

English

The Angry Young Man Movement and Its Influence on Lucky Jim, Look Back in Anger, and A Clockwork Orange

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Anthony Burgess' most famous novel, *A Clockwork Orange*, was published in 1962 amidst the cultural frenzy of 1960s Britain, which included technological breakthroughs, musical experimentation, and artistic progression. Because of its date of publication, most critics label the novel as a futuristic dystopian work. A more exact categorization, however, may be realized by comparing the themes and plot of the novel to works from the decade preceding the work. Burgess' novel has a more resonant connection to the dissenting, anti-establishment novels of the 1950s. During this decade, the literary community saw a vast increase in works of literature that addressed displacement and uneasiness within British society, ranging from social class structure to issues in the education system. The characters within these works are aggressively impatient with the sluggish, fixed ways of their society. *Lucky Jim*, *Look Back in Anger*, and *A Clockwork Orange* also address this lack of social progress within Britain.

These works are the products of an eternally progressive aspect of human nature: people are never satisfied with their current society and always seek to change it. Stories containing this theme have existed for as long as humanity has inhabited the earth and been subjected to any type of social power structure. Although these three works are specifically identifiable with respect to historical context, the theme of an unsatisfied man within an askew society may be found in literature from any period in history, be it past, present, or future. Because this theme is so common and has no restrictions (such as literary genre or period), it is easy to comprehend in every culture, making it universal. Even if the specific characteristics that qualify *Lucky Jim* and *Look Back in Anger* as works of the Angry Young Man movement are foreign to readers, the basic theme of unhappiness within an oppressive or stagnant society can be understood by any reader. This theme is also evident in *A Clockwork Orange*, which is not only related to the two previously mentioned works with respect to theme, but also due to historical context.

In *A Clockwork Orange*, the main character, Alex, is an intelligent young

hooligan who goes out at night to commit horrendous crimes upon the mediocre members of his society. He is eventually caught and sent to prison, where he is given the choice to either finish his prison sentence or enter into an experimental program and subsequently be freed. The experiment (Ludovico Technique) causes dire sickness in Alex when he is exposed to violence in any form, be it physical, mental, or emotional. When he is released back into society, his former victims seek revenge upon him and he is continuously attacked. After attempting to commit suicide, the experimental treatment is reversed and Alex returns to his former habits of drug use and violence. The British version of the novel contains an extra chapter that was unavailable in America for over twenty years in which Alex decides to adopt the culture that he fought against as a young man and become an average citizen.

Many critics describe *A Clockwork Orange* as a dystopic vision of a future Britain; the problem with this assertion is that the society in the novel is based purely on the one in existence during the novel's creation. Burgess is writing about contemporary Britain, not a future one. He was writing *A Clockwork Orange* during the late 1950s and early 1960s. A controversial movement was under way during this period in Great Britain: the Angry Young Man movement. Although many scholars denounce the movement because the writers included in the movement did not possess completely similar characteristics in their works, there is a steady consistency in the foundational themes of the works written during this period. All of these works center on a middle or lower class character who does not fit in with his society because it seems broken and corrupted. Although it may be only coincidental that many of these "Angry Young Man" works were published within such close approximation of each other, it cannot be by random chance that these works appear at the time that they did. They occurred during a time in which the world was still recovering from global catastrophe.

Great Britain was still recovering from the devastation of World War I when World War II struck. British society was still altered and unsettled when WWII started; citizens were not yet used to the new kind of everyday life that was pushed upon them, so the thought of re-entering warfare was completely unwelcome. Once WWII had ended, the double impact of unpreparedness for war and the inability to fully recuperate afterwards put a strain on British society. British citizens were used to years of rationing goods and bomb threats. Fear of invasion and destruction limited the social progression within the country. Of the arts, literature especially suffered. According to Randall Stevenson, "...publishers were hampered both by a serious shortage in the supply and quality of paper, much of which was needed for official purposes, and also by extensive destruction of their stock of books in the course of German bombing raids on London..." (69). Not only was it difficult to publish new works, but it was highly improbable that they would reach many readers.

