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The Music in A Clockwork Orange: the Novel and Film.
by
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Introduction

"I'm now interested in taking a story and trying to get to the bottom of it."
(Kubrick, p111, 1995)

Introduction

This thesis began as a curiosity on my part, on the role of music in film today. Lighting effects, camera angles and costume have been explained to and accepted by the audience. They are used to create effect and help to place the character's and so on. However, for the average film-goer music is a "servant of the image" (Jaubert, p134, 1987), a background accompaniment to the visual imagery played out on screen, literally an aural support. In today's world it has become a commodity, soundtracks are now released to relive the film, witness the sales of the soundtrack to the Titanic.

Music has always been associated with dramatics from ancient times, through the centuries, to present day. It can be traced to film's earlier origins as a fairground attraction and has been present in film since the silent age, in some form or other. In those days the film was accompanied by a piano or sometimes a band in the cinema itself. With the coming of sound these musical 'devices' simply transferred to the screen itself and so it has remained.

As I researched this field I was drawn to the films of Stanley Kubrick because as Vivian Sobchack has pointed out:

"Music in Kubrick films is used inventively and narratively and flamboyantly, causing the viewer to listen so that he can see."
(Sobchack, 1987, p213)

I was in particular attracted to *A Clockwork Orange* because of its origins as a novel where language, music and structure are important. In both movie and novel, music is intertwined with the plot and the main character of Alex DeLarge.

In every essence music has a life of its own. However, both media have very different approaches to music and they manipulate it to achieve their own ends. This could be easily explained because they are two different media translations and both have two different 'authors'.

In the novel music is written down and referred to throughout the book. It is silent to our

ears, but that does not stop it becoming a 'dominant musical motif'¹. In the book it is intertwined not only with the main character but the plot and all of its interpretations. The film on the otherhand is a dissimilar experience. Firstly one can hear the music and the audience is aware of music's presence because they are forced to listen.

The relationship between these two media is a difficult one. When a novel is transferred to the big screen it loses something of the original character. This is because the novel is rewritten and shortened to fit to a specific screen time and as in this case the novelist is generally not involved.

This novel was written and published in the early sixties (1962), by the English novelist Anthony Burgess, under an apparent death sentence of a brain tumour. He had sold his rights to the novel and was not consulted till late in the day. Born in Manchester as John Wilson in February 1917, he was a prolific writer who loved language and music and was intimately aware of both.

The novel was much influenced, at the time, by the new era in England of cafe bars, teddy boys and youth rebellion. All these were new experiences for Burgess as he had just returned from the Far East, after going there not long after World War Two and was shocked by this apparent change to his home culture.

Stanley Kubrick, on the otherhand, is an American born in the Bronx in New York in July 1928. He began his career as a documentary filmmaker but quickly moved into fiction. By the time he read *A Clockwork Orange* in 1969, he was already a well established filmmaker with a reputation to match.

It is here where the relationship between the two media begins. The version that Kubrick read was the American edition which had been published without the final chapter, number twenty-one. Kubrick did not learn of this chapter until it was too late and he believed - once known - that it was unnecessary and a general let down.

In this thesis I wish to discuss the role of music in both the novel and the film of *A Clockwork Orange* and to compare and contrast these two approaches. I will attempt to

show that music's role is an important vehicle for both media and I will try to explain the effect of music on the characters, the plot and most importantly the audience, either the reader or viewer.

These topics will be discussed in the following order:

Chapter One: Music and the Novel.

This includes a synopsis of the novel and its structure, as well as what music is mentioned.

Chapter Two: The role of music in the film.

This names the music used and what it is used in conjunction with, as well as what type of music.

Chapter Three: The effect and interpretation of music.

Chapter Four: The comparing and contrasting of music in the two media.

Chapter One

Music and the Novel

"The reality of literature as opposed to its appearance in written or, printed records is the organisation of speech sounds and this makes literature a temporal art, a twin of music."
(Burgess, p41, 1982)

Chapter One

"If music communicates, and we are assured that it does, it is a genuine system of signs, a semiotic organisation, and we must try to see how it functions."

(Burgess, 1982, p83)

So states Anthony Burgess speaking about music and its meaning in connection with society, literature and life. He could be describing how to approach his novel *A Clockwork Orange* and the use of music. Burgess understood this 'system of signs' in music - it was throughout his life a personal passion - and included them in many of his novels, particularly "MF" and "Napolean Symphony"².

A Clockwork Orange, to a lesser extent than these novels, is no different and one quickly becomes aware of music's presence. However, to treat its presence as merely the main character's passion, would be to dismiss Burgess's manipulation of this musical language, of the characters and the readers.

Structure

"When I plan a novel I propose a verbal structure of some length - 80,000 words or more - in which all the elements are relevant to each other and nothing can be either added or subtracted without harming the whole."

(Burgess, p73, 1982)

A Clockwork Orange has a definite structure. It consists of three sections, each with seven chapters, giving a total of twenty-one. This is a deliberate numerological ploy by Burgess. Twenty-one is seen traditionally as the age one reaches maturity and it is in the final chapter that Alex realises his need to grow and that his change in attitude is a sign of maturity.

