Travelling philosophy: from literature to film

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Citation for published version (APA):
III. The Film

Stanley Kubrick

(1928-1999)
Introduction

Born in The Bronx, New York, American director Stanley Kubrick’s films are largely characterized by satirical wit, technical virtuosity, and imaginative cinematic storytelling. Among his best known works are the Cold War lampoon Dr. Strangelove (1964), his seminal science fiction film 2001: A Space Odyssey (1968), and the highly controversial A Clockwork Orange (1971). Kubrick’s filmic adaptation of Burgess’ novel originally received an X-rating for explicit violence and nudity. However, under pressure from studio executives, some of the more “objectionable” content was begrudgingly edited out and the R-rated version is the film that was widely released in 1971.103

Soon after the film hit theatres, it was attacked as an “unmediated celebration of the violent young self” and a “provocation to youthful viewers to imitate what they saw on the screen” (Kolker 2003: 19). A British judge – prophesying American Senator Bob Dole’s similar rhetoric some twenty-five years later – said the film was “an evil in itself” (19). In The New Yorker (1972), American film critic Pauline Kael wrote:

Literal-minded in its sex and brutality, Teutonic in its humor, Stanley Kubrick’s A Clockwork Orange might be the work of a strict and exacting German professor who set out to make a porno-violent sci-fi comedy. Is there anything sadder – and ultimately more repellent – than a clean-minded pornographer? How can people go on talking about the dazzling brilliance of movies and not notice that the directors are sucking up to the thugs in the audience? (50).104

In a similar vein, Andrew Sarris of The Village Voice described Kubrick’s film as: “a painless, bloodless, and ultimately pointless futuristic fantasy” (1971: 49). In Women and Film (1972) – an early feminist film journal – Beverly Walker charged the film with misogyny and wrote that Clockwork possessed:

…an attitude that is ugly, lewd, and brutal toward the female human being; all of the women are portrayed as caricatures; the violence committed upon them is treated comically; the most startling aspects of the decor relate to the female form (4).

What is more, Kubrick’s film was initially disowned by Burgess who felt that it lacked the redeeming quality of moral transformation. Burgess’ reaction is largely attributed to the fact that the film was an adaptation of the American version of the novel, which did not include the last chapter of the original text released in Europe. As we have seen, it is in this chapter that the anti-hero protagonist matures and begins to emerge from his violent ways. In light of this omission, Burgess felt that the film conveyed a portrait of a human

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103 McDougal, ed., Kubrick’s A Clockwork Orange (2003), 3: “Although the British Board of Film Censors (BBFC) had rejected an earlier version of the script written by Terry Southern and Michael Cooper, they approved Kubrick’s film and gave it an X rating on the grounds that the controversial materials were justified by the story. The film had already received this rating by the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) prior to its New York primer on December 20, 1971. (...) In October, Kubrick declared that he had replaced thirty seconds of film with less explicit mater from the same scenes. His efforts resulted in a new rating (R) from the MPAA for this version.”

being that was unregenerate and incapable of moral progress – a notion he claims the novel centered on\textsuperscript{105}.

Although it lacked the events seen in the last chapter of the novel, Kubrick’s film went on to collect numerous honors, which included the New York Film Critics award for Best Picture and four Academy Award nominations\textsuperscript{106}. Despite the film’s wide critical acclaim, the explicit violence and complex subject matter resulted in only mild box office success\textsuperscript{107}. Nevertheless, Kubrick’s intriguing work has managed to create a devoted following and it is still screened in theaters to this day.

**Machiavellian Selfish Oppression and the Absence of Moral Transformation**

Like the novel, the film conveys the triangulated relationships between Alex and his fellow citizens, Alex and the state, or regime, and the citizens and the state as ones of mere calculation. To emphasize this point, the following passage presents an exchange that involves two of the narrative’s principal characters: Alexander (F. Alexander in the novel), a political writer who lustily desires to overthrow the government and Alex – the film’s anti-hero protagonist. Alexander – unaware that it was Alex who had beaten him and raped his wife earlier in the fabula – speaks to a fellow conspirator over the phone about Alex who has somehow stumbled upon his house after being sadistically beaten by two policemen (former members of Alex’s gang) in the woods nearby. Shot from a low, semi-close camera position, Alexander eagerly, almost maniacally delivers the following monologue:

> He can be the most potent weapon imaginable to ensure that the government is not returned in the forthcoming election. The government’s big boast, sir, is the way they have dealt with crime during the last few months. Recruiting brutal young roughs into the police, proposing debilitating will-sapping techniques of conditioning. We’ve seen it before in other countries. The thin end of the wedge. Before we know where we are, we’ll have the full apparatus of totalitarianism. This young boy is a living witness to these diabolical proposals. The people, the common people, must know, must see. There are traditions of liberty to defend. The tradition of liberty is all. The common people will let it go, oh yes. They will sell liberty for a quieter life. That is why they must be led, sir. Driven, pushed.\textsuperscript{108}

Here, the visual aspect of film allows the viewer to envision Alexander’s power-status through the juxtaposition of the camera position with the content and delivery of his

\textsuperscript{105} Burgess, "Clockwork Resucked," (1986), vii: "Now when Stanley Kubrick made his film – though he made it in England – he followed the American version and, so it seemed to his audiences outside America, end the story somewhat prematurely. (...) What happens in the twenty-first chapter? (...) Briefly, my young thuggish protagonist grows up. He grows bored with violence and recognizes that human energy is better expended on creation than destruction."

\textsuperscript{106} McDougal, ed., Kubrick’s *A Clockwork Orange* (2003), 3. *Clockwork* received awards for Best Foreign Film at the Venice Film Festival, Best Film and Best Director by New York Film Critics, and nominations for Best Film, Direction, Writing, and Editing at the Academy Awards.

\textsuperscript{107} "A Clockwork Orange Box Office Numbers," in Box Office Mojo (statistics online), accessed 24 July 2005, http://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/?id=clockworkorange.htm. More precisely, the domestic gross was $26,589,355. There are no figures for the overseas gross for this film.

\textsuperscript{108} Stanley Kubrick, dir., *A Clockwork Orange* (Burbank: Warner Brothers Home Video, 1999), 30. The dialogue, while audible, can also be seen on the screen via the subtitle feature for a more accurate transcription. The DVD is divided up into 35 chapters and will be referenced accordingly. Subsequent citations are from this edition and will be cited parenthetically. In addition, when chapters are referenced within the text of the filmic analyses, they will refer to the filmic (rather than literary) chapters, unless otherwise noted.
speech. In this case, the tight, upward shot signifies Alexander's current position of dominance, while the content and delivery of his speech anticipates his willingness to use it to selfishly oppress others in his attempt to overthrow the government.  

Similar to its literary antecedent, the preceding speech reveals Alexander's desire to use Alex in his endeavor to depose a government he views as tyrannical. However, it is the filmic version that - even more so than the novel - underscores the notion of selfish oppression. What is more, Alexander's comments exemplify a model that starts from a teleological relation between the elements of the fabula: the actors have an intention: they aspire towards an aim. In this model, the teleology organizes the division of actors into groups or classes (Bal 1997: 196). The classes of actors are called actants. An actant is a class of actors that shares a certain characteristic or quality, and that shared characteristic is related to the teleology of the fabula as a whole. An actant is therefore a class of actors whose members have an identical relation to the aspect of telos, which constitutes the principle of the fabula. That relation is called the function.

