

EVIL AS A WAY OF BEING

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to discuss the function of evil, which is the result of free will and freedom, in fulfilling the process of being an individual with reference to *A Clockwork Orange* (1962) by Anthony Burgess. That is, evil and goodness are the results of free will, in other words, they are results of a (conscious) choice. Therefore, if one's free will is removed it is not possible any more to mention her/his being good or evil. If s/he is forced to do something good or evil by being conditioned s/he becomes a machine now stopped to be an individual. This, in turn, implies that what makes one an individual is his/her choice made by free will. It is true when s/he makes an evil or a good act. In this sense, evil can be taken as a sort of indicator of being individual. As Terry Eagleton says that "evil implies freedom in the sense that nobody can be damned against their will" (247). On the other hand, it does not necessarily mean that one has to do evil to complete her/his being an individual process but that one should have the option to do evil to complete this process. It is up to his/her choice to do it or not to do it.

Keywords: Evil, freedom, free will, *A Clockwork Orange*, and Anthony Burgess.

BİR VAR OLMA ŞEKLİ OLARAK KÖTÜLÜK

ÖZET

Bu yazının amacı, Anthony Burgess'in *A Clockwork Orange* (1962) adlı eserine atıfta bulunarak birey olma sürecini yerine getirirken, özgür irade ve özgürlükten kaynaklanan kötülüğün işlevini tartışmaktır. Yani, kötülük ve iyilik, özgür iradenin sonucudur, başka bir deyişle, (bilinçli) bir seçim sonucudur. Bu nedenle, eğer özgür irade kaldırılırsa, bireyin iyi ya da kötü olduğundan bahsetmek artık mümkün değildir. Koşullandırılarak iyi ya da kötü bir şey yapmak zorunda kalınırsa, artık bir birey olarak durdurulan, bir makine haline gelir. Bu da bireyi birey yapan şeyin özgür irade ile yaptığı seçim olduğunu ima eder. Kötü ya da iyi bir hareket yapması doğrudur. Bu anlamda, kötülük bireysel olma göstergesi olarak algılanabilir. Terry Eagleton'a göre "kötülük, bir kimsenin iradesine karşı lanetlenemeyeceği anlamında özgürlüğü ifade eder" (247). Öte yandan, kişinin bireysel bir süreç olarak tamamlanması için mutlaka, kötülük yapmak zorunda olduğu anlamına gelmez, ancak bu süreci tamamlamak için kötülük yapma seçeneği olmalıdır. Bunu yapmak ya da yapmamak kişinin seçimine bağlıdır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kötülük, özgürlük, özgür irade, *A Clockwork Orange* (*Otamatik Portakal*) ve Anthony Burgess.

EVIL AS A WAY OF BEING

'Freedom' and 'will' are suggested as sources of evil and goodness by different scholars such as Terry Eagleton and Schelling. This thought is acknowledged especially with the Enlightenment Age in which there is no credit for religions, demons, Satan or any other external scapegoats for accused of being the source of evil any more. In other words, reason becomes the ultimate authority in approving the beliefs and practices. Human being is free and cannot be restricted by any external factors. Thereupon, dogmas such as original sin doctrine lose their validity any more, instead, human beings are considered neither good nor evil at birth instead a *tabula rasa*; because human being is believed to be free. Besides, freedom is considered as a possibility of good and evil (qtd. in Heidegger 97). There may be coercive reasons but human beings, by means of 'freedom' and 'will', are the ultimate authority to choose something.

Inasmuch as 'choice' is included one should mention 'will' or 'free will'. Free will is defined as "the power of agents to be the ultimate creators (or originators) and sustainers of their own ends and purposes" (Kane 315). There are two important points in this definition. First one is that the agent should burden all responsibility of the action, which is the direct consequence of the first one. And the second one is that the agent should have the power to be the ultimate creator of the action, which essentially requires freedom. Arthur Schopenhauer states that "the nature of will was to push individuals toward goals" (qtd. in Buchholz and Mandel 126). That is to say, 'will' is a kind of destination one aims. As seen, it is not easy to make a strict line between freedom and free will since free will necessitates freedom, and freedom is a prerequisite of free will. However, the nuance can be indicated as "to act freely is to be unhindered in the pursuit of your purposes; to will freely is to be the ultimate source or creator of your own purposes" (Kane 315). In short, if there is not any obstacle for one to fulfill an action s/he is free then. 'Will', on the other hand, is the choice one intends to do something with full responsibility and intentionally only when s/he is free.

