

Literary Multilingualism in Postmigrant Sweden

Luca Gendolavigna

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Abstract

In contemporary Sweden, migration and linguistic diversity have become structural elements of society and culture. This volume examines how these transformations are mirrored in Swedish literature through the emergence of multilingual writing practices. Drawing on Postmigrant Studies, sociolinguistic principles, stylistics and literary multilingualism, the book analyses four emblematic works: Alejandro Leiva Wenger's *Till vår ära* (2001), Jonas Hassen Khemiri's *Ett öga rött* (2003), Marjaneh Bakhtiari's *Kalla det vad fan du vill* (2005), and Hassan Loo Sattarvandi's *Still* (2008). By focusing on code-switching, lexical contamination, morpho-syntactic variation, and hybrid registers, this book demonstrates how literary language becomes a space of negotiation between identity, belonging and the multiple possibilities of expression. The study highlights the role of multilingualism not only as a stylistic device but also as a socio-political statement, capable of challenging monolingual norms and redefining what constitutes Swedish literature. Combining textual analysis with linguistic research, the book contributes to the understanding of postmigrant aesthetics and the complex relations between language, power, and cultural hybridity in Sweden.

Keywords Swedish literature. Postmigration. Literary multilingualism. Postmonolingualism. Multilingual styles.

Acknowledgments

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Literary Multilingualism in Postmigrant Sweden

1 Introduction

Summary 1.1 Demographic Changes. – 1.2 Linguistic Changes. – 1.3 Literary Developments. – 1.4 Research Questions and Aims of the Study. – 1.5 Materials of Analysis and Selection Criteria. – 1.6 The Necessity to Criticise and to Keep Using the Concept *Invandrarlitteratur*. – 1.7 Theoretical and Methodological Background. – 1.8 Layout of the Study.

This study aims to offer an analytical overview of the linguistic phenomena characterising part of contemporary Swedish literature, in a Sweden which, nowadays, can be defined as a superdiverse and ‘postmigrant’ society. Based on a doctoral project in Nordic Languages and Literatures, carried out between 2018 and 2022, and a monograph entitled *Storie d’identità. La Svezia postmigrante* (Stories of Identity. Postmigrant Sweden), published in 2023, this work seeks to offer a critical glimpse at linguistic aspects that, over time, have become typical of migration-related literature in Sweden in the twenty-first century.

Through the critical lens of Postmigrant Studies, Sweden is framed as a country where migration has now become a structural phenomenon, multilingualism plays a key role in literature,¹ and

1 For example, according to recent surveys, Arabic is now the second most spoken language in Sweden. This data is particularly significant, since the second most spoken language in Sweden has for long time been Finnish for historical, political and cultural reasons (Parkvall 2018).

multiculturalism works as a political resource of intercultural co-existence and tolerance.

Considering the central role played by linguistic varieties in framing societies as postmigrant, this study investigates the so-called *invandrarlitteratur* (immigrant literature), a phenomenon traced in the Swedish literary field since at least the late 1960s and ideally divided into two main waves: first – and second-generation (Gröndahl 2002; Wendelius 2002; Kongslien 2007). Actually, the phenomenon is much more complex than this simple division. The wave known as ‘second-generation’ investigates contemporary Swedish fiction written by authors of non-European origin who either belong to second or 1.5 generations (Pérez Firmat 1994; Suleiman 2002). These terms refer, respectively, to people born and raised in Sweden by at least one foreign parent, and those born abroad but immigrated at a pre-adolescent age (Larrucea 2015, 81), or born in the host country.²

This work needs to be contextualised in what Sweden has become over time. In particular, it is necessary to investigate the way in which migration has changed Swedish society from the second half of the twentieth century to the present.

1.1 Demographic Changes

As of the 31 December 2024, official statistics reported that Sweden reached a population of 10,587,710 inhabitants.³ Of these, 2,200,238 are foreign-born Swedes,⁴ and 831,813 are resident as non-Swedish citizens.⁵ This means that almost 30% of the total population in Sweden has foreign origins. Compared to 2000, when statistics indicated that approximately one-tenth of the Swedish population was foreign-born (De los Reyes 2000, 29), we see how in the last twenty years, in particular after the so-called ‘Migrant Crisis’, Sweden has been experiencing a strong demographic growth, reaching more than ten million inhabitants in 2017. Furthermore, at the end of 2015

² Concerning the concept of ‘second generation’, it is important to point out that “[w]hile it obviously refers to children of international migrants it seems logically and ethically wrong to categorise these children as migrants if they are born in the country to which their parents immigrated, in this case Sweden, many of them being citizens of the country” (Westin 2000, 18).

³ For data about population in Sweden, cf. <https://www.scb.se/hitta-statistik/sverige-i-siffror/manniskorna-i-sverige/sveriges-befolkning/>.

⁴ For data about foreign-born population in Sweden, cf. <https://www.scb.se/hitta-statistik/sverige-i-siffror/manniskorna-i-sverige/utrikes-fodda-i-sverige/>.

⁵ For data about foreign citizens in Sweden, cf. <https://www.scb.se/hitta-statistik/sverige-i-siffror/manniskorna-i-sverige/utlandska-medborgare-i-sverige/>.

Sweden was the nation with the highest number of asylum seekers per capita, when 163,005 new arrivals were recorded.⁶

Although Swedish population is growing, the birth rate is decreasing (from 1.89 in 2013 to 1.45 in 2023, which however is still above the 1.38 EU average),⁷ as well as (although neither gradually nor constantly) the total annual number of immigrants. In the period 2023-24, only slightly more than 210,000 people emigrated to Sweden, of which 22,289 applied for asylum. Compared to 2013-14, when more than 242,000 new immigrants came to Sweden, of which more than 135,000 were asylum seekers, we observe that immigration (and the political acceptance of this phenomenon) is affected by a significant decrease.⁸ On the one hand, from 2016 onwards, Sweden experienced a drastic drop in asylum seekers. On the other hand, immigration contributes to at least 60% of the annual population increase.⁹

These interesting data show what Catrin Lundström and Tobias Hübnette have termed “*supermångfaldspräglade befolkningssammansättning*” (superdiverse demographic composition) (2020, 74). The adjective *supermångfaldspräglad* (superdiverse) draws on the concept of *superdiversity*, coined by Steven Vertovec (2007) to analyse the complex nature of today’s western societies, seeking to overcome the definition of diversity intended only in terms of ethnicity.¹⁰

Swedish superdiversity depends on several factors. The most evident one is the fact that around 40% of young people aged 0-18 years have a foreign background, displaying a population that, potentially, in future can reach even higher percentages of citizens with foreign origin than today. Furthermore, in demographic terms, Swedish superdiversity only measures up to global multicultural models such as the United States, Canada, France and Great Britain.

How does such superdiversity come about? As will be explained in Chapter 2, in the second half of the twentieth century, Sweden enjoyed exponential economic and industrial growth, which fostered immigration waves that created encouraging conditions

6 For data about asylum seekers in Sweden, cf. <https://www.scb.se/hitta-statistik/sverige-i-siffror/manniskorna-i-sverige/asylsokande-i-sverige/>.

7 For data about Swedish and European population growth, cf. <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tps00199/default/table?lang=en>.

8 For data about immigration to Sweden, cf. <https://www.scb.se/hitta-statistik/sverige-i-siffror/manniskorna-i-sverige/invandring-till-sverige/>.

9 For data about annual population increase in Sweden, cf. <https://www.scb.se/hitta-statistik/sverige-i-siffror/manniskorna-i-sverige/sveriges-befolkning/>.

10 Vertovec develops superdiversity in British context as an interdisciplinary notion determined by additional variables to ethnicity, such as class, age, gender, residential patterns, etc. (2007, 1025). The term refers to the radical changes in Western societies brought about by global and regional events prompting international migration, thus stimulating scholars to re-evaluate investigative methods and epistemologies on migration as a social phenomenon.

for the free development of intercultural forms of coexistence, in which the legal-political equalisation of minorities and non-Swedish citizens brought about an important enlargement of the until then (supposedly) homogeneous Swedish nation.

Currently, the demographically most influential countries on migration flows in Sweden are Syria, Finland, Iraq and Poland.¹¹ The reasons constitute prime examples of the historical role played by Sweden within the global migration flows during the last century. Sweden's reputation as a welcoming nation for guest workers and refugees, as well as its generous welfare system, turned the country into a privileged destination for people fleeing conflicts and seeking a better life. Sweden's demand for labour, particularly in sectors like healthcare, building industry and services has attracted workforce from Southern and Eastern Europe, as well as from Finland. Finland's geo-historical and, in part, linguistic proximity to Sweden, have facilitated long-standing flows over the Baltic Sea, particularly after the end of World War II. Further details will be provided in the next chapter.

1.2 Linguistic Changes

Another aspect of Swedish superdiversity is that approximately 2.2 million people have a mother tongue other than Swedish (Parkvall 2019, 39), i.e. almost a quarter of the total population.¹² Although there is a lack of official data, it is estimated that over two hundred languages are spoken in Sweden today (Josephson 2018; Parkvall 2019). The practices of everyday life reflect the way people express their identity. Language is part of it, especially for the descendants of migrants who have access to at least two languages, namely Swedish – learnt at school and through contact with society – and the language of their parents, acquired at home and through family contacts, where, however, the use of Swedish is not excluded. Since the 1970s, Swedish superdiversity has been testified to several varieties emerging from contacts between Swedish and immigrants' mother tongues. In the second half of the 1980s, the sociolinguist Ulla-Britt Kotsinas detected such phenomena in the neighbourhood of Rinkeby, in northern Stockholm, in her article "Invandrarsvenska

11 For data about the most influential countries on migration flows in Sweden, cf. <https://www.scb.se/hitta-statistik/sverige-i-siffror/manniskorna-i-sverige/utrikes-fodda/>.

12 This is even more significant if we consider that in 1950 only one twenty-fifth of the population had a mother tongue other than Swedish (Aktürk-Drake et al. 2021, 5).

och språkförändringar” (Immigrant Swedish and Language Changes) (Kotsinas 1985).

Focusing on academic research about suburban youth multilingualism in Sweden, there is a vast terminological variety, which is not unproblematic and needs to be observed in order to obtain a more precise analytical framework. When speaking of suburban youth languages, in this study we refer to the domain of multilingualism, i.e. what in Swedish scholarship is known as *flerspråkighet*. Research on this area distinguishes at least between three areas of investigation: *andraspråk* (second language), *tvåspråkighet* (bilingualism), and *flerspråkighet* (multilingualism). The former deals with Swedish as a language learned by foreign people in educational contexts, while the second is usually part of education studies, framed as a phenomenon involving individual competences (Björklund 2016, 16).¹³ *Flerspråkighet* refers to a field that, rather than focusing on linguistic competence, examines cognitive and social dimensions of multilingual societies (16). The increasing diversity in the three main cities (Stockholm, Göteborg and Malmö), especially in the *Miljonprogram* (Million Programme) areas,¹⁴ has attracted sociolinguistic interest since the end of the Seventies (Hammarberg, Viberg 1976; Wigforss 1981), when important migration flows occurred from both abroad and the countryside. Thanks to the scientific curiosity towards these new linguistic phenomena, a new research strand on multilingual varieties of Swedish was established, which was later systematised by the aforementioned Kotsinas – who is usually attributed the role of pioneer in these studies – and by the *Centrum för tvåspråkighetsforskning* (Centre for Research on Bilingualism),¹⁵ founded in 1988 at Stockholm University, and coordinated by Kenneth Hyltenstam.

In recent times, a thorough investigation into the changes occurred within such varieties comes from the linguists Ellen Bijvoet and Kari Fraurud, who have devoted many studies to what is also known as *Rinkebysvenska* (Rinkebyswedish, henceforth RS): according to them, RS is a way of speaking Swedish originated and developed in multilingual metropolitan environments among young people of different ethnic origins (Bijvoet, Fraurud 2013). These varieties develop all over the country, especially in areas populated by immigrants, thus they are not limited to the multicultural suburb

¹³ For further insights into the field, see the research work of Kenneth Hyltenstam, starting with his *Svenska i invandarperspektiv* (Swedish from an immigrant perspective) from 1979.

¹⁴ Projects for residential development carried out in the 1960s and 1970s throughout the country. See Chapter 2.

¹⁵ Homepage of the Centre for Research on Bilingualism available at <https://www.su.se/centrum-for-tvasprakighetsforskning/>.

of Rinkeby, but rather concern many areas around Stockholm and the main Swedish cities. As a matter of fact, RS is just one of several popular denominations, as we identify, among others, the following ones: *invandrarsvenska* (Immigrant Swedish), *blattesvenska* (Blatte Swedish),¹⁶ *bushiska*,¹⁷ *förortsslang* (Neighbourhood slang),¹⁸ *ghettospråk* (Ghetto language), *kebabspråk* (Kebab language),¹⁹ *miljonsvenska* (Million Swedish),²⁰ *shobresvenska* (*sho bre*-Swedish).²¹ In addition to these terms, we also find several local names, such as *Albysvenska* (Alby Swedish), *Gårdstenska*, *Rosengårdenska*, and many others.²² Besides these popular denominations, many definitions have arisen in academic fields, which attempt to summarise the complexity of such linguistic varieties: *svenska på mångspråkig grund* (Swedish on a multilingual basis) (Große 2007, 25), suburban Swedish (Young 2014), urban youth styles (Jonsson 2018), *förortsförankrat tal* (suburb-anchored speech) (Bijvoet, Senter 2021), etc. Most recently, Bijvoet has proposed an umbrella term to describe such varieties: *migrationsrelaterad språklig variation* (migration-related language variation) (Bijvoet 2020, 25), by which she means varieties that can be traced back to (mainly) suburban youth languages. The different denominations used to describe suburban youth languages in Sweden suggest that new ways of understanding interlinguistic relationships are leading to a “multilingual turn” (May 2013), whereby multilingualism is defined as an everyday practice, rooted in several Western societies for half a century now. This multilingual turn envisions languages no longer as discrete, bounded entities, but as stylistic and multimodal repertoires available to speakers, regardless of their origins or native language. In recent years, this turn has contributed to interesting reflections on the understanding of phenomena concerning the relationships between two or more languages. Just to provide some examples, in Denmark the concept

16 A term introduced by Ebba Witt-Brattström in 2006 in the newspaper *Dagens Nyheter*, where she stated that these varieties were good only for “selling bananas in Rosengård” (Malmö) (Milani 2010; Agazzi 2015). *Blatte* is attested at least since the 1960s (Lacatus 2008, 11), and was used against dark-skinned immigrants, resulting more offensive and racially connoted than *invandrare*. In recent decades it has enjoyed a positive revaluation. Cf. Leonard 2022, 202.

17 Untranslatable term related to the practices of suburban youth language.

18 Slang influenced by different languages in multicultural areas (Agazzi 2015, 94). This denomination also inspires the title to a glossary written by Dogge Doggelito and Ulla-Britt Kotsinas in 2004.

19 Attested at least since 1987 (Agazzi 2015, 95).

20 Introduced in 2005 by the cultural magazine *Gringo* (cf. Agazzi 2015, 163).

21 Literally ‘hello brother’, a typical Bosnian greeting well established in Swedish suburbs.

22 Respectively immigrant-dense districts of Stockholm, Göteborg and Malmö.

Perkerdansk has become very popular (Quist, Møller 2003). Janus Møller has proposed the term ‘polylingual languaging’ (2009, 188) to define multilingualism in Copenhagen, whereby ‘languaging’ refers to a performative dimension of language. In Norway, today we find the term *Kebabnorsk* (Svendsen, Røyneland 2008; Aarsæther 2010) which, although no longer undisputed, is still widely used.

Regardless of their specific denomination, all these phenomena are spread in many European countries. In Great Britain, the sociolinguist Ben Rampton has formulated the concept of ‘stylised heteroglossic speech practices’ (2011, 276), denoting them as ‘speech practices’ with ‘stylised’ or indexicalised features from different languages or varieties. In Germany, multilingualism is often connoted with the popular terms *Kanak Sprak* (Deppermann 2007) and *Kiezdeutsch* (Wiese 2012; Diko 2019), while France has the famous *verlan* (Lefkowitz 1989),²³ the Netherlands *Straattaal* (street language) (Nortier, Dorleijn 2013), and *Citétaal* (city language) in Belgium (March 2005).

1.2.1 A New Attempt at Definition: Multilingual Styles

Adapting Rampton’s aforementioned definition of ‘stylised heteroglossic speech practices’, in Sweden Ellen Bijvoet moved on to designations such as “new urban youth styles” (2018). In this study, we also propose to start from the definition of ‘style’ to frame youth multilingualism in Sweden. More precisely, we adopt the concept of ‘multilingual styles’ (henceforth MS), already theorised (Gendolavigna 2019) as a more neutral and less controversial term, without prefixes that risk to over-emphasise ethnic backgrounds, age, residential areas and extra-linguistic factors, focusing on the composition of these varieties as resources used by heterogeneous social categories. In both everyday interactions and literary representations, MS often appear with stylised features, i.e. used with such frequency and emphasis as to become a defining element of the identity of a group or one speaker.

First, it is necessary to provide a definition of style: derived from the Greek *στῦλος* (*stylos*, column), style means a way of constructing reality, a concrete or figurative action (Compagnon 2004, 125). Style pertains to the modality (the ‘how?’) of linguistic communication, proposing an agentive perspective on it (Coupland 2007; Nortier, Dorleijn 2013, 237; Svendsen, Røyneland 2008). Inspiring in this

23 *Verlan* is a multiethnic youth variety with strong slang features, distinguished by syllabic inversions, elisions, and substitutions of final letters. The word *verlan* itself is a syllabic inversion of the French *l’envers* (the inverse).

respect is Penelope Eckert's reflection on style, defined as "the activity in which people create social meaning" (2003, 43).

The employment of the term 'style' finds support in various scientific contributions. Rampton defines 'stylization' as a "reflexive communicative action in which speakers produce specially marked and often exaggerated representations of languages, dialects and styles that lie outside their own habitual repertoire" (2009, 149).

Moreover, the concept of style has also been employed by the scholars Tommaso Milani and Rickard Jonsson who, using 'youth styles and stylized performances' (2012, 46-7), tried to capture the dimension of youth multilingual languages as resources for determining the self (46). In 2021, Bijvoet and Senter also alluded to such varieties by using 'style':

[i]nom den etnografiska inriktningen beskrivs den aktuella språkliga variationen ofta i termer av stil. Stil är där något man gör - med hjälp av språk [...] i konstruktionen av identiteter. (172)²⁴

[w]ithin the ethnographic approach, current linguistic variation is often described in terms of style. Style is something one does - through language [...] to construct identities and social relations.

The employment of the plural form *styles* relates to the heterogeneity of MS, where both phonetics and vocabulary of several languages merge (46). Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that 'Multilingual Styles' is a term able to reflect the current polyvalence and complexity of the repertoires available to multilingual speakers. To give a comprehensive definition, MS are contact varieties resulting from a complex intersection of linguistic, historical and social processes, commonly spoken by people from mono - and multilingual backgrounds and interacting in a post-migratory context. As they arise from different features of different languages, most notably Greek, Turkish, Arabic, Spanish, Kurdish, Farsi, Serbo-Croatian, etc. (Rydell, Ganuza 2024, 9), MS consist of a heterogeneous vocabulary that has found its way into Swedish over time. MS do not replace the use of Swedish in every communicative situation, and do not work as an alternative to an alleged lack of grammatical, syntactical, and lexical competence, but rather have a specific diaphasic connotation, as they constitute a part of several repertoires collected along different biographical trajectories (Blommaert 2009), where Swedish is often (but not always) the speakers' native language or the language through which they have been educated. Thus, linguistic choice in

24 Unless otherwise stated, translations are by the Author.

a multicultural environment becomes a matter of identity, but also a semiotic resource in response to social demands, and the practices of intercultural coexistence.

1.2.1.1 Multilingual Styles: Features

MS can be analysed from multiple points of view, as they display interesting phenomena in every aspect of language. These languages are characterised by a set of phonetic features with a strong foreign accent, inconsistent syntax, imprecise morphology, and a varied vocabulary, rich in loanwords, resemantisations, ‘recycled’ archaisms, terms from urban dialects and the use of the recent derivational suffix *-ish*.

1.2.1.1.1 Phonetics

A MS speaker is immediately recognisable as the prosody appears rather monotonous compared to the tones of Swedish. In fact, MS phonetics is strongly influenced by the phonetic systems of the speakers’ mother tongues, which give rise to a prosodic disconnection also known as *brytning* (breaking).²⁵ To provide a couple of examples, the distinction between long and short vowels is often blurred, complicating word discernment, e.g. between *ful* ‘ugly’ (long vowel) and *full* ‘full’/‘drunk’ (short vowel). In addition, complex consonantic conjunctions, such as *sch-*, *sj-*, *sk-*, *sh-*, *stj-* and *tj-*, are reduced to a simple postalveolar fricative [ʃ] or to a sound somewhere between a voiceless velar fricative [x] and a voiceless pharyngeal fricative [ħ].