This fact is precisely why many scholars call the period during and after

World War II a stagnant period in British literary history. It was hard enough for writers to have their works published, but it was even harder to have their works actually picked up by readers. In his chapter about literature during WWII, Stevenson explains that many readers chose novels from the previous century, most likely as a means of escape from the horrors of war (70). Even after the war, the issues for writers and publishers continued: the war impacted every aspect of life in Britain, even the creative aspects. Stevenson describes the mental effects that the war had upon writers, who had a difficult time expressing themselves because of the sheer magnitude of the war (70). This period of stagnation lasted up until the early 1950s, when writers had recovered from their creative shock and began to assess the consequences of WWII.

One of the main consequences that became a major interest for writers was the social impact that the war had upon society. It is the assessment of social structure and interaction that the Angry Young Men began to write about in the fifties. The term "Angry Young Man" was not applied to the group until after John Osborne's play *Look Back in Anger* was published, but the writers who are typically associated with the term were quickly grouped together because of the immediacy of their works being published. One of the most popular authors of the AYM (Angry Young Men) was Kingsley Amis, whose work, *Lucky Jim*, was among the first "angry" works to be published. It was not until other "angry" works had been published, such as *Look Back in Anger*, that Amis was considered an author of the movement. The most interesting aspect of the AYM is that none of the authors identified themselves as relevant to each other, much as less as members of the same movement. Kingsley Amis, for instance, believed that the movement was the result of the need for a seemingly new aspect in literature:

There was this lag of eight or ten years after the war when nothing happened. Then by a series of coincidences, within three years, John Wain appeared. I appeared. John Braine, John Osborne, Iris Murdoch, and Colin Wilson all appeared. And others. Now that looks like a movement, and I can quite see, since there was this business of non-upper-classness...people could be forgiven for mistaking this for a sort of minor revolution or turning point in English writing. I don't think it really was that.... (2-3)

Many scholars note that multiple AYM authors did not even get along with each other, so they abhorred the thought of being thematically grouped together. Another issue with the term arises out of the fact that it implies a specific group of people. As Malcolm Bradbury notes, "...a lot of the authors were not angry, many were not young, and a lot of them were women" (318).

Despite the quarreling and disagreement over the term "Angry Young Men," there are undeniable similarities between the works of AYM authors; the major one is that the main character is always an angry young man. Although the cause and display of this anger may be drastically different between the works, the consistent characteristic of the angry character is that he cannot blend into

society. Nona Balakian explains this issue as isolation, specifically in the case of Jimmy in *Look Back in Anger*: “The cause of his frustration is not that obvious; what rankles in him is the realization that he does not ‘belong.’ Nobody hears his words when he speaks, much less understands his heart when it aches” (264). Balakian has an interesting perspective on the cause of this emotional isolation; she believes that the angry young man creates his own system of judgment and comprehension: “To protect their sense of truth, of integrity and justice, they become skeptical and even cynical” (263). Therefore, the angry young man becomes even angrier because society has no place for his system of values.

Another significant characteristic that the angry young man usually possesses is that he has received an education that conflicts with his living standards. Morton Kroll describes them as “young men with all or a substantial part of a university education and of financially difficult middle-class and proletarian backgrounds” (556). These characters are usually quite intelligent, but they are unable to move up the social ladder because of the strict social structure within Britain. This issue is present in *Lucky Jim*, *Look Back in Anger*, and *A Clockwork Orange*: Jim, Jimmy, and Alex (respectively) all come from middle or lower-class families, and none of them are able to elevate their social status. Their inability to do so conflicts greatly with their intelligence: surely, smart people ought to become more wealthy. Not only should they have more money, but they should also have more influence in society. These characters are much smarter than their peers, and yet they are virtually ignored. Their anger arises from the fact that they “were educated for roles which transcend their class identity” (Kroll 556).