A Clockwork Orange is littered with these numerological ploys. For example, Burgess sets a timeframe of three years for this novel. The violence of the first section takes place over three days and his 'treatment' and the resulting attempted suicide takes place over three weeks. Also Alex has three droogs.

Three and seven, like twenty-one, have similar connotations. Three is linked with the Holy Trinity, which Burgess would know of, being raised a Catholic. It can also refer to the ancient myth of the three ages of man which we now identify as youth, middle age and old age. Alex Harman in Man and his Music also states that many musicians believed that "the number three was a symbol of perfection" (Harman, p50, 1977). Seven has also a historical root, Shakespeare wrote of a seven stages of man and in today's culture seven is considered a lucky number. All of this was surely known by Burgess who often employed these ironies.

Music similarly also has a structure and so a purpose. However, before I can go into this purpose, I must give a brief synopsis of the novel.

Synopsis

In the first section of this novel we are immediately introduced to the main character of Alex, who greets us the readers with "What's it going to be then, eh?"³. Along with his three droogs - Pete, Dim and Georgie - they lead us on a rampage on the first night of fighting, stealing, beatings and rape.

Beginning with the beating of a 'library veck'⁴ and a singing, drunken tramp and ends with the rape and torture of the writer F. Alexander and his wife.

In this section we learn of Alex's true nature, he is an evil individual who is most at 'home' pillaging either people or things and listening like any typical teenager to music.

"What distinguishes Alex from most teenagers is that his tastes in music are classical."

(Morrison, pxiii, Introduction, 1962)

When Alex asserts control over his droogs he sets in motion his own downfall, as they turn on him leaving him at the scene of the break-in to the Cat lady's home. As this section closes Alex is imprisoned and now charged with the murder of his last victim - the Cat lady.

Section two opens to Alex's punishment, a number in prison (listed as 665321), who escapes through his imaginings of violence to the backdrop of music. He has not changed. Chosen - because of his attitude, behaviour and the fact he is being blamed for the murder of another inmate - as a subject for a new treatment, which is government sponsored, called the Ludovico technique.

Alex is plied with drugs that induce nausea while watching violent films, his mind is brain-washed to make him feel sick when he thinks, acts or feels violent. Unfortunately classical music - specifically Beethoven - is used as a background accompaniment and this too reduces him to nausea, as well.

Declared 'cured' by the government and scientists, he is freed, ending section two and released to the 'real world' of section three. In this section Alex is alone and homeless. In this condition he meets with both previous victims and droogs, who recognise and beat him.

Taken in by the writer F. Alexander, he is recognised and tortured with Beethoven. In desperation to escape the music, he attempts suicide. This causes a public outcry and he is returned to his original state of section one, by the government and re-released. However, he finds that he is unhappy and realising his need to grow, he gives up violence in search for a wife so he can have a son.

To explain music's role I have decided to nominate events that show that music is more than Alex's passion.

Music in the novel and its role

I have already stated how Burgess has a numerological structure and so a purpose. Music has a similar purpose. But what is that purpose? What does it do and how? Burgess has stated that "in a novel all the elements are relevant to each other" (Burgess, p73, 1982) and so music is no different.

I believe that music is a tool to reach the readers, to introduce them into Burgess's world, with his interpretation of both moral and social values.

Music appears throughout the novel, sometimes in unexpected places, in disguise. Contemporaries appear as place names, such as Kingsly Avenue or Priestly Place. It is no accident either that similar people to Alex from the past appear as well. This is the case particularly with one of the masks the gang wears, that of Henry the Eighth. Alex's full name also refers to a like-minded character. Alex DeLarge can be clearly seen as drawing from the historical figure of Alexander the Great.

Burgess in his book This Man and Music has said that he often uses word plays like the ones I have mentioned. In relation to music the most obvious 'play' is with Beethoven's first name Ludwig, which is turned into Ludovico, the aversion therapy used on Alex.

Music for Alex is a creative outlet, it helps in his own words 'to sharpen him up....for a bit of the old ultraviolence's. The music he listens to crosses the divide of classical, from Beethoven, to Mozart and Bach. However, he also recognises popular songs, operas and can distinguish the different movements and scherzos associated with classical music. Which means he has a quite wide ranging and knowledgeable understanding of music (like the author).

Music motivates Alex especially in section one. Alex reacts to a 'devotchka's bursting into song from an opera - Das Bettzeug by Friedrich Gitterfenster - in the Milkbar, by lashing out at Dim who ridiculed the sound but they remain friends and all return home.

This incident leads Alex to listen to more classical music, as he fantasises violent imagery. The next day Alex learns of his gang's view of disposing him, he accepts at first but on hearing Beethoven he beats them and reasserts control again.

"For now it was lovely music that came to my aid. There was an auto ittying by and it had its radio on and I could just slooshy a bar or so of Ludwig Van (it was the Violin Concerto, last movement) and I viddied right at once what to do."
(Burgess, 1962, p44)

Music here leads Alex to violence, for him Beethoven means "sex and slaughter" (Hughes, p185, 1995). It incites him to commit acts of aggression. This view can also be applied to the society portrayed. Society too is bland and a mass convention that all within it conform to, something which Alex abhors. He is the opposite, an individual.

