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Universidad de Zaragoza, España
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8054-095X>

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<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5585-2863>

Silvia Murillo Ornat
Universidad de Zaragoza, España
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1369-3590>

Marita Nadal Blasco
Universidad de Zaragoza, España
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2902-7613>

Claus-Peter Neumann
Universidad de Zaragoza, España
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6950-9153>

Elena Oliete Aldea
Universidad de Zaragoza, España
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8197-1199>

Susana Onega Jaén
Universidad de Zaragoza, España
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1672-4276>

Beatriz Oria Gómez
Universidad de Zaragoza, España
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0663-0519>

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Universidad Internacional de Valencia, España
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8962-5298>

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Universidad de Salamanca, España
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3291-5574>

Beatriz Penas Ibáñez
Universidad de Zaragoza, España
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2418-4695>

Javier Pérez Guerra
Universidad de Vigo, España
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8882-667X>
Ramón Plo Alastrué
Universidad de Zaragoza, España
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University of Eastern Finland, Finlandia
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5239-8407>

Constanza del Río Álvaro
Universidad de Zaragoza, España
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3370-3020>

María Isabel Romero Ruiz
Universidad de Málaga, España
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8084-4865>

Miguel F. Ruiz Garrido
Universitat Jaume I, Castellón, España
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9647-1039>

Manuela Ruiz Pardos
Universidad de Zaragoza, España
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9115-1020>

Dora Sales Salvador
Universitat Jaume I, Castellón, España
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6290-2013>

Lena Steveker
University of Luxembourg, Luxemburgo
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6234-6790>

Juan Antonio Suárez Sánchez
Universidad de Murcia, España
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8303-044>

Rubén Valdés Miyares
Universidad de Oviedo, España
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9564-595X>

Javier Valenzuela
Universidad de Murcia, España
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0007-7943>

Rafael Vélez Núñez
Universidad de Cádiz, España
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0405-7357>

Francisco Yus Ramos
Universidad de Alicante, España
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5276-3251>

Krystyna Warchał
University of Silesia, Poland
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8422-4911>

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Articles

A LOOK AT THE NATIVIZATION OF BANGLADESHI ENGLISH THROUGH CORPUS DATA

LA NATIVIZACIÓN DEL INGLÉS DE BANGLADESH: UN ESTUDIO DE CORPUS

ELENA SEOANE
Universidade de Vigo
elena.seoane@uvigo.gal
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2680-7182>

CRISTINA SUÁREZ-GÓMEZ
Universitat de les Illes Balears
cristina.suarez@uib.es
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5736-3705>

Abstract

This paper explores Bangladeshi English, a relative newcomer to the family of world Englishes. First, we chart the evolution of English in Bangladesh across several phases of development. These show that a number of political and ideological factors make the evolution of English in Bangladesh unique in that it wavers between the status of an exonormative foreign language (English in Bangladesh) and a local variety (Bangladeshi English). From a linguistic perspective, recent studies agree that the current level of proficiency is very low, with a dearth of teachers and an absence of quality education. Second, we examine the degree of nativization of Present-day Bangladeshi English on the basis of (i) its postcolonial evolution and the more recent effects of globalization, following the most popular models of analysis (the Dynamic Model and the Extra- and Intra-Territorial Forces Model), and (ii) linguistic evidence obtained through the analysis of a selection of linguistic features associated with this variety, as represented in the Corpus of Global Web-based English.

Keywords: Bangladeshi English, nativization, globalization, morphosyntactic variation.

Resumen

Este artículo explora el inglés bangladeshí, una variedad relativamente reciente en el panorama global de las variedades del inglés. En primer lugar, trazamos la

evolución de la lengua inglesa en Bangladesh en diferentes fases de desarrollo. Estas muestran que una serie de factores políticos e ideológicos hacen que el desarrollo del inglés en Bangladesh sea diferente y único, ya que el inglés navega entre dos estatus: el de una lengua extranjera exonormativa (que se denominaría el inglés de Bangladesh) y el de una variedad local (llamada inglés bangladeshí). Desde una perspectiva lingüística, los estudios más recientes señalan que el nivel de dominio actual en Bangladesh es muy bajo, con una gran escasez de profesorado y una acusada falta de educación de calidad. En segundo lugar, examinamos el grado de nativización actual del inglés bangladeshí, sobre la base de (i) su evolución postcolonial y los efectos más recientes de la globalización, siguiendo los modelos de análisis más reconocidos (el Modelo Dinámico y el Modelo de Fuerzas Intra- y Extra-Territoriales), y (ii) la evidencia lingüística obtenida del análisis de una selección de rasgos lingüísticos asociados con esta variedad, tal y como aparece representada en el *Corpus of Global Web-based English*.

Palabras clave: inglés bangladeshí, nativización, globalización, variación morfo-sintáctica.

1. Introduction

Bangladesh is a densely populated country located in South Asia. It was colonized by Britain in the second half of the 17th century[1]. As with many other such colonies, English became the language of administration and the parliamentary and legal systems. However, in the second half of the 20th century political developments led to a decrease in the proficiency of English because of the increased use of Bengali, the national language. Bangladesh has traditionally been a largely monolingual territory, with the national language, Bengali, spoken by 98% of the population (Banu and Sussex 2001).[2] However, the 21st century has witnessed a revival of English, driven largely by the current shift in the country's economic structure from agriculture to manufacturing, bringing with it the need to integrate the economy into global markets. Such internationalization demands a greater knowledge of English, and also implies the crucial role of English for employment in an era of technological innovation and international commerce (Erling et al. 2012: 4; Hamid and Erling 2016: 27; Nigar 2019). Together with the desire for professional success, the social prestige of English and its nature as the language of globalization are also factors in these recent changes.

This paper is concerned with the process of nativization of Bangladeshi English (BdE). Such a process would confer on it the status of English as a Second Language (ESL) and an Outer Circle variety (OC, Kachru 1985), as in many other postcolonial territories, rather than that of English as a Foreign Language (EFL)

and an Expanding Circle variety (EC). As Schneider's (2003, 2007) Dynamic Model (DM) and Buschfeld and Kautzsch's (2017, 2020) External and Internal Forces Model (EIF) have shown, the status of a language depends on a complex interaction of historical, social and linguistic factors.[3] For this reason, we aim to examine the degree of nativization of BdE taking into account, first, the socio-historical evolution of English in Bangladesh and its present-day situation. Second, we will examine BdE from a linguistic perspective, since for BdE the "localized features of English still remain undocumented" (Hamid and Hasan 2020: 312; see also Bolton 2008: 6), and this has hindered previous attempts to confirm whether English in Bangladesh is following a process of nativization. Our analysis intends to fill this gap with data from GloWbE (Corpus of Global Web-based English), a corpus which contains Internet material, one of the areas where BdE features most prominently. Indeed, as Hamid and Hasan have noted, in Bangladesh, "[t]he use of technology has increased significantly in various domains, paving the way for more English" (2020: 299), with 157 million people (95% of the population) having access to mobile phone connections, and Internet access reaching 91 million; this makes the Internet a good place to begin any corpus-based search for distinctive characteristics of BdE.

The paper is structured as follows. Section 2 charts the evolution of English in Bangladesh following colonialization. Section 3 discusses the degree of nativization of BdE on the basis of the historical and socio-political conditions that have contributed to the present sociolinguistic situation. Section 4 analyses potential linguistic traces of nativization by providing a linguistic, corpus-based description of BdE. Finally, Section 5 provides a summary of the study and conclusions.

2. Modelling the Evolution of English in Bangladesh

2.1. The Foundation of English

Present-day Bangladesh (formerly Bengal) was once an important trading post, resulting in the construction of a factory in Dhaka in 1668 under the auspices of the British East India Company. Disagreements with the local population were constant and led to the Battle of Plassey (1757), which resulted in the British East India Company being established as the new ruler of Bengal and the incorporation of East Bengal, present-day Bangladesh, into British India (Van Schendel 2009: 43-49; Roy 2017: 331).

From 1757 onwards, British rule saw the introduction of new ideas and organization that over the years would lead to changes in Bengal's society and to profound cultural shifts therein. One of these was the establishment of Kolkata as

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the capital not only of colonial Bengal, but, as British power expanded, of all colonial India. With Kolkata as the new political and cultural center, the former Bengal capital, Dhaka, lost power and population, and East Bengal in general saw little modernization, remaining largely a rural society (Van Schendel 2009: 49, 56, 64-67).

By the middle of the 19th century, British rule was firmly established in Bengal and the colonial status of the territory was settled. During British rule English was the main language of administration, the legal system, the media, and parliamentary affairs (Iman 2005: 473; Logghe 2014: 23). Although missionaries and the East India Company had already established some educational institutions, it was in the early 19th century that imperialist education began in earnest under the British colonial presence, with the founding of English language schools based on the British model (cf. Rahman et al. 2021; Hamid and Erling 2016: 28; Chowdhury 2017: 5). Since the region was mainly used for trade and business by the British, only those members of the indigenous population who were proficient in English were employed in the civil service. Accordingly, the British began to provide English-medium education for a small sector of the population, in this way affording these people access to Western knowledge. This is expressed in Macaulay's *Minute on Indian Education*:

> We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern —a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect. To that class we may leave it to refine the vernacular dialects of the country. (1835)

This was a conscious attempt to produce a hybrid population of indigenous people who, native by birth, were British in taste and ideology, and would spread the language and culture of the colonists to the rest of the indigenous population. The promotion of English was part of a well-defined strategy and a key element in the linguistic and cultural imperialism favored by the political, economic and social powers (Schneider 2007: 164; Chowdhury and Kabir 2014: 6; Hamid and Erling 2016: 28; Chowdhury 2017: 5). The 19th century also witnessed the emergence of literary production in English by Bangladesh writers, such as the Nobel Prize winner Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), among others.

This whole period, from the 17th to the late 19th centuries, can be characterized linguistically in terms of features of phases 1 (Foundation) and 2 (Exonormative Stabilization) of Schneider's DM, and of Buschfeld and Kautzsch's model (see Section 1). The colonization of Bangladesh by the British is the beginning of the Foundation phase, which lasts until 1757 with the Battle of Plassey and the integration of East Bengal in British India. From this period onwards, the situation of English in Bangladesh evolves into a phase of Exonormative Stabilization, in

which British English is adopted as the standard in education, culture and politics, in a similar way to what occurred in neighboring countries (e.g. India; cf. Suárez-Gómez and Seoane, forthcoming).

2.2. The Decline of English

In the late 19th century the lower social classes and some members of the indigenous gentry began to join forces politically with the aim of ending economic exploitation and claiming self-determination, this within the framework of anti-colonialism through nationalist and communist action. Despite British attempts to defuse the conflict, using both repression and concessions, the final decades of colonial rule were tense, with nationalists mounting campaigns of non-cooperation and civil-disobedience, with the demand that the British abandon India (Van Schendel 2009: 78-79).

Following independence in 1947, British India was divided into India and the Muslim country of Pakistan. Pakistan itself was made up of West Pakistan (Present-day Pakistan) and East Pakistan (Present-day Bangladesh). The separation of Pakistan from India was made on religious grounds, since both territories of Pakistan were largely Muslim. However, West and East Pakistan did not share the same culture and language, and were geographically distinct (Banu and Sussex 2001: 61; Chowdhury and Kabir 2014: 6; Hamid and Erling 2016: 28; Roy 2017: 331-332). East Pakistan (today Bangladesh) suffered economic and linguistic discrimination from West Pakistan: in 1948 Urdu was established as the language of the new Muslim nation, very much against the wishes of the Bengali opposition (Mousumi and Kusakabe 2017: 681). The new Pakistani rulers considered that, as well as a common religion, a common language was also needed to create unity. Unlike what transpired in other postcolonial territories, English was not chosen as a neutral, co-official unifying language of government, law and education (Bolton 2008: 4); rather, Urdu was seen as a better choice due to its association with Islamic identity, and also because it was effectively a minority language for all speakers, and thus would not be a greater hindrance in communication for any one segment of society.

The Bengali population, who had very much welcomed the idea of a Muslim state, was angered by the imposition of Urdu, and a period of civil unrest began in East Pakistan (Hamid and Erling 2016: 28; Roy 2017: 331). In 1952 students and political activists led a movement in favor of Bengali, and in 1956 Bengali was granted the status of an official language in Pakistan. Bengali became the symbol of a new identity for the people of East Pakistan and also served as a source of inspiration in their struggle for freedom from Pakistan; it became the basis for Bangladeshi nationalism, which sought the restoration of Bengali and which would

lead to the Liberation War of 1971 and the emergence of an independent country, Bangladesh (Chowdhury and Kabir 2014: 9; Hamid and Erling 2016: 28; Roy 2017: 332). Following independence, Bangladesh underwent a period of turmoil, with military rule introduced repeatedly during the 1970s and the 1980s. An enduring democracy was finally restored in 1991, and since then the country has continued to develop, seeking to integrate itself into, and benefit from, the globalized economy.

Such political, territorial and linguistic disputes did not affect the English language directly, since English-based education was maintained. In addition, English was retained as an official language and was legitimized as the link language between the linguistically diverse territories, acquiring the status of an ESL (Chowdhury and Kabir 2014: 9; Logghe 2014: 23; Hamid 2015; Hamid and Erling 2016: 28-29; Chowdhury 2017: 1). Prior to independence, and particularly in East Pakistan, English was used as a tool to resist Urdu and was spoken in domains such as administration and inter-state communication (Banu and Sussex 2001: 61). However, when East Pakistan became the independent nation of Bangladesh, both Urdu and English were officially removed from the public sphere in Bangladesh, in favor of Bengali (Logghe 2014: 23; Roy 2017: 332). As a consequence, the presence of English saw a considerable decline. The 1972 constitution established Bengali as the sole national language, and the government went to great lengths to replace English with Bengali. In 1987 the Bengali Language Implementation Act was passed, and stipulated that the new national language was to be used in administration, the legal system, and as a medium of instruction in education (Logghe 2014: 23; Begum 2015: 240; Hamid 2015: 37; Hamid and Erling 2016: 29-30; Roy 2017: 332-334; Nigar 2019).

This attempt to remove English from use in the country led to the predictable evolution of English into the Nativization phase (phase 3 of both the DM and EIF models) to grind to a halt, a process which, had it continued, would have involved the accommodation of the variety of English into the local language ecology. The Bengali-only language policy that was now applied, which can be classified as an intra-territorial force in the EIF Model, would be largely responsible for the general loss of proficiency in English in Bangladesh.

2.3. The Re-foundation of English

Policy makers have recently realized the extent of the negative repercussions that these language policies, feeding as they did on post-independence nationalism, have had on English proficiency. From a social perspective, the language policies were also a disruptive force: in the years after 1972, when Bengali became the only official language, social differences were reflected in differences of English

proficiency, since wealthy families still made sure their children learnt English in private schools, while most of the population saw a progressive lowering in levels of proficiency. Nevertheless, more recently "English [has begun] to shine again in Bangladesh" (Begum 2015: 241). This re-foundation (or 're-entering' in the words of Banu and Sussex 2001: 53) has been associated with a growth in the awareness of the practical, global needs of the country and a desire on the part of Bangladesh to benefit from increasingly international spheres of culture, the economy, education, and technology (Rahman et al. 2006: 1; Begum 2015: 241). This in turn led the president of Bangladesh to declare in 2002 his intention of emphasizing the teaching of English together with the mother tongue "with a view to promoting employment abroad and encouraging the transfer of technology" (Roy 2017: 335), so that "younger Bangladeshis may acquire a better knowledge of English than their parents" (Banu and Sussex 2001: 61). Currently, over 17 million children are learning English at school; it has been a compulsory subject in education, introduced at the primary level, since 1997 (Chowdhury and Kabir 2014: 11).

English today is used in a number of public and private roles by people in higher education and those seeking to increase their social status, and the national education policy does indeed place special emphasis on English (Banu and Sussex 2001: 59; Shanta 2017: 35). For example, since 2007 it has been the working language of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) (Bolton 2020: 6). Complementary use of English and Bengali arises for sociopolitical reasons, and English has a wide variety of functions, such as in education, entertainment, the media, business, official trade correspondence, and personal communication (Banu and Sussex 2001: 59; Roy 2017: 336). It can probably be understood to be spreading in what Kachru calls "an invisible way", in that "[t]he spread of English in the various domains is not necessarily planned; it is often 'invisible' and 'unplanned'. The invisible and unplanned channels are contributing more to the diffusion and functional range of English than are the planned strategies" (1994: 150).

In terms of education, the Bangladeshi National Education Policy of 2010 placed greater emphasis on English, with the aim of creating a "strong and progressive knowledge-based and information technology-oriented society" (Chowdhury and Kabir 2014: 12). Writing and speaking skills were to be enhanced in primary education and continued at higher levels. At the secondary level, schools can now choose to introduce English as the medium of instruction, in addition to English being a compulsory subject. At the tertiary level, it is the medium of instruction, and is also a compulsory subject in all colleges and universities. There is also a new focus on the teaching of English and on learning how to teach English (Hamid and Erling 2016: 31; Roy 2017: 335-336). In fact, English Language Teaching (ELT) is a

growth area with national, international, private and non-governmental organizations all working to improve the quality of instruction in this area (Begum 2015: 247).

The increasingly prominent role of English in Bangladesh is most conspicuous in the media. English is extremely common on the radio, television channels, and in advertisements and the press (e.g. *The Daily Star, New Age, Dhaka Tribune* and *The Independent*, all accompanied by regular literary supplements, and the magazines *The Star, Slate* and *Dhaka Courier*). Modern literature in English includes the works of writers of the Bangladeshi diaspora, such as Tahmima Anam, Neamat Imam, Monica Ali and Zia Haider Rahman, all born in the second half of the 20th century (cf. Askari 2010; Erling et al. 2012; Begum 2015: 241; Chowdhury 2017; Roy 2017: 336). In the judicial system, English is said to be the *de facto* language (Mousumi and Kusakabe 2017: 681); however, the use of Bengali has increased for both lawyers and judges at higher levels of the legal system, while lower-level courts have always used Bengali (Shanta 2017: 35). Similarly, Bengali is more common in administration, but some senior government officials use English in higher social and administrative spheres, which gives rise to dichotomous reactions, in tune with Kachru's 'linguistic schizophrenia' (1994: 147): some see the hegemony of English as a remnant of the colonial mentality and as a form of linguistic imperialism bringing with it a wish to marginalize Bengali (Chowdhury 2017: 7); others see it as a welcome addition to the linguistic ecology of the country, with which the population can attain greater visibility and opportunities in the international sphere.

In relation to this, the attitudes of Bangladeshi people towards English differ depending on their socio-economic and cultural background. Bristi (2015) observes differences between students of private and public universities, with the former having a more positive attitude towards English, as also reported by Alam (2017). On similar lines, Rahman et al. (2021) found that Aliya Madrasah students with wealthier and more educated parents expressed greater motivation to study English: these respondents deemed it important to learn the language in order to achieve professional success, and also cited social reasons here (see also Nigar 2019 for similar results). All these studies report positive attitudes when it comes to the value placed on learning English in terms of professional success, international connections and global migration. Nevertheless, they also report a shortage of qualified teachers (Sultana 2013), criticize the use of old-fashioned teaching methodologies, especially in public schools (Bristi 2015; Rahman et al. 2021), and complain that there is little exposure to English outside the classroom (Rahman et al. 2021). Ara (2020) goes further and ends her study with a plea to make English a co-official language in the country in order to help raise levels of English proficiency and thus to establish Bangladesh more firmly within the international

sphere. As Rahman et al. (2021: 80) concluded, it is necessary that planners, teachers and students work together to overcome these obstacles as a means of increasing learning success.

In sum, the 21st century has brought about the resurgence of English in Bangladesh as part of the broader aim of the country in establishing itself as part of the globalized world. Globalization, an extra-territorial force in the EIF Model, acts as the pull factor that explains why English is flourishing despite political attempts to eradicate it: English is a passport to modernity and professional success, and consequently a sign of social status and prestige. The new education policies promoting the teaching of English (an intra-territorial force) plus the presence of English in the media both illustrate how English is now socioculturally embedded in Bangladesh, and that it exhibits a dominant power in the country.[4]

3. The Nativization of English in Bangladesh: Historical and Socio-political Factors

While the colonial history of the country might lead us to assume the nativization of BdE and thus to associate it with ESL status, evidence from other non-colonial varieties (e.g. Tswana English and English in Tanzania and Cyprus) shows that a colonial background does not guarantee nativization, entrenchment and local restructuring (cf. Schneider 2007; Gilquin and Granger 2011; Buschfeld 2013; Buschfeld et al. 2018: 21). According to Bolton (2008: 3), British colonialism has brought about a long history of contact with English, making it amenable to being regarded as an ESL and as an OC language from a historical perspective (similar to the situation in India or Sri Lanka). However, as noted in Section 2.2, after independence from India in 1947 and from Pakistan in 1971, the government attempted to remove English from use in the country. Thus, internal language policies would in large part be responsible for the general loss of proficiency in English in Bangladesh, and for the fact that BdE has traditionally been considered an EFL and an EC variety (cf. Hoffmann et al. 2011; Bolton 2008: 3).

An issue which is independent of the colonial background of the country is the recent resurgence of Bangladeshi English (see Section 2.3) and the widespread initiatives to extend the role of English in education. These have to do with factors such as cultural and economic globalization, the current role of English as a global Lingua Franca, and transnational attraction (Schneider 2018) which shape current varieties of English (see Section 2; see also Suárez-Gómez and Seoane, forthcoming). As a consequence of the country's desire to benefit from the economic and social advantages that greater fluency in English permits, new education policies promoting the teaching of English are now in place. From this,

it can be inferred that the observed re-emergence of BdE is independent of the language's initial foundation as a result of British colonization. Rather, globalization serves as a surrogate for colonization in the re-establishment and development of English. This is in line with observations by Schneider (2014: 28), who argues that English today has been appropriated for communicative purposes internationally, driven mainly by its status as an economic resource and a symbol of modernity leading to prosperity (cf. Kachru 2005: 91).

In short, BdE is not a link language as such. It does not have official status, does not have such a prominent role in education as other ESL varieties of English, and has a low level of proficiency, all of which points to an EFL, a non-nativized variety with EC status (Hoffmann et al. 2011: 273). However, the growing presence of English in education, entertainment, the media, business, official trade correspondence, administration and the legal system suggest that BdE is on the way to becoming a nativized ESL and OC variety. This expansion is both intentional, through recent education policies, and invisible, to use Kachru's (1994: 150) term, as a consequence of the aspirations of many members of the population to increase their opportunities for professional success, as illustrated in the findings of several attitudinal studies (see Section 2.3). So, at the current time BdE can be located on the ESL-EFL continuum, apparently leaning towards EFL, that is, on the non-nativized side (cf. Suárez-Gómez and Seoane, forthcoming).

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4. The Nativization of English in Bangladesh: Linguistic Evidence

4.1. Previous Research on Bangladeshi English

BdE is considered to be an offspring of Indian English (cf. Gries and Bernaisch 2016: 1), in the sense that both emerged within the British Raj in South Asia. After the independence of Pakistan (1947), and Bangladesh (1971), the situation regarding English in India, Bangladesh and Pakistan evolved in different ways.

Unlike Indian English (IndE) or Pakistani English (PkE), BdE has not been described or discussed in any recent handbooks on varieties of English. Thus, South-East Asian varieties of English (SAEs) such as IndE, PkE and Sri Lankan English (SLE) are included in *The Electronic World Atlas of Varieties of English* (eWAVE 3.0; cf. Kortmann et al. 2020), but BdE is not. Regarding corpora, there is currently no Bangladesh component in the *International Corpus of English* (ICE), unlike IndE and SLE, which are both represented; however, the GloWbE (Davies 2013a), the *News on the Web corpus* (NOW; Davies 2013b) and the *South Asian Varieties of English Corpus* (SAVE; Bernaisch et al. 2011) do include BdE data.

Within SAEs, only IndE and SLE have been analyzed in detail. Corpus studies which do include BdE have looked at linguistic features of SAEs generally, and have mostly used the SAVE corpus, and more recently GloWbE (cf. Hoffmann et al. 2011; Bernaisch and Lange 2012; Hundt et al. 2012; Koch and Bernaisch 2013; Bernaisch et al. 2014; Logghe 2014; Romasanta 2019; García-Castro 2020).

The results for most of these studies show heterogeneity in the different SAEs. Hundt et al. (2012), for example, find that SAEs do not cluster together, as initially hypothesized, and show different quantitative findings: for example, in terms of past subjunctives with *were* in counterfactual *if*-clauses (see (1) below), in variation with the indicative alternative (2), and in the modal periphrasis with *would* (3). Within this heterogeneity, BdE, as represented in the newspaper *Daily Star*, emerges as the least nativized variety (2012: 160), the one that displays "the highest relative frequency of patterns typical of L2-varieties of English" (2012: 158). This is confirmed by Bernaisch and Lange (2012: 8) in a study of the use of *itself* as a presentational focus marker (4), and Hoffman et al. (2011: 273) with regard to light-verb constructions with zero articles (e.g. *to give boost*, example (5)).

(1) There is nobody to beat the politician in doling out sheer twaddle as if it were the profoundest truths of life! (The Statesman, 24/05/2004) (from Hundt et al. 2012: 150)

(2) Our cricketers endorse products as if advertising was going out of fashion tomorrow. (The Statesman, 22/02/2003) (from Hundt et al. 2012: 150)

(3) …a top UN official would not hesitate … to go further if that would achieve the desired result? (The Statesman, 02/06/2003) (from Hundt et al. 2012: 150)

(4) We had a chance to see two militants adorned with Kalashnikov when they got down at Gangerbal from our bus itself. (IN_SM_2003-08-09) (from Bernaisch and Lange 2012: 8)

(5) We really need to give boost to our export to maintain their competitiveness. (Daily Star, 9/12/2005) (Hoffman et al. 2011: 272)

These studies, then, have concluded that BdE is not currently undergoing endonormative stabilization (phase 4 in the DM), unlike other SAEs such as IndE and SLE. It has been argued that this different behavior of BdE is related to its status as a foreign language rather than an institutionalized ESL variety, since English in Bangladesh is not a link language and does not have official status (Hoffmann et al. 2011: 273). Yet, as described in Section 3, although not being official, English is very much present in Bangladesh, especially in academic and professional fields. In fact, code switching, code mixing and linguistic forms

which are neither Bengali nor English are easily identifiable features in the speech of many Bangladeshi people (Shanta 2017: 34). This is certainly the case in the linguistic landscape of Dhaka, the capital city, where we can find abundant code-switching between Bengali and English, both linguistic and graphological (Banu and Sussex 2001: 53, 66), as well as in print and electronic media, not only as a means of localizing the news and thus guaranteeing better understanding, but also as a step in the process of developing a local variety (Hossain et al. 2015).

More recent linguistic evidence, this time on clausal complementation in SAEs, shows that BdE tends to reflect the pattern of IndE and to differ from SLE and PakE. Thus, García-Castro (2018, 2020) examines the clausal complementation of the verb REMEMBER, which allows both finite (6) and non-finite clausal complements (CCs) (7), in BdE, IndE and SLE; Romasanta (2019, 2020) also examines the variation between finite (8) and non-finite (9) CC alternation for another retrospective verb, REGRET, in BdE, PakE, IndE and SLE.

(6) *Remember* you have to compose two different parts. (GloWbE, BD)
(7) I do not *remember* hearing any of the Anglo-Saxon words even through four years at Oxford University. (GloWbE, IND)
(8) I am satisfied with the decision, definitely I will never *regret* that I took the decision (GloWbE, BD)
(9) Do you *regret* not playing more matches? (GloWbE, BD)

	GloWbE GB		GloWbE IN		GloWbE BD		GloWbE LK		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Finite CCs	5	4.0	13	9.5	14	9.0	4	4.0	35	6.5
Non-finite CCs	117	96.0	125	90.5	144	91.0	104	96.0	490	93.5
Total	122	100	138	100	158	100	108	100	525	100

Table 1. Distribution of finite and non-finite complement clauses after remember in four sections of GloWbE (data from García-Castro 2018: 302)

Table 1 shows the distribution of finite and non-finite complement clauses of REMEMBER in three SAEs compared to British English (BrE). The varieties with a slightly higher relative proportion of finite complement clauses are IndE and BdE, in tune with the tendency of ESLs to favor finite CCs to a greater extent than ENLs, here represented by BrE (cf. Steger and Schneider 2012; García-Castro 2018: 302; Romasanta 2020). This is due to the increased isomorphism of finite clauses motivated by the presence of a complementizer and an explicit subject in the complement clause.

As to the variability in the complementation profile of REGRET in Asian Englishes, Table 2 below shows that in BdE the percentage of non-finite complement clauses is similar to that of IndE, and slightly more frequent than in SLE and PakE.

	Finite		Non-finite	
	No.	%	No.	%
GloWbE GB	156	27.0%	422	73.0%
GloWbE IN	126	39.4%	194	60.6%
GloWbE BD	41	40.6%	60	59.4%
GloWbE LK	79	54.5%	66	45.4%
GloWbE PK	117	57.1%	88	42.9%

Table 2. Distribution of finite and non-finite complement clauses after REGRET in five sections of GloWbE (data from Romasanta 2020: 158, 163, 167, 171, 175)

In the existing literature, then, no linguistic features have been identified which are characteristic or exclusive to BdE, and variability very often seems to be governed by stable predictors across varieties, as is the case with dative alternation (Bernaisch et al. 2014: 28), to mention one widely-researched feature. So, the currently available linguistic evidence suggests the non-nativized status of BdE.

4.2. Bangladeshi English in GloWbE

In this section, we provide a linguistic analysis of BdE as represented in GloWbE. In line with previous research (see Section 4.1), where different varieties of SAEs are analyzed, we selected a series of morphosyntactic features that IndE, SLE and PakE share in eWAVE 3.0 (Kortmann et al. 2020). From a list of 36 features classified there as 'pervasive or obligatory' or 'neither pervasive nor extremely rare' in at least two of the three represented varieties, we analyzed the following five and checked for their presence and frequency in BdE. Since this is a preliminary analysis, we started with the features that involve a fairly straightforward manual filtering, as will be shown below.

    a) Extension of uses of the progressive (eWAVE feature 88)
    b) Extension of analytic comparatives to monosyllabic adjectives (eWAVE feature 80)
    c) Double comparatives (eWAVE feature 78)
    d) Different count/mass noun distinctions and pluralization (eWAVE feature 55)
    e) Specific forms for the second person plural (eWAVE feature 34)

The individual analysis of each of these features is presented below.

4.2.1. *Extension of Uses of the Progressive*

SAEs, in particular IndE and SLE, report a wider range of uses of progressive *be +* V-*ing* than Standard English, motivated mostly by the extension of the periphrasis *be + -ing* to stative verbs (feature 88), as in (10) (cf. Paulasto 2014; Rautionaho 2014).

> (10) What the Bengalis *had really been wanting* were regional autonomy and social and economic justice. (GloWbE, BD)

A search of five frequent stative verbs (WANT, LIKE, LOVE, KNOW and CONCERN) occurring in the periphrastic construction *be + ing* yields the results in Table 3. For the search, we looked for all the forms of BE followed by the *ing* verbal form of those five frequent stative verbs. This automatic search had to be manually revised in order to discard examples such as (11), which includes *liking* not as a verb but as a quotative (by analogy with *like*) and (12), where *concerning* is an adjective rather than a verb.

> (11) You co-curate an exhibition: it's *liking* co-editing a book. (GloWbE, BD)
>
> (12) But what is *concerning* for President Barack Obama is that there seems to be a certain trend of unification. (GloWbE, SL)

Feature 88	BdE	IndE	PakE	SLE
BE *wanting*	2.48	2.92	2.38	2.19
BE *liking*	0.38	0.34	0.31	0.18
BE *loving*	0.66	1.67	0.72	0.50
BE *knowing*	1.34	1.16	1.34	0.66
BE *concerning*	0.56	0.24	0.52	0.46

Table 3. Frequency per million words (pmw) of progressive *be + -ing* in five frequent stative verbs

Results from Table 3 show that this construction is used in BdE in proportions either higher or similar than in the other SAEs (higher with LIKE and CONCERN, similar with WANT, KNOW and LOVE). We can conclude, then, that in broad terms the extension of the progressive periphrasis to stative verbs is a common feature of SAEs, and that BdE is not an exception to this trend.

4.2.2. *Extension of Analytic Comparatives to Monosyllabic Adjectives*

The extension of analytic marking to synthetic comparatives (eWAVE feature 80) mostly affects monosyllabic adjectives, as in (13):

(13) Emergence of new chemical equipment makes the market share of crusher accessories more and *more high*. (GloWbE, BD)

To check for this feature in GloWbE, we selected the nine most frequent monosyllabic adjectives in the analytic comparative form in this database (excluding the adjectives *good, bad* and *far*, with irregular formations). The manual selection of examples involved excluding examples in which *more* was a quantifier, as in [*more* (*old people*)] and [*more* (*high maintenance technology*)]. Table 4 sets out the findings:

Feature 80	BdE	IndE	PakE	SLE
more high	0.18	0.06	0.08	0.06
more great	0.15	0.06	0.06	0.06
more low	0.05	0.03	0.04	-
more old	0.07	0.03	0.02	0.04
more large	0.10	0.05	0.02	-
more big	0.10	0.13	0.10	0.02
more small	0.07	0.08	0.04	-
more young	0.20	0.16	0.23	0.12
more long	0.05	0.06	-	0.06

Table 4. Frequency pmw of analytic comparatives in the most frequent monosyllabic adjectives

Table 4 shows that use of the analytic structure for the comparative has been extended to monosyllabic adjectives, especially in BdE, since six out of nine of the selected adjectives (HIGH, GREAT, LOW, OLD, LARGE and BIG) show values higher than in the other varieties analyzed. Since analytic constructions are more iconic and transparent, they are easier to learn and use than synthetic ones, and this might itself indicate that English input and use in Bangladesh has been relatively more scarce than in the other SAEs analyzed.

4.2.3. Double Comparatives

Within comparatives, the construction which contains a double comparative (14) is also pervasive in the varieties included in eWAVE (feature 78):

(14) Other teams becoming *more weaker* makes it *more easier* for us to beat them, but we have to have the right set of players to get the job done. (GloWbE, BD)

For the analysis of double comparatives we selected the 10 most frequent adjectives, this time including also irregular forms (e.g. *better*) and disyllabic

adjectives (e.g. EASY). In the manual cleaning of the database, examples like (15) below were excluded because *more* is part of the correlative comparative *the more…the more.*

(15) The more rigorous the job looks the *more better* profits you can reap from it. (GloWbE, IND)

Feature 78	BdE	IndE	PakE	SLE
more better	1.44	0.80	0.91	0.43
more easier	0.96	0.67	0.56	0.69
more stronger	0.30	0.54	0.56	0.17
more older	0.10	0.05	0.04	0.04
more worse	0.39	0.28	0.39	0.13
more younger	0.07	0.10	0.02	0.02
more happier	0.03	0.18	0.12	0.11
more cheaper	0.13	0.17	0.12	0.15
more smaller	0.03	0.05	0.02	0.14
more higher	0.28	0.16	0.12	0.08

Table 5. Frequency pmw of double comparatives in the 10 most frequent adjectives

As was the case with the use of analytic comparatives with monosyllabic adjectives, double comparatives also tend to score higher in BdE than in the other SAEs, as shown in Table 5. This is very clear with the adjectives GOOD, EASY, OLD and HIGH. As for STRONG, YOUNG, HAPPY, CHEAP and SMALL, differences with respect to the other adjectives are less marked. As in 4.2.2 above, BdE grammar opts for redundant marking and increased isomorphism, which is common in varieties in an early stage of development (cf. Suárez-Gómez 2017; Scontras et al. 2017).

4.2.4. *Different Count/Mass Noun Distinctions and Pluralization*

The indeterminacy of count/mass nouns (eWAVE feature 55) is observed in the irregular use of plurals that are not possible in Standard English (e.g. *informations, furnitures,* see (16)):

(16) In the court proceedings both the parties try to present all types of *evidences* in front of the judge and the judge decide based on the *evidences* presented by both the conflicting parties. (GloWbE, BD)

This variable was examined in a selection of mass nouns listed in Quirk et al. (1985: 251-252). The manual filtering of the examples retrieved automatically involved mainly verbal forms wrongly tagged in the corpus as nouns, as is the case of *advices* in (17). The results are reported in Table 6:

(17) She advises us to follow the path of truth and honesty. She also *advices* us to be polite, gently and modest (GloWbE, BD)

Feature 55	BdE	IndE	PakE	SLE
informations	2.36	1.20	0.45	0.86
moneys	2.61	1.43	0.84	1.93
advices	2.63	1.70	1.32	1.07
abuses	6.53	3.98	5.98	13.35
evidences	6.26	4.38	9.99	4.14
furnitures	0.08	0.10	0.10	0.13
applauses	0.15	0.03	0.04	0.02
equipments	6.18	5.70	3.52	3.28
homeworks	0.10	0.00	0.08	0.04
researches	4.36	3.00	3.93	3.05
educations	0.66	0.47	0.60	0.64
harms	1.16	0.68	3.02	1.44
safeties	0.20	0.05	0.06	0.06
violences	0.08	0.01	0.10	0.09

Table 6. Frequency pmw of a selection of mass nouns in the plural

Table 6 shows particularly high numbers for two semantically similar nouns in SLE: *abuses* and *harms*. For these two nouns, BdE ranks second, and for nine of the remaining twelve nouns analyzed it ranks first, that is, it is the variety within SAEs that shows the strongest tendency to add plural markers to mass nouns. These nine nouns are *informations*, *moneys*, *advices*, *applauses*, *equipments*, *homeworks*, *researches*, *educations* and *safeties*.

4.2.3. *Specific Forms for the Second Person Plural*

The development of specific forms for the second person plural has been reported as pervasive in SAEs as well as in other varieties of English, both L1 and L2 varieties (eWAVE feature 34). GloWbE data (see results in Table 7) reveal that these forms exist in SAEs, especially *you guys* (18), the most frequent one.

(18) Can *you guys* give these baby sittings a break? (GloWbE, BD)

Feature 34	BdE	IndE	PakE	SLE
you guys	12.26	14.55	24.08	17.30
y'all	0.46	1.27	0.43	0.52
youse, you ones	-	2.16	3.06	1.80

Table 7. Frequency pmw of specific forms for the second person plural

Frequencies in BdE are lower and thus in line with the findings for analytic comparatives with monosyllabic adjectives, double comparatives, and pluralization of mass nouns. That is, four of the five individual features analyzed in BdE point to a lower degree of nativization as compared to the other three SAEs (IndE, PakE, SLE). So, the linguistic evidence here broadly corroborates earlier findings that nativization of BdE is still an ongoing process.

5. Conclusion

This paper has analyzed BdE, an under-researched postcolonial variety of English which deviates from the process described for other varieties of English with a colonial background, in that lineal progression in the case of BdE was interrupted by several sociopolitical events. After independence, Bengali was favored to the detriment of English, which led to a decline in proficiency and to the status of a non-nativized variety. However, the recent revival of English in Bangladesh, motivated by the need for an international language to respond to the growth of globalization, together with new education policies promoting the teaching of English, might now serve to position BdE in such a way that it is becoming a nativized variety. Indeed, this is what we have explored here in terms of (i) the current sociopolitical situation of the country, where educational policies and general attitudes favor the use and consequent nativization of BdE, and (ii) the linguistic analysis of various features, which confirms that structural nativization is in an early phase, since BdE shares with other Asian Englishes just one of the five linguistic features examined here. The other four features appear to indicate that structural nativization has not yet been reached.

Further research is required to confirm the current status of English in Bangladesh. So far, attitudinal studies point to a widespread desire to learn and improve English, with differences between speakers here reflecting their socioeconomic background. There is also evidence that educational policies now favor English teaching and learning to a greater extent than was the case until fairly recently. However, only a thorough assessment of the real situation of English in education would shed light on whether the emphasis placed on English in education translates

into practice, and thus whether English is indeed permeating a wide range of social spheres effectively. Further linguistic studies on the basis of existing corpora of BdE are also necessary to confirm what we believe is the current status of BdE: that of a variety of English which remains non-nativized.

Acknowledgements

Notes

1. Bangladesh's population in 2020 was estimated to be almost 169 million, with 39.4% residing in urban areas (Worldometers 2023).

2. Over 40 other languages are spoken in the country. After Bengali, the most widely-spoken of these are Urdu, used largely by Pakistanis; Hindi, from neighboring India, bolstered by the influence of Bollywood films and music; and Arabic, used in the religious practices and education of Muslims (Hamid and Erling 2016: 27-28; Bolton 2020: 53).

3. For further information on the application of these models to BdE, see Suárez-Gómez and Seoane (forthcoming).

4. See Suárez-Gómez and Seoane (forthcoming) for further details on the 'Re-foundation' phase of English in Bangladesh.

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FORMATIVE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT IN THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPING TRANSLATION SUB-COMPETENCES

EVALUACIÓN FORMATIVA DEL RENDIMIENTO EN EL PROCESO DE DESARROLLO DE LAS SUBCOMPETENCIAS DE TRADUCCIÓN

MAŁGORZATA GODLEWSKA
The University of Gdansk, Poland
malgorzata.godlewska@ug.edu.pl
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3425-4899>

Abstract

This research paper addresses a method of student performance evaluation applied to the process of online collaborative learning. The model of evaluation is intended for developing translation sub-competences and involves the analysis of the team members' discourse in the process of negotiating meanings, in compliance with Stahl's claim that discourse constitutes interpretation (2004: 69). The devised individual assessment form studies the performance of collaborating team members in two dialogic spaces, the content space, and the relational space of collaboration (Janssen and Bodemer 2013). The assessment procedure comprises an analysis of the students' individual achievements as well as their contribution to the team's expert knowledge building. The main goal of this research paper is to highlight the regulatory function of the formative performance assessment method for team learning and to indicate the interdependences between collaborative learning, formative performance assessment as well as the communicative approach to learning, the latter constituting the theoretical framework for this research.

Keywords: translation sub-competences, teaching translation, formative performance assessment for learning, communicative approach to learning, online teaching.

Resumen

Este trabajo de investigación se refiere al método de evaluación del desempeño del estudiante aplicado al proceso de aprendizaje colaborativo en línea. El modelo de evaluación está destinado al desarrollo de subcompetencias de traducción e implica el análisis del discurso de los miembros del equipo en el proceso de negociación de significados en cumplimiento de la afirmación de Stahl de que el discurso constituye interpretación (2004: 69). El formulario de evaluación individual ideado abarca el estudio del desempeño de los miembros del equipo colaborador en dos espacios dialógicos, el espacio de contenido y el espacio relacional de colaboración (Janssen and Bodemer 2013). El procedimiento de evaluación comprende el análisis de los logros individuales de los estudiantes, así como su contribución a la construcción del conocimiento experto del equipo. El objetivo principal de este trabajo de investigación es resaltar la función reguladora del método formativo de evaluación del desempeño para el aprendizaje en equipo e indicar las interdependencias entre el aprendizaje colaborativo, la evaluación formativa del desempeño y el enfoque comunicativo del aprendizaje. Este último constituye el marco teórico para esta investigación.

Palabras clave: subcompetencias de traducción, enseñanza de la traducción, evaluación formativa del desempeño para el aprendizaje, enfoque comunicativo del aprendizaje, enseñanza en línea.

1. Introduction

Teaching literary translation constitutes a challenge since this activity is ingrained with the abstract concept of creativity difficult to capture, verify or assess. Literary translation is primarily perceived in terms of artistic expression, though, as Grucza claims (2017: 64), the fact that it is also a specific type of linguistic activity should not be repudiated. The pandemic period in Poland in the years 2020-2022 imposed online learning as the only feasible educational strategy, which entailed the need to validate existing teaching methods and performance evaluation forms. The propounded method of collaborative learning towards building translation sub-competences in a shared activity of literary translation from English into Polish constitutes an attempt to surmount two obstacles: (1) the disputable quality of team learning, and (2) the difficulty in the assessment of learning achievements in the field of translation. The model of performance assessment proposed in this paper has been devised to increase the effectiveness of group activities in the process of developing sub-translation competences, designated by PACTE researchers as bilingual, extra-lingual, instrumental, strategic and knowledge of

translation sub-competences (PACTE 2003), discussed in detail in 1.3; besides, by doing so, the applied performance assessment method aims to validate its own regulatory function. The activity of translation is believed to reflect a real-life situation in the students' future professional careers and embodies the process of team cooperation towards expert knowledge building, rather than the process of teaching language through translation. The research outcomes originate from a real didactic situation and include the observation and interpretation of discourses in English and Polish of eight cooperating students of Applied Linguistics at Gdansk University during one academic term of online learning in 2021. The project is described in detail in "Building Translation Sub-Competences of Foreign Language Students in Telecollaboration" (Godlewska 2023), though without consideration of the students' individual performance assessment, the central focus of this paper. Further analysis of the group work achievements substantiates an argument about a significant regulatory function of the formative performance assessment applied to collaborative learning. It is the goal of this paper to evaluate and assess the team members' individual and group contributions to the formation of explicit knowledge in the field of translation studies and to authenticate the devised performance assessment model.

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2. Theoretical Foundations

The theoretical framework of this research is based on a communicative approach to learning, while its methodology relies on the research into translation competence carried out by the PACTE group (PACTE 2003; Hurtado Albir 2017) and borrows from the study of collaborative learning assessment devised by Arvaja (2007) and Hämäläinen (2012). In order to discuss the research outcomes, three main theoretical issues require elucidation, namely formative performance assessment for learning, team learning and its particular collaborative type, and the goal of the learning activity, the development of translation sub-competences.

2.1. Formative Performance Assessment from the Perspective of the Communicative Approach

The communicative approach has predominated since the early 1970s due to its focus on the transfer of the speaker's message and his/her intentions in everyday communication rather than on the linguistic correctness of an utterance (Komorowska 2007, 2019: 157; Gajewska and Sendur 2015: 52). It is believed that the construction of evaluative tests should acknowledge the intricacies of the communicative approach in learning and teaching: tests are conducted during the performance of didactic tasks. These tests of performance, as Gajewska and Sendur

argue, place learners in a particular real-life context and force them to adopt a particular social role in a linguistic communicative act (2015: 52). Thus, the growing approximation between the process of teaching and learning as well as the process of evaluation is believed to constitute a recent phenomenon observed in the discipline of didactics (Gajewska and Sendur 2015: 52).

Despite its seeming innovative character, the phenomenon of formative performance assessment for learning can be traced back to the period before the communicative approach to learning became the prevailing didactic approach, as Komorowska (2019: 161) claims. This scholar detects the origins of formative assessment in Scriven's "The methodology of evaluation" (1966) and in the volume *Handbook of Formative and Summative Evaluation of Student Learning* (Bloom et al. 1971). Simultaneously, French and German researchers have devoted a plethora of publications to the issue of formative learning since the 70s through the 80s and 90s up to the present (Komorowska 2019: 160-161).

The validity of formative assessment for learning is accentuated by Komorowska (2019: 162) who stresses its role in stimulating learners' engagement in learning as well as in increasing learning performance despite its drawbacks, such as the subjective and time-consuming process of its operationalisation. Pawlak (2021) highlights the prominence of a formative performance assessment type which surpasses testing as a form of evaluation in that the results of the former provide information for both the teacher and the learner and also give an insight into the learners' errors and the methods of their correction as well as into the students' progress. Nevertheless, Pawlawk (2021) recognises the validity of both summative and formative assessment types, one of which must be selected before the process of performance evaluation with a view to the global didactic process of learning and with respect to its goals.

