

Shocking cinema: A Clockwork Orange

Kubrick withdrew this film from British cinema in 1972 after its release in 1971. It was only re-released in Britain after Kubrick's death in 1999. "A Clockwork Orange" tells the story of Alex and his "droogies" who are a group that enjoy ultra violence. One of the first shocking elements that I noticed about the attitude of the group is how they speak. Their language appears fun and harmless however, it describes acts of extreme behaviour. Alex himself is represented in several different ways. It is clear for the audience to see he is vicious because he is the leader of the group and he acts violently towards everyone, including his own group members.

The scene by the river shows Alex violently lashing out with the other group members.

The scene begins with the camera quite far away. A long shot shows the group walking highlighting that the group's togetherness and also that they are united. Then the "droogs" are picked off one by one by Alex and the camera. The scene is shot in slow motion. This and the use of the non-diegetic classical soundtrack provide a choreographed effect.

When Alex has pushed Dim into the river, he offers Dim his hand to help him out. Kubrick uses dramatic irony here as the audience are shown a close up shot of a knife behind Alex's back. Dim is unaware of this. The audience know that Alex is going to act violently and he has dishonourable intentions towards Dim. A low angle shot is used from Dim's point of view as he looks up at Alex. Alex appears to be in control and he looks threatening.

The mise-en-scene of the water and the background provide a contrast to their white outfits. The outfits they wear are very unusual. They are clearly masculine as they are shown to be phallic by the pieces they wear over their groin. It is strange that their outfits are white because white is most commonly associated with innocence and purity. In this case, I think the reason they wear white is because they believe they are God-like. Alex and his gang believe strongly in the theory of the ubermensch. What I mean by this is they think they are super-men and that they are superior to others. This belief makes them think that they can do whatever they please. Before Alex goes to prison he is the ultimate free person. He temporarily has the freedom to do what he likes.

The editing of this scene draws the viewer into the fight by the use of different shots. It begins with a long shot, then it cuts to a medium shot and finally the viewer is fully involved when we are shown close ups.

Alex is also represented as being innocent and young. Alex is the narrator so the audience follow his thoughts and actions closely, creating a bond between him and the viewer. The scene in which Alex breaks into the cat lady's house and kills her is a very shocking piece of cinema. The cat lady seems to be suspicious when they knock at her door so she does not let them in and she contacts the police. Alex then breaks into her house and corners her. Kubrick uses several long shots when showing the cat lady. This emphasises that she is being victimised and it allows the reader to understand that something bad will happen to her because she is unprotected against Alex and she is alone. However, Kubrick tends to use closer shots when showing Alex. This creates intimacy between Alex and the viewer. The cat lady tried to defend herself against Alex and fight back but Alex continues to dodge her. The camera spins around with them, following them and this makes Alex's attack seem like a fun game rather than a violent attack on a defenceless woman. The fact that Alex kills her with