Alex's tastes - both the violence and the music - shows his separateness. However, it also shows Burgess's view of the individual versus the mass and whether high art is civilising. To these he answers that it is better to be an individual, even an evil one than a 'clockwork orange', an organic cog in a machine culture.

He does this by showing the reader what happens when you brainwash an individual. As for the second moral question, Burgess has stated that music in itself is "apolitical and amoral" (Burgess, p83, 1982), so therefore it is neutral it can be liked by saints but also sinners. For example, both Alex and the Japanese - he tells us he sees in the films that he is forced to watch - are evil but they still appreciate high art.

In section two music is used for emphasising Alex's true nature by showing he has not changed, he still fantasises using Handel and Bach in conjunction with reading the Bible. However, when he is nominated for the Ludovico technique, music is played in the background in the aversion therapy and Alex basically becomes allergic to not only violence but classical music.

In section three music is used to torture Alex and drive him to attempt suicide. Returned to his normal self, he recognises he has changed and music reflects this. Now Alex 'slooshs more malenky romantic songs', rather than the more robust of before.

Music as I have explained, answers moral questions raised by Burgess's novel. It also functions as part of the brainwashing of the novel. Music is part of the language that masks the violence to a certain extent.

"The structure itself is a device of brainwashing, or conditioning: the reader is intended to subliminally to absorb a minimal Russian in a carefully devised programme."
(Burgess, 1982, p157)

So as the reader absorbs the language, they also absorb the music. Music also mimics society's behaviour in the book. Music and society incite Alex in section one through interacting with him. In section two they both punish him by turning against him, music reduces him to nausea and society reduces him to a lesser man. In section three after he is returned to normal they reflect Alex's maturing attitude. Society accepts who he is and music allows him to listen once more. However, Burgess has a more personal interest in the music in the novel.

Beethoven is Alex's personal, musical friend but it has a personal significance for Burgess. Beethoven was the one composer that Burgess's father - Joe Wilson - ever gave him a music lesson in. The use of Handel has also a similar root in Burgess's private life. Burgess discovered Handel in the piano seat in his house. He used this to teach himself how to play the piano.

However, more crucially Burgess leaves a written clue in a Clockwork Orange's narrative. He writes that Beethoven's Number Nine is recorded by the 'Esh sham sinfonia's. Now sinfonia has a wide meaning, it is Italian for symphony but as stated in Music and Musicians:

"It is also a prelude to an opera for example.. and it can even apply to the orchestral ritornello of an aria"
(Cooper, 1978, p403)

Now a ritornello is a recurring theme and an aria has many forms but all arias have in common 'a return to the opening theme before the end's. It all seems a convoluted interpretation but is common to Burgess's novels. Music here functions as a clue to the novel's structure.

The use of Mozart, Beethoven, Bach and Handel also functions to shore up and remind the readers of the structure but also of the individualistic approach to life by Alex. All the composers broke ground with their individual approaches to music. They were also considered misfits to a certain extent, particularly Beethoven, and all at some stage used a tripartite structure in music, which again refers to the numerological play on the number three.

Chapter Two

The Role of Music in the Film

"A sound must never come to the help of an image, nor an image to the help of a sound. Image and sound must not support each other but must work each in turn through a sort of relay ."

(Besson, p149, 1985)

Chapter Two

The film *A Clockwork Orange* uses the novel as its base. It has the same narrative structure and order that the novel possesses until Alex is cured and returned to his previous state, in chapter twenty. There the film ends, omitting chapter twenty-one of the novel.

Music is also present in the film as much as the novel. However, Kubrick has only drawn from the novel its dominant musical motif of Beethoven but has neglected through choice to take onboard the other musical examples in the novel, replacing them with choices of his own.

In film, music has technical conventions which it must adhere to. These are diegetic and non-diegetic and Kubrick like every filmmaker must use them. However, he manipulates them to his advantage and often does not use them in the conventional manner.

Diegetic music is music that issues from a visual source within the film, as Claudia Gorbman puts it:

“All that belongs by inference to the narrated story, to the world supposed or proposed by the film’s fiction.”
(Gorbman, 1987, p21)

Non-diegetic music is music with no visual source. It is often classified as the background score because ‘we the audience, require it to deepen and prolong, the screen’s visual impressions’¹⁰.

Both forms of music in film function to deepen the visual impressions actually, but Kubrick uses their particular traits to do more. Examples create their own ironic counterpoint, both within the film itself and outside the film’s sphere, in the audience.

Non-diegetic Music

The most dominant non-diegetic music in the film is Purcell’s *Music for Queen Mary’s Funeral*. This piece begins the film with the opening credits and sequence in the Korova

Milkbar.

This use of music functions to create a correspondence between a place - the bar - and music. It becomes the Milkbar's theme but it also functions in association with Alex (Malcom McDowell). It plays on the score only when Alex is present, at one stage only is it present in diegetic space.

This scene is when Alex leaves the bar, after the altercation with Dim (Warren Clarke). Alex whistles a few bars of the tune, before it returns to the non-diegetic methods of film music. By whistling the tune we, the audience, recognise that Alex not only knows the piece but that it is his.