Formative performance assessment constitutes a relevant evaluative method in second language learning as it involves an interactive exchange of information between a learner and a teacher about the learner's progress which is used in the construction of the future learning process, as Sterna (2016: 15) observes. This critic accentuates the supportive role of formative assessment in the process of learning apart from performance evaluation. It is the process of students' learning which is its essence rather than teaching. Both the teacher and the student must cooperate, the former by creating an appropriate learning environment and the latter by responding to it through effective learning (Sterna 2016: 15).

Bojanowicz (2019: 126) accentuates the role of the teacher-student bond in the process of learning, which lies in the creation of a friendly atmosphere that guarantees a sense of the students' well-being and security. Inspired by Pater's (2015) research, Bojanowicz enumerates five strategies for effective formative

assessment for higher-education learning, comprising: the definition of learning goals and high achievement criteria, monitoring knowledge and its understanding, offering feedback information about the learning performance, mutual exchange of knowledge among group learners, and supporting learners through including them in the active process of knowledge building (Pater in Bojanowicz 2019: 125).

2.2. Collaborative Learning: A Subtype of Teamwork

The type of learning selected for this study, namely collaborative learning, incorporates the focus on a learning process rather than on its end-product and, as such, intertwines with the main premise of the formative performance assessment method. The type of learning zone selected and designed for the students and the teacher determines the entire learning process, concomitantly with the roles adopted by the team members. The phenomenon of teamwork is defined in English research under two terms, "cooperative learning" and "collaborative learning", designating varieties of team learning methods which can be applied interchangeably (Johnson et al. 2013), or with the stress on their distinctiveness (Mason 1972; Matthews et al. 1995; Bruffee 1999; Roselli 2016; Myskow et al. 2018).

The main difference between the two learning subtypes can be traced in the high degree of the teacher's involvement in the cooperative learning process, in contrast to students' significant independence in collaborative learning. Recent research accentuates the relationship between both subtypes of team learning, suggesting that the cooperative learning method should be used as a form of assistance for the collaborative type at an early stage of learning, before team members manage to acquire the social skills necessary for the process of negotiation while constructing group expert knowledge (Matthews et al. 1995: 40; Murphey and Jacobs 2000).

The author of this paper adopts Myskow et al.'s stance (2018) in that both learning types are treated as phases in a single learning process: cooperative learning is applied at the early stage of the didactic process and collaborative learning in its advanced phase. Furthermore, the collaborative learning type is believed to serve as a strategy which has the potential to stimulate team members' creative thinking and encourage them to rely on other group members' knowledge and expertise. Drawing from Stahl (2004), it is claimed that team members create new meanings and share them in the process of collaborative learning. These new meanings must be interpreted by learners and, subsequently, distributed among the other team members, thus transgressing the limits of tacit knowledge towards explicit knowledge (Stahl 2004: 69). Hence, following Stahl, discourse is constituted in the group interpretation of new meanings activated during the team learning process.

1.3. Translation Sub-competence Model: Definition

The focus of the analysis is on the evaluation of the process of collaborative creation of group knowledge and of individual development in the discipline of translation. The author of this paper diagnoses and attempts to assess the progression of each learner's individual and group expertise in the many dimensions of the translation competence in the process of English-Polish translation. Thus, the hierarchical model of translation sub-competences developed by the PACTE group (PACTE 2003; Hurtado Albir 2017) was selected as the most appropriate for the ongoing research due to its subsuming and differentiating of the multiple levels of the translation process. Furthermore, the PACTE researchers suggest a correspondence between their model of translation sub-competences and expert knowledge. The collaborative learning strategy and communicative approach help to acquire and develop social skills, while expert knowledge relies on social skills.

The PACTE model of translation distinguishes five sub-competences, all of which are related to the sixth element of the model —the psycho-physiological components. Each translation sub-competence alludes to a different aspect of the translation process. They comprise: the bilingual sub-competence, that is, the procedural knowledge of two languages used in translation; the extra-linguistic sub-competence, referring to declarative knowledge of the encyclopaedic type; the knowledge of translation sub-competence, namely the ability to recognise and apply translation methods and procedures as well as "professional translation practice"; the instrumental sub-competence, the ability to use communication technologies and reference books; and lastly, the strategic sub-competence, regarded as the central sub-competence which underlies the translator's ability to conduct the entire translation process, which is related to all of the other sub-competences. The final aspect of the model, the psycho-physiological components, lies in the cognitive dimension of the translation process, incorporating the translator's intellectual abilities and attitude to the translation activity (Hurtado Albir 2017: 39-40).

The distinction of the five main components within the translator's general competence is perceived as a pragmatic tool to be applied in the process of evaluation and assessment of the group's achievements on the individual and collective levels of expanding expert knowledge in the field of translation studies.

3. Methodology and the Model of Performance Evaluation

Formative assessment for learning is indicated as a method which succeeds in evaluating the students' global performance due to its potential to exteriorise the

learners' two knowledge types, the explicit and the implicit, and by way of its many-sided framework (Pawlak 2021; Janicka 2019: 5). The conceptualisation of the formative assessment procedure into the five stages delineated by Bojanowicz (2019) functions as a constituent part of this research paper, together with the combination of two testing types, summative used in the initial phase of learning and formative at its advanced stage, as advocated by Pawlak (2021). This researcher's perspective on the formative performance assessment method with its emphasis placed on the mutual teacher-student interactions in a learning zone constitutes the main foundation of the methodology applied to this research.

The method of performance assessment is indebted to the research of Arvaja (2007) and of Hämäläinen (2012), and their common work on online collaborative learning (Hämäläinen and Arvaja 2009), which foregrounds the role of thinking levels and knowledge resources in the process of knowledge evaluation. The model of the individual performance assessment form adopted in this research incorporates the two categories distinguished by these scholars, though in a simplified form, by addressing the team members' high —and low— thinking levels, and by investigating the frequency of the students' references to the group knowledge resources. The latter phenomenon is included in the performance assessment method as a group "co-text", specified by Linell (1998: 129) as a type of discursive and abstract knowledge resource created by the net of the team members' prior utterances and events. In addition, the methodology acknowledges the definition of discourse and the issue of the exchange of meanings during the process of collaborative negotiation of meaning in group activities as defined by Stahl (2004), with its stress on the group meaning interpretation and group exchange of ideas.

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More importantly, the method borrows from the psychology of knowledge by including the concept of analysing learners' performance in two dialogic spaces: "the content space", which designates the activities contributing to building group knowledge, and "the relational space of collaboration", which denotes the interactions leading towards building mutual learners' understanding (Jaansen and Bodemer 2013).

Thus, the performance assessment model adopted in the process of the students' performance evaluation is structured along the two spaces of collaborative learning: first, the content space, inclusive of the thinking levels of the students' utterances, and the references to the levels of translation sub-competences; second, the relational space, assessed from the perspective of the group co-text resorted to by the team members. The formative assessment method applied to this didactic project rests on the ongoing interactions between the team members, and on the feedback information offered by these face-to-face confrontations as well as the

circumstantial information provided by the individual performance assessment form after each online class.

3.1. Description of the Phases in the English-Polish Literary Translation Project

The research method involves a practical didactic project which includes the observation of the learning process of a group of eight university students whose classes were arranged in an online environment via the MS Teams application during the pandemic period, which imposed a shift in the learners' performance assessment.

The students' input involved the completion of a number of tasks which allowed for the collection of data about their performance and development of translation sub-competences from a variety of sources. First, an introductory online questionnaire was conducted to verify the similarity of the students within the three group symmetries of status, age and knowledge level in the field of translation studies; next, cooperative activities were introduced to stimulate the learners' confidence in their translation skills as well as to diminish their sense of apprehension caused by the novelty of online education and social interactions with unknown learners. This phase included the preparation of a student portfolio by pairs of students, regarded as minimal groups, so as to revise the theoretical foundations in the field of translation studies obtained during the learners' prior university education and to introduce and practice the concept of working in groups online. The students' portfolios consisted of scholarly material as well as their own presentations and a mind map, all devoted to a selected translation problem, which the pairs prepared and published online for the whole group to serve as their group knowledge resources and their contribution to the group co-text. The topics were suggested by each pair of students according to their interests and included translation techniques applied to metaphor, the types of metaphor and methods of their translation, the translation of idioms and set phrases, and the translation of cultural elements.

The second phase involved the cooperation of all eight students in the common task of translating one literary text from English to Polish, namely a short essay, "Joy", by Zadie Smith (2013). This text was selected by virtue of the abundance of translation problems, such as cultural issues as well as the writer's idiosyncratic language, specifically her non-linear style and the genre variant of creative non-fiction, all potential translation difficulties. The online course was recorded and the meetings were analysed and interpreted for the sake of the students' end-of-the-term performance assessment. Their mutual relations were observed and assessed with a view to their contribution to the group knowledge building and their

individual engagement level. The students' collaborative work was evaluated with a focus on their ability to negotiate meanings and their input into the group co-text.

The final assessment phase involved an analysis of the self-evaluation questionnaire as well as a group discussion about their sense of achievement, their list of encountered problems indicated after the last online meeting, and a discussion of the results of the anonymous online questionnaire about the validity of collaborative work and its impact on their development in the content space and the relational space of collaboration.

3.2. Methods of Performance Assessment in the Two Phases of the Project

The first phase of the group activities, specifically the students' portfolios including their mind maps as well as their online presentations in English, involved the application of summative performance assessment in addition to the formative one: the students obtained points for the preparation of the group tasks whose quality was regularly subjected to scrutiny by both their peers and the teacher, as the students' portfolios served as open online knowledge resources for the entire group during the whole process of team learning.

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The second phase of the task proved particularly demanding as it involved the observation and interpretation of the students' interactions in English and the assessment of their merit. The most recent research papers on collaborative learning promote three major performance assessment methods: first, a pragmatic attitude and the collection of data from the learners' pulse or body temperature; second, an assessment of the analysis of recorded protocols from the oral performance of collaborating team members, which is regarded as a common technique by Janssen and Kirschner (2020), and an analysis of discourse in the social, cultural and material context of a given environment, advocated by Hämäläinen and Arvaja (2009). The latter approach was applied to this project so as to interpret the group and individual performance levels in the area of developing translation sub-competences.

3.3. Method of Performance Assessment Applied to the Second Phase of the Project

The performance evaluation involved the observation of the students' cooperation while translating a literary text from English into Polish and rested on the selection of "rich points of discourse" (Nord 1994; Hurtado Albir 2017), specifically the difficult moments in the students' discussions over translation problems marked by significant hesitation and pauses leading towards clashes of attitudes, arguments, and suggested solutions to these obstacles. These "rich points" constituted the grounds for performance evaluation.

Each online class was interpreted and diagnosed by the teacher by means of an individual performance evaluation form (Table 1), which assesses each student's individual engagement as well as his or her role in the creation of the team knowledge by addressing two spaces of the discourse created while learning.

Class date:	Student name:
High-level utterances (0-4 p.)	
Bilingual sub-competence (0-4 p.)	
Extra-lingual sub-competence (0-4p.)	
Translation knowledge sub-competence (0-4p.)	
Instrumental sub-competence (0-4p.)	
Strategic sub-competence (0-4p.)	
References to the group co-text (0-4p.)	

Table 1. The individual performance evaluation form

The performance evaluation within the content space of collaborating discourse includes two aspects: first, a student's level of creative thinking is evaluated by the frequency of high-level thinking utterances on a 0-4 points scale: (0 – no high-level utterances; 1 – high-level utterances rarely present, 2 – high-level utterances sometimes present; 3 – high-level utterances frequently present; 4 – high-level utterances highly present); second, each student obtains from 0 to 4 points for utterances attesting to their contribution to the development of particular sub-competences (0-4 points for each of the five sub-competences).

The utterances representing the high-thinking level manifested the students' abilities of independent analysis and interpretation of the translated text as well as their creativity in offering translation solutions. The translation of set phrases, cultural elements as well as the writer's private metaphors —defined by Raymond Van den Broeck as "innovating creations of individual poets" (1981: 75)— provided data for the investigation of thinking levels and of particular translation sub-competences which they revealed. For instance, rendering the colloquial phrase "old food" used in the depiction of food vans in the streets of New York (Smith 2013: 1), resulted in a range of answers: the students rated with 4 or 3 points for a high-thinking level utterance each offered a different solution to the problem demonstrating independent and creative thinking. The answers included a variety of acceptable semantic equivalents for "ordinary food" (student 1 obtains 4 points for her translation option "zwykłe jedzenie" [*ordinary food*], student 2 gains 4 points for "codzienne jedzenie" [*everyday food*], student 3 – 3 points for the proposed solution "zwyczajna kuchnia" [*everyday cuisine*], a less fortunate translation option on the level of bilingual and extra-lingual sub-competences in

contrast to the other students' choices. The lower rated utterances, such as student 5's answer, revealed her effort to contribute to the general class discussion by suggesting a translation solution. Nevertheless, her proposed translation variant represented a literal and semantically misleading translation of the original phrase, specifically "stare jedzenie" [back translation: *stale food*]. This observation resulted in only 2 points, granted for an attempt to formulate a new solution (a high-thinking level utterance), though without justification or reasoning which could elevate the evaluation of this solution from a single dimension of the bilingual sub-competence to reach the other sub-competences. The students did not obtain any points on the level of high thinking utterances if they failed to submit any translation solution or to evaluate an indicated translation problem. The students' contributions to discussion, such as agreeing to the other participants' suggestions or repeating their answers, represented low-thinking level utterances.

The performance evaluation within the relational space of the students' discourses involves the evaluation of the team members' references to their group "co-text" (Linell 1998), which should be understood as the online data base, constantly updated, verified and enriched during the whole process of collaborative learning, and the students' prior utterances. The ability to update the online database and to use the online environment during the classes, including the chat to present their translation variants, as well as their reliance on scientific online databases, were evaluated on the level of the instrumental sub-competence and showed a gradual increasing tendency during the whole learning process, as the students learned particular techniques from one another.

The references to the group co-text were awarded with 0-4 points during each class. The students' attempts at critical evaluation of the other students' translation solutions supported with their reasoning and the assessment of a translation obstacle gave them a higher score on the dimension of high-level utterances as well as on the level of the group co-text. For instance, students 1-4 participated in the discussion by either inventing solutions or by evaluating the other team members' utterances. The critical remarks directed at student 5's solution "stare jedzenie" [*stale food*] granted student 2 points on the level of the group co-text for the ability to indicate the stylistic and semantic inappropriateness of the answer with reference to the group knowledge. Specifically, student 2's criticism was grounded in her knowledge of translation procedures discussed at the early stage of the online project and publicised via the students' online mind maps. Thus, her reply was awarded 4 points on a number of sub-competence levels thanks to her demonstration of theoretical translation knowledge (knowledge of translation sub-competence), her ability to assess the validity of the translation option (strategic sub-competence) and her evaluation of the relationship between the suggested translation and the socio-cultural context in the source text (extra-linguistic sub-competence).

4. Analysis of the Students' Performance and Assessment Results

The formative assessment method required constant updates concerning the students' performance, since students are believed to constitute the core of collaborative learning, an idea accentuated by Sterna (2016). Introduced at the advanced level of study, following Myskow et al.'s premise (2018), the collaborative learning process was evaluated at the end of each online meeting to complete daily individual assessment forms. The analysis of all of the forms from the entire period of the online learning course resulted in the delineation of the individual students' development tendency and of the team's progress within "the content space" and "the relational space" (Jaansen and Bodemer 2013) created by their discourse.

To illustrate the process of evaluation of the students' performance during the online discussions, exemplary discourse contributions are illustrated with the focus on the interactions between student 1 (who had the highest initial and final grade) and three other team members. Student 1's successful grading during the first meeting lies in her substantial input into the discussion and her effective indication of translation obstacles in the writer's idiosyncratic language, as in the following lines: "A lot of people seem to feel that joy is only the most intense version of pleasure, arrived at by the same road —simply have to go a little further down the track. […]. It's not at all obvious to me how we should make an accommodation between joy and the rest of our everyday lives" (Smith 2013: 1). Student 1 highlights the problem of connecting clauses of the sentence in the target language and, as the only one in the group who suggests changing the structure of the passage by dividing it into separate sentences, thus solving the problem on the stylistic and structural levels. The student recommends the following translation variant: "Wielu ludzi uważa radość za bardziej intensywną formę przyjemności. Dochodzi się do niej podobną drogą —tyle że po prostu idziesz kawałek dalej [back translation: *A lot of people think that joy is a more intense form of pleasure. You reach it by the same road —but you go a bit further ahead*]. Besides, the same student indicates the problem of translating the word "joy" due to its various synonyms in Polish. As a result, her answer is awarded four points on the levels of bilingual and strategic sub-competences. The student's observation triggers translation solutions from students 2 and 3: they suggest and discuss three translation options, student 2 "radość" [*joy*] and student 3 - "szczęście" [*happiness*] and "wesołość" [*joyfulness*]. Thus, the observation of student 1 stimulates the group's creative thinking and high-level utterances with newly invented translation variants. This results in further points obtained by student 1 for the contribution to the group co-text.

During the final three course meetings, student 1's statements manifested further development at the high-thinking level: she evaluated the other students' translation variants, thus showing her awareness of translation procedures (translation knowledge sub-competence) and a significant increase on the level of the strategic sub-competence, as illustrated by the following case: when student 6 suggests rendering a cultural element by means of literal translation into Polish, specifically "Washington Square" to be translated as "Plac Waszyngtona", student 1 objects and insists on preserving the original proper noun so as to recreate the ambience of New York and of the American cityscape, both central themes of the story.

The problem of translating proper nouns is raised by the students during the fifth meeting again, though in a new context and with respect to different translation segments, i.e., names of a popular music club and a street market. All the students accept and follow the foreignizing strategy agreed on during the first discussion initiated by student 1 and agree to preserve the original proper names, "The Fabric Club" and "the Smithfield meat market". Student 6 and student 8 critically evaluate this translation solution by comparing it to the equivalent issue analysed in the first discussion. As a result, they suggest a translation solution grounded in both the group co-text, namely the prior group discussion, and their extended knowledge of translation procedures: the original proper names are to be translated literally into Polish equivalents as "Klub Fabryka" and "stary rynek mięsny Smithfielda" since, as student 6 argues, these cultural elements may not be easily recognised by Polish readers, hence they require a domesticating approach.

The interpretation of the forms completed after every discussion resulted in several observations on the students' achievements. It can be affirmed that the quality of the initial process of collaborative learning stands in contrast to that observed during the final classes. Moreover, the quality of the team's work matches the students' level of engagement. This, in turn, correlates with the differences between the students' knowledge levels in the group: the high achievers revealed more engagement than the weaker students in the initial phase of the project, which is reflected in their higher grades for each sub-competence level during the first class. Besides, the degree of this group's high-thinking level utterances was already significant at the beginning of the course, in contrast to the low level among the weaker students during the first two months of the course. Nevertheless, the level gradually increased towards the end of the project (Table 2).

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Student name (high-achievers)	1st class score	8th class score	Student name (low-achievers)	1st class score	8th class score
Student 1	3	4	Student 5	1	3
Student 2	3	4	Student 6	2	3
Student 3	3	3	Student 7	3	4
Student 4	3	3	Student 8	2	4

Table 2. The summative record of the average rate of students' high-level thinking utterances

It can be assumed that the collaborative learning and the adopted formative performance assessment method are responsible for increasing the weaker students' ability to resort to their internal knowledge resources in the process of suggesting concepts, evaluating the other students' ideas, and discussing with their peers and with the teacher. It should be acknowledged, however, that the stronger students' rate of high-level utterances remained almost stable during the didactic process, though it did not deteriorate. The weaker students' enhanced results and their growing engagement in the common project legitimise the application of the selected method of learning and of formative performance assessment which, as Komorowska (2019) claims, functions as a stimulus in a learning process.

A similar analysis was conducted with a view to the team's development of specific translation sub-competences. A comparison of the results of individual assessment forms and the points obtained at the beginning of the course (class 1) and at its end (class 8) involved the observation and evaluation of the students' utterances while translating. The students' observations which revealed their knowledge of both languages and their ability to create a literal equivalent in the target language would give them a point at the bilingual sub-competence level, e.g. the Polish translation variants of joy, such as "radość" and "szczęście". The students' remarks showing their awareness of the socio-cultural context would result in points at the extra-linguistic level, e.g., the identification of cultural elements such as song titles present in the text ("Smells like Teen Spirit") or proper nouns. The students' references to specific translation procedures and strategies, such as the use of a foreignizing or domesticating approach, (for instance, student 6 arguing against the foreignizing approach mentioned in the previous section of this paper) would award them points at the level of the translation knowledge sub-competence. The demonstration of abilities to use online scientific databases to verify their knowledge or skills to use the chat to present their translation were observed during meetings and awarded with points at the instrumental sub-competence level. However, 2 points constituted the lowest score on this sub-competence level since all of the students started their work in the online environment using basic online tools,

such as MS Teams. Finally, the manifestation of abilities to specify a translation obstacle, to select and evaluate the most appropriate translation option and to justify their decision would award them with points at the strategic sub-competence level.

The results of the students' achievements during the first and last online meetings shown in Table 3 reveal the most significant peaks at the levels of the translation knowledge sub-competence, the instrumental sub-competence and the strategic sub-competence. The divergence between the results of the high achieving and the low achieving students is still visible, though to a smaller degree (Table 3).

Student:	S.1 class 1/ class 8	S.2 class 1/ class 8	S.3 class 1/ class 8	S.4 class 1/ class 8	S.5 class 1/ class 8	S.6 class 1/ class 8	S.7 class 1/ class 8	S.8 class 1/ class 8
Bilingual s.	4/4	4/4	4/4	3/4	3/4	2/3	3/4	2/3
Extra-lingual s.	3/3	4/4	4/4	3/3	3/4	2/2	2/2	2/3
Translation knowledge s.	4/4	3/4	3/4	3/3	4/4	1/3	1/3	2/3
Instrumental s.	3/4	2/4	3/4	2/4	3/4	2/3	2/3	3/4
Strategic s.	4/4	3/4	3/4	2/4	3/4	2/3	2/3	2/4

Table 3. Assessment of team performance in the content space: average rate of students' sub-competence development between the 1st and the 8th online classes

The score of the high-achieving students reveals an increase in the level of the translation knowledge sub-competence (students 2, 3), the instrumental sub-competence (students 1, 2, 3, 4) and the strategic sub-competence (students 2, 3, 4). The other students' scores indicate a slight increase in the level of the bilingual sub-competence (students 5, 6, 7, 8), a sharp increase in the level of translation knowledge sub-competence (students 6, 7, 8) and a slight increase in the level of the other two sub-competences, the strategic and the instrumental (students 5, 6, 7, 8). The results are symptomatic of the students' particular educational needs: the first four students represent high-achievers whose progress at the level of linguistic skills is not noticeable in contrast to the remaining students whose linguistic abilities were weaker.

All the students can be claimed to have profited to some extent from the didactic project and from the formative performance assessment method as their sub-competences relating to their translation expertise, both theoretical and practical, improved. Nevertheless, the most significant increase in the sub-competence levels

marked by two points can be observed among the weaker students: at the level of the bilingual sub-competence (two points for students 6 and 8); at the level of the extra-linguistic sub-competence (only a one-point gain is observed); at the level of translation knowledge (two points for students 6 and 7); at the level of the instrumental sub-competence (2 points for students 2, 4 and 8); at the strategic sub-competence level (two points for students 4 and 8).

The third aspect included in the performance evaluation of the team pertains to the students' references to the group co-text updated through the entire online learning process and stimulated by the group discourse. The utterances within the relational space of the group discourse were also rated during the first and the last class to show the performance tendency of the team.

Student:	S.1 class 1/ class 8	S.2 class 1/ class 8	S.3 class 1/ class 8	S.4 class 1/ class 8	S.5 class 1/ class 8	S.6 class 1/ class 8	S.7 class 1/ class 8	S.8 class 1/ class 8
References to the group co-text	3/4	2/4	3/4	3/4	4/4	1/3	1/2	1/3

Table 4. Assessment of the group activity in the relational space of the team

The tables presented in this paper indicate a slight increase in the students' references to the group co-text among both the high-achieving and the weaker students. The results justify the application of the collaborative learning and the formative performance assessment method, which enhanced students' dependence on each other's explicit knowledge revealed during their discussions, rather than solely on external knowledge resources, as occurred at the beginning of the project. The initial low engagement in building the group co-text, marked by the students' tendency to resort to their own online portfolios or to their personal ideas, is later replaced with their willingness to quote their peers and to refer to their previous utterances so as to agree with them or to question them. Examples of the group co-text being quoted during the translation project include the previously mentioned decision-making discussion about resorting to a foreignizing or domesticating approach to proper nouns, initially imposed by student 1, later reversed by student 6's decision to translate proper names literally. Student 6, who refers to the first meeting and to the students' discussion on proper nouns, uses it as her background knowledge. However, she does not repeat student 1's opinion, which would be symptomatic of a low-thinking level: instead, she quotes it so as to question its appropriateness in a new context and with respect to other proper names which required a different approach. Thus, the student succeeded in appealing to the group co-text and creating high-thinking level utterances. As a

result of this group discourse, the peers become active participants in the negotiation of meaning and in promoting their shared knowledge.

Moreover, the students gradually occupied the position equal to that of the teacher: specifically, they turned to their classmates to criticise, to oppose, to praise or to join the discussion on expert knowledge. Student 1 appreciates student 4's ability to render idiomatic expressions, such as converting the line "the small things go a long way" (Smith 2013: 1) into a stylistically sophisticated idiomatic phrase through its nonliteral equivalent, "drobne rzeczy mogą zdziałać cudza" [*little things can make magic*]. Praise from the best student might be perceived as a stimulus for the weaker students in the future learning process. In contrast to this, student 2 rejects the latter variant, relying on translation techniques applied to literary texts presented on mind maps at the outset of the online course. She argues that the suggested translation option contrasts with Zadie Smith's original colloquial register devoid of decorative metaphors.

The teacher's role altered and was equated with the position of the students in the process of collaboration. In addition, the individual assessment forms provided at the end of the class allowed the students to verify their weaknesses on their own, and to provide information to the teacher about their knowledge gaps, illustrating the teacher-student information exchange specified in the formative performance assessment method (Pawlak 2021). The process of information exchange contributed to extending the group co-text and the shared knowledge resource for the whole collaborating team. This, in turn, might have prompted the shift in the teacher-student relations and in the organisation of the online learning environment into a semi-professional translator's space.

Apart from the individual assessment forms, which constituted the major performance assessment tool in the learning process, the assessment method involved appraisal of the online discussions during and after the classes, the exchange of information by means of a chat, the use of MS Teams, and the data obtained from the final online satisfaction questionnaire, which allowed the students to rank the positive aspects of the project in part 1 and to indicate its weaknesses in part 2. According to the questionnaire results in part 1, the issues appreciated by the majority, chosen by five team members, include the following: the possibility of learning translation skills; the opportunity to compare many translation variants; a friendly and more personal atmosphere; and mastering translation skills in a team. The other options selected by four students were the opportunity to test a new teaching method and to broaden knowledge on translation theory, as well as the teacher's role as an equal partner. The options selected by three students comprised a lack of conflicts and, chosen by just two students, easy use of MS Teams and sharing information online, working together

rather than individually, more opportunities to speak, and improving social abilities. The same aspects of the project were evaluated from the negative perspective in part 2 of the questionnaire and highlighted the problem of stress and fear of sharing ideas with others, indicated by four students, and the method of working together rather than individually, pinpointed by three team members. During the final online meeting, the students who indicated the method of collaborative learning as the negative aspect of the project wished to change their answers into the positive ones: they claimed that their criticism reflected their initial judgement of group work which changed after a few meetings.

The final part of the satisfaction questionnaire included the students' self-evaluation for each translation sub-competence level, rated with 0-5 points. The results demonstrate the students' acknowledgement of their development at the level of the strategic sub-competence (rated with 4-5 points by all the group members), and the bilingual sub-competence (rated by five students with 4 points, two students with 3 points, and one student with 5 points). The lowest-rated sub-competences were the instrumental sub-competence (four students – 2 points, three students – 3 points, one student – 4 points) and the knowledge of translation sub-competence (three students – 3 points, three students – 4 points, two students – 5 points).

It is significant that the majority of the students rated the classes higher after the last meeting, contrasting with their initial scepticism about the success of collaborative learning and of the formative performance assessment expressed at the onset of the project. In addition, the discussion with the teacher disclosed their initial fear and feeling of intimidation in the face of online communication with their peers and with the teacher. The questionnaire revealed a shift in their attitude and their appreciation of a friendly atmosphere during teamwork. The students gave a positive assessment of their developing translation skills, the strong teacher-student and student-student bonds, and improved self-confidence achieved by the end of the course. What is more, the results of the students' questionnaires are consistent with the teacher's individual student performance evaluation. Firstly, the team acknowledged their significant development at the level of the bilingual and strategic sub-competences. This might be confirmed by the results of the individual assessment forms, which show an increase by one point in the group by 5 students, including the low-achievers. Secondly, the development at the level of the strategic sub-competence can be observed among 5 students by an increase of one point, and two students by two points. Furthermore, the development of the students' computer skills can be seen in the increase at the instrumental sub-competence level by an improvement of one point among six students and two points among two students. It should be added that the students' self-assessment

forms support the latter finding since only one student admitted problems with using the computer application or with working on-line.

5. Conclusion

The process of formative performance assessment was implemented following the five criteria advocated by Bojanowicz (2019). The learning goals, namely the group translation of an English literary text into Polish and the exchange of expert knowledge in the field of translation studies, were established at the outset of the experiment. The expanded expert knowledge was regularly monitored, commented on and interpreted during the students' presentations and discussions online. The exchange of information about the process of learning and learning results were rendered on various levels: teacher-students, student-student, student-teacher. Consequently, the students became active participants of the translation learning and of the entire performance assessment process which was implemented by the teacher but activated by the students' engagement in the multiway process of information exchange.

The formative assessment of students' performance applied to the literary translation project relied firmly on the mutual interactions between all group members, with the teacher being their equal partner. The individual performance assessment form provided an effective tool to measure the students' increased translation sub-competences. The study of the forms obtained at the end of the project revealed the development of these sub-competences which prove fundamental to expert knowledge in the field of translation. It might be postulated that the concept of collaborative learning devised for extending expert knowledge coincides with the concept of formative performance assessment due to their shared advocacy of multiway interactions, their potential to generate new learning environments, inclusive of a teacher-partner, their reflection of professional relations and circumstances, as well as their common promotion of constant learning through these interactions, monitored and supported with updated expert knowledge. Thus, the method of formative assessment for learning extends beyond its basic function of evaluation to embrace the function of the learning process itself.

It may be stated that formative performance evaluation for learning has a high regulatory function due to its ability to rearrange class dynamics and promote the development of expert knowledge through the stimulation of team members' active engagement in the process of knowledge building. The proposed method of translation teaching through team work is believed to provide translation teachers with a new perspective on extending students' translation expertise at a university

level. Besides, the project revealed that the method requires a more up-to-date approach to students' performance assessment, such as the formative performance assessment. The evaluation of the students' achievements proposed in this project constitutes a constant process, placing each student at the centre of the learning process rather than the result of this process, namely the final end-of-the-term examination. Evaluation perceived from this angle gives an opportunity to engage all students in the learning activity and stimulates their creativity. Moreover, the students' cooperation over a practical translation task allows them to experience a semi-authentic professional situation in which they are expected to make expert decisions and to rely on their knowledge, thus encouraging them to extend it through online research work. In addition, the teacher's withdrawal from the team's practical task and her acceptance of an advisory position in the team, rather than that of a mentor, might have an impact on the students' growing confidence in suggesting new translation solutions and in relying on the other group members' answers.

The application of the formative performance assessment at a university level of education has the potential to alter students' approach to the assessment of their performance, being a necessary phase in the whole learning process. The aspect which still requires further insight relates to the final element of the translation sub-competence model, specifically "the psycho-physiological components", including "cognitive components", "attitudinal aspects" and "abilities" (Hurtado Albir 2017: 40). The comparison of the group's initial sceptical attitude and their final satisfaction with online cooperation, supported by the optimistic results evidenced in the evaluation forms, confirms the group's convictions about their strengthened self-esteem and their overcoming the fear of public speaking and of using online applications. Nevertheless, some further research might be welcome to measure the degree in which students exploit the internal and external cognitive resources at various stages of the formative performance assessment during translation activities, in particular of a literary type.

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EARLY BILINGUAL EDUCATION: A GENERAL BIBLIOMETRIC APPROACH AND CONTENT ANALYSIS USING *SCIMAT*

EDUCACIÓN BILINGÜE TEMPRANA: ENFOQUE BIBLIOMÉTRICO GENERAL Y ANÁLISIS DE CONTENIDO CON *SCIMAT*

ANA OTTO
Universidad Complutense de Madrid
anaotto@ucm.es
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3058-1067>

BEATRIZ LÓPEZ-MEDINA
Universidad Complutense de Madrid
beatlo07@ucm.es
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1524-2358>

ADRIÁN SEGURA ROBLES
Universidad de Granada
adrianseg@ugr.es
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0753-7129>

Abstract

Bilingual and multilingual education have certainly gained popularity in the past decades since societies are becoming increasingly aware of the need to welcome additional languages into the school curricula to equip citizens with a functional use of several languages. However, research about the extent to which bilingual practices are present in Early Childhood Education (ECE) has not been fully exploited, mainly because this is a non-obligatory educational stage in most countries, and due to the wide variety of educational contexts in which such practices can take place. This study aims to conduct a bibliometric analysis of ECE, using as a reference the publications in the *Web of Science Core Collection* from 1988 to 2022. For this purpose, 1011 publications were analyzed by applying advanced bibliometric techniques in *SciMAT* bibliometric analysis software. It is hoped this research will serve as a framework to identify existing research lines and outline new ones, establishing synergetic relationships that would not be visible without the maps generated herein.

Ana Otto, Beatriz López-Medina and Adrián Segura Robles

Keywords: Bilingual Education, Early Language Learning, Bilingualism, mapping analysis, bibliometric analysis.

Resumen

La enseñanza bilingüe y multilingüe han ganado en popularidad en las últimas décadas, ya que las sociedades son cada vez más conscientes de la necesidad de introducir lenguas adicionales en los currículums con el objetivo de que los ciudadanos puedan tener un uso funcional de distintas lenguas. Sin embargo, la investigación en relación con la presencia de las prácticas bilingües en educación infantil apenas ha sido desarrollada, principalmente debido a la no obligatoriedad de este nivel educativo en la mayor parte de los países, así como a la enorme variedad de distintos contextos donde se desarrolla. Este estudio pretende llevar a cabo un análisis bibliométrico de la educación bilingüe temprana utilizando como referencia las publicaciones en *Web of Science Core Collection* de 1998 a 2022. A tal efecto, 1011 publicaciones fueron analizadas aplicando técnicas bibliométricas avanzadas utilizando el análisis bibliométrico *SciMAT*. Se espera que esta investigación sirva como marco para identificar líneas de investigación existentes y nuevas, estableciendo relaciones sinérgicas que no serían visibles sin el mapeado generado en el artículo.

Palabras clave: Educación bilingüe, aprendizaje temprano de lenguas, bilingüismo, mapeo, análisis bibliométrico.

1. Introduction

Over the last three decades, the generalization of bilingual and plurilingual programs from primary to higher education has led to a large body of research on the topic, especially within the European context. At the Pre-primary level, however, research is scarcer (Thieme et al. 2021), and frequently refers to family contexts where other languages are also acquired from birth (heritage language or emphasis of input in foreign languages from parents/caregivers). In academic contexts, the introduction of additional languages addressed to very young learners is more heterogeneous (Goorhuis-Brouwer and de Bot 2010), non-systematic and, when present, is frequently limited to showering in the additional languages. Notwithstanding this, a significant change has been taking place since 2017, when Ferjan Ramirez and Kuhl's (2017) studies demonstrate the importance of introducing additional languages in Early Childhood Education/Pre-primary schools as well as the cognitive advantages of Early Language Learning and acquisition (see also Kuhl et al. 2016). The impact of this research led to a significant increase in the teaching of

additional languages in Europe within Early Childhood Education (ECE). It also generated an increasing interest in this stage (Ferjan Ramirez and Kuhl 2020), which is key in the development of bilingual proficiency.

In order to identify ongoing research regarding bilingual practices within Pre-primary levels, this paper uses a bibliometric analysis covering authorship, production, and thematic analysis of the main and secondary research themes related to Bilingualism and early learners from 1988 to December 20, 2022. In addition, the areas of development of scientific knowledge associated with this topic are analyzed through *SciMAT* as it offers a complete approach to the field, and evaluates the main performance indicators related to Bilingual Education and Early Language Learning.

Scientific journals are thought to represent one of the main sources of research, projects, and added-value information, providing a new reference point for conducting novel and cutting-edge research into Early Bilingual Education. Therefore, complete bibliometric analysis becomes a key tool for evaluating ongoing actions and research, organizations, countries, sources, and researchers (Bonilla-Aldana et al. 2020; Hossain 2020).

Using bibliometric techniques and tools, the present research focuses on an analysis and description of the development of research themes about Early Bilingual Education and the main related concepts which are available in the literature. First, the research quantifies the main performance-related indicators, i.e., published documents, received citations, journal impact factor (JIF), h-index, most cited articles, most cited authors, and data on the geographical distribution of publications, among others. Secondly, *SciMAT* is used as a science mapping software tool to analyze the areas of development of scientific knowledge associated with Early Bilingual Education within a defined time span (Cobo et al. 2012; López-Robles et al. 2020).

The exponential growth of topics and themes related to Early Bilingual Education calls for an evaluation of the emergent research themes and sub-themes on this subject matter with an emphasis on the most common pedagogical practices, models and implications. This research specifically analyzes (1) the latest research on Early Bilingual Education in the international context, and (2) the main thematic lines that guide the different studies carried out in this field in order to delve into the main topics and most relevant areas. More specifically, the current analysis aims to develop a systematic review to answer the following research questions related to Bilingual Education in early childhood:

- RQ1. What has been the growth of publications indexed in the Web of Science (WoS) database between 1988 and December 2022 focusing on Early Bilingual Education?

- RQ2. What are the most salient journals, authors and publications on the topic?
- RQ3. What are the key emerging research themes and sub-themes on Early Bilingual Education?

RQ1 and RQ2 are key for researchers who wish to publish papers and understand the subject matter in depth. RQ3 aims to provide insightful novel contributions regarding the identification of research clusters by means of a co-citation analysis. This study is structured as follows: After this brief introduction presenting the goal of the study and the research questions, section 2 covers the state of the art regarding the history and evolution of Early Bilingual Education. Section 3 presents the methodology and data collection used for the study. Section 4 shows the bibliometric analyses including countries, authors and most cited or relevant papers, among others. Finally, section 5 summarizes the main findings and conclusions about the research conducted in *SciMat*.

2. State of the Art

Early Bilingual Education, comprising a variety of models of early years' education offered to children aged between three and about five or six years, and which operates at the critical nexus between home and school, is thought to offer children an opportunity to acquire a second language or to enrich their home language (Hickey 2012). The critical period of learning languages (Lenneberg 1967) has certainly influenced the trend to start to learn languages earlier in life. Today, the existence of this critical period or the age hypothesis is discussed (Hakuta et al. 2003; Muñoz 2006; Dolean 2015; Muñoz and Singleton 2011, among others), confirming that age has never ceased to be related to language learning. Nowadays, policy-makers tend to recommend language learning early in life due to the numerous benefits it entails, such as the social and cognitive advantages as well as the effect on phonological consciousness (Madrid 2001; Cenoz 2003), which outweigh the downsides (Byalistok 2018) sometimes observed regarding this controversial issue. In Europe, the emphasis on providing bilingual input to young children is nothing new but tended to be confined to the elite in most contexts until the arrival of the European Commission recommendations for the introduction and promotion of language education in the early years. This was, in fact, a key influential document at that time since it points out the relevance of Pre-primary/Early Childhood Education as the key stage on which future language learning is based (European Commission 2003). In the next decade, this document was followed by a strategic framework for making this language learning efficient and sustainable (European Commission 2011). Today, compared with nearly two

decades ago, students are learning a foreign language from a younger age in most educational systems (European Commission 2023: 20). Finally, it is worth considering that some approaches to Bilingual Education are currently starting to be implemented at this stage, as is the case of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) (Otto and Cortina-Pérez 2023), anticipating a change in the way languages are treated in ECE, and which will undoubtedly have an impact on the next generations' command of languages.

Nowadays, there is unanimous consensus on the importance of the Pre-primary education stage in the social, physical, emotional, and cognitive development of a child, mainly due to the strong prominence that Early Language Learning and Bilingual Education have gained in the educational context. The relevance of this period has not gone unnoticed by current educational research, and ECE has been analyzed from multiple perspectives in pursuit of a better understanding of the teaching-learning process at this stage, as shown, for instance, in Andúgar, Cortina-Pérez and Tornel (2019) regarding foreign language provision at the Pre-primary stage in the Spanish scenario. The growing research interest in childhood education (see Heikka et al. 2019, in this respect) runs parallel to the number of specific studies worldwide. Notwithstanding this, analyses of the emerging themes derived from these publications are scarce, since there are "few studies that investigated research trends of ECE from the bibliometric perspective" (Khodabandelou et al. 2018: 142). Despite this limitation, however, it is possible to find certain analyses sharing similarities with the present study, as will be described below.

Çelik's (2022) bibliometric work, covering the period from 1972 to 2022, analyzes indicators related to ECE which are also present in this study (most common language of publication, most productive countries or most frequently used words, among others). Similarly, the clusters obtained in Wang and Lv's (2021) bibliometric work yield information on the most prolific areas in the field of early education (North America, China, Australia and New Zealand) and the importance of interdisciplinary work in research in this field. This information complements the data obtained regarding the main objectives of their work: the "hot topics" in ECE being "childcare, school readiness, early education quality, effortful control, self-regulation, teacher-student relationships, and family factors" (Wang and Lv's 2021: 14).

Some other bibliometric studies in the field of ECE focus on specific issues. Thus, Su et al. (2022), using the bibliometric approach, identified the key themes from research in ECE during the COVID-19 pandemic. Understandably in this case, themes such as students' families, online learning and teaching, physical activity, and stress and mental health emerge from the study. Shirasu et al. (2022) study the effect of ECE on school performance, eliciting research studies which show

cognitive and non-cognitive gains related to school attendance. Finally, Yilmaz et al. (2022) provide a bibliometric mapping analysis on foreign language teaching in pre-school, also examining the technology used in this stage. These studies and some others (Guo 2021; García-Pérez et al. 2022; Hoang et al. 2023, among others) are examples of the interest in recent research on ECE, despite the above-mentioned difference (quantity-wise) with bibliometric studies based on the other educational stages. To our knowledge, there is no bibliometric analysis concerning ECE and the acquisition of more than one language. This is where this study expects to shed some light.

3. Methodology and Dataset

3.1. Methodology

Bibliometric methods represent some of the most common and widely accepted techniques for analyzing the output of basic and advanced research. They are commonly used to map the state of the art in each area of academic literature. The indicators they provide help to measure scientific output and its quality, productivity and evolution (Moed et al. 1995; Hirsch 2005; Moed 2009; Kalantari et al. 2017; de Oliveira et al. 2019).

Currently, the bibliometric methodology is used in combination with science mapping and performance analysis (Cobo et al. 2012). It is also used to analyze the trends of certain specific fields (Kalantari et al. 2017), and to detect and visualize specific or general thematic areas. As observed by Hirsch (2005), among others, this methodology is based on co-word analysis and the h-index.

Of the different software tools available for science mapping analysis (see Moral-Muñoz et al. 2020, for the different options), this study uses *SciMAT*. According to Cobo et al. (2012: 1609), the following three features make this tool valuable for science mapping: (a) it has a powerful preprocessing module to clean raw bibliographical data, (b) it enables the use of bibliometric measures to study the impact of each studied element, and (c) it uses a wizard to configure the analysis. Following these authors, the following four phases of analysis can be identified:

1. Detection of research themes through the clustering algorithm (Coulter et al. 1998) over a normalized co-word network (Callon et al. 1983).

2. Visualization of research themes and thematic network in a diagram. This diagram shows the centrality (which measures the degree of interaction of a network with other networks) and the density rank of the detected themes (which measures the internal strength of the network). Both types of measure

allow the visualization of Early Bilingual Education as a field of research with a set of research themes plotted on a two-dimensional strategic diagram (Fig. 1 (a)). The detected themes can be classified into four categories (Cobo et al. 2012):

a. Motor themes (see Quadrant Q1) or the relevant themes for developing and structuring the research field in question. They present strong centrality and high density.

b. Highly developed and isolated themes (see Quadrant Q2), which are strongly related to the motor and relevant themes in (a), are highly specialized and peripheral but do not display the appropriate background or importance for the field.

c. Emerging or declining themes (see Quadrant Q3), which are relatively weak and show low density and centrality as they mainly represent either emerging or disappearing/SYNONYM themes.

d. Basic and transversal themes (see Quadrant Q4), which are relevant for the field of research but have not been sufficiently developed. They consist of cross-cutting and general basic themes.

3. Main thematic areas. The above-mentioned research themes are analyzed by means of an evolution map (see Fig. 1 (c) below), which links those themes having a conceptual nexus across consecutive periods.

4. Performance analysis, i.e., the extent to which research themes and thematic areas have relatively contributed to the whole field of research is measured using both qualitative and quantitative means. This performance analysis can be later used to identify the most productive and relevant areas within the research field (see Table 1 below).
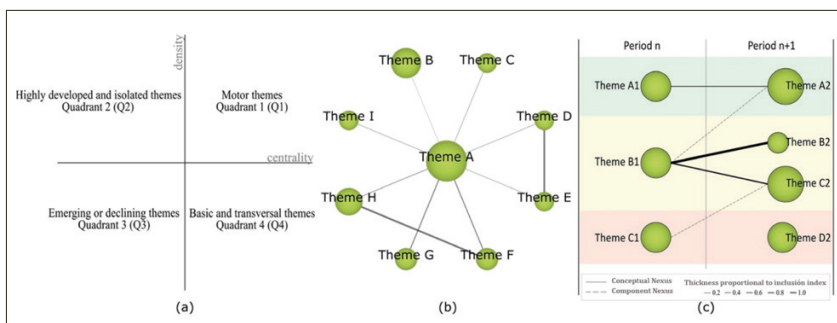
Figure 1. (a) strategic diagram, (b) thematic network, and (c) thematic evolution

Configuration	Values
Analysis unit	Keywords authors, keywords WoS
Frequency threshold	Keywords: P1 = (1), P2 = (1), P3 = (1)
Network type	Co-occurrence
Co-occurrence union value threshold	Keywords: P1 = (2), P2 = (2), P3 = (2)
Normalization measure	Equivalence index
Clustering algorithm	Maximum size: 7; Minimum size: 3
Evolutionary measure	Jaccard index
Overlapping measure	Inclusion Index

Table 1. *SciMAT* indicators of configuration

In addition to science mapping analysis, the present research seeks to identify the citation classics, that is, highly cited articles. For this purpose, the concept of H-Classics proposed by Martínez et al. (2014) is used, which can be defined as follows: "H-Classics of a research area 'A' could be defined as the H-core of 'A' that is composed of the 'H' highly cited papers with more than 'H' citations received" (Martínez et al. 2014: 1976).

