BETWEEN AGENCY AND CONTAINMENT: A NEW HISTORICIST READING OF ANTHONY BURGESS’ A CLOCKWORK ORANGE

A THESIS

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By

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“There is only one thing that makes a dream impossible to achieve: the fear of failure.” – Paulo Coelho
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ABSTRACT


The novel’s title, A Clockwork Orange, might reflect the content of the novel, which is the condition of human’s natural endowment engineered into a mechanized and unnatural being. This manipulation leads to the loss of a man’s individual freedom, which is his potential for both good and evil. As the main character who often commits violence with his gang, Alex is forced to undergo an operation held by the government, making him lose free will. Alex’s individual freedom is removed in exchange for the total control by the state. Therefore, there are two questions in this thesis which are framed using the New Historicism.

Firstly, this thesis explores the tension between agency and containment as reflected in A Clockwork Orange. The term ‘agency’ is similar to individual freedom, meaning that people are agents since they are capable of doing things or make things happen. Meanwhile, the term ‘containment’ is related to how resistance by an agent is contained in order to maintain the existing power relation. This study finds that the dynamic of containment cannot be separated from agency and vice versa. This is because the capability of Alex, as an agent, is always constrained by the government’s containment.

Secondly, this thesis scrutinizes how the novel’s concepts of agency and containment are related to readership at the time of production and consumption. It includes the discussions on its removed last chapter in the American publication and also the controversial movie adaptation, which is often blamed for inspiring violence in the society. Adopting the view of New Historicism that literature and history are equal as primary texts, the analysis elaborates how history has powerful effects on literature, and vice versa. This research indicates that the historical conditions influenced the writing of A Clockwork Orange, and the work itself also influenced the trajectory of history around the publication and adaption of the novel.

New Historicist reading of the novel shows that subversion is always contained by the state power. Secondly, this reading also highlights how to read a literary work within the context of historical discourses, not merely a chronicle of facts or events. Therefore, this thesis also uncovers how A Clockwork Orange presents a complex relation with history.

Keyword: New Historicism, agency, containment, Anthony Burgess’ A Clockwork Orange.
ABSTRAK


Judul novel A Clockwork Orange dapat mencerminkan isi novel itu sendiri, yang menceritakan kondisi alami manusia yang direkayasa menjadi makhluk mekanis dan tidak alamiah. Manipulasi ini menyebabkan hilangnya kebebasan individu seseorang, yakni potensinya untuk melakukan kebaikan maupun kejahatan. Sebagai tokoh utama yang suka melakukan kekerasan dengan gengnya, Alex dipaksa menjalani suatu operasi yang diadakan oleh pemerintah, yang membuatnya kehilangan kehendak bebas. Kebebasan individu Alex diganti dengan kendali penuh oleh negara. Maka, ada dua pertanyaan dalam tesis ini yang dikupas menggunakan kerangka New Historicism.

Pertama, tesis ini membahas ketegangan antara agensi dan pengekangan seperti yang tercermin dalam A Clockwork Orange. Istilah ‘agensi’ mirip dengan kebebasan individu, artinya seseorang adalah agen karena mampu melakukan sesuatu atau membuat sesuatu terjadi. Sementara itu, istilah ‘pengekangan’ terkait dengan bagaimana resistensi oleh agen dikekang oleh negara untuk mempertahankan relasi kekuasaan yang ada. Ditemukan di dalam studi ini bahwa pengekangan tidak lepas dari agensi. Ini karena kemampuan Alex, sebagai agen, selalu dibayangi oleh pengekangan pemerintah.


CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

A. Introduction

Anthony Burgess is a well-known English writer and considered as one of the most prolific literary figures of the 20th century. Jennifer Durham Bass states that Burgess had produced many literary works marked by his skillful use of language and satire during his lifetime (142). Besides writing, Burgess also composed music, translated, and wrote television scripts. Burgess’ adeptness with multiple languages also enhances his sharp writing and satirical commentaries on twentieth-century society (Bass 142). *A Clockwork Orange*, Burgess’ least favorite of his own works, became his most popular novel (Bass 142).

The title of the novel itself might reflect the content of the novel. Coleman, for instance, argues that Anthony Burgess intends to relate the title of his novel with a Cockney expression, “as queer as a clockwork orange.” This expression means something aberrant and unnatural (Coleman 62). He uses ‘orange’ to symbolize man with his natural endowment, whereas “clockwork” refers to the “delicately balanced psychic mechanism of man’s dual nature”, for instance his potential for both good and evil, which operates without man’s conscious awareness or control (Coleman 62). In other words, people are unique and have individual freedom, but when they
are constrained or controlled, they might be led into a mechanized and unnatural being like clockwork. The symbolization of human into orange is further substantiated by Movahedi arguing Burgess also notices the similarity in sound and spelling between the English word “orange” and Malay word “orang”, which is also interesting because of its meaning, since “orang” is a Malay word for human being (Movahedi 3301).¹

Beside the title’s reflection with the content, the story deals with the conflicts between agency and containment. The term ‘agency’ here is similar to individual freedom, meaning that people are agents since they are capable of “doing things” and “making things happen,” politically and psychologically active (Pope 242-243). Meanwhile, the term ‘containment’ is also similar to control of the state, but it is mostly used in New Historicism, which is related to how resistance by an agent is contained in order to maintain the order’s establishment.

The main character of the novel may represent an agent, named Alex, who is depicted as a young teenager who commits the so-called “ultra violence” (Newman 62). Alex’s crimes include robbery, rape, accidental murder, and random beatings of homeless men on the street. Due to the violence, Alex is forced by the state to undergo the Ludovico’s Technique, a means of containment, known as an aversion therapy which could make Alex incapable of committing violence, in exchange for being let out of prison. After undergoing the therapy, Alex will feel terrible pain and

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¹ Burgess taught himself many languages including Malay. He also worked as an education officer in Malaya (Spence 4).
nausea when he has urges towards violent or sexual behavior. Alex is, therefore, unable to defend himself when beaten by his former victims. Yet, what is interesting is that Alex’s former victims are no less brutal than Alex in their attempts to enact revenge on him, so that the brutality displayed by both the state and Alex’s former victims shows how the victims of violence can easily becomes victimizers. It also shows how the society is depicted horribly in the novel, since an agent can be repressed.

The conflict between agency and containment was also experienced personally by Burgess. Burgess’ wife was attacked by four American soldiers. Although not a sexual attack, it led to her miscarriage, deteriorating of health, and her eventual death, as Burgess believes. Interestingly, there is a part of the novel, in which a character named F. Alexander writing a book, and the book is called A Clockwork Orange. It is also told in the novel where F. Alexander’s wife got raped and beaten by Alex and his gang. Most likely, this part of the novel may portray how Alex, the agent, wins against Alexander who represents Burgess’ unconscious desire for revenge.

Other conflict between agency and containment in Burgess’ life is also seen in his relationship with the Catholic Church. Crucial factor in the life of Burgess was his break with the Catholic Church, since it is related to how Burgess, as the agent, could leave or separate himself from a structure, in this case the church itself. Burgess left the church at sixteen but believed it was extremely difficult to overcome
certain beliefs ingrained in his psyche since childhood (Devido 113). Consequently, Burgess’ falling out with the Catholic Church, had their impact on A Clockwork Orange. Devido argues that Burgess does something interesting with both God and religion—he makes the two invisible for the first part of the novel (113-114). Burgess wanted the reader to visualize a world without a God—a direction in which he believed society might be heading, and then Alex turns to God for two perverse and selfish reasons: because he feels hopeless, and knows that by turning to religion it could lead to a lesser sentence (Devido 113-114). In doing so, Burgess might be depicting how people turn to God in certain situations only as a last resort, not because of faith, practice, or personal preference (Devido 113-114).

The publication of this novel was problematic, especially related to the issue of its final chapter. It stems from the fact that the 21st or final chapter of the novel was deleted by New York publisher. The movie adaptation, which was produced by Stanley Kubrick and released in 1971, was also based on the version with the last chapter removed. Burgess himself expresses his displeasure related to the movie adaptation. The 21st chapter narrates Alex’s decision that he is wasting his life and resolves to grow up and live more responsibly. Therefore, this shows a discrepancy between the two versions, the American and British endings. According to Burgess in a 1972 interview, the final chapter was meant to be a “mature conclusion” in the sense that Alex has grown up, but Burgess said that nobody in America had ever liked that idea (Cullinan, Art of Fiction 136). Thus, the United States public never
saw the complete novel until 1986 and Stanley Kubrick’s movie version of the book ended with the 20th chapter, as stated by Burgess in his introduction to the 1986 edition (Newman 61).

Related to the movie adaptation’s controversy, Director Stanley Kubrick also withdrew the movie in 1973 after the press blamed it for inspiring several copycat crimes (Brand 1). Specifically, in Britain, the country where A Clockwork Orange was both made and set, the movie itself was banned by film producers there; thus, there were debates since critics argued that the film had endangered the society by inspiring the very violence it was seeking to explore and define. Many critics attacked the movie at the time for what they described as its gratuitous violence, which depicts unreasonable brutality or just for the sake of being violent. For example, John Fraser used A Clockwork Orange for his study Violence in the Arts because the film “has done the most to set off complaints in the early 1970s about excessive violence in movies” (Welsh 252). The movie release in 1971 provoked a storm of public protest. Many cases were found that the people imitated how Alex committed violence to his victims. For instance, in Lancashire, a young woman was raped by a gang of youths who sang Singin’ in the Rain, just as Alex and his gang did in the film (Shaughnessy 6). In the middle of this situation, critics called Kubrick’s rendition much weaker than the book and they also disapproved of the pornography and violence (Brown 6).

This thesis uses A Clockwork Orange as the object of research because, firstly, this novel has the story which compels me, which shows the theme related to
the relationship between individual freedom and controlling government. In this respect, the novel provokes more questions, especially on considering the values or dangers of both individual freedom and also state order. There is no answer on which is more important or crucial, regarding the importance of moral choice. In this way, Burgess does not give any solution through this novel, yet this is what makes this novel worth analyzing. Therefore, the tensions between agency and containment portrayed in the novel becomes the main concerns of this thesis.

Secondly, this thesis uses *A Clockwork Orange* because of its controversial issue. This novel shocked the public into protest, and its movie adaptation made uproar and controversy in the society because of its portrayed violence (Gilbert 158-159). Another controversy is because the American version removed the last chapter of the novel when it was first published. This last chapter shows that Alex was ‘cured’ as much as possible in that he ultimately gave up on violence of his own free will. Therefore, this thesis scrutinizes how the publication of the novel shaped and was shaped by the society of the period. In this respect, this thesis would focus on the publication and reception of the novel in terms of its historical context. In order to see how this novel interacted with the society when it was written, I would like to use New Historicism as my theoretical approach.

In connection with the conflict between agency and containment in the novel, many critics believe that this novel questions whether the changing human nature is ethical or not. The novel poses the following question: Is it better for a man to be able
to choose the path of evil, or by conditioning, lose his free will and forced to the path of goodness? Burgess clearly believed the former (Segel 41). Thus, this novel could show that personal freedom should be prioritized before crime prevention. But on the other hand, it could show how containment has also its positive sides, since people with free will, but without sense of responsibility, could be destructive. This question posed by Segel will be developed in this study.

This thesis investigates the conflict between agency and containment in the novel since this is related to the paradox of free will. It is also important to investigate the issues which are related to the publication of both versions. This is due to the fact that the reception of *A Clockwork Orange* was very controversial and it was accompanied by series of important events, such as the banning and the removal of the last chapter.

**B. Research Questions**

The research questions that are elaborated in the analysis concern two aspects:

1. How is the tension between agency and containment depicted in the novel?
2. How does the novel reflect concepts of agency and containment related to readership at the time of production and consumption?
C. Thesis Outline

Generally, this thesis is arranged thematically. Chapter one consists of introduction and research questions. Chapter two covers the review of related studies and review of related theories. Chapter three covers the tension between agency and containment in *A Clockwork Orange*. Chapter four deals with how the novel’s concepts of agency and containment are related to readership at the time of production and consumption. The last chapter presents the conclusion of the analysis in the third and fourth chapter.
CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Review of Related Studies

Since its first publication, *A Clockwork Orange* has become the object of many studies. In this section, this thesis focuses on reviewing several studies on *A Clockwork Orange* that especially discuss the individual freedom and the constraints of societal or political structure. This novel illustrates a dystopian society, in which the state has an excess of control over individuals, as in the story the government instructs doctors to alter criminals through mind control and change them into completely different people. In relation to this, Devido argues that a perfectly functioning utopia is a myth (1). This refers to the fact that God was a crucial component in the earliest utopian visions, but that belief diminished by the twentieth-century (Devido 8). As science continues to evolve, the utopian dream begins changing into a dystopian nightmare (Devido 20). Specifically, Thomas More, on the surface constructs his work *Utopia* as a classless and wage-less society similar to a modern day version of socialism (Devido 20). The reader is led to believe that More’s work *Utopia* is a classless and wage-less society, but as the book’s story progresses, a hierarchical system slowly reveals itself (Devido 23). For instance, the priests hold one of the most prestigious positions in *Utopia*. Devido argues that this idea opens
the door for its expansion in modern dystopias. This is echoed in Burgess’ team of sociologists who treat and control Alex in the operation or aversion technique called the Ludovico Technique (Devido 23). The Ludovico Technique’s goal is to physically remove a person’s ability to have bad thoughts, since the government wants its people to be clockwork oranges, likeable and to do what they are told (Skjorestad 81).