1.2.1.1.2 Morphology

MS are characterised by a peculiar employment of certain grammatical categories. One example is the confusion between common and neuter gender, as reported in the example “de e mitt framtid de handlar om” (it’s my future we are talking about) (Kotsinas 1994, 134), where the neuter possessive *mitt* (my), related to the common gender noun *framtid* (future), replaces the common gender possessive *min*. We also recognise overgeneralisation

25 The Swedish Academy Dictionary (SAOB) defines the term *brytning* as follows: “tala på ett sätt som förråder inflytande l. reminiscenser från ett främmande språk l. en viss dialekt o.d.” (speak in a way that betrays influence or reminiscences of a foreign language or a particular dialect and similar), cf. <https://www.saob.se/artikel/?seek=bryta&pz=2>.

and simplification, which affect prepositions, where we see an overextension of the most common *på* and *i* where they should not be used. MS often lack congruence in the conjugation of plural adjectives and nouns: “sen dom blir lite rik” (then they get a little rich) (Kotsinas 1994, 145), with the adjective *rik* (rich) expressed in the singular instead of the plural *rika*. These are just some of the phenomena concerning the morphology of MS. Other phenomena will be discussed in the analytical section.

1.2.1.1.3 Syntax

The phenomena analysed so far could be judged as mistakes committed during a language learning process. This may be partly true, but when it comes to syntax, we can see that MS are not always a matter of simple failures, but rather a result of multilingualism as a social phenomenon coupled with conscious stylistic choices. Let us start with the main peculiarities of MS: the missing verb-subject inversion. According to Swedish grammar, in declarative sentences the finite verb always takes the second place (V2-rule). In main sentences preceded by subordinate clauses, and in main sentences that do not begin with the subject, verb and subject are inverted, where the finite verb precedes the subject. However, MS speakers seem to ignore these rules, resorting to a V3 structure (verb in the third place) (Bylin, Tingsell 2021). Let us look at the following data collected by the scholar Natalia Ganuza: “om du inte vill gifta dej vi bryr oss inte” (if you don’t want to get married, we don’t care); “å sen publiken får avgöra” (and then the audience can decide) (Ganuza 2008, 100-1). In the first example, the main sentence “vi bryr oss inte” is preceded by the subordinate “om du inte vill gifta dig”. According to rules, after a subordinate clause, the main clause verb precedes the subject: “om du inte vill gifta dej bryr vi oss inte”, where the verb keeps its position while the subject moves after the verb. In the main sentence “å sen publiken får avgöra”, however, the verb is not in the second position, but rather after the subject which, in turn, is placed between the tense adverb *sen* (then) and the verb *får* (may, can): the correct version is: “å sen får publiken avgöra”. One of the first theories concerned with word-order issues postulated a tangible difficulty for first-generation migrants to acquire Swedish syntax.²⁶ This is partly due to the syntactic systems of migrants’ languages, that might be unfamiliar with the practice of inversion, and therefore may prove difficult to acquire, especially if Swedish is learned at an older age (as in the case of first-generation immigrants). On the

²⁶ These theories have been highlighted and criticised by Kotsinas 1994; Otterup 2005.

contrary, with regard to the second and third generation, recent research has shown that word-order switches are not always related to language-acquisition issues, but rather they become a deliberately incorrect mode of expression for identity and social reasons according to a given position towards what is judged as standard Swedish. As explained by Kotsinas,

När ungdomarna som är uppvuxna i Sverige gör 'fel' inom språkliga system behöver det inte nödvändigtvis bero på att de inte känner till rätt form. I stället [...] använder de uttryck som de dagligen hör i området av föräldrar, andra vuxna, nyinflyttade kamrater, osv. (1994, 147-9)

When young people who have grown up in Sweden make 'mistakes' within linguistic systems, it is not necessarily because they do not know the correct form. Instead [...] they use expressions that they hear daily in the neighbourhood from parents, other adults, newcomers, etc.

In the preface to the glossary *Förortsslang* (2004), written with the rapper Dogge Doggelito, Kotsinas noted that these linguistic peculiarities should not be simply labelled as mere formal errors, because they are signs of social distinction, supporting the thesis that some aspects of MS are communicative acts for identity purposes. As pointed out by Bijvoet and Fraurud (2011), we should rather speak of conventionalised XSV practices, i.e. the assignment of the verb (V) to the third place when the sentence begins with an element (X) other than the subject (S), which can be reduced only and exclusively to intimate contexts, between bi - or multilingual speakers (Ganuza 2008; 2011). In other words, descendants of immigrants recognise their own morpho-syntactic traits, but they intentionally insist on using them as a common factor of social identification (Kotsinas 1994, 156-7).

1.2.1.1.4 Vocabulary

Like phonetics and syntax, MS vocabulary is also influenced by co-production phenomena with other languages, in which words from the basic vocabulary of a foreign language become constitutive elements of a new, suburban vocabulary. The main language currently contributing to the lexical enrichment of everyday language, slang and professional jargons in Sweden is English. The pervasive influence this language is exerting on the basic vocabulary of many languages introduces widely spread terms, such as *jobba* (from job), *kicka* (from to kick), *missa* (from to miss), *tuff* (from tough), *najs* (nice), etc. However, English is not the only language influencing Swedish,

least of all MS, where it actually has a non-dominant (when not marginal) role. Due to a centuries-old presence of Finnish and Roma minorities in the country, many MS words come from Finnish and, above all, Romani Chib. Categorised as an official minority language, which has been present in Sweden for at least five centuries, Romani has been a lexical source for jargons such as Månsing and urban *koinè* such as *ekensnack* (a Stockholm dialect spoken in the early twentieth century),²⁷ and is attested in several glossaries as an active and prolific source of MS. Some examples are *gola* (to gossip), *lover* (money), *tjalla* (from *čalla*, to gossip), *tji* (no/not). Following post-World War II migration flows, Swedish came into contact with many Southern and non-European languages, which today are in considerable expansion as synonymic and supplementary resources (with different semantic nuances). Consider the influences of Turkish through words such as *aina* (from *aynasız*, cop), *çok* (very), *guss* (from *kız*, girl), *län* (from *ulan*, boy), *para* (from *parra*, money), *benim* (I, my, mine); and Arabic, with *jalla* (let's go), *keff* (from *كف*, bad), *wallah* (I swear), *zutta* (from Maghreb slang *zatla*, grass, hashish). The spread of MS has prompted language authorities such as the *Svenska Akademien* (Swedish Academy) and the *Institut för Språk och Folkminnen* (Swedish Institute for Language and Folklore – ISOF) to lexicalise some of these terms. To provide a couple of examples, the noun *guss* and the adjective *keff* are included in the thirteenth edition of the *Svenska Akademiens Ordlista* (Swedish Academy Glossary – SAOL). However, none of them are included in *Svenska Akademiens Ordbok* (Swedish Academy Dictionary – SAOB).²⁸ Another example is the first-person personal pronoun *benim*, included in the 2019 ISOF *nyordlista* (neologism list).²⁹ Due to their lexical diversity, the use of such terms evidences a clear distance between the lexical material within specific semantic domains. MS, in fact, construct their vocabulary by reflecting the interests and attitudes of the speakers. This is why, for example, the currently available glossaries on youth slang³⁰ contain many references to clothing brands, leisure activities, drugs, police, fights and sexuality (Kotsinas 1994, 119-26).

27 Literally 'eken-speak', where *eken* stands for a shortening of *ekenskisar*, the *månsing* name by which the inhabitants of Stockholm were called, itself renamed *Storhäcken* in the same jargon (see Kotsinas 2001).

28 Similar phenomena occur in Norwegian, where the Norwegian Academy Dictionary (NAOB) recognises the interjection *wolla* from the above-mentioned *wallah* (cf. <https://naob.no/ordbok/wolla>).

29 *Benim* is the genitive of the Turkish first-person pronoun *ben*, often used in MS as an exclamation meaning 'here I am'. *Benim* shows that a neologism can also be introduced into a traditionally 'closed' class of vocabulary, such as pronouns. However, research points out that its use is restricted to MS and hip-hop music (see Young 2021).

30 Kotsinas 1998; Doggelito, Kotsinas 2004; Agazzi 2015; Sjödin 2017.

All these dimensions constitute part of the *ungdomskulturer* (youth cultures), which, as pointed out by Aleksandra Ålund, do not result from a lack of reference points and social discomfort, but are marks of a new culture in the making, developing from a multitude of resources (1997, 165-6). However, it is important to emphasise that, reflecting contemporary interests, habits and approaches, the linguistic expressions of such youth cultures are extremely variable. As more recent literary texts and audiovisual products show, much of the vocabulary used (and captured by research) in the early 2000s is today already obsolete or no longer popular. As for semantic expansions, similar to youth languages MS employ given words out of their usual context. Expansions usually occur in endogenous terms, such as the use of the verb *gå* (to walk) instead of *åka* (to go by transport) (Kotsinas 1994, 145). The same verb *gå* simplifies many expressions, replacing more specific verbs such as *bli* (to become) and *lämna* (to leave) (145). Semantic expansions also occur through resemantisation processes. An example is the employment of the verb *baxa*, reported by SAOB as an archaism for ‘carrying heavy objects’. Today, this verb is disused and has been semantically recycled as synonymous with *stjåla* (to steal). Often used in criminal parlances, *baxa* often recurs in the form *baxish*, which will be discussed shortly (Doggelito, Kotsinas 2004, 43; Gendolavigna 2023b). Even simple interjections (sequences of sounds such as single words, exclamations) contribute to semantic expansions. For such features, these expressions are classified as fillers. Endogenous examples are the use of *ba’* (from *bara*, only) as a discursive marker to introduce indirect speech or to quote something (*citatmarkör*), expanding its original meaning (cf. *like* in English). Exogenous examples in MS are *wallah*, which originally expresses the sacral dimension of oath, overextending its function to ask for seriousness, sincerity, attention or to express marvel; *abou*, an expression of astonishment that also serves to attract attention; *aide*, an expression from Greek serving as an exhortation (‘let’s go!’, ‘come on!’). These elements generally do not convey any particular meaning (although they possess it), but perform the speakers’ expression of emotional involvement.

1.2.1.1.5 The *-ish* suffix

A distinctive feature of MS is the use of a new derivational suffix added to various parts of speech, usually not to change their meaning, but rather to make them more unclear to outsiders: *-ish*. Swedish youth languages are rich in suffixes from which nouns and adjectives are created: consider *-is*, which has produced and still produces very popular words, such as *dagis* (from *daghem*, kindergarten), *grattis* (from *gratulering*, congratulations), *kompis* (from *kumpan*, friend),

fritis (from *fritidsgård*, youth centre); or the suffix - *o* in *drogo* (from *drogpåverkad*, drugged) and *fyllo* (from *full*, drunk) According to Maria Arnstad (2008), -*ish* arose from the need to conventionally transform certain words to make them less understandable to outsiders, ensuring group identity and secrecy, thus assuming an argotic function. In fact, the suffix occurs in so-called taboo words, whose recognisability must be hidden. Arnstad notes that the suffix may originate from the identical English adjectival suffix -*ish* (cf. *reddish*). Even though the use of adjectives in -*ish* does not seem to be attested outside MS (Doggelito, Kotsinas 2004), this suffix deserves special consideration because it has both a linguistic and social function. Linguistically, it can be added to any part of speech without altering its grammatical category: it forms not only adjectives such as *braish* (from *bra*, good) or nouns such as *kranish* (from *kran*, drug dealer),³¹ but also verbs, constituting a new desinence alongside the well-known infinitives -*a*, -*e*, -*o*, -*y*, -*å* and -*ö*, creating forms such as the already mentioned *baxish*, but also *haffish* (from *haffa*, to arrest), *plankish* (from *planka*, to jump the turnstiles),³² *meckish* (from *mecka*, to roll a joint), and other verbs for actions that are usually illegal or related to youth groups. On the other hand, from a social point of view, the heterogeneous patchwork of words in -*ish* does not only serve the need to conceal sensitive topics, but also to reflect the variegated reality of the suburbs. As will be seen below, the use of this suffix is extensively attested in second-generation immigrant literature.

Following these brief descriptive sections on the various linguistic domains of MS, it clearly emerges why we lean towards the employment of the term 'styles', as it more accurately reflects the set of linguistic practices (phonetic, morphosyntactic and lexical) to which, as noted above, are given numerous names. Although often geographically delimited, we cannot say that MS are a dialect, a pidgin or, properly speaking, a variety of Swedish. In other words, it is not possible to say that one speaks in MS, but rather with MS, as it is a tool by which speakers express themselves.

31 *Kran* usually means tap (for water). However, in suburban slang there has been a semantic shift whereby, just as a *kran* is used to run water, a dealer is used for letting drugs circulate.

32 Related to *plagiera*, *planka* was defined by the Swedish linguist Gösta Bergman as "skaffa sig tillträde utan entrebiljett" (to get entrance without a ticket) (1970, 103).

1.3 Literary Developments

The gradual development of Sweden as a multicultural and multilingual society has generated interesting developments in the literary universe. Since the late 1960s, there has been a tradition of foreign and migration-related authors who have provided an important contribution to Sweden's international literary prestige, which was given the conventional label *invandrarlitteratur*.

The concept of *invandrarlitteratur* emerged with the literary debuts of first-generation immigrants, many of whom were women, such as the Argentinian Ana Martinez and the Iranians Fatemeh Behros, Azar Mahloujian, and Jila Mossaed. Among the most prominent figures is Theodor Kallifatides, born in Greece in 1938, whose prolific literary career, spanning over almost six decades, has established him as one of the most influential and widely read voices in both Swedish and international cultural circles.

The first-generation *invandrarlitteratur* begins (conventionally) with Kallifatides' debut collection *Minnet i exil* (The Memory in Exile) from 1969, although this is preceded by an anthology of short stories edited in 1959 by Roland Hentzel, entitled *Mitt Stockholm. Tjugotvå utlänningar ser på stan* (My Stockholm, Twenty-Two Foreigners Look at the City). The first-generation *invandrarlitteratur* narrates the condition of diaspora and exile, linguistic and cultural foreignness and the contrasts between rootedness (in the country of arrival) and uprooting (from the country of origin). Reflections on the political situation in the country of origin are frequent, particularly among authors fleeing dictatorial regimes (Gröndahl 2002; Wendelius 2002, Kongslien 2021).

On the other hand, the literary production of recent generations is confronted with more complex issues generated by ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity, which has fostered a new cultural production that stretches far beyond literature, reaching into the domains of music, filmmaking, and television, through which artists with migration background have employed their artistic talent to develop "nuove costruzioni di vita, [...] nuovi spazi e [...] mondi trasversali che sfidano i limiti del concetto normativo di cittadinanza" (Calvani 2021, 185).³³

Since 2001, a new literary aesthetic has taken shape thanks to young voices of mainly non-European origin, born between the late 1970s and the early 1980s, and raised during the difficult 1990-2000 decade (see Ch. 2). To name a few: Alejandro Leiva Wenger, Johannes Anyuru, Jonas Hassen Khemiri, Marjaneh Bakhtiari, Hassan Loo

33 "New life constructions, [...] new spaces and [...] transversal worlds that challenge the limits of the normative concept of citizenship".

Sattarvandi, Sami Said, Daniel Boyacioglu, Athena Farrokhzad. Some of them were born in Sweden (Anyuru, Boyacioglu, Khemiri), while others were born abroad, but have spent their lives in Sweden since childhood (Leiva Wenger, Bakhtiari, Sattarvandi, Farrokhzad, Said). Some of them have employed MS in their texts, dealt with issues related to racialisation, and the relationship with the suburban dimension, but also with social, emotional and psychological problems which are not necessarily related to diversity and exile. This recent generation constitutes what the scholar Peter Leonard has called “ethnic turn” (2008, 33) in Swedish literature, which coincided with the publication of Leiva Wenger’s *Till vår ära*.³⁴ Renamed in a more recent study by Leonard himself as “post-ethnic turn”, this term refers to a phenomenon that, “[in] the first decade of the twenty-first century saw the rise of several young Swedish authors who put national identity under a new lens, one in which multiculturalism was the norm, not the exception” (Leonard 2022, 191).

1.3.1 The Advent of the Postmigrant Condition as a Critical Perspective on Literature

Following the attempt to de-essentialise the concepts of ethnicity and cultural identity, in recent years there has been a veritable ‘reshuffling’ in research about *invandrarlitteratur*, where concepts such as culture and ethnicity, traditionally considered neutral and non-ambiguous, are profoundly questioned. This shift takes place within the postmigrant perspective. In accordance with this strand, with regard to the topics of *invandrarlitteratur* and its typical literary multilingualism, we avoid reading the texts with a documentary lens, which risks relating the texts to the authors’ biographies as ‘ethnographic testimonies’ on multiculturalism. In this sense, there is an urgent need to take on the awareness that literary texts, in their fictional dimension, reflect the transformations of Swedish society as a whole (Schramm, Ring Petersen 2016). As Sten Pultz Moslund notes, the postmigrant perspective involves a “significant shift” (2019, 100)

³⁴ Leonard introduced the term ‘Ethnic turn’ in the article *Det etniske gennembrud – Multicultural Literature in Denmark*, in which the expression *det etniske gennembrud* (the ethnic breakthrough) seems to give continuity to the term coined by the Danish literary critic Georg Brandes (1842-1927), namely *det moderne gennembrud* (the modern breakthrough). By this, Brandes referred to a cultural-historical cosmopolitan turn in the Nordic landscape of arts during the second half of the nineteenth century. Similarly, with *det etniske gennembrud*, Leonard points to a new turning point against the backdrop of the historical-demographic changes of recent decades, in which young voices of foreign origin represent the profound changes that identity and linguistic paradigms are undergoing.

from externally attributed identity markers (nationality, ethnicity, etc.) to inner processes of subjectification.

Postmigration works as a theoretical-methodological approach that emerged in the German theatre scene around 2008, and later expanded into sociology, cultural studies and the performing, figurative and literary arts with the aim “to reframe the discourses on migration and diversity in contemporary societies and to reclaim the agency of the arts as an important resource” (Schramm, Ring Petersen, Wiegand 2019, 8). According to the historian Kijan Espahangizi (2021), the rise of a specific integration discourse, framing participation and inclusion as structured societal processes, is a key marker of Europe’s shift to postmigrant societies, a perspective well-suited to Sweden’s historical context (see Ch. 2). In contrast, sociologist Naika Foroutan (2019) argues that a postmigrant society emerges not (only) from demographic shifts or integration debates, but from formal political recognition.

More specifically, Postmigration sets a fundamental shift in migration research towards a perspective that critically engages with the previously unexplored ‘majority society’ and its institutions, making migration more visible within broader societal developments and cultural debates (Ring Petersen 2024, 31). The term ‘Postmigration’ was proposed by Shermin Langhoff, who between 2008 and 2012 directed the *Ballhaus Naunynstraße* theatre in Kreuzberg, Berlin. Langhoff’s postmigrant theatre stages stories where the concepts of identity, belonging and society are constantly questioned (Langhoff 2009). Her plays focus on figures who have not experienced migration but carry it somehow as ‘cultural capital’. Thus, the term Postmigration refers to a condition that is consequent to the experience of migration, both temporally (*after*) and ontologically (*beyond*), concerning “the retelling and reinterpretation of the phenomenon ‘migration’ and its consequences” (Yildiz 2013, 177).

Given its wide scope, the concept can apply to different aspects of reality. People and groups can define themselves as Postmigrants, insofar as they experience that the legacy of migration has some kind of importance in the way they (and their families) define themselves from a cultural point of view. In this sense, we refer to people who grew up (and often were born) in a country shaped by migration, where migration not necessarily has been an experience lived in first person. Postmigration is also a concept associated with a precise analytical perspective to different fields of knowledge, such as literature. In literary studies, the concept works as a tool of textual critical-analytical meta-analysis (Schramm 2018, 89), observing how literary texts are influenced by migration, revealing how literature reflects and engages with societal struggles.

However, ever since the appearance of this new perspective, several scholars have raised doubts about the efficiency of the

postmigrant perspective in both social sciences and literary studies. For instance, Paul Mecheril points out that the prefix *post* – evidences a distancing from the object of study, and that therefore Postmigration erroneously suggests that migration as a cultural phenomenon is either overcome or believed to be over (2014, 111). In other words, for Mecheril the prefix *post* – reifies “paradoxerweise das Bild der Schmutzlichkeit des Migrantischen” (111),³⁵ as it does not suggest that migration is over, but rather that it is an ongoing process which not only brings people into contact, but also societies into change. This is why the prefix *post* – criticises a discourse that frames migration as a negligible part of the present which must be overcome (Frontino 2012). For instance, if postmodernism does not mean an overcoming of modernity but a new way of conceptualising it, and if postcolonialism does not mean the overcoming or the erasure of the colonial past (and of colonial power mechanisms), but different ways in which imperialism manifests itself after the formal end of colonial empires (Bhabha 1994, 1), in much the same way by postmigration we mean a profound questioning of the meaning and implications associated with migration. Therefore, it does not mean that migration has come to an end, but rather it needs to be placed under a new critical lens.

1.4 Research Questions and Aims of the Study

Given this premise on socio-demographic, linguistic and literary developments, it is time to move on to the research question that animates the present study, i.e. how literary multilingualism manifests itself in *invandrarlitteratur*. This question takes into account the need to contextualise aspects of fundamental importance, such as how immigration flows have shaped Swedish society between the twentieth and twenty-first century, as well as an adequate reflection on what image of Sweden is derived from the narratives of second-generation *invandrarlitteratur*.