3.2. Dataset

Publications related to Early Bilingual Education were gathered to analyze their bibliometric features and conduct science mapping. Different corpora and queries were proposed for collecting articles related to Early Bilingual Education from different databases. In this analysis, the authors focused on the queries suggested for Web of Science (WoS), and more specifically they followed the advice suggested by the International Society for Scientometrics and Informetrics (ISSI) distribution list. The present study, therefore, focuses on the following concepts: "early language learning" or "early childhood education" or "preschool" or "early language" or "early education" and "biling"*.

Consequently, the raw data (publications) were compiled using the WoS, considered the most important database, since it covers a wide range of disciplines and therefore allows comparisons across scientific fields. The publications devoted to Early Bilingual Education and the above-mentioned themes were all downloaded from the *Web of Science Core Collection* using an advanced query, which gathered a total of 1011 publications from 1988 to 2022. The corpus was further refined and limited to the English language and the following types of publications: articles, proceedings and reviews. The citations from these publications were likewise used in this research, being gathered up to 2022. Finally, a total of 955 valid documents were selected for analysis.

After importing the complete raw data into *SciMAT,* a deduplication process was also conducted to improve the data quality by grouping meanings and concepts representing the same notion: "early language learning" or "early childhood education" or "preschool" or "early language" or "early education" and "biling"*.

Secondly, in order to avoid flatness of the collected data, the whole span of years was divided into consecutive periods. Since those periods were observed to cover the same time spans, and given the low number of publications obtained through the query in the early years, the best option was to split the time span into comparable periods. Therefore, the study period (1988-2022) was subdivided into three consecutive periods: 1988 to 2013 (P1), 2014 to 2018 (P2), and 2019-2022 (P3) with 99, 172 and 186 publications corresponding to the most salient themes, respectively.

Thus, next section deals with the evolution of Early Bilingual Education in terms of publications, citations, and impact by analyzing the following bibliometric indicators: published documents, received citations, journal impact factors, most cited publications, most cited authors, h-index, research areas, and data on the geographical distribution of publications.

The bibliometric performance analysis is therefore structured into three sections: production and impact of published documents; production and impact of authors, journals, and research areas; and H-Classics analysis.

4. Results

4.1 Bibliometric Analysis of Early Bilingual Education

This section aims to conduct a bibliometric analysis of terms related to Early Bilingual Education and Bilingualism. Specifically, the analyses are carried out on the basis of literature corpus around the main characteristics of publications (areas of research, language of publication, most productive authors, among others), citations and impact, analyzing the following bibliometric indicators for publications between 1988-2022:

- Diachronic evolution, geographical distribution
- Main languages
- Research areas
- Predominant/Main WoS categories
- Most productive authors

Figure 2a shows the diachronic evolution of the number of publications identified in the last 15 years. As can be observed, there is a clear ascending pattern in the

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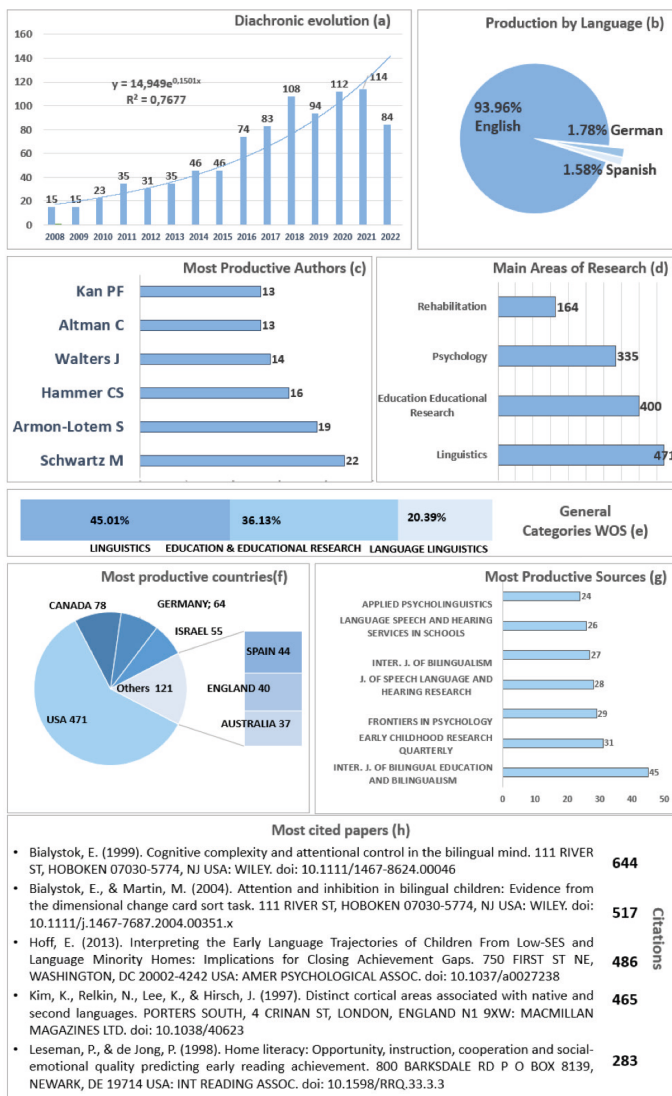
Figure 2. Diachronic evolution of production (a); Production by language (b); Most productive authors (c); Main areas of research (d); General categories in Web of Science (WoS) (e); Most productive countries (f); Most productive sources (g); Most cited papers (h)

literature from 2008. In this respect, and to make the graph more visually legible, publications prior to 2008 (significantly scarcer) are omitted (in this case, the positive trend is shown with r=0.77).

The growth in the analyzed period is progressive, although it is important to take into consideration the following aspects: first, two relevant interannual increases stand out in the years 2015-2016 and 2017-2018 with 60.87% and 30.12%, respectively. Secondly, we should be cautious when interpreting the 2021-2022 period since documents are still being incorporated into the WoS and this change cannot be measured. However, the increase in the already positive trend observed from 2016 onwards suggests an increase in the latest research in recent years. The objective of the publications, i.e., scientific dissemination, depends to a large extent on the vehicular language used by researchers. In the case of this study, English stands out as the most used language of publication (Figure 2b), far above the rest (93.96% of the total production). As for the rest, 1.78% has been published in German, 1.58% in Spanish and less than 3% of the total has been published in other languages. This result is not surprising, since English is the lingua franca most frequently used in academia.

With regard to the geographical distribution of publications, these studies point to the United States and Canada as the countries with more publications on the topic, coinciding with the current study. Specifically, the United States is far ahead (471 publications) followed by Canada with 78 publications (see Figure 2f), while the rest of the papers are distributed among a wide range of countries. This can be explained by the tradition of studying Bilingual Education in these two countries, pioneers in this research since the studies carried out by Peal and Lambert (1962), among others. Over time, and especially through the interest and generalization of bilingual programs from an early age in other parts of the world, research on the topic has originated in various countries (mainly Israel, Australia, Spain and UK as indicated in Figure 2f).

In relation to the areas of knowledge (Figure 2d) and the general WoS categories (Figure 2e), LINGUISTICS leads the classification with 471 publications and 45.01%, respectively. The next area, EDUCATION, takes second place with 400 publications and 36.13% of the publications analyzed. These two areas were expected in the search, and frequent interrelations between both areas take place when studying language learning and development in academic contexts.

Along with the organizations that endorse the publications, and the areas and categories in which they are framed, it is essential to determine the most productive authors and the most cited papers in the analyzed period in order to evaluate the evolution of the field of research. Thus, Figure 2c shows the most productive

authors, where not very disparate figures are observed: 22 papers by Schwartz, followed by 19 and 16 papers by Armon-Lotem and Hammer, respectively. In general, Schwartz's research deals with the conceptualization of preschool bilingual education as a distinct area and the language practices and agency of bilingual preschool teachers, while Armon-Lotem focuses on vocabulary, metalinguistic awareness and language dominance in bilingual preschoolers. Hammer is well known for his studies on language pathologies, early language and reading development among bilingual kids. Finally, as shown in Figure 2h, there are two publications that stand out in terms of citations as compared to the others, namely those by Bialystok (2018) on analysis (representation) and control (selective attention) as basic components of language processing among bilingual children, and Bialystok and Martin (2004) on attention and inhibition in young bilinguals. These figures corroborate the relevance of Bialystok's research and her trajectory; her leading research in other related fields such as Psycholinguistics offers similar figures.

4.2. Thematic Evolution Analysis

To carry out the thematic analysis of the literature, the papers are divided into three main periods: from 1989-2013 (P1), from 2014-2018 (P2) and from 2019-2022 (P3). A balanced division of documents is followed as a criterion for separating the periods. The three periods show a certain consistency, as can be observed in Figure 3, which represents the evolution of keywords in the three periods (P1 - first circle; P2 - second circle; P3 - third circle); it shows output arrows, which indicate the number of keywords maintained in the next period (15 and 22), while a total of 68 new keywords appear in the second period and 26 in the third one. Specifically, there is a consistency of 0.89 and 0.88 between periods, indicating little thematic variability between them.
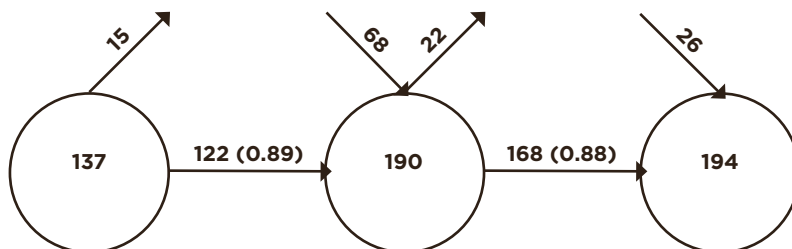
Figure 3. Evolution of the keywords in different periods

	Documents	h	g	q2	Sum Citations
BILINGUAL	25	16	25	33.47	1,452
BILINGUALISM	19	14	17	23.37	631
EARLY-CHILDHOOD-EDUCATION	12	9	11	18.97	457
INTERACTION	5	5	5	11.18	136
HEALTH	7	6	7	20.64	366
FAMILY	8	7	8	11.22	281
VOCABULARY	5	5	5	11.83	216
AGE	4	3	4	12.73	173
IMMIGRANTS	5	5	5	8.66	98
SPEECH	5	4	4	8.94	92
RESEARCH DESIGN	4	4	4	12	242
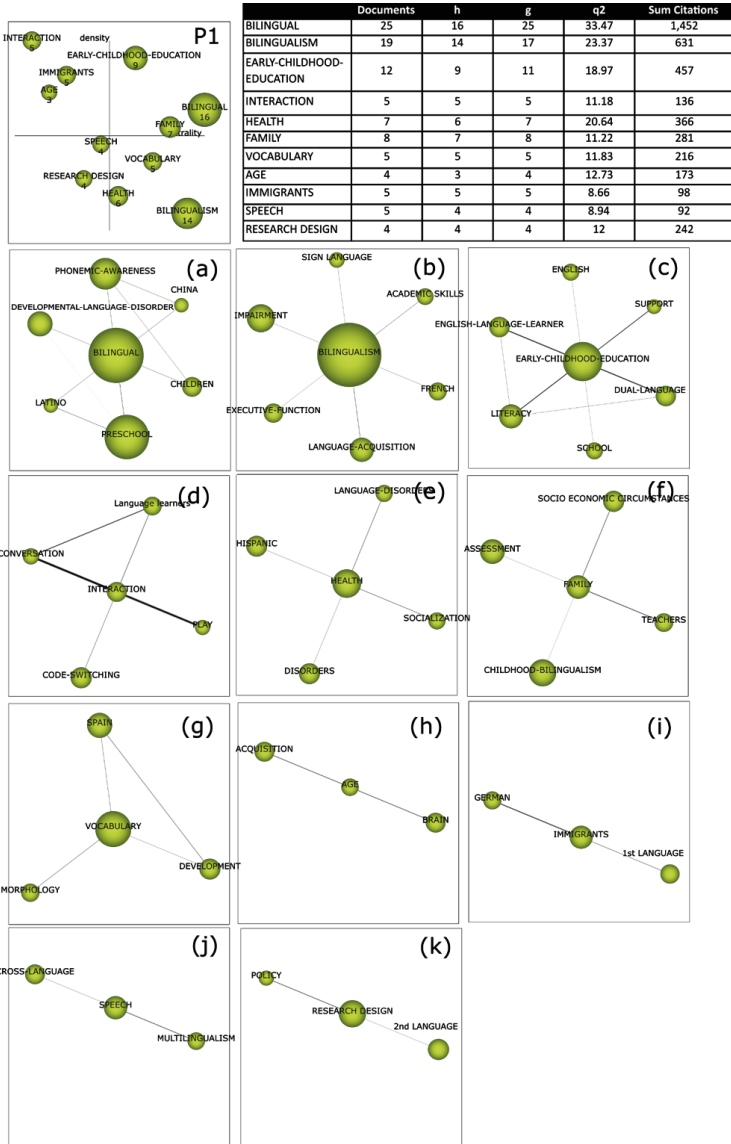
Figure 4. Strategic diagram for period 1

Turning now to the specific analysis of each period (P1, P2 and P3), the strategic diagrams show the values of centrality and density for the main concepts. In addition, the images and their size represent the reference proportional value, calculated according to the h-index.

During period 1 from 1989 to 2013 (P1), eleven research themes related to Bilingualism and Bilingual Education could be identified, which are visible in the strategic diagram P1 (Figure 4). Among them, six are considered key as driving themes, core themes and cross-cutting themes: EARLY-CHILHOOD-EDUCATION, BILINGUAL, BILINGUALISM, FAMILY, VOCABULARY and HEALTH, with the first three standing out for their h-index, number of publications and sum citations (see Figure 4 (a), (b), (c), (f) and (g) and the corresponding table for P1). The presence of the term FAMILY is noteworthy, which will not appear as an emergent theme in the subsequent periods. The fact that learning additional languages in academic environments has become more popular in more recent years might explain the salience of this term in the first period: the family context was the main context of exposure to more than one language in homes where bi- or plurilingualism was the norm.

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For the second period (2014-2018), as indicated in the strategic diagram P2 (Figure 5 and corresponding table), thirteen research topics were identified as being directly related to the analyzed terms. Seven out of these thirteen topics are driving, basic and cross-cutting themes: INFANTS, INTERVENTION, READING, BILINGUALISM, BILINGUAL, EARLY-CHILDHOOD-EDUCATION, LANGUAGE. The classification according to their h-index shows BILINGUAL, BILINGUALISM and EARLY-CHILDHOOD EDUCATION standing out in the first place, followed by INTERVENTION and READING. EARLY-CHILDHOOD-EDUCATION, BILINGUAL and BILINGUALISM also appear as basic or cross-cutting themes as they did in the previous period.

Less salient themes are mostly related to oral skills, since the learners' age conditions oral approaches in the acquisition/learning of additional languages. Therefore, terms such as SPEAKING, HEARING or SPEECH establish more networks than terms explicitly related to written skills (see Figure 5).

The third period (2019-2022) takes into consideration those works published after the publication of the Companion Volume to the CEFR (Council of Europe 2018). This publication is especially relevant for the Pre-primary/Early Childhood Education stage, since it emphasizes language education across the curriculum. This policy had been previously introduced in the Primary stage of education mainly through the CLIL approach, and it is therefore expected it would also be of interest once it was generally implemented in the Pre-primary/Early Childhood Education stage.

	Documents	h	g	q2	Sum Citations
INFANTS	5	4	5	6.63	71
EARLY-CHILDHOOD-EDUCATION	39	12	18	17.32	390
BILINGUALISM	29	14	27	22.45	958
INTERVENTION	14	7	12	14	218
BILINGUAL	40	13	20	18.73	487
IMMIGRANTS	10	3	8	9	74
READING	12	7	11	12.41	159
LANGUAGE	9	6	8	9.17	113
HEBREW	6	4	6	6	45
METHODOLOGY	3	3	3	6.24	38
PRE-SCHOOL BILINGUAL	5	1	1	3	9
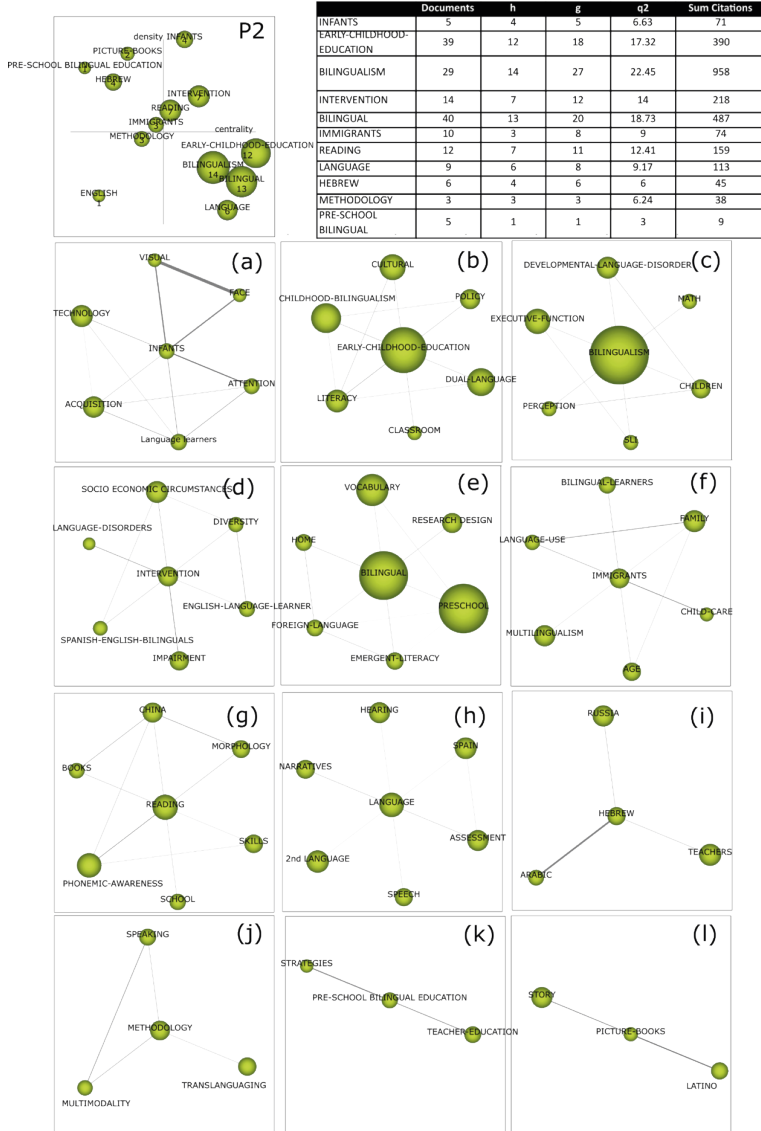
Figure 5. Strategic diagram for period 2

	Documents	h	g	q2	Sum Citations
BILINGUAL	41	7	11	9.9	171
LANGUAGE	10	3	3	3.46	18
EARLY-CHILDHOOD-EDUCATION	29	6	11	8.12	139
DUAL-LANGUAGE	20	6	8	6.93	83
BILINGUALISM	40	7	10	7.94	125
CHILDHOOD-BILINGUALISM	15	3	6	3.87	44
ASSESSMENT	9	4	5	7.21	47
PHONEMIC-AWARENESS	9	3	3	3	18
COGNITION	5	1	1	1	1
SIGN LANGUAGE	5	2	2	2.45	5
INTERVENTION	3	1	3	6.93	50
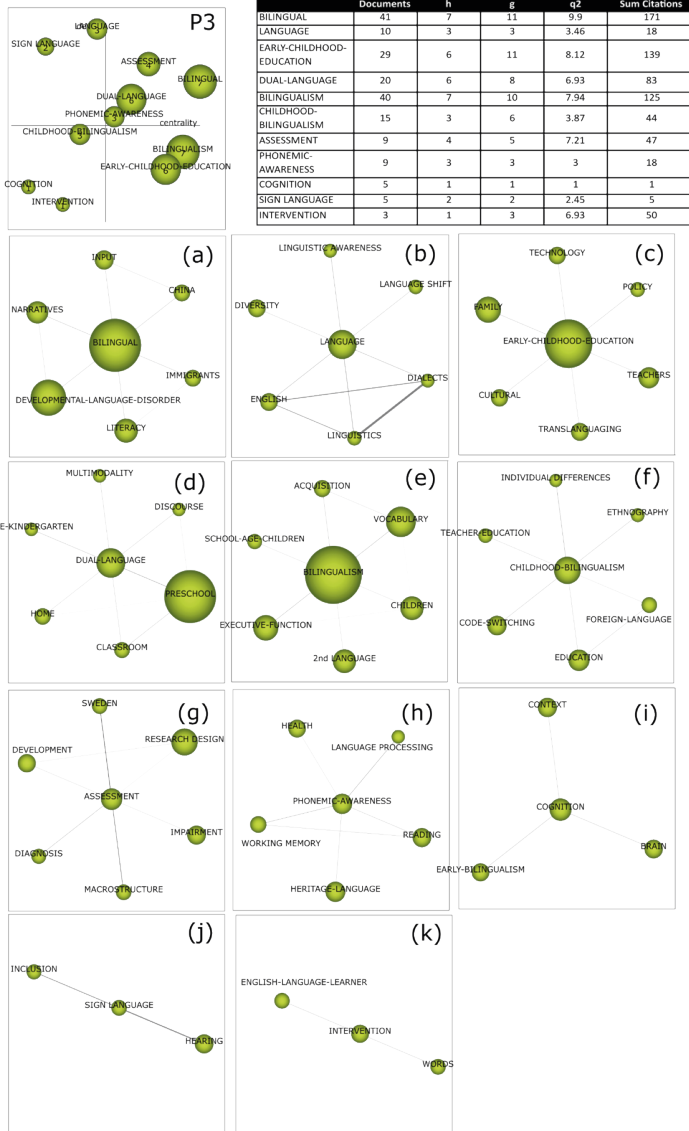
Figure 6. Strategic diagram for period 3

As shown in Figure 6, eleven themes of related research could be identified. Five research topics out of the eleven are considered key for their contribution to the growth of knowledge on the topic of Bilingualism: BILINGUAL, EARLY-CHILDHOOD-EDUCATION, DUAL-LANGUAGE, BILINGUALISM and ASSESSMENT. Compared to the previous period, motor themes such as BILINGUAL, EARLY-CHILDHOOD-EDUCATION, and BILINGUALISM are maintained. Based on the h-index of the topics analyzed, the one which stands out is DUAL-LANGUAGE. Finally, CHILDHOOD-BILINGUALISM appears as an emerging theme in this period.

The total number of cites support the interest in the key topics identified in the previous periods while the salient topic of DUAL-LANGUAGE reflects studies emerging from the US, where the dual language programs are common and have a long tradition, especially in some states. It is expected that a gradual increase of additional languages in the Pre-primary stage in the European context will generate more publications within this field in the near future.

4.3. Conceptual Evolution Map

Another interesting aspect of this type of analysis is the possibility of studying the conceptual evolution over the selected periods. The main objective is to show in a visual format which themes co-occur, and which ones bifurcate along the different sections. Stronger and thicker lines indicate a stronger relationship between the concepts than the dotted or thin lines, i.e., the thickness is proportional to the inclusion rate and the volume of the spheres is proportional to the h-index of the documents associated with each cluster (Cobo et al. 2012). These relationships show the direct linkage and co-occurrences of the key topics analyzed by research in recent decades within the field of ECE and Bilingualism.

As shown in Figure 7, there are different types of relationships between the themes throughout the periods. Some of the strongest relationships presented can be seen by following the colors. In the first place, marked in purple, is the concept BILINGUAL, co-occurring in the three periods. This fact can also be observed with BILINGUALISM, marked in pink and repeated in the three periods. These two terms are clearly salient throughout the time analyzed, suggesting their relevance over the three decades.

The term EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION also appears in all three periods but, unlike the previous cases, it is related to ENGLISH (P2) and LANGUAGE (P3), showcasing the above-mentioned interrelation between the fields of Linguistics/ Languages and Education. There are other interesting relationships such as those found between P2 and P3, as with the concept INTERVENTION, which shows an interest in research to analyze and document the actions addressed to those difficulties

related to the acquisition of two or more additional languages. Finally, a strong link between READING and PHONEMIC AWARENESS shows the research interest in studying these skills, which are central to literacy and consequently to communication.
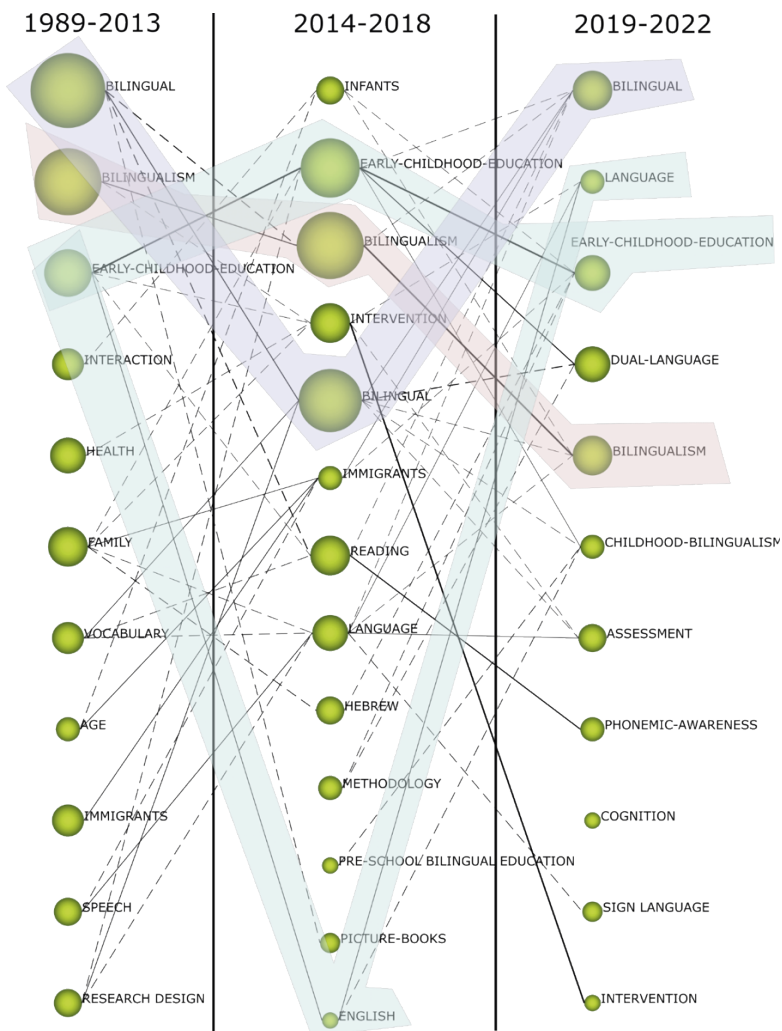
Figure 7. Conceptual evolution map

The analysis has provided answers to the three research questions. RQ1 focused on exploring the growth of publications indexed in the Web of Science (WoS) database between 1989 and 2022 in the area of Early Bilingual Education. Stemming from Figure 2a (diachronic evolution), the study has shown an upward trend of the publications including the terms included in the query (from 15 publications in 2008 to 114 in 2021). As for RQ2, the most salient journals, authors and publications on the topic have all been identified and also analyzed in connection with their citation rate. Finally, RQ3 aimed to shed light on the key emerging research themes and sub-themes on Early Bilingual Education. This has been obtained in the evolution plan and in the figures related to each period. BILINGUAL, BILINGUALISM and EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION stand out as emerging themes which also co-occur in the three periods.

5. Concluding Remarks

This study used a bibliometric analysis of the main performance indicators related to Bilingual Education and Early Language Learning to identify the main authors, organizations, countries, sources, research areas, and to evaluate the development in this field. We believe the study contributes to identifying the trends in research in the last three decades, and allows a comparison of the interest accrued to date in Early School Education and Bilingualism in the three periods under study.

The first period analyzed, despite covering a wider time range, features a more limited number of documents. The topic of FAMILY stands out, in contrast to the last two periods where the school context is more salient. This shows a research interest in the acquisition and learning of two or more languages outside the family context parallel to the increase in the learning of additional languages in the early school periods. In addition, a trend moving away from written materials and skills towards spoken skills and oral practice is also observed in the conceptual evolution map (phonemic awareness appears for the first time as a relevant topic in the last period). The research on this topic might reflect the methodologies introduced in Pre-primary in recent years where the work devoted to phonics takes up significant time.

The last two periods, of four and three years respectively, show the research interest in intervention, which is essential at this educational stage when children are acquiring and developing their languages and in which the identification of difficulties and linguistic impairments is key for avoiding future complications. It is assumed that future research will continue to focus on this aspect.

The information yielded by the *SciMAT* outcomes indicates an increasing interest in analyzing how early learners develop their linguistic repertoire; notwithstanding

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this, ECE is a stage which has attracted limited interest in comparison to compulsory education. It is expected that the generalization of bilingual and dual programs will generate more interest in the future.

Despite the contributions of this paper, we would like to mention the following limitations. First, only indexed publications in the WoS were considered. For future research, a comparison of these results with those from other databases such as Scopus is recommended. Second, the search term "bilingual*" as a generic concept in the database may have led to excluding discussion of other related terms in the area such as "multilingual*" and "plurilingual*". It is also worth mentioning that other articles which focus on this area but do not incorporate the concept of Early Bilingual Education in the title were left out of the analysis. Finally, *SciMAT* offers different grouping algorithms and similarity measures that are selected at the discretion of the researcher, as is the case with the clustering of keywords in the co-word analysis, which was performed based on the authors' criteria. Therefore, considering the increasing relevance of this topic, it would be advisable to conduct more exhaustive analyses of statistical results by analyzing the relationship between keywords and the identified axes and thematic lines. For future research, it might be interesting to address those less noticeable issues which could merit further consideration.

Acknowledgments

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"SLUTS" AND "SLAVES": THE INTERNET AND THE EVOLUTION OF FANTASY IN DENNIS COOPER'S ONLINE WORK

"SLUTS" AND "SLAVES": INTERNET Y LA EVOLUCIÓN DE LA FANTASÍA EN LA OBRA DIGITAL DE DENNIS COOPER

JAIME GARCÍA-IGLESIAS
Universidad de Oviedo / University of Edinburgh
Uo230962@uniovi.es / jgarcia6@ed.ac.uk
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8841-5635>

Abstract

This article explores a yet unresearched part of Dennis Cooper's production: his blog posts and, in particular, his "Sluts" and "Slaves" monthly posts, where he compiles explicit and sometimes sordid texts and images of gay sex workers apparently found online. First, this paper will situate these blog posts in the fields of citational and online literature, arguing that they are an example of 'flarf'. In so doing, it also extends the notion of "flarf" from poetry to narrative. Then, this paper explores the continuities and differences between the blog posts and Cooper's other work, most notably *The Sluts* (2005), to argue that —while similar in their focus on the internet and "the impossibility of truth"— the blog posts present a significant transformation that compels readers to confront their own desires.

Keywords: Cooper, flarf, digital literature, found language, fantasy, desire.

Resumen

Este artículo explora una parte hasta ahora poco investigada de la producción literaria de Dennis Cooper: sus publicaciones en blogs y, en particular, sus entradas mensuales tituladas "Sluts" y "Slaves", donde recopila textos e imágenes explícitas,

y a veces sórdidas, de hombres trabajadores sexuales supuestamente encontrados en internet. En primer lugar, este trabajo situará estas publicaciones en el campo de la literatura citacional y online, argumentando que son un ejemplo de 'flarf'. Al hacerlo, también amplía la noción de 'flarf' de la poesía a la narrativa. A continuación, este artículo explora las similitudes y diferencias entre las publicaciones en el blog y otras obras de Cooper, especialmente *The Sluts* (2005), para argumentar que, si bien similares en su interés en internet y la "imposibilidad de la verdad", las publicaciones en el blog presentan una transformación significativa que obliga a los lectores a enfrentarse a sus propios deseos.

Palabras clave: Cooper, flarf, literatura digital, found language, fantasía, deseo.

1. Introduction

On January 15th, 2021, Dennis Cooper uploaded a new post to his blog.[1] Like every fortnight, the post featured a collection of advertisements for male sex workers or gay men. One such ad included a selfie of two young blond boys in black T-shirts who stand awkwardly in front of a bathroom mirror. The text that accompanies the image reads:

> These boys are under the control of notorious sex trafficker barebacksex67. […] He sells the kids with the text that they are his friends… Nausea! […] The guy with the longer hair on the left, on the other hand, is a minor and will be 17 at the end of March next year. I also don't know if he escaped from the institute, but the fact that he was being searched by the police is registered as a missing person: http://www.police.hu/hu/koral/eltuntszemelyek/473371 "I'm sorry", barebacksex, but you have to stop selling the kids, and "sorry", dear potential customers, but you don't have to molest 16-year-old kids if you just need sex. (January 15th, 2021)

The hyperlink led to a profile on the missing persons website of the Hungarian police,[2] which featured a young man who somewhat resembled the one in the picture. Two responses followed the text above: one was by a user named @anonymous and read, in part, "I had these two boys absolutely filthy […] And yes they don't come alone". The second was supposedly written by the same user the text above mentions, @barebacksex67, and read: "If you wanna play a game, I'll send you to Saw".[3]

Have we stumbled upon a child trafficking ring? Is the boy in the picture really the same as the one on the missing persons site? Has Dennis Cooper, one of the most famed contemporary writers from the United States, become a sex trafficker? The answer is probably not. Since achieving international fame and recognition with his printed books, Cooper has turned to the Internet to develop new fiction. His blog, which he established in 2005, has become his most significant output. Every

fortnight he publishes posts which feature images, texts, and comments from profiles by sex workers and gay men. He calls them "Sluts" and "Slaves" posts, respectively. These posts evidence profound resonances with his previous work, most notably his 2005 novel *The Sluts*. However, as this study will make evident, the DC Blog marks a profound shift in his oeuvre. Cooper has so far refused to clarify the provenance of these blog posts or whether he creates them himself. Despite their having become one of his most significant and frequent outputs, and considering the curiosity they generate among a loyal legion of blog readers, no research so far has sought to explore them. However, as the frequent questions about these posts suggest, there is something profoundly interesting, perhaps morbidly so, about these texts that begs the questions: What are these posts? Where are they located within Cooper's work? What do they tell us about the role of the Internet in Cooper's world?

This article aims to characterize Cooper's "Sluts" and "Slaves" blog posts within their literary context. To do so, it relies on two broad areas of scholarship: digital literature (literature that is born online) and citational literature (literature that heavily quotes other sources), particularly the genre of flarf (Epstein 2012). Starting from this position, this study also explores how the blog posts relate to other works by Dennis Cooper, particularly as it pertains to discussions of the Internet and "the impossibility of truth" and fantasy in Cooper's oeuvre (Férez Mora 2013; García-Iglesias 2022a). At the same time, it also argues that Cooper's blog posts mark a transformation in Cooper's discussion of this impossibility of truth to challenge the reader in new directions. Therefore, this article aims to describe these blog posts critically and situate them within Cooper's work. This paper does not engage with the ethics of writing, publishing or reading materials that relate to violence and sex and which may be deemed extreme by some readers.

2. Dennis Cooper and the DC Blog

Dennis Cooper (California, 1953) is a fiction author from the United States who is well known for his "alarming and transgressive fiction" (Kennedy 2012a: 1). Cooper's most famed books are those that make up the 'George Miles Cycle', published between 1989 and 2000 (*Closer*, *Frisk*, *Try*, *Guide* and *Period*) and his best-selling and award-winning 2005 novel *The Sluts* (2005). Since then, he has published a number of other works, including gif novels,[4] and in 2021, a new novel, *I Wished*. Cooper's work has frequently been seen as influenced by French literature, especially fin de siècle postmodernism and authors such as Marquis de Sade, Arthur Rimbaud, Jean Genet and Georges Bataille (Lev 2006a). He has also been associated with youth cultures such as the Blank Generation (Young and

Caveney 1992), because of how his work is perceived as "vapid, post-punk nihilism" (Jacob 2004: 298). Yet, others have positioned him alongside Dodie Bellamy, Robert Glück, and Kevin Gillian, as part of the New Narrative of San Francisco (Lev 2006b). Furthermore, Cooper's emphasis on the embodied aspects of sex, violence, and sexual violence have provoked interesting comparisons with artists such as Andrés Serrano, Damien Hirst, or Karen Finley (Brantley 2014). Regardless of the comparisons scholars have established between Cooper and other authors, the fact remains that Cooper's works themselves have been the subject of abundant scholarship (e.g. Young and Caveney 1992; Baker 2012; Brintnall 2012).

As has been mentioned, Cooper's work has frequently been explored in terms of the embodied and violent eroticism that pervades it. As Pedro Antonio Férez Mora writes, "sexual expression and violence in Dennis Cooper's poetics are inseparable" (2013: 82). Sex and violence become, in Cooper's work, a conduit to fruitful engagements with a variety of themes, such as embodiment and truth, or the absence thereof. Benjamin Jacob explains that it is a "fascination with the body — especially its fragility" — and with the "materiality of the flesh" that characterizes Cooper's novels (2004: 294). It is the body that remains central to much literary critical engagement with Cooper's work. Férez Mora goes as far as to argue that, in Cooper's oeuvre, "adored, opened-up, abused, torn apart, reluctant, inviting, raped, or even dead…, no matter the form, the focus is always on the flesh" (2014: 73). Yet it is not always the presence of the body, but also its absence, that interests Cooper. In fact, talking about Cooper's perhaps best-known work, *The Sluts*, Férez Mora (2014) also contends that the absence of a physical, material body and its substitution for a prosthetic body through computers draws the narrative together. Linked with this absence of bodies is also another key theme in Cooper: the absence of reality or truth. Timothy Baker comments that in Cooper's work, most notably in *The Sluts*, "there is no grounded underlying reality to which reference can simply be made; instead, the characters are repeatedly forced, both by the events and their own consciences, to reconsider reality and their relation to it" (2012: 52-53). In a way, Cooper's refusal to create narratives containing a framework of objective reality against which characters and their actions can be measured leads to Leora Lev's assertion that "Cooper's work destabilizes epistemological certainties" (2012: 88). This absence of reality or truth, or the fact that these cannot be attained or known —which this paper and other scholarship refer to as "the impossibility of truth"— is also frequently articulated through narratives that evidence the futility of searching for the said truth (Férez Mora 2013).

This futility is most clearly evidenced in *The Sluts*, which features a polyvocal narrative. *The Sluts* (2005) narrates the story of a gay escort named Brad through a

series of posts to an escort review website and to a forum. The novel opens with a multitude of reviews of Brad by a series of anonymous users —as rave reviews accumulate, contradictions emerge about Brad (his attitude, age, body, even whether he is alive). Thanks to these, Brad becomes an object of fascination —so much so that the narrative moves to a blog where users discuss Brad and try to ascertain his existence and whereabouts. Eventually, two men decide to impersonate Brad and his lover, and new reviews appear of the "fake" Brad. In the end, as users begin to increasingly question the veracity of the reviews, the person who had been impersonating Brad's lover submits a final post/suicide note confessing to making up the reviews to appeal to other users' sexual fantasies. As Diarmuid Hester explains, "Brad is not an emotionally riveting character, he's just a whatever, he doesn't even exist" (2020: 205). This is further emphasized in one of my previous studies, where I explained that in the context of an anonymous online space, "these men's fascination with Brad can only be explained because, in his emptiness, Brad acts as a receptacle to their fantasies. Because he is nobody, he can also be anybody: he can mutate and transform to meet every user's specific sexual fantasies" (2022a: 613). However, as the novel advances, the anonymity that characterises the online community also makes it impossible to establish any fact about Brad, leading to tensions between those users who see this as allowing them to explore their sexual fantasies and the many who, instead, feel frustrated at this 'impossibility of truth'. It is this impossibility that eventually forces the collapse of the community. As we will discuss further below, the absence of truth or reality, and its substitution for fantasy, is not unique to *The Sluts* but has long been evolving through Cooper's work.

These elements of violent eroticism and the absence of any framework of reality have caused a multitude of sometimes opposite reactions to Cooper's work. The explosive, graphic, violence (and sexual violence) that is characteristic of Cooper has led some critics to chastise his work. Perhaps the most cited example of this is Michiko Kakutani's argument that "unlike Dostoyevsky or Baudelaire, contemporary artists like Cooper and Hirst are just interested in sensationalism for sensation's sake. Their peek into the abyss isn't philosophically interesting; it's just an excuse for a self-congratulatory smirk" (1996). On the other hand, however, numerous scholars have argued that Cooper's themes focus on "the frail, constructed, nature of culture's timeless 'truths'" (Jacob 2004: 304), or that they "inscribe the ethical and aesthetic limitations and paradoxes of self-other relations" (Lev 2006b: 206). In this sense, I have previously suggested that Cooper's work "conceptualizes the function of fantasy" in an era of Internet anonymity (García-Iglesias 2022a: 617).

In May 2005, Cooper launched the DC Blog. Since then, the blog has become the home of heterogeneous content published almost daily: reviews of exhibitions, films

and books, historical studies of art, or deeply researched insights into topics such as the artistic influences of Satan or archival footage from concerts by Guns N' Roses. The blog also includes short fictional pieces by Cooper, most frequently the aforementioned fortnightly "Sluts" and "Slaves".[5] All this work has made of the blog a heavily populated repository of Cooper's cultural world. In turn, this has attracted a devoted group of followers who routinely comment on each post and engage in friendly and intimate conversations with Cooper, generating a growing community (Hester 2020). The explicit and sometimes violent content Cooper publishes, including the "Sluts" and "Slaves", has also led to the blog being taken down on several occasions by the hosting site —although it has always been reinstated (Sidahmed 2016). Cooper himself has explained that "the blog […] has become sort of my main project now. […] I think of it as important as writing a novel" (Kennedy 2012b: 191). In fact, the interactions between Cooper and his community of blog readers have led to the publication of a compilation of fiction written by the readers themselves and frequently workshopped on the blog (Cooper 2007). The blog itself has been the subject of some scholarship as a key part of Cooper's oeuvre (e.g. Hester 2020). However, to date, no academic work has sought to characterize and situate the "Sluts" and "Slaves" posts within Cooper's work.

3. The Anatomy of a "Sluts" and "Slaves" Post: From Creation to Reception

Every month, Cooper publishes a "Sluts" post (on or around the 15th) and a "Slaves" post (on or around the 31st). In 2021, Cooper published twelve "Sluts" and twelve "Slaves" posts, which were downloaded and analysed (alongside the comments they generated) for the present study. On average, each "Sluts" post included twenty-four different profiles, whereas "Slaves" included twenty-seven. Both posts received, roughly, ten comments from blog readers. Both kinds of posts are similar in format: they contain one or more images of each 'profile', a name, age, and location, as well as some text description (supposedly written by the profile owner) which varies in length and style. They also feature a "guestbook" with comments about each person from supposed 'other users' —which also range in topic, length and style. An example of a "Slut" from the November 2021 entry is @bahnhof_boy, an 18-year-old man from Frankfurt, who describes himself in these terms:

> I would like to meet an older discreet sponsor to fulfill my dream and start a business. A sponsor, a mentor, and a good friend all in one. I don't take drugs. I drink alcohol only occasionally but not hard. I give bjs at the bahnhof for $ but I will stop. I don't have a naked photo in my profile because I don't want to be naked since I'm not gay, I am cheerful.

@bahnhof_boy's profile includes a comment on its guestbook by user @moneyfornothing which reads: "Happy to help you start whatever business you like if it leads to my cock exploding deep in your throat while I call you a fucking slut". It also includes four pictures of @bahnhof_boy, all showing a young, thin man, with a dyed-blond mohawk. In some of them, he is sporting a blue tracksuit while walking in a park; in others, he is seen smoking shirtless.

@bahnhof_boy's profile is relatively "clean" or "vanilla". Many other profiles, however, are much more sordid in their content, and make explicit mentions of suicide, self-harm, violence, or child-abuse. For example, a "Slaves" post from November 2021 features the profile of @ExArmyHotWheelsStud, which reads:

> Been in a wheelchair since March when some drunk guy threw me out of a fourth story window. My lower body is still hot and hasn't turned to mush yet but it will and hence my hurry. Quite like the idea of getting mauled in abandoned industrial area. #hood #gagging #choking #facefuck #mouthfisting #fisting #FF #deepthroat #wheelchair #disabled #paraplegic #earplugs are always best

While a "Sluts" post from August includes the profile of @BoyOwner:

> I have a friend who wants to sell his teenage son. The boy lives by court order with his grandparents in Las Vegas, his grandparents don't like him or know about his lifestyle so if he goes missing they wont [sic] care. The boy is fantastically undisciplined.

These two (which are by no means the most harrowing, sordid or violent posts) suggest just how dark and morbid some of the content in these posts is. Neither the provenance of the images nor of the text is explained in any of the posts: Cooper does not provide any information about where or how he found the content, how he selected the profiles or edited them. Some of the images in the profiles portray celebrities, influencers, or adult entertainers such as soccer player Aaron Moody or Instagram influencer Oliver Forslin, all of whom may be recognized by a reader "in the know" about gay culture. The vast majority, however, seem to be of anonymous individuals across the world. In many instances, the profiles contain links to social media sites (such as Twitter) which sometimes lead to actual accounts but other times do not. Similarly, in many cases, the comments left on a profile's "guestbook" seem not to be directly related to the actual profile or appear to belong to a larger conversation we do not see.

Despite the profiles being much shorter, there is a clear resemblance between the blog posts and Cooper's novel *The Sluts*. As explained above, as *The Sluts* advances, contradictions about Brad begin to accumulate to the extent that by the end of the novel not even Brad's own existence is certain. Similarly, in the "Sluts" and "Slaves" posts, profiles and guestbook comments frequently generate contradictions about the profiles they are supposedly reviewing. For example, in the guestbook of

a profile named @Guhh (from the October 15th "Sluts"), one user by the name of @kay2k comments: "fake", while another user, @openyours, replies: "true". This reminds us of the great amount of contradictory information about who Brad was or what he was like in *The Sluts*. Furthermore, just like in the novel, the guestbook comments also provide supposed glimpses of an offline world. For example, these are two "guestbook" posts from different profiles:

> His current sugardad (we socialise) is faking longterm covid issues in an attempt to get rid of him for good (vapid, needy, narcissistic, alcoholism) reasons. But he's right about his ass. (@Bobby1984 commenting on "Slut" @merryxmassoon, December 15th)
>
> He stole 150 euros from my bedroom drawer, I have already reported him to the police, it is only a matter of time before he is arrested (@cumgetme commenting on "Slut" @Eatadick!, January 15th)

There is no certainty about whether @merryxmassoon's "sugardad" is actually faking COVID-19 symptoms, or whether @cumgetme really had money stolen from him and reported @Eatadick! to the police. It is this type of unverifiable statement that ties the online and offline world together in obscure ways. This unverifiability is not only present in the blog posts but is a key element of Cooper's *The Sluts*, which makes anonymity and unverifiability its central theme (Baker 2012; García-Iglesias 2022a). Cooper, as we mentioned, provides no clear explanations about the processes of finding, selecting, editing, and compiling these materials into "Sluts" and "Slaves", despite blog readers frequently inquiring about their provenance. When asked, he either does not answer, or replies that he finds them online and edits them.

All in all, this section has explored the anatomy of the "Sluts" and "Slaves" posts and the information available about their creation. In order to do so, a comparison with Cooper's *The Sluts* has been established, since both the blog posts and the novel share important links. The following section will argue that these posts are an instance of the literary genre known as flarf, extending this concept from poetry to narrative, and that they are located at the intersection of digital and citational literature.