Kubrick has used the Purcell piece on the Moog - an electronic synthesiser developed by Walter Carlos and Robert Moog - to "associate it with the visual and conceptual milieu of the Korova Milkbar" (Nelson, 1992, p159).

He illustrates this by using this piece later on in the film when Alex is being tested to show the effectiveness of the cure. The audience immediately draws on the associations.

The use of Rossini's pieces is more complex than with Purcell. The Thieving Magpie Overture plays when Alex actually commits a violent act.

It can be heard, for example, when Alex and his droogs beat both the singing, drunk tramp (Paul Farrell) and Billyboy (Richard Connaught) and his group, a rival gang. Its most important function however, is in the scene where Alex attacks his droogs, for trying to dispose of him. It replaces - and so Kubrick does to - Beethoven which is in the novel.

"But this is not Burgess's novel. It's Kubrick's film - a different animal, speaking a different language."
(Anderson,

In these scenes Kubrick has stylised the violence.

"By organising it around the Overture to Rossini's Thieving Magpie:

In a very broad sense you can say the violence is turned into a dance: Not formal dance but orchestral movements and music.”
(Kagan, 1995, p164)

But perhaps the most memorable scene using non-diegetic music, is the scene of the orgy between Alex and the two girls. This scene employs Rossini's William Tell Overture, which is a more recognisable tune as it was the theme tune of the Lone Ranger television series.

Kubrick has speeded up the visual action to match the aural pace. Music's function here is to act as an “ironic counterpoint to the events on the screen” (Strick, pps 45/46, 1971/72).

Diegetic Music

The diegetic music in the film is utilised to a lesser extent than non-diegetic music but its impact is much greater.

The first instance of diegetic music is the drunk tramp, in section one. In the film he sings a few bars of the old Irish ballad Molly Malone. Kubrick's intention here is to create a sequence to show the depths of Alex's cruelty and evil but also to infer cultural associations.

His subtle use of sounds as diegetic music, is present in this film only as the doorbell of the writer's home. This plays the opening notes of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. it also sets the stage for the most haunting use of diegetic music in the film.

In this scene Alex and his droogs have gained entry to the writer F. Alexander's (Patrick Magee) home and have begun torturing him and his wife (Adrienne Corri). Alex as he begins to take control starts singing the musical number of Gene Kelly, Singin' in the Rain.

Kubrick has set this sequence, so that Alex mimics to a certain extent Kelly's dance routine in the 1952 musical. However, where Kelly dances around lampposts on the street with umbrella in hand. Alex “does a soft shoe into the stomach and face of the intellectual” (Kagan, p173, 1995), with a cane that hides a blade, instead of an umbrella.

This scene reveals the unusual juxtaposition of low and high art culture, within the film. Alex recognises not only the high art of classical music but he also acknowledges low or popular culture, such as 'Singin' in the Rain'. He is also surrounded by popular music through other people in his life. For example, the girls he seduces or his parents who listen and buy this music.

This scene also functions to remind us of the song's original purpose - as a happy musical piece, in a feel good movie - and the audience's associated memories of a happy Gene Kelly singing and dancing in the rain.

However, the dominant and most important diegetic pieces are that of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, whether it is the scherzo or the Ode to Joy, based on a poem by Schiller.

Its presence begins in the scene, where after their night out the gang is relaxing in the Korova Milkbar. A woman breaks into song from the Ode to Joy, of Beethoven's Ninth.

This scene functions to illustrate the difference between Alex and his droogs. The Ninth next appears when Alex places a tape, into a stereo, of the scherzo, Fourth movement. This fades to a non-diegetic code.

The next three uses of Beethoven are all electronic sounding because they are played on the Moog and employ Beethoven's Fourth movement, Ninth Symphony. All these instances are diegetic pieces that fade to non-diegetic.

It first appears as the music that is used to accompany the films shown to Alex in jail, for the Ludovico technique. The second instance in this sequence is the playing of the stereo of the writer to torture Alex in his treated state. Finally it appears again from a stereo the minister wheels in, when Alex is in hospital and now in his natural original state.

The function of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and all its movements, is to create an association with Alex. This association begins with Alex playing the piece in his room and is continued by the sequence I have mentioned. Vivian Sobchack also believes that it is a

"narrative hinge upon which the plot swings" (Sobchack, p214, 1987) because it drives Alex who drives the plot.

Chapter Three

The Effect and Interpretation of Music in the Film

"As far as I'm concerned, the most memorable scenes in the best films are those which are predominately of images and music."
(Kubrick, p156, 1982)

Chapter Three

In the previous chapter I explained what music was used and in conjunction with what visual images. In this chapter I will explain the motives for the use of these pieces of music and the effect of them on the audience, characters and the plot.

Purcell's Music for Queen Mary's Funeral is the first musical piece. As I have stated this piece, because of the way Kubrick has structured and laid out its use becomes associated with the Korova Milkbar.

It functions to remind the audience of the Korova Milkbar but I also feel Kubrick has also associated it with Alex in a non-violent state. This piece of music causes the audience to remember Alex and the bar, in a static pose, and ironic counter to the manipulation of Rossini's works.

