The Power of Fictional Constructed Languages in Post-War English Literature

1948 - 1980

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Contents

Introduction

>""You are very much older than I am," said Winston. "You must have been a grown man before I was born. You can remember what it was like in the old days, before the Revolution. People of my age don't really know anything about those times. We can only read about them in books, and what it says in the books may not be true. ["]" (Orwell p.89)

In the late 20th century, with the First and Second World War still painfully present in memory and already a few years into the Cold War, the public grew more aware and scared of the current situation. To raise awareness of – and to personally critique – the present critical situation and its possible devastating outcomes, some writers dedicated their time to writing dystopian, and post-apocalyptic, fiction with a message. The created novels encourage the reader to overthink the possible effects of warfare, and stimulate the reader to question the given information and the language it is provided in.

George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Anthony Burgess' *A Clockwork Orange* and Russell Hoban's *Riddley Walker* guide the reader through the prevailing attitudes towards (nuclear) war in the second half of the 20th century. Not only through literary genre and setting, but more discretely through the use of fictional constructed languages within the novels. Their use of fictional constructed languages makes the three writers and their novels stand out from other post-war fiction, as they provide new insight in how language and concepts of power are closely intertwined. This leads to questioning what type of powerful features a fictional constructed language can convey, and also how such a language can relate to concepts of power and authority. An examination of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, *A Clockwork Orange*, and *Riddley Walker* will show how the fictional constructed languages in each novel react towards the powers that be, and will ask if these fictive languages also convey certain powers themselves.

1. Theoretical Background

Before elaborating on the subject of the powers and influences of fictional constructed languages in different pieces of literature, a brief introduction to the historical period in which the three writers wrote their novels is necessary. This piece of history provides an insight in the literary genres of the time and gives important information concerning the underlying reasons behind the use of constructed languages, and their forms. Furthermore, an introduction to the different types of fictional constructed languages, and an insight in why these languages are generally used in literature over time, contribute to the understanding of the influences of fictional constructed languages.

1.1 The Cold War and Post-War Fiction

Shortly after the devastating impact of World War II, after an American atomic bomb targeted the Japanese city of Hiroshima, the threat of nuclear warfare reached its highpoint. Around 1947 the world was still rehabilitating from WWII and its aftermath, when the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) declared an ideological war and continued their developments in the creation, and testing, of nuclear bombs resulting in the Cold War. During the Cold War both the USSR and the USA possessed enough nuclear weaponry to completely destroy the earth and all of its inhabitants (Segal p.82), which, not surprisingly, led to concerned and anxious reactions from the population. A global feeling of distress and uncertainty entered the public consciousness and created a gap between the population who actively lived through WWII and the population of children and young adults who were not well aware of the impacts of WWII. The younger generation was not as influenced by WWII, which, for some of the young adults, could have triggered a sense of carelessness, or even rebellion against their parents and the 'older' generation.

This rebellion of the younger generation is carefully portrayed by Burgess' use of Russian influences in the speech of his, fairly young, English main character and his friends. Burgess' *A Clockwork Orange* was published in 1962, during the Cold War. The use of the Russian language in the everyday speech of English teenagers would most certainly have raised some eyebrows, and

caused some distress, among the older generation. Burgess was not the only writer who shows signs

of the trending issues of the Cold War and the aftermath of WWII in his novel. Keith M. Booker states

that it "is not surprising, given the overall tenor of the decade, [that] in the intense political climate

of the early 1950's, concerns with themes such as nuclear destruction [. . .] tended to dominate both

novels and films" (Booker p.4). Which he concludes with stating that the "the science fiction of the

long 1950's responds in a particularly direct and obvious way to the threat of nuclear holocaust"

(Booker p.4). A lot of post-war fiction revolves around the possibilities of a disastrous outcome of

war, and the common genres of post-war fiction therefore are dystopian-, post-apocalyptic-, and

totalitarian novels. A *dystopia*, the direct opposite of a *utopia*, has, according to M.H. Abrams, "come

to be applied to works of fiction, including science fiction, that represent a very unpleasant imaginary

world in which ominous tendencies of our present social, political, and technological order are

projected into a disastrous future culmination" (Abrams p.378). Booker, in collaboration with Anne-

Marie Thomas, in *The Science Fiction Handbook,* states that most important science fiction works in

the twenty years after WWII dealt "with the possibility of nuclear holocaust and its aftermath"

(Booker and Thomas p.53), which resulted in the fact that "post-apocalyptic stories [. . .] were

propelled to the forefront of science fiction." (Booker and Thomas p.53). Both Orwell and Hoban

engaged in exploring the possible results of nuclear warfare in their well-known novels, respectively:

Nineteen Eighty-Four, published in 1949, and *Riddley Walker* which was published more towards the

end of the Cold War in 1980. Similar to Burgess, these novels also contain noticeable influences

linked to WWII and the Cold War, most of them connected to the fear of what could happen to the

world if a nuclear war would take place. The novels are dystopian or post-apocalyptic and show signs

of distress, uncertainty, fear and forms of absolute power, mirroring the overall tensions of the post-

war period.

1.2 Fictional Constructed Languages

To investigate, and argument on, how fictional constructed languages in literature can be used to convey certain properties or types of power, a few explanations on created languages are necessary. First of all; how can the term 'fictional constructed language' be defined? It is a language that, in the context outside of the novel it is used in, is non-existing and is solely created for the purpose of characters in a book or script. Invented languages can be found in almost every genre of fictional literature, ranging from children's books – Richard Adams' *Watership Down* contains the fictional constructed language *Lapine*, a rabbit-language which shows grammatical structures and an extensive vocabulary – to fantasy- and science fiction novels. The latter two literary genres have served as the birthplace of many constructed languages for alien life forms and mythical creatures. For example the science fiction novel *Star Trek*'s alien *Klingon* language created by American linguist Marc Okrand (Okrand n.p.), and the different types of *Elvish* languages constructed by the writer J.R.R. Tolkien for his fictive universe in the fantasy trilogy *Lord of the Rings* (Tolkien n.p.).

The term 'constructed' can be loosely translated to 'created', but in the case of many fictional constructed languages the word 'constructed' is used to define that a language is constructed from elements of other, existing, languages. There are certain elements of a language which can be used to create a new language. Existing human languages can be copied on aspects like grammar, alphabet, pronunciation, and vocabulary, where new words can be created by compounding, clipping, and blending existing words and segments of words. Most fictional constructed languages contain grammatical rules which are also found in existing 'real' languages, although the implementation may, for example, include the use of affixes which, vocabulary-wise, are not found in any existing languages.