4. "Sluts" and "Slaves" as an Example of Flarf Literature

There are two outstanding elements in the "Sluts" and "Slaves" that may help better understand and contextualize these posts: the apparent use of content found online and the use of hyperlinks. As we will see below, the presence of these elements is not incidental to the blog posts, but an essential part of them that requires critical attention. Cooper explains that he finds online and only lightly

edits the vast majority of the texts and images present in the blog posts. This establishes a clear first link with citational literature, which is defined as "all works of fiction that incorporate a significant amount of found language" (Comitta 2020). Within these, there exist those which consist almost entirely of "found language" (that is, on text found elsewhere). These are the "literary supercuts", which have been defined as "texts made entirely or almost entirely of found language [which] stand out in the genre of citational fiction because of their radical rejection of originality [which] turns writing into a kind of editorial or archival labour" (Comitta 2020). These can range from full novels or short stories to just sections within larger works, such as the passages devoted to describing whales in *Moby Dick* (largely sources from other texts). Other examples include Eduardo Galeano's *Memoria del fuego* (1982-1986) or *The Best American Book of the 20ᵗʰ Century* by Société Réaliste (2014). Tom Comitta argues that the value of literary supercuts lies in how "the accumulation of similarities across source materials or within a single source can reveal [...] how we write, think and exist in the world" (2020). While literary supercuts have been around for a long time, only a handful of research has been produced about them, including key essays by Jonathan Lethem (2007) and David Shields (2010). In fact, "it's particularly surprising that we don't have a detailed and complex understanding of this kind of fiction" (Comitta 2020). This gap is important given how the Internet has made it easier for authors to access almost infinite sources of texts and simplified their manipulation into literary supercuts.

The relevance of the Internet for citational literature is best exemplified through what is known as "flarf poetry", the creation of poems "by collaging together found language gathered from the web" (Epstein 2012: 311). Most frequently, flarf poets use *Google* to search for ready-made language and then go on to make "strange, funny, unsettling collages of their results" (Epstein 2012: 318). Key authors in this recent movement (it only gained prominence after 9/11) are Gary Sullivan, Raymond McDaniel, Nada Gordon, and Drew Gardner. Most early flarf thrived online through mailing lists, blogs, or forums. While it is true that the notion of "flarf" has traditionally been applied solely to poetry, both the processes and the approaches to language of flarf are similar to what Cooper says he is using. When Andrew Epstein argues that flarf relies on "the verbal detritus which teems on the web and saturates our culture" (2012: 318), it is not difficult also to see the texts and images that Cooper uses as a type of "junk" material that proliferates online and reproduces through social media, for example. As evidenced above, some of the images portraying "well-known" people seem to be endlessly recycled online. Similarly, when flarf is said to be "often rebarbative, abrasive, and distasteful, but its humour and strangeness can be powerfully affecting" (Epstein 2012: 318), we appreciate the emotional complexities that Cooper's posts generate, a sort of

obscene titillation. As one reader comments:[6] "Love your Sluts posts. To be honest, this month's I found pretty hard to read, but couldn't look away until I had finished the post".

In addition to this, thinking of these posts as flarf compels us to reflect on the importance of the Internet. Brian McHale explains that "flarf […] is a sort of cyborg poetics, involving a collaboration between flesh-and-blood poets and digital technologies. It is a zone where the real world in which poets live overlaps with cyberspace, or dovetails with it" (2015: 180). This close relationship, which Cooper has made clear in the case of his blog posts, demands that we also consider the position of the "Sluts" and "Slaves" posts in relation to the field of digital or online literature, "fiction written for and read on a computer screen that pursues its verbal, discursive and/or conceptual complexity through the digital medium, and would lose something of its aesthetic and semiotic function if it were removed from that medium" (Ciccoricco et al. 2010). Electronic literature has been the subject of abundant scholarship, including that contained in Joseph Tabbi (2018) and Ray Siemens and Susan Schreibman (2013). In particular, it is worth noting the body of literature focused on blog posts as a distinct literary genre that "has attained the mainstream as a form of digital personal diary, an outlet for citizen journalism, a community space for special interest forums, and a medium for more passive entertainment" (Morrison 2013: 369), which is characterized, among other things, by extensive reliance on hyperlinks.

In the DC Blog, Cooper relies on hyperlinks to contribute to the narrative by directing readers to other sites, such as social media profiles, police websites or *YouTube* videos. Hyperlinks are not incidental to the blog posts, but rather an essential and defining part of them. In an interview about his blog, Cooper explained:

> DC [Dennis Cooper]: […] I guess I'll archive it.
> DK [Danny Kennedy]: Yeah, you said you imagined releasing it as a CD ROM.
> DC: But it won't work because the links won't work. It has to stay on the Internet —that's what I like about it. I mean I pulled some things I've written up there and put them in the short fiction. Some of the writing things are alright but, no it just exists on the Internet.
> DK: Yeah, and that's integral to it. It can't be separated from that.
> DC: Yeah, yeah you can't. Even so, it slowly dies because the links die, different things die. (Kennedy 2012b: 201)

In other words, what Cooper's words reveal is that without the hyperlinks and images that establish a multitude of connections (some explicit, some implicit like the image subjects being familiar to only those readers "in the know"), the blog loses its essence. These pieces are "integral to it". Cooper's statement positions the "Sluts" and "Slaves" solidly within the field of online or digital literature. This

latter point is seconded by Yra Van Dijk (2015) and Katherine Hayles (2008), who likewise suggest that a key element of this literature is that it would be deprived of its character if moved offline. This circumstance clearly echoes Cooper's position about the need for the blogs to remain online. Furthermore, even Cooper's acknowledgement that the posts' longevity is compromised (as hyperlinks and the pages these lead to may disappear) echoes concerns about the obsolescence of online literature. As Simone Murray writes, "even the most critically acclaimed hypertext fictions remain curiosities in the literary canon, their dissemination beset by problems of software and hardware obsolescence" (2015: 311).

5. "Sluts" and "Slaves" in Cooper's Work

Having established the "Sluts" and "Slaves" blog posts as examples of flarf, it is time to move from the form to the content of these writings and identify connections with and departures from Cooper's previous work, so as to situate these posts in the general context of his oeuvre. The "Sluts" and "Slaves" have some clear connections to previous work by Cooper, most notably in the pervasive presence of the Internet as context, and also in the impossibility of truth. Their clearest antecedent is Cooper's 2004 novel *The Sluts*. At the same time, however, the blog posts mark a significant evolution of Cooper's notions of impossibility of truth and fantasy. This section, thus, will both identify continuities and departures from previous work and argue that the blog posts further complicate Cooper's notion of "fantasy".[7]

As has been suggested so far, the Internet, with its potential for connection and anonymity, has remained a long-standing interest in Cooper's work. This is particularly evident in *The Sluts*. Talking about this novel, Férez Mora reflects: "It is not that erotic activity in the novel takes place through computer screens, it is that erotic activity is singularly played-out on the computer screen. Sexuality in Cooper's narrative is typed about, which can only lead to the formulation of one question: what are the characters, men or machines?" (2014: 74). That is, the internet and its material instantiation in the computer appear as a quasi-character in the novel. I have further emphasized this aspect (2022a) by arguing that *The Sluts* is the tale of an online community coming together and becoming undone around the fantasy of a person (Brad) who turns out perhaps never to have existed in the first place —a narrative void. As the users are unable to transcend the barrier of anonymity that pervades their community, and thus are unable to verify any of the facts about Brad, the community collapses. In this way, the internet becomes a tool for Cooper to explore fantasy, almost being a character, as Férez Mora argues, that brings about the collapse of the community.

In the blog posts, Cooper relies on the Internet yet again but does so to further elaborate on the notion of fantasy and the impossibility of knowing any truth. In order to trace this evolution, however, it is necessary to go back not to *The Sluts* but to *Frisk* (1991), the second novel of the George Miles cycle. *Frisk* narrates the story of a man (Dennis) obsessed with (or, perhaps, traumatized by) a series of snuff photographs he saw as a teenager. He constantly fantasizes with disembowelling his young lovers in search of "truth". As the novel progresses, Dennis mails a letter to a former lover, Julian, describing one such disembowelment of one of his lovers. Julian and his sibling, Kevin, decide to visit Dennis to find out if the murder of Dennis's lover actually happened. Towards the end of the novel, as the murders are proven never to have happened, Dennis explains:

> "I don't know", […] "Well, that's not totally true". […] "I sort of know…well, basically because I realized at some point that I couldn't and wouldn't kill anyone, no matter how persuasive the fantasy is. And theorizing about it, wondering why, never helped at all. Writing it down was and still is exciting in a pornographic way. (Cooper 1991: 186)

In *Frisk*, the murderous fantasy of disembowelment is Dennis's own —it may at times seem tempting for Kevin, but in no way does it serve to build emotional, affective, or social connections between characters. This is drastically different from *The Sluts*, which, as Baker argues, "presents not individual consciousnesses, but a collective discourse which has no direct bearing on reality" (2012: 60-61). This is, as I have suggested (2022a), the key transformation that *The Sluts* evidences: the fantasies become a shared venue, the social glue that binds the community together. Just as with *Frisk*, fantasies prove impossible to actualize into reality, truth is impossible to attain, but in *The Sluts*, this does not bring about the demise of a single character, but rather of the community built upon those fantasies.

The argument throughout this article is that the "Sluts" and "Slaves" posts push this evolution of the impossibility of truth being achievable significantly further. When talking about works such as *Frisk* or *The Sluts*, we are talking about characters or character communities that remain fictional. No matter how immersive or captivating, the story is clearly fictional. In the blog posts, that is not so clear. Readers keep asking Cooper about the provenance of the texts:

> Some impressively articulate profiles today. I couldn't resist googling Elliot Danks, ha. I wonder if it's the same person I found. Did you see the ad somewhere or…?
> Was very proud to see that an escort operating from my hometown (Bloodbaby from Bournemouth) made your pick of the fortnight! A great honour for a very dull and non-descript place, if I say so myself! Incidentally, do you find the posts online (and, if so, where) or did you write it?

Thus, the blog de-stabilizes perhaps the only certainty that *Frisk* and *The Sluts* provided: the authorial figure of Cooper. If the murdered and disembowelled twink and the character of Brad were the absences of *Frisk* and *The Sluts*, respectively, in the blog it seems that it is the figure of Dennis Cooper himself that is absent, which generates a lacuna through the blog's refusal to clarify whether Cooper finds the posts or creates them himself.

This, in turn, generates a significant change for the readers of the blog. In *The Sluts*, it was the multiple characters who formed the community who had to decipher not just whether Brad existed and the events of his life were real, but also their own desires in relation to Brad and the sexual practices described in the novel. The community in *The Sluts* collapses because users seem unable to reach common ground on Brad: some wish he was true, and others, instead, see him as an excuse to share and talk about their sexual fantasies, knowing full well they cannot be realized. Instead, in the blog, it is the readers who are faced with this complex question: they are forced to confront their desires and feelings about the posts they are reading, without being clearly able to discern whether they are fictional or not. This incapacity makes readers feel disturbed while also captivated by the text:

> These month's slaves are out of this world. I couldn't stop scrolling even as I found myself cringing. The Manchester emo farm, if it exists?, is particularly out there —do I want to go or do I not?
> Hey Dennis —Nice group of escorts. Xenosexual was a new one to me and drool over that fantasy. Particularly enjoyed the backstory from Guhh. Londonboy was very tough though.
> I don't know what's happening, Dennis. I think the pandemic and lockdown has made our slaves even more off the hook than usual. Same with the escorts. Things are getting crazier —but I certainly seem to enjoy these more and more, which I'm not sure about how to feel!

Readers have to face their own desires and fantasies in relation to the men portrayed in the posts, just as community members had to do in relation to Brad. What is interesting is that, as evidenced from the readers' comments, this process is complicated by the absence of any certainty about whether the men in the posts are real (and found online) or created by Cooper. The impossibility of knowing any truth (since Cooper refuses to provide it) makes it difficult for these readers to come to terms with their own emotions —they cringe while wondering if they want to visit a sex venue, they drool over some fantasies while finding others 'tough', and they wonder why they are increasingly enjoying the posts. As one user writes:

> Dennis, I'm kinda fascinated by these escorts, even if they could sell themselves better. I mean, they are horrifically broken but they're also appealing in the extreme. If only you know where you find them, we could stalk them and figure out if they're faking it!

So far ignored by research, Cooper's "Sluts" and "Slaves" posts signal a powerful turn in Cooper's work: they continue the themes already present in novels such as *The Sluts* but transform them to force the readers to negotiate their desires and fantasies in a context where truth (whether the posts are real or created) is impossible. Furthermore, this could only happen online. Earlier in this study, it was argued that the internet was an essential piece for understanding Cooper's "Sluts" and "Slaves". The use of hyperlinks that lead to supposed websites for missing people, social media accounts, or emails, complicates any assumptions about the posts. As a reader comments about a post featuring an email address:

> Hey Dennis, I know you [sic] in the past you've said you don't like saying where you find your slaves, but considering one of them left a link to their maybe email (it doesn't work), is there any chance you'd be willing to let us know where you got them or if you crafted it yourself?

This comment evidences this complexity: an email is available but it does not work. Is it because the email is fake, another creation by Cooper, or it existed but it is no longer available? As I have explained in a study of online creative writing, "online interactions are framed by the impossibility of reliably identifying an outside reality, a reality beyond-the-screen" (García-Iglesias 2022b: 385). This reinforces just how much the readers of Cooper's blog are in a similar position to the community members of *The Sluts*.

The impossibility of any truth being achievable, even that of Cooper himself, does not immediately take on a negative connotation in the blog. In *The Sluts*, impossibility compels the collapse of the community —but many of its members had already taken advantage of that impossibility of truth to build their own fantasies. Upon the collapse of the community, they simply find alternative communities to engage in. Férez Mora (2022) describes how Cooper's work, particularly in *Frisk* (1991), speaks to an all-pervasiveness or infinity of desire, which is not curtailed but rather facilitated by impossibility. Cooper explores how erotic identity "tends to infinity" as it exists at the intersection of selfness and otherness (Férez Mora 2022: 12). In "Sluts" and "Slaves", the absence of truth may equally lend itself to infinite interpretations of the blogs, opening the way for infinite desire. Further research should seek to engage with blog readers to better understand how they navigate this context.

6. Conclusion

This article has sought to explore a new area of Cooper's work: his blog posts. These have become a key output from the author, and provide an almost daily

insight into his thinking. Despite this, to date, there have been no scholarly engagements with these materials —even while there is abundant work on his other productions, such as *The Sluts*. In this paper, I have tried to do two things: first, I have sought to describe the blog posts and contextualize them within the field of literary studies. Doing so, paying special attention to the found language and the hyperlinks —which Cooper himself said were essential to the posts— made it possible to situate "Sluts" and "Slaves" in between digital literature and citational literature. I have suggested how the blog posts may be seen as flarf. In addition to this, I have examined the many continuities between Cooper's previous work, most notably *Frisk* and *The Sluts*, and the blog posts. This has revealed that they share a fascination with the internet (in the case of *The Sluts* and the blog posts) and that they engage in discussions about what desire is in a context where truth is impossible to attain. However, I have also identified a major difference: in the "Sluts" and "Slaves" posts, it is the readers who are forced to confront their desires and fantasies in the absence of information about the men featured in the posts. This, as in *The Sluts*, generates both fascination and disgust.

Above all, the analysis of Cooper's "Sluts" and "Slaves" posts is fruitful in that it demonstrates that they are examples of flarf and exist at the intersection of citational and digital literature. This has two important implications: the first is that, to my knowledge, this is the first exploration of Cooper's "Sluts" and "Slaves" posts and, thus, it has required carefully describing what these posts actually are. And, secondly, it pushes the boundaries of flarf beyond poetry. Already in 2009, Shell Fischer argued that flarf, which had originated as a personal source of entertainment among a group of friends, "is showing signs of having cleared a spot among the ranks of legitimate art forms" (2009). And yet, despite flarf having gained popularity, there remains a lack of serious consideration about this genre. This study has thus argued that the unique combination of found text and the use of hyperlinks positions the "Sluts" and "Slaves" posts as flarf narrative, locating them in between citational and digital literature. The remaining question would be: Where do we go from here? In *The Sluts*, the community collapses as infighting breaks out about what the purpose was of their online engagements (fantasizing or finding the truth?). Will readers be satiated after years of posts and decide to disengage? Will someone feel so outraged by them to prompt the closure of the blog? How will they perdure? Copies of Cooper's blog have been "saved" by the Internet Archive over 256 times between 2016 and now, but as links begin to break —leading to nowhere— will they remain the same?

In conclusion, Dennis Cooper's "Sluts" and "Slaves" serve as a powerful example of the emergence of a new hybrid genre that blurs the lines between digital literature and citational literature by means of a sort of narrative flarf. Through his

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blog, Cooper invites readers to reflect on the ways in which truth —among other things— has been shaken and cannot be easily pinpointed in the era of "liquid modernity", as defined by Zygmunt Bauman (2000). Cooper's "Sluts" and "Slaves" would appear to be calling for the reconfiguration of two concepts, literature and truth, and to be an invitation for readers to reflect upon the way in which frames traditionally used to narrate human experiences have been profoundly shaken in the era of the internet and, as Gilles Lipovetsky and Jean Serroy have put it, the "global screen" (2007). Cooper's blog raises important questions about the future of online engagement and the preservation of digital literature. As readers continue to engage with the blog, it will be interesting to see how they will respond to its confrontational approach to desire and truth and how it will perdure in the ever-changing digital landscape.

Acknowledgements

Notes

1. <https://denniscooperblog.com>.

2. At the time at which the posts were retrieved for analysis (23 Feb. 2022), the hyperlink led to a website of the Hungarian Police with a profile of a missing teen. That profile is no longer available.

3. As evidenced in this example, the content of the posts is rife with sordid, violent, and borderline criminal activities. This paper, in turn, features some of those posts, which some readers may find distressing.

4. Gif novels are literary pieces comprising only gifs, which are static images or short, looping videos. Examples are *Zac's Haunted House* (2015), *Zac's Control Panel* (2015), *Zac's Freight Elevator* (2016), *Zac's Coral Reef* (2018), and *Zac's Drug Binge* (2020) released by Kiddiepunk press and available online: <http://www.kiddiepunk.com/zines.htm>.

5. It is worth noting that these posts were originally titled "Sluts" and "Slaves". However, such titles made it difficult to share the links on social media (which banned these terms). Thus, Cooper now chooses a particularly striking quote from each post to use as a title. Despite this, the posts are still referred to as "Sluts" and "Slaves" by Cooper and the readers. (personal communication)

6. Excerpts from Cooper's posts have been quoted literally and dated. However, readers' comments are paraphrased and no date is provided. This is to preserve their anonymity: while Cooper may reasonably see his writing as public, readers often address Cooper directly in their comments and may see them as a conversation with him rather than a contribution to a public forum.

7. It is relevant to notice that, for the purpose of this study, the term fantasy is not used as akin to fictionality, but rather as equivalent to a broad understanding of sexual fantasy (see García-Iglesias 2022a; García-Iglesias 2022c)

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THE ROYAL MASTER AND *EL VILLANO EN SU RINCÓN* REVISITED: MORE THAN THE MOTIF OF THE RELUCTANCE TO SEE THE KING

THE ROYAL MASTER Y *EL VILLANO EN SU RINCÓN* REVISADOS: MÁS QUE EL MOTIVO DE LA RENUNCIA A VER AL REY

LUCIANO GARCÍA GARCÍA
Universidad de Jaén
lugarcia@ujaen.es
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9013-8796>

Abstract

In 1890, in an article titled "Die Nachhamung spanischer Komödien in England unter der ersten Stuarts", the German scholar A.L. Stiefel solidly demonstrated the clear textual relationship between James Shirley's *The Opportunity* and Tirso de Molina's *El castigo del penseque*. In 2003, following an intriguing footnote in that article, which pointed to five more dramatic Spanish sources, I postulated another transtextual relationship concerning Shirley's *The Royal Master* and Lope de Vega's *El villano en su rincón*. My analysis focused on the specific motif that he named "the reluctance to see the king" in the character of the English fool Bombo and the Spanish farmer Juan Labrador. However, after a review of the two plays, it seems clear that there are more textual relationships than the one disclosed in my previous study. Relying on Gerald Genette's category of transtextuality, this article widens further the scope of the motif, explores its relationship with the topic of court versus country life, unearths architextual transferences of elements of plot and characters, proposes affinities based on the palatine affiliation of both plays and the similarities in the use of the dramatic method of matchmaking, and, finally, reveals the creative use that the Caroline playwright made of his Spanish source.

Keywords: Lope de Vega, James Shirley, *El villano en su rincón*, *The Royal Master*, dramatic genres, transtextuality, palatine subgenre.

Resumen

En 1890, en un artículo titulado "Die Nachhamung spanischer Komödien in England unter der ersten Stuarts", el erudito alemán A. L. Stiefel sólidamente demostró la clara relación textual existente entre la obra de James Shirley *The Opportunity* y *El castigo del penseque* de Tirso de Molina. En 2003, siguiendo una intrigante nota aparecida en ese artículo, que apuntaban a otras cinco fuentes españolas, yo mismo postulé la existencia de otra relación transtextual que implicaba a *The Royal Master*, de James Shirley, y la obra de Lope de Vega *El villano en su rincón*. Mi análisis se centraba en el motivo específico al que llamé "la renuencia a ver al rey", visible en el personaje del gracioso Bombo y el campesino español Juan Labrador. Sin embargo, tras una revisión de las dos obras, parece claro que existen más relaciones textuales que revelé en su día. Basándose en la categoría de transtextualidad propuesta por Gerald Genette, este artículo amplía el ámbito del motivo, explora su relación con el tópico de la vida cortesana frente a la vida de aldea, desvela transferencias transtextuales de argumento y de personajes, propone afinidades basadas en la filiación palatina de ambas obras y la similitud en el uso del método dramático del "encarte de parejas" y, finalmente, pone de manifiesto el uso creativo que el dramaturgo carolino hizo de su fuente española.

Palabras clave: Lope de Vega, James Shirley, *El villano en su rincón*, *The Royal Master*, géneros dramáticos, transtextualidad, subgénero palatino.

1. Introduction

The question of the textual presence of Spanish literature in James Shirley's dramatic works emerged as a critical issue in 1890 with the publication of the seminal article "Die Nachhamung spanischer Komödien in England unter der ersten Stuarts" by A.L. Stiefel. The publication of a second article in 1907, "Die Nachhamung spanischer Komödien in England unter der ersten Stuarts III", established a firm claim in favour of Spanish sources which has been seconded by all Shirleian scholars and critics thereafter. In the 1890 article, besides establishing a sound argument for the textual relationship between Tirso de Molina's *El castigo del penseque* and Shirley's *The Opportunity*, Stiefel added a footnote extending the influence of Spanish literature to five more plays, namely: *The Wedding* (1627), *The Young Admiral* (1633), *The Humorous Courtier* (1631), *The Example* (1634) and *The Royal Master* (1637 or 1638 ns).

Although he did not mention which Spanish sources were related to each of these plays, his footnote has some credibility, for in the 1907 article he successfully substantiated one of these cases: *The Young Admiral* which, again, he demonstrated

was based on a Spanish play, Lope de Vega's *Don Lope de Cardona*.[1] Ninety-six years later, García published an article in *The Review of English Studies* in which he made a tenable case for an instance of transtextuality in *The Royal Master*, the last of the plays mentioned by Stiefel. This piece of textual presence is a motif which he termed "the reluctance to see the king" (García 2003: 368). It is something which appears marginally (free motif) in the English play, but which is central (bound motif) to the Spanish one.[2] Basically, it deals with the unwillingness of the fool Bombo to meet the King of Naples each time the sovereign is close at hand, which resembles the stubbornness of Juan Labrador in avoiding the King of France in *El villano en su rincón*. In his article, García gives a series of textual and contextual pieces of evidence which support the hypertextual relation between the two plays.[3] However, some further textual connections which lend greater credibility to the relationship between the two plays appear to have been left out or overlooked.

Something that must be paid attention to beforehand is that James Shirley did not follow the plot of *El villano en su rincón* in *The Royal Master*, but used some of the dramatic elements of this Spanish source for his own purposes in both the amount and the functionality of his material. This is indeed one of Shirley's features as a dramatist, so much so that he has been characterized as extremely original in his plots by Gifford and Dyce (1833, 1: lxiii) and Ward (1875: 333), although Stiefel rejected this assumption alleging precisely the debt of Shirley to Spanish sources (1890: 195-196). Perhaps the key to this question lies in reassessing the personal use that Shirley makes of his Spanish sources, even in *The Opportunity* and *The Young Admiral*. In both plays, Shirley exhibits independence of treatment in deftly manipulating characters, situations, and stretches of plot to his own context and purpose.

In the case of the two aforementioned plays, the task of adapting his models to the taste and conventions of the English stage was facilitated by the fact that both plays coincided with their Spanish hypotexts in terms of genre. Thus, in the case of *Don Lope de Cardona* and *The Young Admiral* the transfer goes from palatine tragicomedy to palatine tragicomedy, and in the case of *El castigo del penseque* and *The Opportunity* the adaptation has taken place within the scope of palatine comedy.[4] The process, however, is made more difficult in the case of hypertextual transference from *El villano en su rincón*, which is a palatine comedy (*comedia palatina cómica*), to *The Royal Master*, which could be described as a palatine tragicomedy.[5] It must be underlined as a significant fact that this pair and the two previous pairs of related plays (in sum, all the cases of Spanish sources unearthed so far) present a palatine characterization, which explains much about the affinities, the possible reception and the kind of audience involved in the Spanish hypertextuality of James Shirley.

This transformation from comedy into tragicomedy deserves an analysis of the plots and subplots of each play in order to determine how Shirley selected and

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employed some dramatic elements which served his artistic purpose in what can rightly be called an architextual operation.

Two main plots can be distinguished in *El villano en su rincón*, though they are closely interweaved. The first is the stubborn and haughty refusal to see the King of France by Juan Labrador, who is finally forced by the king into recognizing the error of his ways and into accepting to live in the palace as his counsellor. The second plot revolves around the attraction that the courtly life exerts on his son Feliciano and daughter Lisarda, focusing mainly on the courtier Otón falling in love with the latter. In the end, Feliciano marries a country girl of his own class while the villainess Lisarda marries Otón, marshal of France.

In *The Royal Master* there are also two main plots. They are so closely knit that, as pointed out by Gayley (1914: 557), in essence, they are only one. The difference with *El villano en su rincón* is that one is tragicomic and the other could be envisaged as a romantic comedy.[6] The tragicomic plot deals with the intrigues of Montalto, the King of Naples' favourite. In pursuing his ambition of preferment in the court, he tries to deftly manipulate the other character so as to finally come to marry Theodosia, the king's sister. So, his first action consists in frustrating the planned marriage of the princess to the Duke of Florence. He tries to divert the affection of the duke towards the young country girl Domitilla. The second plot deals precisely with the bringing to court of this young girl and her mother Simphorosa by the king's command. The king has sojourned briefly at Simphorosa's country house during a hunting day and, impressed by Domitilla's beauty, has commanded her to come to court. His intention is to marry her off to a high personage in the court, whose name he will not reveal and who later turns out to be Montalto. The innocent girl, however, takes it to be the king himself and becomes infatuated with the prospect of becoming a queen. Meanwhile, the young courtier Octavio has fallen in love with the girl and at the proper time steps up in defence of her honour when the King of Naples feigns an episode of sexual harassment as a way of curing her infatuation.

The number and arrangement of the *dramatis personae* show, in the first place, Shirley's adaptation of comedy to tragicomedy and the transfer of dramatic functions of the characters, as can be inferred from the following table:

The Royal Master plot Modality of action	The Royal Master characters	El villano en su rincón (Comic modality)
Tragicomedy + romantic comedy	KING OF NAPLES	EL REY DE FRANCIA
Tragicomedy	DUKE OF FLORENCE	(THE SPANISH KING)[7]

The Royal Master plot Modality of action	The Royal Master characters	El villano en su rincón (Comic modality)
Tragicomedy	MONTALTO, the king's favourite	—
Tragicomedy	RIVIERO, a nobleman banished from the court, but who returns in disguise as the duke's secretary, under the name of PHILOBERTO	—
Tragicomedy + romantic comedy	OCTAVIO, a young courtier, son of RIVIERO	OTÓN, marshal of France.
Tragicomedy	GUIDO, ALOISIO, MONTALTO, ALEXIO	—
Romantic comedy	BOMBO	JUAN LABRADOR
Tragicomedy + romantic comedy	THEODOSIA, the king's sister	LA INFANTA
Romantic comedy	SIMPHOROSA, a noble widow	JUAN LABRADOR
Romantic comedy	DOMITILLA, her daughter	LISARDA FELICIANO

Table 1. Genre modality transference in *El villano en su rincón* and *The Royal Master*

As can be seen in Table 1, only the functions of *El villano en su rincón,* which were instrumental for constructing his play have been used by Shirley. He has not removed the character of Juan Labrador altogether, but has downgraded him from being the main protagonist and distributed the original character's thematic significance between Bombo, who retains the motif of the reluctance to see the king, and Simphorosa, who embodies the theme of the dispraise of a courtly life.[8]

The greatest portion of the play is taken up by the tragicomic component, i.e., the wicked plot of Montalto, his failure, and his final demise. Closely connected to this is the romantic plot: Domitilla's infatuation with the king. Shirley's option for tragicomedy and romantic comedy has precluded a broad use of Lope de Vega's main comic plot concerning Juan Labrador and his stubborn attempt to avoid the king. Due to its comic nature, it was of little use to either the tragicomic plot or to the romantic plot of the young girl's infatuation. We can arguably say that the transference from one genre to another implied an operation of demotion, at Shirley's creative convenience, of the main plot of *El villano en su rincón* from a central to a liminal position, where it was useful in the form of the comic interventions of Bombo, as García (2003) has discovered. However, the figure of Juan Labrador and the motif which accompanies him, being the reluctance to see the king, is not exhausted in Bombo.Part of the significance of Juan Labrador is

infused in the character of Simphorosa, as she herself shows reluctance to receive the king and wishes to leave the court as soon as possible (I.ii.72-80, 232-233, IV.i.14). Indeed, the figure of Simphorosa is instrumental in connecting the aforesaid motif with the theme of the dispraise of a courtly life. This theme, which is openly comic in Lope de Vega, is adapted in *The Royal Master* in a more serious way, as befits a tragicomedy. It acquires graver undertones since it is connected with Montalto's machinations and forms part of the general message of the play: the perils of the court whose inhabitants are exposed to pretty but delusive language, intrigues, and deception. James Shirley, as is consistent with the tragicomic nature of his play, deals seriously with this issue. Lope de Vega, on the contrary, while still dealing with it (see, for instance, the declaration of Juan Labrador in I.283-301) and the mischievous mockery by the villains of noblemen and on courtly manners in III.2017-2150), gives it a comical turn from which he extracts the moral of the story: the king is the source of all nobility and his presence should be desired and encouraged by his subjects.

The plots of the wooing of Lisarda by Otón and the emerging love between Octavio and Domitilla constitute another instance of architextual transference. In Lope de Vega's play, this plot strand is prepared from the beginning (indeed, the play starts with Otón wooing Lisarda), going from being in the background throughout the main plot of the vicissitudes of the king and Juan Labrador (with the growing jealousy of Otón for the king) to being resolved in the finale with the dispelling of Otón's jealousy and his being married off to Lisarda by the king. This plot is transferred to Shirley's play as a strand of the tragicomic plot of Montalto's machinations inasmuch as Octavio is an active participant there and Domitilla is the involuntary instrument of Montalto. It is also part of the romantic plot element of the young girl's royal infatuation, for it provides a happy solution to an embarrassing situation. Thus, the love relationship between Octavio and Domitilla is inauspiciously presented at their first encounter in I.ii.165-218, disappears during act II, re-emerges briefly during the unsuccessful wooing of Domitilla by Octavio and immediately afterwards by the duke in III.ii.176-236, and finally concludes happily in the episode of the feigned sexual advances by the king (V.ii.202-264), the bold defence of the girl's honour by Octavio (V.ii.264-284), and the 'punishment' by marriage that the king imposes on them (V.ii.285-307).

Returning to the topic of the central position of the king in both plays, it is worthwhile to consider that they have in common their avowed publicization of the monarchy. Both the French and the Neapolitan monarchs are represented as models of noble and appropriate conduct, albeit both participate in innocent sexual involvements with the young girls: the King of France by committing the peccadillo of lightly flirting with Lisarda and, in quick succession, with Constanza and Belisa

(*Villano*, II.1891-1964); the King of Naples by inadvertently awakening Domitilla's infatuation and by 'curing' her through a simulated unwelcome sexual advance (*Royal Master*, V.211-290). Apart from these shows of harmless frailty, the two kings are represented as the centre from which all nobility radiates and is communicated to their subjects. No doubt this was one of the doctrinal points present in the play by Lope de Vega which most likely caught the interest of Shirley, especially when, as a court champion (Young 2003: 192), Shirley was obliged to uphold the principle of the monarch's right to rule in the hazardous contexts of Charles I's Personal Rule. *The Royal Master* is the first of five Irish dramas which he wrote for the Dublin theatre at Werburgh Street under the protection of the Lord Deputy of Ireland, Thomas Wentworth, and the unofficial Master of the Revels for Dublin, John Ogilby. It was dedicated to George Fitzgerald, the Earl of Kildare, one of the richest landowners in Ireland. It is clear that the Royalist convictions of Shirley were in play. Thomas Wentworth, who saw himself as a viceroy of Ireland (Williams 2010: 25, 27, 55, 61-62, 210, 217) and John Ogilby, probably Shirley's close friend (Williams 2010: 19), had the self-appointed mission of 'civilising' the Irish population, which was one of the causes for the construction of the theatre and, of course, part and parcel of their 'civilising' task was to promulgate ideas about kingship (Williams 2010: 14, 28). It also seems most likely that the play had been composed before Shirley moved to Ireland and it was originally meant for and addressed to a London audience concerned with the royalist thesis of the play (Young 2003: 323-325; Williams 2010: 135-138). In this respect, it is very interesting to note that starting in 1634-1635, a French acting troupe had been operating in London for approximately ten months under the patronage of the Queen Henrietta Maria. This is two years before Shirley travelled for his long sojourn in Ireland. Apparently, there was resentment among the native London players (Shirley included) for the treatment of favour dispensed upon this troupe (Britland 2008: 66-72) and this may have been an inducement for Shirley to decide to leave England (Williams 2010: 39-42). But no doubt there must have been connections, attendance and exchanges between actors and playwrights of both nations. As is well known, Shirley was close to Queen Henrietta Maria and conversant in French (Bas 1973: 276-279; Hueber 1986: 121, note; García García 1998: 476, 502). Thus, part of his taste for the palatine subgenre and royalist affiliation might have come from these circumstances and could even have been boosted by this encounter.[9] Of course, in this specific thematic content generally coinciding with Lope de Vega, Shirley shows his independent power of creativity in working out an independent story embodying his own nuanced royalist theory of state.[10]

Dramatically both kings are the characters who 'master' all the other characters and the action, either throughout the play (*Villano*) or at the conclusion (*Royal Master)* of the play. Their control of the situation responds to slightly different

theories of kingship. In the case of Lope de Vega, it is the absolute authority of the monarch that brings the self-sufficient Juan Labrador to learn that the most desirable state is not, as he believed, that of country retirement but to live as close as possible to the royal person, the centre from which all power and nobility stems. In the case of Shirley, the title serves to ensure that, no matter the tragicomical upheavals brought about by treacherous advisors, the king finally keeps everything under control and reinstates order and justice. Thus, 'royal master' is an appropriate term to refer not only to the King of Naples in this eponymous play, but also to the King of France in *El villano en su rincón*. Indeed, the expression 'señor soberano', which appears twice (II.998 and II.1793), would be a good translation of 'royal master', and one wonders whether it might have inspired Shirley for the title of his work.

Another point of contact between the two plays lies in the plot of *El villano en su rincón* concerning the willingness of Juan Labrador's children to live in the court. This could be related to Domitilla's infatuation with the King of Naples and her illusory perception that she is about to become queen. In effect, while Lisarda, from her first appearance, shows her fondness for life at court and agrees with Feliciano in his criticism of Juan Labrador's attitude (II.425 ff.), Domitilla, from her first appearance in the play, manifests her attraction to the court (I.ii.97-160), and will increase her contentedness to be there as she becomes immersed in the life of the palace. In general, we can say that both girls have a latent desire to become ladies-in-court and that they finally achieve it, though with a slight difference in the respective denouements: whereas Lisarda marries the man she has intended to from the very beginning (the marshal Otón), Domitilla does not marry the king as she had first imagined, but instead the young and noble courtier Octavio in recognition of his brave defence of her honour. In marrying Octavio, Domitilla equals Lisarda in marrying Otón.

These female protagonists' climbing of the social ladder is played out through the dramatic resource of what García calls "encarte de parejas" (1998: 430), and which will be referred to here as the matchmaking or marriage matching method. This is a prominent resource in Spanish Golden Age comedy also observable in James Shirley's plays (García 1998: 430-436).[11] The device consists of presenting a number of male suitors versus a number of eligible ladies and playing upon the different possible combinations or matches. The situation is ultimately solved through a final reordering of the courting in which each male suitor matches his appropriate partner. Most times, the number of suitors and marriageable women squares, so that everybody ends up more or less happily matched. But other times there are more male suitors than available female partners and one or two of the males remain single, usually as a kind of punishment due to some fault or deficiency

of character (Serralta 1988: 88-89; Zugasti 2013: 12-16). There are even cases in both Spanish and English comedies in which two males end up partnerless and so they marry one another for fun. Lope de Vega excelled in the matchmaking method, up to the point that his immense productivity to a great extent resides in his ability to permute the different possible matches. Tirso de Molina did the same and, tellingly enough, his *Castigo del penseque* relies heavily on this resource. As could be imagined, Shirley's hypertext, *The Opportunity*, fully exploits this Tirsian matchmaking. But in no way does Shirley limit the use of this convention to this hypertext, for he resorts to marriage matching in no less than twenty plays.[12]

The uncertainty remains whether, on account of Shirley's extensive use of the resource in other works, this might be a case of parallel conventions rather than a case of architextuality. My contention is, however, that we are indeed dealing with the latter case. If this is so, it would exemplify the acquisition of a generic trait proper to the Spanish tradition by Shirley, which he was subsequently prone to using extensively.[13]

In *El villano en su rincón*, the marriage matching schema is rather simple and unproblematic since it only contains three pairs which are straightforwardly designed to marry:[14]
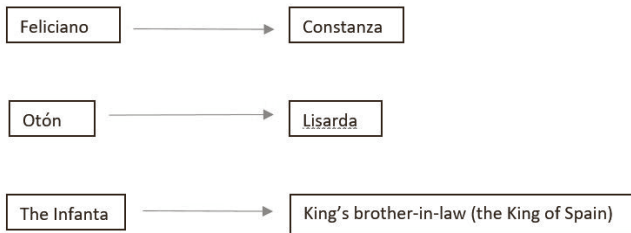
Figure 1

However, the king's suspicious gallantry towards Lisarda in III.2720-2775, which provokes the jealousy of Otón, might be represented as the potential concurrence of a second suitor in the competition to marry Lisarda. It could be represented schematically:

Figure 2

The same happens in *The Royal Master*, though here the situation is more complex due to the tragicomic action that, most likely, drew Shirley to convey a more prominent role in Theodosia, the king's sister:
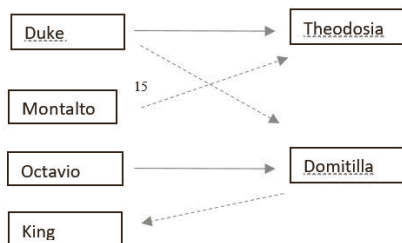
Figure 3

At this point it is necessary to underline that the plot sequence which concerns the appearance of the Infanta, i.e., the king's sister, in acts I and III of *El villano en su rincón* is rather incidental. She accompanies him on his visit to Juan Labrador's village in Act I (679-750, 846-879); makes remarks supporting or nuancing the king's words, is absent during the whole of Act II and, finally, re-appears in Act III to enhance the royal magnificence which the king has designed to impress the villagers (III.2873 s.d. - 2978). Before this final role, however, she is presented shortly before departing abroad to marry the king's brother-in-law (*mi cuñado*), seemingly the king of Spain (III.2486-2528). This marriage, significantly, has been arranged by the king, as also happens with Theodosia in *The Royal Master*. The duke and Theodosia's relationship mirrors the marriage matching of the Infanta and the king's brother-in-law. Again, the tragicomic nature of the play led to a more complex treatment by Shirley, since the completely unfunctional passage in *El villano en su rincón* is turned into a pivotal element which is employed in both the tragic and in the comic actions.[15]

Finally, the parallel element concerning the marriage matching that has been hinted at before deserves a more detailed analysis. In III.2720-2775 of *El villano en su rincón*, the king seems to be courting Lisarda to the jealousy of Otón, who thinks that his master might have brought her and her family to the palace with a view to philandering with her (III.2550-2626, 2732-2741). Otón has good reasons to mistrust the king, for, during his incognito stay at Juan Labrador's house, he had already been presented as something of a wanton character in his comic close succession of unsuccessful bedtime flirtations with Lisarda, Constanza, and Belisa (II.1891-1965).[16] Besides, the Infanta had acknowledged that he had been much taken with Lisarda the first time they met her: "KING. Gods, how her

carriage is gorgeous!/ INFANTA. I'm afraid you can't keep your eyes off her (I.874-875, my translation).[17]

The King of France's apparent courting of Lisarda in III.2720-2775 in *El villano en su rincón* evidently parallels the King of Naples's feigned indecorous proposition to Domitilla in V.ii.203-284 of *The Royal Master*. After previous accord with the latter's mother, the King of Naples feigns to ask the daughter to be his mistress as a cure for her infatuation. The dramatically functional outcome is that it provokes Octavio to step up in defence of the young girl's honour (V.ii.267-276), paralleling the way in which in *El villano en su rincón* Otón, stung by jealousy, tries to divert the supposed courting of the king by reminding him of his supper (III.2749-2775) and the king's amusing retorts. However, the kings in both plays are above the contingencies of mere wilful individual desires: "Never be afraid of power/ where power is wise" (V.ii.2762-2763, my translation),[18] says the king of France. In a parallel way, "You have been a royal master" is heard from the lips of Montalto when acknowledging the justice of the sentence that condemns him to death (V.ii.193). In this the Machiavellian courtier recognizes the king's impartial judgement going beyond personal passions or whims just after the king had uttered "I must not, dare not pardon; 'twere a sin/ In me, of violence to Heaven and justice" (V.ii.191-192). The common message in both plays seems to be that the two kings are the embodiment of justice and nobility and all their endeavours have been for the good of their subjects, renouncing their own selfish passions. Indeed, no matter what they might appear to be (either out of the harmless flirting of the King of France in *El villano en su rincón* or the feigned sexual insinuation of the King of Naples in *The Royal Master*), they are royal masters in the sense that they are also able to master themselves. That is why, as part of their final providential action, they become the true matchmakers of their respective plays in accordance with current historical practice, which gave them control over the marriage of courtiers:

> KING. Clear the table and let my sister
> Tell to which of all our vassals
> She wants to marry off Lisarda.
>
> INFANTA. This, my Lord, let them say,
> Since both her dowry and beauty
> and your favour are such a prize.
>
> OTÓN. Before anybody speaks,
> I sue to be her husband.
>
> KING. Otón, I would have sworn it
> Since first you felt jealous.
> Ana before your depart from here,

You and I will be together
witnesses of this glad wedding. (*El villano,* III.292-264, my translation)[19]

KING**.** You owe much to
His confidence; nor is there any punishment
Beyond your love and liking of his boldness.
You two should make a marriage with your follies.
OCTAVIO. Let Domitilla make Octavio
So blest!

DOMITILLA**.** My lord, you now deserve I should
Be yours, whom, with the hazard of the king's
Anger and your own life you have defended. (*Royal Master*, V.ii.285-293)

Additionally, as can be observed in the above excerpt, in the case of *The Royal Master* the king happily resolves to 'punish' the boldness of Octavio for defending Domitilla against his own sexual advances. This penalty of marriage is undoubtedly a mock punishment which ultimately is a reward.[20]

The aim has been for this comparative analysis of *El villano en su rincon* and *The Royal Master* to show to the reader that the hypertextual relationship between the two plays is greater than has been thought thus far, since it is not restricted to the figure of Bombo, but includes more complex and subtle aspects that impinge on the domain of long stretches of plot, genre transformation, and Shirley's dramatic method.

Fifty years ago, George Bas, discussing the Spanish connection of *The Royal Master*, commented:

A.L. Stiefel having simply asserted that Shirley borrows his subject from a Spanish work, it is unclear whether this was a general source or a model for only a portion of the action (131). We regret this lack of precision all the more since we would like to know whether the ambiguous genre of the whole comes from the fact that it was inspired by a "comedia", or if it resulted from an intimate fusion of two distinct ingredients, the machinations of Montalto and the chimeras of Domitilla. (1973:156, my translation)[21]

This article may well be an answer to the questions posited by Bas, at least as long as no new Spanish hypotexts are unearthed. In *The Royal Master*, Shirley shows his artistic power in his skill to closely fuse several different ingredients taken from one Spanish play (the reluctance to see the king, the dispraise of a courtly life, his royalist vindication of the personal rule of the king) with concurrent elements from the English tradition. In this way, he creates an original play integrating and interpreting some elements learnt from a foreign play. Part of his originality consists in the transference between subgenres, from Spanish comedy to English tragicomedy and romantic comedy, and the apt distribution of the imported

material between the tragic and the comic dimensions. Moreover, all his artistic manipulations take place within the palatine subgenre, which throws light on Bas's question concerning whether Shirley found inspiration in a *comedia*. What can be elucidated here is that the source of some of his textual components was a Spanish palatine comedy (or, as Zugasti calls it, a *comedia palatina cómica*). Further considerations regarding the plays of James Shirley reveal that the two assured sources of inspiration presented by Stiefel (*El castigo del penseque* and *Don Lope de Cardona*) are a palatine comedy and a palatine tragicomedy (*comedia palatina seria*), respectively. What is more, *The Humorous Courtier*, another of the six Shirleian plays alleged by Stiefel to be related to Spanish hypotexts, belongs to the subgenre of the palatine (romantic) comedy. The Spanish subgenre constitutes more than half of the total of the suspected Spanish hypotexts.[22] This says much about the importance of the palatine modality as a popular exportable European subgenre. It is within this context in vogue at the time in Spain, France, and England, that we must envisage not only *The Royal Master*, but many of Shirley's romantic comedies and tragicomedies.[23] The present analysis of the textual relationships between *El villano en su rincón* and *The Royal Master* will additionally show that Shirley, when confronted with Spanish dramatic texts, operated both locally and generally, at the level of motif and at the level of genre transference, always preserving his own artistic integrity.

Notes

1. Indeed Stiefel went as far as saying that around half of the total Shirleian production points to Spanish sources (1890: 196). Bas, although recognizing that not even four of the aforementioned list of Shirley's plays had been substantiated as having connections with Spanish models, gave credit to Stiefel's assertion (1973: 114).

