

## 6 Hassan Loo Sattarvandi, *Still*

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The fourth and last text in the corpus examined is *Still*, Hassan Loo Sattarvandi's debut novel, which incorporates much of the vocabulary already encountered and analysed in the previous three works, but also new terms pertaining to specific semantic fields.

### 6.1 Hassan Loo Sattarvandi: A Short Profile

Born in 1975 in Tehran and emigrated to Sweden at the age of three, Sattarvandi grew up in the neighbourhood of Hagalund, Solna. His debut novel *Still*, published in 2008 by Bonniers, earned him the *Katapultpriset* as the best debut of the year. His second novel is entitled *Belägring* (State Of Siege), published in 2011 by Bonniers and is set as *Still*'s prequel. Both novels are set in Hagalund. In 2012, Sattarvandi also published the short story *Om himlen smälter* (If The Sky Melts) for Novellix. He was also screenwriter for the movie *Snabba Cash* (Easy Money), directed by Daniel Espinosa in 2010, inspired by Jens Lapidus'



homonymous trilogy.<sup>1</sup> Sattarvandi is probably the author least easily associated with migration, both for biographical reasons and for his literary content. Neither in *Still* nor in *Belägring* are migration, cultural identity and ethnicity explicitly mentioned, but rather these aspects are silent traces that bind the existential conditions and conflicts of the characters, manifesting themselves in names, family backgrounds, class, language uses and residential patterns. In fact, in both novels, Hagalund serves not only as a background, but also as a central narrative element, influencing the characters' perspectives, who are often linked to marginality, violence, and drug abuse against a realist (and determinist) background.

## 6.2 *Still*

The novel follows the story of Nemo, an unemployed young adult reliant on welfare benefits, who spends his days abusing drugs and fighting against small local gangs with his friends Foggy, Saladin, Ivan and others.

Although it makes no claim to be a social analysis, *Still* has been praised for being an instrument of reflection on the relationship between individual and society, as it centres on violence and alienation in Hagalund. Narrated in first person by Nemo, the story does not contain a precise plot but rather consists of several disjointed and incomplete episodes put together according to a not always linear chronological arrangement. The narrative structure is fragmentary and sometimes dreamlike, characterised, at times, by a brutal register. From a stylistic point of view, punctuation is scarce, and stream of consciousness abounds. In fact, narrative segments alternate, repeat or interrupt each other, giving space to numerous flashbacks in which Nemo recalls his missing mother, his ex-girlfriend and other scattered moments in which he is under the effects of narcotics. According to Nina Lekander's review in *Expressen* (2008), the story's main themes are also

den sorg, det psykiska skavsår och den existentiella tomhet som kan tolkas som såväl del – som grundorsak till åtminstone Nemos problem: en saknad, förtida död mamma samt en förlorad flickvän som tycktes lova förmodad frälsning. [...] I vilket fall är det varken multi eller kulti vart man än ser.

the grief, the psychic wound and the existential emptiness that can be interpreted as both partial and main causes of at least Nemo's

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1 Of which a TV series for Netflix was also officially released in 2021.

problems: a missing, prematurely dead mother and a lost girlfriend who seemed to promise supposed salvation [...] In any case, it is neither *multi* nor *kulti* wherever one looks.

As noted by Lekander, the text's topics do not deal with multiculturalism in general ("neither multi nor kulti"). This aspect of the novel has been investigated by Daniel Pedersen as well:

[r]omanen [...] skildrar inte [...] en exiltillvaro utan snarare förortens vardagsliv. Exakt var gränsen mellan exil och 'invandrarlitteratur', förortsskildringar eller främlingsskapsskildringar går är svårt att avgöra. (2022, 450)

[t]he novel [...] does not [...] depict [...] an existence in exile but rather the everyday life of the suburbs. Exactly where the line is drawn between exile and 'immigrant literature', depictions of the suburbs or depictions of alienation is difficult to define.

As the novel shows how Nemo and his friends' issues transcend migration-related dimensions, *Still* is situated beyond migration, reconceptualising its main object in a class perspective (Arping 2008; Nilsson 2010; Williams 2016; Sarrimo 2020). A careful analysis of the novel allows us to develop reflections on the relationship between postmigrant individuals and "la retorica ufficiale dei buoni standard abitativi dei sobborghi" (Ciaravolo 2019, 893),<sup>2</sup> behind which lie segregation and racialisation practices (Hübinette 2019; Lundström, Hübinette 2020). *Still* intends to shed light on diversity in the suburban dimension as a central chronotope of the postmigrant perspective, articulating a critical representation of the social safety net as it was planned in the old *folkhem*, highlighting how it has been irreparably shattered, producing a marginalisation of demographically relevant groups and neighbourhoods from the rest of society. As Pedersen summarises, the novel describes "i någon mening en dubbel exil, både den från 'hemlandet' och den i det samhälle man nu befinner sig i" (2022, 50).<sup>3</sup> Hagalund is critically interpreted as a heterotopic space that denies subjectivity to its inhabitants, serving as an imaginary geography in which Nemo and friends are exoticised and racialised by Swedish society. *Still* features a formal and narrative experimentalism that echoes the stylistic structures of postmodern

2 "The official rhetoric of good suburban housing standards".