Moreover, because 'free will' includes 'freedom' and 'choice' the criterion for 'free will' is often regarded as 'the free agent could have done otherwise', which, in turn, presupposes that there are alternatives for the agent in a certain situation but s/he prefers to behave in a particular way instead of the other way. This, accordingly, reveals that the agent's act is not predetermined. One becomes her/himself only when one behaves with free will as 'free will' is also defined as "the essence of the human soul, the need to be true to one's self" (Buchholz and Mandel 139). After all, if there were not free will the actions would be merely accidents or chances which should not include any moral values such as good or evil since these events cannot be regarded as moral or immoral on grounds that "only a free choice is morally binding" (Brown 80).

As for the novel, *A Clockwork Orange*, it is composed of three main chapters. The first part opens with the question of "what's it going to be then, eh?" (Burgess 6) asked by Alex. The second part also starts with the same question but it is asked not by Alex now because he is not an authority to ask a question. He is in prison and does not have a free will. He does not have even a name and is called with a number. The third chapter starts with the question of "what's it going to be then, eh?" asked by Alex again. However, there is no point in asking this question because he does not have a free will and choice any more as a result of a treatment called Ludovico to get out of prison and be free. The

seventh part of the last chapter starts with the question “what’s it going to be then, heh?” (113) asked by Alex. He regains his will because his treatment is undone. He becomes an individual with freedom to choice.

The protagonist of the novel, Alex, is portrayed us as two different persons. In other words, we are shown two stages of his life; the one before he gets in the prison and the other one after he gets out of it. Before he goes to the prison, he is a young boy. He narrates the story us but uses nadsat which is a teenage slang including both Russian and Cockney English. That is why the language of the novel is hard to follow easily. In fact, he knows how to speak in a proper way. For instance, he says that “sir, I have done my best, have I not?” I always used my very polite gentleman’s goloss govoreeting with those at the top. “I’ve tried, sir, haven’t I?” (53). He chooses to speak in improper way as he has freedom to speak in any style he wants. He does not go to school. He is lack of communication with his parents and has a gang including three other boys named Dim, Pete and Georgia. They go to a bar called Korova Milkbar where milk is served with drugs in it and, after they drink their milks they go out at nights. They rob and beat the men to get their money or just for fun, and rape the women. In short, they create an environment which is full of violence, hatred and evil. At one night, they go to a house with the car they stole. They beat the man who is a writer named F. Alexander and rape his wife before him. Then, they go to the bar and Alex hits Dim when Dim makes fun of the opera which Alex likes. At another night, when they go out they break into an old woman’s house. Before they get in the house she calls the police. Dim hits Alex with a chain and he cannot run away with them and get arrested by the police. Then, we are informed that F. Alexander’s wife dies after the rape and Alex is sentenced to fourteen years.

As it is seen, Alex has freedom and free will to do anything whether it be good or bad. As far as he tells us what he has done at nights he does evil acts. Even if he is a bad one he is at least an individual. He chooses to act in a certain way instead of other way because he is free. For freedom is described as the possibility of good and evil as aforementioned he chooses evil. He might have chosen to do good things. However, he chooses what he wants to do without being forced or restricted in a certain way. He exists as an individual. As mentioned before, we call him an individual not because he rapes the women or beat the men but he does all these evil acts by his consent. In this sense, his evil actions play a part in showing us that he has free will and he is an individual not a machine.

When we look at the second part of his life, that is, when he is in prison, he firstly has difficulty in adapting himself in prison but later he gets used to it. He gets along with the chaplain and, he reads and enjoys some parts of the Bible. However, he enjoys the parts which are about sex, drinking and violence. Afterwards, when he learns the Ludovico technique that eliminates the criminal impulses in human beings he becomes a volunteer to undergo this treatment. It takes a fortnight and he cannot stand to see any violence or rape as a consequence of the films he is forced to watch during the treatment. For instance, he screams when he is watching one of the films by stating that “stop the film! Please, please stop it! I can’t stand anymore” (67). Dr. Branom does not stop the film and explains that “violence is a very horrible thing. That’s what you’re learning now. Your body is learning it” (69). Then, Alex responds that “but, I don’t understand. I don’t understand about feeling sick like I did. I never used to feel sick before. I used to feel like very the opposite. I mean, doing it or watching it I used to feel real horror show. I just don’t understand why or how or what” (69). However, there

appears a side effect of this treatment. That is, Ludwig van Beethoven is playing when a scene about Nazi's atrocities is shown (72). So he cannot stand this music anymore besides violence. After the fortnight, Alex is released from the prison after the treatment because he is believed to be harmless now.