For Michel Ciment it is also an ironic counterpoint later in the film. In the Korova Milkbar Alex is the main performer, the one which is associated with the action and therefore the main focus of attention. Ciment points out that when Alex is cured and on stage he is not the main performer, the actors on stage are. So Terry Tucker's Elizabethan piece, Overture to the Sun works directly in opposition to Purcell's piece, and the difference between Alex's previous nature and now, when he is cured, is pointed out to the audience through the use of different music.

The Thieving Magpie Overture is used in conjunction with the violence that Alex commits. It begins with Alex's first violent action - the beating of the tramp and its final appearance is when Alex is betrayed by his three droogs at the Cat lady's home.

The Thieving Magpie characterises violence in the film and the audience picks up on this. When they watch the film, they are forced to recognise that whenever it appears violence will occur, it signposts the violence for the audience but also Kubrick mentions that:

"It was necessary to find a way of stylising the violence, just as Burgess does by his writing style. The ironic counterpoint of the music was certainly one of the ways of achieving this."
(Kubrick, 1992, p134)

However, the use of Rossini's William Tell Overture garners more response. This piece was a well known popular piece at the time because it was the theme tune to the Lone Ranger television series which the audience of the time would more than likely have grown up on. Kubrick has stated that the use of the William Tell Overture:

"seemed a good musical joke to counter the standard Bach accompaniment"
(Kubrick, 1982, p152)

However, I believe its' use is more than a joke. I feel that Kubrick wished to reach his audience and in particular their memories. I believe he wanted his audience to take home a changed attitude not only to the music but their memories and the concept of sex in films too. I also believe he dares us not to laugh as well but that the changed attitude is more important.

I feel this also the case in the concept of using Singin' in the Rain.

"The scene, therefore, functions horrifically not just as a pondering and self-conscious exercise in sadism and violence (as some critics believe), but as a densely anarchic sequence in which virtue and freshness and, just possibly worst of all, old memories are almost insupportably mocked."
(Sobchack, 1987, p215)

This sequence goes further I feel, than just this. I feel that Kubrick wishes to place the audience in the position of the victim. As the scene plays out, our memories and interpretations change because they are forced too, just like the lady is forced to have sex. Kubrick's clever use of this song leads to a raping of the audience mentally.

Who after watching this scene could look upon Gene Kelly and Singin' in the Rain, as innocent? Especially when our memory throws up this scene.

The effect of the Beethoven pieces is much different. It raises the notion of classical and high art being civilising. Like the novel Kubrick also denies this. He does this by playing classical music and particularly Beethoven with violent imagery.

Beethoven is played in conjunction with violence and intimates sexual pleasure, for Alex

it is a passion which he utilises to bring himself pleasure. He does this by either inciting himself to commit violence - by hearing or listening to Beethoven - or by using it in conjunction with his fantasies so "he climaxes with the music" (Kagan, p173, 1995).

However, I also believe that Kubrick also uses it as a firstly a "narrative hinge" (Sobchack, p214, 1987) but also as a thematic device. It is a hinge because it drives the character of Alex forward by inciting him to commit violent acts and so drives the plot.

It is a device because as Vivian Sobchack says it:

"Contrast artistic and ultimately violent individualism with unimaginative and benignly destructive mass mediocrity."
(Sobchack, 1987, p214)

This can be clearly seen when one contrasts these pieces with the mass songs Kubrick has in the film. These mass songs are no more than ditties, simple tunes with no redeeming value except for the cultural associations the audience gets from them.

These can be seen with Molly Malone and the radio piece 'I'm going to marry a lighthouse keeper'. Molly Malone is an Irish ballad, so the audience immediately brings the stereotype of the drunk Irish to mind. Erika Egan's song was a simple tune popular for the radio and dance halls. It raises memories of bygone times. On the otherhand the classical pieces are bourgeois culture or upper-class music and so given more credence

Beethoven's pieces also function to illustrate the character of Alex. They show that Alex cannot be redeemed because of his love of classical music, music is usually neutral. In the film to Alex, Beethoven means sex and slaughter as I have shown, to begin with. However, when he becomes the victim it lets the audience sympathise with him because he has lost a passion or love.

Music in the film functions as more than just a backing track. It involves and communicates to the audience through normal film music methods. However, it also forces the audience to listen to it, they cannot forget the soundtrack.

Music in the film is the exception to the general rule that:

"Globally speaking music remains in the dramatic film as the hypnotic voice bidding the spectator to believe, focus, behold, identify, consume."
(Gorbman, 1987, p69)

It expresses the moral ideas present in the novel. The idea that music is a higher art that is civilising or that 'is good for you and gives moral uplift, is a lie'11, which Kubrick - like Burgess - shows by placing music in Alex's fantasies.

Music also is a device for Kubrick uses to bring forward the central idea of the film, the question of free will and the ideas of the individual. Regardless of how evil Alex is he is entitled to be who he is because to change him through force would be to create a lesser man. Music is the tool that Kubrick uses to show all this.