Consequently, *A Clockwork Orange* depicts that the society terribly grows with controlling government. In the novel, a team of scientists, doctors, and sociologists perform a controversial psychological treatment on Alex. The team of specialists led by Dr. Brodsky manipulates Alex’s mind and body, injecting him with a shot that makes him nauseous while forcing him to watch violent movie clips to the tune of classical music as a reminder of his previous life (Devido 127). In this case, Devido argues that the idea of a “machine-like human” mostly influenced Burgess and ties in directly to the title *A Clockwork Orange*: While undergoing treatment, Alex is treated like a machine that can be molded, changed, and eventually turned back into society as completely different person (Devido 109). These methods are related to Ivan Pavlov and B. F. Skinner’s work on social conditioning, directly linked to the central theme of the novel and reinforcing Esther Petix’s views that people are machine-like and can be wound up and turned back into society like clockwork (Devido 135). Relating directly to Burgess’ Ludovico Technique, B. F. Skinner explains the role of religion and government control through psychological...
manipulation: “The principal technique of psychotherapy is thus designed to reverse behavioral changes which have come about as the result of punishment. Very frequently this punishment has been administered by religious or governmental agencies” (371). Therefore, the ability to manipulate human behavior functions as one of the central elements in A Clockwork Orange.

Similarly, Skjorestad argues that the government controls almost every aspect of human life (79). The government wants people to function like clockwork oranges. Skjorestad asserts that an orange is a fruit with no core, it is organic like humans, and when every person is an orange, everyone is basically the same and uniformed; meanwhile, a clockwork does as it is told, it has no choice, it is a machine which conforms to the rules of physics within the boundaries of the casing (Skjorestad 80). For example, the society in A Clockwork Orange should work without questions; they should do as they are told and without any choices. What should be done is what the government wants, not the individual choices.

One example of doing what the government wants without any questions is related to the totalitarian government. The totalitarian state is defined as a state without democracy, a state where the people no longer have their say, and the people no longer have the privilege to vote for whom they would like to see in power. It is a one-party state without free elections (Skjorestad 30). In this respect, the danger of the totalitarian regime could be shown through the themes such as the regime’s attempts to remove youth violence and also the causes of the youth violence. Similar
to Devido, Skjorestad believes that one important proof that the government is growing in totalitarian character is through Ludovico Technique. This treatment is the prominent indicator that this government does the violence towards Alex, since by doing this treatment, Alex is deprived of his humanity. Alex becomes the victim of violence committed by the controlling government (Skjorestad 9).

Beside the violence committed by the state, this novel also depicts violence committed by the agent, Alex. In the novel, one of the main elements presented on the very first page that carries throughout the novel is that the adolescents are in control instead of adults (Devido 115). Devido argues that his kind of depiction might have been derived from Burges’ observation on the rise in street crime in which parents are no longer authority figures, in turn leading to a terrible situation where teenagers do whatever they want, free of discipline from their parents (Devido 116).

Related to violence committed by Alex, Skjorestad’s study focuses on discussing the type of the violence. He asserts that violence comes in different kinds, namely subjective and objective violence. Subjective violence is the kind of violence that most people from “well functioning democratic societies are familiar with,” it is violence that breaks with everyday life (Skjorestad 115). Examples of subjective violence are assault, sexual violence, robberies; in other words, violent incidents that clearly break with the normal state of affairs in a human’s life (Skjorestad 115). For Alex, violence is perceived subjectively only when he can feel violence on his own body (Skjorestad 9). In this case, Skjorestad also argues that the readers will perceive
the violence subjectively, since it is narrated from first-person point of view (9). When the narrator is first person, the story will always be told subjectively and the readers will, therefore, experience violence subjectively: when Alex is a perpetrator and when he is a victim (Skjørestad 9). Skjørestad argues that Alex commits acts that are extremely violent in character, and he does them, at first sight, just for fun (9). On the other hand, objective violence is often on the political level, which does not break with everyday life (Skjørestad 115). Skjørestad adds that objective violence is the kind of violence that most often manifests itself in totalitarian rules.

In relation with this, Skjørestad argues that violence committed by Alex is not really subjective, and the cause for that violence lies more on the political level (Skjørestad 117). Firstly, Skjørestad asserts that Alex and his gang of criminals are just one street gang, there are several other street gangs in *A Clockwork Orange* about (Skjørestad 117). Second, Alex and his friends’ everyday life consists of being violent, it is what they do, it is how they live (Skjørestad 117). Therefore, youth violence in *A Clockwork Orange*, represented by Alex, is simply the working reality, the status quo, of life in the society in *A Clockwork Orange*. A mugging or a rape are in no way uncommon, it is simply how life is. The system of the youth violence, the frequency of it, is what makes violence in *A Clockwork Orange* more objective in character (Skjørestad 117). In other words, Skjørestad also believes that the violence is not merely done by the agent, but it is a part of the youth violence in the society.
Youth violence is part of a system, and part of everyday life, and that makes violence in *A Clockwork Orange* objective.

Lastly, Skjørestad’s study discusses the causes of violence and aggression in *A Clockwork Orange*. Skjørestad argues that the first refers to the attraction of violence (86). For instance, the state controls the movie business in *A Clockwork Orange*, and by showing violent movies, the public’s perception of violence is altered (Skjørestad 86). The violence done by Alex and his friends is something learnt from watching those kinds of movies. Therefore, this cause is related to the portrayal of violence from the media. In this case, how the violence is portrayed in the movies could affect violence in the society itself. The next cause of violence can be related to biological factors or brain chemistry. There are some indicators based on Alex’s actions in the novel which shows that he might have a high level of testosterone, meaning that he often gets irritated and frustrated, and when that happens, he almost every time resorts to violence (Skjørestad 87). For instance, on their first night in the Korova Milkbar, a person sitting next to Alex starts annoying him. He is not speaking directly to Alex, but still, Alex gets annoyed with his talk. This is an example of how Alex’s frustration can cause his violence acts or aggression in the novel. Another example is how the teens drink milk-plus in Korova Bar, which contains some ingredients. These ingredients are substances which can cause the violent behavior (Skjørestad 88-89). The reward of violence could also become the cause of the violent acts. However, Alex and his friends have no urgent need of money. Alex and his
friends are talking about beating up an old guy and robbing a woman shopkeeper. This is, however, how Alex and his friends can afford their lifestyle, but, as Alex the narrator contemplates, money is not everything and the real reason behind Alex and his droogs’ violence is much more complex than simply getting paid (Skjorestad 91). In this case, money is not the main motivation for Alex and his friends.

The next motivation for Alex to commit violence is to show his power, or his individual freedom. In the novel, Alex and his friends enter into F. Alexander’s house, beat him excessively, and make him watch them raping his wife. This shows how Alex’s power manifests through the violence or the rape, which is the combination of power and violence. For instance, by raping women Alex opposes the system because he is being bad. In other words, committing the violence gives him power, power over women, so that he marks his status as the group leader, and it gives him power over F. Alexander, an author and an intellectual (Skjorestad 92). When Alex beats F. Alexander and makes him watch as he rapes his wife, Alex becomes the superior one. Moreover, by being bad, Alex is doing something society considers an act of evil, Alex regains his freedom of choice, his humanity, his individualism, because being good in the society is not something chosen, whereas being bad is (Skjorestad 92). Therefore, the individualism is really pursued by Alex in the novel. In the midst of the society, it seems that Alex commits violence or chooses to be bad since he seeks out his own freedom, resisting against the totalitarian government.
The most important factors behind Alex’s violence, however, are Alex’s need to belong, cry for recognition, and frustration that he suffers. Skjorestad believes that if the gang wants to be identified with their generation, a generation that is generally violent, the gang too needs to be violent (Skjorestad 99). Skjorestad argues that Alex and his gang have no place in society; that causes frustration, and frustration is often an express way to violence (103). Violence is the only way for Alex and his generation to tell society that they exist, that they want to be recognized and be a part of society (Skjorestad 103). The need to belong overshadows every principle, and Alex succumbs to the power of the totalitarian government (Skjorestad 119). The needs to belong somewhere and to do something meaningful are important causes for Alex’s violence. Alex wants to belong to his generation, but at the same time, he wants to be recognized by society, to be accepted, and to be an important member of that said society (Skjorestad 119).

Different from Skjorestad, Simion believes that “such psychopathic delight” may be considered unhealthy but Alex’s sanity is not questioned; he is simply free to choose what pleases him (66). Even though the individual act is bad, it is considered as the freedom of choice as well. The first part of the novel abounds in all forms of violence: rape, murder, assault, robbery, and vandalism and the reader is exposed to an incredible spectacle of pleasure in violence (Simion 66). The problem that his choices are invariably destructive is not a problem after all, since Burgess debates upon the society’s right to deprive him of this freedom to choose whatever he may
like (Simion 66). In this case, Simion believes that Alex’s violence is both a matter of free choice and an act of rebellion, and that this freedom of choice and its moral consequences being the main themes of this novel.

In connection with this, individuality in this novel can be considered important. The idea of individuality is based on ability as well as possibility to independently choose, with full awareness. Alex represents free independent individuality, because he himself has chosen to be bad (Mikulakova 58). Mikulakova argues that Alex is well-aware of the brutality of his behavior, which might seem vicious, but, according to Burgess, it is also an important part of his definition of freedom (58). Thus, what is important is the possibility to freely choose; it is based on free choice, even if it is a choice to be bad. Mikulakova argues that one of the main themes that interconnect *A Clockwork Orange, The Wanting Seed* and *1985* which are written by Burgess could be a strong defense of individuality, or the uniqueness which stands in eternal opposition to a mass as well as the individual’s right to freely choose, decide and behave, partly influenced by the counter-culture of the 1960s (57). Moreover, *A Clockwork Orange* also belongs to a period in which there were written more books adoring individuality, such as Ken Kesey’s *One Flew over the Cuckoo’s Nest* (Mikulakova 57). In *The Wanting Seed* and *1985*, Burgess included the affirmation of individualism too, though, he chose good characters to struggle against the society and, in fact, the narratives then lost much of their attraction for readers (Mikulakova 58).
Rabinovitz argues that Burgess’ concept of the individual can be explained as a theological opposition between Pelagianism and Augustinianism, which represents two views on human nature (Rabinovitz 43-44). In this respect, the theme of libertarian-authoritarian opposition which occurs throughout Burgess’ *A Clockwork Orange*, is pointed out to be Pelagian versus Augustinian:

Pelagianism is named for Pelagius, a monk whose teachings were condemned by the church. Pelagius argued against the doctrine of original sin and advocated the idea of human perfectibility; hence he is the patron of libertarian societies. St. Augustine, a contemporary of Pelagius, reaffirmed the doctrine of original sin; human perfectibility, he said, was possible only with God’s grace. Because grace is not universally granted, there must always be sin, war, crime, and hence the need for social controls. Augustine therefore emerges as patron of the authoritarians. (Rabinovitz 43-44)

Hence, it shows the relationship between Alex and the society as Pelagius and Augustine. Burgess also sees that this relationship is opposed or contrary to each other, like yin and yang (Rabinovitz 43-44). Therefore, Pelagius, who does not accept the concept of original sin and represented a real break from traditional Christian doctrine, is similar to the libertarian individuals. For instance, in *A Clockwork Orange*, the anarchic quality of the society portrayed early in the novel indicates that Pelagian liberals are in power, but upon Alex’s release from prison he finds that a broken elevator has been repaired and that the police force has been enlarged; these are signs that a more authoritarian party has taken over (Rabinovitz 44). Similarly,
Newman states that the Pelagian-controlled government is somewhat lax, so that there is a general theme of disappointment with the Pelagian system, and the more draconian Augustinian alternatives (e.g. Alex’s conditioning) are attempted (Newman 64). Therefore, the Augustinian point of view is represented as the authoritarian government, which is believed as more powerful than the initially Pelagian government.

Yet, Rabinovitz also argues that it seems imprecise to assume that Burgess consistently favors either an Augustinian or a Pelagian point of view. During one phase, some of the characters are frustrated because they are out of power; during the next they are disappointed when their social theory fails to live up to its promise. Many of Burgess’ heroes learn to change; like Alex, they begin to see how their old unilateral views fit into a cycle of interacting polar opposites (Rabinovitz 45).

The polar opposites’ interaction in A Clockwork Orange could also emerge from Burgess’ juxtaposition of the Augustinian views of Alex and the Pelagian views of F. Alexander (Rabinovitz 45). Many of the characteristics of Alex and F. Alexander may be resolved into examples of extremes that follow the pattern of polar antitheses: predator and victim; uncontrolled libido (rapist) and controlled libido (husband); youth and adult; man of action and man of ideas; destroyer and creator; conservative and liberal; alienated man and integrated man (Rabinovitz 45-46).

Burgess has also indicated that he feels conflicts within himself:
One might make a comparison between Burgess the young composer and Alex the music-lover, or between Burgess the middle-aged novelist and the writer F. Alexander. Like Anthony Burgess, F. Alexander has written a book called *A Clockwork Orange*; and Alex, who tells his own story, is in a sense also the author of a book with the same title. Burgess is hinting that he detects within his own personality elements of both characters, that they form a yin-yang opposition which he sees within himself. But if he indicts himself, Burgess also invites the reader to examine his own capacity for playing the roles of both Alex and F. Alexander. (Rabinovitz)

It makes sense that this religious perspective supports the reason why Burgess values the 21st chapter in his novel, when Alex has grown up and chooses to be a good person. This shows how an individual, as a human, could naturally change, like how Burgess shows that his characters could change easily. Alexander himself also fails to hold his Pelagian views in the middle of the novel, since he finally supports the authoritarian society by putting Alex into his trap and try to make Alex commit suicide.