After the treatment, apart from being harmless he becomes also defenseless because when he witnesses violence or a rape he just feels sick. For example, when he comes across with his old friend Dim and his old enemy Billyboy they take revenges from Alex for what he did for them in past and Alex cannot defend himself. Whenever he attempts to react against them he just feels sick. After he gets rid of them, he looks for a place for help because he does not have a house anymore. His room is rented by another man named Joe. He goes to the house of F. Alexander without realizing that he has come there before. F. Alexander does not recognize him at first. He is a political dissident and wants to use Alex to attack the government. But after he realizes that Alex is the man who rapes his wife he changes his mind. He locks Alex in room and forces him to listen to Ludwig Van Beethoven. Alex feels sick and cannot bear it. Thereupon, he jumps out of the window but does not die. While he is in the hospital, State doctors undo the Ludovico treatment and Alex returns to his nature before the treatment.

As it is indicated, Alex turns into a machine and becomes far from being an individual anymore. However, after the treatment he does not become a moral person who knows what is right and wrong and lives accordingly. Rather, he becomes a safe machine for the society in which he lives. For example, he does not feel sorry or repented when he learns that the woman he raped died. We become sure that he will not rape any other woman in future not because he does not want to do it by finding it evil or unlawful but because he cannot have choice to do or not to do it as a consequence of the treatment. For instance, after the treatment a woman who is nearly naked comes towards him. The lights go down and the spotlights come on the woman. Alex tells that

She had real horrorshow groodies all of which you could like viddy, she having on platties which came down down down off her pletchoes. And her nogas were like Bog in His Heaven, and she walked like to make you groan in your keeshkas, and yet her litso was a sweet smiling young like innocent litso. She came up towards me with the light like it was the like light of heavenly grace and all that cal coming with her, and the first thing that flashed into my gulliver was that I would like to have her right down there on the floor with the old in-out real savage, but skorry as a shot came the sickness, like a like detective that had been watching round a corner and now followed to make his grahzny arrest...O my brothers, I could feel the sickness like slinking back. (81)

He just feels sick when the woman is too near him. He cannot take her even if he wants. In this sense, his so called virtue seems worthless. Raping is evil but preventing to rape by removing his free will is reducing him to a machine. This does not make Alex a good person, either. As a matter of fact, this is discussed by chaplain and some other workers in the prison before the treatment. They do not think this is right even if it eliminates the crimes in the society. For example, Alex wants to get out of the prison and asks about the treatment to the chaplain by stating that he wants to be a good person (Burgess 53). The chaplain tells that "goodness comes from within, 6655321. Goodness is something chosen. When a man cannot choose he ceases to be a man" (54). Nonetheless, this answer does not discourage Alex from doing what he wants to do. Before Alex goes to the hospital for the treatment the chaplain makes a long speech to him:

It may not be nice to be good, little 6655321. It may be horrible to be good. And when I say that to you I realize how self-contradictory that sounds. I know I shall have many sleepless nights about this. What does God want? Does God want goodness or the choice of goodness? Is a man who chooses the bad perhaps in some ways better than a man who has the good imposed upon him? Deep and hard questions, little 6655321...And now, talking of praying, I realize sadly that there will be little point in praying for you. You are passing now to a region where you will be beyond the reach of the power of prayer. A terrible terrible thing to consider. And yet, in a sense, in choosing to be depriving of the ability to make an ethical choice, you have in a sense really chosen the good. (61)

As it is seen, the chaplain is worried about the consequences of treatment. He does not appreciate it because he is not sure about the attitude he will have towards it. He questions the function of free will and choice in acting in a good way or in an evil way. He also questions the value between the bad man who chooses to be bad and the good man who is imposed to be good. The latter one will be beyond the reach of the power of the prayer because he does not act evil. He cannot repent, for example. However, being an individual does not mean to be a perfect man but means to be a man who chooses the freedom to act in either way, good or evil, and then he may become repented or just keep doing his acts. What makes Alex an individual is his evil acts as mentioned. However, he is not the actor of his good deeds now. It may seem that he becomes an individual in society after the treatment but, in fact, it is vice versa in terms of having the freedom of choice.