Chapter Four

"Heard Melodies are sweet, but those unheard are sweeter, therefore,
ye soft pipes, play on"

(Keats, Ode to a Grecian Urn)

Chapter Four

In this chapter I will be discussing the comparisons and contrasts between the two media translations - film and novel - of *A Clockwork Orange*, in relation to their use of music.

Perhaps the easiest contrast to begin with is that in the film one can hear the music, while the novel asks you to imagine it. Because of this music has varying applications which can be explained because each medium has a different author and so interpretation.

In both music is present throughout but where Burgess mentions music within the structure of the novel in disguise, such as place names, Kubrick restricts music to a score on a film. In both media however, music answers comparatively the moral dilemmas and questions raised by the story.

Both agree that classical music, as an example of high art is not civilising. Whether we read or see, Alex is not part of civilised society even though he listens to what is considered civilised music. Alex in the novel states that music is "civilised my syphilised yarbles" (Alex, pps 35/36, 1992). For Alex it helps him defy society and convention.

Music in each medium also answers the question on whether it is better for us to be bad, than conditioned to be good. Both agree it is better to be bad, for when an individual is conditioned he becomes a lesser man, a clockwork orange in effect with no free will. To brainwash a man is to deny him a choice on how he lives. With the result that the man can not take the action he desires, brainwashing is a denial of choice.

Again both use Beethoven as a dominant motif, however, where in the novel Burgess mentions other composers like Mozart and Bach, Kubrick does not. He introduces composers of his own choice.

In the novel Burgess has a specific personal reason for each composer and piece of music. As I have said for example, (in chapter one) Beethoven and in particular the Fifth Symphony, was the only composer and music that Burgess's father Joe Wilson, ever taught his son. Because this is the same for all the music in the novel, music therefore has

a system where each classical piece refers back to Burgess's own life in some form. Music acts as a second layer or code for Burgess, which he does out of homage to one of his heroes (James Joyce, who utilises this in *Ulysses*) and as a reference to himself. All of which the reader only becomes aware of if one researches into Burgess's background.

In the film Kubrick does not utilise Burgess's choices of music, so the film as a result has no personal references and so no hidden meanings. However, he has introduced general cultural references, in contrast to Burgess.

In the novel, for example, the drunk tramp of section one sings a few lines of an unnamed song. The reader can only read the lines and is just given a description that the lines are from "the filthy songs of his fathers" (Alex, p14, 1992), presumably from the tramp's cultural ancestry. In the film Kubrick has changed these lines to ones from the Irish ballad *Molly Malone*.

I believe that in the novel Burgess employed these almost anonymous lines to show the tramp's drunkenness and to give Alex a reason to stop and beat him. In the film however, Kubrick allows the audience to introduce a specific cultural stereotype of the drunk Irish.

He also does this later on when he uses Sir Edward Elgar's *Pomp and Circumstance Marches One and Three*, with images of the minister and authority. These pieces conjure up for me, the stereotypical image of the British, with the stiff upper lip and the bowler hat and suit.

No stereotypical accompaniments appear in Burgess's novel, to have done so would have grounded the novel in a particular era and therefore attitude and interpretation. Similarly no pop person is named instead Burgess gives unreal people, based on real life friends.

In the film real popular songs are mentioned and Kubrick manipulates them to his advantage to reach the audience and specifically their memories. I believe Kubrick does this to comment on these memories but also to create an ironic counterpoint which the audience

has to take notice of.

In the novel Burgess writes music down as part of a scene in section one, Alex listens to various composers in his room while he fantasises. In the film only one composer is heard, Beethoven. The novel explains music's function here to show how it incites Alex to fantasise violent imagery. In the film Kubrick uses music in this scene, not only to do this but also to set the picture of Alex's life. Music jumps in time (and vice versa) to the visual images of Alex's room helping to create an ironic point and to reach the audience through this conjunction of music and images.

In section one the scenes of torture and rape in the writer's home are silent in the novel, this brings the violence to the fore. In contrast the film introduces 'Singin' in the Rain', again to create an ironic point and to reach the audience through their previous memories of this song.

In the novel music is a hidden language because it refers to Burgess's own life. For example, Handel is directly taken from the author's memories where he used a Handel piece to teach himself piano and music. However, it is hidden because the general reader would not be aware of this, only a reader who was acquainted with Burgess, his life and how he includes these ironies would recognise this hidden language.

Music is a metaphor also because it refers to society, in that it reacts to Alex like the society portrayed does. Music and society incite Alex to violence until he goes too far. Then they both punish him, by imprisoning him and inducing nausea and then they both finally forgive him by returning him to his original state. Society gives him back his original nature and music allows him to listen to it again.

In the film music creates a mood by introducing the cultural references I have mentioned but it remains as a background score to the visual. It counters the imagery through irony but does not jump to the fore.

Also in the novel music is part of the brainwashing of the reader through language, where

as in the film there is no hidden agenda, as the viewer is constantly aware of music's presence.

In both media, music is one of Alex's passions and it illustrates his change from the aggressor to victim and back again. In contrast the novel also uses music to show that he is maturing by stating that he is now more interested in romantic tunes, in the last chapter which plays no part in the film.