Devido also discusses how this novel is a battle between the opposing philosophies of Pelagianism and Augustinianism. He believes that in a modern sense, Pelagianism evolved into branches of existentialism, and Augustinianism is a belief system directly connected with the grace of God, and can even be viewed as deterministic depending on one’s perspective (Devido 12). Everything in St. Augustine’s vision is attributed to the will and grace of God, but God as a central principle is mocked by Burgess in the form of a drunken prison chaplain (Devido 18). Meanwhile, both Pelagius and John Paul Sartre, the father of existentialism, support
the belief that people are the sole determining factor in choosing what to do with their lives, “and in the end, are nothing but the sum of those choices” (Devido 112). With that said, a person can just as easily choose evil over good (Devido 112). Further, in existentialism, the choice to do something right or something wrong is available to everyone, and whatever choice is made, one must accept responsibility for that choice (Devido 113). In connection with this, Devido argues that Alex embodies Nietzsche’s belief in an “overhuman,” a concept that was influential in the creation of modern comic book heroes and post-humanist philosophy (Devido 113). Alex exercises his free will when terrorizing the local community on his terms, adhering to no one, including the law (Devido 114). This idea of “overhuman” is something Nietzsche believed could be the next possible evolutionary step for humanity in a godless universe (Devido 12). Nietzsche’s belief system eliminates the need for a God, and God’s grace. Devido argues that Burgess gives Alex and his gang complete freedom as they put terror on the surrounding community (159).

In many ways, the essential conflict in Anthony Burgess’ A Clockwork Orange exists between the individual and the social order. Sumner argues that Alex is a freedom fighter, but government and police officials label him a “juvenile delinquent” (49). In relation with the recondition of Alex after he has finished the aversion therapy, Alex becomes someone who cannot defend himself and in essence, Alex’s un-violent behavior reveals the social violence that was hidden from view earlier in the novel (Koci 6). In this case, Koci believes that a completely violence-
free individual cannot operate in Burgess’ dystopian society because violence is a key part of the social construction: “If violence is key to the collective, then possibly Alex’s own violence earlier in the novel may have simply been an expression, at the individual level, of the collective or societal violence” (Koci 6). In other words, violence cannot truly be an expression of complete freedom.

Similar with Koci, Erika Brown also believes that individual freedom could be seen as completely missing in the novel, as she shows the dominant image in A Clockwork Orange is likewise that of the Panopticon. It is because the operation called Ludovico Technique and the organization of the disciplinary techniques are proved unethical, resulting in absurd treatment and unjustified assumption of power (Brown 3). The system is a failure because it destroys the individual’s capacity for resistance, releasing the criminal into a cruel society, defenseless and incapable of self-preservation (Brown 3). Significantly, Brown states that Foucault’s interpretation of Bentham’s prison design emphasizes the “state of conscious and permanent visibility” instilled in the prisoner, which in turn “assures the automatic functioning of power” of the state (9-10). The prisoner’s freedom and privacy are inhibited; personal preferences are eliminated and conformity to behavior approved by the state is assured (Brown 10). Brown also adds that it is precisely the central theme that is cultivated in Burgess’s novel. Therefore, she believes that this theme in both Burgess’s novel and Foucault’s treatise shows that the Panopticism is inhumane (Brown 10). The prison like Bentham’s Panopticon is a significant work that can be
practiced for surveillance and domination. In Anthony Burgess’ *A Clockwork Orange*, the panoptic Ludovico Technique is used on the protagonist, Alex, in hopes of “rehabilitating” and reforming him, which is, making it impossible for him to continue to indulge in rape, burglary, assault, and murder (Brown 17). The Ludovico Technique functions in the same way as the Panopticon: dehumanizing the individual in order to ensure discipline (Brown 17). Further, Brown argues that the Ludovico Technique is dehumanizing because it limits choice and induces suffering without the individual’s acquiescence (19). The Prison Chaplain, who explains the procedure to Alex, is aware of the dehumanizing effects and makes his perceptions ultra-obvious to the reader since he mentions that Alex will never have the desire to commit acts of violence or to offend against the state’s peace (Brown 19). Moreover, after being let out of the prison and returning to the society, Alex is unable to emancipate himself from the “behaviorally induced Panoptic gaze of the Almighty State” since he becomes a victim of those he once victimized, incapable now of defending himself (Brown 20). In this way, individualism can be seen as apparently missing.

From the related studies that have been reviewed above, there are two different perspectives in the way they discuss the tension between freedom and controlling government in *A Clockwork Orange*. Basically, all the studies believe that the novel shows the opposition between individual freedom and controlling government. Yet, some of them, such as Simion, Devido, and Mikulakova, show that Alex exercises his free will when he commits violence, so that Alex’s violence is
both a matter of free choice and an act of rebellion. In other words, individuality is the most important theme of the novel. On the other hand, some of the studies, namely, Skjorestad, Koci, and Brown, argue how the government controls almost every aspect of human life in the novel, such as through the Ludovico’s Technique, where Alex’s free will is removed. In this case, these studies believe that individual freedom could be seen as completely missing in the novel.

Related to the controversial last chapter, Brown argues that the elimination of the twenty-first chapter would have gone unnoticed if not for the 1971 release of Stanley Kubrick’s acclaimed film *A Clockwork Orange* (6). Thus, the movie and the American novel are closely related. The American edition’s ending states that some psychological engineers have restored Alex’s “self”, and both his love for Beethoven and murdering (Simion 67). Meanwhile, the omitted chapter reveals another alternative. In exactly the same way the novel began, Alex and his new gang are sitting in the Korova Milkbar, drinking hallucinogenic “milk-plus mesto” and getting ready for the evening (Simion 67). But while the opening chapter is a prelude to violence, this last chapter reveals an Alex who is tired of violence. Leaving his gang and wandering alone in the streets, Alex reflects on the changes he has undergone (Simion 67). In spite of the fact that the behavioral engineers have restored his old self, he is more sentimental and longing for something besides the pleasure of listening to classical music and the old ultra-violence (Simion 67-68). It is described that Alex wants to settle down: to marry and have a son whom he will try to teach
what he knows of the world but doubting that his son will be able to learn from his mistakes (Simion 68).

I find that there are only a few studies which discuss the historical influences of the novel, but many discussions about the importance of the 21st chapter of the novel become relevant to the idea of individual change. For instance, Claudia and Vernon Johnson state that in the American edition, Alex is sent home as the same kind of person he was when he was first arrested, but in the English edition, Alex has an enlightenment and is redeemed, deciding that he will get an ordinary, harmless job and raise a family (124). A Clockwork Orange Resucked, which is Anthony Burgess’ introduction to the unabridged American version of his novel, summarizes the significance of the twenty-first chapter: “Briefly, my young thuggish protagonist grows up,” Burgess writes. Despite what appears at first glance to be a positive conclusion to Burgess’ novel of “ultra-violence,” critics continue to state a variety of different responses to the publication of A Clockwork Orange in its entirety. On the one hand, the negative critics say that the ending is far more darker (Davis and Womack 20). On the other hand, Davis and Womack are more optimist since they argue that Alex, who has grown up and fully prepared to accept the difficult challenges, no longer chooses the easier road to ultra-violence, but choosing family commitment and human renewal (Davis and Womack 33).

Other positivist critic, Brown, argues that the book was written with the intention that the novel would conclude with the twenty-first chapter (6). She claims
that Burgess had designed with the number twenty-one in mind (Brown 6), as Burgess says that “twenty-one is the symbol of human maturity, or used to be, since at twenty-one you got the vote and assumed adult responsibility” and “whatever its symbology, the number twenty-one was the number I started out with” (Burgess x). Another critic, John Cullinan, argues that the longer version of *A Clockwork Orange* makes clear Anthony Burgess’ reservations about his protagonist and outlines Alex’s possibilities for growth (*Two Versions* 292). Thus, most of the studies believe that this last chapter of *A Clockwork Orange* is Anthony Burgess’ optimistic message following the twenty pessimistic chapters in the American version.

This thesis focuses on the individual freedom and the constraint of the state. Even though there have been many discussions related to the power and domination, I still focus my research on this relationship between individual freedom and the constraint of the state. Yet, this study is different in the way that the concepts and relationship of agency and containment are explored in depth and more complex. Furthermore, this study also discusses the historical concept of the novel. In this respect, this study focuses on the publication of the novel and also how the work contributes to the discussion between freedom and controlling government. Many of the related studies use the literary text as a primary source, but they only use the history as background. This study, however, places history as one primary text as well, along with the novel itself.
B. Review of Related Theories

1. New Historicism

New Historicism, a term coined by Stephen Greenblatt, designates a body of theoretical and interpretive practices that began largely with the study of early modern literature in the United States. Generally, New Historicism in America had been somewhat anticipated by the theorists of Cultural Materialism in Britain, which, in the words of their leading advocate, Raymond Williams, describes “the analysis of all forms of signification, including quite centrally writing, within the actual means and conditions of their production” (Brewton 1). However, the development of New Historicism has been a complicated one.

One of the most interesting discussion was that of the New Historicism against the “last-ditch defenders” of the New Criticism or formalism, and against deconstruction and post-structuralism since these struggles have burst the bounds of the academy and have entered into a more public arena where they have become topics of considerable debate (Hoover 356). The concepts which have entered into discussions of American history center on questions involving language and constitute what David Hollinger calls “linguistic imperialism,” the tendency to reduce all history into questions of language and its meaning, to argue that all human action is dependent upon symbolic representation and cultural meaning (Hoover 356). Thus, what the New Historicists were reacting against was the idea that the text stands alone.
or isolated from the historical context. New Historicism could not see that the text is separated from the context itself.

New Historicism traces its origins to the early 1980s and is centered in Renaissance Studies (Hoover 359). The two works which made a considerable impact on literary criticism were Fredric Jameson’s *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (1981) and Frank Lentricchia’s *After the New Criticism* (1980); both were anti-formalist, against the New Criticism, and were opposed to any unifying or universal theories since both resisted “unproblemized” distinctions between history and literature or between text and context (Hoover 359).

Beside exploring the relationship between literature and history, New Historicism is useful in demonstrating the ideological and political interests operating through literary texts (Brannigan 10). It differs from the old historicism between 1920 and 1950, for it emphasized on the interaction of history and text instead of seeing history as its context (Jie-xiu 614). In other words, New Historicism is different with the traditional historical approach which considers context as a passive background for literature. There is the dialogue between literature and history. Thus, it is not limited to how the spirit of the age could produce a literary work, but also how the literary work could influence the spirit of the age. In this case, New Historicism is related to how the work is accepted or consumed, not only in the moment of production.

In *Professing the Renaissance: The Poetics and Politics of Culture*, Louis Montrose elaborates on his now-famous slogan, “the historicity of texts, the textuality
of history” (Montrose 24). With “the historicity of texts” Montrose suggests “the cultural specificity, the social embeddedment, of all modes of writing” (Montrose 24). “The historicity of texts” refers to the truth that every text has a historical context; it maintains a relation with its historical background. With “the textuality of history” Montrose suggests that people cannot have “access to a full and authentic past,” and cannot have access to “a lived material existence, unmediated by the surviving textual traces of the society in question” (Montrose 20). Therefore, “the textuality of history” may refer to the relation between truth and its literary representation which means the reader is not provided with the factual representation of a historical event of the past, but with literary representation done by the writer, so that there is no single truth in history. Thus, this slogan supports the previous idea above that there is no hierarchial relationship between literature and history in New Historicism.

In connection with this, Louis Montrose suggests awareness on how representations in history are unavoidable, and that the scholarship or academy cannot stand apart from the biases or personal interests which are related to historical issues. New Historicism tends to distance itself from historicism on the grounds that historian critics often viewed the past in terms of epochal trends and orders, and that the Renaissance period, or the Reformation period, for example, was characterised by a single dominating system of explanation and belief; whereas new historicist critics, on the other hand, tend to view the past as consisting of very diverse configurations
of beliefs, values and trends, often coming into conflict and contradiction with each other (Brannigan 31). In other words, New Historicism believes that there is no single definition of a period. Similarly, Eagleton also argues that there was no single determinable truth to any particular narrative or event, just a conflict of interpretations whose outcome was finally determined by power rather than truth (Eagleton 197). Thus, what is meant about history or historical events in New Historicism is determined by power, meaning that New Historicism assumes there is no single “truth” or reality, since every group has its own perspective. In this respect, it’s plausible that New Historicism is powerful since it refuses to universalize a historical structure.

In practice, new historicist methods are useful ways of constructing exchanges between diverse texts in a given historical period (Brannigan 11). Although in early new historicist work this exchange was often between literary texts and secondary historical sources, later it involved the construction of meaningful dialogues between many primary texts within the same period, including conduct books, penal documents, journal entries, and travel narratives as well as canonical literary texts (Brannigan 11-12). In other words, New Historicism could see the relationship between various literary texts and history. The significance of this method of combining texts from many different genres and discourses was not to make the meanings and intentions of literary texts clearer. The new historicist critics were, for the most part, intended on using literary texts as equal sources with other texts in the
attempt to describe and examine the linguistic, social, cultural, and political fabric of the past in greater detail (Brannigan 12). Therefore, New Historicists recognize all kinds of texts, whether they are literary or non-literary texts.