The governor in the prison does not support this technique, either. For example, he says to Alex that “you, 6655321, are to be reformed” (60). In reply to this, when Alex tries to show how he is grateful to him he says that “don’t be. This is not a reward. This is far from being a reward” (60). The governor is right in the sense that being removed as the authority of your actions is not a reward. When he does evil acts he is the authority of his actions. In this sense, evil can be considered as the celebration of being an individual who has a choice. He becomes just a machine. For example, after the treatment the doctors display what they have done with Alex. One of them tells that

At this stage, gentlemen, we introduce the subject himself. He is, as you will perceive, fit and well nourished. He comes straight from a night’s sleep and a good breakfast, undrugged, un hypnotized. Tomorrow we send him with confidence out into the world again, as decent a lad as you would meet on a May morning, inclined to the kindly word and the helpful act. What a change is here, gentlemen, from the wretched hoodlum the State committed to unprofitable punishment some two years ago, unchanged after two years. Unchanged, do I say? Not quite. Prison taught him the false smile, the rubbed hands of hypocrisy, the fawning greased obsequious leer. Other vices it taught him, as well as confirming him in those he had long practiced before. But gentlemen, enough of words. Actions speak louder than. Action now. Observe, all. (78-9)

As it is observed, the doctor calls him subject instead of an individual or just Alex because they know well that he is not an individual, that is, he is not Alex anymore. He is a subject who does actions only approved by the State. The doctor accuses of the prison by claiming that it makes him hypocritical and does not change him in a good way. However, even being hypocritical means that Alex consciously chooses to act in a certain way in order to protect himself from further punishment or for anything else. What the doctors have done to him is crueller than what the prison does in the sense that they make him a subject and, thus, reduce him into a machine. However, the doctor interprets this process that Alex has become a decent lad and shows us a performance about Alex’s reaction against a man who troubles Alex. Alex feels sick when the man humiliates and tries to beat

him. Alex says that “please, I must do something. Shall I clean your boots? Look, I’ll get down and lick them” (80). He cannot defend himself and licks the shoes of the man. It is seen that he is totally defenseless against any violence happening to him. He cannot fit into the society as an individual in this way. The chaplain in the audience protests the scene and says that “he has no real choice, has he? Self-interest, fear of physical pain, drove him to that grotesque act of self-abasement. Its insincerity was clearly to be seen. He ceases to be a wrongdoer. He ceases also to be a creature capable of moral choice” (80). Alex looks at them feeling sick and asks that “me, me, me. How about me? Where do I come into all this? Am I just some animal or dog?... Am I just to be like a clockwork orange?” (80).

After he leaves the hospital he returns to his true nature. For instance, when one of the doctors in the hospital shows a photograph of a bird-nest full of eggs and asks him what he feels he says that “a birdnest, full of like eggs... smash them. Pick up the lot and like throw them against a wall or a cliff or something and then viddy them all smash up real horrorshow” (110) Then, he assembles a new gang. However, he is fed up with violence. He does not enjoy what he does at nights anymore. When he is sitting at a café he encounters his old friend, Pete who is married now. Then, he feels that he is no longer young. He is a mature person and imagines to get married and have a son. Thus, he becomes an individual again as in the beginning of the story.

I had this sudden very strong idea that if I walked into the room next to this room where the fire was burning away and my hot dinner laid on the table, there I should find what I really wanted, and now it all tied up, that picture scissored out of the gazetta and meeting old Pete like that. For in that other room in a cot was laying gurgling goo goo goo my son. Yes yes yes, brothers, my son. And now I felt this bolshy big hollow inside my plott, feeling very surprised too at myself. I knew what was happening, O my brothers. I was like growing up. (118)

In conclusion, it is that Alex is observed to be an individual when he has freedom and free will in order to do something good or bad. Judging his actions as evil or good is beyond the scope of this paper. The aim of this paper is to study the importance of free will on his being an individual. It has been observed that he acts as an individual only when he chooses to do something on his own without being forced or restricted in a certain way. He might have chosen to rape a woman or have beaten the men but he is called an individual not because what he has done to the women or the men but because he does all these evil acts by his consent. In this regard, his evil actions are important in showing that he has free will and he is an individual not a machine.

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