3 "In a sense, a double exile, both from the 'homeland' and from the society in which one now lives". For details on these aspects of the novel, see Gendolavigna (2023a), in which *Still* is analysed as a novel where *Bildung* is impossible against the backdrop of a suburban space dooming Nemo to subalternity.

aesthetics. Not surprisingly, the incipit is preceded by a quotation from the novel *Requiem for a Dream* (1978), written by Hubert Selby Jr. (1928-2004):

Sometimes. Sometimes it seems to stand still. Like youre in a bag and you cant get out and somebodys always telling you that it will get better with time and time just seems to stand still and laugh at you and your pain.

The fact that the novel opens with a quotation from Selby Jr. helps to shed light on Sattarvandi's style. Selby Jr.'s inaccuracies such as "youre", "cant" and "somebodys" are strongly echoed by Sattarvandi with short, sparse dialogues, a narrative with no specific delimitation between direct and indirect speech, widespread morpho-syntactic imprecision, as well as a vocabulary rich in argotic and foreign terms.

### 6.3 Linguistic Peculiarities in *Still*

Not unlike *Till vår ära* and *Ett öga rött*, Sattarvandi's novel features a vocabulary very rich in influences from MS and various foreign languages, with an almost identical recurrence of items to the previous tables. *Still* shares common features with *Kalla det vad fan du vill* too, as the narrator's voice does not entirely employ MS, showing the presence of multilingualism mainly in dialogues. Compared to the other three works contained in the corpus, *Still* is distinguished by a particular experimentalism of graphic characters, which will be discussed in the following section.

#### 6.3.1 Graphic Peculiarities in *Still*

By resorting to syllabic and onomatopoeic repetitions, Sattarvandi configures an unconventional narrative characterised by repetitions and long word flows without any punctuation, with which he conveys thoughts, impressions, dreams, hallucinations and fragments of memory stemming from Nemo's inner emotions (Jankowska 2010, 39; Wistisen 2013, 10). An example is the following quotation:

Nej nej nej nej nej nej neeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeej  
och inget var mer relevant än det och jag upprepade ordet tyst om  
och om igen tills vi rullade en ny joint som lugnade ned insidan  
eller var det en lina som skapade den totala euforin när musiken  
långsamt vibrerade ut Bob Marleys röst som sa, No no no no no no  
no no, så gick det inte och jag lutade mitt huvud mot väggen och  
kände livet försvinna bort och beaten – Paul Oakenfold – Dadam

[illegible][illegible]

Examples of protracted letter repetitions or onomatopoeias are frequent in the text, resulting in the impression that the words reproduce sounds that come out of the text, causing cross-sensory perceptions in the reader, as sight and hearing merge into a single multimodal experience (Tidigs, Huss 2017). Such multisensoriality is probably not typical of literary multilingualism but, playing with the visual and auditive dimensions of a text, “allows us to highlight the aural and visual dimensions of the phenomenon” (Kauranen, Huss, Grönstrand 2020, 12; cf. Tidigs, Bodin 2020, 147). In other cases, the recurrence of signs or single characters may communicate a perceptive gap determined by causes that remain to subjective interpretation. An example is when dashes omit a sentence spoken by Saladin, not grasped by Nemo perhaps because of his altered state, or perhaps deliberately not reported due to the emotional burden of the words:

Det var tre månader sen, och jag stirrade in i hans vilna, blaskiga  
bruna ögon och undrade vad han menade - och han sa, - - - - -  
- - - - - (2008, 199)

It was three months ago, and I stared into his lost, bleary brown eyes and wondered what he meant - and he said, - - -----  
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In another case, in which Nemo takes Rohypnol (a drug with hypnotic-sedative effects altering the perception of time), Sattarvandi resorts to dashes, with which he seems to slow down the perception that time is passing:

[jag] tog en rohypnol och alla känslor försvann och jag stirrade bara på dem när de skrek om vem som var böj och vem som var sjuk i skallen och vem som var mest... pulsen gick långsammare --

-----långsammare -----  
----- långsammare och -- -----  
----- -- långsammare  
och jag låg bara i sängen till allt blev kolsvart. (2008, 126)

[I] took a rohypnol and all feelings disappeared and I just stared at them as they shouted about who was gay and who was mentally ill and who was the most... my heart beat slowed down --  
----- -- slower -- -----  
----- -- slower and -- -----  
----- -- slower and I just laid  
in bed until everything went pitch black

The continuous repetition of signs, letters and words could serve to expand specific meanings, leading them towards other sensory experiences, just as in “neeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeej”, which seems to graphically extend and expand the sound *nej* (no) in time over the page. A similar effect of extension and expansion is probably also triggered by dashes, interrupted by the adjective *långsammare* (slower), as if to pace, on page, the factual deceleration of Nemo’s heartbeat.