There are different underlying reasons for a writer to create a constructed language and add it to a novel. If the story contains characters struggling with a language barrier, or there is a language barrier between the reader and a character due to time or place, for example in futuristic novels, an invented language can bridge these barriers and improve the communication. By creating a pidgin-

like language where accents, dialects, or even entirely different languages are combined, the reader gains more understanding of the fictive world and its characters. Fictional constructed languages are also used to give a voice to alien species and fantasy characters in the science fiction- and fantasy genre. Every fictive race or species can have its own invented language which creates an individual personality, and which is used to label the actions and concepts of the alien, or fantasy, characters. Within the more futuristic novels these created languages are used to label new inventions and give a name to, previously unknown, innovative projects and technology. New fictive inventions can be described and named with a new fictive language. When looking into dystopian and post-apocalyptic novels which contain a fictional constructed language, it becomes clear that language holds more power than the act of verbal communication alone. These languages can be created to convey power over an audience, to voice the protest of adolescents, or they can be used as a political tool which may even lead to the suppression or overpowering of characters, which are recurring themes in dystopian and post-apocalyptic fiction.

2. George Orwell – *Nineteen Eighty-Four*

Written in the year 1948, and published one year later, George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* portrays a sinister fictional future for the world. The inhabitants of earth, in Orwell's political dystopian setting, are suppressed by the ruling totalitarian regime and are struggling to make ends meet in what seems to be the aftermath of a worldwide nuclear war. Orwell wrote his novel shortly following WWII and during the early stages of the Cold War, when the threat of war and nuclear weaponry were still very much alive. The setting of the novel is most likely a reflection of Orwell's interpretation, and fear, of what might happen if another – perhaps nuclear –, war unfolds. As he states in the opening lines of his essay "You and the Atomic Bomb" written in 1945: "Considering how likely we all are to be blown to pieces by it within the next five years [. . .]" (Orwell n.p.), it is clear that the threat of nuclear warfare has been on his mind ever since the Cold War started. Michael Wilding, in his book *Political Fictions*, observes that Orwell's novel "encapsulated central

aspects of a certain mood of its time; it found a ready acceptance in the cold war climate, and helped foster that very set of attitudes"(Wilding p.242). Orwell's novel, together with Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* and the novel *We* by Russian writer Yevgeny Zamyatin, are described as the probable foundations of the modern dystopian genre by Edward Brown in his essay "Brave New World, 1984, and We: An Essay on Anti-Utopia" (Brown p. 3), portraying the importance of Orwell's work for modern dystopian literature.

Orwell's fictive futuristic world is divided into three super-states, Oceania, Eurasia, and Eastasia, which are at constant war with each other. The protagonist Winston Smith, inhabitant of Airstrip One (former London) in Oceania, works for 'the Party', which under control of the public leader 'Big Brother', forms the corrupt government of Oceania. Booker and Thomas note that "*Nineteen Eighty-Four* is suspicious of both capitalism and socialism, suggesting that either, as it exists in Orwell's 1940's world, has the potential to develop into an oppressive totalitarian system devoted primarily to its own preservation rather than to enriching the lives of its citizens" (Booker and Thomas p.66), hinting towards the totalitarian government in the novel. To the outside world Winston seems a very simple man following the rules and doing his job for the Party, but simultaneously he is skeptic and does not blindly swallow the information he gets from the government like most inhabitants of Oceania do. He is a silent rebel, writing down his thoughts and memories in a diary – something which is strictly illegal in Airstrip One – and he secretly hopes he will find someone likeminded, someone who sees through the lies of the Party just like him. His hopes seem to be answered when he meets Julia and comes into possession of the book *The Theory and Practice of Oligarchical Collectivism*, supposedly written by Emmanuel Goldstein, Big Brother's greatest enemy. Winston's job is to manipulate Big Brother's public proclamations in a way that they match the prevailing situations and make sure his sayings are always correct and mostly positive. The indoctrination of the inhabitants of Oceania continues with a, by the government controlled, new language which creates suppression by enforced limitation and adaptations of their current language. This language is called *Newspeak*.

2.1 The Language: Newspeak

"It's a beautiful thing, the destruction of words. Of course the great wastage is in the verbs and adjectives, but there are hundreds of nouns that can be got rid of as well. It isn't only the synonyms; there are also the antonyms. After all, what justification is there for a word which is simply the opposite of some other words? [. . .] In the end the whole notion of goodness and badness will be covered by only six words – in reality, only one word. Don't you see the beauty of that, Winston?" (Orwell p.51)

Newspeak, the successor of the current English language now redeemed as *Oldspeak*, is a simplified language created from aspects of the English language. Orwell's fictional constructed language shares its basic vocabulary and most of its grammatical rules with the English language, but simultaneously contains alternative vocabulary and grammar. The goal of the characters involved in the creation of Newspeak within the novel, is to eliminate all vocabulary and rules which, according to the Oceanian government, are unnecessary.

Syme, one of the characters in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, mentions the removal of synonyms, antonyms, and the comparative and superlative from the degrees of comparison as an aspect of the creation of Newspeak. The language embraces the process of derivation, "the process of creating words by adding affixes (prefixes and suffixes) to existing words" (McColl Millar p.37), as an alternative for opposites and the degrees of comparison. The term *good* remains, but to label something as *bad* – a direct opposite – would be speaking of something 'ungood'. *Better* and *best* are translated to 'gooder' and 'goodest', and *excellent* or *splendid* would relatively be translated to 'plusgood' or 'doubleplusgood'. The name of the constructed language itself, Newspeak, is a product of the English adjective *new* and the verb *to speak*, and is created by a technique called compounding "combining two (or more) existing words into a new word" (McColl Millar p.35). Most new words in Orwell's fictional constructed language are created by this technique. Alternatively, a combination of clipping and blending, where segments or phonemes of words are combined to create new words, is used for the creation of the Newspeak lexicon. Examples of this process involve words like 'telescreen' (Orwell p.2) which is both a television and a security camera, 'artsem' (Orwell p.66)

which stands for *artificial insemination*, and 'recdep' (Orwell p.307) a term used for the records department.

Since the fictional constructed language is not yet fully integrated in society within the setting of the novel, there are multiple conversations *about* Newspeak, but not many involving the actual use of Newspeak, which limits the amount of examples taken directly from the novel. However, George Orwell has provided an essay, "The Principles of Newspeak", as an appendix to his novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* to explain some more basic principles of Newspeak. He explains that all basic words can be used as both noun and verb and that "[a]djectives were formed by adding the suffix –*ful* to the noun-verb, and adverbs by adding –*wise*. Thus, for example, *speedful* meant " rapid" and *speedwise* meant "quickly"" (Orwell p.302). He continues with the explanation that all plurals are created by adding the suffix –*s* or –*es*, and that "[c]omparison of adjectives [is] invariably made by adding –*er, est* (*good, gooder, goodest*), irregular forms and the *more, most* formation being suppressed" (Orwell p.303). He also points out that the reader should take notice that Newspeak words are stripped from all their 'unorthodox' or secondary meanings. "The word *free* still existed in Newspeak, but it could only be used in such statements as "This dog is free from lice" [. . .]. It could not be used in its old sense of "politically free" or "intellectually free," since political and intellectual freedom no longer exist even as concepts" (Orwell p.300).