In practicing New Historicism, Stephan Greenblatt thinks that not obvious matters but less noticeable ones (marginals) should be handled, that is to say, besides what is known and apparent to anyone, what is alien (the other) should also be reviewed (Balkaya 7069). Ideologies which determine literature must be researched and re-judged by means of the social, political and economic side of that period; therefore, a literary work must be evaluated both as a cultural and literary work (Balkaya 7069). Regarding the new historicist concept, the aim is not to leave the past behind but, on the contrary, to criticize the past and reconsider the social assessments (Balkaya 7069). Thus, in practice, New Historicism criticizes the past and does not leave it behind.

Like New Historicism, Cultural Materialism also seeks to understand literary texts historically and reject the formalizing influence of previous literary studies, including New Criticism, Structuralism, and deconstruction, all of which in varying ways privilege the literary text and place only secondary emphasis on historical and social context (Brewton). In other words, both of them see the text and context, meaning that they privilege both of them, not seeing them as hierarchal. Both New Historicism and Cultural Materialism think that literature does have powerful effects on history, or vice versa (Brannigan 3). They share a willingness to question and
examine the assumptions behind their own interests in the past, and ground their practices of historical interpretation in explanations of political pressures in the present (Brannigan 31). Yet, despite of the similarities, they are both different in some significant aspects.

On Cultural Materialism, Raymond Williams explains the complexity of a culture, which is to be found not only in its variable processes and their social definitions, but also in the dynamic interrelations of historically varied and variable elements:

In what I have called ‘epochal’ analysis, a cultural process is seized as a cultural system, with determinate dominant features: feudal culture or bourgeois culture or a transition from one to the other. This emphasis on dominant and definitive lineaments and features is important and often, in practice, effective. But it then often happens that its methodology is preserved for the very different function of historical analysis, in which a sense of movement within what is ordinarily abstracted as a system is crucially necessary, especially if it is to connect with the future as well as with the past. In authentic historical analysis it is necessary at every point to recognize the complex interrelations between movements and tendencies both within and beyond a specific and effective dominance. It is necessary to examine how these relate to the whole cultural process rather than only to the selected and abstracted dominant system. (Williams 121)

This is related to how materialist criticism refuses to privilege ‘literature’ in the way that literary criticism has done; as Raymond Williams argued in an important essay that people cannot separate literature and art from other kinds of social practice, in such a way as to make them subject to quite special and distinct law (Dollimore 4). In other words, literature and art are not to be privileged, like a “high culture”.
Beside refusing to privilege literature, materialist criticism also refuses what Stephen Greenblatt calls the monological approach of historical scholarship of the past, one concerned with discovering a single political vision, usually identical to that said to be held by the entire literate class or indeed the entire population (Dollimore 4-5). In other words, it is related to the dominant vision or ideology of a society. Dollimore exemplifies Tillyard’s *The Elizabethan World Picture* to explain the objection towards the concept of monological approach. This is one of most significant books on the study of Shakespeare by Tillyard, who details the way in which Elizabethans viewed their world order. He portrays Shakespeare’s age as a period of social stability and cohesion with the partial class interests under control for the sake of universal national interests and in which a shared “world picture” prevailed (Lesic 224). In other words, he describes it as strictly hierarchal and ordered. Tillyard notes that the Elizabethans fostered a universal awareness; their shared vision of the world was expressed in the most representative works of that age, first of all in Shakespeare’s plays (Lesic 224). Tillyard’s world picture was an ideological legitimation of an existing social order, one rendered the more necessary by the apparent instability, actual and imagined, of that order (Dollimore 5). Thus, Tillyard’s picture seemed to ideologically legitimize an existing social order or illustrating the dominant ideology, which is not what the materialists encourage.

Marxism is also much more apparent as an influence in Cultural Materialism than it is in New Historicism (Brannigan 19). In this case, Marxist thinkers have
followed two different interpretations of this idea that, in Marx’s words, “the ruling ideas of each age have ever been the ideas of its ruling class” (Marx and Engels 50). The first interpretation is that economics is the determining factor in any society or culture, and that the ruling mode of economic production (e.g. capitalism, feudalism) determines the ruling mode of cultural production (Brannigan 24). More sophisticated Marxist thinkers such as Antonio Gramsci, Georg Lukacs, Louis Althusser, and Raymond Williams have found this view too deterministic and crude, and have overhauled the base-superstructure model in favour of an interpretation which sees economics and ideology in a relationship which is interactive and dialectical. This forms the basis of the second interpretation, which focuses less on economics as determining factor, and more on the function of cultural representation. For Marx the existence of culture as an autonomous entity devoid of politics was an illusion which concealed the fact that culture functioned as a means of control. Rather than ideology being the product of the dominant class, the petty bourgeoisie, ideology also plays a vital part in producing the ruling class (Brannigan 24).

Different from Cultural Materialism, the work of Michel Foucault has strongly influenced the development of New Historicism. The term ‘power’ suggests the writings of Michel Foucault; and indeed in many ways the New Historicism turned out to be the application of Foucauldian themes to (in the main) Renaissance cultural history (Eagleton 197). In connection with this, one of the proponents, Stephen Greenblatt, had moved from the influence of Raymond Williams, of whom
he had once been a pupil, to that of Michel Foucault; and this was among other things a shift from political hope to political pessimism which well reflected the changing mood of the 1980s, not least in a Reaganite United States (Eagleton 197). Furthermore, inspired by Foucault, New Historicism frequently addresses the idea that the lower common denominator of all human actions is power; the new historicists seek to find examples of power and how it is dispersed within the text (Tiwary 79). Power, which is a means through which the marginalized are controlled, and the thing that the marginalized seek to gain, becomes the dominant view in New Historicism. New Historicism, being anti-establishment, always implicitly approves personal freedom and celebrates all forms of difference and deviance (Tiwary 80). On the other hand, it accepts defeat as an inevitable end at the hands of power and as such New Historicism seems to express pessimistic strain of Michael Foucault (Tiwary 80). Therefore, I believe that the influence of Michel Foucault in New Historicism is clearly seen in how it views the power as a constraining structure which controls individuals, meaning that a dominant group could exert its influence over others.

Related to New Historicism’s view on constraining structure, power relations are important in New Historicism. New Historicism is a mode of critical interpretation which privileges power relations as the most important context for texts of all kinds (Brannigan 6). The visibility of power is an important concept when considering Elizabethan theatre and its relationship to the state, as exemplified by
Jonathan Dollimore: Queen Elizabeth’s anxiety that a play which implied a criticism to her, Richard II, was played 40 times in open streets and houses (Dollimore 8). What makes the operations of power particularly complicated is the fact that the self polices and regulates its own desires and repressions (Brannigan 7). Therefore, power needs to have subversion, otherwise it would be without the opportunity to justify itself, and to make itself visible as power (Brannigan 8).

2. Containment and Subversion

The paradoxical circumstance of trying to control the uncontrollable is played out in the New Historicism, whose central, internal theoretical debate reproduces the question of “containment” or “subversion”: the New Historicism insistently raises the question of whether dominant forces in culture are essentially totalizing, producing their own preco-opted subversions, or whether culture’s power is incomplete and vulnerable to genuine destabilization (Harpham 360). Therefore, New Historicism sees two paradoxical situations which reproduce the question of containment and subversion, since the New Historicism questions whether the dominant forces in culture are producing their own subversions or whether culture’s power is incomplete for destabilization. Whereas for New Historicism subversion is always contained by state power, Cultural Materialism is slightly more hopeful, and for a critic like Sinfield there are sufficient cracks and contradictions in the system to allow for some oppositional intervention (Brannigan 10).
The example of subversion and containment could be seen in Stephen Greenblatt’s essay, “Invisible Bullets: Renaissance Authority and its Subversion, Henry IV and Henry V.” Greenblatt uses Thomas Harriot’s work, *A Brief and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia*. In his work, Thomas Harriot reported how he achieved to convert Indians into Christianity. Specifically, Harriot’s report talks about the English colonists’ experiences with the Indians in America. Greenblatt relates it to Machiavellianism, a sense of religion “as a set of beliefs manipulated by the subtlety of the priests to help ensure social order and cohesion”, since the report initially discusses the ways in which the Indians understood the Europeans as gods (Greenblatt 21-22). In other words, Machiavellianism implies that all religion was a sophisticated confidence trick. Hence, the colonists use it as the power to control or manipulate the Indians, for their own benefits. The Indians must be persuaded that the Christian God is all-powerful (Greenblatt 22). Furthermore, the Indians must be persuaded that the Christian God is committed to the survival of His chosen people, that “He will wither the corn and destroy the lives of savages who displease Him by disobeying or plotting against the English” (Greenblatt 23). The colonists lie by stating that Christian God will destroy the corn and lives of savages, since the survival of the English colony actually depends upon this imposition. In this respect, ‘the invisible bullets’ are considered as their tools or lies to colonize the Indians. Therefore, the subversion is needed by the power and it is contained in order to maintain the order’s establishment.
3. Between Free Will and Agency

The discussion on free will has developed into arguments which have been going on for centuries. This may be because this is closely related to freedom of action and moral responsibility (Ezeh 42). Indeed, much of the debate about free will centers around whether human beings have it. In contemporary debates, scholars like Robert Kane, Timothy O’Connor, and Hugh McCann, though differ in their views about the causes of human action, nevertheless believe that humans have free will (Ezeh 42).

Philosophers like Rene Descartes, argued that the faculty of will is identified with freedom of choice, as “the ability to do or not to do something” and even goes to declare that “the will is by its nature so free that it can never be constrained” (Passions of the Soul 41). Therefore, Decartes opines that though our physical bodies are constrained by natural laws, our spirits have “unbounded freedom that it is our spirits that are ultimately behind the free actions that we perform” (Ezeh 42). This view is related to libertarian free will, which is basically about how man is an autonomous being, operates independently and not controlled by other or by outside forces (Ezeh 42). In this case, man is self-controlled and operates independently of others or other external forces.

On a basic account, free will may be related to choose actions. In other words, free will is the ability to select a course of action as a means to fulfill some desire. For instance, David Hume defines liberty as a power of acting or of not acting
according to the determinations of the will, i.e. if we choose to stay still we may do so, and if we choose to move we may do that (48). This view, that free will is related to the freedom of choice, responsibility, and consequences, will be discussed in the analysis of this study.

Beside free will, another related concept to recognize is ‘agent’, which may be compared to ‘subject.’ People might be able to recognize subject and agent as the passive and active dimensions of the same process, which is, each of human being is potentially a subject/agent or a subject and agent, simultaneously or by turns (Pope 242). People are subjects in so far as they are “thrown under” things; politically oppressed or psychologically repressed (Pope 242). But at the same time people are also agents, capable of “doing things” and “making things happen”, politically and psychologically active in their own remaking (Pope 242-243). Therefore, in terms of history, it is plausible to see people as both “making and being made by it”, and in terms of narrative, people might be seen as both the teller and the told (Pope 243).

4. Theoretical Framework

New Historicism could see how the relations of power are portrayed in *A Clockwork Orange*. In this case, the tension between agency and containment could be scrutinized. Related to the second research question, New Historicism also sees there is no hierarchy between literature and history. In other words, history may have powerful influence on literature, and vice versa. Therefore, this research investigates
in what ways the publication of the novel is related with the historical contexts, especially how they are dealing with the concepts of agency.

Using the novel as the primary text in this study, I also use its co-texts, which are some historical accounts, namely the author’s biography, newspaper articles, movie adaptation, and other historical sources, facts and subject matters they reflect, such as critics or debates from newspaper, some news including crime investigation, in line with the New Historicist criticism. In this case, I examine the dialogue or interaction between the novel *A Clockwork Orange* and history. This point is not only related to the moment of production, but also the moment of consumption. Therefore, it is related to when the novel was consumed or received by readers of different time period and geographical background. And then, as stated above, new historicists may also examine how a particular period or culture fashions itself. For instance, a literary text is the production of the society and in return it can also shape the culture of its society. These major ideas are discussed further on the next chapter.
CHAPTER III

AGENCY AND CONTAINMENT IN A CLOCKWORK ORANGE

The previous chapter has summarized several studies that discuss free will and state control in A Clockwork Orange. This thesis analyzes the concepts of agency and containment, since one of New Historicism’s central assumptions is power relations. Inspired by Foucault, the new historicists seek to find examples of power and how it is dispersed within the text. It can be said that the purpose is to get an understanding of history and the power relations in society. Therefore, the question that is explored here is about the New Historicist’s conception of power and its relation to the possibility of subversion or resistance and how it is depicted in the novel.

A. Alex’s Agency Manifested in Violence

In the novel, Alex represents an agent who expresses his individual will. Within the first seven chapters, Alex shows his ability to show his power and to choose any action he wishes, including violence. The first act of violence occurs within the first chapter when Alex and his gang attack an old man on the street:
The old veck\textsuperscript{2} began to make sort of chumbling\textsuperscript{3} shooms\textsuperscript{4} — ‘wuf waf wof’ — so Georgie let go of holding his goobers apart and just let him have one in the toothless rot with his ringy fist, and that made the old veck start moaning a lot then, then out comes the blood, my brothers, real beautiful.\textsuperscript{5}

They beat the man and destroy his property. When Alex rips up the pages of the old man’s books, the man cries out that they are not his but belong to the ‘municipality’ \textit{(CO, 9)}. In this way, the old man may represent the state or the containing government itself.