A final significant feature that AYMs share is that they tend to discuss prevalent social stagnation and its consequences but offer no solutions. Stevenson states that “...the angry young men are seldom genuinely critical of the forces shaping contemporary life: their ‘dissentience’ seems little more than irritation at their exclusion from a satisfactory place in a society that had ‘never had it so good’” (129). Neither Jim in *Lucky Jim* nor Jimmy in *Look Back in Anger* ever says how society ought to function; they just complain about the fact that it functions in the manner that it does. It is this lack of solution that has inspired a new definition of the term “Angry Young Men”: many critics use the term “dissent” in their discussion of the AYM movement because none of the authors write inflammatory material. Instead of “Angry Young Men,” some critics feel, they should be called “Annoyed Young Men.”

Two of the most important and thereby most famous writers of the AYM were Kingsley Amis and John Osborne. Amis was already a successful novelist, critic, and poet by the time that the AYM arrived, but Osborne was a struggling new playwright with very little success. Osborne was the epitome of an angry young writer. According to Luc Gilleman, in fact, Osborne was consistently mentioned in the newspapers for inflammatory statements, both published and spoken (105). There is speculation that Osborne was not as angry as he seemed, and that he sim-

ply put on a show for notoriety and publicity, but many critics argue that the virulent emotion that is present in his works proves otherwise. Kingsley Amis, on the other hand, was not as apparently angry. His friends, including Anthony Burgess, often described him as a warm, welcoming mentor who loved to be surrounded by good company with numerous topics of discussion. However, Amis reveals in an interview with Dale Salwak that he had some of the same opinions as a young adult as Jim does in *Lucky Jim*: "...it showed me that what I had thought when I was younger (in my teens and twenties)- the view that Britain is a very rigid, structured, separated society, and that it is very difficult to bread through from one class to another- was quite untrue" (2). Based on this assertion, at least while writing *Lucky Jim*, Amis was indeed an angry young man.

Although Amis' novel reads as a comedy, the underlying implications of *Lucky Jim* is that Jim is one angry man: his superior is actually inferior, he can see straight through the falsities of social interaction, and yet he wants so desperately to fit into the social paradigm that he deplures. Jim is constantly mocking his peers, making funny gestures and actively involving himself in shenanigans, simply for his own spiteful amusement. Balakian describes Jim's behaviors as a perfect mirror of the foolishness of society: "By juxtaposing every foolish action of Jim's against the phony attitudes and manners of those whom he must outwit to survive, Amis creates...a topsy-turvy Alice-in-Wonderland atmosphere..." (265). Although it is hilarious to read about Jim's mockery, it is also tragic it is the only form of release for Jim. He must play the social game in order to achieve his goal of fitting in with his peers, but his only satisfaction is privately making fun of those whom he despises.

Many of Jim's exhibitions of mockery occur when he has discussions with the various members of the Welch family, the most influential and aristocratic group of people involved with the university. Professor Welch is an unremarkable historian, but because of his social standing, he is awarded the coveted position of Head of the Department of History. This fact aggravates Jim so deeply that he cannot resign himself to merely accept Welch's promotion and continue his studies. In nearly every conversation with Welch, Jim half-heartedly listens to him, preferring to daydream about beating the man to death. Further infuriating Jim is the fact that Welch consistently pauses in his speech: he stops in a manner that would typically indicate an internal arrangement of intelligent conversation, but after pausing, continues to babble indifferently. It is Jim's hatred for this pretentious use of pause that inspires one of the most heated rants in the novel. When Jim seeks clarity about his job security at the university, Welch gives mindless answers that neither answer Jim's questions nor concern Jim at all. During a particularly long pause after Welch's reply, Jim thinks about the joy that would come to him if he was to:

tie Welch up in his chair and beat him about the head and shoulders with a bottle until he disclosed why, without being French himself, he'd given

his sons French names, nor...No, he'd just say, quite quietly and very slowly and distinctly, to give Welch a good chance of catching his general drift: Look here, you old cockchafer, what makes you think you can run a history department, even at a place like this, eh, you old cockchafer? (88) This lengthy rant exposes the main objections that Jim has throughout the novel: he hates undeserving snobs, unintelligent fakes, and thoughtless automatons.