The primary and most significant function is that between the actor who follows an aim and the aim itself. That function may be compared to that between subject and direct object in a sentence. The first two classes of actors to be distinguished, therefore, are subject and object: actor x aspires towards goal y. x is a subject-actant (sa), and y is an object-actant (oa). In the opening passage, it is Alexander (sa) who aims to overthrow (function) a government he views as tyrannical (oa). However, the intention of the subject is in itself not sufficient to reach the object. There are always powers that either allow it to reach its aim or prevent it from doing so. This relation might be seen as a form of communication, and we can, consequently, distinguish a class of actors - consisting of those who support the subject in the realization of its intention, supply the object, or allow it to be supplied or given - whom Bal calls the power. The person whom the object is given is the receiver. On the basis of analysis, one gains insight into the relations between the powers that form the basis of the reversed, conventional version. Specifically, in theory, the ethical shortsightedness of the government's doctors and their conditioning Technique (power) would make it possible (function) for Alexander (receiver) to overthrow it. Alexander is not truly concerned so much with Alex's physical condition and protection, rather, he sees Alex as a helper, or a practical tool that can be used to assist Alexander realize his ultimate end.

The film's fabula is satiated with principal characters obsessed with achieving the objects of their desire and it is reasonable to assume that each views the attainment of this desire as, in some way, constructively good. Along these lines, Alexander's monologue makes apparent his belief that the eradication of the "diabolical proposals" of the "will-sapping techniques of conditioning" utilized by a government he endeavors

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109 Bal, *Narratology* (1997), 20. Bal provides an example of the "power status" typically associated with the "top-down" gaze in Western culture when the Nazi officer Amon Goeth oversees the prison camp from his villa balcony in the film *Schindler's List* (1993). Bal asserts that the scene: "emphasizes the seeing from the top down, which is usually - in the visual discourse of Western culture - a mastering, colonizing gaze."

110 Bal, *Narratology* (1997), 197: "This is a typically structuralist model: it is conceived in terms of fixed relations between classes of phenomena, which is a standard definition of structure."

111 Bal, *Narratology* (1997), 198: "The French terms used by Greimas are 'destinateur' and 'destinataire,' and 'sender' and 'receiver' are their most literal translation. However, 'sender' suggests an active intervention or an active participation, and this does not always apply; that is why 'power' is perhaps a better term."

112 Bal, *Narratology* (1997), 201. Bal argues that in a fabula, an actor / actant-subject wants (desires) something and either gets it or not, and the process is usually not simple. The aim is difficult to achieve. The subject meets with resistance on the way and receives help. Those characters that assist the subject reach its desire are known as "helpers" and those characters that impede the subject are known as "opponents."
to depose would assuredly be a positive modification. In a similar fashion, as a representative of the state, the Minister of the Interior (MOI) (sa) desires (function) less violence in society (oa). Despite their appearances, the film problematizes the motivations that lurk behind a character’s seemingly estimable ends, or object-actants. With this notion in mind, in the following analysis of not only Kubrick’s film, but Fincher’s and Soderbergh’s works as well, I engage film as a visible and audible medium through a narratological analysis of the text structured by the interdependent features of the filmic components. In other words, my analyses connect Bal’s narratology with the close reading of filmic texts advocated in film theorists Warren Buckland’s and Thomas Elsaesser’s work *Studying Contemporary American Film* (1997). In my analysis and interpretation of Clockwork, I concretize a story which articulates a fabula that conceptualizes the notion of a kind of Machiavellian selfish oppression in the absence of a moral transformation that stems from a kind of Augustinian familial love.

**Alex: Triple Narrative Agency**

In the film, it is Alex who represents the anti-hero protagonist, character-bound narrator, character-bound focalizer, and an actor in the fabula. Alex’s capacities as cn, cf, and actor are largely revealed through the auditory and visual features of dialogue and camera placement respectively.

Chapter two (one being the opening credits) begins with a close-up of Alex’s face, which projects a rather deranged and sinister expression. As the camera slowly pulls back, cn Alex’s voiceover narration is audible:

> There was me, that is, Alex, and my three droogs, that is, Pete, Georgie, and Dim. And we sat in the Korova Milkbar trying to make up our rassoodocks what to do with the evening.

Alex’s first level, nondiegetic speech makes clear his role as cn who begins to recount events he experienced as the younger version of himself, or cf Alex. The following passage represents his literary counterpart:

> "What’s it going to be then, eh?" There was me, that is Alex, and my three droogs, that is Pete, Georgie, and Dim. Dim being really dim, and we sat in the Korova Milkbar making up our rassoodocks what to do with the evening, a flip dark chill winter bastard though dry (Burgess 1986: 1).

Although both present the first instance of speech in each text, the second passage displays two levels of speech, while the first passage only displays one. In the novel, cf Alex’s second level speech is marked with quotes, while cn Alex’s first level speech is not. Additionally, the literary cn Alex’s monologue closely resembles the audible, nondiegetic first level speech of his filmic counterpart who narrates the events as he remembers them.

The following passage demonstrates how the film, like the novel, also conveys the dual roles first demonstrated by the literary cn and cf Alex:

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13 Buckland, Elsaesser, *American Film* (2002), 16: “Whether intentional or not, text and analysis refer us to the study of literature, and it is a reminder that what we do in Film Studies is actually historically and methodologically related to the study of literature, and in particular to that tendency within literature which used to be called ‘practical criticism’ or ‘close reading’: it regards novels, plays, and poems as free-standing, self-contained works, as objects.”
Cn Alex (voiceover): Because I knew what she sang. It was a bit from the glorious 9th, by Ludwig van. (Dim makes a vulgar noise and Alex hits him) Dim: What did you do that for? Cf Alex: For being a bastard with no manners.

Here, cn Alex’s first level, nondiegetic speech is made audible through voiceover narration, while cf Alex’s second level, diegetic speech appears to be uttered from the cf Alex the audience sees on the screen. Since there is no practical use for quotes in the telling of a filmic narrative, first level speech (voiceover narration) is distinguished by two perceptible characteristics, or attributive signs that indicate a shift in focalization. First, voiceover narration is generally recorded in a sound booth with little ambient noise, which lends it a typically clean, clear sound. Conversely, the second level dialogue of cf Alex was most likely recorded on the set during principal photography through the use of a boom microphone, or a microphone that is attached to a long pole and held above the actors’ heads to record their speech (Kolker 2002: 37). However, the most apparent distinction is seen when cf Alex’s mouth remains motionless while the voiceover narration of cn Alex can be heard. In the film, the audible difference in the sound of cn and cf Alex’s voice and the fact that cf Alex’s mouth does not move when we hear the voiceover narration of cn Alex (in place of quotation marks) are the attributive signs that distinguish first from second level speech. In this way, the speech in both the film and the novel helps the viewer determine Alex’s dual function as cn and cf. While both texts are connected through speech, the visual nature of film appends cn Alex to the problematic concept of “filmic narrator.”

Although the novel and the film both constitute narrative texts, the filmic narrator is not as clearly defined as its literary predecessor. Film theorists David Bordwell and Seymour Chatman both addressed the ambiguous status of the filmic narrator. Bordwell argued that film has narration, but no narrator.114 In contrast, Chatman does grant status to an agent, or a filmic narrator.115 As for the former, it is hard to conceive of a narrative film that is not narrated or “sent.” Rather, it seems more plausible, as Chatman asserted, to say that the film’s narrative is “reconstructed” by the viewer.116 Since film exhibits a visual component that literature lacks, the general effect of mise-en-scene leads the viewer to believe that the filmic narrator is the sole external focalizer of fabula events, when s/he is only a theoretical device deliberately manipulated by the filmic subject. In Clockwork, the dynamic of this relationship is impressed upon the viewer through cn Alex’s apparent ignorance of the filmic subject’s higher position in the narratorial hierarchy, which is constant. The viewer’s instinctive desire to conflate the filmic narrator with the filmic subject is intimately related to the reader’s innate tendency to conflate the narrator with the historical author.