2.2 Language as a Psychological and Political Tool

"Don't you see that the whole aim of Newspeak is to narrow the range of thought? In the end we shall make thoughtcrime literally impossible, because there will be no words in which to express it. Every concept that can ever be needed will be expressed by exactly *one* word, with its meaning rigidly defined and all its subsidiary meanings rubbed out and forgotten. [. . .] Every year fewer and fewer words, and the range of consciousness always a little smaller. [. . .] The revolution will be complete when the language is perfect." (Orwell p.52)

Within the novel the creation of the language Newspeak is still in progress. The public has been introduced to Newspeak through official occasions and by the information provided to them from

the government or 'big brother'. Nevertheless, most conversation consists of 'oldspeak' combined with some Newspeak vocabulary. Members of the inner Party are most fluent in Newspeak, but they do not yet speak it as if it were their native language. The 'proles', the working class of Oceania, use Newspeak the least. They are not seen as a threat to the totalitarian system in any way, as they are expected to be simpleminded workers. The proles are therefore granted more freedom than partymembers, and Newspeak is not forced upon them. As Peter Stockwell mentions in his essay "Invented Language in Literature" : "Newspeak is a neograph that is gestured towards for its symbolic value rather than enacted" (Stockwell p.7). Throughout the novel Newspeak vocabulary is sporadically used, but mostly to discuss or describe elements of Newspeak itself.

The people of Oceania are told by their government, and most of them mindlessly agree, that Newspeak is introduced to prevent the inhabitants from committing crime. It is believed to prevent both actual- and 'thoughtcrime' (the act of thinking criminal thoughts, which is considered a felony in Oceania). In a way this is truthful, eventually Newspeak will eliminate thoughtcrime, but at what cost? The totalitarian government in the novel indeed limits the language, which results in a governmental control over what society says. By eliminating all 'unnecessary' vocabulary and rules, the inhabitants or Oceania lose their individual voice and are controlled in what they say, and eventually in what they think.

> "It was assumed that when he was not working, eating, or sleeping he would be taking part in some kind of communal recreations; to do anything that suggested a taste for solitude, even to go for a walk by yourself, was always slightly dangerous. There was a word for it in Newspeak: *ownlife*, it was called, meaning individualism and eccentricity." (Orwell p.82)

On a smaller scale Newspeak is used to create new words and phrases for inventions and actions which are suitable for the totalitarian, controlling, regime. As presented in the quotation above, the Newspeak word 'ownlife' is introduced to retain the inhabitants of Oceania from exploring their own individuality, and to suggest that anyone with a taste for solitude is eccentric and quite possibly

dangerous. The opinion of the government is hereby merged with the official Newspeak vocabulary, which results in a population which shares the opinion of the government.

In his essay "The Principles of Newspeak", Orwell highlights that the purpose of Newspeak is "not only to provide a medium of expression for the world-view and mental habits proper to the devotees of Ingsoc [English socialism], but to make all other modes of thought impossible" (Orwell p.300). The speakers of Newspeak are bound to one thought, and all other divergent thoughts are undesirable and should cease to exist. "Each reduction [of the language] was a gain, since the smaller the area of choice, the smaller the temptation to take thought" (Orwell p.309).

The quotation given at the start of this chapter is taken from a conversation from *Nineteen Eighty-Four* between protagonist Winston and coworker Syme. This character also works for the Party and speaks highly of the oncoming completion of the Eleventh Newspeak Dictionary. The curious aspect here is that the idea of a language which narrows the range of thought is presented as a positive aspect of Newspeak. The inhabitants of Oceania are under psychological control of the government and believe that a language which could diminish thoughtcrime is desirable. This psychological control is also represented in the slogans used by the Party within the novel:

WAR IS PEACE
FREEDOM IS SLAVERY
IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH

The Party-slogans are a result of the concept of 'doublethink'. Doublethink is a, nowadays, widely accepted phrase and can be explained as "the act of ordinary people simultaneously accepting two mutually contradictory beliefs as correct, [. . .] without necessarily sensing any conflict between the two" (McArthur p.321). It is the paradox of accepting the Party-slogans as truthful, even though they are directly contradicting. Doublethink, likewise, embraces the acceptance of knowing that the ministries within the novel represent the direct opposite of their names. As stated in *The Theory and Practice of Oligarchical Collectivism* in Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*:

"The Ministry of Peace concerns itself with war, the Ministry of Truth with lies, the Ministry of Love with torture and the Ministry of Plenty with starvation. These contradictions are not accidental, nor do they result from ordinary hypocrisy: they are deliberate exercises in *doublethink*. For it is only by reconciling contradictions that power can be retained indefinitely." (Orwell p.216)

By manipulating the official language of Oceania, the government gains control over the actions and thoughts of the inhabitants. Which results in a society which easily accepts the governmental phrase "some are more equal than others", and believes this to be logical and truthful.

Individual knowledge is undesirable, and people thinking for themselves are a possible threat to the ruling government and should therefore be altered or 'vaporized'. This alteration happens mostly through indoctrination, political propaganda, and the use of Newspeak. When an individual is resistant to the methods of the government he or she can be vaporized: wiped out of existence with no trace left in any former publication or speech, and not to be spoken of ever again. Character Syme meets this fate when partymembers suspect he might be too intelligent. By understanding the system, and the means of Newspeak, he automatically becomes a threat to this system. The Oceanian government wants unthinking loyalty from anyone outside the inner-party, so Syme is vaporized for being an intellectual. He disappears and becomes an 'unperson'.

"There was a small bookcase in the other corner, and Winston had already gravitated toward it. It contained nothing but rubbish. The hunting-down and destruction of books had been done with the same thoroughness in the prole quarters as everywhere else. It was very unlikely that there existed anywhere in Oceania a copy of a book printed earlier than 1960." (Orwell p.97)

Orwell has created a fictional society where any knowledge, outside the information provided by the government, is regarded punishable. Every book written in 'oldspeak' is destroyed and replaced by altered, and mostly false, historical information provided in Newspeak. Even main character Winston, who has access to every newspaper and publication in Airstrip One, is left in the dark, since all

publications have probably been subject to multiple alterations or might not have been truthful to begin with. Everything written in Newspeak can be considered as unreliable.