This approach assumes that it is important to understand how, rather than *migration* itself, its *effects* are changing Swedish society. Answers are no longer found by analysing the consequences of exile, but by reading and analysing literature, in order to formulate a critique of Sweden as a postmigrant and ‘postmonolingual’ country, to use a term coined by Yasemin Yildız in 2012 in her volume *Beyond the Mother Tongue – The Postmonolingual Condition*. Before discussing the arguments of this theory in detail, it should be pointed out that setting up an investigation of Sweden as a postmonolingual

35 “Paradoxically the dirty image of the migrant”.

and postmigrant society means investigating a reality in which old paradigms that associate one nation, one culture, one ethnicity and one language with *one* identity keep playing a hegemonic role in public discourse, which is strongly based on an institutionalised focus on ethno-cultural homogenisation to a single language model (Johansson 2013, 133). Within this framework, it is relevant to problematise the iconicity of migration-related writers' styles and to deconstruct the alleged inadequacy of MS as a medium of literary expression (Källström 2010; Gokieli 2015). In this respect, it will be crucial to carefully analyse the phenomena characterising literary multilingualism and, in particular, MS vocabulary, in order to understand where foreign linguistic items come from and what meaning these elements, coming into contact with Swedish, take on, radically transforming the experience of reading a literary text in Swedish.

Given these issues, the present study has two main aims: the first is to provide a detailed analysis of multilingualism in the selected works, in an attempt to define the relationship between literary language and the context it draws on; the second is to demonstrate how multilingualism is a central textual element, where certain stylistic usages are part of a critique of the monolingual paradigm in which Swedish, from being the dominant language, becomes minor and deterritorialised.

Another aim of this study is to demonstrate how the use of specific styles works as a conscious act of opposition to a social and linguistic norm with which an ideal of high-quality literature in Sweden is generally identified. As Ellen Bijvoet summarises in her research,

[a]tt tala rinkebysvenska kan också vara ett sätt att protestera mot det etablerade majoritetssamhället. [...] [U]ngdomarna upplever utanförskap och en stark marginalisering; de upplever att det är omöjligt för dem att komma in i det etablerade majoritetssamhället. (2003, 17)

[s]peaking *Rinkebysvenska* can also be a way to protest against the established majority society. [...] [Y]oung people experience exclusion and strong marginalisation; they feel that it is impossible for them to get into the established majority society

The writers considered in this study perform a *writing back* to such constructions, emphasising how in conjunction with political, social and cultural changes, boundaries between languages, cultures, literatures and genres are continually negotiated, and (re)drawn (Kauranen, Huss, Grönstrand 2020, 4).

The analysis and the aims of the present study are not entirely novel, as recent investigations carried out by various scholars have already

explored, or are currently exploring, the presence of multilingualism in migration-related literature in Sweden. Just to provide an example, Nathalia Ganuza and Maria Rydell from Stockholm University have investigated the relationship between language and Swedishness through the analysis of “65 Swedish books, published between 2000 and 2020, which depict protagonists with multilingual and migrant backgrounds” (Ganuza, Rydell 2023, 94).

1.5 Materials of Analysis and Selection Criteria

This study will examine the debut works of four second and 1.5-generation authors. Following a chronological order, the first is Alejandro Leiva Wenger, born in 1976 in Chile and emigrated to Sweden when he was nine years old, who made his debut with the short story collection *Till vår ära* (In Our Honour) in 2001; the second author is Jonas Hassen Khemiri, born in 1978 in Stockholm to a Swedish mother and a Tunisian father, who made his debut with the novel *Ett öga rött* (One Eye Red) in 2003;³⁶ the third author is Marjaneh Bakhtiari, born in 1980 in Iran and emigrated at the age of seven to Sweden, who made her debut with the novel *Kalla det vad fan du vill* (Call It What The Hell You Like) in 2005; the fourth author is Hassan Loo Sattarvandi, born in 1975 in Iran and emigrated at the age of three to Sweden, who made his debut with the novel *Still* (Still) in 2008.

Comparing these authors and their debut works displays shared issues and linguistic features that are relevant to highlight:

1. Firstly, the four texts share a multilingual dimension strongly related to MS, both in indirect discourse (i.e. the narrators' voice style) and in dialogues. The authors employ a rich repertoire of code-switching, loanwords, new-words, onomographic strategies as well as morpho-syntactic constructions (such as missing V2-inversion) which is qualitatively more frequent than what sociolinguistic surveys suggest (Källström 2005; Ganuza 2008; 2011).
2. The literary debuts of these authors are concentrated in a specific time span, i.e. between 2001 and 2008. All these works meet the pattern of the (post-)ethnic turn theorised by Leonard (2008, 2022) (cf. § 1.3) and constitute the best known and most thought-provoking examples of this literary and aesthetic breakthrough. Following this criterion, this

36 Although syntactically questionable, this translation of the title of Khemiri's novel is faithful to the original *Ett-öga-rött* (One-eye-red) in which the typical Swedish adjective-noun structure is reversed. The correct version reads *Ett rött öga* (One red eye).

study could have included many authors who played an important role in the ethnic turn, such as Johannes Anyuru, Athena Farrokhzad, Nora Khalil, Neftali Milfuegos, Andrzej Tichý, Sami Said, Pooneh Rohi, etc., who in recent times have continued in the footsteps of the literary aesthetics pioneered by Leiva Wenger, Khemiri, Bakhtiari and Sattarvandi. However, the analytical choice has tended to focus on these four authors not only because of both their pioneering role and editorial success, but also because their texts contain a rich variety of linguistic phenomena (typical MS vocabulary, loanwords, lexical creativity with new-words and graphic peculiarities) that only scarcely compare to the variety of phenomena that deserve investigation in other contemporary or more recent texts.

3. The four selected books are all debut works. At a very young age (not yet or just in their early thirties), Leiva Wenger, Khemiri, Bakhtiari and Sattarvandi published their first texts with prestigious publishing houses: Leiva Wenger and Sattarvandi with Bonniers, Khemiri with Norstedts and Bakhtiari with Ordfront.
4. The texts account for the lives of teenagers or young adults from extra-European countries, often from the authors' culture of origin.³⁷ They are usually 1.5 generation immigrants (as in *Till vår ära*, *Kalla det vad fan du vill* and probably in *Still*) or second generation immigrants (as in *Ett öga rött*).³⁸ Discrepancies in generational belonging, however, do not represent particular obstacles to the selection criteria of the works, as age boundaries are not interpreted in a strict way.
5. By sharing a focus on teenagers and young adults, identity, coming of age and the search for a position beyond ethno-social and residential categories become key topics, as well as an opportunity to re-conceptualise the idea of *Bildungsroman* (coming-of-age novel). As suggested by Nathalia Ganuza and Maria Rydell, a common feature of migration-related literature is that "they center on the lives and experiences of fictional

37 There are a few exceptions: in *Till vår ära* not all characters share Chilean origins. Regarding *Ett öga rött*, Khemiri has Tunisian origins but 'assigns' Moroccan parents to his Swedish-born main character Halim.

38 Alternatively, there is a new term in Swedish, *förstagenerationssvensk* (first-generation Swedish), which defines an individual born in Sweden to one or both immigrant parents (Agazzi 2015, 95). The term 'First-Generation-Swede' implies that one was born in Sweden and, compared to one's parents, has no experience of their country of origin, making it impossible to apply the label *invandrare*. For comparison, see the concept "First-generation mixed persons" coined by Sayaka Osanami Törngren (2022, 130).

characters with multilingual and migrant backgrounds, and they take place mainly in Sweden in the present” (Ganuza, Rydell 2023, 95). Within the context of *invandrarlitteratur*, the concept of *Bildung* is not to understand in its traditional term, but rather as a voltage field within construction of the self (subjectivation) vis-à-vis societal norms and prejudices (Hoffarth, Mecheril 2021, 44).

6. The four selected works share a suburban and decentralised setting, identified with immigrant-dense areas. This does not mean that all the writers (and their characters) have lived in the suburbs or that they employ MS or multilingualism in general as a result of their background. As Natia Gokieli notes, there has been a strong tendency to link biography and geography (2017, 274), even though we know that only Leiva Wenger and Sattarvandi grew up in suburbs (Vårberg and Hagalund respectively), while Khemiri lived in Södermalm, central Stockholm. Concerning Bakhtiari, there is no certain information about her location in Malmö.

1.6 The Necessity to Criticise and to Keep Using the Concept *Invandrarlitteratur*

Based on the six points discussed, we can assume that, at the turn of the millennium, a new generation emerges for whom the label *invandrare* is no longer applicable. According to Hans Hauge, in fact, the concept of *invandrarlitteratur* was abolished in Sweden as early as 2003, right after Leiva Wenger’s, Khemiri’s and Anyuru’s debuts: “I Sverige blev invandrerlitteratur som begreb afskaffet samtidig med, at der endelig kom en slags indvandrerroman i 2003” (Hauge 2014).³⁹

As is well known, the concept *invandrarlitteratur* has retained a certain centrality in public debate well after 2003 and has never really disappeared from public and academic discourse.⁴⁰ According to the German scholar Wilhelm Beschnitt, *invandrarlitteratur* is a hegemonic discursive categorisation (Behschnitt 2006, 144) that serves as a “semiotic frame” to mark an inferior status in the literary field. Despite these quite negative implications, Behschnitt maintains that it is still possible to use the concept *invandrarlitteratur*, as it is not only to understand in discriminating manner, but rather “it is used at a meta-level to signify a category within Swedish literary discourse

³⁹ “In Sweden, the concept of immigrant literature was abolished at the same time as a type of immigrant novel was finally published in 2003”. The “type of immigrant novel” Hauge refers to is of course Khemiri’s *Ett öga rött*.

⁴⁰ Mohnike 2006; Kongslien 2007; Nilsson 2010; Jagne-Soreau 2021.

and literary practice" (2010, 81). In other words, *invandrarlitteratur* is a concept used to assert that this phenomenon actually exists and has a specific role in the cultural debate. Drawing on this perspective, in this study we also employ the term *invandrarlitteratur*, as it is useful to shed light on a phenomenon that not only exists, but also "transforms national literature by introducing new perspectives, themes and modes of writing" (Heith, Gröndahl, Rantonen 2018, 15) on issues concerning today's society, identity, belonging and language.

Identifying thematic motifs related to the six points listed above, the scholar Maïmouna Jagne-Soreau has redefined *invandrarlitteratur* as *postinvandringslitteratur* (postmigration literature), describing it as "litteratur som har postinvandringsgenerationen som centralt tema, oberoende av författarens bakgrund" (2021b, 70).⁴¹ Concerning research on migration-related literature, Jagne-Soreau is not alone in pursuing this new conceptual proposal, as over the past decade the homologous concept of *Literatur der Postmigration* (Literature of Postmigration) has also emerged in Germany (Peters 2011; Geiser 2015). Although this concept will be comprehensively investigated later, it should be premised that Postmigration is intended to mark a new conception of the contemporary literary text, shifting attention from the origin of the writer towards the stories of people "who have not had any direct migration experience but who are still marked as migrants, sometimes for generations" (Bojadžijev, Römhild 2014, 18). Moreover, as noted by Wiebke Sievers, literary works analysed from a postmigrant perspective serve as "Mittel des Kampfes um Anerkennung" (2024, 53),⁴² challenging rigid notions of identity, culture, and nationhood, even when they do not explicitly address migration.

1.7 Theoretical and Methodological Background

The theoretical and methodological approach pursued to investigate how language is used in the four selected texts is based on literary multilingualism. Literary multilingualism is a theoretical domain that studies how "fler än ett språk är närvarande i romankontexten, dvs. talas i någon eller några av de miljöer som nämns i texten och/eller av någon eller några av romankaraktärerna" (Eriksson,

⁴¹ "Literature that has the post-migrantgeneration as its central theme, regardless of the author's background".

⁴² "A means of struggle for recognition".

Haapamäki 2010, 43).⁴³ By this, we mean an interdisciplinary field that investigates literature in combination with different linguistic codes⁴⁴ and registers (Kauranen, Huss, Grönstrand 2020, 5). As stated by Asif Agha, a register,

is a linguistic repertoire that is associated, culture-internally, with particular social practices and with persons who engage in such practices. [...] Since the collection of individuals that we call a society is constantly changing in demographic composition (due to births, deaths, and migrations, for example) the continuous historical existence of a register depends upon mechanisms for the replication of its forms and values over changing populations (e.g., from generation to generation). [...] The existence of registers therefore results in the creation of social boundaries within society, partitioning off language users into groups distinguished by differential access to particular registers, and to the social practices. (2004, 24-9)

A register can be easily related to a particular social group, or to a single person, as it holds a “characterological figure” (Agha 2003). Codes and registers are, thus, “linked to value-laden ways of being and acting” (Rydell, Ganuza, 2024, 6). Therefore, this study draws on a theoretical and methodological background which combines both linguistic and literary studies (Kellman, Lvovich 2015, 3), without, however, losing sight of the social and cultural factors.

The investigation will focus on an interpretation of multilingualism as a literary motif (Tidigs, Bodin 2020, 144), i.e. an element that contributes to the definition of a text’s content. In this sense, the multilingual features of a text highlight the relationships between different languages and identity representations (Behschnitt, Nilsson 2013, 14), investigating how they coexist and what boundaries they establish in the same text. It is therefore important to point out that literary multilingualism intends to investigate linguistic phenomena that were originally not typically literary, but rather transposed “out of real life into written fiction” (Fowler 1989, 114).

When Alejandro Leiva Wenger made his debut in 2001 with the short story collection *Till vår ära*, the language of his first two stories *Borta i tankar* and *Elixir* was judged to be unliterary, as it reported typical phenomena of orality (loanwords, interjections and code-switching)

43 “More than one language is present in the context of the novel, i.e. spoken in one or more of the settings mentioned in the text and/or by one or more of the characters in the novel”.

44 As stated by Paul Garrett, “[c]ode is used here as a maximally value-neutral cover term that comprises languages as well as language varieties, dialects, registers, etc.” (2004, 67).

in prose. After *Till vår åra*, a multilingual turn has taken place, which had a very strong impact on the Swedish literary field during the latest two decades, involving Swedish-speaking authors both in – and outside Sweden, such as Ann-Helén Laestadius, Jens Lapidus, Mikael Niemi, Zinaida Lindén and others who have also experimented with multilingualism. The widespread use of multilingualism in literature thus refutes the idea that such aesthetics are exclusively performed by authors with extra-European origins (Grönstrand, Malmö 2011; Behnsnit, De Mul, Minnaard 2013). On the contrary, multilingualism is now structured – albeit in some cases stereotypically – as an acknowledged linguistic reality in Swedish-speaking literature (Björklund 2016).

One important theoretical and methodological delimitation needs to be done. This study does not intend to frame literature as a phenomenon that accurately reflects a given historical and social period. Far from conceiving the chosen corpus solely and exclusively as a source for a sociological analysis, it must, however, be acknowledged that a postmigrant interpretation suggests an undeniable tie between the texts and the extra-textual dimension. The literary production of Leiva Wenger, Khemiri, Bakhtiari and Sattarvandi provides significant reflections on the twenty-first century Sweden. Elements such as life conditions in the suburbs, the psycho-social legacy of *Miljonprogram*, the *folkhem* crisis, identity conflicts and a multilingual ethno-proletariat relegated to the spatial margins of the urban areas combine social settings and the temporal specificity in which the action is situated.

In detail, the analytic chapters of this study will follow a methodological procedure based on the need to show the lexical peculiarities of each work, examined in a synoptic way. The analysis will take into account the grammatical categories in which multilingualism is most frequent, the origin of the words and their domain of use in present-day Swedish. The data collected will be organised in tables, subdivided into:

1. lexical items typical of MS;
2. multilingual items not typical of MS;
3. new-words or creative compounds.

Should the lexical material collected in a specific section be limited, a table-based analysis could be replaced by more discursive paragraphs in which a few significant examples will be considered.

The methodological procedure for the attribution of a term to the respective section in each table is the following: first, each term is attributed the respective part of speech (noun, verb, adjective, adverb, interjection); then, the term is consulted in the Swedish

Academy dictionaries and glossaries (SAOL, SO, SAOB),⁴⁵ as well as in the annual ISOF neologism lists. As known, since 2000 only three MS words are collected in these official sources, namely *keff*, *guss* and *benim*. Elements attested in these lexicographic sources will be marked with an (a). Terms that are not attested in these sources will be looked up in scholarly contributions on multilingualism in Sweden, including the slang glossaries available to date: *Norstedts Svenska Slangordbok* (1998) by Ulla-Britt Kotsinas, *Förortsslang* (2004) by Dogge Doggelito and Kotsinas, *Nyord i svenskan* (2015) by Birgitta Agazzi and *O som i Ordbok* (2017) by Maria Sjödin.⁴⁶ Terms found in these sources will be marked by (b). If no references are found in these sources, the terms will be searched in unofficial lexicographic resources, such as newspapers articles about MS, online platforms managed by common users such as Slangopedia, Urban Dictionary, Folkmun, etc., which will be marked by (c). In case there were no references in any of the above-mentioned sources, the terms will be searched in the other literary works of the corpus; should the searched terms occur in one of these, they will be marked with a (d). Should a term be found in more than one source, it will be marked by the corresponding letters in order: (a), (b), (c), (d). Lastly, if terms are found neither in official sources (SAOB, SAOL and ISOF neologisms, scientific articles, volumes and glossaries), in unofficial sources (online slang glossaries) nor in other literary texts, they will be categorised separately as either multilingual elements non-typical of MS or new-words/creative compounds. The former includes terms attested in other sources or derived from foreign words, most of which are loanwords from English (including morphologically adapted Anglisms) and other languages. New-words, on the other hand, include compounds created by the authors or elaborated from already existing lexical items. The notion of new-word in this analysis is significantly expanded, encompassing a dimension of creativity in the formation of compounds which are outside the linguistic routine.

Terms not belonging to the typical MS elements will be subdivided by grammatical class (A. for adjectives, Adv. for adverbs, E. for exclamations (and interjections), S. for nouns (substantives) and V. for verb). Based on the results of this research, the elements found will be placed in the respective tables, each dealt with in sub-sections chapter by chapter (each one for each work analysed). Regardless of the lexical category with which they are associated, almost all terms require an in-depth explanation, which will be discussed in appropriate footnotes. The tables and associated

⁴⁵ All three sources can be consulted at the following link: <https://svenska.se/>.

⁴⁶ The latter two glossaries are published by the *Språkrådet*-related publishing house Morfem.

footnotes are intended not only to provide an ordered presentation of the linguistic elements collected and analysed, but also to give adequate background, explanation and contextualisation on their origin, semantic shifts, and current use. Concerning the investigation, it should be pointed out that a predilection for the collection and analysis of lexical items does not imply that morpho-syntactic or orthographic aspects will be ignored: in fact, the main phenomena concerning these categories will also be discussed, as they also highlight stylistic aspects related to multilingualism.

It is important to clarify that compiling data in tables is not meant for a purely quantitative analysis. Instead, this approach serves to accentuate the aesthetic characteristics and creative strategies of the texts (Östman 2015, 9) by offering insights into the historical background and evolving usage of each term included. The analysed lexical resources, in fact, do not allow to extend the discussion to an entire literary and aesthetic category. Rather, the present work is aware that the proposed reflections are limited to a restricted corpus.

1.7.1 Strategies for Recognising Literary Multilingualism

In addition to the data collection in tables, lexical items of particular interest will be examined, comprehensively discussed and categorised according to specific methodologies. Since one of the aims of this study is to examine the way one or more languages come into contact with Swedish, the investigation cannot be limited to a collection of individual words or expressions in tables, but it must analyse how interlinguistic encounters actually occur.

In recent years, literary multilingualism has garnered growing scholarly interest. A key reference for this study is Meir Sternberg, who in his work “Polylingualism as Reality and Translation as Mimesis” (1981) introduced the term ‘polylingualism’ to describe the field. Although his methodology is somewhat dated, it remains relevant for analysing how multiple languages coexist within a single text. Sternberg highlights that authors employ various strategies to integrate foreign languages, demonstrating that literary multilingualism is not merely a mimetic reflection of linguistic diversity but an active means of representing it, whether explicitly or implicitly.

In detail, Sternberg defines four strategies: The first is known as ‘selective reproduction’, i.e. the insertion of sporadic elements of one language in a dialogue reported in the matrix language of

the text:⁴⁷ these include linguistic clichés such as *Parbleu!* from French or *Donnerwetter!* from German, functioning as ‘mimetic synecdoche’ (Sternberg 1981, 225), revealing which language(s) is (or are) actually used in dialogues. In this case, only stereotypical or idiomatic elements of one specific language are reported.

The second strategy is called ‘verbal transposition’ (Sternberg 1981, 229), i.e. the manifestation of a language in a text by means of spelling, grammatical and syntactic devices typical of that language, but written in the matrix language of the text. One example is a quote from *Lord Jim* (1899) by Joseph Conrad, where a German-speaking figure says: “One thing alone can us from being ourselves cure”, in which English is structured following the German word-order, which in subordinate clauses places infinitive verbs at the end. In this case, multilingualism does not occur at a lexical level, but rather through phonetic, orthographic, or syntactic devices that reproduce (some features of) the language actually spoken by a character.