In the event that there is no perceptible narration made evident in the film, the viewer, positioned in an imaginary relation to the image just as the cn would

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114 David Bordwell, Narration in the Fiction Film, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985). 62. Bordwell asserts that in watching films, we are seldom aware of being told something by an entity resembling as human being. (...) Therefore film narration is better understood as the organization of a set of cues for the construction of a story. This presupposes a perceiver, but not any sender, of a message.

115 Seymour Chatman, Coming to Term: The Rhetoric of Narrative in Fiction and Film (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990). 126. Chatman contends that it is a little unclear how this process (interaction of syuzhet and style) occurs, whether it is internal to the viewer- in which case style and syuzhet “interact” only within her perception and cognition - or whether there is some kind of interchange between the screen and the viewer. If the latter, the “narration” at least partly inhabits the film - in which case, we can legitimately ask why it should not be granted some status as an agent.

116 Lothe, Fiction and Film (2001). 29. Lothe remarks that this does not mean that all viewers reconstruct alike, but it indicates that film narration both lays a foundation for reconstruction and governs it - somewhat in the same way that narration in verbal prose governs the reading process.
hypothetically be, still enjoys a sense of mastery since s/he enjoys being an all-perceiving eye. In the case of Clockwork, however, the cn is made evident by voiceover narration and the viewer's gaze is "sutured" to that of an invisible filmic narrator, or cn Alex. Within cinematic suture, shot relationships, and the shot / reverse shot (SRS) in particular, are seen as the equivalent of syntactic ones in linguistic discourse, as the agency whereby meaning emerges and a subject-position is constructed for the viewer. In light of this construction, it is imperative that the camera denies its own existence as much as possible, which fosters the illusion that what is shown has an autonomous existence, independent of any technological interference or any coercive gaze.

However, the viewer, unable to sustain a belief in the autonomy of the cinematic image, demands to know whose gaze controls what s/he sees. Thus, the SRS, intimately related to focalization, answers the viewer's question and keeps the cinematic illusion intact. For example, a shot / reverse shot relationship built on POV shots of characters seen within the screen frame sutures the viewer's gaze to a temporary, hypothetical internal focalization. On the other hand, if the viewer does not see the basic SRS relationship, but rather a series of establishing shots, for example, the viewer's gaze is sutured to the external focalization of the filmic narrator. In other words, all features seen within the frame appear to be externally focalized on the first level (F1) by the filmic narrator that can, at times (through the POV – SRS relationship), delegate focalization to an internal focalizer, the focalizer on the second level (F2). In principle, there are more levels possible. Additionally, a filmic narrator can be perceptible (voiceover narration) and character-bound, or simply an external focalizer that can be either perceptible or non-perceptible.

Similar to the novel, the filmic cn Alex is an endearing, perceptible narrator who explicitly refers to himself as such. The following passage, uttered on the first level by cn Alex, is heard in chapter twenty-three when cn Alex's conditioning is tested before an audience of reporters and members of the state:

And, O my brothers, would you believe your faithful friend and long-suffering narrator pushed out his red yahzick a mile and a half to lick the grahny vonny boots.

Here, cn Alex recalls his actions as cn Alex who, to avoid the sickness spurred by violence, licks the bottom of a man's boot who has just attacked him.

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117 Buckland, Elsaesser, American Film (2002), 202: "'Suture' designates a process whereby the spectator is continually positioned and repositioned in an 'imaginary,' as opposed to 'symbolic,' relation to the image. Moreover, suture is the way the act of looking represented in a film can "stitch" the plot into the seamless narration of a self-consistent, realist "world" (230).

118 Silverman, Semiotics (1983), 201. On the subject of "suture," Silverman further states the fact that the "shot / reverse shot" is careful not to violate the 180 degree rule of the same circular field, which implies that shot 1 of the sequence was seen through the eyes of a figure in the cinematic narrative (this paradigm may also be reversed). Thus, the gaze that directs our look seems to belong to a fictional character in the narrative.

119 Bal, Narratology (1997), 158: "The external focalizer (F1) can delegate focalization to an internal focalizer on the second level (F2). Markers in shift in level are called "attributive signs." These are signs which indicate the shift form one level to another. These signs can remain implicit."
This passage is one of several examples scattered throughout the film where Alex makes himself overtly known to the viewer as the cn ("long-suffering narrator"), while he simultaneously attempts to endear himself to the viewer ("your faithful friend"). Alex's exaggeratedly obvious effort to befriend the viewer makes the subjective and decidedly unreliable condition of his narration rather apparent.

While Alex's status as cf was established through dialogue, it is also established visually through camera placement, and the point of view (POV) shot in particular. In chapter twenty-two, cf Alex (and the viewer) is forced to watch films replete with war, torture, and sexual violence as a part of his conditioning process known as the Ludovico Technique (Ludovico's Technique in the novel). In this particular sequence, the shots are edited to shift back and forth between a semi-close shot of Alex strapped into a chair with his eyes held open by metal clips, to a POV shot that internally focalizes the film screen of Alex observes.

Similarly, after he is released from prison in chapter twenty-eight, Alex is attacked by a mob of old homeless men (one of whom Alex had beaten earlier in chapter three). Again, a similar editing technique is employed to transfer the viewer back and forth between the old men who beat Alex and the POV shot that duplicates the vision of the internally focalizing cf Alex. In both cases, the viewer is forced to see what cf Alex sees and the effect is a predictably sympathetic attachment to cf Alex, in spite of his viciousness earlier in the tabula.
Characterizing Alex

The simultaneously vicious and sympathetic cf Alex is primarily characterized through the interplay between the soundtrack features of dialogue and the musical score, the visual component of editing, and the mise-en-scene features of costume design, camera placement, and actor expression. In chapter two, as mentioned previously, the film opens with a close-shot of Alex’s face which is tilted slightly down as he gazes unswervingly into the camera with an ill-omened expression.

Alex also sports a black bolo hat and large, fake eyelashes on one eye while, concurrently, the rather bizarre nondiegetic sounds of Purcell’s Music for the Funeral of Queen Mary (1696) is heard on the soundtrack. The juxtaposition of Alex's disturbed expression with his peculiar costume and the uncanny musical score immediately informs the viewer that Alex is slightly, if not considerably off-center. This is the first of several instances placed throughout the fabula where the interplay of the visual and auditory features characterizes cf Alex as eccentric and unbalanced.

As a feature of mise-en-scene, much of what we discover of Alex is gleaned implicitly through his conduct. In other words, Alex’s actions convey insight into both his role as subject-actant and his static function, which is evidenced by his incessant desire to commit acts of sex and violence. For the purpose of this discussion, I examine Alex’s violent behavior in three stages of the fabula: before, during, and after his conditioning.¹²⁰

Cn Alex narrates episode 1, which occurs prior to his conditioning in chapter three when Alex and his droogs attack an old, apparently homeless man:

Cn Alex (voiceover): One thing I could never stand was to see a filthy dirty old drunkie howling away at the songs of his fathers and going “blerp blerp” in between as it might be a filthy, old orchestra in his stinking, rotten guts. I could never stand to see anyone like that, whatever his age might be. But more especially when he was real old like this one was.