2. For free and bound motifs, see Tomashevski (1965: 68-70).

3. I will use here the theoretical framework provided by Gérard Genette for the categorization of textual relationships (1982: 8-14). He distinguishes five main classes of textual relationships to replace the general term intertextuality (which he calls transtextuality): intertextuality, paratextuality, metatextuality, architextuality, and hypertextuality. Here only

two of these five categories are pertinent: hypertextuality and architextuality. The former consists of any relationship uniting a text B (hypertext) to an earlier text A (hypotext), "upon which it is grafted" neither through commentary nor explication nor as a literal ("eidetic") reproduction (Genette 1982: 11-12); the latter covers the area of the taxonomic relationship that literary works maintain with the different abstract categories commonly accepted as literary, such as genres and subgenres (Genette 1982: 11).

4. The question of the palatine subgenre deserves an explanation here. In Spanish criticism the term *comedia palatina* acquired currency since the early publication of Weber de Kurlat (1975). Numerous studies, both devoted to the subgenre and to

individual playwrights, have followed, delineating a repertoire of characteristics and a corpus of "palatine plays" (see Oleza 1997; Yoon 2002; Zugasti 2003, 2013, 2015; Rodríguez García 2015; Zugasti and Zubieta 2015; Gutiérrez Gil 2021). On the English side, this alleged subgenre is more problematic. The name seldom appears in the many studies on tragicomedy and romantic comedy. García García (1999) seems to be the only scholar who has noted that a number of English and French tragicomedies fit well within the palatine domain and constitute together with their Spanish counterparts a true pan-European set of palatine tragicomedies. He even proposes an incipient catalogue (1999: 134-138). More recently, Zugasti (2003 and 2015) has proposed the name of *comedia palatina seria* (which I have adopted here) for Spanish palatine tragicomedy while reserving the name of *comedia palatina cómica* to term the kind of Spanish palatine comedy which would assuredly match a subset of Fletcherian romantic comedies as practiced by Beaumont and Fletcher, Massinger, Shirley, etc. Accomplished instances of palatine tragicomedy, to mention just a few English and Spanish examples, would be *King and No King* (Beaumont and Fletcher), *The Great Duke of Florence* (Massinger), *The Doubtful Heir* (Shirley), *La ocasión perdida* (Lope de Vega), *Amar por razón de estado* (Tirso de Molina) and *Cuánto se estima el honor* (Guillén de Castro). As to instances of palatine comedy, we can cite *The Woman Hater* (Beaumont and Fletcher), *The Gentleman Usher* (George Chapman), *The Humorous Courtier* (Shirley), *El perro del hortelano* (Lope de Vega), *El vergonzoso en palacio* (Tirso de Molina) and *Nadie fie su secreto* (Calderón de la Barca).

5. *El villano en su rincón* is unanimously acknowledged as a comedy. *The Royal Master* bears no description regarding its genre in the two 1638 simultaneous editions (Dublin and London). Editors and critics have not always shown accord as to the dramatic genre of this work. In passing Gifford and Dyce (1833, 4: 102), Gayley (1914: 561), and Ward (1914: 556) call it a comedy. Nason (1915: 292, 303) calls it a romantic comedy, whereas Forsythe (1914: xiii) and the majority of modern critics assign to it the label of

tragicomedy: Herrick (1955: 300), Bas (1973: 876, although with qualifications on 155-156), Lucow (1981: 108 and 149), and Williams (2010: 153, 251).

6. The nature of this second plot is, no doubt, what has made several critics (see the previous note) incline to label the play as a romantic comedy or even simply as a comedy. As Young has noticed, "the play is yet another attempt by Shirley to craft a tale of court intrigue and romance, a formula that he used in the past to cover his political and social commentaries" (2003: 327).

7. The Spanish king is not part of the *dramatis personae*. He is indirectly alluded to ("mi cuñado") as the impending husband of the infanta in III: 184-186, ll. 2486-2529.

8. This is the English counterpart to the well-known Spanish theme of *menosprecio de corte y alabanza de aldea*. The theme, which has its roots in classical literature, was first dealt with by Baldassare Castiglione in his highly influential *Il Cortegiano* (1528) and so became current in European Renaissance literature as part of the anti-court satire. In Spain, Fray Antonio de Guevara, a widely read author in Europe and especially popular and influential in Tudor England, devoted a book to this theme under the title of *Menosprecio de corte y alabanza de aldea* (1539). This book was translated by Sir Francis Bryan in 1548 under the title of *Dispraise of the Life of a Courtier and a Commendation of the Life of the Labouring Man* and by Henry Vaughan in 1651 as *The Praise and Happiness of the Country Life*. Although the theme is more frequently invoked by Spanish literary critics in its Spanish coinage, I have used the present English wording as taken from Sir Francis Bryan.

9. A Spanish company led by someone called Juan Navarro (possibly Juan Navarro Oliver) was operating at the same time and place as the French company (Ward 1875: 418-419, note; Hume 1905: 284, 279; Bentley 1968: 94; Britland 2008: 72; and Williams 2010: 39). What kind of Spanish plays were performed before the King and Queen? Considering the royal nature of their hosts it is not unlikely that they had resorted to palatine plays (and, why not?, to *El villano en su*

rincón). If the comedy was performed in Spanish, and we must remember that Shirley shows himself familiar with Spanish language and culture (García García 1998), the most apparent traits to be grasped by a non-native Spanish audience were those partial ones that Shirley used in *The Royal Master*: the reluctance of Juan Labrador to see the king, the general mechanism of marriage matching and the centrality of the radiant figure of the king.

10. For Shirley's connection with the court and his royalist affiliation and theory of state, see Bas (1973: 305-338), Morillo (1961), Lucow (1981: 18-26, 66), Burner (1988), Clark (1992), Williams (2010: 144-171, 210-211), and Young (2003: 192-195 and 325-329).

11. While marriage and marriage closure has received a good deal of attention in Elizabethan scholarship, there are no studies on the pattern of actions conducive to the final marriage or marriages as viewed from the perspective of the "encarte de parejas". Future research on this area would be extremely productive.

12. These plays are: *The Wedding*, *The Witty Fair One*, *The Grateful Servant*, *The Humorous Courtier*, *Love in a Maze*, *Hyde Park*, *A Contention for Honour and Riches*, *The Ball*, *The Example*, *The Opportunity*, *The Coronation*, *The Duke's Mistress*, *The Constant Maid*, *The Imposture*, *The Sisters*, *The Court Secret*, and *Honoria and Mammon*. In *Love Tricks* and *The Brothers* we witness the comic marriage of two men, something that can be seen in the Spanish *comedia*, too, as in Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz's *Los empeños de una casa*, Andrés de Claramonte's *De lo vivo a lo pintado*, Lope de Vega's *Lo que pasa en una tarde*, etc.

13. This fact strengthens my appeal for further research on the issue of the match-making resource in Early Modern English comedy.

14. The same type of schema as in Zugasti (2013) is used here.

15. The scene announcing the Infanta's marriage (III.2486-2528) is extraneous to the main matter of the comedy, as pointed out by Bataillon (1949: 10-11). It is indeed an incidental celebratory allusion to the double marriage of 1612, between the Spanish Anne of Austria and the French King Louis XIII, on the one side, and Elisabeth of France and the Spanish King Philip IV (Bataillon 1949: 8-12; Marín 1987: note on page 185).

16. It is most likely that Otón had been witness to this episode of dalliance, since immediately after the king has been turned down and teased by the three girls, he discovers his marshal hidden behind a curtain as the latter's way to escape his detection by the villagers after his thwarted assignation with Lisarda.

17. *"REY. El talle es, por Dios, gallardo. INFANTA. Que os lleva los ojos temo".* We can appreciate here and in the whole scene (I.840-879) the Infanta's subtle misgivings about Lisarda, which is mirrored much more patently in the rivalry between Theodosia and Domitilla as seen in IV.i169-221. In the end both women in each play make friends with each other (*El villano* III.2540-2549; *Royal Master*, IV.i.200-221 and V.i.1-4).

18. *"Never be afraid of power/ where power is wise".*

19. "*REY. Quitad la mesa, y mi hermana/ diga a cuál vasallo nuestro/ le quiere dar a Lisarda./ INFANTA. Eso, señor, digan ellos,/ pues el dote y la hermosura/ y tu gracia es tanto premio./ OTÓN. Antes que ninguno hable,/ a ser su esposo me ofrezco./ REY. Otón, juráralo yo,/ desde los pasados celos./ Ana, primero que os vais,/ deste alegre casamiento/ seremos los dos padrinos.*"

20. The reward by marriage under the cloak of a punishment sometimes appears both in the Golden Age comedies of Spain and in Jacobine-Caroline comedies. More frequently, it is a real although comic punishment, typically involving the binding of one character to a socially inferior partner as part of the mechanism of poetic justice. There are examples in the Spanish *comedia* (Salas Barbadillo's *Galán, tramposo y pobre*) and in Shirley's works (*Love in a Maze*, *The Brothers*, *The Witty Fair One*, *The Imposture*).

21. *"A.L. Stiefel ayant simplement affirmé que Shirley emprunts son sujet à une oeuvre espagnole, on ne sait si ce fut là une source globale ou un modèle pour une portion seulement de l'action (131). On regrette*

d'autant plus cette absence de précision que l'on aimerait savoir si le genre ambigu de l'ensemble vient de ce qu'il fut inspiré par une "comedia", ou s'il résulta d'une fusion intime de deux ingredients distincts, les machinations de Montalto et les chimère de Domitilla".

22. As to *The Ball* and *The Example*, both can be defined as comedy of London life/comedy of manners. If there are any Spanish hypotexts preceding them, they must probably be cloak and sword comedies from which Shirley has borrowed some episodes redolent of Spanish themes and conventions.

23. Despite an absolute dearth of studies on the European palatine genre in the Early Modern Period, in Spain this scarcity has been somewhat remedied from 1975 onwards (see footnote 4). As regards studies of tragicomedy and comedy in England, France and Italy from a palatine approach, only partial references are to be found scattered in the works of Herrick (1955), Doran (1961), Ristine (1963), Lancaster (1966), Guichemerre (1981), Hirst (1984), and Cohen (1987).

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JURASSIC WORLD: FALLEN KINGDOM AS A 21ST-CENTURY GOTHIC TALE: AN ANTISPECIESIST REVISION OF MONSTROSITY

JURASSIC WORLD: FALLEN KINGDOM COMO FICCIÓN GÓTICA DEL SIGLO XXI: UNA REVISIÓN ANTIESPECISTA DE LA MONSTRUOSIDAD

XIANA VÁZQUEZ BOUZÓ
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona
Xiana.Vazquez@autonoma.cat
<https://orcid.org/0009-0008-2664-1005>

Abstract

This paper considers Juan Antonio Bayona's 2018 film *Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom* as a Gothic film which disrupts the archetypal conventions of monster films, especially in relation to the antispeciesist conception of monsters —in this case, the genetically-engineered dinosaurs which feature in the *Jurassic Park* and *Jurassic World* sagas. Through an analysis of its cinematography, character construction, scenarios and plot development in the light of Gothic Studies, I will argue that this film is not just Gothic in appearance, but also in the sense that it breaks with contemporary anthropocentric conventions of normalcy, unity and species boundaries, and that it confirms the trend in filmic narratives that takes into account the monsters' perspectives in order to challenge human exceptionalism.

Keywords: *Jurassic World*, *Jurassic Park*, Gothic film, monster films, antispeciesism.

Resumen

Este artículo propone la película de Juan Antonio Bayona *Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom* (2018) como un film gótico que altera las convenciones arquetípicas del cine de monstruos, especialmente en lo referido a la consideración antiespecista de estas criaturas —en este caso, los dinosaurios creados mediante ingeniería genética

que protagonizan las sagas de *Jurassic Park* y *Jurassic World*. A través del análisis de su cinematografía, la construcción de los personajes y escenarios, y el desarrollo de la trama a través de los Gothic Studies, argumentaré que esta película no se encuadra dentro del género solamente por su aspecto formal, sino también en el sentido de que rompe con las convenciones antropocéntricas contemporáneas alrededor de la normatividad, unidad y los límites entre especies. Asimismo, confirma la tendencia de las narrativas fílmicas que tienen en consideración la perspectiva de los monstruos con el fin de impugnar la idea del excepcionalismo humano.

Palabras clave: *Jurassic World*, *Jurassic Park*, cine gótico, cine de monstruos, antiespecismo.

1. Introduction

The attempt to define the Gothic both in its literary and filmic forms is a complex one, as the large amount of scholarship devoted to setting the contours of the genre testify. What most Gothic studies agree on, though, is its everlasting shifts and adaptations to the socio-historical context. Besides some conceptual fuzziness derived from the application of the term to different cultural realms (jumbling architecture, literature and fashion, for instance), the Gothic points to a "particularly stylised approach to depicting location, desire and action in literature and film" (Hand and McRoy 2020: 1). The evocation of dilapidated castles, gloomy ruins or eerie mansions can be traced back, on the one hand, to architectural design during the High and Late Middle Ages and, on the other hand, to the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Gothic novels set in such locations, such as Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) or Henry James's *The Turn of the Screw* (1898).

At a later stage, the 20th century saw the Gothic moving beyond literature to a wider range of modes, including film, television shows, plays and musicals, computer games and music videos, as well as academic studies, with a burst of scholarly volumes devoted to this genre between the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st (*The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*, for instance, was published in 2002). These various written or audio-visual forms share the conventions of Gothic fiction, including the archaic and decaying locations, the secretiveness of unresolved mysteries from the past, the tug-of-war between conservative and revolutionary forces —as in the case of the patriarchy and subversive female characters of the Female Gothic— or the blurring of opposing concepts such as life/death, natural/unnatural (or supernatural), ancient/modern, and conscious/unconscious.

For its part, the cinematic format of the Gothic has some particularities that should also be stated, especially due to the usual confusion between this genre and that of horror films. Besides narrative elements, the formal aspects of a filmic text, for example cinematography or camera angles, take a particular shape in the Gothic film. The use of shadows, settings and production design might seem straightforwardly-Gothic in flagship films of the genre such as *Dracula* (Browning 1931), *Frankenstein* (Whale 1931) or *The Haunting* (Wise 1963), but, as Xavier Aldana-Reyes argues in *Gothic Cinema* (2020), its genre specificities remain rather unclear and often unaddressed, especially when it comes to contrasting it with horror.[1]

Although the distinct approaches to the Gothic take different perspectives, a common point is often established around the subversive and transformational nature of the genre, with conflicts that challenge the social order. These conflicts are often brought about by one of the Gothic's key figures: the monster. Following scholars such as Jack Halberstam (1995), Jeffrey Jerome Cohen (1996) or Margrit Shildrick (2002), this article considers monsters as representations of collective anxieties, as well as barometers of the embracement or rejection of social change. Contemporary film scholarship on monsters has analysed the intricacies of their representation in popular culture, ranging from vampires, zombies or ghosts to nonhuman animals. This article intends to contribute to this scholarship on contemporary monsters as yardsticks of cultural and socio-political discourses that soak Gothic fiction. In particular, it is concerned with nonhuman animal monsters, specifically through a case study of Juan Antonio Bayona's 2018 film *Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom* (henceforth: *JWFK*).

This article will analyse how the cinematic features of the Gothic film apply to *JWFK* in its cinematography, characters —especially Maisie as the Gothic heroine, but also of Blue as a nonhuman Gothic heroine counterpart— scenarios and locations, as well as the breaking of traditional boundaries. This last part will be connected to the representation of monsters as sentient beings whose drives should be taken into account, as opposed to their previous portrayal as voiceless evil creatures to be ruthlessly killed. These typical 20th-century animal horror cinema representations —in films such as *The Birds* (Hitchcock 1963), *Jaws* (Spielberg 1975), *Frogs* (McCowan 1972) or *Grizzly* (Girdler 1976)— portrayed the animal "as a (monstrous) Other to the Western subject" (Gregersdotter et al. 2015: 10). However, contemporary examples like *JWFK* incorporate post-anthropocentric perspectives which are aware of the speciesism embedded in previous representations of filmic animals (and their often fateful end), providing more complex depictions of monsters.[2]

In keeping with this, I will consider the 'Gothicness' of this film through the concept of the Gothic as a "type of artistic expression that continues to perform a

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cultural function, a specifically subversive or radical one" (Aldana Reyes 2020: 15). Aldana Reyes's opinion about contemporary Gothic is also relevant for my analysis when he says that "since the 1980s, the Gothic has been opened up and mainstreamed. […] [I]ts images and tropes have more actively blossomed through the figure of the sympathetic monster and in other genres like animated films for children and the superhero action adventure" (2020: 27). My argument is not that *JWFK* constitutes a fully-Gothic film, since it still belongs to the science fiction genre of its predecessors and the whole saga it belongs to.[3] However, if we consider the Gothic as a mode (rather than a stable genre) that extends across other genres —or an open genre that is able to intermingle with others— characterised by a particular kind of aesthetics and use of cinematic techniques as well as posing a challenge to conservative traditions, it is my intention to defend *JWFK* as belonging to the contemporary Gothic tradition. More specifically, the Ecogothic subgenre will be considered, following the idea that the Gothic is being reconfigured in this film to contest anthropocentric and speciesist views about nonhuman animals.[4]

2. Contextualisation of the Case Study

Bayona's film is the second release in the *Jurassic World* trilogy that started with Colin Trevorrow's *Jurassic World* (2015) and closed with Trevorrow's *Jurassic World: Dominion* (2022). This saga is the continuation of the original *Jurassic Park* trilogy which began in 1993 with Steven Spielberg's landmark monster film *Jurassic Park*, followed by *The Lost World* (Spielberg 1997) and *Jurassic Park III* (Johnston 2001). The original saga was based on Michael Crichton's novels *Jurassic Park* (1990) and *The Lost World* (1995), which established a distinct kind of science fiction which blended pseudo-science —audiences had to be assured for years that the science behind the park was not scientifically accurate[5]— history and contemporary technological advances at that time (bioengineering in particular).

The first *Jurassic Park* film set the context for the subsequent productions: scientists under the sponsorship of John Hammond (Richard Attenborough) discover how to bring dinosaurs back to Earth through palaeolithic DNA found in the blood of mosquitoes kept in amber for millions of years. Hammond and his team manage to genetically design dinosaur species from T-Rexes to diplodocuses and velociraptors, and they set up an amusement park on Isla Nublar, in Costa Rica. Replicating the playing-God-scientist narrative of Frankenstein, the park security systems go awry and dinosaurs escape among general havoc and a few human deaths. The second and third films also make use of the engineered dinosaurs to address human ambition, the risks of corporate greed, and the limits of anthropocentric science.

The *Jurassic World* trilogy starts when a group of investors decides to replicate the first park and, once again, things do not go as planned since, as the first film's motto stated, "life finds a way". After the disastrous events of *Jurassic World* (2015), in *JWFK* the dinosaurs which remained on the island after the park was ravaged are now being threatened by a volcanic eruption, and there is an animal-rights movement campaigning to bring them to the mainland and save their lives. When the United States Senate decides to leave the dinosaurs on the island, Claire (Bryce Dallas Howard) is commissioned by Benjamin Lockwood (James Cromwell) and his assistant Eli Mills (Rafe Spall) to go to Isla Nublar and bring the animals back. Claire and her team —Owen (Chris Pratt), Zia (Daniella Pineda) and Franklin (Justice Smith)— manage to capture some of the dinosaurs (including Blue, the main velociraptor), but the intentions of the mercenary team hired by Mills are soon revealed: the dinosaurs are not going to be taken to a sanctuary, but to Lockwood Manor, in Northern California, where they will be auctioned to millionaires and warlords. There, we are introduced to Maisie (Isabella Sermon), Lockwood's granddaughter, who is revealed to have been cloned from her deceased mother. When Claire and Owen try to stop Mills in the manor, the dinosaurs are freed, wreaking havoc around the house. Eventually, Maisie opens the gates of the house and liberates the dinosaurs into the open, allowing them to roam around urban areas, and bringing about the context of *Jurassic World: Dominion* (Trevorrow 2022), where humans and dinosaurs need to learn to coexist.

3. Cinematography: The Use of Shadows

Having defined and contextualised the aim, concepts and case study, the article now turns to a formal analysis of the selected film. In terms of cinematography, the use of shadows is one of the key characteristics of the Gothic film. This was influenced by German expressionism, the cinematic trend from the early 20th century that gathers the works of directors such as Fritz Lang, Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau, Robert Wiene, Robert Siodmak and Edgar G. Ulmer. These directors went to the US in the 1920s and 30s and exerted a big influence on Hollywood studios, including in lighting and camerawork aspects. Misha Kavka explains that German expressionism took elements from surrealistic theatrical staging, including stylistic techniques like "chiaroscuro lighting effects (that is, extreme distinction between light and dark), distorted backdrops, claustrophobic spaces, extreme camera angles, and shadows disproportionate to the objects that cast them" (2002: 215). As Kavka states, "casting shadows is one way of manipulating space, either by taking something of human dimensions and recasting it in an extended, larger-than-life form that exerts menacing control, or by using shadows to create planes

in space, so that the shadow serves as a metaphor for what lurks in another plane" (2002: 214).

Shadows, then, work in three key ways for the Gothic film. Firstly, the shadow anticipates the subject that casts it, contributing to the building of tension. Secondly, it enlarges the subject, rendering the human smaller by contrast, an effect which is also created through the use of huge spaces as scenarios where the people being chased by the menace are made to look tiny and, therefore, more vulnerable. Thirdly, the shadow is an element in between light and dark, being and not-being, real and imaginary: it has the power of turning a pile of clothes on a chair into a monster, a normal-sized animal into a dangerous beast, or a normative body into an inhuman creature. If, as Kavka puts it, the "ambiguity about the separation of existential spheres […] is fundamental to the Gothic film" (2002: 217), shadows extend beyond their use of creating a menacing chiaroscuro atmosphere to becoming a symbolic element of this ambiguity and the liminal existence that characterises the genre itself (see figures 1 and 2 for examples of these aspects in vampire films). The use of shadows in *JWFK* by director of photography Oscar Faura is radically different from that of the previous films. The first appearance of the Indoraptor, a new kind of dinosaur obtained through mixing the DNA of the Indominous Rex (from the first film, *Jurassic World*) and the velociraptors, is in the shape of a shadow (figure 3). The body of the Indoraptor is projected onto the walls of the Lockwood mansion, creating a scene that is clearly indebted to *Nosferatu*'s chiaroscuro.

Figure 1. *Nosferatu* (Murnau 1922)

Figure 2. *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (Ford Coppola 1992)

Figure 3. *JWFK* (Bayona 2018)

All in all, German expressionism was concerned with creating a nightmare atmosphere that is also a key aspect of *JWFK*, which recreates classic nightmarish tropes when the Indoraptor breaks free from its cage and approaches Maisie's bedroom. The camera follows Maisie while she locks herself in the room and then moves upwards out of the window and towards the roof of the manor, where the Indoraptor's claw chillingly grabs the top of the roof as the creature climbs the walls. A wide shot then shows the Indoraptor reign over the manor, and as the camera comes closer, it opens its jaws and roars in front of a misty moon that provides the dramatic chiaroscuro effect through which its teeth are clearly outlined against the moonlight. As Maisie tries to hide under the sheets in her bed, the Indoraptor crawls towards the window, echoing childhood nightmares of the monster lurking under (in this case on top of) the bed. The claw then appears on the window, with the monster illuminated with the cold light outside

threatening the warmly-lit safety of the home (figure 4). Next, Maisie sees the shadow of the Indoraptor projected on the wall, a signature shot in Gothic monster films (figure 5). The dinosaur manages to open the balcony window lock with its huge claw, and Maisie looks at the wide-open window, where the terrifying creature enters the room and knocks three times with its claw, echoing nightmarish home invasions. Still with a predominance of suggestiveness rather than a straightforward gruesome monstrous attack, through the use of shadows and the tulle canopy on Maisie's bed which hides part of the threatening Indoraptor, the dinosaur's claw and teeth approach Maisie in her bed (figure 6). When it is about to attack her, Owen opens the door and shoots at it, but the scene does not rely on the sole appearance of the male rescuer, since he runs out of bullets and it is Blue who saves the day. The scene is related to the construction of female heroines as described in the next section.
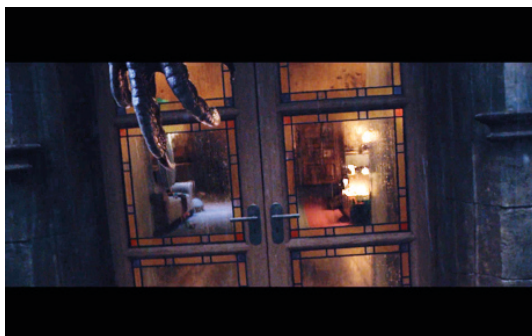
Figure 4. *JWFK* (Bayona 2018)
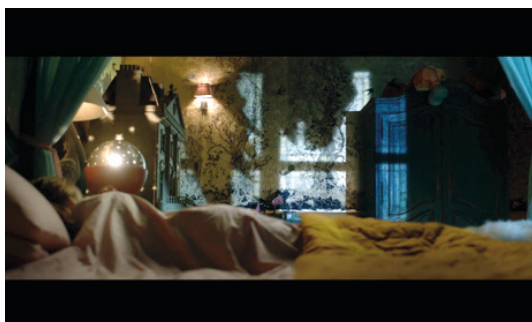
Figure 5. *JWFK* (Bayona 2018)

Figure 6. *JWFK* (Bayona 2018)

4. Characters: Gothic Heroines

Considering the second historical trend of Gothic cinema (Kavka 2002), the Female Gothic, several resemblances between *JWFK* and this subgenre can be observed. The Female Gothic trend was initiated —cinematically speaking— by Hitchcock's 1940 filmic adaptation of Daphne de Maurier's 1938 novel *Rebecca*.[6] The homonymous film contains the main characteristics of the Female Gothic: a woman is haunted by another woman, who might be a rival, a Doppelgänger or a mother, often in the shape of real or paranoia-induced ghosts. The domestic space becomes a character in itself, the location where monstrosity is projected, as will be seen in the next section. Although this trend relies a lot on film noir tropes, a key difference is that, within noir, the female rival (the femme fatale) is the antagonist of the female protagonist, whereas in the Gothic the monstrous presence and the female protagonist are conflated. This identification is shown through the use of devices like reflecting surfaces: "the female Gothic relies on mirrors and portraits to indicate that the conflation of woman and monster is a matter of psychological reflection, even identification, rather than simply of symbolism" (Kavka 2002: 220). The use of reflecting surfaces (figures 7 and 8) in *JWFK* connects the film with earlier predecessors such as *Rebecca* (Hitchcock 1940), *Cat People* (Tourneur 1942) or *The Haunting* (Wise 1963).

Figure 7. *JWFK* (Bayona 2018)

Figure 8. *JWFK* (Bayona 2018)

The scene where Maisie and the Indoraptor face each other (figure 7) has their faces superimposed, combining them. In the next, they scream opposite each other, but also side by side in the reflection (figure 8). Both scenes point to this matter of "identification, rather than simply of symbolism" between woman and monster that we understand at a deeper level after knowing that Maisie is also a clone, created from the DNA of her deceased mother. Besides, this discovery happens through the finding of an old photograph, which also constitutes a Gothic trope that reveals the hidden secrets from the past, as seen in other films such as *The Shining* (Kubrick 1980), *The Others* (Amenábar 2001) or *The Village* (Night Shyamalan 2004). Maisie thus becomes the troubled heroine of the Gothic story: she is haunted by a tragic happening in her past (her parents' death), as well as a secret also from the past (that she has been cloned).[7] Moreover, she is

identified several times throughout the film with the monsters —the dinosaurs— that ultimately haunt the house too.

The fact that the Gothic (human) heroine of the film is a child/pre-teenager is relevant in two ways. Although it might be argued that Maisie's age (she is supposed to be nine years old in the film) separates her from the classic Gothic heroines, most of these heroines are usually described as young women who have not reached legal adulthood —in fact, they are often under the supervision of a guardian. Besides, these heroines' most relevant characteristics, rather than a specific age, are innocence, inexperience, fragility and, in spite of that, bravery to face the threat and unveil the mystery. Where age is concerned, Female Gothic heroines are often in "the passage from girlhood to female maturity" (Milbank 1998: 54). Taking into account that Maisie is in her pre-teen years, she can be considered within the Female Gothic tradition due to her character features and development along with the narrative circumstances around her.

On another note, and in relation to the post-anthropocentric subtext of the film, Maisie is the rightful narrative descendant of Hammond's granddaughter Lex Murphy (although it must be noted that Lex does not fit into the Female Gothic, given the narrative features of *Jurassic Park*, and is rather an adventure-film heroine). During the car visit to the park in the first film, Lex states that she is a vegetarian. At the end of the film, she is the one who saves the day by managing to find the right link in the park's computer network to get the security system running again. Both facts have led Kenn Fisher to consider Lex as the film's heroine through her use of technology in order not to dominate animals, as Hammond does, but to save her family and friends. Fisher points out that, despite his intention to control the park and the dinosaurs through the computer system, Hammond does not ultimately manage to exert this control. Lex, however, "never uses computers to dominate the animals, and this quality ends up making her the hero for saving everyone still alive on the island […]. The next generation and the generation after that could very likely become more concerned with the rights of our co-inhabitants on this small planet" (Fisher 2014: 322). Viewers of *JWFK* do not know Maisie's eating ethics, but she also embodies the post-anthropocentric heroine when she decides, at the end of the film, to set free the dinosaurs who are trapped in the dungeons (where a leaked gas is about to asphyxiate them), arguing that "they are like me". This assertion is, on the surface, related to her also being a clone, but following the species discourses of the film (and also of the whole *Jurassic World* saga), there is a deeper meaning imbued in her statement, making reference to the ethical understanding of the dinosaurs as sentient creatures whose unnecessary suffering, like that of humans, should be avoided.

Within the adult cast, Bayona makes use of one of his preferred actresses, Geraldine Chaplin, to be the housekeeper, Iris, bringing to mind a previous haunted-house production of his, *The Orphanage* (Bayona 2007), where Chaplin played the medium Aurora. Contrasting Gothic and film noir, Kavka explains that:

> the female Gothic is set in a house where a monstrous act or occupant (usually but not always female) is projected onto the monstrosity of the house itself. On the other hand, like the film noir, the female Gothic deals with the interrelated themes of investigation, paranoia, and (usually deviant) sexuality, though in place of the film noir's setting in the malevolent city the female Gothic substitutes a domestic space made uncanny. (2002: 219)

In Maisie's case, given that she is nine, I would argue that her deviance happens in terms of motherhood/birth rather than sexuality, but Kavka's definition still stands. The domestic space is made uncanny and Maisie has to deal with an investigation (about her mother and her own birth), paranoia (she suspects that something is wrong with her from the very beginning), and deviant birth, which is considered unnatural. Despite her short presence and limited dialogue in the film, Iris anchors the narrative even more in the Female Gothic trend: she is the British housekeeper and nanny who looks after Maisie in a mysterious way, keeping the family secret away from her. Her figure echoes that of the governess in Victorian literary fiction, as well as in Female Gothic cinema, a character divided into the archetype of the heroine —as the several adaptations of Henry James's 1898 novel *The Turn of the Screw* illustrate, including *The Innocents* (Clayton 1961) or *The Others* (Amenábar 2001)— and the villain —best exemplified by the malignant Mrs. Danvers of Hitchcock's *Rebecca*. Here, Iris constitutes a character in between (neither heroine nor villain), acting as a link between Maisie and her past, recalling the spectral presence of Maisie's mother, and contributing to the construction of the Gothic aesthetics and to Maisie's unravelling of Lockwood Manor's mysteries.

When discussing the differences between horror and the Gothic, Kavka also explains that:

> what the Gothic insists on, […] is a speaking from the 'beyond' in the form of a figure that arrives from beyond the present, beyond the grave, or beyond the rational, material world. This is in effect what demarcates or delimits the Gothic on screen, for speaking from the beyond registers the paradoxical eruption of the unspeakable, or the unrepresentable, into the scene of representation. (2002: 226)

Dinosaurs in *JWFK* come, indeed, from "beyond the present" and also from the figurative grave of their extinct species. This article has already examined the Gothic heroine Maisie, but there is another Gothic female character who breaks

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yet another boundary within the genre: that of species. Blue is the velociraptor that has the most prominent role in the whole *Jurassic World* saga, and who has the closest relationship with Owen, the velociraptor trainer and animal behaviourist. Studying monster films from an antispeciesist point of view, it would be anthropocentric to believe that only a human female can embody the Gothic heroine of a post-anthropocentric film. Blue also fits the description of Gothic protagonists: she finds herself confined in a manor where she must face the male villain (Eli Mills) and his violent creature, the Indoraptor. In the end, like Maisie, she gets rid of patriarchal control and breaks free from the past state of things: an anthropocentric world that will undergo far-reaching changes when humans are forced to cohabit with dinosaurs, and which is the main setting of *Jurassic World: Dominion*.

5. Scenarios: The Gothic Manor

The house itself also fulfils the characteristics of the Gothic domestic space: Lockwood Estate is a huge, dark and gloomy old manor full of nooks, including dungeons and a secret laboratory, where the family secrets are kept (figure 9). Several scenes show the mansion at night with the moon partially covered by clouds (figure 10), which brings to mind the first appearance of houses like Manderley from *Rebecca* (figure 11).
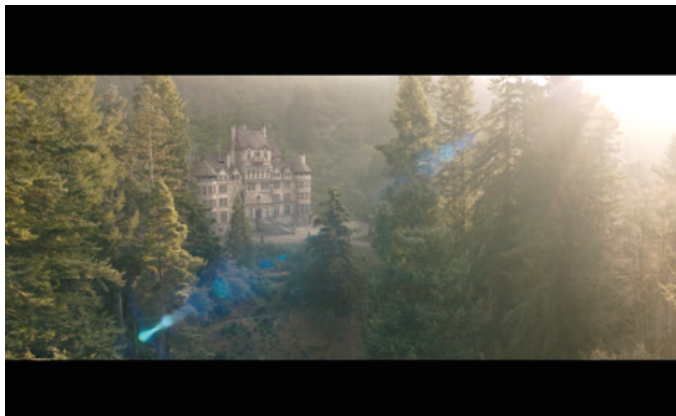
Figure 9. *JWFK* (Bayona 2018)

Figure 10. *JWFK* (Bayona 2018)

Figure 11. *Rebecca* (Hitchcock 1940)

In his analysis of the haunted house in film, Barry Curtis explains that one of the features of these houses is the flexibility of their margins and the willingness of objects not to stay in their customary place, where their shared meanings can be bestowed upon (2008: 11). Although Lockwood Estate is not truly a haunted house, in the sense that there is no curse or supernatural events inside it, the presence of resurrected dinosaurs within its walls allows the mansion to be considered within the theorisations of haunted houses through the concepts of the Freudian uncanny and what Anthony Vidler has called the "architectural uncanny" (1994: ix).[8] This is defined by Curtis as "a structure within which familiarity and extreme anxiety come together, where 'doubling' is brought to a crisis through reflections, encounters and repetition, often a place where the passage of time is troubled" (2008: 12). In this sense, as was seen with the superimposed images of

Figure 12. The Haunting (Wise 1963)

Maisie and the dinosaur in the previous section, the house and its reflections are also reminiscent of another haunted house classic, *The Haunting* (Wise 1963), based on Shirley Jackson's novel *The Haunting of Hill House* (1959). Wise's film takes us to Hill House (figure 12), where Eleanor Vance finds herself merged with the house on several occasions through the use of superimposed shots.

Returning to the consideration of Lockwood Manor as being haunted, Curtis has argued for the extension of 'haunting' to elements that are not actually 'cursed' or 'bewitched', stating that "as any attempt to communicate with the past through excavation, exegesis or hermeneutics is a form of confronting ghosts, it is not surprising that 'haunting' as a metaphor has such an extensive currency, particularly since the fictions of haunting suggest that the search for origins brings with it unexpected ramifications" (2008: 13). This search applies, once again, to the *Jurassic Park* sagas and more specifically to *JWFK* (particularly due to the unexpected ramifications that this investigation brings about, such as the suggestion that Maisie is also a clone). The uncanny structure of familiarity is at play, on the one hand, through the contact that humans have had with dinosaurs in history and palaeontology manuals, children's books and films and, on the other hand, the 'real' contact with dinosaurs that the actions of Hammond and Lockwood have provided the characters with. This allows both the audiences and the characters to have a sense of familiarity with these creatures while at the same time experiencing anxiety due to the unease brought about by the bioengineering that created them, as well as the danger that these animals pose. The next section deals with this danger, and with the way in which we can analyse the *Jurassic World* saga situations from either an anthropocentric or a post-anthropocentric viewpoint.

6. Breaking Genre Tradition: Conveying the Monster's Voice

Dina Khapaeva has developed the concept of 'Gothic Aesthetics' to refer to a body of literary and filmic texts that share two distinctive features: "murderous monsters typically take the role of first-person narrators, occupying the place previously reserved for humans. Second, the plot and setting out of those works revolve around the representation of a nightmare" (2019: 17). Khapaeva argues that Gothic Aesthetics was a key cultural factor in the formation of what she calls 'thanatopathia' (from the union of the Greek terms for 'death' and 'craving'), a kind of "death turn" that "reinvents death as entertainment and challenges our understanding of humanity's role and its place in our system of values" (2019: 17). In her view, humanity has seen its moral value shrink through the commodification of violent death as entertainment.

Besides the popularity of Halloween, the fascination with serial killers, vampires, zombies and cannibals in fiction and the appetite for death-centred fashion trends (such as the use of skull patterns, skeleton decoration, or jewellery representing anatomical parts or weapons like knives), Khapaeva points out that throughout the 1970s and until the 1990s two philosophical trends established the intellectual basis for thanatopathia. These trends are French Theory —that is, theories put forward by French poststructuralist thinkers such as Michel Foucault, Claude Lévi-Strauss and Jean Baudrillard— and Animal Rights Theory —advanced by Peter Singer and other authors who denounced anthropocentrism and speciesism. According to Khapaeva, both tendencies had in common the dismantling of the subject of Western philosophy, which, in turn, lead to an antihumanistic train of thought that ultimately disdained human life and whose best illustration within popular culture was the evolution of monsters toward more empathetic —and empathisable— creatures. She illustrates this with the difference between the vampiric characters of Stoker's Dracula and Stephenie Meyer's Edward Cullen or *The Vampire Diaries*'s vampiric brothers Damon and Stefan, and how deadly creatures who saw human beings as inferior became acclaimed characters whom audiences identified with —sometimes even more than with their human counterparts.

Besides other popular culture examples, such as the novel sagas *Twilight* (Meyer 2005) and *Harry Potter* (Rowling 1997) or the TV series *Hannibal* (Bryon Fuller 2013), Khapaeva also deals with the *Jurassic World* saga in her analysis of human-eating monsters in contemporary culture. In her view, *Jurassic World* is "the first that is profoundly saturated by Gothic Aesthetics to the point of drawing explicit parallels between its plot and the nightmare" (2019: 27). However, she acknowledges that it is *JWFK* where "not a single Gothic trope is left unexplored" (2019: 29). She continues:

> As in the classic Gothic story, it has a Gothic castle with a secret dungeon and secret corridors, meant to disorient and confuse the viewer's perceptions; in this castle lives a young maid who is threatened by a villain and a monster. Much of Bayona's movie takes place in the neo-Gothic castle during a thunderstorm. […] The classic nightmare trope of a 'monster under the bed' is used as one of the several tropes of nightmare hypnotics: Maisie flees from monstrous Indoraptor through the long corridors of the castle and hides in her bed to watch monstrous paw stretching out to her window lock, opening it and coming towards her bed to eat her. (Khapaeva 2019: 29)

Khapaeva's conclusion about the use of Gothic Aesthetics to enhance thanatopathia entails a negative and anxious concern about the dismantling of human rights. In her opinion, the evolution of monsters towards more empathetic characters that audiences love indicates a hazardous moment where humans are being treated like nonhuman animals (for instance, in narratives where many human characters end up being food for monsters). However, anthropocentrism and speciesism remain unquestioned in her analysis. Disdaining Animal Rights movements for being antihuman hints at her own speciesism being left undisputed and points to a willingness to maintain the species hierarchy untouched, with nonhuman animals below us being turned into commodities such as food, clothes or entertainment material. Animal Rights movements are often aligned with the theoretical approaches of Posthumanism —not Antihumanism— which is concerned with a critical inquiry into the capitalised Human subject that has not even always included all homo sapiens, but has rather grouped some people (such as women or racialised populations) with nonhuman animals and has thus oppressed them on the grounds of not belonging to the privileged category (Wolfe 2009; Braidotti 2013).

From an antispeciesist, post-anthropocentric point of view, *JWFK* —together with the other *Jurassic World* films— brings about a change that is, indeed, influenced by Animal Rights movements and theoretical accounts coming from poststructuralism, posthumanism or ecofeminism. It is my contention that the result of these influences on screen should be read in a positive light. In our current ecological crisis situation, and bearing in mind the numbers of nonhuman animals being mistreated, tortured and killed on a daily basis in slaughterhouses, circuses, zoological parks, aquariums or private houses, producing a film (with such large audiences) where both species —humans and dinosaurs— must learn to coexist is something that should be thought of under a necessarily post-anthropocentric and ecologically-aware perspective. This outlook acknowledges that the danger lies not in bringing humans down in the species hierarchy, but rather in not doing so. In this sense, I also argue that *JWFK* is Gothic in its way of shattering previous genre traditions (namely, the representation of monsters as evil, irrational creatures that had to be defeated and killed) and providing a critical inquiry into clear hierarchical borders (human/ nonhuman, natural/unnatural, or normal/monstrous). Moreover, it can also be

seen as Gothic in its way of looking at the past to unveil social problems of the present. As Steven Bruhm explains, "the central concerns of the classical Gothic are not that different from those of the contemporary Gothic: the dynamics of family, the limits of rationality and passion, the definition of statehood and citizenship, the cultural effects of technology" (2002: 259).

In relation to re-workings of the genre, Andrew Smith and William Hughes (2013) have proposed the term Ecogothic to explore the genre through the theories of ecocriticism. Sharae Deckard explains that new approaches to "greening" the Gothic explore how Ecogothic "represents cultural anxieties about the human relationship to the nonhuman world through uncanny apparitions of monstrous nature" which mediates "fears surrounding climate crisis and environmental damage" (2019: 174). Deckard vindicates the extension of the Gothic on the basis that "if Gothic often turns around a 'return of the repressed' that reveals buried social truths, Ecogothic turns around the uncanny manifestation of the 'environmental unconscious', particularly those forms of environmental violence that have been occulted" (2019: 174). Ecogothic can convey ecophobia, transmitting a sense of vengeful Nature that is positioned as an antagonist without any sort of post-anthropocentric analysis, but it can also be a source of a subversive critique "of the domination of nature in late capitalism, criticising dualist myths that separate notions of the human from nature rather than embracing humanity-in-nature, or summoning spectres of past ecological disasters in order to explore the complex causality of compound catastrophes" (2019: 174-175).

Bearing in mind the disruption of anthropocentrism in Bayona's film, as well as the specific addressing of Animal Rights issues, I would suggest the development of the subgenre of Vegan Gothic within Ecogothic, following the development of Vegan Studies within Critical Animal Studies, as advanced by Laura Wright (2015), in order to analyse the representation of veganism in popular culture. Vegan Gothic would thus look at works of fiction which stylistically share Gothic features (even if they also have other genres' characteristics, especially those which have been traditionally closer to the Gothic, such as science fiction, fantasy or horror) and which can be read from an antispeciesist perspective, either because they portray vegetarian characters or because they challenge anthropocentrism, speciesism, or human exceptionalism. Shelley's *Frankenstein*, which lies at the threshold of Gothic and science fiction, has had several vegan readings, such as Carol Adams's (2015), who points out that the monster does not eat other creatures but rather feeds on roots and berries. This could therefore be the starting point for such a project, which I venture to say will include more and more narratives as veganism and antispeciesism spread like feminism or postcolonialism did at their moments of expansion, influencing, among others, Gothic studies.

7. Conclusion

This article has examined how Bayona's film *JWFK* fits into the tropes of the Gothic film. In terms of location, the film unites three classical Gothic scenarios: the island, the laboratory and the manor. Thematically, the film is concerned with monstrosity and the blurring of boundaries between human and nonhuman, real and unreal. The place of the monsters (the dinosaurs) is essential within the plot as revenants from the past that bring to light the harm done by people: firstly, the scientific arrogance of bringing about the de-extinction of the dinosaurs and secondly, the ecological crisis and anthropocentrism. Besides, antispeciesist theory has shown how nonhuman animals (or rather, the construction of the Animal) have become a discursive Other against which the capitalised Human builds itself, through the animalisation of those who do not fit into the patriarchal categories of the white, the citizen, or the civilised.

As explained in the section about the characters, Maisie becomes the Gothic heroine of the film, challenging the family in its broadest sense as the whole patriarchal structure which maintains othered subjects (including nonhuman animals) oppressed by the elites (represented by Hammond, Lockwood, and the range of villains featured in the sagas). Firstly, Maisie is a clone (although we end up discovering this is not so in *Jurassic World: Dominion*, but her supposed clone nature is key in this film), which is already disruptive of the nuclear family and of the female reproductive role, since she has been cloned by her grandfather. Secondly, she stands against the hierarchy of species by releasing dinosaurs into the city, stating that they are like her: they are clones, and they are also sentient creatures. Finally, regarding the blurring of boundaries, the film has at its core the breakage of the limits between human and nonhuman, natural and unnatural, real and imaginary, and normal and monstrous. The presence of natural and supernatural environments in the Gothic often points to the futility of human intervention on the grounds of Enlightened rationality, showing that "science or reason [are] no guarantee of survival" (Hand and McRoy 2020: 2). In these narratives, as happens in *JWFK*, Gothic nature "threatens notions of cultural and corporeal integrity, displacing humanity from its perceived perch at the top of the food chain and exposing us for the frail, clever and frequently hubristic animals we are" (Hand and McRoy 2020: 2). Given its challenging of ontological thresholds and its representation of this blurring of boundaries, it has been argued that the film is Gothic in its treatment of social anxieties by exploring the past through the use of the above-mentioned Gothic tropes. Bruhm states that "the Gothic has always been a barometer of the anxieties plaguing a certain culture at a particular moment in history" (2002: 260). *JWFK* is an indicator of how the ecological crisis and the concern about the relations between human and

nonhuman animals are being expressed, represented and received within Western culture.

All in all, this article has studied the Gothic aesthetics of *JWFK* and its depiction of monstrosity, highlighting its ability to generate a post-anthropocentric discourse which challenges traditional views that sustain conservative notions about the division between species. Through the reworking of monsters as creatures whose subjectivities should be considered (an idea clearly shown in the demonstrations in favour of dinosaurs' rights at the beginning of the film, as well as in the ending when Maisie liberates them), *JWFK* makes use of the Gothic in its formal aspects and in its construction of a counter-discourse that disrupts previous traditions and advances progressive views from an antispeciesist, post-anthropocentric perspective.

Notes

1. The main difference between the Gothic and horror is usually stated to be the suggestiveness of the first —through the use of half-glimpsed shadowy images, and the prevalence of mood over obvious horrifying scenes— as opposed to the explicitness of the latter —with its quintessential graphic violence, overtly-horrifying images, torture and/or splattered blood. However, this distinction is often not so clear-cut. Films like *The Others* (Amenábar 2001), *Crimson Peak* (Del Toro 2015), or the TV series *The Haunting of Hill House* (Flanagan 2018) constitute Gothic stories in their concepts, but they make use of blood, jumpscares and graphic images in their development. For further reading on this, see Aldana-Reyes (2020).