The third strategy is called ‘conceptual reflection’ (Sternberg 1981, 230), which identifies different socio-cultural norms and semantic shades from other languages in the matrix language. Objects of interest are the so-called *Realia*, words and expressions for culture-specific elements which are difficult, if not impossible, to translate from one language to another. As Valentina Fulginiti argues, through this strategy, “la superficie eterolinguistica viene meno, ma si riproducono il sistema di valori e la semantica soggiacente alla lingua” (2014, 145).⁴⁸

The fourth strategy is called ‘explicit attribution’ or ‘translational mimesis’ (Sternberg 1981, 231), a strategy similar to selective reproduction in which the narrator, through appropriate metalinguistic comments, reveals that a dialogue is taking place in one language, although it is rendered in another. In Sternberg’s words, translational mimesis reproduces “the reality of polylingual discourse through a communicative medium which is normally unilingual” (Sternberg 1981, 231). An example posed by Sternberg is the sentence “He spoke French” in *Pnin* (1957) by Vladimir Nabokov, which precedes an utterance in English. Explicit attribution consists, in other words, in ‘asking’ the reader to believe that what is written in a language (English) is actually spoken in another language (French). The difference between selective reproduction and explicit attribution (or translational mimesis) is that while the former reveals the presence of a foreign language by using one or more words of the foreign language in question, the latter requires the narrator or

⁴⁷ By *matrix* is intended the dominant language of a text (Myers-Scotton 1993).

⁴⁸ “The heterolinguistic surface disappears, but the value system and semantics underlying the language are reproduced”.

a character to make the presence of a language explicit through one (or more) metalinguistic remark(s). This phenomenon is extensively investigated, such as in Thomas O. Beebee's study from 2012, where he calls it 'transmesis':

Transmesis is thus the mimesis of the interrelated phenomena of translation, multilingualism, and code-switching. Transmesis includes the following types of literary texts: [...] Texts that mime a language reality such that the medium does not match the object depicted (e.g., when conversations taking place in Cuba between Cubans are given in English). (2012, 6)

It could be argued that texts in which the presence of other languages is only 'suggested' through metalinguistic comments or only partially shown through sporadic elements are not, in fact, multilingual texts. However, as Julia Tidigs notes, texts that depict multilingualism without being written in several languages are also multilingual (2020, 144), as they convey the idea that communication is taking place through linguistic means other than the language of narration.

1.7.2 Postmonolingualism or The Motherless Tongue

Literary multilingualism looks beyond the dichotomies between 'correct' and 'deviant' language, highlighting not only the co-presence of multiple languages in a text, but also the effects that this co-presence, when manifested, entails. This area of study encompasses various theoretical approaches, including the so-called *Postmonolingual Condition*, posited by Yasemin Yildız (2012). This condition implies a new analytic paradigm, in which multilingualism asserts itself not anymore as an exceptional phenomenon, but rather as a structural one. Overcoming old paradigms according to which each modern nation would have a homogeneous people speaking only one language, critically, Yildız identifies her main critical object in the romantic paradigm of *Muttersprache* (mother tongue) (2012, 4). Following André Lefevere's words:

The reason why many scholars of literature still want to confine literature to a language or a political entity is to be found in a development in the functional component of Euramerican poetics which occurred a hundred and fifty years ago: Romanticism. Itself a brilliant example of the way in which a poetics transcends languages, ethnic and political entities, Romanticism nevertheless insisted that language does indeed represent the main component of a work of literature, or that a literature is circumscribed by the language in which it is produced. The Romantic concept of

the primacy of the mother tongue, the national language has, moreover, all but succeeded in obliterating the fact that from at least the eighth to the eighteenth century all so-called “national” literatures of Europe were not monolingual, but at least bilingual, operating between the two poles of Latin, on the one hand, and “the vernacular” on the other. The subsequent monolingualization of literary history has left us with less than half of the picture in most cases. (Lefevere 1987, 28)

The consideration quoted here is intended to emphasise the fact that European societies have the coexistence of at least two languages as a fundamental feature of their cultural identity. Therefore, politicising attempts to induce nation-states to identify with one language is not only unfounded, but anachronistic, especially in the literary sphere. Considering the strong normative impact of the mother tongue paradigm, according to which “a writer can become the origin of creative works only with an origin in a mother tongue, itself imagined to originate in a mother” (Yıldız 2012, 10), Yıldız suggests moving beyond the concept of multilingualism, using the term ‘Postmonolingualism’, a condition in which multilingualism is so widespread that the territorial and ethnic anchorage to a dominant language is now overcome, as for instance in Sweden, which according to research is strongly bound to monolingual norms (Aktürk-Drake et al. 2021, 5).

Yıldız theorises postmonolingualism starting from the literary language of German-speaking authors such as Franz Kafka, Theodor Adorno, Emine Sevgi Özdamar, Feridun Zaimoğlu, Yoko Tawada and others, focusing on how the concept of language today has become a globalised and mobile ‘linguascape’.⁴⁹ She discusses postmonolingualism by examining everyday communicative practices (such as code-switching) in literary texts. According to her, the speakers who are able to see postmonolingualism as a structured phenomenon today belong to the generations that “do not so much mark the phenomenon of migration as that of the aftermath of migration. [Those who] [s]ome cultural agents in Germany thus refer to [...] as ‘postmigrants’” (Yıldız 2012, 170). Joining the theoretical

49 Yıldız does not provide an exact definition of linguascape. However, the suffix - *scape* seems to come from Arjun Appadurai’s studies in *Modernity at Large* from 1996, by which the scholar indicates the fluid and irregular forms of different social landscapes (ethnoscape, mediascape, technoscape, etc.). This suffix indicates that these terms are to be understood as constructions influenced by historical, linguistic and political contingencies (Appadurai 1996, 33). By *linguascape* Yıldız means a perspective on language that takes into account its character related to power dynamics and political contingencies.

framework of postmigration, Yıldız considers Sweden a suitable example of postmonolingualism:

young postmigrants tend to make creative use of these often socially unequally situated languages. In the process, they create new collective codes, such as the much-studied Rinkeby Swedish, the multilingual youth language drawing on Swedish, Turkish, Arabic, and other sources that emerged in the suburbs of Stockholm and spread to other urban settings in Sweden. Postmigrants' hybridized, novel ways of mixing linguistic material make the complex flows of the linguascape palpable. (Yıldız 2012, 171)

As quoted, Yıldız reconciles the postmigrant perspective with the postmonolingual one as two sides of the same coin. Both concepts share the use of the prefix *post*-, by which is meant the persistence of old cultural, ideological and power paradigms over the present, for which there does not seem to be an actual overcoming, but rather a continuous questioning of the phenomena to which the prefix *post* - refers. Moreover, as also mentioned in the above-quoted excerpt, the so-called Rinkeby Swedish is a striking example of how young postmigrants create hybridised group codes (which works as a suitable synonym to 'Multilingual Styles'). Yıldız argues that such varieties are often subject to harsh discrimination,⁵⁰ pointing out that a writer cannot consider him - or herself a member of a national literature if he or she uses several languages at the same time, or a variety that deviates from what is generally considered as standard Swedish.⁵¹

In literature, as well as in everyday life, the creative use of MS among young postmigrants lays the foundation for a new linguistic condition, which Yıldız calls 'motherless'. In their essay *Mille plateaux* (1980), Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari postulated the non-existence of the mother tongue, which Yıldız follows up, recognising how it is constructed around power nodes. Thus, by 'motherless language' is meant a language that escapes the constraints and the hegemony of mother tongue as a concept (Gardner-Chloros, Weston 2015, 185).

50 In fact, MS have often been delegitimised/invalidated in the media through stigmatising labels such as *Blattesvenska*.

51 Concerning the notion of 'standard', it is important to point out that this label has been problematised more and more often over the last years (see Johansson 2013), underlining that it does not actually correspond to any form of language usage, considering that every linguistic act presents some specific characteristics.

1.7.3 A Widespread Practice in Literary Multilingualism: Code-Switching

As mentioned above, the presence of code-switching is a major element of literary multilingualism. By code-switching (henceforth CS), we mean a phenomenon of interference by contact through the choice of two or more codes in one and the same discourse for semantic-pragmatic reasons (Otheguy 1995).⁵² As also argued by Kathryn Woolard, CS can be defined as “an individual’s use of two or more language varieties in the same speech event or exchange” (2004, 73-4). The grammatical systems or codes that come into contact have usually an asymmetrical relationship, determined by the presence of a matrix language that dominates the discourse, and an embedded language (Myers-Scotton 1993, 7) interfering with the matrix. Code-switching can occur between different ways of speaking, i.e. “between forms recognized as distinct languages, or between dialects, registers, levels [...] or styles of a single language” (Woolard 2004, 74).

In the literary texts examined in this study, the matrix language is identified with Swedish, while the embedded languages are all those that interfere with it, i.e. the main immigration languages in Sweden. In CS, interference is mainly generated between *open* lexical classes (nouns, verbs and adjectives), and this can occur both within one and the same syntagm (intraphrasal/intrasentential CS) and between one syntagm and another (interphrasal/intersentential CS) (Poplack 1980).

One of the main questions about the nature of CS is whether it is a phenomenon with no specific function and devoid of specific cultural, aesthetic and political implications,⁵³ i.e. whether codes can intertwine without complying with specific communicative intentions. In fact, in one of his recent studies, Ben Rampton defined CS as a phenomenon involving alternations that are no longer strictly regulated but rather represent a new communicative normality that is often free of formal delimitations and precise motivations (2020, 21).

However, we have to consider whether CS is a regulated system with a specific purpose. The main theories maintain that this phenomenon does not come from nowhere, but is defined as an instrument of (partly) controlled action between speakers with a

52 For more details, see the contributions of John Gumperz, one of the leading scholars of contact linguistics, who defines CS as the overlapping in the same conversation of linguistic passages belonging to two grammatical systems or subsystems (1982).

53 For CS’s specific functions, see Gumperz 1982.

(partly) shared linguistic background, which is (partly) not motivated by needs to ‘cover’ lexical shortcomings.⁵⁴

Since CS is a phenomenon explained and theoretically framed primarily within the domain of contact linguistics, operationalising this phenomenon in the investigation of literary multilingualism appears problematic, as literary language sometimes seems to escape the parameters of sociolinguistic analysis (Tidigs 2014, 48). In this regard, as stated by Maria Rydell and Nathalia Ganuza, “analyses of language variation in fiction need to consider not only the linguistic features that are employed, but also the available linguistic options that the authors choose not to exploit, and the possible reasons why this is so” (2024, 6). However, the methodological approach employed to the investigation of CS as a literary phenomenon conceptualises interlinguistic relations as regulated by boundaries that are never well separated, but rather porous and negotiable (Kauranen, Huss, Grönstrand 2020, 6). Hans Landqvist proposes a different term for literary CS, i.e. “litterär språkväxling” (literary language-switching) (2012, 13), emphasising the artistic and identity-related purposes of CS in fiction.

1.7.4 Literary Stylistics

Connecting to the descriptive concept of Multilingual Styles, it is necessary to turn our attention to stylistics as applied to literature. As stated by Satu Gröndahl in her work *Litteraturens gränsland* (*Literature’s Boundaries*), a “hittills utforskat fält är de stilistiska och språkliga särdragen i svenskspråkig *invandrarlitteratur*”,⁵⁵ where “behandlingen av svenskan inte alla gånger är normenlig” (Gröndahl 2002, 55-6).⁵⁶

Among the leading scholars in stylistics, Dennis Freeborn defines style as a set of “features of literary composition which belong to form and expression rather than to the substance of the thought or matter expressed; A manner of discourse, or tone of speaking, adopted in addressing others or in ordinary conversation” (1996, 1). This attention to the form, expression and tone of a text is linked, according to Freeborn, to both a human and a communicative dimension: the human dimension concerns the choice of stylistic elements according to one’s way of conceiving oneself in the world, while the

⁵⁴ Poplack 1980; Gumperz 1982; Gumperz, Cook-Gumperz 1982, 6-7; Grosjean 2010; Blommaert, Rampton 2011, 6.

⁵⁵ “Hitherto unexplored field is the stylistic and linguistic characteristics of Swedish - language immigrant literature”.

⁵⁶ “The use of Swedish is not always consistent with the norm”.

communicative (or social) dimension concerns language as a vehicle for collectively understood thoughts and feelings (Freeborn 1996, 4). An author's style contains both a personal and a social aspect.

Style, as mentioned, is a matter of choice (Verdonk 2002, 6). Using a multiple vocabulary, one can express the same concept using several words, which are synonymically related to each other, but diaphasically connoted. Some examples are the Swedish nouns *flicka* and *tjej* as opposed to the typical MS lower-register-term *guss* (girl), the Swedish *dålig* and the MS term *keff* (bad), or the Swedish *kille*, *grabb*, *snubbe* and the MS term *shunno* (guy, dude). These words have the same meaning, but – as Freeborn says – “we use them in different contexts, to speak or write formally or informally, and this affects the style or defines the register of our language in use” (1996, 13). What changes between the two varieties is not only the origin of the words, but also their use depending on the degree of formality or informality of the contexts.

1.7.5 Minor Literature and Deterritorialisation

A literary work is said to be multilingual when it reveals the presence of two or more languages, when a writer does not entirely use only one language (or ‘invents’ a third one), marking out a new linguistic territory within the context of the dominant language. To reframe a term employed by Deleuze and Guattari in *Kafka. Pour une littérature mineure* (Kafka. Toward a Minor Literature) (1986), such a choice is inevitably considered ‘minor’ in relation to canonical norms, as it does not include the complete use of a monolingual form of writing, usually identified with the national standard language, and its norms (1986).

The style of an author who belongs to such a literature has as its source one or more languages that are often politically discriminated, unprotected and weak, compared to the standard language of the host country. The presence of one or more of these languages makes the literature somewhat ‘minor’, a term by which is not meant literature produced in a minor language, but rather literature produced by a minority, or by a person who belongs to a minority in a given territory or in a given literary field. The example proposed by Deleuze and Guattari is the Czech author Franz Kafka, a German-speaking author who lived in Prague. Minor literature is thus characterised by a non-ordinary and experimental use of the dominant language. For example, Leiva Wenger, Khemiri, Bakhtiari and Sattarvandi manage to question established identity discourses, by resorting to unprotected minor languages, such as Arabic, Farsi, Spanish, Turkish, etc., which are not typically associated with Sweden and the Swedish language. As Tidigs states, in fact,

Minor here means not only small in terms of numbers or range of territory. It also means ‘underaged’: not being the one who sets the (language) rules. Minor literature is characterized both by a coefficient of deterritorialization (i.e. a centrifugal, anti-structuralizing tendency) and by its collective and political nature. (Tidigs 2009, 366)

Another significant term is ‘deterritorialisation’. By this term we define various strategies deployed to include foreign linguistic items that are not translated into the dominant language of the literary text in which they occur. As stated by Elizabeth Gordon and Mark Williams, untranslated linguistic items “discomfort the reader by *confronting* him or her with an apparently uncrossable boundary” (Gordon, Williams 1998, 80). Thus, deterritorialisation is a movement out of habitual, linguistic territories, referring to a process in which the cultural dynamics of territories (cities, regions, states) change due to a destabilisation in the relationship between culture, language and place, as a result of the coexistence of different cultural groups (Møhring Reestorff, Stage 2012, 19). As a literature with minority traits, *invandrarlitteratur* causes a deterritorialisation of language, understood as a foreign and minor use of the dominant language, a liberation in the act of writing from the boundaries of monolingualism. A deterritorialised entity in this context is, for example, the reader, who is confronted with texts in which language use makes him/her a stranger in his/her own language (Deleuze, Guattari 1996, 36).

1.8 Layout of the Study

The next chapter is entitled “How Sweden Became a Multilingual and Multicultural Country”, and considers the historical events that, from 1945 to the early 2000s, laid the foundations for Sweden’s transformation into a postmigrant country, as well as to the birth of *invandrarlitteratur* and the development of MS. In the analytical section, embracing Chapters 3 (on Leiva Wenger’s *Till vår åra*), Chapter 4 (on Khemiri’s *Ett öga rött*), Chapter 5 (on Bakhtiari’s *Kalla det vad fan du vill*) and Chapter 6 (on Sattarvandi’s *Still*), this work will investigate how literary multilingualism, and MS in particular, manifest themselves in the works analysed. Chapter 7 contains a comparative discussion of the analysed data and some concluding remarks about MS as the expression of a new way to frame Swedishness.

2 How Sweden Became a Multilingual and Multicultural Country

Summary 2.1 The End of the War, the First Refugees and *Gästarbetare*: The Foundations for a Multicultural Country and a National Identity Between *Folkhem* and *Välfärd*. – 2.2 Demographic Growth: The Launch of the *Miljonprogram*. – 2.3 The End of the Record Years. – 2.4 Political Changes and Crises in the 1990s. – 2.5 Austerity and Multiculturalism at Göran Persson's Turn. – 2.6 The Emergence of a (Post)migrant Consciousness.

In this chapter, we will outline a concise but possibly comprehensive historical overview of how Sweden became a multicultural and postmigrant society. With a critical look at the past, we discuss the socio-historical factors that triggered the shifts thanks to which, in turn, we can conceptualise Sweden as a postmigrant society. Before delving into the contents of this chapter, it is important to define multiculturalism as a concept and as a phenomenon as applied to Swedish society. As defined by Harold Runblom,

Multiculturalism is often used to describe a situation characterized by a multitude of ethnic groups, cultures, religion and languages. But the term also [...] refers to an ideal situation of peaceful coexistence between individuals or groups of diverse origin. In the Swedish debate, this concept [...] generally has a positive connotation. (Runblom 1994, 624)

Among several critical perspectives from which the history of Sweden in the last century can be approached, this study will draw on the framework proposed by Paulina De los Reyes in her article from 2000 entitled *Folkhemmets paradoxer. Genus och etnicitet i den svenska modellen* (Folkhem's Paradoxes. Gender and Ethnicity in the Swedish Model), in which she identifies specific periods characterised by crucial events and episodes: the Swedish political openness, industrial expansion and the first labour migration (1946-55); the launch of the *Miljonprogram* and the peak of labour flows during the record years (1956-72); the humanitarian solidarity years, the immigration of refugees, Olof Palme's death and the decay of the multicultural myth (1973-89); the progressive restrictions on immigration policies, economic crises, power shifts into government and issues of intolerance towards diversity (1990-2000) (De los Reyes 2000, 35).

Furthermore, another interesting contribution to outline a defined timeframe comes from Harald Runblom's article "Swedish Multiculturalism in a Comparative European Perspective" (1994), where he finds five different phases:

1. the period of free movement (1948-64);
2. the guest-worker period with heavy migration flows from Southern Europe (1965-72);
3. stop to economic immigration as a reaction to the so-called energy crisis (1973-82);
4. new form of immigration, mainly for humanitarian reasons (1983-88);
5. the end of cold war, geopolitical destabilisations due to the fall of the Iron Curtain (1989-93).

2.1 The End of the War, the First Refugees and *Gästarbetare*: The Foundations for a Multicultural Country and a National Identity Between *Folkhem* and *Välfärd*

Unlike Denmark and Norway, who were invaded by the the German Reich, during Second World War Sweden kept a position of neutrality, remaining essentially unaffected by conflict and violence. Ruled by the Social Democratic government led by Per Albin Hansson,¹ Sweden encouraged the development of a key role in humanitarian aid in Northern Europe, becoming a shelter for thousands of Jews from Denmark, Norway, Germany, Poland, and the Baltic countries, as well as for anti-Nazi political opponents, and nearly 70,000 Finnish children fleeing from the Winter War (1939-40).

¹ Hansson was Prime Minister of Sweden from 1932 to 1946 (with a brief interruption in office from 19 June to 28 September 1936).

As noted by Charles Westin, “[t]he modern era of immigration to Sweden started during World War II, in the early 1940s” (Westin 2000, 2), because, after peace was restored in Europe, Sweden found favourable conditions for rapid and efficient industrial growth, which significantly increased labour demand. Therefore, Sweden stipulated the first bilateral agreements to recruit new labour force as early as 1947, finding Italy as the first country of cooperation (Danielsson 2017).

Signed by the Social Democratic Prime Minister Tage Erlander and pursued individually by the main Swedish industries (ASEA, AGA, Atlas Copco, SKF, Volvo, and others), the bilateral agreements concerned the recruitment of skilled (and unskilled) workforce in the main export sectors. Apart from Italy, the main source countries were Austria, Yugoslavia, Greece, Portugal, Turkey and Hungary (Abrahamsson 1999, 52).² The steady inflows gave rise to the historical phenomenon of the so-called *gästarbetare* (guest workers), which further improved the industrial sector (De los Reyes 2000, 30; Slavnic 2006, 100). In 1969-70 alone, at the peak of its economic boom, Sweden set an inflow record, with 77,326 new arrivals.³

Compared to other countries, the arrival of foreign labour in Sweden was based on the need to implement production in sectors that were already growing and not affected by wartime devastation. Therefore, the guest workers had no particular obstacles in settling permanently in Sweden (Johansson 2008, 194). Mobility from abroad tended to mainly affect the largest cities of the country, i.e. Stockholm, Göteborg, Malmö, and leading industrial towns (Westin 2000, 31) such as Norrköping and Västerås. However, migration from abroad was also combined with massive internal migrations from the countryside to the cities.

The industrial and economic growth between the 1950s and 1970s is known by the symbolic name of *rekordåren* (the record years), during which the concepts of *folkhem* and *välfärd* found their fullest expression as tenets of a social democratic ideal, based on welfare guarantees that fostered the consolidation of what is now globally known as the ‘Swedish model’. For the sake of clarity, it is appropriate to provide a brief description of the concepts of *folkhem* and *välfärd*.

