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Anthony Burgess in French Translation: Still “as Queer as a Clockwork Orange”

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Abstract

This paper examines the origin and features of the language in *A Clockwork Orange* by Anthony Burgess. The novel is narrated by the protagonist, Alex, who speaks an invented teenage dialect (sociolect), *nadsat*, with his friends in violence. A highly criticised and controversial novel, *A Clockwork Orange* contains many scenes of brutal violence and sexual content. This paper looks into the characteristics of *nadsat* and its role in masking the content and ‘numbing’ the reader.

The challenge of translating Burgess’s linguistic invention into French is tackled by two French translators, Georges Belmont and Hortense Chabrier. The French translation of 1972 is compared to the English source text in a comparative analysis which reveals the intricacy and inventiveness of the teenage dialect in the French target text, in particular neologisms. The paper examines a number of examples and outlines some of the translators’ methods, drawing conclusions on the effect of the French *nadsat*. Finally, this brief analysis provides an insight into the symbolism behind the merging of English and Russian, two official political and ideological languages at the time.

Keywords: Anthony Burgess, *A Clockwork Orange*, French translation, *nadsat*, *L’Orange mécanique*, Russian transliteration

“An off-beat and violent tale about teenage gangs in Britain, written in out-of-this-world gibberish”

an anonymous review¹

“There are also books already written. They were written not merely to earn bread and gin but out of conviction that the manipulation of language to the end of pleasing and enlightening is not to be despised”

Anthony Burgess²

1. Introduction

In January 1960, doctors advised Anthony Burgess that he had less than a year to live – that is a winter, spring and summer. He was expected to die “with the fall of the leaf” (Burgess 1990: 3). Despite such a dark prognosis, Burgess was feeling too well and set to the task of writing vigorously for whatever time he had left. Unemployable since he had less than a year to live, he decided to turn himself into a professional writer and earn royalties for his prospective widow. In this bleak but immensely productive year, Burgess managed to write five and a half novels. Once the pseudo-terminal year was over and the doctors realized that in fact Burgess was no longer in danger of dying from a cerebral tumour, he continued writing at a remarkable rate. The half of the novel written during the “miraculous year” was the beginning of A Clockwork Orange.

In 1962, Anthony Burgess published a dystopian novel called A Clockwork Orange. It was deemed a philosophical novel that questioned the existence of free will, goodness and evil. The main character, Alex, is a teenager who lives in the early 1970s Europe and commits random acts of violence with his three *drugi* or *droogs* (friends). He is subsequently caught and submitted to the so-called Ludovico technique, inspired by Pavlovian-like classical conditioning. He is “cured” after the fictitious drug-assisted aversion therapy, and is no longer able to commit acts of violence. At any violent thought, Alex is overwhelmed with a paralyzing form of nausea.

This thought-provoking novel stands out not only for its violent and controversial content, but also for its language. Burgess created a slang that Alex and his *droogs* could speak but that would not be quickly outdated. Since it was a prophetic work, the language

¹ Burgess 1990: 59.

² Burgess 1990: 391.

he chose to create was a unique medley of demotic English, Russian loanwords “seasoned with rhyming slang and the gipsy’s bolo” (Burgess 1990: 37). However, in the immediate reception of A Clockwork Orange, the critics were often hostile towards Burgess’s linguistic creation and often referred to it as “gibberish” and “a viscous verbiage.” But the success of Stanley Kubrick’s rendition of the original in 1971 sparked significant interest and publishers commissioned translations. The French translation appeared fully ten years after the publication of the original, in 1972.

Other Burgess’s novels proved to be difficult to translate, and A Clockwork Orange did not seem any less of a challenge. The two translators who rose to the occasion, Georges Belmont and Hortense Chabrier, received much praise from Anthony Burgess himself. In his 1990 autobiography You’ve Had Your Time: Being the Second Part of the Confessions of Anthony Burgess, Burgess approved of the translation and seemed content with its quality: “There then arrived [...] two remarkable editor-translators – Hortense Chabrier and Georges Belmont. They proposed making me better known in France. [...] Hortense and Georges were bilingual and foresaw few problems.”

Chabrier and Belmont were experienced translators with an impressive profile and would together translate a number of Burgess’ books such as Beard’s Roman Women, 1985, Earthly Powers, and The Wanting Seed. Belmont was also an editor and journalist, but his career blossomed after the Second World War with his translations of Henry Miller, Graham Greene (with Chabrier), William Irish and Evelyn Waugh. A great figure in the Paris literary world, he was friends with James Joyce, Samuel Beckett and André Gide, among others.