Jim expresses his anger while also showing his vulnerability and need to adapt on numerous occasions. For example, while Welch is discussing Jim's work, Jim stands behind him making funny gestures with his hands, until Welch suddenly turns around and invites Jim to have dinner with him. Jim does not pause to decide: "After a day of doing Welch's work there was plenty for Dixon to do that evening in connection with his lecture, but it was obvious that he couldn't afford to turn down this offer, so he said unhesitatingly: 'Well, thank you very much, Professor. That's very kind of you'" (180). As much as he may despise Welch, he needs to come into favor with him in order to achieve a higher place in the social circle. A similar occurrence happens when Jim meets Welch's son, Bertrand. Jim immediately judges Bertrand as a practiced phony and cannot stand him. However, because he needs the social grace that a close relationship with his father can provide, he decides that "he mustn't be offensive" to Bertrand (43).

One of the most interesting aspects of *Lucky Jim* is the treatment of women in the novel. An angry young man who is mad at society is bound to mistreat women, which is definitely the case in this novel. Women are depicted as over-exaggerated, purely emotion-driven parasites that hold Jim back from his full potential. Balakian asserts that Jim's attitude towards women as "cautious and distrustful," which is exactly how he approaches every character in the novel (268). When Jim decides to tell Margaret that he no longer wants to be her pillar of support, she spirals into a passionate frenzy, which Jim sees as a feat of acting: "Don't be fantastic, Margaret. Come off the stage for a moment, do" (163). He does not trust anything that people say to him, especially when it is an emotional outburst like Margaret's. Balakian claims that the women in AYM novels are especially repulsive to the angry young man because they are needy, weak, and submissive, and are obstacles to the man's social elevation (268). The distrust that the angry men feel towards society is extended to the women in their lives because they are attempting to form a close bond with the men. Jim feels threatened by Margaret because she is trying to insert herself into his world, which is only capable of holding himself.

A similar attitude towards women is evident in *Look Back in Anger*, in which Jimmy Porter shows nothing but contempt for his wife. He does not trust her because he sees her as one of the lackadaisical members of society who exists without questioning her role in society. To Jimmy, his wife lacks the substance of humanity because she accepts her life. Jimmy encapsulates his opinion of his wife near the end of the play: "You'll end up like one of those chocolate meringues my

wife is so fond of...my wife- that's the one on the tom-toms over there. Sweet and sticky on the outside, and sink your teeth in it- inside, all white, messy and disgusting" (II. 39). The wife is so used to the sweets that she does not notice that they are messy; it is a clever metaphor for her existence. In fact, most of the play consists of Jimmy attacking his wife's integrity and status as a human being. He accuses her of lacking any humanity and merely living the easy life by taking everything for granted. Again, the distrust of the angry young man is the cause of his isolation from society.

This distrust is much more violent in Jimmy than it is in Jim: Jimmy does not hesitate to yell it at anyone within earshot. Unlike Jim, Jimmy has no means of elevating himself in society: he works hard for long hours and cannot afford the luxuries of education and polite dinners with guests. Because he has virtually no voice within society, Jimmy has to yell at the only people that he can, but even they do not hear his complaints. After Clive glibly brushes aside Jimmy's comments, Jimmy retorts, "You bet you weren't listening. Old Porter talks, and everyone turns over and goes to sleep. And Mrs. Porter gets 'em all going with the first yawn" (I.7) Most of the characters in the play consider Jimmy a grouchy, nostalgic man full of complaints and do not take any store in the meaning of his outbursts.

Look Back in Anger contains one extra dimension to Jimmy's isolation that makes his character much angrier than Jim: he feels a kind of nostalgia for a better time in his life. His assertion that there is nothing worth fighting for anymore insinuates that there once was something worthy of the struggle. Simon Trussler believes that this nostalgia is a much deeper yearning that reflects Jimmy's desired state of existence for humanity. Trussler claims that "Ironically, it is a product equally of Jimmy's proletarian and Alison's upper-class upbringing- and hence the certain incongruity of Jimmy's simultaneous feelings of identification with the working-classes and the aristocracy, for he is less in search of a particular background than of a lost innocence and assurance which both seemed to share" (44). The important aspect of this point of view is that the structure of social classes is not what Jimmy laments. He is angry that people of all social classes have seemingly stopped thinking about the important things in life.