The graphic composition of the text becomes even more distinctive when Sattarvandi introduces striped characters, as for example in “du är en stor pojke nu – det är väl du som ska trösta mig, Nemo, skrek Foggy och när jag öppnade ögonen slog den gröna papperskorgen först mot motorhuven, sen mot framrutan och sen flög den över bilen, Sluta prata i sömnen” (2008, 96).<sup>4</sup> Given the impossibility of associating these graphic additions with a precise interpretation, the meaning attributed to such graphic conventions is left to the reader’s own subjectivity. Usually, strike through sentences indicate a deletion or non-validity of the utterance. However, such reflections are outside

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<sup>4</sup> “You’re a big boy now – you’re the one who’s supposed to comfort me, Nemo, shouted Foggy and when I opened my eyes the green trash can first hit the motor cover, then the windscreen and then it flew over the car, Stop talking in your sleep”.

the scope of the present study, which, while considering graphic peculiarities as interesting, now turns its attention to multilingualism.

### 6.3.2 Intertextual Links to Musical Culture in *Still*

In *Still* there is an intertextual reference to the codes of youth cultures, in particular hip-hop music, which occupies a central space in the everyday life of the characters. Interwoven into the narrative, the lyrics quoted seem to re-mediate (i.e. express them through other media) accurate states of mind. We notice a similarity to Leiva Wenger's *Borta i tankar*, where we find a clear reference to The Latin Kings; in Sattarvandi, on the other hand, similar to Bakhtiari's novel, there is a broader range of international references alternating between American, British, Jamaican and Algerian reggae and hip-hop, with references to Sade, House of Pain, D'Angelo, The Prodigy, Bob Marley, Ini Kamoze, Cheb Khaled and Cheb Mami. In addition, Sattarvandi draws on very popular lyrics such as Pink Floyd's *Another Brick in the Wall*, Bob Sinclair's *World Hold On* and Daddy Yankee's *Gasolina*. Sattarvandi's extensive use of songs works as a narrative support, creating intertextual networks, particularly when quoting verses from House of Pain's *Jump Around*, and Pink Floyd's *Another Brick in the Wall*, songs traditionally known as pleas to rebellion against established and institutionalised power, which Nemo and friends address with *de* (they), and held responsible for their hardships. Two examples in *Still* in which the narrative is intertwined with lyrics are in the following excerpts: in the first one, the slow rhythm of Bob Marley's *Sun Is shining* seems to match the psychedelic state experienced by Nemo, who is severely affected by drugs:

och allt snurrade runt och som vanligt försvann tiden tills jag låg i sängen igen och hörde musiken säga, Thursday evening – get on the rise, a new day is dawning, Friday morning – here I am, Saturday evening – want you to know just, want you to know just where I stand. (2008, 173)

and everything was spinning around and as usual time passed until I lay in bed again and heard the music say, Thursday evening – get on the rise, a new day is dawning, Friday morning – here I am, Saturday evening – want you to know just, want you to know just where I stand.

In the second example, Sattarvandi quotes a passage from Cheb Khaled and Mamim Bakhta, switching between Swedish and Arabic during the narration, without providing translations:

och precis när vi skulle gå över gården hördes musik från något fönster, kanske House of Pain, kanske Cheb Khaled e Cheb Mamis Bakhta – Naada, il yom njaat kaayteesal bghit il nijma, bakhta, zeenit libnat mow jeeb el howari – nej, det var förmodligen någon annan låt. (2008, 52)

and just as we were about to cross the courtyard, we heard music from some window, maybe House of Pain, maybe Cheb Khaled and Cheb Mamis Bakhta – Naada, il yom njaat kaayteesal bghit il nijma, bakhta, zeenit libnat mow jeeb el howari – no, probably it was another song.

The fact that Sattarvandi proposes particular instances of CS combining his narrative with music enhances the linguistic and cultural repertoire of the novel. Music becomes an analytical tool to structure the narrative as a performance, thus constructing here the multilingual soundscape mentioned previously (cf. § 3.2.1). As Jagne-Soreau notes, references to musical subcultures are central in novels of the postmigrant condition, bringing into play different ways of relating to the cultural sources of the present (2018, 15): *Still* seems to embody an emblematic example of this tendency.