The two translators worked as a team and completed the translation within several months. In the case of Burgess’s A Clockwork Orange, the French translators had a unique case before them. The originality of the language in the source text has inspired much investigation into the workings of the language which, anchored in a futuristic society, represents a language, or rather a sociolect, of its own. It is determined to stand the test of time while refusing to become a period document and reflect the British sociolect of the 1960s (Burgess 1990: 27). The aim of this paper is to discuss the work and the language in A Clockwork Orange and to draw a brief comparison between the English original and the French translation by George Belmont and Hortense

Chabrier. The analysis will include comments about some of the challenges and solutions that the translators faced and will provide examples of the language that made A Clockwork Orange a widely celebrated but also a much criticized novel. Finally, the paper will conclude with an insight into the symbolism behind the merging of English and Russian, two official political and ideological languages at the time.

2. A Clockwork Orange: The Birth of *Nadsat*

Out of more than fifty works, A Clockwork Orange is considered to be Anthony Burgess's *magnum opus*. What contributed to both its success and notoriety are not only the descriptive scenes of violence and sex, but also, Burgess's invention: *nadsat*. In 1960, Burgess wrote the first draft of the novel but was blocked by a stylistic problem – What language should his main character, Alex, speak? The author did not wish to use slang that was already being used by street gangs and teenage subgroups in Britain at the time (Burgess 1996: xvi). He believed that for a futuristic society, such as the one described in the novel, a historically determined slang would outdate the work. After his visit to Leningrad in 1961, Burgess found his solution. His invention would include a kind of Anglo-Russo-American language based on slang words derived and transliterated from Russian, mixed with Cockney rhyming slang, French, German, and even invented words.

As innovative and entertaining as *nadsat* is, the book is not an easy read for most English speakers. The book's success was not an easy accomplishment either. Burgess was just starting to establish himself as a writer when A Clockwork Orange was published in 1962. He had written several books prior to it, but was not yet a widely known author. When A Clockwork Orange came out, it generated interest but it did not sell very well. Most people heard about the novel and its unusual language since it stirred much attention and interest; however this fact did not translate into a commercial success. Burgess would later blame the commercial failure to the overexposure of the book.³ In the late sixties, the novel caught the attention of Stanley Kubrick. He later adapted it to

³ In his autobiography *You've Had Your Time*, Burgess writes: "But the book sold badly, rather worse if anything than previous novels of mine. I learned the great lesson of the dangers of over-exposure. Viewers had been told enough about the book to be able to discuss it at cocktail parties: the reading of it would be wearisome, as the press had already announced, as well as supererogatory. The British were, I considered, stuffy and desperately conservative." (Burgess 1990, 59-60)

the screen and released it under the same title in 1971.⁴ Celebrated and scrutinized, the movie has since been recognized as a cinematographic masterpiece. Today, the novel remains as one of the most noted English literary works of the 20th century.⁵

Burgess was a prolific writer, critic and composer despite having started his career at the age of 43. His creativity and wit were at full display in A Clockwork Orange where the “ultra-violence” of the protagonist and his “droogs” gained Burgess notoriety but also praise for his linguistic accomplishment. The title was taken from Cockney rhyming slang from the expression “as queer as a clockwork orange.” The word “queer” did not mean “homosexual” but “mad.” Burgess explained further in his preface to the American prints:

...human being is endowed with free will. He can use this to choose between good and evil. If he can only perform good or only perform evil, then he is a clockwork orange--meaning that he has the appearance of an organism lovely with colour and juice but is in fact only a clockwork toy to be wound by God or the Devil or (since this is increasingly replacing both) the Almighty State. It is as inhuman to be totally good as it is to be totally evil. (Burgess 1986: ix)

The style of the book is highly recognizable due to *nadsat* – the Russian suffix for “teen” – which is the language of Alex, a fifteen-year old who speaks *nadsat* with his “droogs” (friends) and other members of the teenage subculture. The book is written in a first-person narration where Alex recounts his adventures from his point of view. The language of A Clockwork Orange wraps the novel like a fog, blurring the brutal violence of rape scenes and bloody beatings. It tones down the linguistic and social transgression, and like a screen, it has a ‘numbing’ effect, allowing readers to follow the events but without deep disturbance of graphic details.