This nostalgia causes Jimmy to create a parallel universe in his head, in which everything is "right" and beautiful. Aleks Sierz asserts that "Jimmy's nostalgia is not for a world he has lost, but for a world he never had...Looking back, he evokes the [Edwardian era of his father] as a dream, a fantasy, an idea...While he knows rationally that this picture is 'phony' (11), he needs it as a stable reference point" (25). Jimmy feels much more emotion than everyone else and this emotion leads to a desire for a meaningful, symbolically-significant life. He tries desperately to cling to the idea that his dream world can become the real world, so when his idealism is dragged back down into the depths of his middle class life, he becomes violent and deeply offensive to his peers. It is this sudden realization that usually leads to insults intended for his wife: "Why don't we have a little game? Let's pre-

tend that we're human beings, and that we're actually alive? Just for awhile. What do you say? Let's pretend we're human. Oh, brother, it's such a long time since I was with anyone who got enthusiastic about anything" (I.11). *Look Back in Anger*, *Lucky Jim*, and *A Clockwork Orange* all contain this form of wishful thinking. The main characters daydream because it is their only way to exist in a manner that is not totally miserable. Jimmy, in particular, must daydream because he is stuck in a lower-middle-class hell and cannot find any acceptable alternative lifestyle.

The tragedy of Jimmy's life is not that he cannot move beyond his class. People are too wrapped up in the pettiness of social trappings to consider the more philosophical aspects of living. Just as Jim is too educated for his living situation, Jimmy is too emotional and philosophical for his social position. He attempts at numerous times during the play to express himself but his pleas only become increasingly angrier because they are ignored. The more that he tries to bring attention to his opinion, the more that he is ignored, and the more isolated and frustrated he becomes. Jimmy's repeated rebuffs from the other characters, especially Clive, result in cycles of enthusiasm and despair. Each failure results in gloomy reflections that mean a great deal to himself but nothing to the others: "I give up. I give up. I'm sick of doing things for people. And all for what?... Nobody thinks. Nobody cares. No beliefs, no convictions, and no enthusiasm. Just another Sunday evening" (I.12). This statement perhaps best defines the issue that the AYM writers believed existed within 1950s Britain.

Although Anthony Burgess is not considered an AYM author, many of his novels approach social issues with a similar attitude. If Burgess had remained in England throughout the fifties, it is entirely possible that he would be considered an AYM author because numerous works of his echo the broken society that is so prevalent in AYM works. The main difference between Burgess and the AYM authors is that Burgess seemed to be an actual embodiment of the angry man. Roger Lewis, who wrote the definitive biography of Burgess, states that Burgess "believed himself to be oppressed, and he believed himself to be different. He was animated by a dark pride and rage..." (56). Burgess felt isolated from the rest of society at a young age due largely to a childhood full of "passive affection" from his family. The already-disgruntled Burgess felt even more repulsed when he returned to Britain in the late 1950s after years abroad to discover that he was no longer familiar with British culture, which he felt had downgraded (Lewis 263). Clearly, like the AYM authors, Burgess was not pleased with modern society.

He began writing *A Clockwork Orange* in the very late fifties, as soon as he returned to Britain, and the novel totally reflects the anger that he felt towards British society. Burgess explains that the novel was, in fact, written about British culture in the present time, not a future time, unlike many scholars assume. He asserts that "It didn't begin as a futuristic novel at all. It began as novel about the present day" (Lewis 279). Although the details of *A Clockwork Orange* may have seemed foreign to British society of the late fifties and early sixties (after all,

there was no overly-oppressive government or dramatically “droog-like” culture in existence at that point in history), the issues of Alex’s society, namely the issues involved with the interaction of social classes, middle-class boredom, and the inability of the youth to channel their creative energies towards proactive causes, were all too familiar to modern British citizens. It is perhaps because of the invented Nadsat language of the novel that the connection between Alex’s society and that of Burgess’ time is thinly disguised. Whatever the case may be, upon close reading of the social structure of *A Clockwork Orange*, the similarities between the novel and those of the AYM movement are too obvious to be dismissed.