As mentioned before, many Newspeak words are connected to a governmental opinion. A lot of 'oldspeak'-words have simply seized to exist, because they were considered of no use within the beliefs of the totalitarian government. Words like *honour, justice, morality, internationalism, democracy, science,* and *religion* are no longer in use and are covered up by government-approved blanket words, which abolish the original English words (Orwell p.305).

> "All words grouping themselves round the concepts of liberty and equality, for instance, were contained in the single word *crimethink*, while all words grouping themselves round the concepts of objectivity and rationalism were contained in the single word *oldthink*." (Orwell p.305-6)

Evidently, all words concerning liberty and equality are labelled as criminal, and all words concerning objectivity and rationalism are labelled as old-fashioned and outdated. By covering up the – by the party's standards – non-essential words with Newspeak words with a negative connotation, the thoughts and opinions of speakers of Newspeak are influenced in a way that is profitable for the ruling regime. Eventually, after Newspeak is fully integrated, it will still be possible to make a construction like *Big Brother is ungood*. This statement, however, will sound completely absurd to a dedicated speaker of Newspeak, and furthermore it cannot be "sustained by reasoned argument, because the necessary words [are] not available" (Orwell p.310). Unwanted concepts are essentially eliminated from the language. Society is no longer able to talk about these concepts, which ultimately will make it nearly impossible to even think about them.

In Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-four* Newspeak is used as psychological manipulation to change the behaviour, and the method of thinking, of the inhabitants of his fictional dystopian society. The fictional constructed language is weaponised as a political tool, and adds to the general political atmosphere in the novel. The fictive totalitarian government "seeks power entirely for its own sake. We are not interested in the good of others; we are interested solely in power." (Orwell, p.263), so

they create a language which is fitted for their political purposes. The Newspeak language is a tool to provide, and amplify, this power the government desires.

3. Anthony Burgess – *A Clockwork Orange*

A little over a decade after George Orwell wrote *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, shedding new light on the dystopian genre in post-war fiction, Anthony Burgess' *A Clockwork Orange* was published during the Cold War in 1962. Although the setting of Burgess' novel resembles the general atmosphere of Orwell's literary piece, the attitude towards the fictive dystopian universe is seemingly different. As Robert O. Evans stated: "Like *We* and *Brave New World* and *1984* [*A Clockwork Orange*] presents a vision of society as it has developed at some future time, a vision that is not only unpleasant but is almost entirely unbearable. Unlike Zamyatin, Huxley, and Orwell [. . .], Burgess holds no shred of hope for society" (Evans p.408). Burgess' lack of faith in his fictional futuristic society might be considered a reaction towards other dystopian novels which are similar in attitude to *Nineteen Eighty-Four.* In many dystopian novels there is one character, or multiple characters, fighting for justice, leading a rebellion, or at least considering the possibility that the current system he or she is living in is flawed. There is a sense of resistance, a spark of hope. *A Clockwork Orange* is different.

In Burgess' near future dystopian the reader encounters England in a seemingly post-war state. Main character Alex and his group of friends are the leading figures in this, slightly absurdist, novel. They are part of the present subculture of extreme youth violence, and protagonist Alex casually tells the story of their exuberant behaviour and profligate lives using a fictional language he and his friends speak. They go day by day skipping school and committing crimes of 'ultra-violence', involving theft, rape, and physical violence. Moreover, Alex and his group use drugs on a daily basis, sometimes at the Korova Milk Bar in the form of 'milk-plus' where their drug of choice is added to a glass of milk, making the drugs accessible for minors. One night, after a quarrel doubting Alex' leadership qualities, the group plans to rob a wealthy woman in her own home. Alex' break in is successful, he knocks the woman unconscious and opens the door to let his friends in. One of his

friends, looking for revenge for the earlier quarrel, knocks Alex unconscious and leaves him on the front porch. The police find Alex and take him in to custody, where he learns that the woman has passed away from her injuries. Alex is sentenced to 14 years in prison. After two years in prison Alex is offered to undergo a certain aversion therapy in exchange for his remaining years of confinement. This therapy, called the Ludovico Technique, should eventually turn Alex into a non-violent man with no desire for, and even aversion to, any form of violence.

3.1 The Language: Nadsat

"'These grahzny sodding veshches that come out of my gulliver and my plott,' I said, 'that's what it is.' 'Quaint,' said Dr. Brodsky, like smiling, 'the dialect of the tribe. Do you know anything of its provenance, Branom?' 'Odd bits of old rhyming slang,' said Dr. Branom [. . .] 'A bit of gipsy talk, too. But most of the roots are Slav. Propaganda. Subliminal penetration.'" (Burgess p.86)

Nadsat is a form of personalised speech which is not spoken by every character within the story. Most supporting-, or side-, characters in Burgess' novel speak English, but the main character Alex and his friends communicate in a fictional constructed language, even though they are perfectly capable of speaking the English language. Their divergent language can technically be labelled as an argot: a form of secret slang spoken by a specific group of people, which is difficult to understand for any outsiders of the group. Character Dr. Brodsky within the novel refers to the Nadsat speech patterns as 'the dialect of the tribe'(Burgess p.86). This line can be found in T.S. Eliot's poem "Little Gidding" which was published two decades before Burgess' *A Clockwork Orange.*

For last year's words belong to last year's language
And next year's words await another voice.
[. . .]
Between two worlds become much like each other,
So I find words I never thought to speak
[. . .]

> Since our concern was speech, and speech impelled us
> To purify the dialect of the tribe
> And urge the mind to aftersight and foresight (Eliot II.4)

The line in the novel is quite possibly a reference to the poem by Eliot, which – like the novel – embraces changes in language (amongst many other subjects). A comparative commentary of Burgess' novel and "Little Gidding" on the subject of changing language would be an interesting further literary examination outside the context of this thesis.