2. In terms of discourses relating to the environment, monstrosity and animality, the first *Jurassic Park* saga (1993-2001) already provided a contrast to previous animal-monster films. While *Jurassic Park* partially followed the depiction of animal-monsters as symbols of revenge for humans, it also set the starting point for a saga that would come to represent the whole evolution of human-eating animals —in general, monsters— at the turn of the 20th century. In contrast to the monsters from the revenge-of-nature trend of the 1970s, the dinosaurs in the *Jurassic Park* (and later *Jurassic World*) saga underwent an evolution which provided them with more complex subjectivities (for instance, in *The Lost World*, T-Rexes are not depicted as mere blood-thirsty predators, but also as parents concerned with the well-being of their children; and in *Jurassic Park III* velociraptors are represented as having complex communication, rationality and sympathy capabilities).

3. It might also be interesting to clarify the differences in genre that may apply to a set of films that drift among motifs related to science, monstrosity, fear, violence and threat (as is the case of *JWFK*). In the case of the *Jurassic Park* and *Jurassic World* sagas, the common view is to put them under the umbrella of science fiction, since their narratives deal with unreal events that are made possible within the scientific discourse of the story. If we take Darko Suvin's (1979) definition of science fiction, for a work to be considered within this genre there must be cognitive estrangement at work (the events must be as close to reality as possible, so as to make audiences identify with the scenario they are witnessing; but there must be some alienating element that makes readers and viewers identify an estrangement, that is, a radical difference with their own world); and this must be provided by the 'novum' (a new

thing that scientifically allows the events to happen, like a time machine or genetic engineering —no matter if this is actually scientifically accurate or not).

4. It might be useful at this point to clarify the terms used in this analysis. Anthropocentrism refers to the epistemological cosmovision that places the human as the centre of knowledge production and acquisition, which gives our species an advantaged point of view upon which human exceptionalism is built. Human exceptionalism or supremacy is the idea that the human species holds an intrinsically higher moral value compared to other animal species and is thus separated from the rest of the natural world through its superiority. This establishes a discriminatory value system which privileges the human species over the others, establishing a biased prejudice to the detriment of the interests of nonhuman animals. For a more detailed introduction to these concepts and the main theoretical grounds in Critical Animal Studies, see Fischer (2021) or Gruen (2012).

5. As illustrated by the edited collection *The Science of Michael Crichton: An Unauthorized Exploration into the Real Science Behind the Fictional Worlds of Michael Crichton* (Grazier 2008), which explores the science behind not just *Jurassic Park* but also other works by Crichton, such as *The Andromeda Strain* or *Prey*; or the more recent article after the release of *Jurassic World*, "*Jurassic World*: Just How Impossible Is it?" (Parry 2015).

6. For further insight into the literary Female Gothic, see Moers (1976) or Wallace and Smith (2009).

7. In *Jurassic World: Dominion* it is revealed that Maisie is not a clone, but was born before her mother died. However, within *Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom*'s narrative, the identification of both Maisie and the dinosaurs as cloned creatures prevails, as well as its discursive consequences.

8. One of the fundamental aspects of the uncanny for Freud is the "animation of the inanimate" (in Curtis 2008: 50), which becomes corporeally real in the 'resurrection' of the extinct dinosaurs in the manor laboratory.

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MARGARET MORE ROPER:
A SURVEY OF HER WRITINGS

MARGARET MORE ROPER:
UN REPASO A SUS ESCRITOS

EUGENIO M. OLIVARES MERINO
Universidad de Jaén
eolivar@ujaen.es
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9260-5132>

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Abstract

As a contribution to the forthcoming 500th anniversary of the publication of Margaret Roper (née More)'s *A Devout Treatise* (1524-2024), the purpose of this article is to make a survey of her written production (public and private), including those works that were preserved as well as those others that were written but have been lost. The trial and death of Thomas More necessarily resulted in the loss of documents and writings, not only by More but by his daughter too. Sixteenth-century biographies of Thomas More are the main source of information about his daughter Margaret (1505-1544) and her written production. These early biographers were clearly concerned with the promotion of the figure of More, but they did not let pass the opportunity to ponder and testify to the scholarly excellence of his eldest daughter. This is particularly the case of Nicholas Harpsfield (1557) and, more especially, Thomas Stapleton (1588). Cresacre More's biography of More (Douai, 1631), even though in general terms it offers no original information, has also been used in this study. Another important corpus of information is the epistolary writings of Margaret and her father, as well as of Erasmus. Various other documents subject to recent literary criticism are also consulted.

Keywords: Margaret More Roper, Erasmus of Rotterdam, *A Devout Treatise upon the Pater Noster* (1524?), Thomas More, letter writing in the Renaissance.

Resumen

Como contribución al próximo 500 aniversario de la publicación de A Devout Treatise (1524-2024) de Margaret Roper (de soltera More), el propósito de este artículo es hacer un repaso de su producción escrita (pública y privada), incluyendo aquellas obras que se conservan así como aquellas otras que fueron escritas pero se han perdido. El juicio y la muerte de Thomas More necesariamente provocaron la pérdida de documentos y escritos, no sólo de More, sino también de su hija. Las biografías de Thomas More escritas en el siglo XVI son la principal fuente de información sobre su hija Margaret (1505-1544) y su producción escrita. Estos primeros biógrafos estaban claramente interesados en la promoción de la figura de More, pero no dejaron pasar la oportunidad de ponderar y dar testimonio de la excelencia académica de su hija mayor. En particular, este es el caso de Nicholas Harpsfield (1557) y, sobre todo, de Thomas Stapleton (1588). La biografía de Cresacre More (Douai, 1631), aunque no ofrece en términos generales ninguna información original, también ha sido utilizada en este estudio. Otro corpus importante de información son los escritos epistolares de Margaret y de su padre, así como de Erasmus. También se consultarán algunos otros documentos dispersos estudiados por la crítica literaria reciente.

Palabras clave: Margaret More Roper, Erasmus of Rotterdam, *A Devout Treatise upon the Pater Noster* (1524?), Thomas More; la escritura epistolar en el Renacimiento.

1. Introduction

On 6 September 1529, Erasmus sent a letter to Margaret Roper (née More), to whom he referred as "Britanniae tuae decus", —the glory of your Britain— (Letter 2212; Allen and Allen 1934: 274/1-2). The Dutch humanist was not an easy man to please, and he was no sycophant either. Certainly, Erasmus was affectionate to this woman, the daughter of his friend, the English humanist Thomas More, but his praise was "not in mere flattery" (Thompson 1997: 514). Thomas Stapleton referred to this letter as proof of Margaret's excellence: "[Erasmus wrote] to her not only as to a gentlewoman, but as to an eminent scholar" (1966: 104). Margaret Bowker has conveniently summarized the extent of her intellectual training as follows: "Besides studying Latin and Greek and reading the early fathers Margaret was introduced to astronomy, philosophy, theology, geometry, and arithmetic" (2017).

Margaret was born shortly before 1 October 1505 in London.[1] When she was four years old, Erasmus met her for the first time. From a very early age, she (together

with the other boys and girls that were brought up in the Mores' household) received a very solid education, by means of the several tutors that her father appointed. More was a fervent supporter of the right of women to education, so his three daughters (Margaret, Cecily and Elizabeth) were brought up the same as More's only boy, John. Erasmus himself, who kept regular contact with the family, is an exceptional witness of the progress of its members. In September 1521, he wrote a letter to the French humanist Guillaume Budé, providing relevant information about More's home school:

> He [More] has three daughters, of whom Margaret, the eldest, is already married to a young man [William Roper] who is well off, has a most honourable and modest character, and besides that is no stranger to our literary pursuits. All of them from their earliest years he [More] has had properly and strictly brought up in point of character, and has given them a liberal education. […] And he has a son by his first wife, now a boy of about thirteen, who is the youngest of his children. (Mynors 1988: 296)[2]

On the recommendation of the Flemish humanist Frans van Cranevelt, More had arranged for his friend, the Valencian humanist Juan Luis Vives, "to be paid to write a book on women's education" (Guy 2008: 140-141); and Queen Catherine of Aragon herself commissioned the book, which would be published as *De Institutione Feminae Christianae* (Antwerp, 1524). With this work completed, Vives arrived in England on 12 May 1523. When he visited the Mores some months later, Margaret played the "surrogate host" to the Spaniard (Guy 2008: 140-141), as her father was away from London.[3] Vives, of course, mentioned More's daughters in *De Institutione* (Fantazzi and Matheeussen 1996-1998, vol. 1: 38-39). It has been argued that the Spaniard might have played a part in encouraging Margaret to publish *A Devout Treatise upon the Pater Noster*, shortly after his visit to More's household (Olivares-Merino 2007). This work (probably published in 1524) was a translation of Erasmus of Rotterdam's *Precatio Dominica in septem portiones distributa* (Basel, 1523).

As a contribution to the forthcoming 500th anniversary of the publication of *A Devout Treatise* (1524-2024), this study provides a comprehensive survey of Margaret's extant works (public and private), and examines the evidence of texts that she may have authored but that have not been preserved. Sixteenth century biographies of Thomas More are the main source of information about Margaret Roper. The purpose of these early biographers was clearly the promotion of the figure of More, but they did not let pass the opportunity to ponder and testify to the scholarly excellence of More's eldest daughter.[4] This is the case of Nicholas Harpsfield (1557)[5] and, especially, Thomas Stapleton (1588). Cresacre More's biography of More (Douai, 1631),[6] even if in general terms it offers no original information, has also been used. Another important

corpus of information is the correspondence of Margaret and her father, as well as of Erasmus. Some other scattered documents subject to recent literary criticism are also considered.

2. Preserved Writings

This section discusses a variety of texts by Margaret Roper, or attributed to her, that have come to us in printed form. Only one of them was planned for publication. Letters, on the other hand, fall into that Early Modern practice in which the author wrote as if engaged in a private conversation, which intentionally or potentially might be public (Henderson 2002: 17-18). In one of these letters, the expression of private filial intimacy envelops a prayer by Margaret. Two other texts attributed to her and transmitted through other channels are also discussed.

2.1. Printed Works

A Devout Treatise upon the Pater Noster (1524?), Margaret Roper's English translation of Erasmus's *Precatio Dominica in septem portiones distributa*, published in Basel in 1523.[7] Even though the earliest extant edition of Margaret's translation is dated 1526, Richard Hyrde finished his prologue for this work on 1 October 1524. This detail has led some scholars to believe that the work was first published in 1524 (McCutcheon 1987: 460; Guy 2008: 303).[8] Margaret Roper (whose name appears nowhere in the book) is the "yong / vertuous and well / lerned gentylwoman of .xix. / yere of age" referred to on the title page of the translation (Reynolds 1960: 38-39). Of course, the elite of London humanists and scholars well knew that the author of this work was Margaret Roper.

Surely, Margaret did not choose the best time to print a translation of Erasmus. His Lutheran sympathies placed the famous humanist (and anyone associated with him) in an uncomfortable position. On 12 March 1526 (Bennett 1969: 34; Guy 2008: 157),[9] Dr. Richard Foxford, the Bishop of London's Vicar-General, summoned Thomas Berthelet on suspicion of having printed three translations of Erasmus's works, among these Margaret Roper's *Devout Treatise*. Berthelet was accused of not following the legal procedures established in 1524 to prevent the coming of Lutheran books into England.[10] The printer admitted that he had not followed the procedures (in Reed 1926: 169-170), and Margaret's book was withdrawn from sale.[11] Hyrde asked for the help of Stephen Gardiner, who at the time was Wolsey's secretary (Guy 2008: 157-158). The second printing (1526) had the cardinal's imprimatur; it is the earliest one that has been preserved.

2.2. Letters

Margaret Roper's extant epistolary writings include one letter in Latin, plus three in English.[12] *Margaret Roper to Erasmus of Rotterdam (4 November 1529). Latin.* This is an autograph epistle preserved in the University Library of Wroclaw, Rehdiger Collection, MS. Rehd. 254. 129. It was not published until the beginning of the 18th century.[13] Margaret answered Erasmus's above-mentioned letter by thanking him for having chosen her as the addressee of one of his epistles: "for what could compare with the honour that was done me when one who is *the glory of the whole world* judged me deserving of a personal letter?" (Dalzell and Estes 2015: 87, emphasis added).[14] Margaret was returning Erasmus's compliment to her (*Britanniae tua decus*) by calling the Dutch humanist *totius orbis decus.* Before concluding her letter to this old friend of the Mores', she addresses him as "our mentor" (Dalzell and Estes 2015: 87).[15] Although she was fluent and proficient in Latin, this is her only extant letter written in that language.

Three complete English letters by Margaret are preserved. The three were written in 1534 and were first published by William Rastell in his edition of More's English works (1557). *Margaret Roper to Thomas More (Letter 203; May? 1534).* This letter first appeared in More's English works (Rastell 1557: 1432). On 13 April, Thomas More was summoned to Lambeth to take an oath to the First Act of Succession (Roper 1958: 73). After refusing to do so, he was never able to return home. Margaret was the addressee of More's first letter after his imprisonment (Letter 200; 17 April); her answer (April or May) has not been preserved (see Section 3 below). More wrote to her again in around May (Letter 202). By the tone of his words, it seems that his daughter had tried to persuade him to take the oath. In his edition of More's English works, Rastell claimed that Margaret "semed somwhat to labour to perswade hym to take the othe (thoughe she nothinge so thought) to winne therby credence with Maister Thomas Cromwell, that she might the rather gette libertye to haue free resort vnto her father (which she onely had for the moste tyme of his imprisonment" (1557: 1431).

Margaret was granted permission to see her father (Roper 1958: 75; Rastell 1557: 1432). Whether she had ever attempted to convince him cannot be ascertained. In any case, in the first of her extant English letters she seems to convey her acceptance of More's decision. She declares that she finds comfort in rereading her father's latest letter, "the faithfull messenger of your very virtuous and gostly minde, rid from all corrupt loue of worldly things, and fast knit only in the loue of God" (Letter 203; Rogers 1970: 510). She also gains consolation from remembering her father's "lyfe past and godly conuersacion, and wholesome counsaile, and verteous example" (Rogers 1970: 510), and concludes with her wish to be reunited with her father here on earth (Rogers 1970: 511).

Margaret Roper and Thomas More to Alice Alington (Letter 206; August 1534). Margaret's second English letter —first published in Rastell (1557: 1434-1443)— is problematic. It was addressed to Alice Alington (August 1534, Rogers 1970: 514-532), More's stepdaughter. In it, Margaret recounts a meeting with her father at the Tower and the conversation that followed. Rastell could not reach a conclusion about the authorship of the epistle: "whether thys aunswer [to Alice Alington] wer writen by Syr Thomas More in his daughter Ropers name, or by her selfe, it is not certaynelye knowen" (1557: 1434).[16] After bringing up for More's consideration the examples of "so many wise men" (Rogers 1970: 529) who had taken the oath, she recalled the words of Henry Patenson, More's fool, who had claimed "What aileth hym [More] that he will not swere? I haue sworne the oth myself" (Rogers 1970: 529). Immediately afterwards, Margaret added, "And so I can in good faith go now no ferther neither, after so many wise men whom ye take for no saumple, but if I should say lyke M. Harry, Why should you refuse to swere, Father? For I haue sworne myself" (Rogers 1970: 529). To this, More laughed and said, "That word is lyke Eue to, for she offered Adam no worse fruit that she had eten herself" (Rogers 1970: 529). In a side note to More's comment, Rastell adds, "She [Margaret] toke the othe with this excepcion, as farre as would stande with the law of God" (Rastell 1557: 1441).[17]

Margaret Roper to Thomas More (Letter 209; 1534). First published by Rastell (1557, 1446). Margaret wrote another letter to her father in 1534 (Rogers 1970: 538-539) —presumably after the previous two— "answeryng to a letter which her father had sent vnto her" (Rastell 1557: 1446).[18] For Margaret, "though it [More's letter] were writen with a cole, [it] is worthy in mine opinion to be written in letters of golde" (Rogers 1970: 539). She also stated her wish to follow, with God's grace, her father's "fruitfull example of liuing" (Rogers 1970: 539). She hoped to achieve this end "thorowe the assistens of your deuoute praiers, the speciall staye of my frayltie" (Rogers 1970: 539). More's answer has also been preserved (Letter 210; Rogers 1970: 540-544).

2.3. A Prayer and a Petition

There was a fourth letter sent by Margaret to her father in 1534, which is now lost. In his answer (Letter 211, Rogers 1970: 544-547), More quoted her words whose tone and arrangement made them sound like a prayer. He wrote: "[T]hat it may please him (it doth me [Thomas More] good here to reherse your [Margaret's] own wordes) 'of his tender pitie so firmely to rest our loue in hym, with litle regard of this worlde, and so to fle sinne and embrace vertue, that we may say with S. Paule *Mihi viuere Christus est et mori luchrum*. Et illud, *Cupio dissolui et esse cum Christ*'" (Rogers 1970: 544-545).

More goes on with his letter and then quotes again "these words of your selfe" (Rogers 1970: 545):

> But good father, I wretch am farre, farre, farthest of all other from such poynt of perfection, our Lorde send me the grace to amende my lyfe, and continually to haue an eie to mine ende, without grudge of death, which to them that dye in God, is the gate of a welthy lyfe to which God of his infinite mercie bringe vs all. Amen. Good Father strenght my frayltie with your deuoute prayers. (Rogers 1970: 544-545)[19]

2.4. A Verse Profession of Faith

A copy of *This Treatise concernynge the fruytful Saynges of David the King and prophete in the seven penytencyall psalms* (Wynkin de Worde, 1508) by John Fisher is held in the *Réserve Patrimoniale* of the Douai Public Library. The relevance of this volume lies in the fact that it was one of the last books More owned (and presumably read) before his execution; furthermore, it contains a revealing handwritten inscription. The first reference to this volume that I have located is in a Russian periodical, the *Journal of the Ministry of Public Education*.[20] After briefly describing the volume, the anonymous author adds that on the parchment cover there are verse lines declaring the faith and religious opinions of these famous friends, i.e., John Fisher and Thomas More. For this unknown author, the lines had been written by John Fisher ("The Psalter of Thomas More" 1836: 720-721). "Apparently", —the note continues— "Fisher presented this book to Thomas More at the moment of his execution, which took place 14 days before the execution of the Grand Chancellor" (1836: 721). The anonymous author then quotes the final four lines of the inscription in Latin.

Two years later, a similar report was published by Pierre Alexandre Gratet-Duplessis, at the time Rector of the Douai Academy.[21] Fisher's work was precious precisely for its inscription: on the flyleaf preceding the title of the work, a contemporary hand had written ten lines, followed by a Latin sentence and the names of John Fisher and Thomas More. Gratet-Duplessis transcribed the whole annotation "scrupulously and without any alteration" (1838: 461, my translation).[22] He described this brief composition as More's and Fisher's agreed declaration of their beliefs, a profession of faith, their religious testament, composed while both were prisoners at the Tower of London (1838: 462). Gratet-Duplessis would not say, however, whose hand had written down these lines. For it was in fact one single hand, which excluded the possibility that one of the two had just added his name to what the other one had written. Gratet-Duplessis claimed that this composition had been elaborated by the two prisoners (More and Fisher), and originally written by one of the two in some book secretly kept —but not necessarily *This Treatise*. Ultimately, this French bibliophile was suggesting the possibility that

the handwritten words —only preserved in the said work— might have been jotted down by someone else, neither More nor Fisher (Gratet-Duplessis 1838: 463).

This issue remained thus until 1847, when an anonymous author made two significant claims. In the first place, Fisher had given *This Treatise* to More; in the second, the inscription had been "written by the learned Chancellor in his own hand-writing" ("Lines by Sir Thomas More" 1847: 256). The anonymous writer provided no support for these statements; neither did s/he make reference to Gratet-Duplessis's paper.

Two contributions on this topic were published in 1851. In May, the director of the Douai Library, H.R. Duthilloeul, stated that (according to the tradition and testimony of the English Benedictines) this profession of faith had been written by John Fisher, who then secretly submitted the work to More, as Henry VIII had deprived the latter of those books he kept in his cell (1851: 255-256). Another paper was published shortly afterwards (November) in the well-known journal *Notes and Queries*. The author —only identified as S.H.— mentioned the previous article as his source (1851: 417), and basically adhered to Duthilloeul's conclusions: it was a profession of faith of the two friends, written by Bishop Fisher (so said the Benedictines), who then gave More the said book (S.H. 1851: 417-418).

Almost two decades later, in a review of the catalogue of the Douai Public Library, the authorship of the annotation reverted to Thomas More: "Tradition assures that the verses, […], are by Thomas Morus, and that they, together with the other indications, were written by his hand in the Tower of London" (*Catalogue méthodique* 1869: lxix).[23] Surely, the anonymous author of this note was appealing to a different tradition than the previous two critics. Be that as it may, how is all this relevant for Margaret Roper?

Henri Meulon (one of the earliest contributors to the *Moreana* journal) travelled to Douai at the end of May 1969 and was able to take a close look at the lines written on the flyleaf of Fisher's book. He concluded that it was not More's hand-writing (Fisher's was not even considered), but rather Margaret Roper's on account of the graphological similarities between the lines in the book at the Douai library and the text of her Latin letter to Erasmus (4 November 1529), preserved in the University Library of Wroclaw. "Attributing the lines in Douai to Margaret Roper" —Meulon concluded— "is only a presumption" (1969: 68, my translation).[24] Before finishing his paper, the author stressed that the composition's metre and poor style ruled out More's authorship: "the mediocrity of the style, especially of the last line, and the very form of the dizain, different from that of his [More's] poems" (1969: 68, my translation).[25] To date, no one has refuted Meulon's hypothesis. The inscription is the following:[26]

The surest means for to attain
The perfect way to endless bliss
Are happy life and to remain
Within the Church where virtue is:
And if thy conscience is so sound
To think thy faith is true indeed,
Beware in thee no schism be found
That unity may have her meed.
  If unity thow do embrace
  In heaven joy, possess thy place.
Qui non recte vivit in vnitate Ecclesiæ catholicæ,
  salvus esse non potest.
Thomas Morus, dominus cancellarius Angliæ.
Johannes [Fisher], episcopus Roffensis.

2.5. An English Poem?

Elizabeth Bruce Boswell (1673-1734), a Scotswoman known for her reading
habits (Caudle 2018: 117), elaborated a compilation of works by different authors,
known as *Devotional Miscellany of Elizabeth Boswell* and preserved at the Beinecke
Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. In her miscellany, Boswell
attributed to Margaret Roper one of the poems included, adding the heading
"'Verses Writt by Sir Thomas Moore his Daughter when he was in prison, in Henry
the 8s time'". This ascription was reported by Sarah C.E. Ross, who celebrated it
as "a notable discovery, and will be of interest to scholars of Roper and of early
modern women's writing" (2009: 502). The poem begins with "How can the soul
that loves her God / for very shame complain?", Ross reproduced the whole verse
composition (2009: 503-504), and claimed that it was "clearly embedded" in
Margaret's biographical circumstances at the time of More's imprisonment and
execution (2009: 503). Even when Ross was cautious enough as to admit that this
poem might not after all be by More's daughter, she stressed Boswell's reliability
as "attributor of authorship" (2009: 504-505). As Ross concluded, "if Boswell's
ascription of this lyric to her [Margaret] is correct, it is an exciting addition to her
oeuvre" (2009: 506).

In a more recent paper, Romuald Lakowski described the structure of this poetic
work as follows: "The poem is composed in the ballad meter, basically in double
ballad or common-metre double stanzas, and consists of thirteen eight line stanzas,
whose even lines rhyme (xaxaxbxb), for a total of one hundred and four lines"
(2016: 293). Interestingly enough, both Ross and Lakowski bring Thomas More's
great-great-granddaughter, Gertrude More,[27] into their discussions (Ross 2009:
504; Lakowski 2016: 294). Actually, Dame Gertrude More is the real author of
the referred poem. It was included in *The spiritval exercises of the most vertvovs and*

religious D. Gertrvde […] (More 1658: 5-9),[28] a compilation of her mystical writings published posthumously at Paris.

3. Missing Writings

Assumedly, Margaret Roper wrote many other texts that have not survived. Thomas Stapleton's testimony is crucial in this sense:

> She wrote very eloquently *prose and verse both in Greek and Latin. Two Latin speeches* written as an exercise, which I have myself seen, are in style elegant and graceful, while in treatment they hardly yield to her father's compositions. *Another speech, first written in English*, was translated by both the father and the daughter separately with such great skill that one would not know which to prefer. When More wrote his book on the Four Last Things, he gave the same subject to Margaret to treat, and when she had completed her task, he affirmed most solemnly that that *treatise* of his daughter was in no way inferior to his own. (Stapleton 1966: 103, emphasis added)[29]

The credibility of Stapleton's testimony lies in the fact that he became personally acquainted with John and Margaret Clement, as the three had met in their continental exile years before the composition of *Tres Thomae* (1588).[30] This Margaret (née Giggs) had been brought up in Thomas More's household as another daughter of the family. There she met John Clement, whom More adopted as page and pupil. In his work, Stapleton explicitly mentioned the relevance of the memories of those who had either lived with More or were on terms of intimacy with him: "John Clement, a doctor of medicine" (Stapleton 1966: xvii),[31] and his wife stand out.

Thus, as stated in Stapleton's above quoted words, we may include in Margaret Roper's writings the following:

1. A treatise on The Four Last Things. Margaret finished her text on the *novissimi*, but her father did not. Cresacre More —in his biography of Thomas More— adds that "her father sincerely protested that it was better than his, and therefore, it may be, never finished his" (1828: 154).

2. Latin letters. Margaret wrote more letters in Latin than are preserved, as can be deduced from the allusions to them in More's or Erasmus's epistles: "elegantes epistolae vestrae" (Letter 43; Rogers 1970: 97); "literae tuae" (Letter 69; Rogers 1970: 134); "tali […] epistola" (Letter 70; Rogers 1970: 134); "tuae […] epistolae", "istae […] tuae tam elegantes, tam politae" (Letter 106; Rogers 1970: 254); "Epistola tua", "epistolam tuam" (Letter 108; Rogers 1970: 257); "elegantissimae literae tua […] tam longam […] epistolam" (Letter 128; Rogers

1970: 301); "tuis sororumque tuarum literis" (Letter 1404; Allen and Allen 1924: 366).

3. English letters. It is reasonable to assume Margaret wrote other letters to her father in English, while he was a prisoner in the Tower. More alludes to a letter that she wrote trying to convince him to take the oath, or pretending to do so in order to get Thomas Cromwell's permission to visit her father. Rastell reports that "Within a while after Sir Thomas More was in priso[n] in the Towre, his doughter Maistres Margaret Roper wrote and sent vnto hym a letter" (Rastell 1557: 1431). From More's answer, we catch a glimpse of the mood of that lost epistle, which he describes as "lamentable" (Letter 202; Rogers 1970: 508/3). Apparently, Margaret questioned her father about the reasons behind his refusal to take the oath, since he defended himself in his reply: "Wherein as towchinge the pointes of your letter, I can make none answere, for I doubt not you well remember, that the matters which moue my conscience [...] I have sondry tymes shewed you that I will disclose them to no man" (Rogers 1970: 508-509). Most probably, Margaret also reminded her father of the difficult position in which his refusal put his family, something of which More is obviously aware in his response. What caused him more pain, he says, is that his family and friends are "in great displeasure and daunger of great harme therby" (Rogers 1970: 509).

Letter 210 (Rogers 1970: 540-544), as stated by Rastell —"answering her letter here next before" (1557: 1446)— is More's response to Margaret's letter 209. In this same epistle More mentioned "your daughterlye louing letters" (Rogers 1970: 540).

Letter 211 by More (Rogers 1970: 544-547) opens mentioning a previous one by Margaret: "Your doughterly louyng letter" (Rogers 1970: 544). Rastell, however, makes no reference to it.

4. Latin Poems. In his letter of 11 September 1522? (Letter 108; Rogers 1970: 257-258), More tells his daughter that the bishop of Exeter, John Veysey, had examined a Latin letter by her ("epistolam tuam"; Rogers 1970: 257), which had accidentally fallen out of his father's pocket.[32] When More saw how delighted he was, he presented him with Margaret's poems, "carmina" (Rogers 1970: 257), presumably also in Latin.

5. Latin speeches. As reported in Stapleton's, "[t]wo Latin speeches written as an exercise [...] in style elegant and graceful, while in treatment they hardly yield to her father's compositions" (1966: 103). Furthermore, he states that he has in his "possession a speech of hers" (1966: 107) —which I assume to be one of these two— that he praises in the following terms:

> It is eloquent, clever, and perfect in its use of oratorical devices. It is in imitation, or rather in rivalry, of Quintilian's declamation on the destruction of the poor man's bees through the poison that had been sprinkled upon the flowers in the rich man's garden. Quintilian defends the cause of the poor man: Margaret of the rich. The more difficult such a defence is, the greater the scope for Margaret's eloquence and wit. If it were not that I fear to be tedious and to digress too much from the task I have undertaken of writing More's life, I would print the speeches both of Margaret and Quintilian, either in this place or in an appendix. (Stapelton 1966: 107)[33]

Cresacre More further confirms this point: "She made an oration to answer Quintilian, defending that rich man which he accused of having poisoned a poor man's bees, with certain venomous flowers in his garden, so eloquent and witty, that it may strive with his" (1828: 158).[34]

In the already cited letter of 11 September (1522?), More says that he also showed Veysey a Latin speech by Margaret, alluded to as "declamationem" (Rogers 1970: 257).

6. A speech written in English and translated into Latin. Margaret and her father translated separately a speech "first written in English" into Latin (Stapleton 1966: 103). Cresacre More augments what Stapleton says: "She wrote two declamations in English, which her father and she turned into Latin so elegantly, as one could hardly judge which was the best" (1828: 154).

7. Translations from Eusebius of Caesarea? Cresacre More stated that Margaret "translated Eusebius out of Greek, but it was never printed, because Christopherson at that time had done exactly before" (1828: 158). Thomas Fuller in his *The Worthies of England* (1662) follows Cresacre More almost verbatim: "she translated Eusebius out of Greek; but it was never printed because. Christopherson had done it so exactly before" (1952: 358).[35] It is well known that it was Mary (Margaret's daughter) who translated Eusebius.[36] Cresacre More might simply be wrong, or there might be some truth to his account: perhaps Margaret had started translating Eusebius from Greek, and then Mary used or incorporated her mother's translation. In any case, the reference to Christopherson's work must necessarily be applied to Mary, rather than to Margaret, as his translation of Eusebius was published in 1569.

4. Conclusion

Margaret Roper died at Christmas 1544. She was not yet forty years old. John Guy has recreated the details of her funeral, which "must have been the bleakest of occasions" (2008: 270). I will not say that had she lived longer she would have published more works. I do not think she wished for public notoriety, but not necessarily because —as More liked to think— he himself and her husband William

were "a sufficiently large circle of readers" for what she wrote (Rogers 1961: 155).[37] She was more than rewarded by the esteem and admiration of a select group of scholars and humanists that were aware of her intellectual capacities and her solid scholarly training.

However, I have no doubt that Thomas More's fall from grace and execution for high treason marked the last decade of her short life in many aspects, but particularly in one that is relevant for this paper. The persecution that the family suffered after the trial and death of the father necessarily resulted in the loss of documents and writings, not only by More but by his daughter too. Henry VIII's henchman, Thomas Cromwell, brought Margaret before the king's council in August 1535 to question her (Stapleton 1966: 193; 1588: 347-348). Despite the adverse circumstances and the two periods of exile that followed Henry VIII's death (1547), those in More's closest circle were able to safeguard most of the former's writings, which Margaret had secretly kept and passed to them. Therefore, John and Margaret Clement, together with William Rastell (More's nephew), as well as Dorothy Colly (Margaret Roper's maid) became the depositaries of Thomas More's heritage, but also of his daughter's. Unfortunately, none of them saw the need to publish Margaret's writings, as all the efforts were devoted to printing More's works, first those in English (1557) and then in Latin (1568-1569). Stapleton was able to go through Margaret Roper's works when he met the Clements; he even felt tempted to print some. However, in the agenda of English recusants in Counter-Reformation Europe, the figure to exalt and promote was Thomas More.

Margaret Roper was not rescued from oblivion by 20th century feminist scholars. As early as 1550, John Coke was already praising her intellectual status (1550: K.i/7-13). John Leland, Henry VIII's poet laureate, devoted two epigrams to More's daughters (1589: 67-68). Her emendation of a corrupt passage in a Latin letter included in St Cyprian's epistles was finally included in later editions, something for which she was given full credit (albeit posthumously).[38] Leaving aside Erasmus of Rotterdam's praise, Margaret's scholarly acumen was recognized by the first biographers of her father —excluding William Roper, her own husband. It is often argued that, by praising Margaret these authors were in fact aiming at indirectly enlarging the figure of Thomas More. There may be some truth in this, but I think she was also given the credit that was due to her. Harpsfield had met Margaret; Thomas Stapleton did not, but he did meet the other Margaret, John Clement's wife and More's daughter's close friend. Their admiration for Margaret Roper was further complemented by the praise she received from the most eminent humanists of the day: Erasmus, Juan Luis Vives, Richard Hyrde, John Clement, Reginald Pole, John Veysey and Roger Ascham. They have all given posterity the picture of a woman who was, no doubt, an ornament of her beloved country.[39]

Notes

1. In Hans Holbein's draft of the More family portrait (late 1526 – early 1527), Margaret's age is written below the book she holds as twenty-two years old. This points to a birth year of 1504 or 1505. There are also two Holbein miniatures of Margaret and William Roper at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Margaret is said to be thirty years old, but unfortunately the painting is undated. Richard Hyrde's preface to Margaret's translation of Erasmus's *Precatio Dominica* is dated 1 October 1524. On the cover page of this work we read that the translator is nineteen years old. This and the family portrait caption seem to point at 1505 as the year of Margaret's birth.

2. *"Habet filias treis. quarum maxima natu, Margareta, iam nupta est iuueni, primum beato, deinde moribus integerrimis ac modestissimis, postremo non alieno a nostris studiis. Omnes a teneris annis curauit imbuendas primum castis ac sanctis moribus, deinde politioribus literis. [...] Habet filium ex vxore priore, natum annos plus minus tredecim, ex liberis natu minimum"* (Letter 1233; Allen and Allen 1922: 577).

3. See letters 115-128 (Rogers 1970).

4. William Roper, Margaret's husband, was the author of the first account of More's life. It was completed before 1557, but not printed until 1626: *The mirrour of vertue in worldly greatnes. Or The life of Syr Thomas More Knight, sometime Lo. Chancellour of England, At Paris* [i.e. Saint-Omer: Printed at the English College Press], MDCXXVI. He makes no reference to Margaret's intellectual skills.

5. Though he finished the biography of Thomas More in 1557, it was not printed until 1932. Harpsfield's work is the main source of the anonymous text known as *Ro.Ba.* (1599). The two main editions are Wordsworth (1810) and Hitchcock, Hallett and Reed (1950). What remains of William Rastell's planned biography is very interesting, but has no relevance for my present purpose.

6. *D.O.M.S. The life and death of Sir Thomas Moore Lord high Chancellour of England. Written by M. T.M. and dedicated to the Queens most gracious Maiestie* (Douai: Printed by B. Bellière, 1631?).

7. *"A deuoute treatise vpon the Pater noster, made fyrst in latyn by the moost famous doctour mayster Erasmus Roterodamus, and tourned in to englisshe by a yong vertuous and well lerned gentylwoman of. xix. yere of age"* (London: In fletestrete, in the house of Thomas Berthelet, 1526). (rpt. London: Thomas Berthelet, ca. 1531). For the latest critical edition of Margaret Roper's work —a reprint from Germain Marc'hadour's edited transcription published in *Moreana* 2 (7), 1965: 10-62— see Gentrup and McCutcheon (2022: 60-99). There have been several critical approaches to Margaret Roper's translation of Erasmus (Olivares-Merino 2022a: 42-43, n. 208), but see especially Demers (2022).

8. Dating the publication year of Margaret's translation is a complex issue. Reynolds thought "Margaret's translation was published at the beginning of 1525" (1960: 38), and so does Sarah C.E. Ross (2009: 502).

9. Reynolds, however, dated this episode to 1525 (1960: 39-40). Reed claims that Dr. Foxford summoned Berthelet a month after "Fisher preached a second notable sermon on a wet Sunday in February, 1525-6" (1926: 169). He means 1526, for at that time the chronological year started in the month of March. Hall placed the episode in February of the seventeenth year of Henry VIII's reign, that is, 1526 (Hall 1809: 708).

10. On 12 October 1524, Bishop Tunstall had warned the London booksellers against "importing into England books printed in Germany or any other books whatever containing Lutheran heresies, or selling or parting with any such books already imported under pain of the law" (Reed 1926: 165-166).

11. Reed claims that Berthelet's fault was "a technical one"; his summoning by Foxford points to the fact "that the Court

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exercised the wider powers that it possessed [...] and that it was not limited by the terms of Tunstall's inhibition of 12 October, which dealt only with imported books" (1926: 170).

12. For several approaches to Margaret's epistolary writings, see Olivares-Merino (2022a: 44, n. 215).

13. *Epistola CCCLII* in Clericus (1703: 1743-1744).

14. "Quid enim cum illo honore comparandum quo digna habita sum, qua totius orbis decus suis litteris dignatus sit?" (Letter 2233; Allen and Allen 1934: 300).

15. "praeceptorem nostrum" (Letter 2233; Allen and Allen 1934: 300).

16. The question of authorship or collaboration between More and Margaret of this very long and important document remains unsettled. For the most recent discussions, see–Betteridge (2013), Curtright (2019), McCutcheon (2020), Foley (2022) and Rodgers (2022).

17. The text of this letter is included in Gentrup and McCutcheon (2022: 103-119).

18. More's letter is not extant.

19. Guy has edited and rewritten this prayer to imitate the liturgical collects Margaret included in her *Devout Treatise* (2008: 249).

20. Журнал министерства народного просвещения (*Journal of the Ministry of Public Education*) was founded in 1834 on the initiative of the Minister of Education, Count S.S. Uvarov. Published in the printing house of the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences, it was Russia's earliest ministerial periodical. Heartfelt thanks to Dinara Klimovskaia, who has kindly translated this article.

21. I have identified the author behind the initials G.D., with which the paper is signed.

22. *"Scrupuleusement et sans aucune alteration"*

23. *"La tradition assure que les vers, […], sont de Thomas Morus, et qu'ils ont*

été, ainsi que les autres indications, écrits de sa main dans la Tour de Londres"

24. *"Attribuer les vers de Douai à Margaret Roper n'est qu'une présomption"*

25. *"la médiocrité du style, surtout du dernier vers, et la facture même du dizain, dirrérente de celle de ses [More's] poèmes"*. Romuald Lakowski echoed this statement and further added: "The poem, which Henri Meulon calls a 'dizain', is made up of two English alternating iambic tetrameter quatrains and a final rhyming couplet, a rhyme scheme that More himself never uses, together with a concluding note in Latin" (2013: 289).

26. I have only modernised the original spelling, retaining the meter of the lines.

27. Helen More (1606-1633), known in religion as Dame Gertrude More, became a Benedictine Nun at the Monastery of Our Lady of Consolation at Cambrai. Her writings were published posthumously by another English Benedictine, Augustine Baker.

28. For a contemporary edition of this work, see Weld-Blundell (1911: 5-8).

29. "Composuit Graece Latineque, soluta & pedestri oratione elega[n]tissime. Vidi ego duas eius declamationes Latinas exercitij causa scriptas, quae vt stilo quidem ornat[a]e & facundae erant, sic inuentione no[n] ita multum patri cedebant. Et altera quidem declamatio quum Anglice primum scripta esset, ab vtroque Latine versa, a patre & filia ea elegantia ab vtroque vertitur, vt nescias vtra alteri sit praeferenda. Certe quum Thomas Morus librum fuum de 4. novissimis scriberet, dedit idem argumentum Margaretae tractandum: quod quum fecisset, affirmabat sancte filiae tractatum nulla ex parte suo ese inferiorem" (Stapelton 1588: 237).

30. In Stapleton's words: "In the familiar intercourse which existed between us some years ago, owing to our common exile, from time to time I gathered from all of them many particulars of the sayings and deeds of Thomas More, which I now reproduce exactly as they are in my memory" (1966: xviii). "Ex horum omnium in hoc communi exilio nostro conuersatione familiar quae mihi cum eis

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ante aliquot annos intercesserat, plurima per occasionem de dictis ac actis Thomae Mori libenter audiui, diligenter retinue, et nu[n]c fideliter collegi" (Stapleton 1588: 8).

31. "Ioannes Clemens doctor Medicus" (Stapleton 1588: 6-7).

32. "He took it into his hand with pleasure and examined it. When he saw from the signature that it was the letter of a lady, he was induced by the novelty of the thing to read it more eagerly. When he had finished he said he would never have believed it to have been your work unless I had assured him of the fact, and he began to praise it in the highest terms (why should I hide what he said?) for its pure Latinity, its correctness, its erudition, and its expressions of tender affection" (Stapleton 1966: 106). "Delectatus manu coepit inspicere: vbi ex salutatione depraehendit esse mulieris, legere coepit auidius. Sic eum inuitabat movitas. Sed quum legisset & (quod nisi me affirmante nom erat crediturus) tuam ipsius manum esse didicisset, epistolam, vt nihil dicam amplius talem: (quanquam cur non dicam quod dixit ille?) tam Latinam, tam emendatam, tam eruditam, tam dulcibus refertam affectibus, vehementer admiratus est" (Stapleton 1588: 241-242).

33. "Est penes me declamatio quaedam huius Margaretae eloquentissima, & ingeniosa admodum, omnibusque veri oratoris numeris absoluta, qua Quintilianum imitata, vel aemulata potius respondet illi eius orationi, quae est de pauperis apibus in horto diuitis veneno floribus asperso necatis.

Pauperis causam defendit Quintilianus. Diuitis tuetur Margaretae. Quae sane causa quanto ad defendendum difficilior, tanto ars & eloquentia Margaretae excellentior videri debet. Nisi prolixitatis hic taedium aut nimiam a proposita Thomae Mori vita digressionem metuerem, vtramque declamationem Quintiliani, & Margaretae vel hoc loco vel huic operi subiecissem" (Stapleton 1588: 242-243).

34. For Guy this was the speech said in front of Henry VIII in December 1525 at Richmond Palace, when the king invited Margaret and her sisters Elizabeth and Cecily to have some kind of philosophical debate in his presence (2008: 156-157). Vives's influence on this Quintilian-like *declamatio* by Margaret has also been argued (Olivares-Merino 2007: 398).

35. In his *Memoirs*, George Ballard reached the same conclusion (1752: 152). This error has also found an echo in recent scholarship; see Olivares-Merino (2009: 157, n. 33).

36. For a full discussion on these translations, see Olivares-Merino (2009) and Goodrich (2010).

37. "frequensque legenti tibi theatrum simus, maritus tuus et ego" (Letter 128; Rogers 1970: 302).

38. See Olivares-Merino (2022b).

39. This paper is an extended and revised version of part of Olivares-Merino (2022a).

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DIASPORIC ROOTS/CIRCULAR ROUTES: KAMIN MOHAMMADI'S SEARCH FOR HOME IN *THE CYPRESS TREE: A LOVE LETTER TO IRAN* (2011)

RAÍCES DIASPÓRICAS/RUTAS CIRCULARES: BÚSQUEDA DEL HOGAR EN *THE CYPRESS TREE: A LOVE LETTER TO IRAN* (2011) DE KAMIN MOHAMMADI

PARISA DELSHAD
Universidad de Valladolid
parisa.delshad@uva.es
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9394-518X>

Abstract

This paper explores Kamin Mohammadi's position regarding the discourses of national belonging through the scrutiny of her circular route from England to Iran. Reflecting the interrelation between identity, home and the modern nation-state, *The Cypress Tree: A Love Letter to Iran* (2011) recounts the story of Mohammadi's journey back to Iran in search of a singular self. It recounts her story of growing up in Iran and England and the reason behind her displacement from both of these countries in 1979 and 1997. Indebted to Stuart Hall's take on the diaspora, Gaston Bachelard's reading of home and Homi Bhabha's notion of hybridity, this paper rejects the synonymy between home and home country as well as exclusive belonging intrinsic to nationalism. The aim of this paper is to read Mohammadi's ultimate choice to settle down in England as a challenge to the homogenizing forces of nationalism that inhibited her sense of belonging to Britain and drew her toward Iran. As she embraces a hybrid identity by telling her circular story, beginning and ending in London, her literary contribution is a way to dismantle the link between belonging and the nation-state, as well as a challenge to the alleged homogeneity of the nation-states to which she belongs.

Keywords: *The Cypress Tree*, identity, diaspora, nationalism, home.

Resumen

Este artículo explora la posición de Kamin Mohammadi con respecto a los discursos de pertenencia nacional a través del escrutinio de su ruta circular desde Inglaterra hasta Irán. Reflejando la interrelación entre la identidad, el hogar y el estado-nación moderno, *The Cypress Tree: A Love Letter to Iran* (2011) relata la historia del viaje de regreso de Mohammadi a Irán en busca de un yo singular. Cuenta la historia de cómo creció en Irán e Inglaterra y la razón de su desplazamiento de ambos países en 1979 y 1997 respectivamente. En deuda con la visión de la diáspora de Stuart Hall, la lectura del hogar de Gaston Bachelard y la noción de hibridación de Homi Bhabha, este artículo rechaza la sinonimia entre hogar y patria, así como la pertenencia exclusiva intrínseca al nacionalismo. El objetivo de este artículo es entender la decisión final de Mohammadi de establecerse en Inglaterra como un desafío a las fuerzas homogeneizadoras del nacionalismo que inhibieron su sentido de pertenencia a Gran Bretaña y la atrajeron hacia Irán. Mientras adopta una identidad híbrida al contar su historia circular, que comienza y termina en Londres, su contribución literaria es una forma de desmantelar el vínculo entre la pertenencia y el Estado-nación, así como un desafío a la supuesta homogeneidad de los Estados-nación a la que ella pertenece.

Palabras clave: *The Cypress Tree*, identidad, diáspora, nacionalismo, hogar.

1. Introduction: Beyond the Either/Or

Speaking from the interstitial space of a migrant memoir, *The Cypress Tree: A Love Letter to Iran* (2011) challenges the reactionary and politically conservative essentialism that territorializes culture and imprisons it within a given nation-state. It recounts the life story of Kamin Mohammadi, an Iranian-British journalist, and focuses on her return to Iran after eighteen years of living as an immigrant in Britain. As the narrator grows up, she struggles to cut all her ties with her past life and Iranian culture, mainly due to the rejection that she feels when she first arrives in London in the 1980s. The nine-year-old refugee finds her difference from British society frowned upon, which leads her to feel "ashamed of standing among the reasonable English people and not being one of them" (2011: 6). In order to rectify this and better assimilate in her host country, the young Mohammadi draws an English mask upon her face, rejects Iran at every turn, and eventually earns "the dubious honor by [her] British friends of not being considered Middle Eastern but 'one of us'" (Mohammadi 2011: 212). Despite this "honorary citizenship" (Fanon 2008: 25), she is unable to ignore the "memories and the longing" for Iran that have "seeped inexorably" through her (Mohammadi 2011: 7), and fails to feel at home in

Britain. When a rather moderate candidate wins the general elections in Iran in 1997, and thus the ever-turbulent diplomatic relations between Iran and Britain restore to ambassador level, she begins to entertain the idea of return. She applies for an Iranian passport and travels to the only place she considers as her home, Iran.