After reviewing the common characteristics of the angry young man character, Alex appears to be the perfect embodiment of this archetype, because he possesses all of the main traits. He is bored with his peers, he is too intelligent to live the lifestyle of his parents, he has a natural ability to lead others but is limited to mindless followers, and he is aware that the only way for him to break out of the monotony of his everyday life is to commit terrible crimes to shake people out of their complacency. It seems that Alex thinks of the people around him as soulless machines: he has no moral hesitations or guilt when he kicks or “tolchoks” a victim. It is not until he sees blood that he remembers that they are human beings like himself. Rather than an animalistic exhilaration, the joy that Alex feels upon seeing blood flow is much more metaphysical. It arises from the fact that it proves that his victim is capable of feeling emotion and pain. Like Jim and Jimmy, Alex does not trust anything about people that fully embrace society. When he and the droogs attack the homeless man in the street, he is disgusted by the old man because he is “howling away at the filthy songs of his fathers and going blerpberp in between...” (16). The combination of nostalgia and the state of numbness brought on by intoxication makes the man pathetic to Alex.

A similar show of spite towards the acceptance of modern society occurs during the rape scene of the author’s wife. Alex puts on an act as a high-class gentleman in order to fool the wife into letting him enter her house: “It was a sharp’s goloss, a youngish devotchka by her sound, so I said in a very refined manner of speech, a real gentleman’s goloss: ‘Pardon, madam, most sorry to disturb you...’” (23). He clearly understands that there is a specific manner in which people of the wife’s class and lifestyle will react more hospitably to a favor from a stranger. Like Jim in *Lucky Jim*, Alex knows all of the petty details that people use to distinguish themselves as members of a particular class, so he is able to manipulate people by copying their mannerisms.

A more complex aspect of Alex’s treatment of high society is his feeling about and treatment of art. He has a brutish respect for artists or anyone who creates. He adores Beethoven, not for the complexity and brilliancy of the melodic harmonies, but for the energy that the music gives him. He revels in the violent melodies that thrust themselves forward continuously in waves: “Oh, it was gorgeousandness and gorgeosity made flesh. The trombones crunched redgold

under my bed, and behind my Gulliver the trumpets threewisesilverflamed, and there by the door the timps rolling through my guts and out again crunched like candy thunder" (37). Alex mocks the sophistication that music symbolizes for the upper-classes by using it as his inspiration for violence. Again, a similarity to Jim is evident because they both use aspects of high society at their own disposal, instead of seeking the reverence achieved by their intended usage.

A major difference exists between Jim and Alex: whereas Jim attempts to blend in with the members of society that he despises for the sake of self-elevation, Alex tries to set himself apart from his peers. This fact is the key difference between the angry young men of the AYM movement and Burgess' angry young man. Alex is symbolic of the generation after the AYM: these new "angrier men" actively rebel against their society rather than seek acceptance in it. Alex has no aspirations to move up the social ladder or to plead for an abandonment of petty obsessions. He simply wants to act out against a mechanical society because he can get away with it. Alex takes a great deal of pleasure out of committing crimes because it is forbidden by the mass culture. He intentionally sets himself apart from others, attempting to prove that he can have a better existence by living without the constraints of normal society.

One of the methods that Alex uses to achieve this independence of society is the creation of an alternate culture. He adopts new clothing, a new social code, and a new language in order to set himself apart from others. He embraces many of the taboo aspects of British society, such as drug-use and rape, because they fill him with adrenaline and allow him to divulge his built-up energies into pleasures that would normally be denied to him. As a droog, Alex is a leader. In normal society, Alex is just another teen-aged son of middle-class parents who toil away in a factory for twelve hours a day, but as a droog, he has power. Power and freedom are not available to Alex if he adopts the society of his parents, which has recently been taken over by a strict, powerful government. Robert K. Morris describes the Alex's world as "a smug, self-satisfied, socialized England that has run down" (59). This new government seeks to smother the subculture of young dissenters like Alex, which creates a heated battle between the droogs and the police. Both sides understand the intentions of the other, so there is a fierce struggle between the crime-committers and the men who actively seek them out.