There are some other examples that can explain why Alex is an agent, such as when Alex and his gang find a cottage, a house of an author named Alexander. They first pretend that they are in trouble and need help to use telephone for an ambulance \textit{(CO, 23-24)}. After managing to enter the house, Alex finds a book written by Alexander, titled \textit{A Clockwork Orange}. Alex is interested in the book’s title, and reads some of the description:

\begin{quote}
The attempt to impose upon man, a creature of growth and capable of sweetness, to ooze juicily at the last round the bearded lips of God, to attempt to impose, I say, laws and conditions appropriate to a mechanical creation, against this I raise my swordpen. \textit{(CO, 25)}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{2}man
\textsuperscript{3}mumbling
\textsuperscript{4}noise
\textsuperscript{5}All subsequent citations of Burgess’ novel \textit{A Clockwork Orange} abbreviated \textit{CO} will be used in this thesis with pagination only.
This particular part may show how actually Alexander is against the government’s domination because he argues that a man cannot be forced to act like machines, so that he is against the government’s total subjugation of its citizens. What makes Alexander different from Alex is that he uses his ability to write, while Alex uses his physical violence. Eventually, Alex and his gang senselessly beat up the author and then make him watch as they take turns raping his wife. Again, they use violence to express their freedom. This scene of violence may also show how Alex, as an agent, intentionally violates the government laws.

B. Alex’s Critique of the State

The way Alex evaluates the state may also show his subversive act as an agent. During one of his monologues, Alex thinks that the government or the schools “cannot allow the bad because they cannot allow the self” (CO, 44). The state here could not accept the “self” because the state sees that it contains free will which may include evil things or violence.

Alex also thinks that the progress of history is caused by the “brave malenky selves (agents as the minority) fighting these big machines (government)” (CO, 45). This means that Alex considers himself as an agent against the state, so that his argument is subversive. Therefore, Alex’s conclusion concerning the state’s abolition of the self intersects with his thought on the fight between the freedom of the “self” and the government. Alex mocks a government’s article which states that the society
and young people would be better if appreciation of art is encouraged, since the art appreciation could make people more civilized (CO, 46). Alex, who himself loves listening to classical music, accuses that the government’s media is foolish. This is because Alex loves to fight and commit violence even though he enjoys listening to music; thus, Alex concludes that the government’s article is wrong. The story shows how high appreciation for music hardly demonstrates the civilizing role of art. In this respect, Alex’s violent acts and his appreciation for music can be read in relation to Pierre Bourdieu’s writing, *Distinction: A Social Critique on the Judgment of Taste*. In this book, Bourdieu argues that cultural choice, or taste, is closely related to social position. The book presents a survey determining how cultural products, varied from the most legitimate areas (high culture) to the most ‘personal’ ones, are consumed, viewed from two basic factors, namely, educational level and social origin (Bourdieu 13). Bourdieu found that people with the same educational position will choose the same choices of music (Bourdieu 16). Yet, these different aesthetic choices people make are all distinctions, which are choices made in opposition to those made by other classes. In this view, Burgess shows how Alex’s taste in high-culture classical music serves to resist against the division of social classes. This is because taste can be “terribly violent”, as tastes are first and foremost distastes, “disgust provoked by horror or visceral intolerance (‘sick-making’) of the taste of others” because each taste “feels itself to be natural” which “amounts to rejecting others as unnatural and therefore vicious” (Bourdieu 56). In this way, taste separates people since it may
reject other different tastes. Alex, who has high appreciation of music and criticizes other teenagers who love popular music (CO, 156-157), is a criminal and hardly known as a civilized or high educated person.

Bourdieu also asserts that working-class people expect every image to fulfill a function (41). This is similar to how the government’s article views music only for its civilizing purpose. In another part of the story, Dr. Brodsky also mentions how music is “a useful emotional heightener” (CO, 128). Therefore, this also serves to criticize the function of art for distinction because in the story, it is the highly educated ones who view music for its purpose, different from Alex who really worships the classical music.

C. Alex’s Totalitarian Manner

Another interesting fact is that Alex, as an agent who is subjected, also loves to subjectify some people. Here Alex imposes his belief to the members of his gang in a totalitarian or repressive manner. In this way, he loves to show Georgie, Pete, and Dim what should be considered acceptable and unacceptable behavior. The tension first grows when the gang returns to their favorite place to drink, after a night of ultra-violence. Alex shows his resentment toward Dim by beating his face since Dim interrupts him when listening to a woman singing his favorite piece of music (CO, 32). Yet Alex narrates that he had disapproved of Dim’s behavior long before the incident of the singing woman. For example, once after the gang attacks the
tobacco shop owner, Alex tells the reader that he “didn't like the look of Dim; he looked dirty and untidy, like a veck who'd been in a fight, which he had been of course, but you should never look as though you have been” (CO, 14).

In addition to his repressive manner towards Dim, Alex shows the desire to rule when he gives instruction to his friends, telling them how to behave: “Have you not every veshch\(^6\) you need? If you need an auto you pluck it from the trees” (CO, 57). However, his friends do not necessarily agree with Alex. In fact, Georgie and Dim oppose and defy Alex’s imposition as a gang leader. Yet Alex manages to win a fight between him, Georgie, and Dim. Afterwards, he states “they knew now who was master and leader” (CO, 59). In relation with this, Alex’s last role as the leader of the gang happens in their attempt to rob an old woman’s house. Here Alex often makes orders upon his droogs\(^7\), shows his capabilities and even thinks that the others would be amazed. He then faces the old woman by himself and kills her, after a fight (CO, 69).

D. Alex as Prisoner

However, Alex’s totalitarian manner results in his gang’s treachery. In the story, Alex narrates the moment of his friends’ treachery. After the incident at the old woman’s house, Alex heard that the police coming, thinking that it was the woman who reported to the police. However, he was surprised to find out that when he tried

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\(^6\) thing

\(^7\) friends
to tell his friends about the police, Dim said to him “You stay to meet them” (CO, 70). Afterwards, Dim chains Alex and hurts his eyes so that Alex could not see anything for a moment (CO, 70-71). Alex was eventually caught by the police and brought to the police office. He was beaten, and forced to tell all the crimes which he had committed. Yet the other members of the gang are not arrested by the police. This situation shows how Alex’s friends invert the position of Alex, from a repressive leader into a prisoner.

In relation with the changed situation, after the initial scenes of Alex’s violence, the novel proceeds with the government’s control towards Alex. From the first days in the prison, the prison chaplain often preaches to the prisoners every Sunday morning. The prison chaplain is very fond of finding Alex who often reads the “big book” or the Bible, which is likely a part of education of the prison (CO, 89). Although Alex finds the book interesting in the way it tells about “yahoodies” tolochking each other and then peeting their Hebrew vino and getting on to the bed with their wives like handmaidens” and even imagines himself involved in the book’s beating and “nailing in”, the prison’s Governor is also pleased to hear that Alex seems to like the religious teaching (CO, 89-90). In this way, the state believes that the prisoners’ manners could be changed through religion.

8 Jews
9 beating
10 drinking
11 wine
E. The Government’s Control through Ludovico’s Technique

In the prison, Alex kills a new prisoner and this news spreads to the prison’s officials. The state wants to change Alex’s depraved behaviors. It is shown through how the Ministry of Interior says that the criminals can best be dealt with “on a purely curative basis” and to “kill the criminal reflex” (CO, 102). This is related with what the Governor says to Alex, “Why then should not the state, very severely hit by you brutal hooligans, not hit back also? But the new view is to say no. The view is that we turn the bad into the good” (CO, 104). In other words, the state decides that while criminals have innate evil characteristics, their choices could be turned into good through science.

Despite of what the Governor states, the state seems to not really care about the idea of morality. In this case, the state desires and enjoys the power and should be obeyed and feared. The state, in the form of funded scientists, uses a variety of methods to control Alex’s violence. The operation upon Alex, named Ludovico’s Technique, makes Alex feel ill. Alex is injected with hypodermic and forced to watch a series violent movies, with his top eyelids’ pulled up by some clips so that he could not close his eyes when watching the movies. His head is restrained so that he cannot try to look away if he doesn’t want to view the movie clips. One of the doctors, Dr. Branom, seems to convince Alex that he will be cured, even though they should be hard on him (CO, 121). Furthermore, Dr. Branom also attempts to comfort Alex in his conditioning when he says, “What is happening to you now is what should happen
to any normal healthy human organism contemplating the actions of the forces of evil, the workings of the principle of destruction. You are being made sane, you are being made healthy” (CO, 121). However, everything the state does gives the impression that it will keep the government in power.

In relation with maintaining the state’s power, it is shown through the state’s motive in conditioning Alex. On the last day, Alex is forced to show the result of the operation in front of an audience. It is clear that Alex could not commit violence when he is tested. For instance, when a man hurts him and tries to make him angry, Alex could not hurt him back. Alex narrates how the “horrible killing sickness whooshed up” (CO, 139). In this way, Alex feels sick every time he wants to commit violence. Alex’s capability to commit violence is removed. Moreover, Dr. Brodsky says to the audience, “Our subject is, you see, impelled towards the good by, paradoxically, being impelled towards evil. The intention to act violently is accompanied by strong feelings of physical distress” (CO, 140). This speech and Alex’s performance invite arguments from the audience. One of the strong opinions is from the Prison Chaplain, who believes that Alex has no real choice since he ceases to be a creature capable of moral choice because of this operation (CO, 140-141). The chaplain worries that Alex cannot become a truly human if he cannot make a choice to be or not to be violent. However, Dr. Brodsky expresses the state’s desire to maintain its status when he admits to the audience at Alex’s exhibition, “We are not concerned with motive, with the higher ethics. We are concerned only with cutting
down crime” (CO, 126). In this way, the state wants to prove to the public and shows their politics on how to rehabilitate criminals and to make the society free of crime. This statement is proved further in the last part of the novel, where Alex comes back to the society. This is because the government makes cutting down crime as a means for getting many votes from the people in the next General Election, as Alex says:

This gazetta\textsuperscript{12} I had seemed to be like a Government gazetta, for the only news that was on the front page was about the need for every veck to make sure he put the Government back in again on the next General Election, which seemed to be about two or three weeks off. There were very boastful slovos\textsuperscript{13} about what the Government had done, brothers, in the last year or so, what with increased exports and a real horrorshow\textsuperscript{14} foreign policy and improved social services and all that call\textsuperscript{15}. But what the Government was really most boastful about was the way in which they reckoned the streets had been made safer for all peace-loving night-walking lewdies\textsuperscript{16} in the last six months, what with better pay for the police and the police getting like tougher with young hooligans and perverts and burglars and all that call. (Burges 149)

The newspaper that Alex reads tells about how the government has succeeded in getting over the crime and makes the situation better. Alex is also included in the article, where the article itself is boastful about the Ludovico’s Technique. He also finds the picture of Minister of Interior, who tells about the crime-free era, so that the

\textsuperscript{12} newspaper
\textsuperscript{13} words
\textsuperscript{14} good, well
\textsuperscript{15} feces
\textsuperscript{16} people
society would be peaceful and no more fear of attacks from young street gangs and other criminals (CO, 149).

F. Alex Losing Free Will

Beside the government’s control on public’s vote, the last part of the novel also shows how Alex’s will is completely removed, like clockwork orange. After Alex completes the program and is released back into society, firstly he is rejected by his parents. He returns to his home to find that there is a newcomer in the family who pays a rent for living in his room, named Joe. When Alex finds that his own belongings have been sold by the police, he was very upset. The way Joe treats him also makes Alex feel angry, yet he could not do anything since the thought and act of any violence would make him feel sick:

I had to sit down then, and this Joe said: “Ask permission before you sit, you mannerless young swine,” so I cracked back skorry\textsuperscript{17} with a “Shut your dirty big fat hole, you,” feeling sick. Then I tried to be all reasonable and smiling for my health’s sake like, so I said: “Well, that’s my room, there’s no denying that. This is my home also. What suggestions have you, my pee and em\textsuperscript{18}, to make?” (CO, 153)

This shows how the government’s containment is powerful towards him. Alex returns to the society to become a victim, incapable of defending himself, making his capability as an agent disappear or castrated. When his former victims beat Alex, he

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\textsuperscript{17} quick
\textsuperscript{18} parents
can do nothing to defend himself, since for him “it being better to be hit at like that than to want to sick and feel that horrible pain” (CO, 163). Alex has been transformed into a completely different person. The further evidence is when Alex is beaten by two policemen, who were his former friend, Dim, and his old enemy, Billyboy (CO, 168-169). They have become police officers, thereby becoming agents of the state.

Yet Alex can do nothing to defend himself.

Being assaulted and weak because of the torture, Alex accidentally finds F. Alexander’s house, his former victim. He asks Alexander for help, and slowly remembers him as the writer whom he has attacked before. However, Alexander didn’t remember Alex and instead he sympathizes for Alex’s horrible condition. When Alex states that the police officers have beaten him, Alexander mentions Alex as “a victim of the modern age” (CO, 172). Alexander also recognizes Alex from the newspapers, which states how Alex is the victim of the Ludovico’s Technique (CO, 173). Alexander believes that the government has turned Alex into something other than a human being since Alex has “no power of choice any longer” (CO, 174). Alexander implicates the government as treating Alex like a machine, something which is against humanity. For that moment, Alexander seems to be Alex’s new friend, since he connects Alex’s similar condition with his dead wife’s poor incident when he says “a victim of the modern age, just as she was” (CO, 176). In this way, Alexander also puts Alex “a victim of the modern age” for the purpose of being a weapon against the authoritarian state. He has told some of his friends who will be
interested in Alex’s case and writes an article in order to show how evil the Government is (CO, 179). Alexander makes sure that he cooperates with his party to speak out against the state.