The Nadsat language is basically constructed from the English language and from Russian words and influences. There are also a few German words – "'tashtook' for *handkerchief* and 'kartoffel' for *potato*" (Evans p.408) – and some words from an unclear origin which are most likely created by Burgess himself. Most words are anglicised Russian loan-words with the preserved original Russian pronunciation, other parts of the Nadsat vocabulary are made up of blended, clipped or compounded English words (Oks p. 42). Examples of these Russian influences are the use of the Russian word 'droog' (Burgess p.2) for *friend*, the anglicised Russian word 'horrorshow' (Burgess p.2), derived from Russian 'хорошо' or 'khorosho', meaning *good*, and the word 'gulliver' (Burgess p.86) derived from Russian 'golová', meaning *head*. Next to standard English main character Alex also uses childish expressions like 'appy polly loggies' (Burgess p.8) and 'pop-poppicorns' (Burgess p.134). English rhyming slang is mostly represented by using the word 'cutter' (Burgess p.134), originally derived from the expression 'bread and butter', meaning *money*. Stockwell also mentions some Cockney-derived words like 'pretty polly' (Burgess p.135) for *money,* and 'platties' (Burgess p.13) for *clothes* (Stockwell p.5). He also argues that 'viddy'(Burgess p.13), meaning *to see*, is derived from Cockney slang, but the word has more likely originated from the Russian verb 'видеть' or 'vídet'' (*to see*) or the Latin verb 'vidi' (*to see*). The name for the fictional constructed language itself is derived from the Russian suffix '–надцать', or '-nadtsat' as portrayed in the Latin alphabet, which is the Russian equivalent of the English suffix –*teen*, as in, for example, *sixteen* (Oks p.39).

Most of the foreign loan words used in Nadsat are nouns. The verbs, adverbs, and adjectives are English or derived from the English language. Evans analysed the amount of foreign language within *A Clockwork Orange* and came to the conclusion that "there are about a dozen words on every page of the novel that are non-English, and these words are almost entirely substantives. At a rough estimate about three per cent of the text is foreign or borrowed" (Evans p.406). He mentions that this is a rather large amount of invasion, considering that most of the non-English words are from languages which are substantially different from the English language (Evans p.406), and therefore hard to read and understand for an English audience.

3.2 Language as the Voice of Rebellion and Protest

"It was round by Municipal Power Plant that we came across Billyboy and his five droogs.
 [. . .] Billyboy was something that made me want to sick just to viddy his fat grinning litso, and he always had this von of very stale oil that's been used for frying over and over, even when he was dressed in his best platties, like now. They viddied us just as we viddied them, and there was like a very quiet kind of watching each other now. This would be real, this would be proper, this would be the nosh, the oozy, the britva, not just fisties and boots."
(Burgess p.13)

Nadsat is the language of a subculture. It is a language created by teenagers to voice their specific thoughts and needs. Main character Alex and his friends are the prominent speakers of Nadsat within *A Clockwork Orange*, although in Stanley Kubrick's 1971 film adaptation of *A Clockwork Orange* there are some encounters with other (rival) teen-groups who also seem to speak a form of Nadsat, or at least disturbed English. Alex converses in Nadsat with everyone he encounters in his everyday life; his friends, his parents, girls he meets, bartenders, the police, doctors, and bystanders. Most characters in the novel seem to understand at least some of the fictional constructed language, as they respond to Alex's remarks and questions. However, nobody outside the teenage age-group uses the Nadsat language themselves. Different from Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is that most of Burgess' novel is written with the use of Nadsat vocabulary and Nadsat speech patterns. Since

narrator Alex uses the fictional constructed language fluently, and the language is fully functioning within the teenage subculture, it gives the reader more insight in the use of Nadsat.

Within *A Clockwork Orange* it is not made clear how Nadsat came into being, how the language originated is free to be interpreted by the audience. At the start of the novel the fictional constructed language already exists, and there is a small group of characters who speak the argot. Stockwell argues that "Nadsat serves to increase the reader's involvement with the focalizer" and that the use of Nadsat in the novel "pitches the reader into Alex's mind more effectively than if the narrative had been written entirely in Standard English" (Stockwell p.5-6). So it is suggested that the use of a fictional constructed language like Nadsat is introduced to make the reader more emotionally involved with the main character.

Burgess' novel is a futuristic novel, and he anticipated that a futuristic, changed, world would also embrace a newly developed language. Nadsat is used to portray and amplify the personality of a disturbed teenage character. The character of Alex, the first person narrator of the story, is a rather unique individual who seems to be indifferent to the social and cultural norms of the society created in Burgess's story. To add to Alex's divergent behaviour from the rest of the characters, Burgess created an argot to match his personality. With the creative use of this fictional constructed language, Burgess is able to complete the eccentric personality of the main character within his novel. Stockwell mentions that the language in *A Clockwork Orange* consists of dialectal innovation which is strongly focalized by main character Alex. "The narrative is thus their dialect, and the invented language takes the reader quickly into the conscious world of the novel" (Stockwell p.5). The use of the fictional constructed language Nadsat adds to the overall character of Burgess' futuristic world.

In Burgess' fictive England the use of Nadsat, at first glance, seems to be nothing more than a tool to voice the outrageous behaviour of a pubescent subculture. It is a teenage language in which the youthful characters express aggression and sexism. Nadsat, rather than standard English, is the preferred language to describe different violent aspects in the novel. Like the term 'ultra-violence'

(Burgess p.137), used to indicate particularly aggressive an vile criminal actions. Also the use of 'britva' (Burgess p.13) for *razor*, and 'crast' (Burgess p.137) meaning *to steal*. Not only specifically violent, but also rebellious behaviour is expressed in Nadsat, like 'cancer' (Burgess p.138) for *cigarette* and 'vellocet', 'synthemesc', and 'drencrom' (Burgess p.3) for different types of drugs. Within the novel the teenage subculture is strongly dominated by boys, which causes some aspects of Nadsat to grow as a rather sexist language. In *A Clockwork Orange* there are noticeably more words, both positive and negative, for *girl* and *woman* than for *boy* and *man*. Evans mentions these synonyms when, in his essay, he states that "women are sometimes [referred to as] sharps or lighters, as well as ptitsas, cheenas, baboochkas, and devotchkas" (Evans p.408).

Arguably one of the clearer examples of Nadsat being a teenage language occurs when, near the end of the novel, Alex runs into one of his former friends. Pete, now grown up and happily married, used to be part of Alex's violent teen-subculture. He has lost his former Nadsat speech patterns and converses with Alex in standard English.

> "'He talks funny, doesn't he?' said this devotchka, like giggling. 'This,' said Pete to the devotchka, 'is an old friend. His name is Alex. May I,' he said to me, 'introduce my wife?' My rot fell wide open then. 'Wife?' I like gaped. 'Wife wife wife? Ah no, that cannot be. Too young art thou to be married, old droog. Impossible impossible.' This devotchka who was like Pete's wife (impossible impossible) giggled again and said to Pete: 'Did you used to talk like that too?'" (Burgess p.138)

The conversation between the narrator and his old 'droog' Pete portrays the difference in language-use between a teenager and an adult in Burgess' novel. This interaction suggests that the new generation of adults, after shaking off their Nadsat-lifestyle, lose their sense of rebelliousness, and their uncontrollable aggressive behaviour and sexist remarks.