In film, Kubrick has to adhere to the technical conventions such as diegetic and non-diegetic music. However, he manipulates them to reach his audience and allow them to draw certain associations. For example, Purcell's Music for Queen Mary's funeral is played in conjunction with images of the Korova Milkbar. So when the audience hears this tune they immediately conjure images of Alex and his droogs in the Milkbar, relaxing. These associations only come into play when the audience hears them repeated.

Another example would be the use of 'Singin' in the Rain'. We first hear this tune in conjunction with the rape and beating of the writer and his wife. It is repeated later when Alex sings it in the bath when he is taken in by the writer, after his treatment. Both the audience and the writer immediately recognise the tune and recall the images and action of where we last heard it, which was the rape. This cannot be done very effectively in the novel due to its written limitations.

Summary

In summary both these media use music to the author's advantage which is in effect to reach the audience, whether they are reading or watching the story.

In comparison both media employ music to answer the moral questions and dilemmas raised by the story. Both agree that high art is not civilising, with classical music being a case in point in the story. Also the idea of freewill is addressed through music, Alex chooses to listen to classical music but this is taken from him when he is conditioned. He then because he loses this choice becomes a lesser man, a clockwork orange.

Lastly music is used comparatively because for both Burgess and Kubrick it is a tool to reach their respective audience but through obviously different methods.

In the novel music is part of a structure and a language. Music is integral to the novel's structure and therefore becomes part of the brainwashing Burgess utilises through the language he calls Nadsat, this is not the case with the film as music remains part of the score. It also is a hidden language that refers back to the author's own personal life and a metaphor for the society that Burgess portrays in the novel. In contrast music has no hidden meanings in the film because Kubrick does not use Burgess's structure in relation to music.

In the film music's main functions are to create a mood or an ironic counterpoint to the visual which the audience recognises and reacts too. It also creates cultural references by using stereotypical pieces - like Molly Malone - unlike the novel, which lead the audience to associate certain people with certain things. For example, the drunk with the stereotypical image of the drunk Irish. Associations also come into play within the film because Kubrick uses certain pieces in conjunction with places or people, like the conjunction of Purcell's Music for Queen Mary's funeral.

Conclusion

"The belief that music affected man in different but very definite ways was much more fundamental,..... for each melody, rhythm and instrument was thought to exert its own special influence on man's character."

(Harman, p13, 1977)

Conclusion

Music is a form of communication which transmits various meanings and overtones to its audience. This does not stop just because the music written down, either as a musician's aid or as part of a story.

Throughout the history of film, music has been a definite presence that has helped create a world that we the audience can believe. The conjunction of music whether with written words or images is a powerful one, that both writers and filmmakers are growing more aware of.

In literature, music is named but silent to our ears. It does not have an oral voice as such but has a mental voice, which asks a person to imagine the music. If it is named then a knowledgeable person can actually imagine the music mentioned. In literature music can, like a film, flesh out characters and become integral to the story, characters and so on.

In film, music is employed in conjunction with the visual images. It helps create a world - with sound - that moves, talks and sings and in doing so makes this fictionalised world more believable, it reinforces the reality effect of 'those bodies and space'¹². However, in reinforcing the visual, it remains to a certain extent a background score.

Both media when using music are subject to technical conventions. In film this is diegetic and non-diegetic music, diegetic meaning music with a visual source while non-diegetic is the background score with no apparent visual source. In literature the technical convention is the written language. When an author of either form uses music they usually must comply with these conventions.

This is not the case with the novel *A Clockwork Orange*. Anthony Burgess has included music to show Alex's character and behaviour, which is a general convention illustrating a character. Classical music illustrates Alex's uncivilised behaviour because he uses it to incite him to violence. Burgess also however in contrast to convention, uses music to refer back to his personal life in a hidden format, by including composers and music that are

relevant to his own life. The most prominent example being the inclusion of Beethoven. He manipulates the language of the novel.

Within this novel also music is a metaphor for the society, it mimics the behaviour of this society. So when for example, the society punishes him by imprisoning him, music does too by reducing him to nausea. Lastly music is a part of the overall structure of the novel and so it is also a part of the brainwashing of the reader by language, which I explained in chapter one.

In the film music is the score which accompanies the visual imagery. However, in saying that Kubrick does manipulate the technical conventions of diegetic and non-diegetic music, so the audience is forced to listen. Kubrick does this by using popular tunes that have specific associations. For example, the use of 'Singin' in the Rain', which most people associate with Gene Kelly.

Kubrick uses this song but subverts the meaning by placing it in conjunction with a beating and rape scene. This therefore changes the audience's memories by creating an ironic counter but also changes their attitude to the song, so that they will never look on it the same as the same innocent song again. This can also be said of the use of Rossini's William Tell Overture from the Lone Ranger television series in the orgy scene.

Kubrick in doing this manipulates the audience and their feelings and so manipulates the audience's mood and reactions, which is a general convention. He also uses music in this way, as a background score to the action on screen and as a device that allows the audience to create cultural references and associations. I mean by this the use of music like Molly Malone and Sir Edward Elgar's Pomp and Circumstance, that can be associated with stereotypical imagery of the drunk Irish and British imperialism, respectively. The references are when he introduces music that has stereotypical connotations. The associations - which are a general film convention - are when Kubrick repeatedly uses the same music in conjunction with the same people or places.