It is true that Alexander’s attack against the government shows his opposed political ideology, but once he discovers Alex’s true identity, he becomes similar with the authoritarian government itself. Rather than focusing on his ideology for humanism, F. Alexander chooses his personal values over the values of his own political party, since he plans to kill Alex. After Alex takes a nap, he wakes up in a locked room and hears classical music playing, which stimulates his sickness. Afterwards, Alex finds a window and chooses to jump outside the house, in order to commit a suicide (CO, 187-188). However, Alexander’s plan failed since Alex didn’t die and the government eventually tried to befriend Alex.

G. Alex’s Reconciliation with the State

As stated earlier, cutting down crime for the government only serves as the immediate means for achieving favor with the popular vote. The evidence becomes clearer when the government restores Alex to his natural self and promises him a good job. Alex’s jumping incident is reported in the newspapers headlines, such as “Victim of Criminal Reform Scheme” and “Government as Murderer” (CO, 192). When Minister of Interior visits Alex, he states that they should become friends: “I and the Government of which I am a member want you to regard us as friends” (CO,
Minister of Interior, who is greedy for vote and power, tries to befriend Alex and offers him a good job so that the government gets more popularity and respect from its people. Alex is also cured since at the hospital, he is able to dream of committing violence without any sickness (CO, 192-193). For instance, some doctors test Alex’s condition by giving Alex some pictures, such as a picture of bird-nest full of eggs, and Alex explains how he wants to smash them and “throw them against a wall or a cliff or something and then viddy\(^{19}\) them all smash up real horrorshow\(^{20}\)” (CO, 196). This shows how Alex’s free will has been restored by the government. Therefore, the government’s power is so large that it could control Alex’s free will. It is opposed to Decartes’ view on free will that the free will cannot be constrained.

Beside restoring Alex’s free will, the government also incarcerates the writer F. Alexander:

“There is a man,” said the Intinfmin (Minister of Interior), “called F. Alexander, a writer of subversive literature, who has been howling for your blood. He has been mad with desire to stick a knife in you. But you’re safe from him now. We put him away.” (CO, 198)

The fact that Alexander is jailed by the state shows the state’s containment towards any opposition, positioning Alexander as the “menace” (CO, 198). By jailing Alexander for his cruelty toward Alex, government intends to create an image that the bad guy is Alexander not the government.

\(^{19}\) see
\(^{20}\) good
What the government has performed, such as, giving back Alex’s free will is not motivated by humanity, but power. By restoring Alex’s free will and putting him back as a normal human being, the government wants to get the people’s sympathy and votes from the society. Therefore, the government’s motivation is not merely about morality, but of power and containment.

The fact that the government’s seemingly kind action is actually motivated by the desire to maintain the existing oppressive power relation is also highlighted by the incident when Alex is made to sign a document without realizing its content. This proves how Alex is not aware of the state’s deception to keep Alex from resisting against them. This trick is carried out by the minister who presents a stereo to Alex and allows him to hear Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony. Distracted by the music, Alex unwittingly signs a document without knowing what he was signing (CO, 199). In From Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison (1975), Michel Foucault also presents how the society is “carceral”, or prisonlike:

The frontiers between confinement, judicial punishment and institutions of discipline, which were already blurred in the classical age, tended to disappear and to constitute a great carceral continuum that diffused penitentiary techniques into the most innocent disciplines, transmitting disciplinary norms into the very heart of the penal system and placing over the slightest illegality, the smallest irregularity, deviation or anomaly, the threat of delinquency. (Foucault 1639).

Therefore, the prison system regulates and permeates the society, forming what Foucault terms the “carceral”, to control the disciplinary society. This great carceral
network reaches all the disciplinary mechanisms that function throughout society (Foucault 1640). In relation to this, the institutions (schools, factories, the army, etc.) mold behavior according to a norm, subordinates individuals to institutional demands, examines and watches over all subjects, and punishes deviants (Cain et al 1618). They administer individuals using the same strategies and techniques of control that prisons employ. This resembles Michel Foucault’s interpretation of Jeremy Bentham’s architectural figure, the Panopticon. A panoptic (all-seeing) power keeps subjects under constant surveillance (Cain et al 1618). This is related to how Alex blindly reconciles with the government and somehow forgives them from the blame of his horrible conditions as a result of the Ludovico’s Technique. By blindly signing the document, the effect on Alex is repressive because Alex himself doesn’t realize the content of the document. He might not be able to realize that he is still under government’s surveillance after signing the document. The content of the document, although not revealed, might also be interpreted as submission of his free will. Therefore, Alex’s capability as an agent is contained by the government.

H. Alex’s Final Realization as an Agent

How Alex has been cured as a human being is further proven on the last chapter. The chapter begins with Alex and his new gang, Len, Rick, and Bully, sitting at the Korova Milkbar while posing their intentions to commit violence on that day. However, it does not proceed like what happened in the initial chapters. For the first
time in the novel, Alex imagines his future: While walking through town, Alex imagines himself as a seventy-year-old man with grey hair (CO, 207). On his walk, Alex suddenly bumps into the only former friend he hasn’t seen yet, Pete. He is married to a woman named Georgina and has a job, showing his change and how he has grown. The meeting with Pete makes Alex think that his old life has been dead and gone. Alex discovers that he wants to break free from his violent urges and wishes to start a family: “Perhaps that was it, I kept thinking. Perhaps I was getting too old for the sort of jeezny I had been leading, brothers” (CO, 210). This is where Alex finds that he has grown up.

Alex’s change may illustrate the power and ability of people to change, hence people’s capability as agents. However, Alex also shows how violence is a part of society. In this story, Alex doesn’t merely want to break free from his own violence, but he is also able to realize it:

My son, my son. When I had my son I would explain all that to him when he was starry enough to like understand. But then I knew he would not understand or would not want to understand at all and would do all the veshches I had done, yes perhaps even killing some poor starry forella surrounded with mewing kots and koshkas, and I would not be able to really stop him. And nor would he be able to

\[\text{life} \]
\[\text{old} \]
\[\text{things} \]
\[\text{“trout”} \]
\[\text{tomcats} \]
\[\text{cats} \]
stop his own son, brothers. And so it would ity\textsuperscript{27} on to like the end of the world. (\textit{CO}, 211)

When he talks about his future son, Alex reaches to the point of realization that this chain of violence could not stop. He would have a son and realizes that his own son might be violent as well. Alex realizes that he can do nothing and cannot stop it if it happens. This is interesting because Alex’s sudden change itself on the surface may show his free will, but in the same time his monologue about his son projects that youth violence might not be able to be stopped as it becomes a part of the society. In the end, Alex also believes that his maturity is only a part of the cycle which he cannot fully control and grasp, and thus implying that agency is inseparable from containment.

\textsuperscript{27} go
CHAPTER IV

*A CLOCKWORK ORANGE IN THE CONTEXT OF HISTORY*

More than a fictional story, *A Clockwork Orange* can be viewed as a representation to culture and history. As mentioned previously, New Historicism attempts to read literary texts in relation with the nonliterary text production of the period. In other words, a literary work should be considered as a product of historical and social circumstances rather than an isolated work. Therefore, I scrutinize the novel in terms of New Historicism concepts, since putting the novel in specific social and political discourses of its time will project the story as a historical and cultural product.

In terms of historical context, *A Clockwork Orange* may draw the parallel between the rising of street violence in Britain when the novel was produced and the conflicts between freedom and controlling government in the novel. The depiction of the situation where Alex commits violence is influenced by the rising of street violence at the time the novel was written. In that respect, the writing of *A Clockwork Orange* was influenced by youth culture in 1950s and 1960s.

There are several accounts related to the situation of youth culture after the Second World War. Delinquency was found to have local traditions and values (Brake 59). Mays’ (1954) study of Liverpool found an overtly delinquent tradition
emphasizing toughness, daring and defiance to authority, which also offered emotional solidarity (147). Other studies in London as well as Liverpool (Morris 1957; Kerr 1958) found that in the local community, “theft from bosses, institutions or shops was permitted, vandalism on property seen as not belonging to anyone in particular and masculinity were all emphasized. School was seen as useless, and the police and employers regarded cynically” (Willmott 143). Burgess’ characterization and depiction of Alex and his gang’s activities against school and authorities seem to have been inspired by such a historical context.

In terms of how the youth culture influences *A Clockwork Orange*, Anthony Burgess had first hand experiences in his life which serve as the main ideas of the novel. Burgess began the book in 1960 when, returning to Britain from Malaya and Brunei, he was diagnosed as suffering from an inoperable brain tumor and told that he had only a year to live. He was 43, with four novels behind him, written between teaching, composing music and working for the Colonial Service (Morrison 1). In the second volume of his autobiography *You’ve Had Your Time*, Burgess states how he was inspired to write the novel. Newly back in Britain, Burgess was struck by the development of coffee bars, pop music and the rivalry between Mods and Rockers. At that time of writing, Burgess met Teddy Boys:

Lynne and I had come home to a new British phenomenon—the violence of teenage gangs. We had, on our leaves of 1957 and 1958, seen teddy boys in coffee bars. These were youths dressed very smartly in neo-Edwardian suits with heavy-soled boots and distinctive
coiffures. They seemed too elegant to be greatly given to violence, but they were widely feared by the faint-hearted. They were a personification of the Zeitgeist in that they seemed to express a brutal disappointment with Britain's postwar decline as a world power and evoked the age of Edwardian expansion in their clothes if nothing else. [...] Now, in 1960, they were being superseded by hooligans more casually dressed. The Mods and Rockers were so called because the first group wore modern clothes.²⁸

Burgess found this phenomenon of youth violence as he saw the violent youth gang called Teddy Boys, who were elegantly dressed in neo-Edwardian suits²⁹. Like what the Teddy Boys had done, Mods developed in East London, but with an attempt to abstract themselves with a neat and hip image, and reflected the elegant dandyism (Brake 74). Tough, but reflecting the lower white-collar, upwardly mobile groups, their appearance was the opposite of their enemies, the Rockers, who also appeared in the early 1960s (Brake 74). With their black leather jackets, studs, boots and jeans, Rockers were violent, studiedly working class, and anti-authority (Brake 75). The peculiar dress, style, focal concerns, etc. of Teddy Boys, the Mod, or the Rocker set them off as distinctive groupings (Hall & Jefferson 7-8). The two images, as Nuttall (1969) states are that Mod meant effeminate, emulating the middle classes, aspiring to be competitive, snobbish, while Rocker meant hopelessly naïve, loutish, and scruffy (Nuttall 333). These young people may walk, talk, act, look different from

²⁸ All subsequent citations of Burgess’ biography You’ve Had Your Time abbreviated YHYT will be used in this thesis with pagination only.
²⁹ The neo-Edwardian clothes were inspired by the styles worn by dandies in the Edwardian period (the reign of King Edward VII, 1901-1910), which Saville Row Tailors had attempted to re-introduce into men’s fashions in Britain after the Second World War. This fashion style has origins in what was an upper class reaction to the austerity imposed by the socialist government in post-war years. (Bell 3)
their parents and from some of their peers, but they belong to the same families, go to the same schools, work at much the same jobs, live down the same streets as their peers and parents (Hall & Jefferson 8).

In A Clockwork Orange, Burgess describes similar condition of this youth culture. The novel presents the youth subculture originated in London in the late 1950s and peaked in the early to mid 1960s (Ahmed & Rahman 64). Elements of the youth subculture’s lifestyle include music and fashion. Specifically, the Teddy Boys were the first post-war, working-class dandys in the late 1950s, a drab and dreary period in Britain after the war (Brake 73). They are also known as a subculture group who emerged in London in the 1960s having a dandy-like style consisting of strange dress which was a fashion of the day, such as, an Edwardian style suit, suede shoes, three-button suits, cropped hair, short-hemmed trousers and very narrow hats commonly referred to in Britain as “pork pie hats” (Ahmed & Rahman 64-65). Burgess was very much concerned about the emergence of this subculture group in British society. On the very first page of A Clockwork Orange, he has vividly depicted a candid picture of the dress style of the Teddy Boys (Ahmed & Rahman 65), as shown by Alex and his gang:

“The four of us were dressed in the heighth of fashion, which in those days was a pair of black very tight tights with the old jelly

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30 A youth culture whose distinctiveness depended on distinct styles, behaviors, and interests of its members. Youth subcultures offer the members an identity outside of that ascribed by social institutions, such as family, work, home and school.

31 height
mould, as we called it, fitting on the crotch underneath the tights, this being to protect and also a sort of a design you could viddy\textsuperscript{32} clear enough in a certain 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 [...] which were a kind of a mockery of having real shoulders like that. Then, my brothers, we had these off-white cravats which looked like whipped-up kartoffel\textsuperscript{33} or spud with a sort of a design made on it with a fork. We wore our hair not too long and we had flip horrorshow\textsuperscript{34} boots for kicking. (CO, 4)

Like the Teddy Boys, Alex and his gang express their style in the height of fashion, or similar to upper-class style, in order to be autonomous or different. It is very likely that Burgess was inspired by the real historical condition of his time when depicting the novel.

The youth gang’s expression by dressing in upper-class style might also show the youth subculture’s attempt to reach the higher status. In the story, Alex is obsessed with the “height of fashion” and often comments the styles of others. However, the fact that remains is that it only suggested a solution on a symbolic level, since in real life the youth teenagers are only the working-class groups. It means that they ‘solve’, but in an imaginary way, problems “which at the concrete material level remain unresolved” (Hall & Jefferson 37). Therefore, the young teenagers could only present a status which they could never achieve in their real life.