Mohammadi's desire to return to Iran can be explained by drawing on the well-known ideas of Stuart Hall and Avtar Brah. As the site that encompasses Mohammadi's hopes and dreams of a home, Iran is similar to Africa in Hall's study of the Jamaicans' return journeys. In "Cultural Identity and Diaspora", Hall retraces the return of Jamaicans in Britain to Africa in search of a true African identity. This identitarian move is repudiated by Hall, for whom Africa is only to be found beyond "where [the] voyage of Discovery first began", and thus in the African diaspora (1992: 232). Comparably, Mohammadi's memoir treats return in a similar manner as it begins with a search for a home in Iran but ends with her relinquishing the idea of national belonging. In order to further explore Mohammadi's return, Brah's concepts of "homing desires" and "the desire for a homeland" can be employed. For Brah, "homing desire" refers to the diaspora's desire for a sense of belonging, rootedness, and connection to a place or community. It is a desire to feel at home. On the other hand, "desire for a homeland" refers to a specific longing for a physical location that is seen as the place of origin or ancestral homeland (Brah 2005: 177). In both Mohammadi's case and the Jamaican diaspora, the two concepts are conflated and the reason behind not feeling at home in Britain is inaccurately associated with being away from the ancestral homeland. Their homing desire drives them toward return. Thus, Mohammadi needs to take several trips to Iran and reassess different forms of belonging, before she settles into and celebrates her diasporic identity. Beginning and ending in England, the circular narrative of the memoir ultimately advocates that "homecoming is out of the question" (Said 2003: 179), precisely because it rejects the prevailing vision of national identity that sets strict boundaries between 'us', who come from a nation-state, and 'them', who lie outside it. The compulsion to return to Iran, suggesting a need to find herself and capture her lost home, reveals Mohammadi's initial preoccupation with a homogeneous national identity. As Edward Said argues regarding the return to culture:

> [c]ulture comes to be associated, often aggressively, with the nation or the state; this differentiates 'us' from 'them', almost always with some degree of xenophobia. Culture in this sense is a source of identity, and a rather combative one at that, as we see in recent 'returns' to culture and tradition. These 'returns' accompany rigorous codes of intellectual and moral behavior that are opposed to the permissiveness associated with such relatively liberal philosophies as multiculturalism and hybridity. In the formerly colonized world, these 'returns' have produced varieties of religious and nationalist fundamentalism. (1993: xiii)

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Said's quote maintains that the return to culture and tradition, embraced by many emerging nations during the postcolonial period, merely deepened the divide between 'us' and 'them'. Mohammadi's return begins in a similar way. Stimulated by a total disregard for the distinct and multicultural spaces in which she has resided, Britain and Iran, her initial decision to return betrays a desire for a homogeneous nation and culture to which she can belong. Much to her chagrin, however, she realizes that she does not fully belong to her home country either, since she does not recognize its altered face upon her arrival in Iran. The shocking disappointment at not belonging to either England or Iran leaves Mohamamdi skeptical about a homogeneous identity. Her journey eventually equips her to celebrate cultural hybridity and discard a national culture, which inevitably involves xenophobia and nationalism.

Mohammadi ultimately resolves all confusions about her identity because her return to Iran not only makes her acknowledge her failure to claim a homogeneous Iranian identity, but also provides her with the chance to review her childhood memories of growing up in her hometown of Abadan, a city which best embodies Iran's encounter with colonial modernity. The modern town of Abadan was developed in the twentieth century to house the expat communities and workers at the oil refinery patronized by the British Empire. Learning about her hometown's turbulent encounter with colonial modernity allows her to manage the interfaces between her two worlds and thus nuance the terms of belonging. She retraces her childhood memories in her house in Abadan and learns the extent to which her life was deeply and closely intertwined with the connection between her home and host countries. Knowledge of the history behind the acquisition of her house is definitive in Mohammadi's ultimate rejection of the hypostasized connection between home and home country.

Presupposing the conception of nations as internally undifferentiated entities to be a corollary of modern thought, and viewing national identity as a legacy of modernity (Hobsbawm 1992; Greenfeld 1993; Gellner 1994), this paper argues that *The Cypress Tree* reassesses the past and imagines a future 'by another route' —a circular one, as opposed to the forward-looking route conceivable by modernity. It draws on Stuart Hall, Gaston Bachelard, Avtar Brah and Homi Bhabha to enquire about issues of belonging, identity and home, and reads the memoir as a construction of Mohammadi's hybrid self through the self of the Iranian and British nations. In recent years, scholars have increasingly turned their attention to questions of diaspora and identity to explore how individuals negotiate cultural affiliations in a globalized world. A notable example of this focus can be found in *New Directions in Diaspora Studies: Cultural and Literary Approaches* (Ilott et al. 2018), which draws on a wide range of disciplinary perspectives to

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provide important insights into the complexities of diasporic subjectivity. This study can be said to be aligned with the collection's broader scholarly conversation and engages with similar themes and debates. Particularly, as a "contemporary 'revisiting' practice of cultural memory", it relates to "conflicting subject positions of a national, ethnic, gendered, class-based, or generational nature brought about by the proliferation of (sometimes forced) intercultural crossing" (Ilott et al. 2018: xxiv). In light of this overarching theme of cultural memory, the article maintains that the anamnesis of Iran's encounter with modernity allows Mohammadi to reject unitary sites of belonging as championed by modern nation-states, redefine belonging beyond the national identity, and thus "interrupt the Western discourses of modernity" (Bhabha 2012: 199). Following the memoir's trajectory, which begins with accounts of homelessness in exile and ends with feeling at home in the diaspora, this article scrutinizes the representation of Mohammadi's identity by problematizing the correlation between the nation-state and belonging, established by the logic of modernity.

2. Homeward Bound: Diasporas and Return

Mohammadi's decision to return to Iran, which reflects a persistent obsession with a unified self, coterminous with a specific geography, needs to be considered within her initial exile following the Islamic Revolution of 1979. The memoir begins with the events that triggered her displacement from Iran to England. Recounting her migration process and loss of home at a young age, Mohammadi writes about the forces that drove her to assimilate in England by "ignoring Iran" and "denying its existence" (2011: 6). This was her way of renouncing the traces of her previous connections to the place that "dealt [her] young heart such a shattering blow" that would comfort her sense of "shame" and unease (6). She had to renounce her previous home, which was associated with "radical images and ideals of the Islamic Republic", the "hostage crisis" and "the austere looks of Ayatollah Khomeini", to find a new home among the "reasonable English people" (6). To belong to 'here', her previous life 'there' has to be repressed and concealed, which contributes to her alienation in the host country. This generates a sense of exclusivity regarding national identity and drives her to become ambivalent about which of the two countries to call her home, England or Iran. As her attempt to define home and identity in exclusive terms is the reason behind her failure to accept England as her home, she conflates her feeling of not belonging to England with her separation from Iran and, thus, she feels the need to return. Contrary to Hall, who believed that "[f]ar from being grounded in a mere recovery of the past […], identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves

within, the narratives of the past" (1992: 225), Mohammadi views identities as transcendental. She embarks on her journey while still oblivious to the fact that identities are not "eternally fixed in some essentialized past", but are "subject to the continuous play of history, culture and power" (Hall 1992: 225).

Thus, influenced by nationalist thinking, which territorializes the stabilizing space of home within a nation-state and renders it coterminous with one's home country, Mohammadi sees return as the only option to ease her pain of not belonging. "Iran would not be willed away" (2011: 7), because it is synonymous with home for her. The failure to reject Iran and settle down comfortably in England is connected to her conception of home as "a body of images that give mankind proofs or illusions of stability" (Bachelard 1994: 17). Her memories of the "rose garden" in her old house, "noisy family gatherings", and "balmy nights" (Mohammadi 2011: 7) create this illusive body of images, which persists and frustrates Mohammadi's effort to feel at home in England. Her fixation with her childhood home as the exemplar of happiness and protection, with which nothing compares, eventually driving her to return to Iran, is reminiscent of Gaston Bachelard's notion of home in *Poetics of Space*:

> We comfort ourselves by reliving memories of protection. Something closed must retain our memories, while leaving them their original value as images. Memories of the outside world will never have the same tonality as those of home and, by recalling these memories, we add to our store of dreams. (1994: 5)

Recollections of the halcyon days of childhood set the definition of happiness and, accordingly, the feeling of being at home. For Mohammadi, who was displaced as a child, her house in Iran and metaphorically the country as a whole, stand for home. The "closed" period of childhood that retains her memories of protection accompanies her into the new house in London and nuances the meaning of home. Thus, England, as the new "outside world", is set against and falls short of the "tonality" of the memories she has of her home in Iran. This tonality is reflected by Mohammadi in such memories as the "cornucopia of different fruits arranged delicately on top of each other" that she compared with the "paucity" of fruit bowls of her new neighbor, Angela Baker (2011: 157). This different tonality drives her to decide that everything in her world was "so much bigger, larger, more abundant, and in comparison, England seemed so small, pale and controlled" (2011: 163). Corresponding to Bachelard's notion of home, Mohammadi's "entire past comes to dwell in [her] new house" (Bachelard 1994: 5). The illusive, stabilizing, and familiar past in Iran is the only space where her "certainty of being is concentrated", and allows her "a life that would be [her] own, that would belong to [her] in [her] very depths" (Bachelard 1994: 33).

Especially because she left Iran with no prospect of return, her journey back and

revisiting the people and places that have remained accessible only in her memories encompass all her anticipations for a reconciliation with her lost home. For Mohammadi, just like many Iranians who were exiled after the Revolution, Iran is the "the vision of paradise":

> For every Iranian the vision of paradise encompasses our land. […] Our roots go deep in Iran —we are exiles with a Lost Paradise forever swimming in our eyes, steeped in the culture of our lost land while living in foreign countries, […] ours is not just romantic love for an idealized country but also an expression of the loss each of us feels on being physically separated from Iran. (2011: 11-12)

Mohammadi's nostalgia for Iran exemplifies the dream of regaining a prelapsarian self, before the Fall of the Revolution condemned her to a life in exile. Her return embodies a diasporic vision of the home country as a paradise from which it was forcibly removed, and to which it will eventually return (Safran 1991: 83). Thus, as the way to retrace her steps became accessible, the anticipation of finding a welcoming home drives her to pack her newly obtained Iranian passport, in addition to her rusty Persian language, which she speaks "hesitantly and with an English accent" (2011: 7), and travel to Iran in 1997.

Upon her arrival, however, she soon realizes that her return is not a rewarding reconciliation with the past, as it offers no solution to her dislocating sense of homelessness. Even when she reunites with her extended family, she feels lost and confused as the complexities and nuances of everyday life escape her:

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> The rules of behavior in this new Islamic Republic were so confusing to me that I learned to hang back and be quiet and let others take the lead. I was trying to understand my own culture and this mortified me. I was swept off to palaces and museums. […] The city I had grown up in had become a confusion of criss-crossing motorways. Everything had changed. (Mohammadi 2011: 20)

Her return to Iran is traumatic. Not only does she have her dream dashed, but Mohammadi also has to readjust her memories, as well as her old self raised in England to the realities of a homeland she does not fully recognize. One of the factors that contribute to her sense of unfamiliarity with Iran is the radical transformation in the appearance of many Iranian cities, including Tehran and Abadan, the places where Mohammadi once lived. She searches for familiar sites where her "memories are housed", "have refuges" and are "clearly delineated" (Bachelard 1994: 8). But her initial excitement to reunite with her homeland wanes and is replaced by the disturbing realization that the remnants of her past can only be traced in museums, which, as the above quote demonstrates, she visits like a tourist. Like the experience of many second-generation Iranian migrants who return to the home country, Mohammadi "oscillate[s] between tourists and native identities, never quite settling into either position" (Darznik 2008: 57). She

is mortified and feels out of place as she "spent those first days in Tehran not quite a tourist not quite a local; neither British nor properly Iranian, but lost somewhere in the gap between the two, an empty space which was more dislocating than [she] had anticipated" (Mohammadi 2011: 19). The terrifying realization that she needs to struggle constantly to make sense of what she perceives as Iranian culture compounds her sense of dislocation.

Instead of "an easy panacea for matters of identity", Mohammadi's return to Iran "revealed a new layer of complexity" to her feeling of not belonging (Maghbouleh 2017: 131). This "new layer of complexity" emerges during the first few days of her arrival as her previous life, including her language and cultural knowledge, is now inaccessible to her. Stuck in a liminal space between "estrangement and familiarity with Iran and its resonant cultural impact" (Karim 2013: 106), Mohammadi does not grasp the social and linguistic nuances that govern modern Iran. She begins to see herself as "a foreigner" who is "nonetheless Iranian enough to be mortified by [her] own lack of appropriate manners and language" (Mohammadi 2011: 19). In Iran, she is compelled to observe social rules, such as "*ta'arof*, the elaborate Persian[1] form of courtesy, whose deciphering has dogged [her] life" (Mohammadi 2011: 7). While she could avoid the numerous nuances of Iranian conventions in England as she tried to refashion herself anew as an English girl, they unexpectedly stand up against her in Iran to challenge her sense of belonging at every turn.

In spite of her initial shock, this situation is familiar to her. For the adult Mohammadi in Iran, the strangeness of the place is reminiscent of England when she first arrived as a child refugee. Faced with the realization that she has to struggle to assimilate to her home country in 1997, she feels the same shame she felt in London after the Revolution in 1979:

> The first thing I learnt in England was shame. The second was shyness. I was ashamed of my inability to understand what people were saying to me and ashamed by the stare of the cashier when I, as a nine-year-old who was large for my age, bought English books in large print, intended for children half my age. (Mohammadi 2011: 166)

She felt ashamed because she failed to perform simple acts including speaking or reading. Everyday activities such as shopping terrified her, causing her to withdraw and transform from a sociable child in Iran to a shy and quiet one in England. The failure to fulfill what was demanded of a nine-year-old refugee drove Mohammadi to project the shame of being allegedly different from the rest of the society onto the Revolution; on "Ayatollah Khomeini's austere looks"; on the "radical images and ideals of the Islamic Republic"; on the fact that they had to flee Iran; and on not belonging to the "reasonable English people" (Mohammadi 2011: 6).

To deal with this shame, she struggled to become fully British by relinquishing her Iranian origins:

> Growing up in Britain in the 80s, I had slipped on the mask of Englishness, had declared Britain my country, had stuck my flag in her soil and given myself to her denying Iran at every turn refusing to speak Farsi until I had forgotten my language, and rejecting my relations every time they rang, not knowing how to speak to them, what to say, how to carry out this. Over the years, I had become so good at wearing the mask that eventually, the mask became my face. (Mohammadi 2011: 211)

The little girl shed her skin as she grew up. She pulled an external veneer of Englishness over her face by breaking off all ties with Iran, refusing to speak to her Iranian relatives, and forgetting her mother tongue, Farsi. After all, in keeping with Fanon, "to speak a language is to take on a world, a culture" (2008: 25). Farsi is an unnecessary burden to carry for the young immigrant eager to become "whiter" by gaining "greater mastery of the cultural tool that language is" (2008: 25). As language became intertwined with notions of Englishness, she pinned down a model of belonging on the basis of national identity and rejected Iran in order to adhere to her model of exclusive nationality and carve out a place for herself in her new country. Her fixation with a national identity, which was her reason for taking Iran as the solution to her feeling of homelessness in England, is also evident in her negative verdict on the Iranian community in London: "[w]e had all become masters of disguise, brilliant chameleons able to change color and even shift shape as we moved between our two worlds" (Mohammadi 2011: 211). Rather than a positive skill, she saw this maneuvering and handling of different circumstances that arise as a result of being a foreigner in England as a treacherous act. Mohammadi frowned upon her fellow Iranian migrants' "mimicry" (Bhabha 1984) and appropriation of certain strategies to carve a place in the national space of their common host country, and despite the use of the term "chameleon", she failed to appreciate the very first function of a chameleon's changing color, namely, survival. As Homi Bhabha remarks, in the interstice of either/or, there is always a third option, "camouflage" (1984: 172). As "a mode of appropriation and of resistance", Bhabha argues, "mimicry" or "camouflage" exemplifies "the assertion of the hybrid" which transforms "the insignia of authority" into "a mask, a mockery" (1984: 172). This is the reason why he finds it "difficult to agree entirely with Franz Fanon that the psychic choice is 'to turn white or disappear'", as there is always "the more ambivalent, third choice: camouflage, mimicry, black skins/white masks" (1984: 172). Contrarily, Mohammadi's choice was precisely to either turn white or disappear. Having inherited the modern discourse of identity and belonging, which assumes an integral identity for everyone living within the borders of the nation-state, as well as the colonial discourse of purity, which rejects miscegenation and mixing,

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Mohammadi wondered what the Iranian migrants, the chameleons, were doing among the "reasonable English people" (2011: 6).

Her disdain towards hybridity harks back to anxieties related to the imperialist discourses of racial purity in nineteenth century England "that valued boundaries of all kinds between people, and that devoted great energy to establishing and defending them" (Ritvo 1996: 44). As "a fundamental part of British national identity from at least the mid-Victorian period up until the mid-twentieth century" (Ashcroft and Bevir 2019: 26), and out of the fear of destabilizing social hierarchies and the strict borders of cultural unity, the imperialist mind-set permitted only exclusive forms of belonging to a place. Therefore, her use of the word "chameleon", as well as her search for a singular identity, signals a desire for a stable and unchangeable self or, in Bhabha's words, an impatience with the "ambivalen[ce] of the world of 'not quite/not white'" (1984: 132). However, when she realized that "the mask of Englishness" that she had "slipped on" (Mohammadi 2011: 211) did not help her to "turn white", she decided she had to "disappear" (Fanon in Bhabha 1984: 172) and return to Iran.

Eighteen years later, in her alleged home country, a similar culture shock overwhelms her. In the light of the shattered illusion of regaining her place and the subsequent realization of lacking anywhere to call home, the question arises as to where she might seek solace during this time of displacement. The answer to this predicament can be found within the realm of her life experience. Even though she feels out of place in her alleged home, there is a difference between her immigration to England and her return to Iran. Despite a familiar shock that the new refuge is far from a welcoming home, this time, and as an adult in Iran, she is equipped with long years of acculturation in a new place that quickly help her uncouple the reason for her failure to feel at home in both of these countries from the place. As Bachelard claims, while past memories are important, "all *really* inhabited space bears the essence of the notion of home" (2004: 5, emphasis added), which raises a question about the quality of living. If one really inhabits a space, then, what induces nostalgia for a home and the struggle to return to an earlier, happier state? In other words, what inhibits the real inhabiting of the young refugee's new home? If England is not Mohammadi's home —as the term 'host country' suggests— then she must feel like a guest in it, which makes one enquire into another important question: why are "immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers imagined as guests of the host nation-state?" (Manzanas Calvo 2013: 2). Feeling like a guest in her home country drives Mohammadi to contemplate whether it is possible to be native to a place and feel homeless in it, nonetheless. Having turned skeptical about her project of regaining a home in Iran, she begins to delve deeper into its history. As the next section demonstrates, she relinquishes her search for a unitary site of belonging

once she sets her own homelessness in tandem with that of many other Iranians who became guests in their own homes following Iran's encounter with modernity.

3. Guests of the Home Country

Mohammadi disavows the conflation of home and home country when she learns about the history of her hometown. Her successive trips to Iran provide her with "precious insights, bits and pieces of information" (Mohammadi 2011: 40) about the way in which colonial modernity interrupted the "livelihoods" of many people, by depriving them of the place where "their certainty of being" (Bachelard 1994: 33) is located, namely, their homes. Her return enables her to locate her memories of growing up in her childhood house and retrace the history behind its acquisition, the people who passed through it, as well as the land on which it was built. Mohammadi spent her childhood in Abadan, one of the most important sites of Iran's encounter with colonial modernity. Before the arrival of imperial Britain, Abadan was an island where Arab and Bakhtiyari[2] tribes lived and on which they relied for their subsistence. Along with the other south-western town of Masjed Soleyman, the modern town of Abadan was primarily developed for the Anglo Persian Oil Company's (APOC) employees who came to live side by side with the 24,000 Bani-Kaab Arab tribesmen who originally dwelled on that mudflat island (Ehsani 2003: 372).

Mohammadi describes the unequal development of the town by sarcastically repeating the APOC's colonialist view of the lands on which her hometown was built: "a town which had so recently just been an island in a marsh was thriving" (2011: 65). The APOC had leased the marshes, which it considered as a "wasteland", through a concession from the local authorities in 1901.[3] Because its colonial sensibility was incapable of perceiving other modes of life, the APOC saw the open expanse of the marshes as an "empty waste land" lying unattended, waiting to be exploited (Ehsani 2017: 433). As Kaveh Ehsani asserts, the APOC,

> justified this claim based on the absence of permanent settlements, agricultural farms, and private property claims registered by the central government. This perception conveniently overlooked the fluid nature of property relations in migratory pastoral societies and the social and political relations that underlined them. Tribal territory and its control was the foundation of the Bakhtiyari economy and its social and political structures. Pastoralists made seasonal use of pastures, and the maintenance of their flocks relied on migratory routes that were assigned to each clan by the tribe. (2017: 433)

The colonial mentality on the side of the APOC and the local authorities justified the dispossession of the local marsh dwellers' means of subsistence. The nomad

pastors who inhabited the lands seasonally and returned to them the following year to allow them to recuperate were seen as alien to the modern/colonial mind-set of extracting resources of a land to the last drop. This unsedentary lifestyle, along with their different property relations, contributed to their characterization as 'primitive' by the colonial mindset.

As a modern town, Abadan was the embodiment of such differentiation in the logic of coloniality and separating 'modern' from 'primitive'. By subjugating both nature and subsequently other forms of life that respected it, the logic of coloniality instituted the two opposing categories of the 'modern man' —characterized by his power to overcome nature— and the 'primitive man' —distinguished by his proximity to it and thus his barbarity. As Walter Mignolo remarks,

> The modern man built his sense of superiority and his pride in the process of cutting the umbilical cord with 'nature', while 'primitive man' was still too close to it; and being close to nature meant (from the perspective of "modern man") being far from civilization. However, Incas for example, were both, close to Pachamama and civilized. But that idea was destroyed by the rhetoric of modernity in order to build the logic of coloniality justifying actions over the 'barbarians' later on translated into 'primitives'. (2011: 172)

"The logic of coloniality", exemplified by the Iranian authorities' obsession with settlement, as well as the invading nomadism of imperial Britain, considered the allegedly 'primitive' ways of the nomads in the south of Iran as the antithesis of 'modern' projects. It therefore subjected the nomads to a modern life. The nomads' life was "circular", to borrow from Edouard Glissant, and was in stark contrast to the "arrowlike nomadism" (1997: 12) that colonialism represents. Glissant applies "arrowlike nomadism" to colonialism, characterized by its "absolute forward projection" indebted to its being "neither prudent nor circular", and its "devastating desire for settlement" (1997: 12). Thus, the totalitarian and arrowlike nomadism of the "logic of coloniality" paved the way for the expansion of modernity and the obliteration of the older ways of life, which resulted in binding and constraining the nomads to one place.

Accordingly, robbed of their "livelihood" (Bachelard 1994: 33), the nomadic tribes were the victims of the Iranian modernization project that considered nomadism as an impediment to the nation-state it was striving to establish and thus prohibited it by imposing forced settlements (Cronin 2009: 369). "[T]he largest proportion of Iranian territory was under the control of tribes" when modernity arrived in Iran. Therefore, the Iranian central government introduced the "tribal problem" as "a key weakness in Iran's development" and struggled to eradicate tribal identities by presenting them as an "internal other of Iranian national identity" and thus "hostile to the national unity" (Özdemir and Ergun

2021: 98). Iran's integrative nationalism, argues Ervand Abrahamian, entailed overcoming tribal identities along with linguistic, religious and ethnic diversity (in Vejdani 2014: 12). Mohammadi alludes to this history when she writes about the Iranian monarch's "land reforms" as an instance of his sprint toward modernity at the expense of "the poor", "the peasant" and "the nomad":

> [King Reza Pahlavi] forcibly settled the nomadic tribes and his land reforms attempted to create modernity at the expense of the poor and peasant classes, now joined in round by nomads whose enforced settlement turned them into impoverished farmers raising their cattle on arid land. […] Tehran's dominion over all aspect of this emerging nation state allowed the strong man to keep all the threats of the country directly in his own hands and, in the meantime, become the biggest landowner in Iran. (2011: 42-43)

To forge an Iranian national identity, many people had to relinquish their means of livelihood and subsistence. Encroaching on people's homes, the central government confiscated their lands and leased them to forward development projects such as constructing the oil refinery, and erecting new neighborhoods and shanty towns.

Mohammadi's family eventually acquired a house in the *Braim*, a neighborhood that stood out from the surrounding native neighborhoods. Built with an English aesthetic to offer a familiar sight to the British expats who worked at the oil refinery, the neighborhood was exclusively inhabited by the British up until the nationalization of the oil company in 1951:

> The British had built Braim for themselves and their manicured lawns and ordered gardens recalled the suburbia with a paler sky many thousands of miles away. They stopped short of the mock-Tudor facades and double or triple stories standard in Surbiton. These houses were mostly bungalows and though the population of up and down saw that this was exactly like England, an English man, confronted by date palms soaring into the firmament in the garden and walls of tumbling bougainvillea against the humid blue sky, would certainly not have agreed. (2011: 65)

Even though it was built to offer a hospitable and familiar site to the British who were far away from their homes, the weather and flora of Abadan, as well as the architecture, felt too foreign to them. The Braim was English, but "not quite", to repeat Homi Bhabha's quote mentioned above, even if it felt authentic to the Iranian observers who were barred from entering it. Rather "uncanny", it was far from hospitable to both the English and the Iranian neighbors. The term uncanny is a reference to the way Gayatri Spivak, drawing on Freud, problematizes the loss of our common humanity as a result of colonialism. In his famous eponymous article, where he describes situations that induce certain irrational fears, Freud proposes that repression of any kind of affect will turn that emotion into an anxiety, which then "recurs" and produces an uncanny feeling (1976: 634). In *Death of a Discipline*,

Spivak focuses on the etymology of the German equivalent of the word uncanny, das Unheimliche (literally unhomely), and connects the uncanny to colonialism. She defines heim (home), at the root of unheimliche, as the state of being "human in the world" (2003: 57), which colonialism has rendered inaccessible and "inhospitable", and which eventually recurs and provokes "anxiety or Angst" (2003: 57). She argues that, "the name of what comes forth to transform this familiar shared humanity […] into a source of fear and anxiety (Angst), may be something called 'colonialism'" (2003: 57). Apart from the difference in climate and architecture between England and Abadan, which was too obvious for the expatriates to feel at home in their houses in Braim, an equally hostile social segregation in the town made the place uncanny. The segregation was even visible in the urban geography of Abadan. Located in a part of the island where "the breeze made the extremely hot climate somewhat tolerable", Braim was far away from the "native town", where Arab villages were located, or the "the sprawling shantytowns" and urban neighborhoods that housed lower rank workers (Elling 2016: 191).

As Mohammadi describes her hometown, before the nationalization of the oil company, "something like an apartheid" existed in Abadan, which "barred ordinary Iranian workers from occupying high management positions and entering Braim" (2011: 62). Ironically, the segregation continued when the Iranian oil industry was nationalized in 1951 and the APOC —which was by now called the 'AIOC', Anglo-Iranian Oil Company— changed to 'NIOC', National Iranian Oil Company. The forging of the nation, mirrored in the evolution of the oil company's title, did not necessarily equal the inclusion of all the people who lived within the national geography. In other words, though Iran was becoming the alleged home of the nation, in reality not everyone was at home in it. With the nationalization of the oil industry, a new class, which Ehsani calls "the labor aristocracy", was born (2003: 370). These "new Iranians" (Mohammadi 2011: 94) substituted the British and came to occupy higher positions in the Oil Company. Having studied in England, Mohammadi's father "was one of the three men appointed to keep the power station supplying the refinery working when the British departed" (Mohammadi 2011: 62). In Abadan, this group that "identified with Western culture more than their own were classified as the elite of the city" (Farzaneh 2021: 63), while the rest of the town's population served them "as housekeepers, cooks, cleaners, maids" (Mohammadi 2011: 66). The houses of Braim "were allocated to Iranian managers" (Mohammadi 2011: 65), like Mohammadi's father, who came to live in it with his English wife, who hired a local man as a cook specialized in preparing English food.

As Mohammadi follows the different people that passed through her house in Braim, she ultimately arrives at the moment when her family were ousted from it. With the increasing divide between the different social classes caused by political

restrictions and economic disparity, Iran was becoming the exclusive home for a select few, including the 'new Iranians' such as her own family, whose modern lives were epitomized by the ruling elite:

> Unseen by families like mine, cushioned from the grim realities of political outcry and economic deprivation, the vast majority of traditional Iranians —those peasants and workers who were now uprooted from their traditional livelihoods on the land— were looking with increasing resentment at not only the Shah and the unspeakably rich elite that surrounded him, but also at the comfortable lives of corporate new Iranians such as my father. (2011: 94)

Produced by both imperial powers and the national sovereigns' desire for modernization and progress, the "grim reality" of the constant disturbance of people's "livelihoods", against which her family had been "cushioned", is assumed by Mohammadi to be behind the violent upheavals that eventually displaced myriads of Iranians. On the one hand, with "the ascendency of oil as a major global strategic resource" during the course of WW1 (Ehsani 2014: 174), the invasive nomadism of the British Empire in search of provisions for funding its participation in the war heavily impacted the lives of many Iranians. For the British Empire, access to oil meant "the mass production of military hardware that operated with the internal combustion engines, such as tanks, airplanes, automobiles, and submarines" (Ehsani 2014: 174). Imperialism allowed Britain to extract the oil that gushed beneath the marshes and impact the ways of life that existed on them. On the other hand, the coloniality that is hardwired into forced modernization, propelled the Iranian authorities —what Mignolo would call 'modern men'— to exercise their control over the traditional —'primitive'— population and eternally transform their dwelling.

Recounting her hometown's encounter with modernity and tracing the history of the disappearance of the different kinds of dwellings —of the nomads', the expats', and her family's— from the land on which her childhood house stood, Mohammadi's self runs parallel to the construction of the disturbed selfhood of her nation. The knowledge that the nation-state is not the home for everyone living in it prompts Mohammadi to rewrite belonging in terms distinct from the myopic imagining permitted by nationalism, and instead to claim a cultural identity. Her return is therefore circular and brings her back to the diaspora. Similar to the Jamaicans' "symbolic journeys" in Hall's study, Mohammadi's return, "necessary" and "necessarily circular" (Hall 1992: 232), gives her the home she was searching for. Departing from the well-trodden path of national identity, Mohammadi eventually settles in a home built from the multiplicity of the "routes" that she, and many other Iranians in the diaspora, take "through politics of memory and desire" (Hall 1992: 232):

> Whether it is my cousins making good their new lives in Europe, North America or Australia, bringing up their children and stitching new identities on top of the old one, or the cousins still in Iran living in the big city or a small town, trading clothes or erecting skyscrapers, showing off or falling out, studying and marrying and negotiating a curious mixture of all the new that Iran now is, or whether it is us, our own mini-village of Mohammadis gathered around my mother's kitchen table in London, we have all survived. (Mohammadi 2011: 269)

Acknowledging the overlapping and porous boundaries of the collective identities that she inhabits simultaneously, Mohammadi, therefore, arrives in Iran "by another route", a circular one that takes her from an exilic identity to the diaspora. She manages to reassess the past and learn that people are not enveloped in a singular social world. Mohammadi is able to shift her focus to her 'homing desire' rather than a 'desire for a homeland' by embracing the diaspora's "multi-locationality within and across territorial, cultural and psychic boundaries" as described by Brah (2005: 194). Beginning in London at her mother's house, her route takes her through her aunt's house in Iran —her "*Maman Doh*", second mom— where she hears "we have all lost a lot, but there is life. You have to look in front of you, *ghorbonetam* [darling], not back" (2011: 269, emphasis in original). It eventually brings her back to England, to her mother's house in London, where she writes: "Sedi is much more to me than my mother —she is my mother tongue, my motherland, and to me, she is also my beloved Iran" (2011: 260).

4. Conclusion

My discussion of Mohammadi's memoir has highlighted the extent to which the knowledge of the imperial experience can "transform our understanding of both the past and the present and our attitude toward the future" (Said 1993: 17). It critically examined Mohammadi's longing for a home by drawing upon Bachelard's reading of the fundamental aspects that shape the concept of a home. The essay put forth the argument that Mohammadi's motivation to return to Iran is not simply rooted in a conventional understanding of a home, but rather driven by a "homing desire" as conceptualized by Avtar Brah. It refuted the conventional notion of returning to the past that often occurs within many diasporic experiences. Imagining alternative routes, this essay has questioned the putative neutrality of the term national identity and challenged the unitary narrative of national belonging, according to which dispossession and homelessness are allowed. Accordingly, it examined the homogenizing forces of nationalism and took hybridity as its point of departure in order to scrutinize Mohammadi's desire to

find a home in her native land. It also focused on her struggle and failure to assimilate in Britain, as well as her subsequent disillusionment with not fully belonging to Iran, in order to highlight the significance of cultural memory as a vital resource that aids Mohammadi in overcoming her sense of homelessness. Central to this study was Mohammadi's revisiting of the previous lives that dwelt in the place where her childhood house stood, which drives her to acknowledge that nation as a category is embedded in colonial modernity. The paper illustrated that as she juxtaposes her personal history with that of other Iranians whose loss of livelihood was a consequence of nation-building endeavors, she abandons her pursuit of a singular site of belonging. Retracing her memories, she learns that even an Iranian identity is internally contested and thus her ambiguous world transforms into the heterogeneous social worlds she inhabits. From this new interstitial position, she ceases to view her home and host societies as internally integrated societies and settles into her hybrid identity.

Notes

1. Persian and Iranian are used interchangeably throughout this essay.

2. One of the two biggest tribes in Iran.

3. The Arab date farmers and pastoralists were under the rule of the paramount Sheikh Khaz'al who leased those lands to the British (Ehsani 2017: 433).

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EUROPEAN MIGRANTS AS "STRANGE" FIGURES IN ALI SMITH'S *AUTUMN*

PERSONAS MIGRANTES EUROPEAS COMO FIGURAS "EXTRAÑAS" EN *AUTUMN* DE ALI SMITH

LAURA ALDEGUER PARDO
Universidad de Oviedo
lauraldeguer@uniovi.es
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7196-8340>

Abstract

This article examines the representation of the European protagonist in *Autumn* by Ali Smith from a gender, intersectional and cultural studies perspective. The novel is a pioneering work in Brexlit, an emergent literary movement which aims to reflect the current political and social landscape of the United Kingdom after the 2016 European Union referendum. Firstly, this article offers an overview of the political, social and literary phenomenon of Brexlit, followed by an outline of Sara Ahmed's theorisation of the sociological concept of the stranger. Secondly, the article further contextualises Brexit fiction, presenting its crucial role in putting forward a fair portrayal of migrants, a collective largely misrepresented in the UK media. The article then considers the centrality of Ali Smith's *Seasonal Quartet* to the reworking of the British social imaginary. The subsequent two sections explore the encounters in which Daniel's strange(r)ness manifests itself through his heterogeneous and relational yet singular identity, owing to his connection to the migratory experience. Retaining his differences and from a position of agency, the solidary bonds he establishes with Elisabeth convey strange(r)ness as a label that must be overcome in order to ensure a better coexistence within the British nation.

Keywords: Brexit, migration, the figure of the stranger, European citizenship.

Resumen

Este artículo examina la representación del protagonista europeo en *Autumn*, de Ali Smith, desde una perspectiva de género, interseccional y de estudios culturales. Esta obra es pionera en Brexlit, un movimiento literario emergente que pretende reflejar el actual panorama político y social del Reino Unido tras el referéndum europeo de 2016. En primer lugar, este trabajo ofrece una visión general del fenómeno político, social y literario del Brex(l)it, seguido de un esbozo de la teorización de Sara Ahmed sobre el concepto sociológico del extraño. En segundo lugar, el artículo contextualiza la ficción del Brexit, otorgándole un papel crucial en la justa representación de las personas migrantes, un colectivo cuya realidad ha sido frecuentemente tergiversada en los medios británicos. Por tanto, el artículo considera la centralidad del cuarteto estacional de Ali Smith en la reconstrucción del imaginario social británico. Las dos secciones siguientes exploran los encuentros en los que la extrañeza de Daniel se manifiesta a través de su identidad heterogénea y relacional, aunque singular, debido a su conexión con la experiencia migratoria. Conservando sus diferencias y desde una posición de agente, los lazos solidarios que establece con Elisabeth transmiten la extrañeza como una etiqueta que debe ser superada para asegurar una mejor convivencia dentro de la nación británica.

Palabras clave: Brexit, migración, la figura de la extraña, ciudadanía europea.

1. Introduction

The aim of this article is to analyse, through the lens of notions related to strangerness, the representation of the character embodied by a European migrant in Ali Smith's *Autumn* (2016), the opening novel of her *Seasonal Quartet*. Close reading techniques are combined with an interdisciplinary and theoretical approach to the analysis of the novel based on gender, intersectional, cultural and migration studies. The novel concerns Brexit, in particular the political and social climate in which the United Kingdom's exit from the European Union originated on June 23, 2016. The "(proposed) withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union", as the Oxford Dictionary defined it in 2017, has given rise to a post-referendum literary movement by the name of Brexlit. The term first appeared in a 2017 Financial Times article which featured Scottish author Ali Smith's *Autumn* (2016) as the most salient example of Brexit fiction. Smith's work is pioneering within this emergent literary movement given that her works engage directly with the state of the British nation before, during and after the vote on European membership. The omniscient narrator that guides us through the *Seasonal Quartet* infiltrates the consciousnesses of an array of characters belonging to a variety of

cultural backgrounds, from people born and bred on British soil to those with European roots but either fully settled in the UK, or trying to settle, or just staying temporarily. While attention will be paid to all, the focus of this work will be mainly on those who find themselves in the latter categories. There is a great deal of significance in the fact that the characters of the *Seasonal Quartet* who mirror the formulation of 'strange figures' in Ali Smith's fiction all share a connection to the migratory experience. In times of exacerbated Euroscepticism and xenophobia, not only is the task of representing characters embodied by European migrants a political one, but so is placing them at the hinges of the narrative. Smith's representation of strange(r)ness subverts contemporary political discourses tasked with clouding the public perception of —European, in the case of *Autumn*— migrants. In doing so, she places them in "structural and ethical roles" that sway the narrative towards "perceptual, even ethical and political readjustments of the people and the societies they encounter" (Masters 2021: 982).

For that reason, the backbone for the analysis of Daniel will be the work of feminist academic and author Sara Ahmed, *Strange Encounters: Embodied Others in Postcoloniality* (2000). Ahmed draws on feminist and postcolonial theory to explain the experiences of otherness and marginalisation that arise from current phenomena such as migratory movements, globalisation and multiculturalism. Thus, Ahmed offers a critical and innovative analysis of contemporary strangerness, as she reveals the negative assumption behind an ethics that embraces it. The stranger is understood as a tangible figure with a meaning of their own. Thus, she criticises what she terms the "stranger fetishism" of earlier thinkers such as Zygmunt Bauman. Essentially, by characterising the stranger as an ontological figure (stranger-as-figure) with a life, name and referent of their own, the particularities at play in their histories of determination are erased. If this was the case, we would be assuming that the circumstances in which migrants, foreigners and refugees find themselves are alike, since "all forms of movement, travel and displacement […] lead to the same place: the place of the stranger" (Ahmed 2000: 7).

Ahmed suggests considering the stranger as the outcome of the processes of inclusion and exclusion that result from the construction of borders between bodies and epistemic, neighbouring or travelling communities. To achieve this, she resorts to encounters, whether physical or figurative, between two or more elements, which are inherent in the configuration of human and non-human identities. According to Ahmed, such encounters produce antagonistic conflicts, for although both elements lack the necessary information to take control of the situation, one of them possesses the power of definition and uses it to designate itself as subject by establishing the boundaries of the familiar around its own identity. The presence of the stranger, while out-of-place and beyond the familiar,

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destabilises these very limits since its presence cannot be interpreted immediately. Hence, the figure of the stranger does not stand for that which we fail to recognise, but for what we have already recognised as strange. In order to shed some light on these asymmetrical power roles, Ahmed ponders on the impact of previous encounters, which are also framed within certain power relations and social antagonism. These encounters take place both in the present and in the past, in specific and general terms. Thus, the repeated recognition of strangers designates certain human traits as such, while simultaneously outlining, strengthening and legitimising the borders of a given community. The sociological concept of the stranger as formulated by Ahmed will prove highly effective for the later close reading of *Autumn*, which will delve into themes of natives' framing of otherness, and migrants' forms of agency and belonging. Additionally, Ahmed's contemporaneous theorisation will also be of use when considering the current degree of social exclusion experienced by European migrants generally.

2. European Strangerness in Post-referendum Literature

Kristian Shaw, in *Brexlit: British Literature and The European Project* (2021), provided an elaborate definition of the literary movement we have come to know as Brexlit. According to Shaw, the works belonging to this genre are concerned with either reflecting imaginatively, responding directly or dealing with the socio-cultural, economic and racial consequences that followed the UK's exit from the European Union (2021: 4). According to a number of scholars who have worked on this matter (Eaglestone 2018; Keller and Habermann 2021; Shaw 2021), the Brexit aftermath did not fracture the nation as much as it revealed a high degree of social, cultural, economic and identity dissatisfaction across virtually the entirety of British society. Nonetheless, debates surrounding the British referendum are undisputedly driven by xenophobic stances based on a long-standing Eurosceptic tradition. Such a sentiment is described as originally English by Robert Harmsen and Menno Spiering, who also argue that it has contributed to a sense of awkwardness in regard to the swift progress of the European Union's common polices (2005: 13).

Thus, the 2016 referendum was the ultimate expression of this sentiment, targeting the millions of European citizens residing in the UK as the main cause of strain on the British public services. In this sense, a number of papers (Eaglestone 2018; Berberich 2021; Shaw 2021) have argued that this movement has become an inexpungable fortress of cosmopolitanism, an imaginary stage that allows for the debating and rethinking of interpersonal relations through national and cultural borders. Such a vision is reminiscent of Benedict Anderson's approach, who

pointed to the commodification of the press as a key ingredient in the shaping of modern imaginary nations (1991: 44-46). In this regard, it is significant to consider the work of Dulcie Everitt, author of *BrexLit – The Problem of Englishness in Pre- and Post-Brexit Referendum Literature* (2022). Everitt argues that the corpus of Brexlit stands in opposition to some works of English literature published before the referendum; she refers specifically to Julian Barnes's *England, England* (1996) and Jonathan Coe's *The Rotters' Club* (2001). Thus, she contends that it is their approach to the idea of Englishness that drives them apart, for those works that came before the referendum offer a problematisation of Englishness, whereas post-referendum literature attempts to resolve it (2022: 22).

As a whole, the cultural production resulting from Brexit, including literature, has been criticised for two reasons. First of all, it has been faulted for attending to the consequences of the referendum from a single point of view: the English one. The use of this singular perspective portrays Brexit as a national issue that affects only those native to the territory, thus ignoring the range of serious situations endured by European migrants working and living in the United Kingdom. A long way from literary Realism, Brexlit works lie in between fiction and history, owing to the chronological and geographical nearness of the events they feature. For that reason, Christine Berberich states that such exclusion serves to reinforce the portrayal of EU migrants as marginal and "disenfranchised outsiders" in British society (2021: 168, 180). Conversely, while it is true that some works include characters embodied by Europeans, namely Linda Grant's *A Stranger City* (2020) or Adam Thorpe's *Missing Fay* (2017), they often appear as token characters. Thereby, their characterisation abides by stereotypes that perpetuate their marginal position while revealing unresolved concerns about British racial and cultural superiority.

However, there is something to be said about the inequalities among European nationalities, especially those concerning the treatment they are subjected to. Starting from the literature, this point was raised by Vedrana Veličković in an article on the token representation of Eastern European migration, in which she writes: "Eastern Europeans are builders, plumbers, agricultural workers, nannies, au pairs, care workers, trafficked and exploited women in need of rescuing and educating, unruly and sexist men" (2020: 649). This disparity is also to be found in cultural and migratory studies, where the circulation of Central and Eastern European migrants has been studied in view of the negative impact it has on the welcoming society's labour market. Alternatively, the mobility of northeastern Europeans is mostly depicted as tolerable from the welcoming society's perspective owing to the commercial value of their skills and/or financial independence (Lafleur and Mescoli 2018: 481).

That being said, both characterisations rest on the idea that migrants are unable to settle permanently in one place, and thus, their ability to establish emotional ties of belonging with the territory, as well as interpersonal relationships with their neighbours, is easily denied (Lafleur and Mescoli 2018; Taulant and Daffyd Jones 2018; Mas Giralt 2020). Even though this representation did not begin with the referendum or the hostile political environment, the context in which both occur is ideal for examining the dynamics of belonging "as it has shifted national and supranational boundaries in an aggressive manner, juxtaposing collective identities, creating uncertainties and foreboding crises" (Ranta and Nancheva 2018: 2). The context of the referendum has emphasised the responsibility of producing academic and literary works that examine and attribute value to the ways in which European migrants assert their sense of belonging, namely through what is known in migration studies as embedding (Ryan and Mulholland 2015). This notion is useful in highlighting the efforts migrants make when integrating in a new community, seeing as it relates both to practical aspects —the bureaucracy and participation in the community and in the labour market— and to the idea of home, based on the emotional bond between individuals and a community and/or a geographical location (Sotkasiira and Gawlewicz 2021: 26). Dynamism is a pivotal aspect of embedding, essential in expressing the contingency that dictates interpersonal and territorial bonds. Thus, some of Brexlit's pending tasks include exposing the exclusion processes that identify European migrants as strange figures, owing to their association with migrancy, and avoiding reductive representations that lead to stranger fetishism by including characterisation that attests to the different European nationalities, as well as to other variables —age, social class, gender and geographical locality.

Ali Smith —born in Scotland, a territory that voted overwhelmingly in favour of remaining in the EU— attempts to tackle these tasks with her *Seasonal Quartet*, published as a "time-sensitive experiment" during the referendum campaign and post-Brexit scenario (Smith 2019). This was purely coincidental, as with the publication of *Autumn* Ali Smith was far from trying to make a personal statement about Brexit. She ruminates: "[t]he novel form is always unfailingly about the mesh of time and society, and people caught up in both" (in Orhanen 2020). This dislike of categorisation is shared by Smith's fellow Scots and contemporary writers Jackie Kay, Janice Galloway and A.L. Kennedy. Following the leading female voices of the Second Scottish Renaissance in the 1980s, Smith and her contemporaries aimed to further explore issues of gender and national belonging "through interrogation of boundaries of private/public spaces, centre/margin dichotomies, proposing models of identity which deviate from stable readings of home (lands) and roots" (Germanà 2012: 153). However, Smith's latest works have already been recognised as leading a branch of Brexlit that distils hope and is headed

towards the creation of spaces that foster national and transnational dialogues. To this end, Smith resorts to literary devices such as intertextuality, stream of consciousness and multiple perspective so as to reflect the degree of social detachment that prevails in present-day UK, whilst still inching towards an "ideal of dialogical communication and political solidarity to overcome this state of paralysis" (Pittel 2021: 123).