Nadsat has been called many things, such as a constructed language, slang, register, and sociolect. Its definition is not single layered since one could argue in favour of all the cases. In the introduction to the 1996 edition, Blake Morrison refers to it as *language*: “Burgess called this language *nadsat*, a transliteration of the Russian suffix for

⁴ Kubrick’s movie is however based on the American, truncated version of the novel that omitted the last (21st) chapter – a decision much resented by Burgess himself and discussed later in life.

⁵ According to the Radcliffe Publishing Course Top 100 Novels of the 20th Century, A Clockwork Orange stands at number 49 and is Burgess’ only book to make the list. Retrieved from <http://www.ala.org/ala/issuesadvocacy/banned/frequentlychallenged/challengedclassics/index.cfm>

'teen', and imagined that at the time and place the events in the novel occur (somewhere in Europe, circa 1972), it had become part of the culture, or sub-culture" (Burgess 1996: ix). However, it can be said that *nadsat* is also a register since Alex is capable of speaking standard English when he wants to (with his parents at times, for example) (Burgess 1996: 113). Registers are not only characterized by their linguistic aspects, but also by non-linguistic ones:

[...] le ton, ou le registre, constitue un classement sociolinguistique de l'Autre. Dire que quelqu'un parle de façon "sous-prolétaire" ou de manière "soutenue", c'est souligner qu'il se comporte de façon "sous-prolétaire" ou "soutenue", dans la langue. On peut aussi s'habiller, vivre, manger ou avoir certaines envies qui peuvent être aussi reconnues comme étant "sous-prolétaire" ou "recherchées." (Peeters 1999: 72)

The teenage gangs, and specifically Alex's group, are dressed in a particular way, and their clothes and behaviour are codified and intended to separate them from the rest. Alex narrates: "The four of us were dressed in the height of fashion, which in those days was a pair of black very tight tights with the old jelly 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 clear enough in a certain light, so that I had one in the shape of a spider" (Burgess 1996: 4).

Furthermore, *nadsat* can also be defined as a 'sociolect' as this term stands for any language spoken by a particular social (sub)group and is based on social, cultural, economic and institutional criteria (Chapdelaine and Lane-Mercier 1994: 7) *Nadsat* is spoken (not written) by Alex, his group of friends and by other teenage subgroups; other characters in the novel (the doctors, government officials) use standard English words without Russian transliterations. Moreover, *nadsat* can be viewed as slang since its vocabulary and expressions seem to be of inferior value in comparison with standard English. Also, there is an implied assumption that the other addressees are familiar with the terms. Therefore, it would appear to be a variant of language confined to a certain group of users – "the teenage dialect, spoken by drugi or droogs or friends in violence" as Burgess called it (Burgess 1990: 38).

3. *Nadsat* in the English Source Text

Alex's way of expressing himself is key in understanding the character and his point of view. In *nadsat*, some Russian examples include words like *droog* for *friend* (*drug* in Russian), *moloko* for *milk*, *slovos* for *words*, *rooker* for *hand* (*ruka* in Russian), *litso* for *face*, *mesto* for *place*, and *viddy* for *to see* (*vidyet* in Russian). Furthermore, Burgess inflected verbs according to the English grammar, so he would write "I peeted" to say "I drank" (*peet* = to drink, after *pit* in Russian). Nouns in plural have an added 's' as in *otchkie*s for *eyeglasses*, and *rooker* became *rookers* (hands).

Longer words with more complex Russian transliteration would include *devotchka* (girl), *privodevat* (leader) from *privodit* (to lead), *prestoopnick* (criminal) from *prestupnik*, *rassoodock* (mind) from *rassudok* (sanity). So then, this is how Alex would sound in one of his opening, more famous lines:

There was me, that is Alex, and my three droogs, that is Pete, Georgie, and Dim, Dim being really dim, and we sat in the Korova Milkbar making up our rassoodocks what to do with the evening [...] The Korova Milkbar was a milk-plus mesto [...]. (Burgess 1996: 3)

But, *nadsat* draws on more than just the Russian transliterations. It includes transliterations of German, *tashtook* (handkerchief) from *Taschentuch*, and of French, *vaysay* (washroom) from W.C., pronounced as /vécé/ (which was actually borrowed from English: watercloset). There are also borrowings from Cockney rhyming slang. For example, *pretty polly* (money) from *lolly*, and *luscious glory* (hair) from *upper story/hair*. Other 'slangy' and quite imaginative words include *cancers* for *cigarettes*, *sinny* for *cinema*, *godman* (priest) from 'man of God', *pan-handle* (erection), *mounch* (snack).