Folkhem was used publicly as a socialist political term on the 18th of January 1928 by Social Democratic Party leader Per Albin Hansson, who in a parliamentary speech known as *folkhemstal* (*folkhem* speech) introduced it as a metaphor which encompassed, in one image, both

² In detail, by the late 1950s, Swedish companies turned to Yugoslavia and Greece for manpower, while during the 1960s the dominant flows came from Turkey (Westin 2000, 4).

³ For data about new arrivals in Sweden between 1969 and 1970, cf. <http://share.scb.se>.

society, State and urban development, referring to it as *det goda hemmet* (the good home) for the people and the single citizen. Thanks to Hansson's politics, the Swedish model was formally born, whereby *folkhem* was configured as a complex system of universal care and material support "from cradle to grave" (Hilson 2020, 75). By bringing both vision and stability to the country, Hansson opened a long Social Democratic governmental age that lasted almost uninterruptedly from 1932 to 1976. Even in the inter-war period, Sweden consolidated its democratic structures, based on political strength and a broad consensus towards social democracy.

Välfärd, on the other hand, is a metaphorical concept to frame the citizen's life as a journey (*väl-färd*: good-journey) that the state must take care of. Today, Sweden can to all intents and purposes define itself a welfare state and, specifically, it belongs to the category of countries with a social-democratic or universal welfare, in which social security is guaranteed by citizens' high tax contributions and is extended to every individual (Esping-Andersen 1990).

2.2 Demographic Growth: The Launch of the *Miljonprogram*

In this section we examine one of the main events of the so-called *rekordåren*: the realisation of *Miljonprogram*, the housing project created to cope with Sweden's rapid and extensive demographic growth.

The record years were characterised by important social reforms, including the extension of holidays from 15 to 30 days, universal health insurance, sick leave, improved parental benefits and other reforms that considerably improved the citizens' standard of living. High prosperity sustained industrial production and migration from the countryside stimulated a demographic development that caught the country's infrastructure unprepared. While Sweden had a population of just over five million in 1900, by 1960 this had already exceeded seven million (SCB 1969). The demographic growth resulted in a serious shortage of urban housing for new working-class families. Stockholm, for example, had to deal since the early twentieth century with a large number of people moving from rural areas to residential facilities that, due to overcrowding, did not meet minimum hygiene requirements (Hall 1999, 853, 857).

Supported by the largest national industries to solve overcrowding issues, the Swedish government implemented a housing system which could live up to the level of its welfare: the *Miljonprogram*, a project which envisaged the construction of one million new housing units over a ten-year period (1965-75) in suburban and green areas placed in the major cities, to provide high-standard housing to the growing population at affordable prices for all (Högberg 1999).

Rooted in the 1930s Funkis architectural style (Scandinavian Functionalism), this modernist design aimed to fulfil the social democratic vision of providing citizens with a structured existential model (Sernhede, Johansson 2006, 112). The *Miljonprogram* sought to address social integration, economic dependency, and unemployment by developing suburban areas with cutting-edge services while upholding social equality (Sejersted 2011).

Miljonprogram's early years were marked by the arrival of Swedish families from the countryside as well as guest workers and, later, non-European refugees. Lower housing prices were logically a favourable factor for immigrants and poorest people, especially in Stockholm.⁴ The new suburbs became places of multicultural encounters and language mixing, of which now public discourse emphasises more the effects of marginality than integration (Ciaravolo 2019, 887-99).

2.3 The End of the Record Years

Between the 1970s and 1980s, the population in the *Miljonprogram* neighbourhoods soon faced social and infrastructural issues, which made them unattractive to middle-class Swedes because of a lack of services, workplaces, cultural activities and public transport connections. As early as the 1970s, Swedes who could afford better housing began to move out (Dahlstedt, Eliassi 2018, 28), leaving space to non-native and multilingual citizens who would subsequently become predominant in these neighbourhoods.

During this period, many guest workers were joined by their families and settled for life in Sweden (Slavnic 2006, 99), where they found housing in *Miljonprogram* areas. However, during the 1970s, Sweden tried to stop large-scale workforce immigration, but "this 'stop' had limited effects. Immigration based on family reunion was allowed, and refugee immigration, which was not affected by the immigration stop, escalated in the 1970s and 1980s" (Runblom 1994, 634). Thus, while on the one hand Sweden put a brake on labour migration, on the other hand it strengthened its role as a beacon of hospitality and human rights activism, by keeping its borders open to refugees fleeing from crisis-torn countries in – and outside Europe, especially during Olof Palme's terms as Social Democratic Prime Minister, as he gave Swedish foreign policy an internationalist tone with a high moral profile. The migratory season that unfolded with the political upheavals in Uganda, Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, Greece,

⁴ Through the years, *Miljonprogram* did not remain limited to Sweden's major cities, but rather was extended to several minor industrial cities too.

Iran and Afghanistan in the 1970s, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kurdistan, Iran, Lebanon and Syria in the 1980s (Westin 2000, 5), and in Somalia, Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union in the 1990s, led to increased immigration flows that resulted much larger than the previous workforce flows. This period proved crucial for Sweden's recent history, as what is termed as the introduction of multiculturalist policies "has been much in contrast to Swedish historical tradition" (Runblom 1994, 639), but nevertheless necessary, given the size of migration flows and the rapidly changing demographic (and thus cultural, linguistic and social) conformation of Sweden. To give an example, in 1980 the total number of citizens born in Africa, Asia and South America living in Sweden was about 60,000 (SCB 2017), i.e. less than 1% of the total population. In the two decades 1980-2000 alone, increased migration led to a representation of non-European citizens up to 10%, of the total population (Corman 2008).

2.3.1 The Institutionalisation of Sweden as a Multicultural Country

The idea that guest-workers and refugees would soon return to their country of origin was widespread, which might have initially slowed down their integration process, as Sweden was still seen as a country of transit, where the main acculturation process adopted in governmental policies was assimilation. The fact that a large proportion of immigrants not only stayed, but also reunified with their families, led to a radical break with the traditional and unreflected policy of assimilation, which made it possible for integration processes to take place.⁵ As noted by Runblom, on a governmental level, a certain "awareness was growing that the state had moral responsibility for the well-being of people who had come to Sweden to work and who had decided to stay in the country" (1994, 630).

In 1975, the Social Democratic government then run by Palme issued a constitutional reform (*Regeringens Proposition* 1975, 26), which established a new migration and minority policy. This policy explicitly rejected the previous principles of assimilation and ethno-cultural homogeneity in favour of multiculturalism. This event is today known as "multiculturalist turn" (Wickström 2015), which proved to be nearly revolutionary, considering Sweden's background as an old and consolidated nation which has not based its identity

5 The definition of integration involves the choice to embrace and recognize the culture of the host or dominant society while simultaneously preserving a strong connection to one's cultural roots, including the traditions and values of one's minority background or parental heritage. Through integration, individuals can navigate and contribute to both cultural spheres.

as a state on different linguistic groups. Groups who immigrated assimilated rather quickly. However, as a young multicultural(ist) country, Sweden had “[a]s a consequence, no experience in minority legislation, and [...] no positive tradition of treating minorities” (Runblom 1994, 632-3).

In details, the proposal *Om riktlinjer för invandrar – och minoritets politiken m.m.* (On Guidelines for Immigration Policy, Minorities, etc.), contained in the reform 1975:26, became a constitutional law on equal opportunities for ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities (see Johansson 2008, 198; Milani 2008; Wickström 2013, 25). As the legislative proposal 1975:26 states, Sweden was dealing with a “fortsatt relativt stor invandring” (relatively large continued immigration), establishing the legal-political recognition of migration as a fundamental prerequisite to any political and social intervention.

This civic turn makes Sweden, in line with the theoretical framework discussed in the previous chapter, a true prototype of a postmigrant country, as it features in its recent past both political, social and cultural transformations that intersect with histories of post-colonial migration and guest-workers (Karakayalı, Tsianos 2014, 34). Summarised in Westin’s words,

Essentially, immigrants residing in Sweden on a permanent basis enjoy the same rights as Swedes. They may wish to assimilate into Swedish ways of life or maintain their distinctive native cultures. Whatever preference this is a personal matter and of no concern to the authorities, except for the requirement that their integration model should not conflict with essential Swedish values and norms. (2000, 6)

With this reform, Sweden became one of the first countries in Europe to guarantee a multiculturalist legal framework, which is embodied in three basic principles: *jämlikhet* (equality), *valfrihet* (freedom of choice) and *samverkan* (cooperation).

The first principle, *jämlikhet*, indicates the attainment of equal opportunities for immigrants, so that they were to enjoy the same social and economic rights as Swedes. The second principle, *valfrihet*, stated that all citizens had the right to speak their own language, to profess their own religious faith and to live in Sweden in accordance with their own cultural customs insofar as these coincided with Swedish laws. In particular, the freedom to speak one’s mother tongue also resulted in the right to learn it at school. This was made possible by the program *Hemspråksundervisning* (Home Language Teaching), which officially came into force in 1977 (cf. Ålund, Schierup 1991, 2), then replaced in 1997 by a new reform called *Modersmålsundervisning* (Mother Language Teaching) (Milani 2008, 30). Thanks to this program, the Swedish school system introduced norms according to

which pupils with migration background could receive teaching and tutoring in their (and/or their parents') mother tongue (if a competent teacher was available).⁶ Although the program is still active today,

[i]n time, however, the ethnic and cultural composition of the immigrant communities changed in such a way that mother tongue instruction in the schools became increasingly difficult to organise for economic and political reasons. (Westin 2000, 6)⁷

Finally, the third principle, *samverkan*, emphasises the need for mutual tolerance and solidarity between immigrants and native Swedes, producing a shared effort in the rejection of social exclusion, racism and discrimination. With this law, Sweden established specific rights to provide immigrant minorities with the opportunity to express their identity without coming into conflict with political, cultural and religious institutions. Moreover, this new legislative framework played an important role in a new “national mythmaking” (Keskinen, Skaptadóttir, Toivanen 2019, 47), which is defined as a storytelling process introduced when cultural diversity took place in the 1960s, and became both a structured and normed element of Swedish society.

2.3.2 Towards the Slow Decay of *Folkhem* in Multicultural Sweden

At the end of the *rekordåren*, socio-economic problems were soon to appear, and the contiguous arrival of refugees exposed the welfare state to new challenges. For example, in December 1989 the then Social Democratic government led by Ingvar Carlsson introduced restrictions by ruling that applications for political asylum would be treated strictly in accordance with the Geneva convention. This decision resulted in an apparent decrease in the number of asylum seekers. However, the new political directions triggered a wave of attacks against refugee camps and centres provoked by far-right

⁶ Actually, mother tongue teaching was introduced in Sweden as early as 1966 but was initially a voluntary commitment by the municipalities and only applied to Finnish-speaking pupils. For further details on mother tongue teaching in Sweden, see ISOF 2020.

⁷ Over the past five years, the proportion of pupils in Sweden entitled to mother tongue teaching has increased, but at the same time fewer are choosing to study it at school. The fact that the subject is optional makes it a secondary activity at school, as the mother tongue is usually kept alive at home. Political trends naturally play a role, as do social pressure (the importance of only learning Swedish vis-à-vis the presumed ‘pointlessness’ of learning the mother-tongue) and ignorance about the positive effects of mother tongue teaching (Helsingborgs Dagblad 2024).

movements. On the other hand, from a social point of view, the sharpening of spatial boundaries between city centres and suburbs highlighted differentiations whereby somatic features, non-Swedish names and foreign accents became easy targets for stigmatisation, as well as verbal (when not physical) violence. Between suburban areas and city centres there were (and there still are) invisible cultural boundaries that make multiculturalism a relative and well delimited concept, as it is “geographically located to specific housing areas in the major cities” (Westin 2000, 36). With respect to the main subject of the present study, as noted by Ann Runfors, “the importance of speaking Swedish without a foreign accent [i]s an additional but crucial aspect for passing as Swedish, and hence for passing the norms of Swedish whiteness” (Runfors 2021, 70). This means that, as early as the 1980s, the emerging suburban varieties contributed strongly to the attribution of a new discriminatory meaning to the term *invandrare*. Following the multicultural turn, this term took on a pejorative tone, probably due to a changed perception towards diversity, followed by economic and generational changes, and less tolerance for increasing non-European flows (Hübinette 2019, 102). As a result, *invandrare* has become “[t]he main Swedish category of otherisation” (67), as it “lumps together people who only have their non-Swedishness in common, and also because it is used in connection with the children of international migrants who are born in Sweden” (Westin 2000, 61). According to Ann Runfors, the concept *invandrare*

embrace[s] people with similar features but with different ethnic affiliations. However, [...] the category ‘invandrare’ is used as a label for non-whiteness indirectly. This can be seen as an effect of a strong colour-blind ideology in Sweden [...] The label ‘invandrare’ furthermore differs by being constructed not only by means of skin colour, but also by other phenotypes such as hair and eye colour as well as what is perceived as a foreign accent. (2021, 67)

There was also a clear and unequivocal socioeconomic correlation between the figure of the immigrant and the *Miljonprogram*, in which the former was held responsible for the degradation and the failure of the latter.

An institutional investigation into the politicization of the concept *invandrare* was also carried out by a parliamentary commission for the Ministry of Culture (Kulturdepartementet), which in 2000 published a text titled *Begreppet invandrare – användningen i myndigheternas verksamhet* (The Concept of Immigrant – Usage in Governmental Activities), where the following is evidenced:

Det lämpliga i att kalla människor som har bott länge i Sverige för invandrare kan ifrågasättas. [...] Dessa personer har oftast en starkare anknytning till Sverige än till något annat land. (Kulturministeriet 2000, 22)

The appropriateness of calling people who have lived in Sweden for a long time 'immigrants' can be questioned. [...] These individuals often have a stronger connection to Sweden than to any other country.

In the suburbs, far from contact with the typically Swedish cultural and social life, not only did international hospitality take place, but also a rupture in the traditional image of the country, manifesting a discomfort that foreshadowed the failure of multiculturalism.

2.4 Political Changes and Crises in the 1990s

Through these historical developments, non-European migrations changed the overall perspective on diversity in Sweden, where over time, different socio-economic conditions have created two distinct ethno-social layers: the ethnic and socio-economic homogeneity of metropolitan centres, and the promiscuous heterogeneity of the suburban ethno-proletariat. If, as Gunnar Broberg and Mattias Tydén put it, *folkhem* was an ideology that permeated all societal structures to the point that it defined the identity of the nation (2005, 59) as a human consortium based on equality, and if the structure of the city as it was projected during the establishment of the *Miljonprogram* should mirror the *folkhem*, then it seems appropriate to explore how the new highly stratified ethno-social and residential structure undermines this idea of equality, where immigrants are often depicted as a potential threat (Keskinen, Skaptadóttir, Toivanen 2019, 2-3).

The representation of migrants as a threat led to the establishment of dichotomous oppositions. Unlike many Swedes who were able to find better job opportunities and housing elsewhere, the social ladder remained rather static for immigrants, making it impossible for them to improve their socio-economic and housing conditions. Among the reasons we certainly include linguistic issues, disparities in education, unequal power distribution, limited political involvement, significant income inequalities, and job insecurity. On an attitudinal level, negative stereotypes, prejudice, and biased social constructions further strengthened practices of ethnic and racial discrimination.

Consequently, during the 1980s, despite an economic upswing, many refugees found it difficult to get into the labour market, so they sustained themselves with state aids which, however, proved insufficient to avoid their 'relegation' into the *Miljonprogram* areas

(De los Reyes 2000, 39). Furthermore, the neoliberal legacy on the Swedish housing market, implemented by Carl Bildt's government in the 1990s, resulted in an intensified socio-economic inequality due to the institution of a needs-tested welfare system (Tunström, Wang 2019, 23) and an increased power for private real estate markets (Christophers 2013).

Given this new, precarious situation, the utopian principle of *folkhem* began to wane, especially with the gradual transition to a globalised, individualistic and neoliberal economic system. In fact, shortly after Palme's death in 1986, the political climate changed irretrievably and the term *folkhem* lost its positive charge, taking on nostalgic overtones reminiscent of a community where solidarity was dissolving into an increasing individualist competitiveness. As mentioned above, in 1989 Ingvar Carlsson put a stop to refugees, although during the 1990s the influx of refugees soon started to rise again, causing political and social issues.

Global events such as the fall of the Berlin Wall, the collapse of the USSR, the wars in the Balkans,⁸ Somalia and the Arab Gulf had very strong consequences on overall migration flows towards Sweden, which granted over 76,000 permanent residence permits in 1991-92, over 136,000 in 1993-94, and over 64,000 in 1995-96 (Westin 2000, 16).

1991 is recalled as a turning point also because, for the first time, violent racism reached Sweden, a country that had traditionally considered itself unaffected by this social issue. Violence was mainly identified with the figure of John Ausonius, better known as *Lasermannen* (The Laser Man), who between August 1991 and February 1992 committed no less than eleven individual attacks on non-white ethnic citizens with a red sighted firearm, spreading panic in Stockholm and Uppsala's streets.⁹

2.5 Austerity and Multiculturalism at Göran Persson's Turn

The imbalances, conflicts and political alternations of the 1990s show how an overt politically recognised multiculturalism is not sufficient to ensure that a society is multicultural and egalitarian in practice (Gokieli 2017). This is evidenced by the political developments after

⁸ In the years 1992-93, over 100,000 Yugoslav citizens found refuge in Sweden, the majority of whom, around 40,000, were Bosnians. Migration from the Balkans accounted for 21% of the total flows to Sweden in the 1990s alone (Westin 2000, 7; Migrationsverket 2021).

⁹ Alongside Ausonius, we also mention the rise of organised neo-Nazi movements responsible for violence against refugee dwellings (1990-92) and the proliferation of various extreme right-wing supremacist and independent movements such as *Vitt Ariskt Motstånd* (White Aryan Resistance) and *Nationell Ungdom* (National Youth).

Bildt's conservative term, when Social Democracy came back to government in 1994. With a cabinet headed by Ingvar Carlsson, later replaced in 1996 by Göran Persson (in charge between 1996 and 2006), Social Democracy guided Sweden to its official admission into the European Union (1995), working on the reduction of public debt and curbing unemployment caused, in part, by the financial crisis of the early 1990s (Chiesa Isnardi 2019, 1216).

Although Sweden in 1975 had embraced multiculturalism as a societal founding value, the shifts in socio-economic policy occurred in the following decades contrasted sharply with the ideal of hospitality, inclusion and celebration of diversity that continued to dominate also the first decade of the 2000s. Indeed, the establishment of the thematic year (*temaår*) of multiculturalism, *Mångkulturåret*, dates back to 2006.¹⁰ The Multicultural Year was designated by the Social Democratic government to better integrate Sweden's cultural and ethnic diversity into cultural institutions and to permanently increase opportunities for all citizens to participate in cultural life, as well as to connect different cultural traditions (Regeringen 2007). Through exhibitions, theatre performances, artistic productions, lectures, seminars and documentaries related to the representation of Sweden as a multicultural country, this multicultural portrayal of Sweden found expression in dance, music, literature and other contexts (both academic and non-academic), including a growing social interest in this phenomenon and a particular investigative attention from linguists in the multi-ethnic varieties that have developed in multicultural neighbourhoods.

Over the years, scholars and critics have analysed diversity in Sweden, seeking an answer as to whether the symbolic celebration of multiculturalism in those years matched a positive response in everyday coexistence practices against the portrayal of migrants as an alleged threat. It was precisely in that contradictory climate which arose during Persson's government (on the one hand, increasing neo-liberalism and welfare restriction, on the other hand the somewhat self-satisfied glorification of its own progressive multiculturalism), that a new intellectual critique took shape towards the concept of Swedishness and its progressive ideas, which would preface the developments of a postmigrant consciousness.

10 A thematic year consists of the proclamation and organization by the Swedish government of activities developed and carried out over the course of a year, dedicated to a specific purpose.

2.6 The Emergence of a (Post)migrant Consciousness

In this chapter, a synthetic overview of the historical and social events that characterised profound changes in Sweden in the last decades of the twentieth century and the very first years of the twenty-first century has been provided. In this final part of the chapter, we will focus on a fundamental aspect that has run through the events reconstructed so far: the advent of a new generation of writers of foreign origin, who narrate contemporary Sweden against the backdrop of *folkhem's* decay.

From the late 1980s onwards, there was a visible break in the country's recent history, mainly because, in these years, second-generation migrants developed their own consciousness and began to make their voices heard. It is often from the marginalised, stigmatised and often reinvented places of the suburbs that many second-generation writers grew up and then developed their own artistic projects, creatively addressing the challenges of multicultural society.

It is important to emphasise that, in this context, the role played by art in the rethinking process of identities and belonging is crucial (Calvani 2021, 194). In fact, a part of the Swedish cultural production at the wake of the twenty-first century contributed to unravelling identity binarisms between Swedish and foreign cultures, representing the ambivalences of national belonging, i.e. a concept that needed to be profoundly re-semanticised in relation to the past (Ghose 2008, 421, 422). In particular, second-generation writers in Sweden have developed perspectives in new literary forms and languages as a way to re-interpret the ideological closure of the 1990s and the all too enthusiastic celebrations of multiculturalism of the early 2000s, which contributed to a further migrantisation of second-generation citizens.¹¹ Although (often) born and raised in Sweden, this generation is still called 'guest', 'immigrant' and at any rate never or only reticently 'Swedish', inheriting the social segmentation experienced by their parents (Hübinette, Lundström 2014, 424) as a dominant pattern expanded to the domain of culture.