In conclusion I find that music is a device that both Burgess and Kubrick use to reach their audience and to allow them to form opinions on the character of Alex, the plot and the

main premise of the story. However, they also use music to express ideas and feelings.

Burgess does this to bring his readers into his own life, by referring to it in disguise and Kubrick does it to create a mood and backdrop to the visual images. Music is therefore in the novel more than just part of the overall structure. While in the film music, though still tied to conventions, makes the audience react not only with their feelings but by creating irony and daring us not to laugh at the conventions themselves.

Music becomes a communicative device but it is one that has been steadily ignored throughout the years in both media. The role of music is an important one in both media and it is my belief that to fully understand both the film and the novel you must understand music's function within both structures.

Endnotes

Introduction

- 1 See Morrison's Independent on Sunday article.
- 2 Final two chapters This Man and Music.

Chapter One

- 3 This begins each section of the novel.
- 4 Taken to mean a library person.
- 5 Alex's response to whether music is civilising, ultravioence means extreme violence
- 6 Taken to mean woman or wife.
- 7 Slooshy means to listen and maleky is taken to mean great.
- 8 Seen to be name of the orchestra, p36.

Chapter Two

- 9 See Music and Musicians.
- 10 See Gorbman, p3, 1987.

Chapter Three

- 11 See Hughes, p185, 1995.

Conclusion

- 12 See Gorbman, p52, 1987.

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Fig. 1

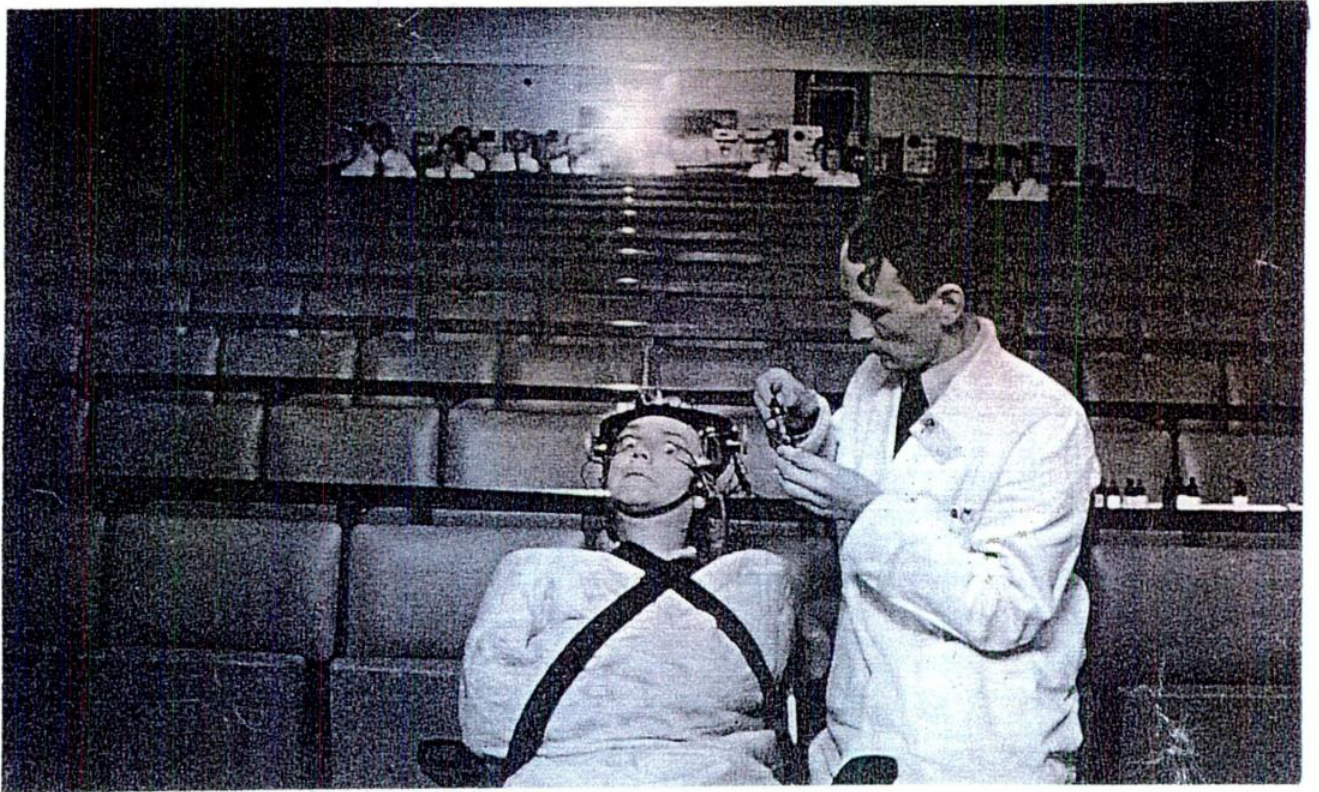


Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4