In relation to this, Brake argues how most youth subcultures are not in any simple sense oppositional (7). They may be rebellious; they may celebrate and dramatize

\textsuperscript{32} see
\textsuperscript{33} potato
\textsuperscript{34} good
specific styles and values, but their rebellion seldom reaches an articulated opposition (Brake 7). Even where it does, as it did with the counterculture of the 1960s (more accurately the period between 1964 and 1972), it becomes accommodated and contained (Brake 7). Michel Foucault also states how resistance everywhere throughout the world created by power, but like everything else, resistance is an offshoot of power (Cain et al 1621). As a result, many activities that may seem to oppose power are, a Foucauldian analysis shows “complicitous” with it, reinforcing rather than contesting its reign (Cain et al 1621).

These teenagers, as told by Burgess, are also described as trouble makers. Mike Brake, in his work, also states how the societal reaction of the teenagers was outrage (73). George Melly also depicts the terrible atmosphere at the time:

The fights and cinema riots, the gang bangs and haphazard vandalism were produced by a claustrophobic situation. They were the result of a society which still held that the middle classes were entitled not only to impose moral standards on a class whose way of life was totally outside its experience; of an older generation who used the accident of war as their excuse to lay down the law on every front; of a system of education which denied any creative potential and led to dead-end jobs and obligatory conscription; of a grey, colourless, shabby world where good boys played ping-pong. (38)

It was a riot atmosphere, since many of the gangs were involved in fights. Burgess described explicitly his thoughts when he and his wife Lynne saw Mods and Rockers in a fight when they made a trip to Hastings. He stated that those young people loved aggressive “for its own sake” and he decided to write the novel “in which youthful
aggression reached so frightful a pitch that the government would try to burn it out” 
(YHYT, 62). Here the authorities of the state had troubles with the aggression of the 
youth which became such a nuisance. This chaotic situation might have inspired 
Burgess for the novel’s theme of violence.

Brought up as a Catholic, Burgess frames the chaos in the novel with a 
religious content, in this case the free will “having the choice of good and evil” 
(YHYT, 62). Burgess’ religious background also makes him consider that humanity is 
defined by its capacity for St. Augustine’s free will, and that “moral choice cannot 
exist without a moral polarity” (YHYT, 73). Although realizing that the theme might 
be dangerous because of its theme and depiction, Burgess believes that this book 
should show violence (YHYT, 73). He believes that “literature, even the kind 
celebrated at a literary luncheon, was an aspect of the fallen world and one of its tasks 
was to clarify the nature of the fall” (YHYT, 73). This nature of the fall is related to 
the inner evil of human, as depicted by Alex in the novel, who commits violence 
because he simply loves to. When Alex is imprisoned and his free will is taken, he 
cannot commit crime anymore. Therefore, Burgess believes that the evil is considered 
as a natural part for Alex of being a human.

Burgess’ depiction of the state’s repressive atmosphere in A Clockwork 
Orange might have been influenced by the condition of the post-war period in 
Britain. The novel, entirely set in England, depicts an ultra-violence nightmare. In 
1960s, England was facing the disruptive decline of World War II. Many of the post-
war novels were dystopian novels which were about societies run by totalitarian governments and, while set in the future, they seem to reflect worries over the rising power of fascism and communism.

Pazan also argues how the Russian-English hybridization of the Nadsat language may mirror the Western world’s fear of the subconscious penetration of Soviet ideals (13). The idea of the language being tied in with communism is enhanced by the fact that the novel was published just after the built of Berlin Wall. In other words, Nadsat language may be used to reflect the worries of society toward the Soviet Union and totalitarianism. Even some characters in A Clockwork Orange recognize Nadsat as sinister (Pazan 16). For example, Dr. Branom in the novel describes Nadsat as “odd bits of rhyming slang”, “most of the roots are Slav. Propaganda”, and “subliminal penetration” (CO, 129). Therefore, Dr. Branom argues that “subliminal penetration” is related to how speaking in Nadsat may change someone’s perceptions in a particular way and also shapes his thinking process without realizing it. Meanwhile, as related to “Slav. Propaganda”, this language may connote communist dictatorship.\(^{35}\) Keith Booker argues that Nadsat represents various forms of entrapment and conditioning which may reflect the subtle influence of Russian propaganda as well as having an ‘alienating’ effect on its teen speakers, since it cannot be understood by mainstream society (Wood & Marlow 62). Therefore, the doctors in the novel may see the language as representing the youth culture which

\(^{35}\)Anti-Slavism reached its highest peak during World War II, when Nazi Germany declared Slavs to be subhuman and planned to exterminate the majority of Slavic people (Longerich 241).
does not respect parents, authorities, and moral values. When Burgess first began to write *A Clockwork Orange*, Burgess planned to use the youth slang of the 1960s (*YHYT*, 62-63). However, he thought that the slang was “ephemeral, like all slang, and might have a lavender smell by the time the manuscript got to the printers” (*YHYT*, 63). He realized that the slang would be outmoded by the time the novel is published. The solution was to create the unique slang, Nadsat. Burgess used his background in Russian to build a vocabulary of around two hundred slang words (*YHYT*, 67). He believes as the book was about brainwashing (as the government brainwashes Alex), it was appropriate that the text itself should be a brainwashing device, meaning that the reader would be brainwashed into learning minimal Russian (*YHYT*, 67). Therefore, the reader may become fluent in learning minimal Nadsat language without even realizing it. Reviewers also noticed Burgess’ brainwashing technique, slowly grinding Russian into his readers’ minds through Nadsat, and agreed that it is effective (Pazan 17). For instance, Diana Josselson, attested that “mastery [of Nadsat] may be said to be simultaneous with exposure” (Pazan 17). Therefore, as if to confirm and mock Western society’s fears of the subconscious penetration of communist and totalitarian ideals (Pazan 16-17), the text coerces the reader into learning Russian without realizing it.

Burgess’ use of Nadsat language also influences the novel’s publication, since no British reviewers and readers liked the book. This is shown through how the book sold badly in England, the first time it appeared in 1962 (*YHYT*, 71). Moreover,
the reviewers particularly argued that Burgess was an accomplished writer who “had set out deliberately to murder the language”: the way Burgess uses Nadsat language in the novel is considered by the reviewers as Burgess’ destruction of English language (YHYT, 70).

Burgess also states how the British reviewers dramatized much of the first chapter of the book than the theme of the novel (YHYT, 71). When Burgess was invited to some television programs, the BBC even paid a small fee, more than French or American television does (YHYT, 71). Furthermore, Burgess states that the British were desperately conservative, since “they did not want experimental fiction and they hated ideas” (YHYT, 71). As a consequence, Burgess began to look to America (YHYT, 71).

Hoping to reach American audience, Norton released the novel’s edition in 1963. However, this American edition omitted the last chapter of the novel. Eric Swenson, Norton’s vice president, insisted that the book lose its final chapter (YHYT, 71). The Ballantine edition published in the country also omitted the concluding twenty-first chapter which the English Heinemann edition includes (Cullinan, Two Versions 288). The last chapter was cut in the US edition of the novel and not restored until 1986. Therefore, in 1986, Norton released a new edition of the novel, which included the controversial twenty-first chapter along with the introduction by Anthony Burgess. Here Burgess explains the reason for the disappearance of the last chapter. The New York publishers insisted on cutting out the twenty-first chapter, as
stated in Burgess’ introduction to this edition. Burgess agreed since he needed money back in 1961 (CO, x-xi). Burgess also justified the release of his incomplete novel in an interview with John Cullinan:

When I wrote the book my agent was not willing to present it to a publisher, which is rather unusual; and the sort of publishers in England were very dubious about the book. So when the American publisher made this objection to the final chapter, I didn’t feel myself to be in a very strong position. I was a little hesitant to judge the book; I was a little too close to it. I thought: “Well, they may be right.” Because authors do tend to be (especially after the completion of a book) very uncertain about the value of the book; and perhaps I gave in a little too weakly, but my concern was partly a financial one. I wanted it to be published in America, and I wanted some money out of it. So I said, “Yes.” Whether I’d say “Yes” now I don’t know; but I’ve been persuaded by so many critics that the book is better in its American form that I say, “All right, they know best.” (Art of Fiction 137)

In this interview, Burgess also mentions about how he needed money from the publication of the novel. He admitted how he gave in too weakly, since he was financially constrained and had no choice but to publish his novel incompletely, in accordance with the publisher’s wish.

The fact that the American publisher could not accept the last chapter stems from the publisher’s assessment on American readership that the Americans were tougher than the British and could face up to reality (CO, xiii). In this case, they believe they could handle a novel which depicted Alex as pure evil, without a kind of fairy-tale ending where he realizes his wrongs and wants to change. Yet Burgess
believes that the British version “accepted the notion of moral progress” (CO, xiii). This is related to the importance of moral choice, since a human being is endowed with free will to choose between good and evil.

Beside disappointed at the removal of the last chapter, Burgess is also displeased with the Glossary of Nadsat Language which is added to the Ballantine paperback edition by the late Stanley Edgar Hyman; this undercuts his purpose of teaching the reader a dialect by having him adjust to the context of each unfamiliar word or phrase (Cullinan, Two Versions 288). This is because Burgess had purposefully designed the novel so that no glossary would be needed. As mentioned previously, Burgess had the purpose for the text as a brainwashing device. In relation with this, Burgess believes how the glossary would nullify the brainwashing (YHYT, 67). Therefore, he is disappointed since the glossary allows the reader to avoid being involved actively with the novel’s language (Cullinan, Two Versions 288).

Even though the American audience was reading somehow different version of the book, Burgess believes that American reviewers understood the book better (YHYT, 72). For instance, Time said that Alex is more of a man as an evil man than as a good zombie (YHYT, 72). David Talbot in the New York Herald Tribune wrote that “love cannot exist without the possibility of hate, and by forcing men to abdicate their right to choose one over the other, society turns men into automata” (YHYT, 73). Burgess felt gratified to be understood in America and humiliated to be misread in his own country.
In spite of the release of the incomplete novel and the better reception in the US, Burgess was not satisfied with both the American novel and movie. Moreover, there were also people who wrote to Burgess about the movie adaptation, wondering why Kubrick “left out the denouement” (CO, xi). At the first time, the film director, Stanley Kubrick, was fascinated by the novel and found it bizarre, exciting and brilliantly developed (Nelson 136). His primer “intention was to be faithful to the novel” (Nelson 137) when he adapted it for film. However, the movie caused Burgess’ disappointment due to the ending, which is similar to the American version. The ending shows that Alex, “having been conditioned to hate violence, is now deconditioned and sees himself wrestling with a naked girl while a crowd dressed for Ascot discreetly applauds” (YHYT, 85). Burgess was worried of this ending since the free will had become an exaltation of the urge to sin (Burgess 85). Burgess believes that the last chapter is important since the main character has finally grown up, and it gives the novel the quality of “genuine fiction”, where it is found the principle that human beings change (CO, xi-xii). In the interview, Burgess likewise says how the last chapter was meant to be a “mature conclusion” (Cullinan, Art of Fiction 136).

Burgess’ scripts for A Clockwork Orange had been all rejected, and Burgess feared that the movie would be turned into pornography (YHYT, 85). It is because the movie was not made out of words, different from books, in which the writer’s aim had been to put language, not sex or violence into the foreground (YHYT, 85). Kubrick confessed that he did not know the unabridged or complete version and as an
American, though settled in England, “he had followed the only version that Americans were permitted to know” (Burgess 85). It’s also surprising that Kubrick was not aware of the original English version. It was the source of some tension between Kubrick and Burgess, along with the fact that Burgess had sold the film rights for the movie company and received no benefit when the movie became an international success (YHYT, 84).

Burgess’ fear was proved, since the public regarded the movie as dangerous and controversial. The movie had been blamed for its violence. Many critics attacked the movie at the time for what they described as its gratuitous violence, which depicts unreasonable brutality or just for the sake of being violent, and its release in 1971 provoked a storm of public protest, especially in UK. In 1974, John Fraser used A Clockwork Orange for his study Violence in the Arts because the film “has done the most to set off complaints in the early 1970s about excessive violence in movies” (Welsh 252). Fraser considered the film an example of a genre he goes on to identify as the “Violation Movie.” Other critic also attacked the film for its representations of violence, warning that watching so much brutality could desensitize viewers to violence (Schickel 14).

There were also many debates and critics arguing that the film had endangered the society by inspiring violence. The youth violence influences the work of Burgess, but the work itself has been accused as inciting violence in the society afterwards. Public claims that the film inspired incidences of real-life criminality. In
the United Kingdom, the banning of the film was considered and discussed in Parliament (Grabovickic 71). In the US, the press also considered Kubrick and Burgess responsible for various cases of youth delinquency and violence. Many cases were found that the people imitated how Alex committed violence to his victims. For instance, in Lancashire, a girl on a camping holiday was raped by a gang of youths who sang *Singin’ in the Rain* in imitation of Gene Kelly, just as Alex and his gang did in the film (Shaughnessy 6). A young boy was also beaten by a 16-year-old wearing white overalls and a bowler, which is similar to Alex’s costume (Shaughnessy 6). As Prince (1998) points out, Kubrick’s homeland at the time faced “steep increases in homicide, rape, aggravated assault, and robbery,” which “fed a sharp public fear of street crime” (28). There was also a report on gang, dressed in Alex and his gang’s style, raping a nun in Poughkeepsie (*YHYT*, 87). The report was inaccurate, since the boys confessed that they had not seen the film (Morrison 1). However, the charges of immorality for Burgess and Kubrick did not go away. In the middle of this situation, critics called Kubrick’s rendition much weaker than the book and they adamantly disapproved of the pornography and violence (Brown 6).