3. Framing the Other: Strangerness at (whose) Home?

Written during the 2016 British referendum campaign on the European project, *Autumn* is the first of the four novels that comprise Ali Smith's *Seasonal Quartet*. As such, the first specific temporal reference we encounter locates us "just over a week after the vote" (2016: 53). Despite the lack of specific geographical indications, a series of brief clues dispersed across the narrative space allows us to venture that the main characters live in an English village to the north of London —"she had gone down to London" (2016: 98). Both hints verge on indeterminacy —not fully vague nor rigorous— thus placing the referendum, the novel's main point of reference, on a polyhedric stage: historical and contemporaneous, general and particular. Such a wide range of available perspectives also works to broaden the definitions that govern nostalgic national identities such as the English one, allowing for peaceful coexistence with multicultural, European and/or hybrid ones.

In *Autumn*, it is not linearity that gives meaning and cohesion to the narrative but the coalescence of "scattered stories and memories" that have led Smith's narrative to be dubbed fragmentary (Baker 2022). As Timothy C. Baker puts it, although these fragments will not be a panacea for the world's ills, their —or rather our— constellation-like disposition situates us in immediate contact with everything around us. Baker contends that fragmentary narratives such as Smith's rely on this discursive and stylistic brokenness to provide "new ideas of connection and community" (2022: 191). As for the work under analysis, the driving plot rests on a series of existential and historical links: the long-lasting friendship between its two protagonists —Elisabeth and Daniel, a successful yet unknown musical composer. Their friendly bond begins when Elisabeth and her mother move house, becoming Daniel's next-door neighbours. Despite the number of factors that set Daniel and Elisabeth apart, namely their age —during their first encounter, Elisabeth is a child and he is of old age— as well as their origins —Elisabeth is English and Daniel grew up in Germany and England— their friendship emerges out of the need of getting to know and respecting your closest neighbours.

Ahmed's contributions on the role of strangers in this type of relationship become especially pertinent when examining their particular friendship. Based on the

analysis she offers of what is known in Australia as "the Bell debate", Ahmed notes how friendship can serve as an excuse to conceal "the operation of an epistemic difference and division" (2000: 67). Essentially, Ahmed questions the legitimacy of the knowledge that results from this type of friendship, since the stranger involved is defined not according to "what it lacks politically and economically, but by their epistemic privilege", and thus, it becomes an object of knowledge, rather than the subject that generates it (Marotta 2021: 4). From the very start, Smith manages to avoid such a reading of her protagonists' friendship by means of two elements. In the first place, Elisabeth is barely a child when the two meet, and so even though her status as a native Briton eases her way through the nation, her age makes her less prone to act on potential power asymmetries. On top of this, Daniel's character is instilled with complexity and agency, making him not only the source of knowledge, but also the one who puts it into practice through his ethical guidance.

In addition to this, the voices and minds through which readers experience the political climate prior to and following the 2016 referendum belong, on the one hand, to Elisabeth, whom we meet during her childhood and get to know through her teenage years and into adulthood as a 32-year-old who works as a "no-fixed hours casual contract junior lecturer" in one of London's universities (2016: 15). On the other hand, Elisabeth's childhood was spent by the side of her mother, Wendy, whose mindset at times showed signs of nostalgia for the past along with repudiation of the strange. Thus, when Elisabeth comes home from school one day in 1993 with a homework assignment "about history and being neighbours" that requires her to interview her then elderly and still unknown neighbour, her mother urges her to resort to her imagination to fabricate a credible enough interview (2016: 45). However, the child is utterly fascinated with the person inhabiting the neighbouring house, hence her determination to make him the subject of her interview.

Unaware of any details about Daniel's life, Wendy bases her first impression of the neighbour on the fact that she is unable to interpret a painting visible through a window in the front room of his house, which depicts a stone with a hole in its centre. According to Sara Ahmed, encounters between two unknown beings always entail a power imbalance (2000: 3). In this first figurative encounter, the imbalance between Wendy and her neighbour, whose identity is rendered by this very painting, is made patent as she appoints herself as a privileged subject the instant she defines the painting as pretentious and different. A strange quality is also attributed to Daniel, an inference backed by Ahmed's understanding that the stranger is the outcome of processes of inclusion and exclusion that result from the construction of borders between bodies and epistemic, neighbouring and travelling

communities. As such, the authority which Wendy grants herself enables her to conjecture that "[h]e probably can't speak very good English" (2016: 44). Within this assumption, we do not only find a complete alignment of the terms foreigner and stranger, but also a reification of the latter, as it turns them into an actual figure with specific features that help identify them as well as others displaying the same characteristics. Moreover, Wendy's response could be attributed to the imminent possibility of a face-to-face encounter with Daniel, or between Daniel and Elisabeth, since "proximity is imagined then as the possibility of future injury" (Ahmed 2004: 67). Following Ahmed's arguments on fear, this entails a present relation of proximity; however, it is also based on past encounters —in this case, involving other foreigners. When assigning some other with the quality of being "fearsome", Ahmed mentions the use of stereotypes to determine the other's definition, as can be seen in Wendy's commentary on Daniel (2004: 63). It is precisely the act of attributing a negative effect that causes fear to move around and stick to other signs and/or bodies, which clarifies Wendy's reluctance and her desire to keep a distance between Elisabeth and Daniel.

While the behaviour exhibited by Wendy could be said to abide by the discourse that is expected of the nation —one that requires "some-body or some-where to not-be in order for it to be" (Ahmed 2000: 99), that is, someone with different artistic references or a different accent— Elisabeth's attitude corresponds to the other side of the same coin. After hearing her mother's allegations about their neighbour's "arty" or pretentious art (2016: 44), Elisabeth resorts to introspection, to observing the familiar, as she turns to examine the very paintings that hang in their living room: "the picture of the river and the little house. The picture of the squirrels made from bits of real pinecone" (Smith 2016: 44). In her artistic description, Elisabeth remains rigorously objective until the end, including her analysis of the family portraits. In this sense, the differences Wendy spots in Daniel's character are not equally perceived by Elisabeth, who does not feel the need to impose her own identity over the stranger's and does not seem overprotective over what constitutes her "space of the familial": her home, family and memories (Ahmed 2000: 8).

In her way of thinking, Wendy's attitude could be associated with a more traditional English consciousness, one based on past nostalgia, ignorance, superiority. In contrast, her daughter Elisabeth could be said to embody a British identity or contemporary Britishness. This designation has been, since the coming into force of the British Nationality Act in 1981, strongly associated with a multicultural identity, due to its ability to accommodate a European identity, and an open-mindedness towards migrants and other minority groups (Van Der Zwet et al. 2020: 522). Contrary to her mother, who requires the presence of the stranger in

order to reinstate the legitimacy of physical and figurative boundaries, Elisabeth does not jump to conclusions based on preconceived definitions and finds it necessary to have a first-hand account of her neighbour's circumstances, such as "what it was like where the neighbour grew up and what life was like when the neighbour was my age" (2016: 33). Therefore, even though Elisabeth appears to share some of her mother's views——"[t]his town's been a town since long before I was born. If it was good enough for my parents, and my grandparents and my great grandparents…" (2016: 83)— she also exhibits a great degree of curiosity that, together with her tenacity, emphasises her ethical standpoint as she seeks truthfulness and each person's unique characteristics: "[i]t's supposed to be true, Elisabeth said. It's for News" (2016: 44). Hence, the kind words the youth writes about her wise neighbour, without having met him in person, lead Wendy to initiate her first encounter with Daniel with the aim of showing him the said description, as well as to trust him with her daughter's care in her absence.

Over the course of their friendship, Daniel avoids sharing with Elisabeth any details regarding the uneasiness that came with his hybrid identity, namely the fact that as a teenager he was identified as a stranger in Germany, where "[a]ll the people on the train [could] see from his clothes that he [wasn't] from here" (2016: 98), as well as in England, where "he also [didn't] quite belong" (2016: 183). A deeper insight into this feeling of unbelonging is provided in the pages of *Summer* (2020), the fourth and closing instalment of the *Seasonal Quartet*. The narrator follows a young Daniel and his father during the early 1940s, a period that saw the British Government, led by the Conservatives, set up prison camps for all Germans and Austrians living in England under accusations of treachery and espionage. The question about Daniel's origin arises on three occasions during his time at the prison camps of Ascot and Kempton Park. An aspect worth highlighting about all three instances is that independently of their outcome, they serve to reinstate Daniel's sense of self and belonging. Indeed, the first of these instances features a young English boy who, from outside the camp territory, spouts tabloid rumours about camp internees at Daniel. Our protagonist does make his English nationality explicitly clear, but the strength of this piece of information lies not in the denomination. Instead, it is the pairing of Daniel's flawless command of the language with his conviction that he belongs wherever his family is. His hybrid identity resurfaces in an encounter with two German brothers, with whom he feels comfortable enough to share his parents' origins and to articulate his identity as a "Summer German" (2020: 100). Lastly, Daniel's contact with a fellow German internee seeking a German and English speaker prompts him to further elaborate on his life-story, which leads him to define his German self as being six years old.

Ultimately, what Daniel passes down to Elisabeth are the ways of communicating,

reflecting and being in the world —acquired thanks to his experiences as well as from his sister Hannah— that allow him to belong to a single place, while still being connected to another one and its people. Despite his attitude to life, which already distinguishes him from others, it is important to stress that his difference does not lie in an "I/others" opposition but in his way of conveying what Harald Pittel refers to as "an awareness of the collective dimension of reality" (2021: 127). In order to reach this stage, Daniel adopts an attitude that escapes traditional forms of belonging, such as autochthony, a belief that prioritises blood and soil over cultural belonging. Correspondingly, those native to a given territory are thought to be more entitled to claim ownership or belonging to it.

4. Binding Subjectivities through Nature

The most recurrent symbol permeating *Autumn* —and the rest of the *Seasonal Quartet*— is that of nature. Its changing but recurrent and familiar elements embody an eternal albeit last glimmer of hope. After all, Smith's works are marked by the depiction of a multicultural, solidary and tolerant yet united British society. The fact that Smith opts to convey an optimistic account of the social situation in post-Brexit Britain does not necessarily mean that reality is set aside to envision a utopian future. Instead, the idea of hope is tethered to nature in all its contingency. Every chapter is introduced by a sentence printed in bold with the apparent purpose of situating the forthcoming action. While we do encounter precise dates, when strung together, the majority of these sentences can be said to belong to an arrangement of individual experiences of the passing of time and references to natural elements. Together with detailed descriptions of leaves thinning or flower buds blooming we find statements such as "[a] minute ago it was June. Now the weather is September" (Smith 2016: 52), which signal the season's triumph over time as a fixed cultural convention. In short, allusions to the seasons predominate, oscillating between the exactness of dates and the relativity of individual accounts. The narrative cannot be pinned to a sole positionality, its groundedness and multiplicity making it applicable to a great number of contexts.

Nature also makes recurrent appearances in the form of implicit and metaphorical references. We find multiple excerpts that feature elements of nature such as trees, trunks, leaves or flowers. They become essential props in the task of illustrating themes of connectivity and human subjectivity. One could say they seem to appear out of nowhere, but the reality is that their recurrent presence and aid in critical situations (an unconscious Daniel dreaming of witnessing Christine Keeler's trial from a Scots pine trunk) throw light on a potential that remains untapped. In most cases, it is Daniel that infiltrates tropes of nature into his interactions with Elisabeth

(or with his surroundings). From the beginning of their friendship, Daniel tries to bring out this relational perspective common to all identities through a game by the name of Bagatelle that involves at least two participants and requires them to join efforts as they make up a story together, alternating turns as they each come up with a line. The story can either borrow the plot from a well-known story, those which "people think are set in stone" (2016: 117), or it can start from scratch. Both alternatives imply a break from the rigidity of dominant discourses as they place value on personal and subjective accounts instead.

In the end, Daniel's intention is to foster Elisabeth's critical thinking, making her able to contemplate and update seemingly innocuous tales such as that of "Goldilocks and the three bears". When analysing Elisabeth's story-making skills, it is evident that her mind is fuelled by the fact that "[t]here was war on the news every day" (2016: 118), and thus resorts to opposing binomials that inevitably place her characters in confrontational situations: true/false, peace/war, victory/ loss. As such, Elisabeth arms her character with a gun, granting it an immeasurable amount of power over Daniel's, a man disguised as a tree. In light of the bleak and tragic ending that awaits them, Daniel bestows Elisabeth with the ethical responsibility of "welcom[ing] people into the home of [her] story" (2016: 119), so that these people are never left resourceless against those with a greater enunciation power, giving them a safe place from which to act. The ending of their shared story is revealed in the next section, where "there's nothing left of them, the pantomime innocents of the man with the gun, but bones in grass, bones in flowers, the leafy branches of the ash tree above them" (2016: 79). The sight is striking, but the idea that prevails is that nature is human action's counterpart in providing the opportunity for renewal. However, it is up to us whether we choose to move forward and learn from our mistakes, or whether we decide to remain anchored in our old ways.

Daniel's insights on dialogue and empathy begin to germinate and flourish within Elisabeth even when, in the present time, a now century-old comatose Daniel is admitted to a care centre. Following the perspective of an unconscious Daniel, the very first pages of the novel find him regaining consciousness on a beach after having been shaken and stripped by the rough sea. In a backdrop deeply reminiscent of the experiences of many asylum seekers, whose only alternative is to flee by sea, Daniel is fortunate enough to survive; however, he is aware that "[i]t will not last, the dream" (2016: 13). The attitudes towards nationalities, especially those coming from individuals who revel in the presumed safety provided by national borders, are contingent on changes in historical, political and social contexts. This understanding exposes the consequences of not making an ethical use of nature's opportunity for renewal, as it requires ethical awareness and social transformation

so as to lead to progress. This outlook is vital no matter one's positionality, but given the scope of this work it is significant when applied to post-Brexit times, when the manner of dealing with asylum seekers and/or refugees has been extended to European nationals, or in the case or Daniel, to those with a genealogy that traces back to the continent. In his dream, he seeks shelter in a nearby forest, preserving his physical integrity (after encountering a group of women who see him au naturel), as well as his most precious memories. Covered in leaves, Daniel heads back to the beach, where he notices the corpses of adults and minors lying on the beach, as well as people he describes as "human, like the ones on the shore, but these are alive" (2016: 12). In Smith's work, deciduous leaves symbolise the passing of time and the succession of events over time, as in this case would be the 2015 refugee crisis and the aftermath of the Brexit referendum, which entails a rejection of European identities. Even though Daniel keeps a hold of the leaves that shield him, he still remembers that, the same as deciduous leaves in the autumn, "things fall apart, always have, always will" (2016: 1). This dream works as a reminder of the vulnerability of subordinate identities when the physical and symbolic frontiers of a nation-state are being rearranged. This conception of borders follows that of Popescu, who defines them as "dynamic and creative discontinuities" that are "based on collective historical narratives and on individual identity constructions of self" (in Yuval-Davis et al. 2019: 4-5).

As for the Brexit campaign, a number of speeches and slogans on the part of supporters of the UK's withdrawal from the EU tapped into feelings of postimperial melancholia. This term, coined by Paul Gilroy (2005), throws light on the pathological quality of Britain's feelings of nostalgia towards its 'glorious' past. Although my interpretation of *Autumn* leans towards the context of Brexit, the narrative seeks connections across historical and geographical scales that go way beyond the European continent. The use of intertextuality is one of the many ways in which it does so. Indeed, Daniel's reflection contains a clear reference to Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958), a postcolonial work of fiction that explores the undermining of Nigerian national identity in the face of European colonisation. In its explicitness, this reference helps to further expose the instability inherent to all positionalities.

In a later passage, Daniel extends the symbol of nature as a pillar of hope to languages which, in a process similar to the loss of foliage, regularly recreate their vocabulary, giving rise to ramifications while remaining in the same family. Irrespective of grammatical rules, contact among languages brings about words "grown from several languages" that, according to Daniel, are extraordinary, as is the case of gymkhana (2016: 69). His vocabulary is a reflection of his way of being in the world, as it proves there is room for contradictions. As such, Daniel does not

consider that the fact that our protagonist's name derives from French, as seen in its spelling with an 's' instead of a 'z', automatically makes her abnormal, contrary to the opinion of a passport inspector —"[t]hat's not the normal way of spelling it" (Smith 2016: 22). This instance takes place as Elisabeth is trying to have her passport renewed. The episode evidences the illusory sense of "normality", given it is not even available to the entirety of the UK's native population. Indeed, Elisabeth's bureaucratic proceedings are brought to a halt as "[her] head is the wrong size" (2016: 24) in the passport photo she hands over to the inspector. Correspondingly, Elisabeth ascribes Daniel's borderless, relational and communitarian outlook to his European identity: "Daniel's not gay. He's European. […] Or if he is, Elisabeth said, then he's not just gay. He's not just one thing or another. Nobody is" (2016: 181). In this instance, Elisabeth goes back on her words to put forward an intersectional understanding of all identities. That is, she acknowledges the complexity and the myriad of factors —gender, ethnicity, social class, sexuality and age, among others— that influence human experience. By informing her mother of the multiple disposition of all identities, she is acting as a mediator between the oppressor's awareness and the lived realities of humans, especially of those under oppression. Following Audre Lorde's formulation, Elisabeth would be alleviating Daniel's burden and thus leaving him to devote his energy to "redefining [himself] and devising realistic scenarios for altering the present and constructing the future" (2007: 112). It is also interesting to notice Wendy's preceding remark —"why else are you always hanging round an old gay man?"— in light of her character development, as by the end of the novel she is in a relationship with a woman. However, this early denial of relatability signals an almost compulsive backing of institutionalised, rigid identity patterns, possibly to achieve "some illusion of protection" (Lorde 2007: 111).

Smith provides Daniel with a degree of agency that is ubiquitous, contagious, unclassifiable and perennial, neutralising every single try at differentiating between equals —whether they are migrants, natives, refugees or asylum seekers— in the political climate of 2016 when this is precisely what is being promoted: "[f]irst we'll get the Poles. And then we'll get the Muslims. Then we'll get the gyppos, then the gays" (2016: 197). Bleak, essentialist and ostensibly racist, this quote reminds us of the need to assume an intersectional perspective. The main issue lies in the dominant undertone urging us to exclude all subordinate collectives. In this case, differences are evoked to "divide and conquer, segregat[e] [and] fragmentat[e]" (Lugones 2003: 93). In this line of thought, Ahmed notes how strangers become an essential part of multicultural nations as their dislocation is employed by nations to reinforce the national identity of those native to the territory. This identity emerges as a response that is constantly reinforced, in this case by denoting "rightful" violent action and a derogative use of language. This

wider picture is juxtaposed with one that is more appreciative of difference as well as focused on the personal (bearing in mind that as the popular feminist slogan states, the personal is political) by showing us how Daniel's influence goes beyond his own consciousness. Namely, he builds a bridge between Elisabeth and her mother, and by extension, between two generations at odds on account of British politics and history. Thus, after Elisabeth's mother has lost touch with Daniel for a period of time, a neighbour of hers informs her that his house has been emptied, and that he has been admitted into a nursing home. This news makes its way to Elisabeth, who eventually spends extended periods of time in the village where her mother lives, which also happens to be the closest to Daniel's care home. A shift in Elisabeth's mother's personality takes place towards the end of the novel, as she begins to behave according to values associated with Daniel and that she has acquired through her daughter.

This transformation can be appreciated through Wendy's passion for antiques, which also happens to be the most substantial evidence of the ideological and generational differences between her and Elisabeth. Wendy's elation at having been selected to participate in a television programme about touring antiques shops in search for the most "valuable" item clashes with Elisabeth's emotional state, who cannot help but dwell on the most recent xenophobic attack she had witnessed, which had been directed towards two Spaniards. In contrast to her mother's ignorance, Elisabeth is mindful of the magnitude of these individual incidents, as well as of the media's attempts to keep part of the population stuck in the past, when "the junk from the past is worth money" (2016: 130). The last pages of Smith's novel take us to the present, when Wendy's appreciation of antiques remains, although it now stems from a more solidary and communitarian perspective.

Consequently, when she learns, while listening to the radio in her car, that the post of Minister for Refugees has been scrapped, a measure that significantly decreases refugees' possibilities for integration, Elisabeth's mother strays from her usual route and drives towards a place encircled by an electrified fence. Owing to a prior scene featuring Elisabeth, we readers know that this fence is patrolled by SA4A officials, a security company that makes recurrent appearances in the other three novels. My contention is that its spelling is a nod to the British security company G4S, one of the largest in the world. The narrative takes this reference further, as Elisabeth tries to unearth a twofold meaning in an encounter with one of the officials: "is that an approximation of the word *safer* or is it more like the word *sofa*?" (Smith 2016: 141, emphasis in original). Ultimately, Elisabeth cannot make sense of the corporate name, as it fluctuates between meaningful and meaningless, socially involved and selfishly detached. This moral ambiguity hints at the corrupt

and opportunistic intentions of the company, urging the readership to read against the grain. Additionally, its functions are also of a contradictory nature. For this purpose, the case of G4S is illuminating in that it played a significant role in the Israeli occupation of Palestine by "running prisons, being involved in checkpoint technology [and] […] in the deaths of undocumented migrants" (Davis 2016: 144), while also operating centres for abused women and "young girls at risk" (Davis 2016: 144). Similarly, SA4A's functions range from operating an immigration detention centre to supervising copyright infringement to bussing homeless people to areas where they are more likely to receive alms. Davis ascribes the danger of these all-encompassing corporations to their ability in establishing intersecting connections between our social relations, political contexts and interior lives. Thus, as an act of protest against this evil company, Wendy makes it her mission to short-circuit the fence by throwing one of her antique pieces at it, and insists on coming back to the fence daily to bombard it with "people's histories and with the artefacts of less cruel and more philanthropic times" (2016: 255). By doing this, Wendy adds a new layer of meaning to the same past glories that once kept her in the dark, inasmuch as they can (and should) have a place in today's political debates regarding the situation of every single one of the nation's inhabitants.

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5. Conclusion

The focal points of this article have been migrants' representation and ways of belonging, based on Sara Ahmed's characterisation of the stranger not as someone (un)known, but rather as someone who is identified as such in figurative and face-to-face encounters. These encounters take place in the present, while simultaneously (re)opening past experiences with other strangers. Thus, the previous sections have offered an examination of instances where *Autumn*'s European protagonist crosses paths with Britons who attempt to define him on the basis of stereotypes that perpetuate the ontological characterisation of the stranger. Ahmed's observations regarding processes that turn strangers into objects or fetishes have allowed me to demonstrate how one of *Autumn*'s protagonists challenges this type of representation. The literary analysis has revealed that the character with European roots turns the narrative into a space that welcomes all kinds of subjectivities, and which is based on the transmission of moral values and lessons among the different people residing in the UK.

By examining the interpersonal bonds that emerge between the characters of Daniel and Elisabeth, I have argued that their peculiar friendship is able to transcend two of the greatest obstacles that hinder an understanding in the

political context at hand: generational and cultural differences. That being said, the wisdom that Daniel shares cannot be solely pinned to a migrant perspective, as it provides insights that foster the acquisition of a relational point of view, based on empathy, a sense of communitarianism and critical thinking. Far from having an unstable and fuzzy identity, Daniel meets his own definition (or singularity) not in opposition to others, but in the solidary acts and traits that every person has the potential to develop. Therefore, all the characters reap the rewards of having reached a consciousness level that takes into account other people's circumstances.

This article has shown how political discourses —past and current— give the native characters the authority to define themselves as subjects in encounters with the European protagonist. An analysis of the explicit, temporal and symbolic use of nature has served to accentuate the text's ability to resonate with a variety of individual and collective circumstances beyond Brexit. This is best seen in relation to Daniel's contemplative disposition. This is particularly relevant regarding his own agency, as the use of nature metaphors and imagery helps him articulate his fluid identity while dodging any negative characterisations linked to migrancy. Simultaneously, the centrality of natural elements in the forming of his intersubjective bond with Elisabeth —which then translate into the relationship between her and Wendy— or in his use of intertextual references, illustrates the possibility for connectivity between intersubjective, geographical and historical scales.

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Reviews

THE HUMAN FUTURE? ARTIFICIAL HUMANS AND EVOLUTION IN ANGLOPHONE SCIENCE FICTION OF THE 20TH CENTURY
Stefan Lampadius
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MARÍA TORRES ROMERO
Universidad de Málaga
mariatorresr@uma.es
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0532-8139>

Science fiction has commonly been defined as the 'literary genre of possibilities'. However, these many possibilities are precisely what keep both readers and authors dissenting when they try to categorise texts as science fiction. Traditionally, the genre, which flourished during the 20th century to become what we know of it today, has included texts that explore, among other topics, space travel, time travel, human and biological enhancements, extra-terrestrial existence, or non-corporeal life. Besides the great range of themes, which have exponentially expanded in the 21st century to include others such as artificial intelligence(s), quantum computing or climate crises, science fiction narratives often overlap with other generic categories as well, such as crime or detective stories to name a couple. It is because of this heterogeneity and versatility that categorising, defining, or deciding what science fiction is has become a rather complicated task. As stated by some critics such as Carl Freedman "[no] definitional consensus exists" (2000: 13) in the genre of science fiction and that is why the different definitions always depend on an analytical context. This idea is the premise of Stefan Lampadius's recent monograph *The Human Future? Artificial Humans and Evolution in Anglophone Science Fiction of the 20th Century* published in 2020. The author presents a very thorough and extensive but clearly illuminating analysis of some of the so-called seminal texts in science fiction written along the 20th century, most of them in English, by using the framework of evolution and evolutionary discourse as the metanarrative that encompasses these texts from a thematic perspective. Lampadius

claims and aims to demonstrate that all the selected texts present in some way instances of a recurrent motif in the genre, which will become his main analytical category in the volume, which is the artificial human. The author proposes a consideration of different instances or materialisations of the motif of the artificial human by (dis)placing it in relation to the all-encompassing metanarrative of Darwin's evolutionary theory and discourse.

One of the most noticeable aspects of the volume, which is one of its strongest points that clearly demarcates it from other recent studies that address the theme of evolution in literature, such as Emilie Jonsson's *The Early Evolutionary Imagination: Literature and Human Nature* (2021), is that it has been carefully devised considering the dialogical nature of literature and literary genres. It becomes clear from the Introduction (Chapter 1) that this study, as stated by the author on several occasions, builds on an interdisciplinary perspective that focuses on different social and cultural discourses that prevailed and marked the literary panorama of the 20th century. Ranging from sociology, psychoanalysis, philosophy, physics, gender studies, economy and industrialization, biology, ethics, or cybernetics and technology, Lampadius embraces the idea of cross-communication and influence among disciplines to reflect how science fiction can only be understood if we regard the genre as multi-layered, or as a "mega-text [that] works by embedding each new work" (15), almost working as a conglomerate of texts of different natures, and which will only make sense if the pertaining texts are not looked at in isolation but taken into account in the light of the multiplicity of their context. Even experienced readers in the field will appreciate Lampadius's approach to science fiction, as it combines deep "contextual analysis with close reading" (11) to provide a broader and more complete perspective of different texts in the genre, both best-sellers and not so well-known, showing how, being framed within Darwinian discourse, they can be read as texts that contain examples of the artificial human.

In addition, Lampadius's research aims to connect and create a continuum among other schools of thought that have similarly considered the role in literature of the man-made or unnaturally created being that the artificial human represents, for example by examining in depth the relevance of critics from movements such as Posthumanism or Transhumanism, something that might be appealing to scholars or readers interested in those trends. Furthermore, the idea of dialogue or cross-communication is also relevant from a structural point of view if we consider the overall distribution of the chapters in the volume. It includes a total of nine chapters, each focusing on a particular decade or moment in the timeframe of science fiction, chronologically ordered to offer a coherent and synchronised reading. However, even if the chapters are consistent and fully informative by

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themselves, as each includes an introduction and a conclusion and outlook, a complete reading of the volume will help readers understand Lampadius's continuous references to motifs, themes and especially other authors and theories mentioned in the different sections. The chapters, which are deep in understanding and very ambitious, complement each other, emphasising in this way the idea of communication and dialogue at different levels: thematically, within the genre of science fiction (and) among authors and disciplines, and structurally, within the volume chapters themselves.

The author presents in Chapter 2 a thorough and well-informed theoretical background from which he builds up the central idea of the artificial human, offering a commentary on the general influence that religious and the later Darwinian discourses had on the Anglophone literary tradition. This information is later expanded and made more specific depending on the subject of the chapter. No important gaps are left for the reader to find out elsewhere as Lampadius provides extensive and very illuminating, though at times overwhelming, footnotes with explanatory references. According to the author, 20th century science fiction contradicts religious discourse and heavily builds on Darwin's evolutionary theories, yet these texts, instead of celebrating this scientific discourse as ground-breaking, question or challenge natural selection as the guiding thread of human evolution (24). On the contrary, authors such as H. G. Wells, referred to by the author in several chapters as one of the founders of this literary genre (27), place the human as the actor/agent responsible for the guided evolution of humanity by means of technology, which results in the creation of the motif of the artificial Other. This motif is, according to Lampadius, the place where the "scientific narrative of evolution and the religious narrative of divine creation" (2) intersect, as the human is now the "God" figure that freely creates and alters evolutionary natural selection giving way to a new being, an artificially created —but not always improved— version of the human.

This hypothesis is positively tested in the analytical chapters which, as mentioned before, correspond to significant moments in 20th century science fiction. Chapter 3 looks at the artificial human in the decades of 1920s and 1930s in several works by H. G. Wells, Karel Capek (the only translated author), G. B. Shaw, Olaf Stapledon and C. S. Lewis. Lampadius carefully studies how writers keep responding to each other's views on artificiality in utopian, dystopian or even apocalyptic texts. The artificial human adopts the shape of robots or other species that have been mass created or modified to adapt to a new environment. Chapter 4 looks at *Brave New World* (1932) by Aldous Huxley, where Lampadius explores the parallelism between the social context and the fictitious literary world in which the proximity between utopia and dystopia, mass (re)production, consumerism

and control are the factors that have shaped the artificial human of the 1930s. The Golden Age of science fiction is examined in Chapters 5 and 6, where, as expected, Isaac Asimov, Jack Williamson, and Philip K. Dick are presented as the authors that materialised artificiality in very different forms, sometimes in a positive way, as they go beyond the human realm and even place the artificial animal and the android within the scope of guided evolution. One of the highlights of the volume in this part is Chapter 7, as Lampadius analyses and situates *Neuromancer* (1984) in the framework of evolution while delving into other theoretical perspectives that marked the literary critical studies of the 1980s, such as Postmodernism, Cyberpunk, Cybernetics, Cyborg theory, artificial intelligence, corporeality, or gender studies. The artificial human is analysed in consideration of the body and its newly adopted capacity to live in a virtual space. The final analytical chapter, Chapter 8, presents a very interesting approach to the subgenre of hard science fiction with an analysis of Greg Egan's novel *Diaspora* (1997), in which the artificial human in the form of code is an entity that can live in both the physical and the virtual reality. In the last chapter, Chapter 9, Lampadius concludes and offers his positive opinion of the many possibilities offered by the artificial human for further literary studies in 21st century science fiction, as he signals how renowned authors such as Kazuo Ishiguro, Margaret Atwood or Ian McEwan have very recently published novels featuring the artificial human.

Altogether, *The Human Future? Artificial Humans and Evolution in Anglophone Science Fiction of the 20th Century* is a fundamental contribution to the field of science fiction critical studies, as it not only considers seminal works of the genre taking an innovative and multi-layered approach to evolutionary discourse, but also shows the relevance of the analysis of the motif of the artificial human within that framework. This is shown to be a versatile and fruitful concept that articulates in divergent ways, showing how different technologies are exponentially affecting human evolution and how authors, consequently, have been portraying this in fiction. Something that is worth pointing out is that —despite the impressive scope of the research, seen for example in the way that the chapters not only focus on just one author or text but on many and that Lampadius at some points considers how authors contest and influence each other later in time— there is a lack of clarification about the criterion used for the selection of a corpus of texts by authors that are solely male. For a critical volume that analyses and focuses on the development of science fiction and the topic of evolution, the omission of female authors who also established the genre and who have works of fiction addressing the artificial human in relation to evolutionary discourse, such as Ursula K. Le Guin or Octavia E. Butler, is questionable. Examples are Le Guin's short story "Nine Lives" (1968) and Butler's *Xenogenesis* trilogy. The volume would benefit from a statement or clarification to specify why some female authors are simply not

mentioned or left out in the analysis. Finally, even if the text is generally accessible, there are some substantial digressions from the topic and the extensive explanatory notes are rather overwhelming, being at times far removed from the focus of the study of literature. Nonetheless, and considering that other authors have previously studied the motif of the artificial human from different perspectives —see Horst Albert Glaser, for example— the study serves as a reference text in evolutionary literary and critical studies in relation to the Anglophone literary tradition of the 20th century. It is an exceptionally well-informed study that fulfils what it promises by giving a heterogenous and multidisciplinary approach to the genre of science fiction.

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CULTURAL REPRESENTATIONS OF GENDER VULNERABILITY AND RESISTANCE: A MEDITERRANEAN APPROACH TO THE ANGLOSPHERE
Edited by María Isabel Romero-Ruiz and Pilar Cuder-Domínguez
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J. JAVIER TORRES-FERNÁNDEZ
Universidad de Almería
jtorferna@ual.es
<https://orcid.org/ 0000-0002-5999-0040>

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Cultural Representations of Gender Vulnerability and Resistance: A Mediterranean Approach to the Anglosphere is a collection of twelve chapters that explore growing cultural and social issues, such as vulnerability, gender violence, precarity, and resistance. The approach of this carefully curated volume is a transnational one that considers eleven case studies from the United Kingdom, the United States, Ireland, Australia, Canada, and India. Considering the present globalized world, the editors acknowledge the Mediterranean as a place of cultural hybridization from which to tackle continuing processes of exclusion and discrimination. All the contributors, Mediterranean based, look at texts from the Anglosphere delving into this wide range of representations of vulnerability, oppression and resistance offering a multidisciplinary theoretical approach drawing from Post-Humanism, Human Rights Studies, Postcolonialism, Critical Race Studies and Animal Studies. Providing substantial insight drawn from these fields, this volume not only proves to be breaking new ground but also stands as a publication of great interest to any scholar dealing with such theories and contemporary transnational social issues. I turn to Judith Butler to contextualize this volume in terms of previous work on vulnerability in general and gender vulnerability in particular, who affirms that we live in interdependent communities and that some bodies, which can belong to different groups, are more vulnerable to violence than others based on, for example, gender, sexuality, and race (2004: 26-29).

In Chapter 1, a thorough introduction to the volume, María Isabel Romero-Ruiz and Pilar Cuder-Domínguez, henceforth the editors, successfully deliver a comprehensive examination of the current debates around vulnerability and resistance in cultural and literary studies. The Introduction answers to the powerful emergence of Vulnerability Studies in the last two decades and establishes one of the main objectives of this collection: filling an existing gap in scholarship dealing with Vulnerability Studies within Cultural Studies and Humanities.

The volume is divided into three thematic sections and comprised of eleven chapters, plus the Introduction. Each section explores different contexts and definitions of gender vulnerability concerning resistance and resilience, agency and interdependencies, and trans*/post* identities. The first part, entitled "Gender Vulnerability, Resilience and Resistance", deals with the concepts of vulnerability, resilience, and resistance in literature from the gender perspective. Drawing from Butler, vulnerability is not understood as a "subjective disposition" but rather politically imposed and unequally distributed (2016: 25). Elena Cantueso-Urbano opens this part with her chapter titled "Growing Resilient in Irish Magdalene Laundries: An Analysis of the Justice for Magdalenes' Oral History Project (2013) and Kathy O'Beirne's Autobiography *Kathy's Story: A Childhood Hell Inside the Magdalen Laundries* (2005)". Cantueso-Urbano conducts a detailed examination of the concept of trauma within the reformatory process experienced by non-privileged women in Ireland. Focusing on the autobiography of Kathy O'Beirne, who was a resident of the Magdalene Laundries, Cantueso-Urbano highlights O'Beirne's work as a particularly compelling testimony. The author concludes her analysis with a more optimistic tone by suggesting that resilience, resistance, and vulnerability can complement one another and become coping strategies. Therefore, testimonies such as O'Beirne's represent how, after enduring such traumatic events, survival and healing can be achieved.

In a similar vein, the following chapter, "Becoming Resilient Subjects: Vulnerability and Resistance in Emma Donoghue's *Room*", is written by María Elena Jaime de Pablos and analyses Donoghue's novel *Room* (2010), which was inspired by a real case. Jaime de Pablos suggests examining vulnerability within the framework of resistance to better understand the subjectivity of the characters. More precisely, Jaime de Pablos explores the traumatic experiences lived by vulnerable individuals confined within cramped spaces for an extended period of time. This is portrayed in Donoghue's novel with the example of a mother and her child. Despite the pessimist undertone that permeates through the story, glimpses of hope are found in the role of Ma, "an intelligent woman, a caring mother, a proper figure of attachment, a source of affection and a model of principled behaviour" (37). Ma's positive influence becomes evident when following their prolonged confinement

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as the characters try to reinforce resilience and resistance while struggling with oppression and vulnerability.

Chapter 4, "Of Mice and Women: Gendered and Speciesist Violence in Joyce Carol Oates's 'Martyrdom'" by Maria Sofía Pimentel-Biscaia, offers a distinct perspective on resilience, resistance and vulnerability through a speciesist lens focusing on sexual violence against women. Pimentel-Biscaia's chapter presents an analysis of Joyce Carol Oates's short story "Martyrdom" skillfully drawing parallels between human and non-human suffering. Building on Oates's story, where the wife willingly endures violence within her marriage, the chapter examines the figure of the martyr as "a composite of abstract concept and material object" (55). Additionally, it explores the significance of self-representation and the existence of silenced martyrs. In Oates's story, patriarchal and speciesist violence collide given that women are depicted as rats subjected to human males and conceived as mere sexual objects. Pimentel-Biscaia emphasizes the need to consider the embodied subjectivities of human and non-human entities as martyrs, and henceforth offers an innovative contribution to the field when proposing the parallelism between both human and non-human animal relations and gendered relations.

Concluding part one, Auxiliadora Pérez-Vides's chapter, titled "'Nobody Kills a Priest': Irish Noir and Pathogenic Vulnerability in Benjamin Black's *Holy Orders*", explores the concept of institutional precariousness emphasizing the flawed practices of systematic power in Irish institutions such as the police, the press, and the Catholic Church. The author argues that the bodies of the travellers, a subaltern community, and its children and women remain under the control of these corrupted authorities that enforce pathogenic vulnerability and multi-layered precarity resulting in an erasure of any possible form of resistance leading to further victimization. Through the analysis of Benjamin Black's *Holy Orders* (2013), Pérez-Vides offers the reader a better understanding of the exposure of moral dysfunctionality within the Catholic Church and highlights the failure of institutional norms on individuals from diverse social, gender and age groups. Throughout the four chapters of part one the concept of vulnerability, initially considered as fragile, is transformed into something strongly intertwined with the notions of resilience and resistance, which also transcends historical and geographical boundaries.

Part two of this edited collection is titled "Gender Vulnerability, Agency and Interdependencies" and guides the reader into a deeper exploration of vulnerability in relation to identity in crime fiction, cinema, and television. Pilar Cuder-Domínguez initiates this section by addressing the situational vulnerability of refugees in Chapter 6, titled "Crime Fiction's Disobedient Gaze: Refugees' Vulnerability in Ausma Zehanat Khan's *A Dangerous Crossing* (2018)", presenting

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a compelling argument that Khan's novel critically examines and critiques "the failure of European states and transnational institutions to morally respond to the needs of a population whose vulnerability is context-specific" (93). According to Mackenzie et al., the vulnerable subject is located at the center of social policy and institutional responsibility. In other words, those in power are deemed as responsible for the vulnerable and precarious conditions of others (2014: 13-15). These supranational institutions are failing to protect refugees from systemic forms of violence and Cuder-Domínguez argues that fiction and reality can converge in advocating for the protection of vulnerable individuals and communities. To conclude, the author directly addresses "the material effects of current migration management practices in Europe and more widely in the West" (105) to point at the contradictions found between the discourse of human rights and the politics enforced by nations against migration.

In Chapter 7, Beatriz Domínguez-García with her chapter titled "Detection, Gender Violence and Atkinson's Jackson Brodie Series" delves into the study of vulnerability from a feminist standpoint. Domínguez-García focuses on the detective stories in the series and carries out a comparative analysis between the portrayal of the protagonist in the television series, *Case Histories* (2011-2013), and the written works. This chapter offers a thought-provoking and innovative approach to reevaluating perceptions of vulnerability conveyed through both media sources introducing, for the first time in this volume, a television series as the subject matter. While in the novels Brodie connects empathically to women victims of gender violence by empowering them and promoting their autonomy, the television series delivers a picture where the detective presents a stronger detachment projecting his patriarchal stance as a male caretaker over the victims. Continuing with a feminist approach, E. Guillermo Iglesias-Díaz's paper titled "Resisting Binaries: Vulnerability, Agency and the Sovereign Subject Through a Feminist Critical Gaze" argues against the traditional opposition between resistance and agency, exploring the feminist critical gaze in cinema. Iglesias-Díaz explores Andrea Arnold's film *Red Road* (2006) emphasizing the reversal of roles depicted in Arnold's film, which subverts the traditional notion of the male gaze while also challenging assumptions about agency and vulnerability. The chapter concludes by emphasizing the intricate nature of vulnerability "as opposed to agency and sovereign subjectivities in order to subvert them" (141). Iglesias-Díaz argues that Arnold presents a set of characters full of agency while also vulnerable, but never as victims.

In the closing of part two, María Isabel Romero-Ruiz's paper titled "Trans-National Neo-Victorianism, Gender, and Vulnerability in Kate Grenville's *The Secret River* (2005)" explores the concepts of gender and vulnerability through

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the novel's capability to challenge the conventional conceptualization of colonization by presenting both the colonizers and the colonized under conditions of precariousness and vulnerability (151). Romero-Ruiz skillfully contextualizes Grenville's novel to provide a comprehensive understanding of the situation, offering an apt analysis of the Neo-Victorian narrative that converges with post-colonial issues. After reading Romero-Ruiz's analysis, the reader can comprehend how the retrieval of cultural memory in fiction can be collected through past events and gendered archetypes. The contributions that build part two broaden the scope of research by incorporating new terms and perspectives in exploring vulnerabilities beyond traditional academic frameworks.

Part three, titled "Gender Vulnerability and Trans*/Post* Identities", introduces new ways of embodiment beyond the heteronormative societal structures in contemporary cultural representations of non-binary, trans* and post* identities related to vulnerability in dystopian fiction, science fiction film, and television series. Turning to Butler, resistance emerges from being seen and acknowledged (2016: 14), which is crucial for those identities not fitting in the societal status quo who have been traditionally marginalized and oppressed. Furthermore, when a system fails to represent all its diversity, those who have no chance to represent themselves are found at a higher risk of being othered and treated as less human (2004: 147). Rocío Carrasco-Carrasco opens this section with her chapter titled "The Vulnerable Posthuman in Popular Science Fiction Cinema" where she critically examines how posthuman subjects are often portrayed as vulnerable beings who seem to be condemned to fit within normativity. Carrasco-Carrasco argues that the posthuman subject has been represented in contemporary films as an alternative way of understanding the world (170), therefore disrupting the traditional notions of normalcy and difference. Through the analysis of Jonathan Glazer's *Under the Skin* (2014) and Rupert Sander's *Ghost in the Shell* (2017), the author explores two distinct depictions of posthuman subjects. First, "an unnamed and impassive alien who abducts and kills men around Scotland in *Under the Skin*" (170); and second, "a human-machine hybrid working for the police in an unspecific Asian city who eventually discovers her true identity in *Ghost in the Shell*" (170). Carrasco-Carrasco's reflection on the identity of the posthuman subject suggests that identity-building should be understood as a "process in constant change" (171). She concludes by arguing that the disruption of the status quo allows us to understand the posthuman subject in their non-normative bodies.

Chapter 11 by Juan Carlos Hidalgo-Ciudad, titled "Trans* Vulnerability and Resistance in the Ballroom: The Case of *Pose* (Season 1)", continues in line with the exploration of non-conventional vulnerability. Hidalgo-Ciudad examines how homo and heteronormative communities can reject vulnerable subaltern identities

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due to their gender, ethnicity, and sexuality. Delving into the captivating world of ballroom in the groundbreaking television series *Pose*, the author analyzes the characters, who are LGBTQ+, Black, and Latinx as trans* subjects that lead to resistance instead of perpetuating heteronormative dichotomies in their "continuous process of (un)becoming other(s)" (198). *Pose* brings historically silenced voices forward into one of the most mainstream media platforms, television. Hidalgo-Ciudad carefully examines vulnerability and precariousness within the Black and Latinx LGBTQ+ communities that take part in the ballroom culture as presented in the show. The author concludes that this representation of the ballroom culture, its history and its members offers a sweetened version of an environment "that reinforces, to a certain extent, the validity of the American dream for the dispossessed" (199). The volume closes with Chapter 12, titled "A Trans Journey Towards Resistance: Vulnerability and Resilience in the Dystopian Narrative of Manjula Padmanabhan", by Antonia Navarro-Tejero. Navarro-Tejero adds a new framework, the utopian genre, for the analysis of gender identity and its constraints. The author delivers an examination of dystopian scenarios, Indianness and womanhood employing a feminist lens from an activism standpoint and explores the displacement of technology leading to women being perceived as the sex at risk. Navarro-Tejero concludes her work by arguing that in the event of a dystopian displacement by technology, the only solution out of a precarious reality would be for these vulnerable subjects to adapt and join forces. The last three chapters of this collection offer a contemporary and fresh perspective by examining gender vulnerability and trans*/post* identities in science fiction cinema, television series, and dystopian narratives.

Collectively, *Cultural Representations of Gender Vulnerability and Resistance* is a comprehensive publication that arguably makes a significant and original contribution to the scholarly investigation of vulnerability and its corresponding dynamics of resistance and resilience. Thoughtfully designed and carefully structured, the volume provides a thought-provoking collection of synchronized chapters with an uninterrupted flow of ideas, theoretical frameworks, and thematic explorations presented by the contributors. If only, to further enrich this publication and drawing from Sociology, the analyses presented in this volume could have benefited from including another layer of theoretical apparatus such as Imogen Tyler's work on the process of stigmatization, self-stigmatization, and collective responses to stigma. However, the complex transnational nature of this volume is not to be overlooked since it further enhances its scholarly achievement. The interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches incorporated throughout the volume widen its scope and reach. In fact, adopting the Mediterranean as a vantage point from which to delve into the analysis of texts coming from the Anglosphere implies the recognition of the modern world's interconnectedness in

terms of gender vulnerability and inequality. Including perspectives from popular culture, literature, television and cinema, this publication not only provides a much-needed exploration of Vulnerability Studies within the Humanities and Cultural Studies, but it also achieves the greater social purpose of giving voice to vulnerable subjects and communities who live under precarious conditions and are marked by violence and oppression. In conclusion, the editors and contributors of this publication are setting the ground for further research endeavours by introducing new concepts, theoretical constructs, and case studies that will undoubtedly attract an extensive body of scholars working in apparently different, but ultimately interwoven, fields of study.

Acknowledgements

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