### 6.3.3 Typical Elements of MS in *Still*

In the novel, numerous instances of typical MS terms recur, especially in dialogic speech:

**Table 7** Typical Elements of MS in *Still*

Nouns	Verbs	Adjectives/Adverbs	Interjections
<i>aina</i> (p. 154) (b, c, d); <sup>1</sup> <i>bangare</i> (p. 194) (b, c); <sup>2</sup> <i>cp-namn</i> (p. 130) (b); <sup>3</sup> <i>dabb</i> (p. 114) (b, c); <sup>4</sup> <i>dabba</i> (p. 137) (b, c); <sup>5</sup> <i>gajo</i> (24) (b, c); <sup>6</sup> <i>jidra</i> (p. 146) (b, d); <sup>7</sup> <i>lover</i> (2) (b, c); <sup>8</sup> <i>mavro</i> (4) (b); <sup>9</sup> <i>punani</i> (p. 194); <sup>10</sup> <i>rakli</i> (p. 194) (b); <sup>11</sup> <i>skurre</i> (18) (b); <sup>12</sup> <i>zutt</i> (5) (b, c); <sup>13</sup>	<i>ava</i> (p. 205) (b); <sup>14</sup> <i>axa</i> (p. 30) (b, c, d); <sup>15</sup> <i>banga</i> (3); (b, c, d); <sup>16</sup> <i>baxa</i> (p. 29) (b, c, d); <sup>17</sup> <i>baza</i> (3) (b, c, d); <i>beckna</i> (6) (b, c, d); <i>gitta</i> (2) (b, c, d); <sup>18</sup> <i>haja</i> (p. 69) (b, c); <sup>19</sup> <i>kera/kirra</i> (4) (b); <sup>20</sup> <i>pippa</i> (p. 22) (b, c); <sup>21</sup> <i>spela mangas</i> (5) (b, c, d); <i>tagga</i> (4) (b, c, d); <i>tjalla</i> (p. 166) (b, c); <sup>22</sup>	<i>beng</i> (p. 152) (b, c); <sup>23</sup> <i>cok med</i> + noun (p. 37) (b, c, d); <sup>24</sup> <i>fett med</i> + adj. (2) (b, d); <i>keff</i> (p. 115) (a, b, c, d); <sup>25</sup> <i>softish</i> (2) (b, d); <sup>26</sup> <i>värst</i> + noun (p. 83) (b, c, d); <sup>27</sup>	<i>aide</i> (4) (b, c, d); <sup>28</sup> <i>abou</i> (19) (b, c, d); <sup>29</sup> <i>ey</i> (70) (b, c, d); <sup>30</sup> <i>pass</i> (3) (b, c, d); <sup>31</sup> <i>sho</i> (9) (b, c, d); <sup>32</sup>
<b>1</b> Cf. Leiva Wenger 2015; Khemiri 2003.			
<b>2</b> Cf. Leiva Wenger 2015; Khemiri 2003.			
<b>3</b> Cf. Khemiri 2003, Bakhtiari 2012.			



- 4 Typical expression from Västergötland meaning ‘punch’. Cf. Doggelito, Kotsinas 2004, 63; Sjödin 2017, 37.
- 5 Synonym for ‘to punch someone’, or ‘make a mistake’ (Sjödin 2017, 37).
- 6 In Doggelito, Kotsinas *gayo* (2004, 78).
- 7 Cf. Khemiri 2003.
- 8 From Romani for ‘money’. Cf. Kotsinas 1998, 122; Doggelito, Kotsinas 2004, 108.
- 9 Specific term for ‘drugs’, or non-white person. Cf. Kotsinas 1998, 129; Doggelito, Kotsinas 2004, 114.
- 10 Of uncertain origin, attested in Kotsinas as *ponane* and *ponanie* (1998, 155); in Doggelito, Kotsinas as *ponani* (2004, 130). In both cases the term means ‘vagina’ and, methonymically, ‘woman’.
- 11 From Romani for ‘girl’ (Kotsinas 1998: 164).
- 12 Jargon term for ‘drugs’ (Doggelito, Kotsinas 2004, 141).
- 13 Noun derived from the verb *zutta*. Cf. Leiva Wenger 2015.
- 14 From Romani for ‘to come’. Cf. Carling, Lindell, Ambrazaitis 2013, 134; Kotsinas 1998, 5.
- 15 Cf. Khemiri 2003.
- 16 Cf. Leiva Wenger 2015; Bakhtiari 2012.
- 17 Cf. Leiva Wenger 2015; Khemiri 2003.
- 18 Cf. Leiva Wenger 2015; Khemiri 2003.
- 19 From Romani for ‘to understand’, extensively used in *Ekensnack* in the first decades of the twentieth Century. Cf. Kotsinas 1998, 75; Carling, Lindell, Ambrazaitis 2013, 171; <http://www.slangopedia.se/ordlista/?ord=haja>.
- 20 From Romani for ‘to do’ (Carling, Lindell, Ambrazaitis 2013, 186). Attested in *kirra* for ‘to provide something for someone’ (Doggelito, Kotsinas 2004, 100).
- 21 MS and, generally, slang term for ‘to have sex’ (Kotsinas 1998, 151).
- 22 From Romani for ‘to tattle’. Cf. Carling, Lindell, Ambrazaitis 2013, 253; Kotsinas 1998, 219.
- 23 Also attested as *bäng* in Kotsinas for ‘stupid’, ‘strange’ (1998, 11). Also attested as ‘cops’. Cf. <http://www.slangopedia.se/ordlista/?ord=beng>.
- 24 Cf. Leiva Wenger 2015; Khemiri 2003.
- 25 Cf. Kotsinas 1998.
- 26 Cf. Kotsinas 1998, 143; Leiva Wenger 2015, Khemiri 2003.
- 27 Cf. Kotsinas 1998, 240; Doggelito, Kotsinas 2004, 156; Khemiri 2003.
- 28 Cf. Leiva Wenger 2015.
- 29 Cf. Leiva Wenger 2015.
- 30 Cf. Doggelito, Kotsinas 2004, 68; Khemiri 2003.
- 31 Cf. Leiva Wenger 2015.
- 32 Cf. Leiva Wenger 2015, where it also occurs as *shu*; Khemiri 2003.

