

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF A CLOCKWORK ORANGE

Free Will, Conditioning, and the Cure That Costs Everything

A REFLECTION GUIDE FOR ADULT VIEWERS



Content note: this film contains extreme violence and sexual violence. This guide is for adult viewers and stays non-graphic throughout.



Use this guide to reflect on what the film asks, on your own, in a class, or in a discussion with other adults.

1 BEFORE WATCHING



Frame the questions the film will raise.

- What do we mean when we call a person good? Is it what they do, or what they are able to choose?
- Where do you already stand on whether a society may change a person's mind against their will?

2 WHILE WATCHING



Notice your own responses, not only the plot.

- When does the film make something appalling look beautiful, and what happens in you when it does?
- Whose consent is being managed, and who benefits from the treatment being adopted?
- Where do you feel pulled toward the protagonist, and what technique is producing that pull?

3 AFTER WATCHING



Reflect on the argument the film is making.

- Was the treatment wrong because it failed, because it destroyed choice, or both?
- The chaplain says compelled goodness is not goodness. Do you agree, even when the person is monstrous?
- The film refuses to explain the protagonist. What did that refusal do to your sympathy?

4 CARRYING IT FORWARD



Connect the film to real life.

- Where in medicine, institutions, or everyday pressure do we accept a version of consent that would not survive the film's scrutiny?
- What holds a genuine change in place, and what does that suggest about how people actually change?
- One thing to sit with: is the capacity to choose badly something a person can be deprived of without being deprived of personhood?

DR. Z TAKEAWAY

“ Goodness is a property of choosing, not of behavior alone. A person made harmless has not been made good, and a change no one chose has nothing holding it in place. ”



DR. MICHAEL ZAKALIK, PSY.D.
Psychologist for Parenting | Z Psychology

Hard films, honest questions.