Out of such a context, a non-white Swedish consciousness arose in the 1990s (Hübinette 2019, 102-3), formed especially among those who, having grown up in Sweden since childhood, have received an education in Swedish culture and can speak about it from a critical perspective. Unlike the first generations, the younger generation

11 Migrantisation is a concept developed in postmigrant theory with regard to people born or raised in a society to which they formally belong, but which, due to external factors such as foreign appearance and name, they are constantly excluded from. Summarised in Schramm, Ring Petersen and Wiegand's words, it consists of "the ascription of migrant backgrounds to some citizens" (2019, 8).

feels the need to offer a point of view on the distinction between identity and otherness, proposing a new image of Swedish identity, in which privileged common means of expression are MS. Indeed, it should be noted that the development of *invandrarlitteratur* followed an important artistic and aesthetic fervour flowing from different directions, in particular from cinema and the emerging Swedish hip-hop scene, where linguistic creativity was one of the most innovative artistic outputs.

In the universe of cinematography, we mention movies such as *Före stormen* (Before the Storm) by Reza Parsa, *Det nya landet* (The New Country) by Geir Hansteen Jörgensen, *Vingar av glas* (Glass Wings) by Reza Bagher and *Jalla! Jalla!* by Josef Fares. All the movies mentioned were released in 2000, which is a very interesting and certainly not accidental timing. As for television, the Italian-Swedish director Peter Birro launched the series *Kniven i hjärtat* (The Knife in the Heart), released in 2004 and set in Bergsjön (Gothenburg), centred on the lives of second-generation youths from different ethnic backgrounds.

Turning to the field of music, the 1990s brought the advent of a hip-hop group of South American origin based in Botkyrka (Stockholm): The Latin Kings (TLK). This group had a very significant political, social and cultural impact on the conceptualisation of immigrant identity in Sweden. Known for being the first to have publicly used MS as a means of artistic expression, TLK made their debut in 1994 with the album *Välkommen till förorten* (Welcome to the Suburbs), emancipating suburban varieties from their previously ascribed marginalised features through deliberately provocative linguistic elements and narratives that simultaneously convey the precariousness and artistic power of *förort* life.

In a social climate of growing intolerance towards otherness, TLK testified to a new image of Sweden emerging from the amalgamation of the North and South. Thereby, the counterculture of the counterplaces, the heterotopic suburbs,¹² traditionally seen as ‘spaces for the Others’, begins to emerge in this period as an aesthetic and spatial *Leitmotiv* of the new, multicultural hip-hop scene (Gendolavigna 2021a), influencing identity – and suburb-interested artists such as Jacco, Mohammed Ali and Erik Lundin.

Delving deeper into this perspective, it is worth quoting the TLK frontman Douglas ‘Dogge Daggelito’ Leon, who in an interview released in 2014 for the Swedish Television SVT asserted his

12 The concept of heterotopia derives from the Greek *ἕτερος* (different, other) and *τόπος* (place) and is delineated as a place outside all other places, i.e. a place that, although localisable, remains different. For the French philosopher Michel Foucault, heterotopias are not utopias, as the latter present society in a perfected form, remaining essentially unreal, whereas heterotopias are real places (2011).

awareness of the social role his group played in the revolution of the multicultural and multilingual aesthetics of the period: “Vi blev de första som verkligen kom från förorten och visade vad förorten var och vi hade vårt egna språk” (Doggelito in SVT 2014).¹³ Quoting Lacatus,

Their rap becomes the medium for formulating a social message – by using violent imagery to depict their fictional rap world and a language drawing heavily on local slang that used to be almost inaccessible to people never exposed to it, TLK make their audience experience an uncanny linguistic and cultural alienation within their own language. (2008, 61)

2.6.1 The Ethnic Turn

In the early 2000s, the emergence of MS in literature marked a crucial step in the transition towards a postmigrant and postmonolingual aesthetic. Aleksandra Ålund highlights that, during this period, a significant shift occurred through a reflection on the cultural and linguistic repertoires that arose within the context of superdiversity, expressed through texts, sounds, and images (1997, 16). It is well known that after Alejandro Leiva Wenger’s *Till vår ära* in 2001, many writers introduced new linguistic tools to convey an image of Sweden that also included its peripheral spaces and previously untold experiences. Bodies, subjectivities, emotions, and new forms of expressivity took shape within the cultural context of a nation in constant transformation (Leonard 2011, 113).

In literature, the ethnic turn deeply explores the cracks opened by the first generations and the music of TLK, becoming a source of critical disruption by transcending old dichotomies and reimagining intercultural coexistence. Writing with a heterogeneous vocabulary and narrating suburban settings equips postmigrant artists with a tool of resistance that turns their presence in the literary and artistic field into a disruptive force. Particularly noteworthy are Alejandro Leiva Wenger’s words in an interview with Naima Chahboun from 2013, where he argues that the category *förortsförfattare* (suburban writer) can be used to challenge specific power structures that divide literary field and Swedish society into rigid categories:

jag kan fortfarande känna mig främmande inför hur mina texter blir lästa av vita medelklasskritiker. [...] Men ibland tänker jag

13 “We were the first who truly came from the suburbs and showed what the suburbs were and we had our own language”.

att man borde försöka vända kategoriseringen till något positivt. Säger 'ja, jag är förortsförfattare' som en strategi. (Leiva Wenger in Chahboun 2013)

I can still feel estranged by how my texts are read by white middle-class critics. [...] But sometimes I think one should try to turn the categorisation into something positive. Saying 'yes, I'm a suburban writer' as a strategy.

The postmigrant voices from *invandrarlitteratur* subvert the constructed image of the immigrant from being the cause of the *folkhem* collapse to a figure capable of radically rethinking him-/herself in opposition to the narrative of the immigrant as an exotic object of the literary landscape and, thus, of society (Heith 2004; Trotzig 2005; Lindholm 2019, 250).

Retaining its subversive character, in the last decades *invandrarlitteratur* has undergone a process of canonisation, which conveys the image that it is a unified and cohesive intellectual movement. Anyuru discussed this development in his essay from 2018 *Strömavbrottets barn* (The Power Cut's Children), attempting to historicise the postmigrant wave (ironically called by him *vågen*, 'the wave'), noticing that it appeared (and still does) quite fragmented, though what we today call *invandrarlitteratur* is now regularly consumed by the general public (Anyuru 2018, 88), who see the suburban setting and the stylised use of multilingualism as an unmistakable mark of authenticity. Drawing inspiration from this, the reflection on the importance of multilingualism as a literary element is the red thread that runs through the four selected works, analysed in the next four chapters.

3 **Alejandro Leiva Wenger, *Till vår ära***

Summary 3.1 Alejandro Leiva Wenger: A Short Profile. – 3.2 *Till vår ära*: Structure and Analysis of Lexical Peculiarities. – 3.2.1 *Borta i tankar* and *Elixir*: A Linguistic Focus. – 3.2.2 Graphic Features in *Till vår ära*. – 3.2.3 Morpho-syntactic Features in *Till vår ära*. – 3.3 Typical MS Elements in *Till vår ära*. – 3.4 Foreign Influences not Typical of MS in *Till vår ära*. – 3.5 Creative Compounds and New-Words in *Till vår ära*.

This chapter aims to provide a detailed analysis of multilingualism in Alejandro Leiva Wenger's *Till vår ära*, but also to show how it fits into a critique of the monolingual paradigm where Swedish as the dominant language is deterritorialised. As the first writer to use MS as a language of literary expression in Sweden, Leiva Wenger opened a new aesthetic in *invandrarlitteratur* characterised by a heterogeneous integration of styles and informal varieties of Swedish. In an interview for *Stockholmsfria*, Leiva Wenger described how this idea came about:

Jag skrev en roman först som jag skickade till en massa förlag, men den blev refuserad. Romanen var mer finlitterär, jag trodde att litteratur skulle se ut på det sättet. Att det skulle vara fint, vackert, med ett skönt språk. Någon gång där började jag lyssna på Latin Kings och fastnade för språket de använde, och som jag hade haft i min omgivning när jag växte upp i Vårberg. Jag hade aldrig tänkt på att man skulle kunna göra litteratur av de orden. Men när jag



lyssnade på Latin Kings kände jag att det Dogge gjorde var så fint. (Leiva Wenger in Holmström 2016)

I first wrote a novel that I sent to a bunch of publishers, but it was rejected. The novel was more highbrow, I thought that literature had to be like that. That it should be elegant, beautiful, with a nice language. At some point I started listening to the Latin Kings and became fascinated by the language they used, which I had been surrounded by when growing up in Vårberg. I had never thought that one could make literature out of those words. But when I listened to Latin Kings, I felt that what Dogge was doing was so beautiful.

Leiva Wenger admitted that, at first, he conceptualised literary writing as something sophisticated, as he believed that a literary text should be “fint” (elegant); later, inspired by The Latin Kings and surrounded by local varieties in Vårberg, the author began to draw on a language hitherto unexploited in literature. In this sense, in the linguistic construction of *Till vår ära*, Leiva Wenger shifted from a formal to a distinctly more informal approach to literary language, emphasising the importance of styles associated with suburban youth and multi-ethnic contexts (Leonard 2011, 29; Behschnitt 2013, 176), with which he came into contact in the place where he grew up. The excerpt from the interview highlights how MS serve as a solution to an editorial impasse: constrained by the aesthetic canons of what he believed a literary language should be, Leiva Wenger faced multiple rejections; once he had adopted MS and the creativity of TLKs, editorial acceptance arrived, first with the short story *Elixir*, published in 1999 for *Bonniers Litterära Magasin*, and then with the short prose collection *Till vår ära* at the age of 25 (where the same story *Elixir* is included). Leiva Wenger was impressed by TLK’s expressivity, as the beauty of Doggelito’s language lies in its unusualness within the Swedish musical canon. Likewise, Leiva Wenger gained popularity by using MS. As Monica Gomér demonstrated in a dissertation based on her private correspondence with Leiva Wenger (2008), it emerges that the author wanted to confront readers with a language never seen before in literature. In other words, Leiva Wenger challenges the readers by placing them in a condition of exclusion (cf. Tidigs 2019). This effect is reinforced by the fact that the author creates words never met before in Swedish vocabulary, which provides an insight into his multilingual creativity. As will be seen, a particular element of Leiva Wenger’s *Till vår ära* is that he displays multiple registers. While the first two short stories are written in MS, from

the third story, *Sakers riktiga namn*, the author switches to a more proper register, although there is no lack of lexical peculiarities.¹

3.1 Alejandro Leiva Wenger: A Short Profile

Alejandro Leiva Wenger was born in 1976 in Concepción, Chile. At nine he emigrated to Sweden with his mother and his two brothers,² where he grew up in the multi-ethnic district of Vårberg, in the south-western suburbs of Stockholm. Today, Leiva Wenger is a writer and playwright. He holds a PhD in sociology at Stockholm University, where he defended a dissertation on the rhetoric of diversity in the domain of management titled *Three Faces of Diversity Rhetoric – Managerialization, Marketing and Ambiguity*, published in 2019. Despite the great success of *Till vår ära*, Leiva Wenger did not immediately follow up his literary vein, spending ten years without publishing. Although there is no clear information on his prolonged literary silence, it is arguable that excessive media pressure may have influenced him as, at the time of his debut, he was portrayed as ‘representative’ of a specific immigrant reality: the use of MS, the suburban setting, and his (and his characters’) South American origin would have made *Till vår ära* an “ethnographic souvenir” (Mohnike 2006, 154).

Not recognising himself within this framework, Leiva Wenger probably abandoned literary writing in order not to further fuel a stereotype, limiting himself to journalistic contributions on multilingualism and diversity, as in the notorious debate against the derogative use of the term *Blattesvenska* perpetrated by Ebba-Witt Brattström in 2006, in which he defended the introduction and the use of the Turkish noun *guss* (girl). An example to understand the media pressure put on Leiva Wenger can be found in the following excerpt from Inger Alestig’s review on *Dagen* in 2002: “Många har väntat på det. Nu sker det, ‘Rinkebysvenskan’ har fått sin första starka litterära stämma, och den kommer från en 25-åring med uppväxt i en stockholmsförort men med rötterna i Chile”.³ In this and in many other reviews, *Till vår ära* is described as a work long awaited by the public, while the author is associated with the use of the so-called *Rinkebysvenska*. Leiva Wenger is indeed reputed

1 Leiva Wenger has frequently maintained that language is an instrument of in – and exclusion, as well as an indicator of class and status (Gomér 2008, 3).

2 The author’s brothers are Felipe and Pablo Leiva Wenger, respectively a famous rapper and a theatre and television actor who also acted in Alejandro’s plays (see <https://www.alex.se/lexicon/article/leiva-wenger-alejandro>).

3 “Many have been waiting for it. Now it’s happening, Rinkeby Swedish has its first strong literary voice, and it comes from a 25-year-old who grew up in a Stockholm suburb with roots in Chile”.

to be the first immigrant writer to use MS as a means of literary expression, transposing it from music to literature after The Latin Kings' hits (with whom he collaborated), and making it a particular aspect of his writing.⁴ Furthermore, Leiva Wenger is often associated with the *Miljonprogram* areas, mainly because of the language, but also because almost all of his stories are set in the south-western suburbs of Stockholm (Mohnike 2006, 152; Hübinette 2019, 35). In fact, in the above-mentioned interview with Naima Chahboun, Leiva Wenger not only states that the label *förortsförfattare* (cf. § 2.6.1) can be used to challenge specific power structures or certain categories, but also that his work is seen as (auto)biographical realism rather than just 'fiction'.

Jag brukar skämta om att jag skulle kunna skriva om en kaffekopp, och någon skulle ändå tolka det som en berättelse om kulturkrockar eller integration [...] Men jag kan också önska att fiktionen skulle få ta mer plats. Allt jag skrivit är icke-realism, men det tolkas ofta som realism. (Leiva Wenger in Chahboun 2013)

I often joke that I could write about a cup of coffee, and someone would still interpret it as a story about cultural clashes or integration [...] But I also wish fiction would take up more space. Everything I have written is non-realism, although it is often interpreted as realism.

Leiva Wenger defines his prose as non-realistic, but he does so not because what he writes does not have a value of social criticism, but rather to detach the fictional dimension from the biographical one.

Ten years after *Till vår ära*, the author pursued a flourishing theatre career, debuting with the play *127* (2011), with which he won the *Stockholmpriset* in 2012. Following this, Leiva Wenger published *Författarna* (The Writers) (2013), *No Limit* (2015), *Folkbokförarna* (The Anagraphists) (2016), *Minnesstund* (Memorial) (2016), *It's corona time!* (2020), *Pappas födelsedag* (Dad's Birthday) (2020), *Arvet* (The Inheritance) (2021, with which he won the Karen Boye prize), *Borkmania* (2022, a revisitation of Henrik Ibsen's *John Gabriel Borkman*), *Nattvak* (Overnight stay) (2024) and *Tunneln* (The Tunnel) (2025). Among these, *127*, *Författarna* and *No Limit* are collected in the volume *Fakta - 3 pjäser* (Facts - 3 Plays), published in 2015 for Bonniers. Leiva Wenger motivated such a shift from prose to theatre as a move towards a more collective, and participatory form of critical experience (Leiva Wenger in Chahboun 2013). In 2013, Leiva Wenger

⁴ Leiva Wenger recorded the single *Hickande Hund* (Sobbing Dog), included in the TLK album *Omertà* released in 2003.

also wrote a short story entitled *Bakom* (Behind) for the *Sveriges Radios Novellpris* competition, which however was never published.

3.2 *Till vår ära*: Structure and Analysis of Lexical Peculiarities

Published in 2001 by Bonniers, reissued in 2015 by Modernista and a third time in 2023 again by Bonniers,⁵ *Till vår ära* consists of six short stories, entitled *Borta i tankar* (Lost in Thoughts), *Elixir*, *Sakers riktiga namn* (The True Name of Things), *Song for My Father*, *Till vår ära*, and *Zaqwertyuop*. The collection did not go unnoticed in Italy, where the first story *Borta i tankar* was translated by Stefania Renzetti in 2006. On the back cover of the Modernista edition, the collection is described as one of those “extremt sällsynta debutböcker som förändrat litteraturen från en dag till en annan. Sex noveller som skakade om vår syn på skriftens möjligheter när de kom ut hösten 2001”.⁶ In the volume *Storia delle letterature scandinave. Dalle origini a oggi* (History of Scandinavian Literatures. From Origins to the Present Day) (2019) edited by Massimo Ciaravolo, Leiva Wenger is introduced as a writer whose stories “hanno il merito di aprire la strada a un territorio nuovo della narrativa, ricco di successivi sviluppi” (Ciaravolo 2019, 894).⁷ As can be seen, the collection is characterised by an element of novelty which heralds the advent of a turning point in Swedish contemporary narrative with a formal and narratological experimentalism that has become a fervent topic of debate as well as investigation (cf. Källström 2003, 2005; Heith 2004; Behschnitt 2010).

3.2.1 *Borta i tankar* and *Elixir*: A Linguistic Focus

Borta i tankar's plot weaves two different narrative lines: one in the present, in which the protagonist Felipe is with his friends, and one in the past, in which Felipe revisits the highlights of his relationship

⁵ The 2023 edition is preceded by a preface by Swedish writer Sonia Saleh, who comments on the transformative power of Leiva Wenger's prose as follows: “Får man göra så här? Kan man skriva så här? [...] Är det här ett brott mot... Jag vet inte, Svenska Akademien? [...] Den lilla novellsamlingen, inte längre än 123 sidor, skapar en reva, en ruptur, varifrån språket springer fram och expanderar” (Saleh in Leiva Wenger 2023) (“Can this be done? Can you write like this? [...] Is this an offence against... I don't know, the Swedish Academy? [...] The small collection of short stories, no longer than 123 pages, creates a rift, a rupture, from which language springs and expands”).

⁶ “Extremely rare debut books that changed literature overnight. Six short stories that shook our vision on the possibilities of writing when they were published in autumn 2001”.

⁷ “Are credited for paving the way for a new narrative territory, rich in subsequent developments”.

with Julia. The story explores themes of identity, alienation, and the complexities of multiculturalism in Sweden between suburban and metropolitan life perspectives. Felipe navigates both dimensions between external and internal struggles as a second-generation immigrant, feeling disconnected from both Swedish society and his cultural roots. Through vivid language and introspective narrative, Leiva Wenger highlights the emotional and psychological toll of living between two worlds. The second story, *Elixir*, delves into issues of urban alienation, cultural identity, and social exclusion. It is narrated in the first person by a character with Hispanic origins, and it follows a group of young men, also with Hispanic origins, from Fittja, Stockholm. The main characters concoct a mysterious elixir able to transform their appearance into the typical traits of Swedish ethnicity (blond hair, blue eyes, fair skin), helping them to cope with their sense of frustration and disconnection from mainstream society. The narrative captures the tension between their desires for recognition and the realities of life on societal margins. The story's short film adaptation, directed by Babak Najafi in 2004, further highlights its exploration of youth and societal boundaries. Part of *Borta i tankar*'s vocabulary resorts to quotations from the homonymous song *Borta i tankar*, released by The Latin Kings in their album *I skuggan av betongen* (Under the Shadow of Concrete) in 1997. Leiva Wenger quotes not only the title, but also a few lines from the song, creating intertextual links between literature and music. One example is the line "Varje gång ni dyker upp, så blir det knas, slingra er iväg, stick iväg, sjaaas!" (2015, 16),⁸ which Felipe goes back to when he sees his friends coming. Another example is the mention of the song's refrain "det enda jag [...] hör e mitt hjärta som bankar, jag e för långt borta i mina [...] egna jävla tankar" (24).⁹ The author resorts to hip-hop as a narrative tool, transforming his text into a form of multimedia work, which in certain passages can be read while singing (Tidigs, Huss 2017), thus earning it the appellation "multilingual soundscape" (Tidigs 2020, 199). Approaching *Borta i tankar* as a multilingual and multimedia text requires constant attention in reading. In fact, in both *Borta i tankar* and *Elixir* we can see how MS work as a kind of allusion to a non-literary language which shapes a mere act of 'mimicking' MS, i.e. an "evocative hybridisation" (Tidigs 2020, 199). In *Borta i tankar*, as well as in the works analysed below, repeated and predictable stylised linguistic features produce

⁸ "Every time you show up, it's trouble, go away, run away, get out!".

⁹ "The only thing I [...] hear is my heart beating, I'm too far away in my [...] own damn thoughts".

what Nikolas Coupland calls “strategic inauthenticity” (2001, 350),¹⁰ i.e. the presence of stereotypical speech elements associated with specific ethno-social categories. *Borta i tankar* is imbued with this kind of vocabulary, where dialogues result incomprehensible to those unfamiliar with MS. An emblematic example is perhaps “abou, aina, aina, axa len” (2015, 16),¹¹ or “sen vi kan beckna och få fett para jao” (20);¹² a third significant example is:

Bollen sa pass på det, vi kom in i perrongen och vi sa softish, men tjockisen fortsatte måla och någon hade sett dom, en vakt, typiskt, abou spring, axa. Shuno kutade efter oss en bit, jag höll på att ramla. Felipe tänker, jävla tjockis, vi sa till dej, ska du alltid spela mangas? (2015, 17)¹³

Bollen said no, we got onto the platform and we said softish, but the fatso kept painting and someone had seen them, a security guard, typical, abou run, run. The guy ran after us a bit, I almost fell. Felipe thinks, fucking fatso, we told you, you always playing cool?