Burgess also incorporated words from other languages such as Malay, for example, *orange* (man) – also referring to the title. As well, he borrowed from Hebrew the word *yahood* (meaning *Jew*) from יְהוּדִי *yehudi* (a man from the tribe). Furthermore, Burgess invented his own slang, for example, *ultra-violence* (extreme violence), *luna* (moon), *drencrom* (a drug). He also created slang from the Russian transliterations: *chelovyek* (man) became even shorter, *veck*. The author's inventiveness and imagination make the novel a linguistic adventure:

Our pockets were full of *deng*, so there was no real need from the point of view of *crasting* any more *pretty polly* to *tolchock* some old *veck* in an alley and *viddy* him swim in his blood while we counted the takings and divided by four, nor to do the *ultra-violent* on some shivering *starry* grey-haired *ptitsa* in a shop and go *smecking* off with the till's guts. (Burgess 1996: 3) (my emphasis)

The sentence is rich with Russian transliterations and slang. As difficult as the reading can sometimes get, most of the meanings of words are understood from the context or are explained by Burgess himself. At the beginning of the novel, he introduces *rooker* by providing the explanation in the brackets: "Pete had a rooker (a hand, that is) ... of a clown's litso (face, that is)" (Burgess 1996: 4).

In addition, numerous words are understood through the co-text. The author creates a textual environment that includes and, in fact, repeats the word in standard English, as if to 'train' the reader. To explain *deng* in the segment above, Burgess conveniently adds another sentence that follows immediately: "But, as they say, money isn't everything." *Crasting* comes from *krast* (to steal in Russian), *pretty polly* (*money* in rhyming slang), *starry* meaning *old* (*star* in Russian), *ptitsa* is used as a slang word from Russian (bird, implies woman = chick). *Tolchock* means to hit (from Russian *tolchok* = push, shove), and *smecking* comes from Russian verb *to laugh* (*smekh*). Burgess introduces more terms and potentially runs the risk of turning away his readership. But, in the following example, it is clear that the author was careful when introducing the foreign terms: "We yeckated back toward, my brothers, but just outside, not far from what they called the Industrial Canal, we viddied the fuel needle had like collapsed" (Burgess 1996: 20). *Yeckate* is derived from *yeckate* in Russian meaning *to drive*. However, it becomes quite clear from the context and the co-text that the characters are in a car.

Some editions of *A Clockwork Orange* were accompanied by a glossary of *nadsat* words. But, Burgess was against this practice, arguing that since the book was about brainwashing, readers were to go through another kind of brainwashing by reading the book. They were to use a Russian dictionary and learn some basic Russian along the way (Burgess 1996: x). Burgess further argued that "[a] glossary would disrupt the programming and nullify the brainwashing" (Burgess 1990: 38). However, it could reasonably be argued that the task of reading becomes more difficult for English-speaking readers with no knowledge of a Slavic language. It is questionable whether a

significant number of readers in reality do use a Russian dictionary while reading the novel. Writing in *nadsat* certainly involved a risk for Burgess since the book's language demands more work from the reader, linguistically speaking, than what is often expected.

However, the novel breathes a language that is not simply British English with Russian transliterations. There are other slang words, invented terms, a unique rhythm of the language itself, as well as the influences of Shakespeare and the Bible, as remarked by Morrison. For instance, there are repetitions of words and sounds, reminiscent of Shakespeare: "creech creech creeching away" (19); "our own ha ha ha needles [...] coughing kashl kashl kashl" (20); "Hi hi hi, there"; "Yum, yum, mum"; "humble mumble chumble" (37). When Alex's father tells him about his bad, foreboding dreams, Alex replies to his *papapa*: "Never worry about thine only son and heir, O my father...Fear not. He canst taketh care of himself, verily" (38). The language of A Clockwork Orange cannot simply be reduced to additions of Russian transliterations. Rather, it is a combination of the existing and invented slang, rhythm, and linguistic playfulness that the author crafts in order to tie together the main messages of the novel.