In this auditory example of explicit auto-characterization, we learn that Alex has an extreme distaste for filth and old age. After a close-up of Alex, head cocked with a now

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¹²⁰ By “conditioning,” I mean the Ludovico Technique. First seen roughly halfway through the film, the Ludovico Technique is a form of State-run aversion therapy and quite similar to its literary counterpart. Specifically, a patient (Alex) is strapped into a chair and made physically ill while forced to watch overtly violent and sexual films.
familiar sinister expression, he proceeds (with his droogs) to savagely assault his first in a string of unfortunate victims.

Episode 2, also prior to his conditioning, occurs at the residence of a political writer, Alexander, and his wife who is unnamed. In the novel, this residence is referred to simply as “HOME.” In the film, the residence is seen as HOME when Alex and his droogs pull up to the house and a small, illuminated sign in the front yard reveals it as such. Alex and his gang then manage to break into the house and assail Alexander and rape his wife; concomitantly, we hear the second-level, diegetic music from Alex who playfully croons “Singin’ in the Rain” (1940). Here, the intertextual dialogue effectively characterizes Alex as one who can nonchalantly perform extreme acts of sex and violence while singing the title song from a rather lighthearted Hollywood musical. What is more, toward the conclusion of the sequence, Alex leans down in front of Alexander—bound and gagged and forced to watch the subsequent rape of his wife—and tells him to “viddy well,” or to watch closely. In this case, Alex’s face is shot from a close, low-angle, while Alexander is shot from a close, high-angle, which highlights the power status linked with seeing from the top down.

Later in the fabula, Alex’s gaze will be reversed signifying a shift in the power hierarchy that results from his capture. However, here, it is Alex who maintains power, which he summarily abuses time and time again in the first third of the film. In this instance, however, it is the interplay between Alex’s appalling violence we see on the screen and the cavalier way he goes about it that characterizes him as either a callous practitioner of cruelty or simply ignorant as to the eventual consequences of his actions.

Episode 3 takes place during Alex’s conditioning against sex and violence in chapter twenty-three. At this point, Alex is seen standing on a stage as a man walks out

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and proceeds to insult and slap him, which effectively and intentionally taunts Alex to
violence. In reaction, Alex raises his arm to strike the instigator, but he cannot; the
sickness of the conditioning prevents him from doing so. The instigator then exits the
stage and a half-naked woman takes his place. She proceeds to stand directly in front
of Alex and, mechanically, he attempts to grab her breasts and discloses (through cn
Alex’s voiceover narration) that he desired to rape her, but his conditioning prevented
him from doing so:

Cn Alex (voiceover): She came towards me, with the light like it was like the light
of heavenly grace. And the first thing that flashed in me gulliver was that I’d like
to have her right down there on the floor with the old in-out. Real savage.

Both tempting agents reveal that Alex’s natural inclinations had not been altered, rather,
only his ability to act upon them was negated by the effects of the Ludovico Technique
conceived by the state’s doctors.

Episode 4 occurs in chapter thirty-three after the doctors somehow surgically
removed the conditioning from Alex’s brain. This ambiguous procedure was performed
in response to Alex’s effort to avoid the debilitating effects of his conditioning by
committing suicide. Alex’s failed attempt was a widely publicized act that reflected
poorly on the state’s efforts to reduce crime and ultimately maintain power. In the
following episode, a psychologist tries to ascertain whether or not the surgery was
successful. She shows Alex a series of slides and asks him to reveal the first thing that
enters his mind in a type of picture association. In the slides, there are drawings of
human figures adjacent to written dialogue, which the psychologist reads. The following
passages are examples from this exchange:

Psychologist: A woman says to two men: The boy you always quarreled
with is seriously ill. Cf Alex: My mind is a blank, and I’ll smash your face for you
yarblockos.

Psychologist: A woman says to a man: What do you want? Cf Alex: No time for
the old in and out love. I’ve just come to read the meter.

Psychologist: A woman says to a man: You sold me a crummy watch, I
want my money back. Cf Alex: You know what you can do with that watch?
Stick it up your ass!

Psychologist: A woman shows a man some eggs and says: You can do
whatever you like with these. Cf Alex: Eggiwegs, I would like to smash ‘em, and
pick ‘em up, and pick ‘em all up and throw ‘em.

From the preceding passages, cf Alex’s speech and the excited manner with which he
delivered his responses reveal that the surgical procedure was successful, and that the
adverse effects of the conditioning no longer inhibit his natural responses to sex and
violence. The examples seen before, during, and after his conditioning effectively
characterize cf Alex as static in his violently aggressive behavior throughout the course
of the fabula. The fixed nature of Alex’s character is due, in large part, to the film’s omission
of the last chapter of the novel where Alex begins to mature and shed the violent ways
of his youth. In the film, Alex is truly unchanged. In effect, he is robotic, or a mechanical
clockwork orange in his involuntary predisposition toward violence.

Alex’s automatic, inherently aggressive nature is further imaged through the
visualization of his thoughts, in what I will refer to as a thought montage. A montage is a
number of shots edited quickly together in order to form meaning, to create an impression. A thought montage serves as a visual entrance inside the head of a character and reveals what they are thinking at a particular moment in the fabula. The first example of a thought montage is seen in Alex's bedroom after he had returned home from an evening of what he refers to as "ultra-violence." Alex is first seen relaxing to Beethoven's 9th Symphony. We then hear on Alex's voiceover narration that describes what we see of Alex imagining shortly thereafter:

On Alex (voiceover): Oh, bliss! Bliss and heaven! Oh, it was gorgeousness and gorgeously made flesh. It was like a bird of rarest spun heaven metal. Or like silvery wine flowing in a spaceship, gravity all nonsense now. As I slooshied, I knew such lovely pictures (cut to montage).

The thought montage seen in chapter eight takes the viewer through a series of shots that include: a woman in a wedding dress as she falls through the trap door of the gallows, a rapid (one frame) shot of Alex's face with a grin and bloody vampire teeth, a bomb explosion, vampire Alex, another explosion, vampire Alex, rocks falling on cavemen in an old movie, vampire Alex, and fire burning in reverse.

Here, Alex's speech, which seems to describe something beautiful, is contrasted with the quick, quasi-subliminal one-frame images of the vampire Alex and other assorted violent images. At the beginning of the sequence, on Alex effectively articulates his love for classical music and the unique manner in which it affects him. Alex is not elevated in the traditionally ethereal sense, but rather he reflexively conjures visions of violence and blood.

The second thought montage occurs towards the middle of the film in chapter eighteen. Here, reading from a rather large Bible, cf Alex closes his eyes in contemplation, and the viewer is projected into his thoughts while on Alex describes them:

I read all about the scourging and the crowning with thorns. And I could viddy myself helping in and even taking charge of the tolchocking and the nailing in. Being dressed in the height of Roman fashion. I didn't so much like the latter part of the Book, which is more like all preachy talking than fighting and the old in-out. I like the parts where these old yahooides tolchock each other and then drink their Hebrew vino and getting onto the bed with their wives' handmaidens.

Alex's voiceover narration leads the viewer through the sequence in which Alex imagines himself as a character in another narrative - the Bible. The progression is as follows: a
Like the first montage, this example depicts Alex's visions of sex and violence after his exposure to what is traditionally considered an uplifting work of art. In both montages, the dichotomy between the traditional human response to classical music and the Bible and Alex's reactions effectively characterize him as decidedly abnormal.