In the aforementioned excerpts, several elements stand out, such as *säga pass* (to say no), *softish* (to keep calm; to be soft), *abou* (wow), *axa* (to run away), *shuno* (guy, lad), *spela mangas* (play cool, show off). The use of MS shows how the writer concretely confronts the reader with a language that connects insofar as it signals a common suburban background but also divides insofar as it is incomprehensible to those who are not part of it. This reflection about Leiva Wenger's language is extensively attested in scientific literature about literary multilingualism, as this phenomenon “on the one hand, [...] can build bridges and reduce the distance between groups (of readers); on the other hand, it can also create difference between languages and promote hermetic associations” (Kauranen, Huss, Grönstrand 2020, 13). The linguistic peculiarities of *Elixir* display a vocabulary that is fundamentally similar to that of *Borta i tankar*, but is considerably more complex due to frequent syntactic deviations from conventional spelling, characterised by rather gross spelling and grammatical flaws, giving a “hyperrealist” (Bassini 2009, 122) but also ambiguous impression to language (Grydehøj 2020, 154),

¹⁰ Or, as an alternative provided by Siv Björklund, “modifierad autenticitet” (modified authenticity) (2016, 14).

¹¹ “Wow, cops, cops, run buddy”.

¹² “Then we can sell it and get a lot of money, yo”. Maria Rydell and Nathalia Ganuza (2024) have proposed ‘to push’ as an English translation of *beckna* (to push: to sell something illegal, e.g. drugs).

¹³ Notes on translation: the verb *axa* is a shortened form of *accelerera* (to accelerate). In this text it means ‘to run away’.

thus feeding the stereotype of the uneducated immigrant who does not respect the basic rules with a ‘contaminated’ vocabulary. In particular, *Elixir* is distinguished by free prose features, without division into paragraphs and subparagraphs, alternating direct and indirect speech without appropriate punctuation marks and, above all, without respecting graphic conventions such as capital letters at the beginning of sentences, which are instead scattered randomly in the middle of words (Källström 2010, 145). The lexical peculiarities of Leiva Wenger’s collection will be discussed in more detail in tables in the following sections.

3.2.2 Graphic Features in *Till vår ära*

In *Elixir*, there is a systematic subversion of orthographic conventions with numerous inaccuracies based on homophony between correct and alternative spellings of individual words. Consider the following example: “Marco svärde på hans morsas grav han ska brenna reseptet men jag tycker endo synd om hans tjej” (Leiva Wenger 2015, 35),¹⁴ in which there are some divergences: *bränna* is reported as *brenna* (to burn) (note the phonetic affinity between *e* and *ä*), *receptet* as *reseptet* (the recipe) (affinity between intervocalic *s* and *c*), *ändå* as *endo* (however) (affinity between *e* and *ä*, *o* and *å*). Other misspellings are *igenkligen* for *egentligen* (actually) (Leiva Wenger 2015, 35), and *anor lunda* for *annorlunda* (different) 35), in which Leiva Wenger plays with the widespread problem called *särskrivning* (spacing between words, or ‘separate writing’).¹⁵

Observing such deviations, it is possible to make a subdivision into (1) deviant spellings, marking no differences in pronunciation with the correct forms (*anor lunda*, *földe*, *för utom*, *istellet*, *källar rum*, *leksjonen*, *lektjonen*, *prov smaka*, *ock*, *tillomed*, etc.);¹⁶ (2) deviant spellings marking dialectal flavour (*burja*, *huve*, *pricis*, *stog*, *tidit*, *äcklit*).¹⁷ Leiva Wenger’s spelling deviations are scrupulously consistent: consider the inflected forms of the verb *börja* (to begin) as *burja* + verbal ending (e.g. *burjade*), or the way the adverbial and adjectival suffix - *igt* is reported as - *it* in words such as in *dålit*,

¹⁴ “Marco swore on his mother’s grave he will burn the recipe but I still feel sorry for his girlfriend”.

¹⁵ *Särskrivning* describes the action of separating words that should be compounded. For example, *jätte arg* instead of *jättearg* (very angry).

¹⁶ In order: ‘different’, ‘followed’, ‘without’, ‘instead’, ‘basement room’, ‘lection’, ‘lection’, ‘to taste’, ‘and’, ‘even’.

¹⁷ In order: ‘begin’, ‘head’, ‘exact’, ‘stood’, ‘early’, ‘disgusting’. The preterite of *stå* is *stod*. However, *stog* has always been considered a colloquial variant of it (cf. https://svenska.se/saob/?id=S_13587-0001.N4xv&pz=7).

*konstit, äcklit (dåligt, konstigt, äckligt).*¹⁸ Other consistent occurrences along the story are the onset transformation or semi-omission of the consonant digraphs *gj-*, *hj-* and *lj-* into *j-* as in *jorde, jort, jusare, jålp, järnan, järtat (gjorde, gjort, ljusare, hjälp, hjärnan, hjärtat).*¹⁹ One of the main tenets of the postmigrant condition is a critical stance against migrantisation processes. In his collection, Leiva Wenger asks readers to make an effort to decipher and comprehend the presence of ‘other’ grammars, spellings and vocabularies. In fact, the complexity of *Elixir* is given by the intention to represent what Priyamvada Gopal calls “wordplay” (2012, 182), i.e. a multilingual writing, which is typical of postcolonial literatures, characterised by orthographic, grammatical and morphological deviations that deform the language of literary expression as an act of protest against both the dominant society and the current notion of ‘standard’. With such a graphic configuration, *Elixir* also shows a progressive deterritorialisation of Swedish,²⁰ escaping the assumption that an elegant literary language is the ultimate manifestation of Swedishness.

3.2.3 Morpho-syntactic Features in *Till vår ära*

One example of Leiva Wenger’s linguistic plays is the non-inversion between verb and subject in sentences beginning with adverbs, violating the V2 rule. Until the publication of *Till vår ära*, this phenomenon was mainly known as a typical practice of oral communication in contexts where Swedish is the speakers’ second language. With Leiva Wenger, the non-inversion is not only introduced in a literary text but is even placed in the incipit of his collection: “Till slut dom sätter sig på varsin sida av bänken” (2015, 9).²¹ This is how *Borta i tankar* opens, welcoming the reader into a new linguistic landscape where rules work in their own way. Similarly, also *Elixir*’s incipit shows no inversion: “idag vi lovade vi ska sluta dricka skiten” (2015, 9, 35).²² Other examples connoting *Elixir* from a morphological point of view is the weak declension of strong verbs’ past tense such as *svära* (to swear), conjugated *svärde* instead of *svor*, *ge* (to give) conjugated *gedde* instead of *gav*, *bära* (to carry), conjugated *bärde*

¹⁸ In order: ‘bad’, ‘strange’, ‘disgusting’.

¹⁹ In order: ‘did’, ‘done’, ‘clearer’, ‘help’, ‘the brain’, ‘the heart’.

²⁰ Graphic deviations in multilingual literature have been investigated by, among others, Tidigs, who in her doctoral thesis discusses orthography as an area of the text in which the idiosyncrasies of literary writing are able to evoke the multiple presence of foreign languages (2014, 51-2).

²¹ “In the end they sit on both sides of the bench”.

²² “today we decided to stop drinking that shit”.

instead of *bar* (2015, 35, 39).²³ In *Elixir* we also find omissions of coordinating conjunctions: “hon står tittar på oss” in place of “hon står och tittar på oss” (29),²⁴ in which the conjunction *och* (and), usually employed between two verbs with a gerundive function, is omitted between *står* and *tittar*. In the collection there are also examples of prepositional omission, such as in *Borta i tankar*: “Jaime vet vad jag snackar” (2015, 21), where *om* (about) is omitted after the verb *snackar* (talk).²⁵ Object pronoun omissions also occur in *Elixir*: “men sen sa marco nej jag vill inte bli för jag är stolt över att va svarting” (2015, 21),²⁶ where the object pronoun *det* (it) is omitted after *bli* (to become). When mentioned, however, object pronouns are often incorrectly inflected such as “efter skolan vi gick hem till han för han skulle visa oss” (2015, 35),²⁷ where the first *han* (he) marks an object pronoun, thus to replace with *honom* (him). The same concerns the following sentence: “så på rasten stängde vi in han i toaletten” (2015, 37).²⁸ Leiva Wenger lets his characters express metalinguistic considerations about the use of different registers, but also about the importance of social recognition in a shared group language. This can be seen in *Elixir*:

när vi snacka, så snacka han lite anor lunda. jag sa va fan pratar du så där för, tjockis. han sa hur??? och jag sa du snackar fett som en svenne. för han jorde det. man hörde inte att han var svarting och han sa ord som svenskar kan. (2015, 37)

When we talked, he talked a little bit differently. I said what the hell are you talking like that for, fatso. He said how??? and I said you talk very much like a swede. Because he did. you could not hear that he was black and he said words that swedes know.

Drinking the elixir brings consequences that go beyond transracial metamorphosis: in their process of ‘Swedification’, the characters start to speak a more refined variety of Swedish, using terms and

²³ Transposed to English, it is as if these three verbs were declined ‘swear’d instead of swore, ‘gived’ instead of gave and ‘beared’ instead of bore.

²⁴ “she is looking at us”. When used in this kind of construction composed of position verb + another verb (for example *stå + titta*), the conjunction *och* helps to create the present continuous in Swedish.

²⁵ “Jaime knows what I’m talking about”. Literally, “Jaime knows what I’m talking”.

²⁶ “but then marco said no I don’t want to become that because I’m proud to be black”. Literally, “but then marco said no I don’t want to become because I’m proud to be black”.

²⁷ “after school we went to his house because he would show us”. Literally, “after school we went home to he because he would show us”.

²⁸ “so during the break we locked him in the toilet”. Literally, “so during the break we locked he in the toilet”.

expressions they would never have employed. This switch does not go unnoticed, and it is given a precise social connotation: *svenne*, i.e. a slang, and potentially derogatory designation of an ethnically Swedish person or a behaviour reputed to be stereotypically 'Swedish'. Since language is first and foremost a social practice, generated by the nature and purposes of interaction (Jourdan 1991, 189), a sense of alienation overtakes the characters when, without being able to control themselves, they use words foreign to their register. Speaking in a more prestigious variety of Swedish is not perceived as the group's everyday language. However, as discussed in the previous chapter (§ 2.3.2), using it proves crucial for 'passing' as a Swede, and "hence for passing the norms of Swedish whiteness" (Runfors 2021, 70). Furthermore, the transformative qualities of the elixir prompt a progressive erasure of Spanish: "plus att sen kom flaco och sa han kunde inte komma ihåg ett enda ord på spanska. vi sa fan den där läsken gör att man blir svenne" (Leiva Wenger 2015, 40).²⁹

3.3 Typical MS Elements in *Till vår ära*

This section provides a comprehensive overview of the typical lexical elements of MS in *Till vår ära* [tab. 1]. It should be pointed out that as early as 2008, Monica Gomér carried out a lexical investigation on Leiva Wenger's work, focusing, however, only on specific elements (intensifiers, insults and the lemmas *len*, *ey*, *shuno*, *keff* and *abou*), as well as syntactic and grammatical elements limited to the short story *Borta i tankar*. In the present work, the scope of investigation is broader because the focus is not only directed at *Borta i tankar*, but at the entire collection, while the spectrum of elements considered is also broader: nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs and interjections typical of MS. The focus, moreover, is different from Gomér's investigation: here, it is shown how such styles challenge and deterritorialise the concept of the Swedish language.

²⁹ "Then flaco came and said he couldn't remember a single word in spanish. we said damn that soft drink turns you into a swede".

Table 1 Typical MS elements in *Till vår ära*³⁰

Nouns	Verbs	Adjectives/Adverbs	Interjections
<i>aina</i> (3) (b, c, d); ¹	<i>axa</i> (2) (b, c, d); ¹⁹	<i>fet</i> + adj.; noun (26)	<i>abou</i> (11) (b, c, d); ³⁸
<i>amchuck</i> (p. 21) (b, c); ²	<i>banga</i> (9) (b, c, d); ²⁰	(b, d); ³⁰	<i>aide</i> (3) (b, c, d); ³⁹
<i>bangare</i> (p. 24) (b, c, d); ³	<i>baxa</i> (9) (a, b, c, d); ²¹	<i>keff</i> (6) (a, b, c, d); ³¹	<i>benim</i> (p. 19) (a, b, c); ⁴⁰
<i>baxare</i> (p. 25) (b, c); ⁴	<i>baza</i> (5) (b, c, d); ²²	<i>lack</i> (p. 16) (b, c, d); ³²	<i>ey</i> (13) (b, c, d); ⁴¹ <i>jao</i>
<i>feja</i> (4) (b, c); ⁵	<i>beckna</i> (2) (b, c, d); ²³	<i>maricon</i> (2) (b, c, d); ³³	(11) (b, c, d); ⁴² <i>shu re!</i>
<i>flax</i> (p. 17) (a, b, c, d); ⁶	<i>gitta</i> (3) (b, c, d); ²⁴	<i>skum</i> (2) (a, b, d); ³⁴	(p. 11) (b, c, d); ⁴³
<i>floos</i> (p. 27) (b, c, d); ⁷	<i>händish</i> (2) (b); ²⁵	<i>softish</i> (2) (b, d); ³⁵	<i>walla</i> (2) (b, c, d) ⁴⁴
<i>guz</i> (6) (a, b, c, d); ⁸	<i>spela bonanza</i> (p. 11)	<i>shok</i> (p. 36) (b, c, d); ³⁶	
<i>kardash</i> (2) (b, c); ⁹	(b, c, d); ²⁶	<i>värsta</i> + adj./noun	
<i>knas</i> (4) (a, b, c, d); ¹⁰	<i>spela mangas</i> (3) (b,	(11) (b, d); ³⁷	
<i>knasare</i> (3) (b, c, d); ¹¹	c, d); ²⁷		
<i>len</i> (18) (b, c, d); ¹²	<i>tagga</i> (3) (b, c, d); ²⁸		
<i>morre</i> (p. 21) (b, c); ¹³	<i>zutta</i> (p. 15) (b, c); ²⁹		
<i>orre</i> (2) (b, c); ¹⁴			
<i>para</i> (2) (b, c, d); ¹⁵			
<i>partoos</i> (p. 23) (b); ¹⁶			
<i>pass</i> (3) (b, c, d); ¹⁷			
<i>shuno/shonne</i> (6) (b, c, d); ¹⁸			

1 From Turkish *aynasız* (literally, without mirror). It is used in MS as a synonym to Cops (Sjödin 2017, 13), probably because cops carry a sense of shame so they can't stand looking at themselves in the mirror (Milani 2020). Attested in Kotsinas in the forms *aina*, *ayna*, *aino* (1998, 1); in Doggelito, Kotsinas *ayna*, *aina*, *ainasis* (2004, 32). Cf. <http://www.slangopedia.se/ordlista/?ord=aina>. Cf. Khemiri 2003; Sattarvandi 2008.

2 Derived from Turkish, this word means 'vagina'. Attested in Kotsinas in *amuk* (1998, 2); in Doggelito, Kotsinas *am*, *amchik*, *amjick*, *amjuck*, *amuk* (2004, 34). Cf. <http://www.slangopedia.se/ordlista/?ord=Amcuk>.

3 Approximately translatable as 'coward'. Agent noun derived from *banga* (to back down) (Kotsinas 1998, 9; Doggelito, Kotsinas 2004, 41). In *Slangopedia* it is attested as 'unreliable person' (<http://www.slangopedia.se/ordlista/?ord=bangare>). Cf. Khemiri 2003; Sattarvandi 2008.

4 Approximately translatable as 'thief'. Agent noun derived from *baxa* (to steal) (Doggelito, Kotsinas 2004, 43).

5 Slang term of uncertain origin for 'face' (Kotsinas 1998, 47; Doggelito, Kotsinas 2004, 71). Attested in Slangopedia as *fejja* (<http://www.slangopedia.se/ordlista/?ord=fejjan>). Cf. Khemiri 2003.

6 Term for 'luck', from an archaic slang form (cf. https://www.saob.se/artikel/?unik=F_0663-0257.QMaj&pz=5); cf. Kotsinas 1998, 55; Doggelito, Kotsinas 2004, 73; Khemiri 2003.

7 From Maghreb Arabic, meaning 'money'. Attested in Kotsinas as *flus* (1998, 56); in Doggelito, Kotsinas as *floos*, *flos* and *floss* (2004, 74). Cf. Khemiri 2003.

30 In table 1, as in all subsequent tables, the numbers in brackets indicate the occurrences of a specific word. When a word has only one occurrence, the brackets contain the page number where the lexical entry was found. Words sharing the same root (*baxare*, *baxa*) will be placed in the respective columns according to their grammatical category.