4. *Nadsat* in the French Translation

Nadsat of the source text (ST) is the invention of Burgess; but *nadsat* of the French translation is another kind of dialect. It is interesting to note that in the translators' preface the reader is warned immediately about the difficulty of reading and the strangeness of the vocabulary. The translators urge, however, that the wish of the author be respected. They end the short preface with encouraging words: "la première surprise passée, le lecteur se laissera porter et emporter, nous en sommes certains, sans la moindre difficulté" (Burgess 1972: 7). What is more, the translation includes a limited glossary at the back of the book with some 150 words and their simple French equivalents. The wish of the author is apparently not fully respected, and the glossary provides explanations of the 'infiltrations' into the French language of the Russian, propagandist vocabulary.

The translation incorporates the Russian transliterations but forms them according to the French language rules. It seems that Belmont and Chabrier closely followed, whenever possible, the author's inventive vocabulary. For example, *droog* becomes *droug* in French; *mesto* turns into *messtot*, *groody* into *groudné*, and *lovet* (from *lovit* = to

catch, to hunt) into *lovretter*. At times, the transliteration stays the same as in the ST; and at times, the spelling changes, but the pronunciation remains quite similar. *Choodessny* becomes *tchoudessny*, meaning *wonderful*. Verbs are conjugated according to the French grammar: *toltchocker* (to hit) takes on the infinitive suffix –er and in this way, follows Burgess’s strategy.

However, the task is not straight-forward, and the translators’ creativity is challenged. For example, the names of the main characters are changed; *Dim* acquires a new name *Momo*. In the novel, the author writes “Dim being really dim” and thereby creates an antanaclasis (repetition of a word in two different senses), describing a quality or characteristic of the friend with a play on words. The TT creates a matching trope, antanaclasis, by introducing the name *Momo* and repeating it twice. *Momo* could be a nickname in French but it could also mean *idiot, simple, fada*; just like in English *dim* means *stupid, dumb*. *Pretty polly* (money) from the rhyming slang is turned into *joli lollypop* and in this way, maintains the ‘slangy’ character as well as the rhyme and the sound effect. Furthermore, the translators enrich the translation with some of their own creative solutions. For example, where Alex says “starry grey-haired ptitsa,” the translation renders *starry* as *viokcho*. It plays with the meaning of *old* (*star* = *old* in Russian) and creates a new word drawing from the French argot word *vioc* that is used to refer to older persons as in the example “mes viocs” = my parents, in a familiar and more pejorative tone. They add a suffix –*kcho* in order to maintain the sound of Russian.

In the novel’s introduction, Alex takes the reader straight to the dark words of *nadsat* revealing the criminal and violent character of the group’s actions and their state of mind: “...some of the new veshches which they used to put into the old moloko, so you could peet it with vellocet or synthemesc or drenchrom or one or two other veshches which would give you a nice quiet horrorshow fifteen minutes admiring Bog and All His Holy Angels and Saints” (3). There is an inscribed challenge of translating “a nice quiet horrorshow fifteen minutes.” The phrase is complex and rich, and it builds an oxymoron by putting together two terms that are usually contradictory (*Nice, quiet* in contradiction to *horror*). But, in this example, Burgess adapts the Russian word *harasho*, meaning *good* and creates paranomasia. The two words sound alike but have a different meaning. The word *horrorshow* acts as an adjective and therefore, modifies ‘fifteen minutes’.

Belmont and Chabrier respond to this challenge with equal wit by combining one Russian word, *tzar* (*tsar*: title carried by Russian emperors) and the French word, *terrible*. The portmanteau *tzarrible* makes the connection with Russian all the while making the link with the notion or image of something negative, bad, terrifying.

Another challenge that the translators faced is related to the length and the clarification/expansion methods. The French translation keeps the name of the bar, Korova Milkbar, and thereby keeps the foreign in the text. However, the explanation of *mesto* is a little bit longer in the French:

The Korova Milkbar was a milk-plus mesto, and you may, O my brothers, have forgotten what these mestos were like, things changing so skorry these days and everybody very quick to forget. (3)

Le Korova Milkbar, c'était un de **ces messtots où on servait du lait gonflé**, et peut-être avez-vous oublié, Ô mes frères, à quoi ressemblait ce genre de messtot, tellement les choses changent zoum par les temps qui courent and tellement on a vite fait d'oublier. (11) (my emphasis)