Since the novel takes place in a peripheral context among characters with non-typically Swedish names (Nemo, Saladin, Ivan, Leo, Foggy), it is to be expected that the vocabulary in the dialogues belongs, at least in part, to MS. The somewhat overabundant use of such lexical elements and morpho-syntactic constructions, however, makes *Still* a text where MS are highly stereotyped. Consider, for example, the following cue: “Öh, dick gajo som han spelar mangas, slår ner en tafatt snorung och en jävla gojnare och nu är du värsta kungen”

(Sattarvandi 2008, 83),<sup>5</sup> where the reader finds a compact set of examples mentioned in Table 7. Compared to the other texts examined here, Sattarvandi seems to employ MS in a slightly different way, i.e. to unhinge linguistic stereotypes. To understand how he manages to do this, we can observe metalinguistic considerations posed by some character, as in the following excerpt, in which Nemo's friend Ivan intentionally highlights stereotypical features of MSs:

Öh, öh - lyssna, som en jävla gojnare snackar du, shoooo bre, kom hiiiit och shoooooooooooo fan sug min kuk din tönt - inte ens de där ungarna på trappan pratar så där - vem i förorten pratar så - det är bara medelklassen och de där innerstadsungarna som tror att de hänger med när de babblar så. (2008, 17)

Uh, uh - listen, you talk like a fucking gipsy, shoooo bre, come here and shoooooooooooo fuck suck my dick you idiot - not even those kids on the stairs talk like that - who in the suburbs talks like that - it's only the middle class and those inner city kids who think they can keep up when they talk like that.

In this quotation, Ivan mocks the use of the expression *sho bre* (hi brother), which has become so popular that it has been used to build the term *shobresvenska*, i.e. an alternative denomination for MS (cf. § 1.2). According to Ivan, in fact, the excessive popularity of this expression has gradually led young people from Hagalund to avoid it, given the linguistic appropriation by "the middle class and those inner-city kids". Thus, Sattarvandi seems to make use of MS in a way that is well aware of both their performative value and their reception as a literary language. This is, in part, due to the relatively belated year of publication of the novel *Still* (2008) with respect to the three previous texts (*Till vår ära* 2001, *Ett öga rött* 2003, *Kalla det vad fan du vill* 2005). In this respect, influenced by success, critique but also imitation of the literary styles of the ethnic breakthrough, Sattarvandi proposes a text in which he uses exactly those languages in order to make a metalinguistic critique, i.e. to unveil the stereotypes associated with MS by using them as a language of literary expression. In the brief excerpt quoted above, we see a conflict between centre and periphery, in which language plays an important role: what is exported from the periphery and becomes popular in the centre seems to lose value in the periphery, not so much because it is no longer the distinctive trait of the place, but because it is no longer the 'exclusive' one. Therefore, Nemo

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5 "Oh, you boasting loudmouth, you beat up a poor kid and a fucking gypsy and now you are the ultimate king".

and his friends mock and avoid the expression *sho bre* once they notice it is used by other speakers who are not from Hagalund, in order to maintain a constant distance from the sociolinguistic dimension of the centre. Along with *sho bre*, also other expressions are appropriated by middle-class figures, as in the episode where a videomaker comes to Hagalund to exploit the architecture of the neighbourhood to shoot a music video, asking the characters to show off their supposed suburban attitude and speech, by stimulating them through the most popular MS terms: “Kom igen nu, försök få in den där förortsstilen, lite sho, lite bre, lite baxa, beckna och lite tjockt abbor’re - ni vet - förorten - Rinkeby” (Sattarvandi 2008, 29).<sup>6</sup> Through the figure of the videomaker, Sattarvandi enriches the discourse on urban multilingualism by presenting a character who engages in the practice of ‘language crossing’, described by Rampton as the appropriation of a repertoire that does not generally belong to a speaker for socio-residential reasons (1995; 1998, 291). Coming from the centre, and not being particularly familiar with such styles, the videomaker draws on MS, referring to single terms, expressions and places emblematically associated with Rinkeby, in order to elicit a positive reaction from Nemo and friends. In this case, however, crossing has clear overtones of stereotypical appropriation, insofar as it makes the linguistic tropes of a particular variant salient, typifying the speakers (Agha 2004, 30). In fact, the videomaker’s imitation of MS vocabulary is not just the result of a controlled act of elicitation of a desired style for artistic purposes, but rather it is imbued with a ‘colonial gaze’,<sup>7</sup> as it contributes to drawing a clear line between a ‘me’ from the centre who speaks a standard variety or a different kind of slang, and a ‘you’ from the periphery, speaking only slang, characterised by aggressive styles, endowed with less symbolic and cultural capital, underlining what could also be defined as an attitude - by the videomaker - of “[o]thering and discrimination embedded in the white men’s desire for Rinkeby Swedish” (Jonsson, Franzén, Milani 2020, 13). Moving on to examine the semantic fields that inspire Sattarvandi, there are frequent references to drugs by means of coded terms, such as the *moude*, probably related to ‘mood’, which puts drugs and the concept of mood in a relationship of cause (I take drugs), and effect (I’m in a bad or good mood). Coded references are also found in the use of *fet* (fat) in place of ‘joint’, as in “Hur fan