Returning to Alex's methods of self-distinction, it is important to note that although Alex is not attempting to fit into normal society, he is trying to create one for himself in which he does belong. Unlike Jim and Jimmy, Alex does achieve this goal, even if only for a short period of time before he is caught and sent to prison. The new culture that Alex creates also has a social class structure: there are certain fashions and customs that droogs must adopt in order to be a "malchick." Very early in the novel, Alex goes into great detail about the drugs that he ingests and the clothes that he wears. He discusses all of the daily activities of the droogs in a manner that borders on ritualistic. The Korova Milkbar, for example, is a nightly

stop for the droogs before they head out to commit crimes because it “would sharpen you up and make you ready for a bit of dirty twenty-to-one...” (4). Alex explains that he is the leader of the droogs because he is the smartest, fastest, and most persuasive member of the group. He is the ideal example of a droog.

Alex's success as a droog is due largely to his mastery of the language of the droogs, Nadsat. As Dr. Branom explains it, Nadsat is “Odd bits of old rhyming slang...A bit of gypsy talk, too. But most of the roots are Slav. Propaganda. Subliminal penetration” (129). A clever use of language on Burgess' part, the reader is able to grasp the meaning of Nadsat terms simply by closely examining the context in which it is used. In the very first sentence of the novel, Alex leads the reader to understand what a droog is: “There was me, that is Alex, and my three droogs, that is Pete, Georgie, and Dim...” (1). The genius of the Nadsat language is that the spoken form is hard to comprehend, but as soon as it is written down and given context, it is easy to understand. It is through this method that readers are drawn to sympathize with Alex. Being able to understand the charming yet brutish language of the main character, along with the fact that all of the other characters have sub-human qualities, makes Alex the hero, despite his deplorable character by Western standards of morality.

Much of the Nadsat has repeated or baby-like sounds, which makes the language have a natural fluency and is lyrically pleasing. This characteristic makes all of the language sound pleasing, even if the topic of discussion is shocking or repulsive. One of the most famous lines in the novel exemplifies this idea of pleasing sounds. While pondering what to do about his droogs' sudden desire to replace Alex as leader, he has an epiphany: “And I made with a like deep bow, smiling like bezoomny but thinking all the time. But when we got into the street I viddied that thinking is for the gloopy ones and that the oomny ones use like inspiration and what Bog sends” (57-8). Without the context provided by the sentences, the Nadsat words would be hard to clearly define. As A.A. de Vitis explains it, “Nadsat at first appears to the reader as a barrier to communication; but it actually becomes a device that enhances the narrative. The activities of Alex and his “droogs” become more terrifying, while, ironically, the language becomes more poetical” (105). Not only does the language give Alex's narrative a more sophisticated feel, but it also distances the reader from the violence of the book. Without this crucial distance, the sheer vulgarity of Alex's acts would repulse the reader and decrease the efficiency of portraying *A Clockwork Orange's* themes. Alex's poetic language makes him appear as a more genteel angry young man.

The other effective consequence of Alex's language is that he is able to establish his power over the other droogs. Julie Carson makes an intriguing argument that Alex's pronoun usage demonstrates his obsession with power. She claims that he uses “you” when he addresses people whom he feels to be of equal social standing, and uses “thou” when he believes himself superior to the person addressed (201). Her hypothesis supports the idea that Alex is attempting to cre-

ate a social structure in which he has a comfortable position of power. There are numerous instances when Alex uses biblical language while talking to someone like Dim, whom he constantly mocks and treats like a child. In fact, Alex likes the Bible because of the influence that it has over people with its strong images of violence. He often pictures himself within the stories in the Bible, usually performing the acts of brutality upon Jesus Christ (89). His fascination with the Bible is yet another instance of Alex's joy with the subversion of vital components of British culture.