The excerpt shows that *milk-plus mesto*, a fictional place in Burgess's futuristic society, has to be explained, expanded in the translation: "un de ces messtots où on servait du lait gonflé." As well, the translators use a more descriptive approach, depicting the place and the 'enriched' milk. "Changing so skorry" ends up being much longer in French, but the translation is just as imaginative as the original: "les choses changent *zoum*." Whereas the author referred to the Russian word *skori* (quick), the translators resorted to the onomatopoeic word *zoum*. In addition, the phrase is extended further with "par les temps qui courent," serving as a supplement. However, the language of the translation still seems to flow and to create a rhythm that is not a copy of Burgess's language, but rather, a parallel stream. It is inspired by the original, and the ST always resurfaces in the TT.

Further examples illustrate the innovation that seems to spring from Burgess's playful language. The author replaces the word *God* by *Bog* (Russian for God), but this word is meant to have more layers than one: "Averse though Burgess was to lavatory humour, there is a touch of it in his word for God: Bog" (Burgess 1996: x). Merriam Webster Dictionary explains that *bog* is short for *boghouse*, or lavatory, stemming etymologically from British *argo* where *bog* means *to defecate*. Belmont and Chabrier

match the author's humour and come up with a new word in French, *Gogre*, drawing from *goguenots* (lieux d'aisances, toilettes) or from its abbreviation *gogs* or *gogues*.

The translators resort to some French slang as well: *cancerette* for *cigarette* or *cancers* in ST. Also, they respond to Cockney rhyming slang in the example, *luscious glory* meaning *hair* (upper story/hair), by putting *luxuriante splendeur* together. Interestingly, the verb *peet* (piti = to drink in Russian) was translated into the anglicized word *drinker*. When Alex says: "you could peet it with vellocet" (3), the translation suggests: "on pouvait le drinker avec de la vélocette" (11). Some transliterations simply did not work or they could have potentially misled the reader. Perhaps, *piter* would have made the reader think of *la pitié* or *piteux/piteuse*, and therefore, would have taken the reader unnecessarily in the wrong direction. The anglicized term *drinker* can potentially serve two functions: remind the reader of the original, English work, and point to the action of *drinking/boire* with a term that has already entered the French slang (*le drink*, dating back to the 19th century).

For Burgess's invented slang, for example, *guff* (laugh), the translators make up a parallel term *bidonske* inspiring on the word *bidon* (from *se bidonner*: to laugh without restraint or to laugh one's head off) and the Russian suffix *-ske*, to represent *rigolade* or *laugh*. And lastly, intertextuality is very much present in the novel, specifically in the author's use of the word *gulliver* (head). The translation keeps this reference to *Gulliver's Travels* and Jonathan Swift and incorporates the word *gulliver* (Burgess 1996: x).

5. Nadsat: West Meets East

From this brief comparative analysis of the source text and the French translation, it can be seen that Belmont and Chabrier invested much effort and thought into creating a parallel *A Clockwork Orange* and not a mechanical copy. A detailed look into the language of Burgess's work shows how rich, intricate and multi-layered the novel is. The translation needed to be imaginative and inventive in order to reveal the underlying elements of the original. But the translation not only transferred the story, it also, maintained a creative space for the readers' imagination. As much as the source text is a linguistic adventure for the English-speaking readers, the translation offers its own linguistic challenges and grabs the attention of the French readers.

As a sociolect or a teenage dialect, *nadsat* serves several functions. First, it represents the language appropriated by teenagers and is meant to exclude others. Second, it builds a barrier between the violence in the novel and the readers' sensitivity. It does not fully mask the sexual content and the *ultra-violence*, but it certainly distracts from the actual rawness of the actions. Lastly, as Burgess has suggested, it attempts to *brainwash* the readers into learning minimal Russian, and by drawing from the "two chief political languages of the age" (Burgess 1990: 38) it creates a meeting point of the West and the East at the height of the Cold War. In this way, the linguistic adventure of demotic English and Russian transliterations becomes much more: a powerful, controversial, inspirational critique of the society, the brainwashing and "the Almighty State." It symbolically pushes the reader to learn the enemy's language and to cross over to the Other at a time when such action was unthinkable. Through translation, Burgess's *slovos* are disseminated even farther and have the task of reaching an ever-growing readership. And finally, the French translation proves that even novels like A Clockwork Orange are not untranslatable.

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