The third thought montage occurs in chapter thirty-five after Alex's conditioning had been removed. In an effort to reclaim public opinion from the rather negative press he and his administration received from Alex's attempted suicide, the Minister of the Interior (MOI) poses for a photo opportunity after assuring Alex that he would enjoy a comfortable future provided that he "cooperates." As the two gaily pose together, the camera begins to slowly zoom in on Alex, his head slowly tilts, and his face changes until he exhibits a deranged expression eerily similar to the one seen at the beginning of the film. This time, however, the nondiegetic musical score is the triumphant climax to Beethoven's 9th and we are again thrust into Alex's consciousness. Here, the filmic subject cuts to a shot of Alex and a woman who (while lying in what appears to be snow) engage in sexual intercourse before a crowd of clapping aristocrats, and on Alex utters his final bit of voiceover monologue: "I was cured alright."
In this sequence, the viewer is confronted with contrasting channels of information: audibly, there is the sound of classical music and the sarcastic voiceover while, at the same time, the viewer sees cf Alex's thoughts where he is being applauded for engaging in a sex act. With these points in view, the final montage not only characterizes Alex as abnormal, but also reinforces the fixed, static function of his character.

The preceding examples taken from both the film's mise-en-scene and soundtrack components make apparent the text's characterization of Alex as an insensately violent and impenitent individual. Alex's function as subject-actant remains static, it is only the object-actant, or the object of his violence, that changes. In other words, his innate tendencies remain unaffected by any actions taken as a result of the will of the state (the Ludovico Technique). In effect, we are presented with a rather rare example of a complex, multi-faceted protagonist who, nonetheless, remains static throughout the course of the fabula.

Characterizing the State

Similar to the allegorical thrust of literary text, the film reveals the disposition of the intrinsically antagonistic relationship between the desires of the collective (state) and the aims of the individual (Alex). Specifically, the individual and the collective can be viewed in terms of doubling. A fabula may have different subjects who are in opposition: a subject and an anti-subject. An anti-subject is not an opponent. An opponent opposes the subject at certain moments in pursuit of his or her aim. An anti-subject pursues his or her own object, and this pursuit is, at various times, at cross-purposes with that of the first subject. When an actant has his or her own program, his or her own aims, and acts to achieve this aim, s/he is an autonomous subject.122

As noted previously, this relationship can also be viewed in terms the teleological relation between the elements of the fabula, that is, the actors have an intention and aspire towards an aim. For example, Alex (sa) desired to commit (function) acts of sex and violence (oa); however, the members of the state (sa) desired to prevent (function) Alex from committing acts of rape and violence (oa). Viewed in this way, the doubling, antithetical relationship between the individual and the collective becomes clearer and, to better understand this relationship, I examine how the latter is characterized. Furthermore, I do not consider the relationship in terms of opposing ideologies, but the opposition of selfish desires and those moments in which they intersect.

122 Bal, Narratology (1997), 203. Bal makes a distinction between the incidental position of an opponent and the autonomous nature of the anti-subject as it relates to the concept of doubling.
The filmic state is implicitly characterized by the visual features of mise-en-scene such as camera placement, lighting, and actor expression, and explicitly characterized by the auditory feature of dialogue. The following passage conveys dialogue between Alex and Deltoid (Alex’s parole officer). Deltoid, although he is unable prove it, is keenly aware of Alex’s criminal acts committed the night before:

Deltoid: Because next time it’s not going to be the corrective school. Next time it’ll be the Barrey place, and all my work ruined. If you’ve no respect for your horrible self, you at least might have some for me, who sweated over you. A big, black mark, I tell you. For every one we don’t claim. A confession of failure for every one of you who ends up in the stripy hole. Alex: I’ve been doing nothing I shouldn’t, sir. The millicents have nothing on me, brother. Sir, I mean. (...) Deltoid: I’m warning you little Alex, being a good friend to you as always, the one man in this sick and sore community who wants to save you from yourself! (Deltoid forcefully grabs Alex’s testicles) (7).

The sequence begins with a medium shot when we first see Deltoid and Alex (in his underwear) who sit next to each other on a bed. Midway through his monologue, Deltoid abruptly leans back on the bed and takes Alex with him – forcefully pinning Alex down. Deltoid then mentions the hard work he has performed Alex’s behalf, and he also issues a caveat in regard to the future consequences of Alex’s criminal ways. At the conclusion of the sequence, Deltoid grabs Alex’s testicles while, concurrently, professing a desire to save Alex “from himself.” Here, Deltoid’s status as subject-actant is figuratively imaged when we see him vehemently seize Alex’s testicles while also declaring his intent is to save Alex from himself. Deltoid – imaged in a position of power as he vigorously holds Alex down – confesses his will to save Alex by force.

Thus, the juxtaposition of Deltoid’s speech with his action conveys the notion that his particular brand of “saving” is also an act of “castration.” In other words, his version of salvation has nothing to do with Alex becoming a good man, but rather it simply attempts to makes Alex into a good citizen by castrating that part of him that stands antithetically to the will of the state that Deltoid signifies. On the surface, Deltoid’s desire to save Alex from himself appears to be a rather noble ambition. However, a deeper investigation of the passage reveals the primary motivation behind his function, which is a selfish desire to prevent Alex from marred his professional record. Deltoid’s function presents us with an instance of doubling where (if Alex is the subject) he becomes an anti-subject with his own agenda, and acts to achieve his particular aims. Thus, when viewed in light of his comments in regard to a “black mark” and “confession of failure,” Deltoid’s action reinforces his genuine impetus, which is his desire to control Alex’s violent impulses, not for Alex’s good, but rather to safeguard his professional record.

In chapter fifteen, the state is implicitly characterized by the behavior of both Deltoid and the police who have arrested Alex. The sequence begins with Deltoid’s arrival at the police station, and he stands just outside the room where Alex is being interrogated and beaten. During his examination, in defiance of the abusive power signified by the police officer who stands over him, Alex responds insolently as he grabs the officer’s testicles, which mirrors Deltoid’s previous act. In this case, Alex’s action provides an instance of visible doubling and signifies the antithetical relationship – based on the opposing desires of power and control – between the collective and the individual.

The following passage, through features of both mise-en-scene and soundtrack, implicitly characterizes the representatives of the state as both desensitized to violence and ignorant of their own sadistic natures:
Sergeant: Would you like some tea, sir? Deltoid: No thank you Sergeant, we'll have it later. May I have some paper towels please? Sergeant: We're interrogating the prisoner now. (Deltoid enters the interrogation room. In a point of view shot, cf Alex focalizes the paper towels being thrown at him and the men who stand over him.) Deltoid: This boy does look a mess, doesn't he? Just look at the state of him. Sergeant: Loves young nightmare-like. Policeman: Violence makes violence. He resisted his lawful arresters. (...) (Deltoid leans into cf Alex's focalization.) You are now a murderer little Alex. A murder. Alex: Not true, sir. It was only a slight tochock. She was breathing, I swear it. Deltoid: I've just come from the hospital. Your victim has died. You try to frighten me. Admit so, sir. This is some new form of torture. Say it, brother sir. Deltoid: It will be your won torture. I hope to God it'll torture you to madness. Policeman: if you'd care to give him a bash in the chops, don't mind us. We'll hold him down. He must be a great disappointment to you, sir (Deltoid spits into Alex's face) (15).