6 “Come on now, try to get that suburban style, a little *sho*, a little *bre*, a little *baxa*, *beckna* and a little *abbor’re* - you know - the suburb - Rinkeby”.

7 By this term is meant a structured act which is by no means equivalent to an individual viewer’s look: the gaze is able to make all subjects subjected to it (Silverman 1992). Therefore, in the videomaker’s episode the subjects are always simultaneously part of the spectacle as objectified subjects.

ska jag veta – rulla en fet?” (Sattarvandi 2008, 90),<sup>8</sup> in which the noun ‘joint’ is omitted and only partially replaced by the adjective *fet* which makes the mention of ‘joint’ unnecessary (*en fet joint* → *en fet*). Furthermore, in another case we find interesting metonymies in the use of *ladd* (load) for cocaine and *hink* (bucket) for alcohol (cf. Doggelito, Kotsinas 2004, 87),<sup>9</sup> which respectively refer to the type of transport (*ladd* derives from *ladda*, ‘to load’) for the consumption (of cocaine), and the container (*hink*, ‘bucket’) for the content (alcohol): “eller efter sommaren ska jag sluta med allt – pura, skurre, ladd, hink, rohypnol och allt annat skit som dödar mig” (Sattarvandi 2008, 180).<sup>10</sup> Concerning adjectives, Sattarvandi often takes up constructions that, in part, have already been discussed as typical for MS, such as superlativization: *fett med* + adj. (“fett med mogen”, very mature, 2008, 16); *dick* + noun, (“dick gajo”, boasting loudmouth, 2008, 83; “dick muchengo”, boasting guy, 2008, 141); *värst* + adj./noun, (“värsta mästaren”, the ultimate master, 2008, 92); “värsta tunga nyheten” (the ultimate news, 2008, 115); “värsta grejen” (the ultimate thing, 2008, 199). Interestingly, Sattarvandi also resorts to the construction *aka* + adj./noun to create nicknames or ironic attributes, which often draw on words or names from a global, mostly Anglo-American, cultural imaginary: “aka mingo” (2008, 69); “aka manga” (2008, 69); “aka Mandela” (2008, 70); “aka Helt jävla bränd i skallen” (aka fucked up) (2008, 72); “aka Forrest Gump” (2008, 73); “aka Bruce Lee” (2008, 80); “aka Helt fucking borta i skallen” (aka completely gone crazy) (2008, 82); “aka Balboa” (2008, 83, 119); “aka majtomanio” (2008, 91); “aka Deep undercover” (2008, 161). The verbs employed in *Still* are very common to Leiva Wenger and Khemiri (*axa, banga, baxa, baza, gitta*). However, Sattarvandi shows a quite high frequency of verbs from Romani, such as *ava, haja, kera* and *tjalla*, which are not attested in the other three works analysed. One example is “jag ska vänta för han ska ava hem snabbt och jag sitter där och väntar i trettio minuter till och tänker på hur jag ska kera något” (2008, 205),<sup>11</sup> where *ava* and *kera* replace *komma* (to come), and *fixa* (to do, to fix, to handle) respectively. Among the interjections, the use of *ey* is predominant, as it occurs more frequently (as many as seventy times) than in the other three works: “ey, aide, ibland

8 “How the hell should I know... roll a fat one?”.

9 Further evidence of the use of *ladd* as a synonym to cocaine is attested in the Swedish Police glossary released by the newspaper *Göteborgs-Posten* (Abrahamson 2024).

10 “Or after the summer I’m going to quit everything – pura, skunk, coke, bucket, rohypnol and all the other crap that kills me”.