But Nadsat has more layers than just being a tool to voice the aggression of Burgess' violent futuristic youth. The fictional constructed language embraces the protest and rebellion of the teenage characters against society and their elders. That Burgess created characters which are

rebellious and unlike their parents did not go unnoticed. Evans states that Burgess "is creating a

hopeless vision of a society taken over by youth. The youth do not share the values of their elders,

nor do they admit any sort of normal associations with them" (Evans p.409). One aspect of Nadsat

which highlights this rebelliousness of the youth against their elders is the use of the Russian

language.

As *A Clockwork Orange* was published in 1962 during the Cold War, Burgess' choice to use

the Russian language as an influence for his fictional constructed teenage language was probably not

random. Where England predominantly opposed the Soviet ideology, all Russian influences naturally

were a bit intimidating. Taking this context outside of the book in mind, Robbie Goh mentions that in

the time Burgess was writing the novel there were "fears of a larger group of communist

sympathisers in British government and society" (Goh p.265). He continues that this fear was

"transformed in the novel into the Russian-based morphological and lexical elements in Nadsat"

(Goh p.265). The use of the Russian language, during that time, may have evoked fear and anger in

the older generations who lived through the WWII, and who were currently awaiting what possible

catastrophes the Cold War may bring. If we assume that this context is also present within the

environment of the characters in the book, the use of Nadsat by the teenage characters can be seen

as a rather harsh protest, and certainly as disrespectful behaviour, against their elders.

Outside of the fictional world in Burgess's novel, the Russian-based language serves as a

warning for the reader. As Evans states: **"**for the Anglo-American reader the Slavic words connote

communist dictatorship, [. . .] without moral value and without hope" (Evans p.409). Although the

fear of Soviet influences might have been valid, Evans suggests that Burgess tries to convey to his

reader that the affiliation with anything Russian could actually lead to the disturbed world filled with

youth-violence he has described. Evans is of the opinion that, by creating a Russian influenced argot,

"Burgess is exaggerating beyond all reasonable bounds this sort of linguistic process. And he makes

the argot Russian, as if to warn his readers of what society may become if it communizes itself along

Soviet lines" (Evans p.409).

The fictional constructed language Nadsat, in *A Clockwork Orange*, is used to give voice to the rebellious teenage subculture present in Burgess' futuristic England. It is an argot merely spoken by teens and it contains many expressions regarding the concepts of violence and sexism. The Nadsat language adds to these powerful concepts by giving the characters more opportunities, with a new vocabulary, to address the concepts and to freely express them. The Russian infiltration within the language adds to the dystopian genre of this post-war novel, as it captures the anxiety, and fear for Soviet influences, which were present in England during the cold war. The teenage characters within the novel portray their protest against their elders by speaking a Russian influenced argot.

4. Russell Hoban – *Riddley Walker*

Around nine years before the fall of the Berlin Wall, which marked the approaching end of the Cold War, Russell Hoban's *Riddley Walker* was published in 1980. The biggest threats of war had ceased, but the public was still fearful of what was possibly yet to come. Although Hoban's post-apocalyptic novel can be classified as post-war dystopian, it differs from the likes of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *A Clockwork Orange*. Unlike most other dystopian literature, *Riddley Walker* is written entirely in a fictional constructed language. Booker and Thomas praise the novel's divergence by stating that it "overcomes a shortcoming of most works of the subgenre" and that it has influenced many subsequent works which similarly try to portray the eroding language of a post-apocalyptic world (Booker and Thomas p.61). Where most dystopian literature presents a future with relatively unchanged language, Hoban takes it a step further and "attempts to portray a post-apocalypse England in which language itself (along with other elements of civilizations) has dramatically decayed." (Booker and Thomas p.61). Hoban renewed the post-apocalyptic literary genre by adding a new way to involve fictional constructed languages within a dystopian setting.

Riddley Walker is narrated by the 12 year old protagonist – a boy named Riddley Walker – who lives in the remains of what used to be the English county Kent in 'Inland'. Hoban's novel portrays a futuristic England around two millennia after a nuclear war, where a 12 year old boy like

Riddley is considered an adult. After Riddley loses his father in a work-related accident while digging out old machinery from the 'Bad Time', he becomes the successor to his father's status as a 'connexion man'. A connexion man is responsible for providing prophetic interpretations after the villagers gather to watch a travelling puppet show. The puppet show serves as a religious ceremony, and rather evidently as some form of propaganda tool, and tells the creation myth of 'Inland'. The puppet show is staged by the 'Pry Mincer' and the 'Wes Mincer' who tell the story of 'Eusa' who, a very long time ago, became greedy for 'clevverness' – intelligence – and used technology to split the 'Littl Shining Man' of the atom into two. Riddley, looking for answers, tries to connect his reality with the stories provided to piece together the true history of 'Inland' and the '1 Big 1', the latter one hinting towards nuclear weaponry. On his journey he is led by a group of dogs, the enemies of humankind, and encounters the 'Ardship of Cambry' who tells him to find the 'Eusa people'. Riddley continues his epic journey to find these Eusa people, and thereby hopes to encounter the true history of Inland.

4.1 The Language: Riddleyspeak

"Next morning when I 1st come a wake I wer ½ thinking may be it ben a dream. Like when some thing harbel happens in a dream then you wake up and it aint nothing only a dream what a releaf. But when I woak up all the way there it wer and no dream. [. . .] I fealt like I rathert not come a wake that day." (Hoban p. 63)

The fictional constructed language in Hoban's *Riddley Walker*, unlike Newspeak and Nadsat, was not given an official name by the author. Some critics (Anna Pietroni, Peter Ruppert, Martin Boyne), and Will Self in the introduction to the novel, opted for the name *Riddleyspeak* – named after main character Riddley – and for the sake of coherence the constructed language will from here on be referred to as such. Riddleyspeak is a distinct form of English which includes seemingly phonetic transliterations of a Kentish dialect (Scott p.88), and embraces simplified speech. Stockwell mentions that Hoban's "written language of the future is imagined as a return to spoken vernacular forms"

(Stockwell p.6). The vocabulary, although written down phonetically, is clearly of English origin. However, many of the grammatical rules used in common English, and most punctuation, have vanished.