The beginning of the passage - when Deltoid is offered tea and asks for paper towels - discloses two important points. First, the sergeant's desensitized nature is revealed as he nonchalantly offers tea while a prisoner is beaten in the next room. Second, we know that Deltoid is also aware of the violence when he asks for paper towels (presumably for blood) before he even enters the room where Alex is being interrogated. We also learn of the officers' consequent ignorance in regard to their own brutality when one says: "Violence makes violence," as he offers to hold Alex down so he can be more easily beaten. Finally, Deltoid's maliciousness is revealed when he declares that he hopes Alex will be tortured to madness before spitting in his face. Furthermore, as he does this, Deltoid is filmed through a close, low-angle shot, while Alex is seen through a close, high-angle shot inverting the power status of the mastering, colonizing gaze associated with Alex in the first third of the film prior to his capture. Thus, both Alex and the state (police) are shown to ignorantly and violently misuse their power.

Like the police, the state's doctors also exhibit a naive abuse of power. The next passage presents dialogue between Alex and Dr. Branom (one of the state's doctors in charge of the Ludovico Technique) who attempts to explain the conditioning effects:

Branom: We have to be hard on you, you have to be cured. Alex: It was horrible. Branom: Of course it was horrible. Violence is a very horrible thing. That's what you're learning now, your body's learning it. I just don't understand about feeling sick the way I did. I never used to feel sick. I used to feel the very opposite. Doing it or watching it, I used to feel real horrorshow. Branom: You felt ill this afternoon because you're getting better. When we're healthy, we respond to the hateful with fear and nausea. You're becoming healthy that's all (21).

In this scene, the dialogue is edited back and forth between semi-close shots of Alex in bed and Dr. Branom who is shot closely from below, which reinforces the state's superior position in the power hierarchy at this point in the fabula. Emphasizing this advantage, Brodsky is backlit with a monochromatic, bright white lighting as she delivers the dialogue in a stern, coarse voice and, although never shown to act aggressively, she approves of the latent violent Technique. Such an endorsement implicitly divulges her ignorance of the psychological root causes of his aggression, which is reinforced when she asserts that he will be cured only when his body reacts negatively to sex and violence.

As the head of the state, the MOI represents the mentality behind the rather unsavory practices carried out by both the police and the doctors. The following passage conveys the MOI's selection of Alex for the Technique:
MOI: Soon we may need all our prison space for political offenders. Common criminals like these are best dealt with on a purely curative basis. Kill the criminal reflex that’s all. (…) What crime did you commit? Alex: The accidental killing of a person, sir. Warden: He brutally murdered a woman, sir, in furtherance of theft. Fourteen years, sir. MOI: Excellent. He’s enterprising, aggressive, outgoing, young, bold, vicious. He’ll do. (…) This vicious, young hoodlum will be transformed out of all recognition (19).

Here, the MOI discloses the political reasons behind his selection of Alex as the initial test subject for the Technique. This can be initially written as: the MOI (sa) desires to condition (function) Alex against sex and violence (oa). However, we later learn of the deeper political motivations to condition Alex (and others like him). So, it can be more accurately stated that the MOI (sa) desires to use (function) Alex to get reelected and maintain power (oa). Thus, similar to Deltoid, the MOI represents an anti-subject to Alex’s subject, and those moments in which their antithetical, selfish agendas intersect supplies the fabula with conflict, which tends to force the viewer into a deeper consideration of the nature of power and violence.

In the following passage, in order to diminish the storm of bad press, the MOI pays a visit to Alex who is hospital-bound after he attempted to commit suicide to evade the adverse effects of the conditioning:

MOI: We tried to help you. We followed recommendations that turned out to be wrong. An inquiry will place the responsibility where it belongs. (…) You see, we are looking after your interests. (…) You must have an interesting job at a salary you’d regard as adequate. Not only for the job you’re going to do and in compensation for what you believe you have suffered, but also because you are helping us. Alex: Helping you, sir? MOI: We always help our friends, don’t we? (Alex opens his mouth again) (…) As I was saying Alex, you can be instrumental in changing the public’s verdict. Do you understand Alex? Do I make myself clear? (34).

Here, similar to the interests of Deltoid, the MOI has his own professional designs in mind, which is re-election in this case. With this end in mind, the MOI must first publicly ingratiate himself back into Alex’s good graces and to accomplish this he attempts to bribe Alex. As he explains his offer, the MOI hand-feeds Alex because he is in a body cast due to his attempted suicide. In this sequence, both actors are filmed from roughly the same angle, and the viewer’s gaze is edited between the two. During this scene, Alex exaggeratedly opens his mouth so the MOI can insert a spoon into it in a kind of pseudo-sexual interaction.
Visually and metaphorically, the MOI (collective) and Alex (individual) now stand on equal footing and thus viewer’s gaze, like the power structure, is now level. The MOI needs Alex to get re-elected, as he did before, but now Alex has the power to deny him, a power he previously lacked. The two each have something the other desires and – much like sex – they exchange those wants for mutual gain, or pleasure. Alex can now be viewed as a helper that gives incidental aid to the MOI in his effort to get re-elected. In light of this, the doubling relationship can be inverted as Alex’s own selfishness (power) makes it possible (function) for the MOI to continually use him (receiver) and vice-versa. Hence, the antithetical doubling originally presented is reversed in that the two actants – who at one time opposed each other – now assist each other to meet their selfish desires.

The state, as revealed by its filmic representatives, presents the viewer with characters who (just as Alex) act, often violently, according to selfish designs. While they display a superficial desire to reform Alex, the true impetus behind their seemingly altruistic intents is born out of ignorance and self-preservation. In their attempts to “cure” Alex of violence, they exploit violence themselves and thus are characterized as ignorant of their own brutality as a means to achieve selfish ends.

Characterizing the Prison Chaplain

The prison chaplain, the filmic counterpart to the literary prison charlie, is characterized predominantly through the soundtrack feature of dialogue and such visual features of mise-en-scène as camera placement and actor expression. The following passages present dialogical exchanges between cf Alex and the chaplain and cf Alex and the charlie respectively:

Alex: How about putting me in for this new treatment, Father? Chaplain: I take it you are referring to the Ludovico Technique. Alex: I don’t know what it’s called, Father. All I know is that it gets you out quickly and makes sure you never get back again. Chaplain: That is not proven, 655321. (…) Alex: I don’t care about the dangers, Father. I just want to be good. I want for the rest of my life to be one act of goodness. Chaplain: The question is whether or not this technique really makes a man good. Goodness comes from within. Goodness is chosen. When a man cannot choose he ceases to be a man (23).

“I take it you’re referring to Ludovico’s Technique.” He was still very wary. “I don’t know what it’s called, sir,” I said. “All I know is that it gets you out quickly and makes sure you don’t get in again.” (…) “The question is whether such a

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123 Bal, Narratology (1997), 201: “In the fabula, the subject, in the effort to achieve a desired aim, usually meets with resistance and receives help. A ‘helper’ is not the same as the ‘power.’ While the power typically has power over the whole enterprise, is often abstract, and remains in the background, a helper typically gives only incidental aid, is mostly concrete, and often comes to the fore.”

124 Bal, Narratology (1997), 198: “The intention of the subject is in itself not sufficient to reach the object. There are always powers who either allow it to reach its aim or prevent it from doing so. This relation might be seen as a form of communication, and we can, consequently, distinguish a class of actors consisting of those who support the subject in the realization of its intention, supply the object, or allow it to be supplied or given – whom I shall call the power. The person to whom the object is ‘given’ is the receiver.”

125 To clarify, I refer to filmic chaplain simply as “Chaplain,” as opposed to the literary chaplain, whom I refer to as “charlie.” When I refer to the same character in both texts, I use the common noun – “chaplain.”
technique can really make a man good. Goodness comes from within, 6655321. Goodness is something chosen. When a man cannot choose he ceases to be a man” (Burgess 1986: 83).