11 “I’ll wait because he’s coming home quickly, and I’ll sit there and wait for another thirty minutes thinking about how I’m going to fix something”.

känns det som att någon stryper mig, Abou du dödar min skalle tooooootalt” (2008, 83).<sup>12</sup>

#### 6.3.4 Foreign Influences Not Typical of MS in *Still*

In addition to the above-mentioned linguistic items, *Still* also displays instances of loanwords such as those shown in Table 8, where – given their quantity – Anglisms adapted to Swedish morphology deserve specific analytical attention.

**Table 8** Foreign Influences Not Typical of MS in *Still*

Loanwords from English	Anglisms adapted to Swedish morphology	Loanwords from other languages
<i>allright</i> (p. 151), E; <i>blaze</i> (p. 196), S; <i>bolea</i> (3) (c) V; <sup>1</sup> <i>buffed</i> (p. 156) A; <i>bushweed</i> (6), S; <sup>2</sup> <i>cash</i> (3), S; <i>clown</i> (p. 208), S; <i>datachips</i> , S (p. 50); <i>fucking</i> (12), Adv.; <i>groggy</i> (p. 143), A (c); <i>homie</i> (p. 205), S; <i>joint</i> (39), S; <i>kick</i> (4), S; <i>mack</i> (3) (c), S; <i>monde</i> (19), S; <i>shit</i> (12), S; <i>tight</i> (p. 196), A; <i>yez</i> (p. 11), E; <i>waz up</i> (2), E	<i>checka</i> (p. 194), V; <i>chilla</i> (3), V; <i>jabba</i> (p. 143) (b, c) V; <sup>3</sup> <i>disrespecta</i> (p. 145), V; <i>dissande</i> (2), S; <i>hooka</i> (p. 32), V; <i>hupa</i> (p. 50), A; <i>hypade upp</i> (p. 34), V; <i>meck</i> (2), V; <sup>4</sup> <i>meckare</i> (3), S; <i>mecka</i> (8), V; <i>najs</i> (5), A; <i>outrot</i> (p. 167), S; <i>pissa</i> (2), V; <i>pumpa</i> (3), V; <i>toucha</i> (p. 91), V; <i>tripp</i> (3), S; <i>wankar</i> (p. 10), V;	<i>bravo</i> (p. 158), A; <i>cojones</i> (p. 72), S; <i>koskesh</i> (p. 193), S; <sup>5</sup> <i>señor</i> (p. 193), S
<b>1</b> Term from U.S. slang meaning, defined by Urban Dictionary as “the person in every group of people who has the tendency to fuck everything up” ( <a href="https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=Bolea">https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=Bolea</a> ).		
<b>2</b> In one case it is shortened to <i>bush</i> (Sattarvandi 2008, 209).		
<b>3</b> Attested in <i>Slangopedia</i> as synonym to ‘to hit’, ‘to beat up’ (cf. <a href="http://www.slangopedia.se/ordlista/?ord=jabba">http://www.slangopedia.se/ordlista/?ord=jabba</a> ).		
<b>4</b> Both <i>meckare</i> , <i>mecka</i> and <i>meck</i> are related to the action of rolling a joint, and to the ‘joint’ itself. According to Agazzi, <i>meck</i> is attested as a synonym to <i>jobb</i> (work), and <i>besvär</i> (trouble) (Agazzi 2015, 159). Wiktionary describes <i>mecka</i> as an alternative form of <i>meka</i> , related to the adjective <i>mekanisk</i> (mechanic) (cf. <a href="https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/mecka">https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/mecka</a> ).		
<b>5</b> From Farsi, meaning ‘pimp’ (cf. <a href="https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=koskesh">https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=koskesh</a> ).		

The table contents reveal a high number of verbs from English that are morphologically adapted to Swedish. Just to give a few examples,

**12** “ey, come on, sometimes I feel like someone is strangling me. Abou you are killing my head tooooootalt”.

we have *checka* (to check), *chilla* (to chill), *disrespecta* (to disrespect), *toucha* (to touch), where the English lemma is kept and combined with Swedish morphology (-a suffix to create infinitive forms). Adapted anglicisms are also adjectives, such as the omophone form *najs* (nice), and nouns, such as *outrot* (the outro) and *tripp* (trip).

The abundance of foreignisms in *Still* is manifested in several dialogues and, in particular, in the following sentence: “Señor Nemo, waz up, koskesh” (Sattarvandi 2008, 193), where a three-matrix mixed-language production takes place: Spanish (*Señor*), English (*waz up*) and Farsi (*koskesh*). In this quotation we see how styling involves a process of what Penelope Eckert calls bricolage, i.e. a practice “by which people combine a range of existing resources to construct new meanings or new twists on old meaning” (Eckert 2004, 43). Resulting from a lexical mash-up, this quotation’s intrasentential CS represents a resource for group members, motivated by a dual purpose: on the one hand to respond to conventionalised communicative rules, on the other to impress and attract the attention of others with an increasing degree of linguistic creativity, and complexity (Gumperz 1982; Stroud 1992; Woolard 2004).