While at first hard to read and understand, Riddleyspeak becomes easier to grasp when it is read out loud. 'Mouf' (Hoban p.20) means *mouth*, 'sylents' (Hoban p.97) is *silence*, and the word combination 'teckernogical progers' (Hoban p.48) which, at first glance, seems hard to recognize becomes *technological progress* when carefully pronounced. An analysis of Riddleyspeak by Anna Pietroni also narrows in on the simplified versions of some English terms, for example explaining the translation of *a command* to be a 'do it' (Hoban p.27), and the term *leadership* to be 'follerme' (Hoban p.89) derived from the phrase *follow me* (Pietroni p.100). Within the aspect of phonetic speech other differences in language use and in spelling are present. The term 'memberment' (Hoban p.6) is given multiple meanings which include the verb *to remember*, but also the noun *memory*, showing similar words or expressions fading into one. Another form of simplified writing or speech is the frequent use of monosyllabic fragments instead of their original English transliterations consisting of more syllables. Structures like 'and tirely', 'sir prizes', and 'as plain' are used to express the multiple syllabic English words *entirely, surprises,* and *explain*. There are, however, also cases in which structures of multiple words or syllables have morphed into one expression. This process is mostly portrayed by combining pronouns with verbs and a combination of verbs and auxiliary verbs, for example found in 'youwl' for *you will* and 'shudve' for the phrase *should have*. Another intriguing aspect of the fictional constructed language is the infliction of the English verb *to be*, or rather the lack thereof. Within *Riddleyspeak* all inflictions of the verb *to be* (am, are, is, was, were, been) are replaced with the term 'ben', and in some cases 'wer', and all negations of the verb *to be* (am not, are not, have not been, etcetera) are replaced with the term 'bint', and on very few occasions with the term 'aint'.

4.2 Erosion of Language and the Decay of Communication

"She said, 'There bint no tel women time back way back. Nor there aint never ben no strait story I ever heard. Bint no writing for 100s and 100s of years til it begun agen nor you wunt never get a strait story past down by mouf over that long. [. . .] All them other storys tol by mouf they ben put to and took from and changit so much thru the years theyre all bits and blips and all mixt up.'" (Hoban p.20)

Riddley Walker is one of the first novels to have all monologue and dialogue – with the exception of one or two historical passages – written completely in a fictional constructed language. Russell Hoban's main character Riddley, as the protagonist, addresses the reader in the futuristic constructed language Riddleyspeak. Since Riddley is "one of the few literate people in a largely illiterate world" (Boyne p.2), we cannot be certain that all characters speak (or for that matter, write) exactly as how the character of Riddley has written it down. However, the language is written down partially phonetically, so the reader can assume that Riddley's interpretation does not differ much from the characters' actual speech. Unlike the societies in Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and Anthony Burgess' *A Clockwork Orange,* – where the creation of the constructed language was still in progress, or the language is only spoken by a select group of characters – in Hoban's fictive society every character the reader encounters speaks a language divergent from standard English. Within *Riddley Walker* the entire society communicates in the fictional constructed language Hoban created.

While comparing the language in *A Clockwork Orange* to the language in *Riddley Walker*, Stockwell mentions that "Russell Hoban's *Riddley Walker* presents an even more thoroughly realized dialectal extrapolation to symbolize the postapocalyptic fall of civilization" (Stockwell p.6), suggesting that the use of these fictional constructed languages adds to the dystopian setting of the novels. In all three novels the use of divergent language symbolizes the changes in society after a (nuclear) war. All three writers, Orwell, Burgess, and Hoban, within their novels have portrayed the decay of civilization and have indirectly commented on the subject of nuclear criticism. Hoban, furthermore, created a futuristic world which stands out from the other novels through his use of an eroded form

of English. Not only civilization, but also the use of language – and thereby language itself, have dramatically decayed in Russell Hoban's futuristic *Riddley Walker*.

Although a great addition to the general atmosphere, Riddleyspeak is rather hard to read and understand for the uninitiated eye. "Hoban's style requires a great deal of effort on the part of the reader, with a corresponding risk that the reader might consider the task too onerous" (Stockwell p.6). A similar aspect was noticed by Nancy Taylor who, in her essay on futuristic views in *Riddley Walker*, mentions that the fictional constructed language might be too overwhelming, and could cause a distraction from the novels storyline and its characters. "Hoban's carefully created language has drawn almost more critical interest than have the novel's plot and characters" (Taylor p.28). Martin Boyne, in his stylistic analysis of syntax in – amongst other novels – *Riddley Walker*, states that the theme "and even the story itself are secondary in many ways to the language" (Boyne p.2). Boyne, similarly to Taylor, points out that "[The language] has been the primary focus of many, although far from all, critical studies of the novel from the early 1980s to the present day" (Boyne p.2). Nevertheless, Hoban's introduction of his fictional constructed language Riddleyspeak is an innovative way to draw the reader's attention towards the decaying elements of society in his dystopian post-war novel. Boyne addresses this, while discussing language-use in both *Riddley Walker* and Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*, by stating that: "In many ways the syntactic chaos that appears to be [. . .] at work both mirrors and contributes to projecting the chaos and destruction of the worlds of the novels" (Boyne p.1).

Communication plays a central role in Russell Hoban's *Riddley Walker*. The interaction between the characters within the novel, the disturbed communication between protagonist Riddley and his reader, and the ideas Hoban tries to communicate to his audience are all aspects of communication. Within the context of the story the most prominent communicational difficulties are the lack of vocabulary, and the erroneous use – in comparison to current English – of the available vocabulary. Riddleyspeak is a decayed language where over time translations and definitions have been lost. Although main character Riddley is able to communicate with other characters, and is able

to explain his thoughts, there are some occasions where he lacks the right expression to describe an object, action, or situation. Joanne Weselby, in her essay on *Riddley Walker*, mentions that "Often in *Riddley Walker*, characters use incorrect terms or are without an appropriate word (signifier) to describe the concept (signified)" (Weselby n.p.). One of the earliest encounters of this communicational problem in Hoban's novel is when protagonist Riddley has just lost his father in an accident and cannot name the object that killed him. "My dad ben kilt by some thing I dont even know the name of" (Hoban p.11).

As mentioned before, the used futuristic fictional language in Hoban's novel differs from standard English on many aspects, which can cause confusing situations for the reader. Since the reader cannot be aware of all the changes in meaning that some phrases have endured over the two millennia that are said to have past, and is not aware of the atypical conjugations, a communicational problem between character Riddley and the reader arises. The main problem seems to be that the reader cannot be sure of Riddley's definitions of many words. Most copies of *Riddley Walker* are accompanied with a meager three-page glossary, 'A Short Guide to Riddleyspeak', which provides the reader with some explanation of under 30 Riddleyspeak-expressions. The glossary states, for example, that the term 'pirntowt' can be translated to *printout* (Hoban p.234), but when the reader comes across the word within the novel this translation is not very helpful.