In both instances, the most informative section of dialogue is presented in the chaplain’s closing remarks when he unambiguously defines goodness as “something chosen.” From there, he proceeds to delineate humanity in terms of our capacity to make moral choices, thereby implicitly asserting the Pelagian contention that human beings are, by definition, endowed with free will. Along these lines, the filmic dialogue is consistent with the Pelagian thrust of its literary counterpart.

Later in the film, Alex is publicly subjected to sex and violence in a politically motivated endeavor to demonstrate the effectiveness of the aversion therapy. In the following passages taken from both texts, the chaplain voices obvious ethical considerations in regard to the conditioning of a human being he believes to possess free will:

Choice. The boy has no real choice, has he? Self-interest. The fear of physical pain drove him to that grotesque act of self-abasement. Its insincerity was clearly to be seen. He ceases to be a wrongdoer. He ceases also to be a creature capable of moral choice (27).

“Choice,” rumbled a rich deep gollor. (...) “He has no real choice has he? Self-interest, fear of physical pain drove him to that grotesque act of self-abasement. Its insincerity was clearly to be seen. He ceases to be a wrongdoer. He ceases also to be a creature capable of moral choice” (Burgess 1986: 126)

Except for the vocal description seen in the second passage, the two are nearly identical in structure and content. However, the description presented in the novel is indicative of a subtle, albeit essential distinction between how the same actor is characterized in both texts. In the novel, such descriptive words “rich” and “deep” convey a sense of trust, and lend a certain veracity to his character and speech. In the film, the chaplain’s voice is neither rich nor deep. Moreover, the career risk the chaplain takes in voicing his concerns about the Technique is not as evident as it is in the novel: “There is the question of my own career, there is the question of my own voice when set against the shout of certain more powerful elements in the polity” (95). In the film, the viewer is unaware of the sacrifice he may be making and, therefore, the filmic character is not presented as sympathetically as his literary antecedent, which potentially makes the ethical assertions heard in his dialogue ring a bit more hollow.

Yet, like the novel, the chaplain is the only character who exhibits genuine concern for Alex, and he presents the only farsighted, rational trepidation in regard to the ethical complexities of the Technique. In spite of this, he is not characterized in an entirely positive light. The following passages are taken from the same event (the chaplain’s sermon) in the film and the novel respectively:

What’s it going to be, eh? (...) I have been informed in visions that there is a place darker than any prison, hotter than any flame of human fire where souls of unrepentant criminal sinners like yourselves... (an inmate belches) Don’t you laugh damn you, don’t you laugh. I say, like yourselves scream in endless and unendurable agony. Their skin rotting and peeling. A fireball spinning in their screaming guts! (21).
"I know, I know, my friends, I have been informed in visions that there is a place, darker than any prison, hotter than any flame of human fire, where souls of unrepentant criminal sinners like yourselves - and don't you leer at me, damn you, don't laugh – like yourselves, I say, scream in endless and intolerable agony, their noses choked with the smell of filth, their mouths crammed with burning ordure, their skin peeling androtting, a fireball spinning in their screaming guts" (Burgess 1986: 78).

In the case of the latter, it is only his figural, rather explicit description of hell that serves to implicitly characterize the charlie as perhaps a callous, pharisaical man who has forgotten Christ’s message of love and forgiveness. In the film, it is the particular imaging and delivery of this same dialogue that portrays the chaplain in a likewise manner. This negative filmic characterization is accomplished through the interplay of the chaplain’s fire and brimstone speech with the manner in which the speech is delivered and filmed. Specifically, viewed in a semi-close shot from underneath, the chaplain speaks in an enraged, agitated manner as spittle flies from his mouth and he furiously pounds his fist on the podium. Focalized from below, the viewer’s upward gaze conjures images of an angry dictator who, by force of might, intends to make his subjects succumb to his absolute will. As a result, while he espouses the merits of choice, the chaplain is seen in an attempt to coerce these inmates, through threat of fear, into choosing the good. Ironically, this is precisely the concept that he so eloquently waxes against when he speaks of the state-run Ludovico Technique later the fabula.

Similar to his literary predecessor, the chaplain is conscious of the ethical dangers the Technique presents and – through his emotive dialogue in regard to the value of Pelagian free will – is imaged as a genuinely concerned, slightly altruistic character. However, unlike the novel, the film does not supply the viewer with any information as it relates to the future security of the chaplain’s career as a result of voicing his apprehensions on Alex’s behalf. And – despite his levelheaded approach to the ethical concerns raised by the Technique – he also is shown to be rather shortsighted in his power-driven attempt to frighten the inmates into choosing salvation. This behavior stands in opposition to a more logical presentation of his case, which would allow the inmates to choose as the extension of their free will, a notion he ardently expresses in defense of Alex.

**Filmi cc Space and Implied Temporal Derivatives**

Analogous to its literary counterpart, filmic space is an aspect of the story and is not fixed, but fluid. It is an inclusive, concrete term that refers to the describable environment in which characters move and live. It is the particular composition of filmic space that tends to manipulate the viewer’s conception of the fabula elements and resultant interpretation of the story. For example, in chapter two, we first see Alex who sits inertly with a glass of milk gripped in his hand. There is a specific place in the fabula – the Korova Milkbar – where Alex is able to (because the milk is laced with drugs) “sharpen-up” for the acts of extreme violence he will engage in later that evening. The Milkbar is made real, or fleshed-out through spatial description. It is this describable filmic space, revealed by such features of mise-en-scene as camera position, set and costume design, and the soundtrack feature of dialogue, that is the subject of the discussion presented here.

Camera position – the feature of mise-en-scene primarily responsible for the measure of visual entrance into the filmic world – is potentially the most significant device the filmic subject possesses in regard to the conveyance of filmic space. In Clockwork, although there are a variety of shots employed, I focus on the copious number of semi-
close shots in particular. A semi-close shot results when the camera is placed relatively close to what is being filmed (actors and sets). Generally, unlike medium and long shots, close and semi-close shots offer the viewer a narrower, more restricted perspective of filmic space. In light of this visual constraint, the amount of filmic information conveyed to the viewer tends to be directly proportional to where the camera is placed. In Clockwork, the high frequency of close and semi-close shots creates the film's special effect, which is generally a sense of restriction, claustrophobia.

Conversely, there is a noticeable dearth of long, establishing shots that classically show wide, revealing images of literary space such as landscapes and the exteriors of buildings in which events occur. To illustrate, in the only instance of an establishing shot, there is a helicopter shot of the large state-run prison (or “Staja”) where Alex has been recently incarcerated for murder. From this particular angle, the viewer is able to glean that the prison is located in the country and, in this case, the establishing shot’s primary effect is that it provides context, or a visual frame of reference for the subsequent shot of Alex in a prison cell. Typically, however, the viewer thrust into the interior sets with no external perspective and the effect is generally one of disorientation. So the film, like the novel, by the sheer absence of information, conveys a rather ambiguous sense of filmic space, which makes it difficult for the viewer to affix the fabula events to any recognizable, existent location.