There were also debates in the *New York Times* which were based in philosophical and political discourses, especially related to the theme of morality and free will. Kubrick and actor Malcolm McDowell participated in these discussions, claiming that “liberals” did not like the film because it was forcing them to face reality (Burke 13). Meanwhile, Fred M. Hechinger on his article *A Liberal Fights*
Back, attacks the movie since it promotes fascism (Hechinger 1). Stanley Kubrick then particularly responded to Fred M. Hechinger on Now Kubrick Fights Back, by stating that the work was anti-authoritarian (Kubrick 1).

Closely connected to the movie’s controversy, another criticism was centered on its supposed ideological messages. For example, Beverly Walker, a feminist critique, charged the film as “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” (Walker 4). Therefore, she interpreted A Clockwork Orange’s violence and sexuality as representing a misogynist or gender-related political matter.

The worries about how youth is influenced by A Clockwork Orange were intensified by reports about a small but growing minority of young people who started copying the film’s fashions. For instance, an article in the Evening News from 17 January 1973 observed that young working-class males, including violent ones, were now wearing eye shadow and glitter, similar to Alex’s style in the movie (Kramer 53). Across 1973, there were also numerous reports about the violent and non-violent activities of groups of youngsters wearing droog outfits and often labeled ‘Clockwork gangs’ (Kramer 54). In this case, the youth’s fashion and violence activities were intensified by the movie.

Both the novel and the movie caused a panic and controversy to the society. This fact also proves the perspective of New Historicism, that literature is not merely
the mirror of the society but also capable of influencing the society. Only several years after it was released, the movie *A Clockwork Orange* by Stanley Kubrick was banned from screens by film’s producers in Britain, the country where *A Clockwork Orange* was made. Under the pressure of ongoing criticism, the director withdrew *A Clockwork Orange* from distribution in British market, until the film’s re-release in Britain on March 17, 2000. Therefore, it was Director Stanley Kubrick himself who withdrew the movie in 1973 after the press blamed it for inspiring several copycat crimes in the society, and probably because Kubrick himself also received some death treats (Brand 1).

Yet Anthony Burgess rejected the notion that art should be responsible for the events that happen in real life, by stating that “events of real life are anterior, naturally, to their representation in book or film, and that neither cinema nor literature can be blamed for the manifestations of original sin” (*YHIT*, 87). However, in New Historicism, it is literature which is capable of influencing history. He also mentions that “a man who kills his uncle cannot justifiably blame a performance of *Hamlet*” (*YHIT*, 87). So Burgess argues how people could not just blame *Hamlet* for the murder, and he also does not feel responsible for the violence inspired by his movie. In this case, Burgess did not believe the relationship between literature and history.

However, twenty years later, Burgess’ convictions about the moral influences of art were fundamentally changed (Grabovickic 72). In 1993, a few months before his death, he expressed concern in an article for the *Observer* whether *A Clockwork*
Orange might not have contributed in a small way to a certain “cult of violence” among the youth:

It must be considered a kind of grace in my old age to abandon a conviction that was part of my blood and bone. I mean the conviction that the arts were sacrosanct, and that included the sub-arts, that they would never be accused of exerting either a moral or an immoral influence, that they were incorrupt, incorruptive, incorruptible. I have quite recently changed my mind about that. This protective attitude to the arts was really a desire to justify the corrupt elements in the greatest literature of all time. That of the Elizabethan stage. It was a wish not to see William Shakespeare as a violent writer [...] But I begin to accept that, as a novelist, I belong to the ranks of the menacing. (qtd. in Grabovickie 72)

Writing in the wake of the murder of a two-year-old child, James Bulger, by two Liverpool 10-year-olds, and addressing public anxiety about a “cult of violence” among the young, he conceded that his lifelong belief in the essential harmlessness of literature might have been wrong (Morrison 1). Here Burgess explains that he has changed his mind and believes that the effect of art can be dangerous.

The controversy of A Clockwork Orange in its reception may also reflect the concepts of agency and containment. In this case, it may be seen as a subversive tool to the society, since this work and its movie adaptation have been blamed for inspiring similar violence. There were also many critics in the newspaper discussing the messages of the work itself, such as how the critics debated about how the work

36 Two boys were convicted of abduction and murder in the beating death of a Liverpool toddler, James Bulger. Jon Venables was 10 years old in February 1993 when he and Robert Thompson, who was also 10, lured James Bulger from his mother and killed him during a prolonged and savage assault on a railway line in Liverpool (Smith 22-34).
promotes fascism or gender-related issue. As a subversive work, *A Clockwork Orange* was banned by the government and attacked by public because of its portrayed violence.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The tension between agency and containment is investigated in this study, since one of New Historicism’s central concerns is power relation. Therefore, the first conclusion is related to the power relation and how it is dispersed within the text, since the novel itself shows the tension between individual freedom and state control. Meanwhile, the second conclusion refers to how New Historicism attempts to read the novel in relation with social, political, and historical discourses. This is not only related to how history influences the literary work, but also how the literary work is capable of social change.

In the story, Alex represents an agent who expresses his individual free will. Alex shows his ability to show his power and to choose any action he wishes, including violence. For instance, Alex is often depicted as using violence toward many people. Alex and his friends use violence to express their freedom and also to violate the government laws.

The tension between agency and containment as shown by Alex and the state is also shown between Alex and his friends. In this case, Alex loves to dominate his friends since he imposes his belief to the members of his gang in a totalitarian manner. For example, he loves to show Georgie, Pete, and Dim what should be
considered acceptable and unacceptable behavior. However, Alex’s totalitarian leadership results in his gang’s treachery. In the story, his friends hurt and chain Alex so that he is caught by the police. This situation changes Alex’s position from a repressive leader into a prisoner of the state.

The state’s total control over Alex, as a prisoner, is shown through the operation named Ludovico Technique. In this operation, the state intends to change Alex’s depraved behaviors and removes his evil inclinations through science. Hence, the doctors use a variety of methods to cure Alex, such as forcing Alex to watch some violent movies by not allowing him to close his eyes. They try to convince Alex that the operation will make Alex cured and healthy. Yet, the result of this operation is that Alex feels sick every time he wants to commit violence. When his former victims beat Alex, he can do nothing to defend himself, making his capability as an agent castrated. This shows how the government’s containment succeeds in changing Alex’s consciousness.

The state’s containment is also shown through its motivation. In spite of what the government states about curing violent behaviors, the state does not seem to really care about the idea of morality. For instance, Dr. Brodsky admits that the state only concerns on how to rehabilitate criminals and to make the society free of crime. This is because the government makes cutting down crime as a means for getting many votes from the people in the next General Election. The evidence also becomes clearer in the last part of the story. Minister of Interior, who is greedy for vote and
power, tries to befriend Alex so that the government gets more popularity and respect from its people. By restoring Alex’s free will and putting him back as a normal human being, the government wants to get the people’ sympathy and votes from the society.

The government’s motive to maintain its power is also shown by the incident when Alex is made to sign a document without realizing its content. This can be viewed from what Foucault observes that the society is “carceral” or prisonlike. This system regulates and permeates the society, as shown by institutions since they administer individuals using the same strategies and techniques of control that prisons employ. This also resembles Michel Foucault’s famous interpretation of the Panopticon, in which panoptic (all-seeing) power keeps subjects under constant surveillance. Alex’s freedom is contained since he does not realize the content of the document he signs, which might be repressive for him. Alex will not realize that he might be still under the government’s surveillance, so that this situation illustrates Michel Foucault’s account on carceral society.

The last chapter also shows how the containment of the government cannot be separated from agency. Even though Alex has been cured as a human being with free will, he realizes that the chain of violence could not stop. This is when Alex thinks about his future son and realizes that his own son might be violent as well. Alex realizes that he can do nothing and cannot stop it if it happens. In this way, Alex
confirms that his maturity is only a part of the cycle which he cannot fully control and that the agency is always constrained by the containment.

Secondly, it is found that the writing of *A Clockwork Orange* cannot be separated from its historical context. Burgess’ characterization and depiction of Alex and his gang seem to have been inspired by the historical condition, especially the youth culture after Second World War. Anthony Burgess himself also had experiences in his life where he met the Teddy Boys and other youth gangs, which inspired him to write *A Clockwork Orange*. Burgess vividly depicted a picture of the dress style of the Teddy Boys as shown by Alex and his gang. Like the Teddy Boys, Alex and his gang express their style in the “height of fashion”, or similar to upper-class style, in order to be autonomous or different. Alex and his gang’s expression by dressing in upper-class style might also show their attempt to reach the higher status. However, it only suggested a solution on a symbolic level, since in real life the youth teenagers are only the working-class groups. In relation to this, most youth subcultures are not in any simple sense oppositional. It is related to Michel Foucault’s claim on how resistance everywhere throughout the world is created by power.

The chaotic situation in Britain might have also inspired Burgess for the novel’s theme of violence. Burgess described explicitly his thoughts when he and his wife Lynne saw Mods and Rockers in a fight when they made a trip to Hastings. It was a riot atmosphere, since many of the gangs were involved in fights. Burgess
stated that he decided to write the novel in which youthful aggression became a nuisance.

Burgess’ Catholic background also made him frame the chaos in the novel with a religious content, in this case the free will in relation with having the choice of good and evil. He believes that literature was an aspect of the fallen world and one of its tasks was to clarify the nature of the fall. Hence, this nature of the fall is related to the inner evil of human, as depicted by Alex in the novel, who commits violence because he simply loves to.

The condition of the post-war period in Britain might have also influenced the use of Nadsat language in *A Clockwork Orange*. In relation to this, Nadsat language may be used to reflect the worries of Britain toward the Soviet Union and totalitarianism. This is because the doctors in the novel depict the language as “subliminal penetration”, so that speaking in Nadsat may change someone’s perceptions and shapes his thinking process without realizing it. As if to confirm and mock the worries of subconscious penetration of communism, the text coerces the reader into knowing Russian without realizing it.

The novel did not only reflect history but also influenced the historical condition at the moment of its consumption. This can be seen, for instance, in how the novel sold badly in England and no British reviewer liked the book because of the Nadsat language. Some reviewers considered the way Burgess uses Nadsat language in the novel as the destruction of English language. The reception in America was
better since American reviewers understood the theme of the book better. However, the American publisher added the Glossary of Nadsat Language. This undercuts Burgess’ purpose of teaching the reader a dialect by having him adjust to the context of each unfamiliar word or phrase. Burgess was disappointed since he purposefully designed the novel so that no glossary would be needed.

Burgess was also disappointed because the American publisher insisted on cutting out the last chapter of the novel. Burgess admitted how he gave in too weakly, since he was financially constrained and had no choice but to publish his novel incompletely. The American publisher assessed that the Americans were tougher than the British and could face up to reality, meaning that they believe they could handle a novel which depicted Alex as pure evil, without a kind of fairy-tale ending where he realizes his wrongs and wants to change. Yet, Burgess believes that the British version was the best and it was the mature conclusion.

The most controversial influence was from the movie adaptation, since many people had blamed the movie because of its violence. Many critics attacked the movie at the time for what they described as its gratuitous violence, which depicts unreasonable brutality. Moreover, public claims that the film inspired incidences of real-life criminality. Many cases were found that the people imitated how Alex committed violence to his victims. Only several years after it was released, the movie by Stanley Kubrick was banned from screens by film’s producers in Britain, the country where A Clockwork Orange was made. Therefore, the youth violence
influences the work of Burgess, but the work itself has been accused as inciting violence in the society afterwards.

Burgess initially did not believe in the relationship between literature and history, since he rejected the notion that art should be responsible for the events that happen in real life. However, twenty years later, Burgess’ convictions about the moral influences of art were changed. Writing in the wake of the murder of a two-year-old child and addressing public anxiety about a “cult of violence” among youth, Burgess eventually conceded that his lifelong belief in the essential harmlessness of literature might have been wrong.

After analyzing *A Clockwork Orange*, this thesis concludes that containment cannot be separated from agency, as shown in the novel how Alex realizes that the cycle of violence cannot be stopped, even though his free will has been restored. This also proves the New Historicism perspective that subversion is always contained by the state power. Secondly, the perspective of New Historicism clearly provides the framework for interpreting *A Clockwork Orange* in the context of history. It can be concluded that literature is not merely the mirror of the society, but also capable of social disruption. This is because not only the historical conditions which influenced the writing of *A Clockwork Orange*, but the work itself also influenced the history. Therefore, the controversy of *A Clockwork Orange* on its reception in the society may also reflect the concepts of agency and containment. This is because the work might be seen as a subversive tool to the society, such as when it was banned because of the
violence portrayed inside. This relationship between literature and its readership may prove that subversion cannot be separated from containment.

As an importance of this study to the context of the real world, it can be concluded that the history may speak to our present moment. Similar to the story of *A Clockwork Orange*, authoritarian regime is everywhere. For instance, some countries including Indonesia, have been experiencing the fear of authoritarianism itself. Other countries which were in wars also had been afraid of the effect of tyranny in their countries. This proves how this study is related to the situation of the world.

As a suggestion for future study, the discussion can be enhanced by analyzing more than one Burgess’ novel, since this study only focuses on *A Clockwork Orange*. By using New Historicism, the future researchers may analyze how those novels share similar or different reflection of social conditions at the time, and how they are capable of social change in the society. Another suggestion is a comparative study between the novel and movie adaptation, which can also be connected with political or historical condition of the society at that time.