"So off we gone. I pirntowt we bes not go the straites way." (Hoban p.89)

"Counting from Horny Boy its 1 in the 1st then 2 in the 2nd and so on til you have 9 in No. 9 which the pirntowt is 45." (Hoban p.96)

"If [Goodparley] pirntowt Orfing wer putting some thing to gether agenst him hewd be sure to tern up where itwd do him the mos good and Orfing the leas." (Hoban p.171)

Pietroni states that "[w]e have to work out for ourselves what 'pirntowt' means to Riddley and deduce that 'I pirntowt' might mean something like 'I concluded'" (Pietroni p.101), although

concluded might not cover the entire meaning of the word. Riddley's broken world still has relics

from its industrial and technological past, which can also be found in Riddleyspeak. The language

embraces many terms which carry associations with technology and computing. The characters in

Riddley Walker have appointed these computer-related terms to human properties, since technology

became extinct and the definitions of the words have thereby become unclear over the years.

Examples of computer-language from Hoban's novel are "it over loadit my serkits" (Hoban p.97), 'tryl

narrer' (Hoban p.119) for *trial and error*, and sentences like "the E qwations and the low cations Ive

got to comb the nations" (Hoban p.48), and "he cernly had some progam he wernt jus randeming"

(Hoban p.74). Since 'pirntowt' is a term linked to, the in Riddley's world ancient and in Hoban's world

brand-new, computer technology, a definition for the term would more likely be something along the

lines of *calculating*. It has a more specific definition than *printout* or *to conclude*. While trying to

translate Riddleyspeak it is important to keep their faded technological history in mind, and to

remember that these computer terms were new when Hoban wrote the novel. A simple translation

of the Riddleyspeak-words is not sufficient and may lead to an only partial understanding of Hoban's

fictive post-war world. Although a great addition to initially get more comfortable with Riddleyspeak

and its spelling, the glossary fails its purpose as it cannot give the reader the full understanding of

most Riddleyspeak-phrases and may even cause more communicational difficulties.

Other misconceptions regarding communication in the novel are due to a lack of written

information from before the 'Bad Time', and from misinterpreting the few works that have survived.

"Bint no writing for 100s and 100s of years til it begun agen nor you wunt never get a strait story past

down by mouf over that long" (Hoban p.20). As said in *Riddley Walker*, a lot of miscommunication

appears when information is passed on verbally, making written information the preferred medium

of communication. Books and writing are often used to symbolize intelligence and individual

knowledge in novels, similarly are the burning and destroying of books used as symbols for the

destruction of knowledge. In Orwell's fictive world in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* all books published before

1960 were destroyed, because the totalitarian government feared individual thinking. In *Riddley*

Walker, although involuntarily, almost all valuable written information was lost as well. Even if remembered information was written down again later, it will have lost most of its credibility as the information will come from the mind of one person, and cannot be checked or compared to other sources. Weselby, while comparing *Riddley Walker* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, mentions that *"Riddley Walker* demonstrates a similar tendency to attempt the alteration of history. Just like in *1984*, written records cannot be relied upon to provide the absolute truth" (Weselby n.p.).

Unlike the situation in *Nineteen Eight-Four*, is the presence of the historical written text known as 'The Legend of St Eustace' in *Riddley Walker*. One historical text has survived the nuclear war and still exists in its original spelling. Within Hoban's *Riddley Walker* the reader comes across three versions of written English. Mullen, in his detailed article on Hoban's novel and its language, states: "There are 83,422 words in *Riddley Walker*: 490 in the 1980 spelling of The Legend of St Eustace, 2917 in the "old spel" of The Eusa Story, and 80,015 in Riddley's own spelling" (Mullen p.392-3). The Legend of St Eustace, written in the 1980 English spelling, is easy to read for the (Anglo-American) reader of the novel, but it is a complete struggle to understand for the futuristic society in Hoban's fictive world.

> "Wel soons I begun to read it I had to say, 'I dont even know ½ these words. Whats a Legend? How dyou say a guvner S with a littl t?' Goodparley said, 'I can as plain the mos of it to you. Some parts is easyer workit out nor others theres bits of it wewl never know for cern jus what they mean." (Hoban p.124)

The few written works that did survive the war and its aftermath will look unintelligible to the characters in *Riddley Walker*, since the language use has changed drastically over the years. Some words were lost in their new language, and some words may have a different definition in Riddleyspeak. Within Hoban's futuristic society a lot information was passed on erroneous, via verbal communication in Riddleyspeak, due to the lack of written source material, which resulted in the loss of a large amount of valuable information.

The initially hard-to-grasp language in Russell Hoban's *Riddley Walker* gives its reader an insight in the possible dystopian future as the result from a nuclear war. The fictional constructed language is used to portray the decay of civilization, and the communicational problems that accompany this decay. Not only the direct communication between the characters within the fictional society – and the interaction between the main character and the reader – has changed, the credibility of books and other historical documents is unsure as well. *Riddleyspeak* portrays the possible erosion of language, and therefore communication, within a post-apocalyptic civilization. It demonstrates the power of communication, and what might happen to society if it partially loses this aspect of humanity.

Conclusion

George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-*Four, Anthony Burgess' *A Clockwork Orange*, and Russell Hoban's *Riddley Walker* show the, for their time, current responses of global anxiety towards the threat of nuclear warfare. Their justifiable fears have translated into their dystopian, and post-apocalyptic, post-war fiction. Following the chronological order in which the novels were published, a pattern between the fictional constructed languages within the novels has formed. Newspeak's creation is still in progress and not yet actively in use, Nadsat is spoken only by a subculture, whereas Riddleyspeak has taken over all dialogue within its novel. The three novels are seemingly very similar; all three can be categorized as a warning for future societies, they all belong to the same literary genre, and all three novels include a fictional constructed language.

However, the reasons behind the use of the fictive languages are not identical. Although all three languages add to the overall dystopian atmosphere of the novels, the purpose for using the fictional constructed languages differ. Stockwell mentions that "the primary function of new language in literary fiction is to delineate the distance and connections between the reader's world and the world imagined in the text" (Stockwell p.3). Although all three novels have their own fictional world, the nuclear critique of the writers connects these fictive worlds to the real world, a world that

during the time of writing was threatened by nuclear warfare. Orwell's Newspeak portrays how a transformation of language can psychologically alter a human mind, and can be misused for political indoctrination. Burgess' Nadsat revolves around the rebellion of youth and is used to voice the aggressive protest of a youthful subculture against their elders. Hoban's Riddleyspeak maps out the catastrophic consequences communication possibly endures after a nuclear war. All three fictional constructed languages add to the powers present within the novels, and convey new powerful aspects as well.

Political and psychological powers, the rebellion of youth and their protest against older generations, and communicational difficulties and the decay of language are all powerful features which can be illustrated or conveyed by the use of a fictional constructed language. These features are all part of a bigger aspect which was dominant during the time the three novels were written: nuclear criticism. Newspeak, Nadsat, and Riddleyspeak portray the devastating effects of nuclear warfare and function as a warning from the writer for current, and future, societies.

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