Besides the actors, there are primarily two things that comprise filmic space: existent and fabricated locations. In Clockwork, as was previously mentioned, the camera is frequently positioned near the actors inside rather small sets, and the most obvious examples of this practice are seen when the space is primarily linked to Alex. For example, smallish sets filmed with a preponderance of close and semi-close shots are seen in his home in chapter nine, the interrogation room in chapter fifteen, his prison cell in chapter nineteen, his hospital room in chapter twenty-one, and the bedroom in which he is musically-tortured in chapter thirty-one. Although the sense of claustrophobia created through the use semi-close shots and small, cramped interiors can be seen throughout the film, there is a higher frequency of such shots when filming the spaces chiefly linked to Alex. In this way, the use of tight camera placement and small set design in the conveyance of filmic space becomes a metaphor for Alex’s confined existence due to his lack of moral freedom before, during, and after his conditioning.

While the dimensions of the set and the manner with which it is filmed may influence a viewer’s interpretation of the events that take place within it, I also examine how set and costume design can imply a sense of filmic time, or a comprehensive term that refers to the time the story impresses upon its readers in the most general sense. In other words, the way filmic space appears can signify the general sense of filmic time during which the story occurs. Much like its literary counterpart, film is able to, by juxtaposing the familiar (existent) with the unfamiliar (fabricated), create a sense of the near future just beyond the immediate experience of the viewer. For example, the film begins with a close shot that slowly pulls back to reveal Alex and his droogs who sit in the Korova Milkbar. While viewers would certainly be familiar with a bar, they would likely be unfamiliar with a bar that serves milk. In addition, the Korova Milkbar set is unusually constructed from black walls with strange writing written across them and coffee tables constructed from naked female manikins made visible by low-key lighting contrasted by rows of rather intense lights arranged on six three-foot pedestals.126

126 The strange writing on the wall seen in chapter two (e.g. "Moloko Pius" and "Moloko Synthemesc") is written in Burgess’ fabricated language – nadsat.
The rather eccentric design of the sets is repeated throughout the film. For example, in chapter six, Alexander's home contains futuristic-looking spherical furniture and is constructed with a unique, tri-level design. In chapter ten, Alex strolls through the cramped hallway of a shopping center built with reflective gold and silver metallic walls and ceilings. Throughout the film, the viewer is confronted with interior sets of locations that would likely be somewhat familiar (bar, home, shopping center), but they are designed, decorated, and dressed in a way that makes them appear rather unfamiliar which gives the film another one of its special effects — the conveyance of the near future.

Just as the sets were fashioned with an understanding of the near future, so were the costumes. As Alex and his droogs sit in the Milkbar, we see that they are dressed in tight white shirts and pants with suspenders, black bolo hats, black boots, and bulky codpieces.

In the novel, on Alex describes their peculiar fashion this way:

The four of us were dressed in the height of fashion, which in those days was a pair of black very tight tights with the old jelly mould, as we called it, fitting on the crutch underneath the tights, this being to protect and also a sort of a design you could viddly clear enough in a certain sort of light, so that I had one in the shape of a spider... Then we wore waisty jackets without lapels but with these very big built-up shoulders (pletchoes we called them) which were a kind of a mockery having real shoulders like that. Then, my brothers, we had these off-white cravats which looked like whipped-up kartoffel or spud with a sort of a design made on it with a fork (Burgess 1986: 2).
In both cases, we are likely to be familiar with types of clothes, but unfamiliar with the particular manner they are being worn. Although the film, in this case, is absent of Alex’s (voiceover) narration and conveys less descriptive information than the novel, both texts are able to suggest the familiar within the unfamiliar and generate a sense of the near future. And though the novel is more explanatory in this instance, such is not always the case. For example, in the film, we see Alex’s mother, who appears to be in her early fifties, outfitted in a short, black leather dress, black shoes with yellow socks, and a blue wig. On the other hand, her literary counterpart is merely an actor in the fabula and is never characterized through the description of her appearance. While, in the case of Alex and his droogs, the literary text possesses a more thorough description, the visual nature of film often allows for greater access to the actors’ appearance without them ever becoming characters in the story. In literature, it would be inefficient to describe the appearance of every actor in the fabula. However, in film, we see (to greater or lesser degrees) every actor and are thus, potentially, granted deeper access into the narrative.

**Conclusion**

In an effort to conceptualize the notion of selfish oppression, I explored the mise-en-scene and soundtrack features in order to expose the triangulated relationships between Alex and his fellow citizens, Alex and the state, and the citizens and the state as ones of mere calculation.

In the film, Alex functions quite similarly to his counterpart in the novel as an antihero protagonist, on, cf, and actor in the fabula. As the filmic narrator, on Alex, through audible motifs, makes himself perceptibly and endearingly known to the viewer through such first-level, non-diegetic dialogue as “long-suffering narrator” and “your faithful friend.” As cf, Alex’s internal focalization (POV shot) serves to create empathy for him despite his detestable actions, and it is also a form of auto-characterization that reveals him as being both an “abuser of” and “abused by” power. It is through the feature of camera placement (high and low-angle shots) that our gaze is saturated with cf Alex who tends to either look down at those he abuses or peer up at those who abuse him. In this way, the filmic subject employs camera placement, and the point of view shot in particular, to confer power status onto particular actors in the fabula, which then becomes a mechanism of characterization on the story level. In Alex’s case, although his position in the film’s power hierarchy fluctuates, his role as subject-acting and his function in relation to the object-acting remains static; it is only the object-acting that changes. Alex’s desire to act violently remains fixed throughout the course of the fabula despite the ill-treatment he receives at the hands of the state, which reinforces the literary text’s notion that “goodness” cannot be forced upon an individual, no matter how detestable their actions.

At one point or another, power is visibly conferred to not only Alex, but also to the other principal characters in the narrative, which each summarily abuses in their own way. What is more, the misuse of power always comes at the expense of another actor in the fabula and can thus be seen as a form of selfish oppression in its own right. This notion is best demonstrated by the actantial function, or the relationship between the actor who follows an aim and the aim itself. It was shown that each principal character acted, in varying degrees, out of a selfish desire to achieve specific ends that were met by the oppression of the other through the abuse of power. In this manner, the film forces the critical observer to sincerely consider the egotistic motivations that lurk behind the characters’ ostensibly creditable ends.

The fabula repetitively reveals the nature of the intrinsically antagonistic relationship between the desires of the collective (state) and the aims of the individual.
(Alex), which was viewed in terms of doubling between the intersecting self-seeking wants between subject and anti-subject. For example, the actantial relationship between Deltoid and Alex can be written as: Deltoid (sa) wants to prevent (function) Alex from going to prison (oa). However, Deltoid is not only a subject-actant, but also an anti-subject with his own program, his own aims, and takes action to achieve them. This can be written as: Deltoid (sa) wants to keep (function) his professional record clean (oa). It is this particular aim that is at cross-purposes with Alex's, which can be written as: Alex (sa) wants to commit (function) acts of violence (oa). The state's other principal character, the MOI, also demonstrates the doubling of Alex by Deltoid. The only principal character that is exempted from effectively opposing Alex is the chaplain. Such an exception is sensible since he is the only one who exhibits the least bit of Augustinian-familial concern for Alex, although he is not totally emancipated from the exploitation of power in his own way.

So, then, we are presented with a story set in a slightly futuristic Western city set in which every principal character (with the chaplain as the only possible exception) abuses what power s/he possesses by oppressing other to meet their selfish ends. As the chaplain's words of familial love go unheeded and Alex is never shown to mature beyond his mechanical urges, Kubrick's *Clockwork* does, through the filmic subject's handling of the mise-en-scene and soundtrack features, articulate a fabula that conceptualizes a conquering notion of Machiavellian power. It is this pervasive ideal that is shown to supersede the notion of an Augustinian familial love and its resultant moral transformation that, unlike his literary predecessor, Alex never undergoes.