Cases of intrasentential CS also concern English, as in the use of the strengthening word *fucking*: “jag fick svårt att andas och hela den där fucking skiten, så jag ringer till honom igen och jag hör hur idioten sitter i någon fucking lägenhet” (Sattarvandi 2008, 206).<sup>13</sup> But there are also cases of intersentential CS, as in the following statement by Saladin: “Exakt, äntligen har du fattat någonting av det jag har sagt – thiis is the shit” (2008, 19).<sup>14</sup> As can be seen from the cases analysed, Nemo and friends make use of different resources that seem to work together fluidly, without considering the boundaries between codes.

### 6.3.5 Creative Compounds, and New-words in *Still*

In this section, we will analyse compounds created through a creative use of existing elements of the Swedish vocabulary. Given the limited number of items under consideration, the inclusion of a new table is considered unnecessary. We distinguish verbs such as “ticktackticktackat iväg” (literally ‘to tic-tac away’, meaning ‘to flow away in tic-tac rhythm’) (Sattarvandi 2008, 52), “köra en mack” (to flirt) (2008, 115) and “köra en ninja vanish” (to vanish, to run away, four hits). Furthermore, we also include nouns such as

<sup>13</sup> “I was having trouble breathing and all that fucking shit, so I call him again and I hear the idiot sitting in some fucking apartment”.

<sup>14</sup> “Exactly, finally you understand something of what I said... thiis is the shit”.

*abbor're*,<sup>15</sup> *Dohano* (2008, 191),<sup>16</sup> *majtomanio* (2008, 91),<sup>17</sup> *muchengo* (uncertain meaning, probably associated to 'guy'),<sup>18</sup> *rajban*,<sup>19</sup> *maich* (much, nothing).<sup>20</sup> Given the lack of attestations and information, as is also evident from the reflections developed in the respective footnotes, *Dohano*, *majtomanio*, *rajban* and *abor're* remain, at present, untranslated. Since the available sources do not currently allow for more in-depth interpretations, the meaning of some words and expressions discussed here is derived from a careful reading in the context in which they occur. However, the reason why *muchengo*, *köra en mack* and *köra en ninja vanish* are included in the current section depends on the fact that these expressions are not attested either in dictionaries, in the sociolinguistic research materials available to date, or the other three texts examined. For this reason, these could either be words that have not been 'caught' by sociolinguistics so far, or words created by Sattarvandi or belonging to small groups of speakers, potentially located in Hagalund, of which there is no trace (yet) in research.

As for other terms, e.g. *muchengo*, consider sentences such as "visa muchengo vad du går för" (Sattarvandi 2008, 141),<sup>21</sup> or "ge muchengo en smäll till" (2008, 141),<sup>22</sup> where it clearly emerges that the term (perhaps a Hispanicism related to *muchacho*?) refers (in a rather unfriendly way) to a male person, therefore translatable as 'guy'. Thus, it seems unlikely that Sattarvandi invented *muchengo* out of scratch, as well as the expression *köra en mack*, considering that both items occur in several narrative sections. It must be specified that the expressions *mack* and *ninja vanish* are not new, as they are reported in the Urban Dictionary as English slang verbs with the respective meaning of 'to hit on, flirt with, or seduce a female by using verbal or

**15** Eight hits in the novel. In one case it occurs as *abbor'retönt* (Sattarvandi 2008, 79). Based on current findings, several hypotheses are formulated as to the meaning of this expression: probably it is a crasis between *abou* and *bre/re* taking the meaning 'wow, dude'. Cf. Doggelito, Kotsinas 2004, 134. It is also likely to be a different spelling of *abre* or *abri*. Also the meaning 'let's go' or 'listen' is attested. Cf. Kotsinas 1998, 1; Doggelito, Kotsinas 2004, 31. At present, any connection with *abbor're*, the Swedish term for the European perch (*Perca fluviatilis*), can be ruled out for semantic inconsistency.

**16** There is no precise and reliable information on the term. However, scattered web research reports that *Dohano* is a surname, but its origin is unclear.

**17** *Hapax legomenon* with no explanatory-translational solution.

**18** Three hits. *Muchengo* is the name of a mountain in Zambia. The correlation with its use in the text is however unclear.

**19** Two hits. Unknown origin and meaning.

**20** Ten hits. Adverb of quantity which, depending on the context, takes on contrasting meanings.

**21** "Show the muchengo how much you are worth".

**22** "Give the muchengo one more punch".

sometimes physical means of persuasion',<sup>23</sup> and 'to vanish'/'to make a dramatic exit'.<sup>24</sup> The reason why *köra en mack* and *köra en ninja vanish* are considered new is that Sattarvandi, apparently, coined the expression *köra en mack* (literally, 'to go for a flirt') and *köra en ninja vanish* by using the verb *köra* and converting the English verbs 'to mack' and 'to ninja vanish' into nouns.

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**23** Cf. [https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=mack\\_](https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=mack_)

**24** Cf. <https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=Ninja%20vanish>.