One final aspect of *A Clockwork Orange* still needs to be examined, which is of course the final chapter of the book. The American version did not contain the twenty-first chapter for many years because Burgess' editor believed that the book would sell better if Alex remained an anti-hero. It is not just for the sake of retaining a great villain, however, that the final chapter should be excluded: the final chapter of the novel does not fit Alex's character profile. In the infamous last chapter, Alex grows up and decides to give up his droogan lifestyle, instead opting for a traditional one. The first main issue with this chapter is that Alex continues to narrate in Nadsat: if he is truly embracing mass culture and renouncing his former lifestyle, surely he would revert to standard English. Early in the novel, Alex explains that Nadsat was created for the single purpose of deterring the police. Because his former droogs have also adopted the standard lifestyle, he will not have anyone to converse with in Nadsat. When Alex has a surprise encounter with Pete, he is shocked to learn that Pete has completely assimilated to British culture and is engaged. Pete speaks in standard English, so his fiancé is surprised to hear Alex's language: "Did you used to talk like that too?" (209). A possible explanation for Alex's retention of Nadsat is that he only recently adopted the standard lifestyle, but considering the fact that he does not at all attempt to alter his language in order to more easily communicate with Pete and his fiancé, this explanation cannot be correct.

The second problem that the twenty-first chapter causes is the major shift in Alex's personality. Throughout the novel, a steady personality has presented itself, in both word and deed. It is highly unlikely that a character like Alex, who is in many ways superior to the people around him, would settle for the lifestyle that he has fought against for years. The Alex that is presented throughout the novel is a stubborn, willful young man who is cunning enough to find alternative solutions to any problem that he comes across. Also, the simple fact that Alex is able to beat the government and is returned to his pre-Ludovico Treatment state of mind would appeal to his ego, likely boosting the thought that his counterculture is superior. For this reason, it seems impossible that Alex would ever abandon his droogan culture for the standard British culture.

This statement does, however, bring into question whether the angry young man turns into the angry old man or the defeated old man. If Jim, Jimmy, and Alex become too worn down and wearied by the realities of everyday life,

they will ultimately give up their hopeful daydreams. But, taking into consideration that these are very angry men who see no redemption for their societies, it seems highly illogical for them to do so. These men are disgusted and unwilling to settle for mediocrity. Their peers and culture are not worthy of the merits that these men possess. The struggle of these characters is in itself a remarkable feat, and the beauty of it is evident. Even Alex is aware of the significance of fighting mainstream culture: "A terrible grahznvyonny world, really, O my brothers. And so farewell from your little droog. And to all the others in this story profound shooms of lipmusicbrrrrrr. And they can kiss my sharries. But you, O my brothers, remember sometimes thy little Alex that was. Amen. And all that cal" (212). Not only does Alex revere his fight to remain isolate, he glorifies it like an act of God (in the typical, subversive fashion that he so loves to do). These Angry Young Men have so much more symbolic girth than their title suggests.

All of the main characters in *Lucky Jim*, *Look Back in Anger*, and *A Clockwork Orange* are angry young men; although they all express their anger in different ways, the cause of their frustration is the same. Although *A Clockwork Orange* was published after the AYM movement had already faded out of popularity, it could easily be categorized as the last great work of the movement. The dystopian label is too narrow for the numerous themes that exist within the novel. If it had been published only a few years earlier than its 1962 publication, it is very probable that *A Clockwork Orange* would be considered a work of the AYM movement, especially because its author, like Osborne, was a perfect embodiment of the kind of man who could write an "angry novel." Because Burgess and Amis were good friends, and Amis was favorite author of Burgess', it is highly likely that the themes of *Lucky Jim*, or other "angry novels" inspired Burgess' masterpiece. Whether Burgess was inspired by the AYM, was actually an unidentified member of the movement, or was completely unrelated to the movement, the closeness in themes between his novels and those of Osborne and Amis reflect that British society was troubling everyone.

Notes

1. Burgess was actually traveling throughout Europe in the early to mid-1950s.
2. His mother died when Burgess was very young, so he was raised by a lukewarm-affectionate father and an indifferent stepmother. Lewis emphasizes throughout the biography that this unaffectionate childhood formed Burgess into an emotionally-unavailable adult.
3. Alex is fourteen at the opening of the novel and eighteen at the close of it.