-
- 8** From Turkish, meaning ‘girl’, attested in written texts since 1994 (Agazzi 2015, 105). Attested by SAOL since 2005 as *guss* (<https://svenska.se/tre/?sok=guss&pz=1>); in Kotsinas *gus*, *guss*, *guz* e *guzz* (1998, 73); in Doggelito, Kotsinas *guss*, *guzz* e *gusse* e *kuz* (2004, 82, 105). Cf. Sjödin 2017, 8; Khemiri 2003; Bakhtiari 2012.
-
- 9** From Turkish, meaning ‘brother’ or ‘friend’ (Kotsinas 1998, 49); in Doggelito, Kotsinas as *gardash* (2004, 78, 98).
-
- 10** Attested by SO as adjective for ‘crazy’, and as a noun for ‘foolishness’ (cf. <https://svenska.se/tre/?sok=knas&pz=1>). Attested in Kotsinas as ‘mistake’, ‘stupid/strange person’ and ‘cope’ (1998, 104); in Doggelito, Kotsinas, as ‘problem’, ‘argument’ (2004, 102).
-
- 11** Approximately translatable as ‘troublemaker’. Agent noun from *knas*. Cf. Doggelito, Kotsinas as ‘person who often goes to jail’ (2004, 102).
-
- 12** From Turkish *ulan* (boy, young man, guy) (Sjödin 2017, 209), Attested in Kotsinas as *len* and *län* for ‘friend’ and ‘immigrant’ (1998, 119, 125); in Doggelito, Kotsinas for ‘listen’ (2004, 107-8).
-
- 13** Greek term used in Balcanic languages for ‘friend’. Used to attract attention (Joseph 1997, 257). Attested in Kotsinas as *moré* (1998, 134); Doggelito, Kotsinas *morre* (2004, 117).
-
- 14** Shortened form of Turkish *orospu* (prostitute) (Sjödin 2017, 138): in Kotsinas as ‘slap’, ‘girl’, ‘child’, ‘orgasm’ (1998, 144); in Doggelito, Kotsinas ‘girl’, ‘prostitute’ (2004, 124).
-
- 15** From a Turkish word for ‘money’. Cf. Kotsinas 1998, 147 (reported as *para* and *parra*); Doggelito, Kotsinas 2004, 125; Sjödin 2017, 142; Khemiri 2003.
-
- 16** In Doggelito, Kotsinas in *partooz* as ‘to have sex’ (2004, 126).
-
- 17** Of uncertain origin, linked to Spanish *paz* (peace) to express negation. Cf. Doggelito, Kotsinas 2004, 126; <http://www.slangopedia.se/ordlista/?ord=pass>; Sattarvandi 2008.
-
- 18** From Turkish, referring to both male, and female persons. Leiva Wenger indicates only a male figure, five times as *shuno*, and once *shonne* (2015, 21); Cf. Kotsinas (1998, 176-7) as *shono*, *shonu*, *chono*, *chuno*, *shuno*, *chuno*; Doggelito, Kotsinas 2004, 139 as *shonne*, *shono*, *shomme* e *shuno*; Khemiri 2003.
-
- 19** Synonym to ‘run away’. Attested in SAOB as shortened form of the verb *accelerera* (to accelerate) (<https://svenska.se/tre/?sok=axa&pz=2>). Cf. Kotsinas 1998, 6; Doggelito, Kotsinas 2004, 37. Cf. Khemiri 2003; Sattarvandi 2008.
-
- 20** Occurring eight times in the form *banga* and once in *bangish* (2015, 13). Cf. Kotsinas 1998, 9; Doggelito, Kotsinas 2004, 41; Khemiri 2003; Bakhtiari 2012; Sattarvandi 2008.
-
- 21** Attested in SAOB as a synonym to *stjåla* (to steal) (cf. <https://svenska.se/tre/?sok=baxa&pz=1>). It occurs once in *baxish* (2015, 18). Cf. Kotsinas 1998, 10; Doggelito, Kotsinas 2004, 43; Khemiri 2003; Sattarvandi 2003.
-
- 22** Slang term of uncertain origin whose meaning is ‘to have sex’. Cf. Kotsinas 1998, 10 (also attested as *bazza*); Doggelito, Kotsinas 2004, 41 (attested as *bassa*; Khemiri 2003; Sattarvandi 2008).
-
- 23** From Romani *chib*, ‘to sell’ (Carling, Lindell, Ambrazaitis 2013, 142). In MS it acquires the specific meaning ‘to sell drugs’, ‘to steal’. Cf. Kotsinas 1998, 11; Doggelito, Kotsinas 2004, 44; Sjödin 2017, 21; Khemiri 2003; Sattarvandi 2008.
-
- 24** From Turkish *gitmek* (to go) (<https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/gitta#Swedish>). Attested twice as *gitta*, once as *gittish* (2015, 17). Cf. Kotsinas 1998, 66 (with the same meaning); Doggelito, Kotsinas 2004, 79 (as *gittish*); Sjödin 2017, 63; Khemiri 2003; Sattarvandi 2008.
-
- 25** -ish form of the verb *hända* (to happen), translated as “how are you doing?” (cf. Doggelito, Kotsinas 2004, 89).
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- 26** Words from Spanish, attested in the Dictionary of Real Academia Española, meaning ‘sunny weather’, ‘prosperity’, ‘abundance’ (<https://dle.rae.es/bonanza?m=form>); Attested in Sjödin as ‘economic success’ and ‘lucky event’ (2017, 25). Attested in Kotsinas as ‘to have an argument’, ‘to irritate’ (1998, 17); in Doggelito, Kotsinas as synonym to *Besserwisser* (Know-it-all) (2004, 49). Cf. Khemiri 2003.
- 27** Greek form for ‘playing cool’ (cf. Doggelito, Kotsinas 2004, 112). Cf. Khemiri 2003; Sattarvandi 2008.
- 28** Verb attested since 1993 for *klottra* (to scratch) (Agazzi 2015, 245; Sjödin 2017, 195). Used twice as *tagga in* (to break in) (Kotsinas 1998, 215; Doggelito and Kotsinas 2004, 147).
- 29** From Maghreb Arabic *Zat* (weed, hashish); attested in Doggelito and Kotsinas in *zutta e zuttla* (2004, 159). Also attested in the Police Glossary released by the newspaper *Göteborgs-Posten*, associated with drugs (Abrahamson 2024).
- 30** Intensifier occurring eight times as *fet* (before a noun), and eighteen as *fett*, of which six as *fett med* + adj. or noun. Cf. Doggelito, Kotsinas 2004, 7; Khemiri 2003; Sattarvandi 2008.
- 31** As previously discussed, it is attested since 2005 in SAOL (<https://svenska.se/tre/?sok=keff&pz=1>); Kotsinas 1998, 100; Doggelito, Kotsinas 2004, 99; Agazzi 2015, 129; Khemiri 2003; Sattarvandi 2008.
- 32** Attested in Kotsinas as ‘angry’, ‘sad’, ‘tired’ (1998, 117) (cf. <http://www.slangopedia.se/ordlista/?ord=lack>). Cf. Khemiri 2003.
- 33** Popular Spanish word. Cf. Kotsinas 1998, 128; Doggelito, Kotsinas 2004, 113; *Svensk Slang Ordbok* (<http://sv-slang.wikidot.com/invandrarsvenska>; Khemiri 2003).
- 34** Attested in SAOB, meaning ‘dark’, ‘uncertain’, ‘suspicious’. Attested in Kotsinas for ‘unreliable/strange person’ (1998, 184). Cf. Khemiri 2003; Bakhtiari 2012.
- 35** *-ish* form of *soft*.. Cf. Doggelito, Kotsinas 2004, 143; Khemiri 2003; Sattarvandi 2008.
- 36** From the Turkish adverb *çok* (much). Cf. Kotsinas 1998, 28; Doggelito, Kotsinas 2004, 58; <http://www.slangopedia.se/ordlista/?ord=cok>; Khemiri 2003; Sattarvandi 2008.
- 37** Lit. ‘the worst’. This construction supports in two cases an adjective, in six cases a noun. Although it is a superlative absolute of *dålig* (wrong, bad), it is often used in a positive sense. Cf. Kotsinas 1998, 240 as ‘better person’, ‘strong person; Doggelito, Kotsinas 2004, 156; Khemiri 2003; Bakhtiari 2012.
- 38** Expression of wonder and surprise. Of uncertain origin, Sjödin associates it to Turkish (2017, 13) (cf. <http://sv-slang.wikidot.com/invandrarsvenska>), while Milani and Jonsson to Arabic (2012, 56). Cf. Kotsinas 1998, 1; Doggelito, Kotsinas 2004, 31. Also attested as *abow* (cf. <http://www.slangopedia.se/ordlista/?ord=abow>). Cf. Sattarvandi 2008.
- 39** Of Greek origin, attested in Kotsinas as *ade* and *ayde* (1998, 1); in Doggelito, Kotsinas *aide*, *ajde e ade* (2004, 32) with the meaning ‘let’s go’, ‘stop it’, ‘go’ (cf. <http://www.slangopedia.se/ordlista/?ord=aide>).
- 40** Genitive form of Turkish first-person pronoun *ben* (cf. Doggelito, Kotsinas 2004, 45, where it is also attested as *benom*; Young 2021).
- 41** Informal greeting. Cf. Doggelito, Kotsinas 2004, 68; <http://www.slangopedia.se/ordlista/?ord=ey>.
- 42** Of uncertain origin. In Doggelito, Kotsinas as ‘listen’, ‘friend’ (2004, 93). Cf. Khemiri 2003.
- 43** Bosnian greeting for “hi brother” (Joseph 1997). Occurring three times as *sho bre*. Cf. Doggelito, Kotsinas 2004, 132; <http://www.slangopedia.se/ordlista/?ord=shu> (attested as *shu*); Khemiri 2003; Sattarvandi 2008.
- 44** Attested in Kotsinas as *valah*, meaning ‘I swear’ (1998, 234); in Doggelito, Kotsinas *walla*, *valah e wallawalla* (2004, 154). It takes and indexical function in MS. Attested in *Slangopedia* in *wallabarn* (lit. ‘son of walla’) for Swedes not resident in suburbs who enact strategies of *crossing* (cf. <http://www.slangopedia.se/ordlista/?ord=wallabarn>). Cf. Bakhtiari 2012.

Most of the collected elements in Table 1 occur in dialogues, although there are also extra-dialogical cases (see for instance the first-person narrating voices, especially in *Elixir*). As can be seen from the footnotes, although the linguistic documentation on the terms listed often appears scarce and uncertain, typical MS vocabulary is present and available in reliable sources today. Reading *Till vår ära* today does not imply a fragmented textual understanding as it used to when it was published. As a matter of fact, with the exception of the 1998 glossary edited by Kotsinas, at the time of the collection's publication in 2001 there were still neither similar literary works nor comprehensive studies providing further mentions, explanations or translations to its vocabulary. Therefore, *Till vår ära* is a text that cannot be understood by consulting only an ordinary monolingual dictionary but rather requires the consultation of other sources to fully understand its lexical content. In *Borta i tankar*, there are new words replacing commonly employed ones, which allow the monolingual paradigm to be overcome and Swedish to be deterritorialised, as in the case concerning the pronoun *benim* and the noun *mangas*: as explained in the dedicated notes, *benim* replaces the Swedish pronoun *jag* in one case: "om benim sa okej" (Leiva Wenger 2015, 19),³¹ and is included among the interjections, as it is so classified by ISOF. *Mangas*, on the other hand, is roughly translated as 'boaster'. However, its background is historically relevant: the term derives from the Greek μάγκας, a figure from national culture and folklore referring to a rebellious man, indifferent to laws and therefore relegated to the margins of society (Petropoulos 2000). One of the earliest uses seems to date back to the Greek-Turkish War of Independence, when μάγκας denoted unorganised anti-Turkish rural militias (Hyper Lexicon: English-Greek, Greek-English). In *mangas* we see how, thanks to migration, a topos linked to a foreign culture is territorialised into Swedish: from being an exclusively Greek term, *mangas* is introduced into Swedish, deterritorialising it from its own monolingualism. Interjections include further examples of deterritorialisation, such as *abou*, used to express surprise and wonder. *Aide* is an interjection typical of Balkan languages and is used for instance in the sentence "Aide det räcker..." (2015, 26),³² replacing the traditional Swedish *kom igen* (come on). *Walla*, on the other hand, is a very popular Arabic expression, and its meaning today goes far beyond the simple *jag svär* (I swear). In Leiva Wenger we find an interesting use: "säg walla du har" (2015, 17),³³ whereby *säg walla* has the same meaning as 'swear' or 'be honest'. In this quotation,

31 "If I say ok".

32 "Now it's enough...".

33 "Swear that it is true".

the exclamation *walla* replaces the noun *sanning* (truth), constructing the imperative/exhortative expression *säg sanningen* (tell the truth) with *säg walla* ('be honest', 'tell the truth'). The interjection 'shure' (11), on the other hand, is an alternative form of the greeting *sho bre*, which has already been mentioned above.³⁴ Other terms related to friendship are the Turkish *kardash* and *len*, which replace *bror/brorsan* (brother/bro), and *kompis/polare* (friend/buddy). The examples provided above, *benim*, *mangas*, *abou*, *aide*, *walla*, *bre*, *kardash* and *len*, show how the Swedish language is enriched by words with vocative function, acting as "contextualization cues" (Woolard 2004, 85), i.e. indexical elements of a well-known framework of interaction where code-switching occurs normally at intra-sentential level: "Interactants who share backgrounds use 'contextualization cues' to signal and infer such interactional frames, allowing them to interpret particular utterances. Code-switching is one of the many possible cues that speakers rely on" (Woolard 2004, 85).

Analysing these examples, we notice how specific terms are associated with MS, and "are sometimes used in humorous stylisations of CUV (Contemporary Urban Vernacular) speakers in popular cultural output" (Rydell, Ganuza 2024, 9). Swedish has no special need for new appellatives, as expressions such as *bror/brorsan* (brother) or *mannen* (man) are already well established in everyday language. Among these appellatives, the pronoun *benim* deserves a special mention. *Benim* is attested by the ISOF as a neologism of Swedish since 2019 and it is recognised as a synonym to *jag* (I, me), just like *guz/guss*, listed in SAOL since 2005, which is now recognised for all intents and purposes as a synonym to *flicka* and *tjej* (girl) (§ 1.7.4). This linguistic embedding of new exogenous vocabulary in Swedish also allows for a broader reflection on the concept of code-switching itself. Some of the expressions above would now be so deeply rooted in usage that they would barely be recognised as acts of code-switching. The use of these words highlights how, in the linguistic experimentation of MS, Swedish becomes deterritorialised, i.e. its vocabulary acquires new terms that shift from the geographical coordinates of Sweden, connecting, by means of exogenous resources, different territories, histories and connotations. Leiva Wenger makes Swedish a minor language, overcoming monolingualism by including traces of other languages that make his Swedish a motherless language (Yıldız 2012). A strategy of linguistic deterritorialisation also occurs with the suffix *-ish*. It recurs frequently in *Borta i tankar*, where it is found in both verbal (*bangish*, *baxish*, *gittish*, *händish*) and adjectival (*softish*) functions. As we can see, *-ish* has the function of a verbal ending. Consider, for instance, the following examples, in which several

34 Cf. fn. 21 from Chapter 1.

verbs undergo an argotic camouflaging: “eh shu len, vad händish, hälsar du inte längre, fan är det jao, har du blivit fin?” (2015, 12);³⁵ “om du är så kan du bangish nu” (13);³⁶ “Bollen tog den och gittish” (2015, 17);³⁷ “om du har så kan vi baxish” (18);³⁸ The verbs *händish*, *bangish*, *gittish* and *baxish* further exoticise the more common forms *hända* (to happen), *banga* (to back down), *gitta* (to run away) and *baxa* (to steal). Moreover, it has been observed that MS words do not only come from foreign languages, but also from Swedish jargons, fostering the resemantisation of neglected items. An example in Leiva Wenger (and elsewhere) is the verb *baxa*, defined by SAOB – among other meanings – as an archaism that shifted from ‘dragging heavy objects’ to committing burglary (cf. Doggelito, Kotsinas 2004, 43; Gendolavigna 2023b). Typical MS elements also include adjectives and adverbs, such as the construct *fett med* + adj. or noun, which works as both a quantity and quality adverb. *Borta i tankar* attests the forms “fett med skit” (full of shit); “fett med shunar” (full of boys), while in *Elixir* a superlativised use with adjectives is attested, as in “fett med äcklit” (very disgusting) and “fett med dåligt” (very bad) (2015, 12, 13; 37). In Swedish, *fett* (fat) only works as an adjective, while in MS it also serves an adverbial and adjectival function, replacing *mycket* (very) and proving. Examples are “fet respekt” (much respect) (35), “feta grejerna” (great things), “fett kul” (very funny), “feta låten” (beautiful songs), “fett lack” (very pissed off), “fet flax” (a lot of luck), “fett många” (a lot), “feta knasare” (great trouble-makers) (15-18, 22). In this case, the use of *fett* is semantically expanded, taking on a positive meaning. Another example of adjectives used positively and in a superlative sense is the construction *värsta* + adj. or noun, as in “värsta knasarna” (worst trouble-makers), “värsta skrattanfall” (very loud laughter), “värsta knäckarna” (the toughest crackers), “värsta söt” (very beautiful), “värsta tönt” (very silly) (14, 20, 22).³⁹ The use of *keff* with adjective function is also attested, occurring six times in the collection, confirming its meaning in the sentences “jag gick in sängen var keff bäddad” (2015, 21),⁴⁰ and “okej jag vet jag [...] var keff” (2015, 25).⁴¹

35 “Eh yo bro, what’s up, don’t you say hi anymore, what the hell yo, are you getting fancy?”.

36 “If you are [scared] back down now”.

37 “Bollen took it and left”.

38 “If you did it then we can steal”.

39 As demonstrated by Eva Sundgren (1998, 2010), *värsta* has undergone a process of grammaticalisation over time, taking on adverbial and reinforcing functions.

40 “I went in, the bed was badly made”.

41 “Okay, I know I was bad”.

3.4 Foreign Influences not Typical of MS in *Till vår ära*

In addition to MS, Stockholm dialect, Anglisms and Hispanisms not relatable to MS also play an important role in *Till vår ära*. Table 2 shows loanwords from English and Spanish, including those adapted to Swedish morphology.

Table 2 Foreign Influences not Typical of MS in *Till vår ära*

Anglisms	Hispanisms
<i>bitch</i> S (2); <i>dissad</i> A (p. 9); ¹ <i>fuckade upp</i> V (p. 16); ² <i>pieces</i> S (p. 17); <i>skippa</i> V (p. 41) ³	<i>apagera</i> V (p. 50); ⁴ <i>compañeros</i> S (p. 68); <i>conchetumadre</i> E (p. 41); <i>empanadas</i> S (2); <i>kaminera</i> V (p. 50); ⁵ <i>lija</i> V (p. 51); ⁶ <i>oja</i> S (p. 50); ⁷ <i>venceremos</i> V (6)
1 Adjectival participle from <i>to dis/diss</i> . In the text, the verb takes the typical Swedish ending – <i>ad</i> to create adjectival participles of non-neutrum gender (cf. Sjödin 2017, 38).	
2 Past tense form of <i>to fuck up</i> . In the text, the verb takes the typical past tense – <i>de</i> ending from the first group verbs, using <i>upp</i> as in English.	
3 Morphological adaptation of <i>to skip</i> . SAOB attests the same meaning (cf. https://www.saob.se/artikel/?unik=S_04117-0043.lxLy&pz=5).	
4 Hispanism declined in – <i>era</i> (typical loanwords ending) from <i>apagar</i> (to turn off).	
5 Hispanism declined in – <i>era</i> from <i>caminar</i> (to walk).	
6 Non-existent word in Swedish, possibly adapted from the Spanish verb <i>lijar</i> (to sand down), conjugated with the typical Swedish infinite suffix – <i>a</i> .	
7 Non-existent word in Swedish, possibly adapted from the Spanish noun <i>ojo</i> (eye), mixed with the Swedish <i>öga</i> .	

The presence of loanwords allows us to observe a dynamic language that, in a monolingual flow, resorts to foreign elements. An example of Anglisms is “pieces in *Borta i tankar*, in which Felipe tells Julia about his graffiti: “om du hade [...] sett våra pieces du hade säkert gillat” (2015, 17),⁴² “Pieces” replaces common Swedish terms such as *graffiti* or *stycken* (literally ‘pieces’) as it is probably more common to an international jargon. In *Sakers riktiga namn*, the noun “truism” is not reputed loanword, as it is now an established entry in the SAOB, in use since at least 1848:⁴³ “men vissa saker måste upprepas, även om det numera är en truism att återge vad han vid ett tillfälle sade” (2015, 45).⁴⁴ Not only single words, but also cases of entire sentences given in English in intra-sentential CS are attested, as in *Song for my father*: “Ja, jag tänkte det. Men du kan få den. A pleasure doing

42 “If you had [...] seen our pieces, you would have surely liked them”.

43 Cf. <https://www.saob.se/artikel/?seek=truism&pz=2>.

44 “but some things have to be repeated, even if it is now a truism to repeat what he once said”.

business with you" (2015, 73).⁴⁵ Concerning Hispanisms, we see how in "Jag sa din jävla fitthuve idiot conchetumadre och han sa ja ja men jålp mej nu istället" (41),⁴⁶ Leiva Wenger switches to Spanish to emphasise the narrator's high emotional involvement (the switch concerns a swearword in Spanish). Well-known terms from Chilean cultural, political and culinary traditions are found in the collection, such as *compañeros*, *empanadas* and *venceremos* (the latter linked to the politically engaged music of Víctor Jara), through which Leiva Wenger seems to establish a personal (and emotional) contact with Chile. In addition to these, there are also several Hispanisms, which are morpho-phonetically integrated into Swedish: *apagera*, *kaminera*,⁴⁷ *lija* and *oja*, all occurring in *Sakers riktiga namn*: "Kulås i en oja när de kaminerade och apagerade ljuset [...] Du opåar mig verkligen. kommer du lija en öpa? [...] Zaqzaq, zaqwertyuop" (2015, 51).⁴⁸

In what may seem a meaningless linguistic action, we can discern Leiva Wenger's attempt to emphasise the way speakers creatively exploit the fluidity of linguistic boundaries by negotiating and challenging social and cultural boundaries (cf. Garrett 2004, 55). However, terms such as *Kulås*, *oja*, *opåa*, *lija*, and *öpa* appear as *hapax legomena*, upon which any monolingual reader would simply place a *crux desperationis*. While some theoretical speculation and intuition might suggest that *oja* could be a Hispanism for *öga* (eye), *lija* an adaptation of the Spanish *lijar* (to sand down), and *opåa* a privative version of *vara på* (often shortened to *påa*, i.e. 'to get sexually excited'), there seems to be no plausible explanation for the meaning of the nouns *Kulås* and *öpa*, at the moment. These dialogues in *Sakers riktiga namn* reveal language as an exclusive system, without providing solutions or clues, lexicalising Hispanisms and using words that destabilise the monolingual balances of the text.

For that matter, the incomprehensibility of such terms is also acknowledged by the narrator himself, who points out the meaninglessness of the dialogues between the main characters Daniel and Laura: "Vad allt detta betyder är än så länge inte känt. En andra utredning kommer förhoppningsvis att kunna ge oss svaret nästa

45 "Yes, I thought so. But you can have it. *A pleasure doing business with you*".

46 "I said you fucking cunt-headed idiot conchetumadre and he said yes yes but help me now instead".

47 Note that SAOB reports the verb *inkamminera*, which was brought from Italian via German (from the seventeenth century) and defined as 'to set off', 'to launch'. (cf. <https://www.saob.se/artikel/?seek=inkamminera&pz=6>).

48 "*Kulås* in one eye when we walked and turned off the light. [...] You really make me unexcited. Will you sand down an *öpa*? [...] Zaqzaq, zaqwertyuop". Given their untranslatability, *Kulås* and *öpa* are identical in translation.

höst, även om sannolikheten för det är försvinnande liten” (2015, 51).⁴⁹ Be it group or individual language, elements from MS, English, Spanish or an invented vocabulary that re-elaborates Swedish, the effect is the same: to define one’s identity by distinguishing oneself through the multiple forms of multilingual communication (Heith 2004, 6-7). Typical and non-typical MS loanwords are resources that unplug the traditional ties between language and ethnicity (Yıldız 2012, 198), expanding the expressive boundaries of Swedish. This is perhaps the reason why Swedish *bror/brorsan* does not have the same confidentiality as Turkish *kardash*, or that the use of *vad fan* (what the hell) does not have the same emphasis as Spanish *conchetumadre*.

3.5 Creative Compounds and New-Words in *Till vår ära*

Below are listed *Till vår ära*’s lexical new-word, mostly made up of unusual and original compounds: the verb *fitta sej* (2015, 9) and the nouns *keffmat* (2015, 37),⁵⁰ *kulås* (2015, 50),⁵¹ *svennebrudar* (2015, 36),⁵² *svergekillar* (2015, 36),⁵³ *öpa* (2015, 51),⁵⁴ *zaqwertyuop* (13 hits), which we divide into resemantisations and novel compositions. We speak of resemantisations in the case of the verb *fitta sig* (to back down) from the noun *fitta* (vagina): “bara snudd och aldrig på samma ställe, den som fittar sej är ute” (2015, 9).⁵⁵ Due to its low frequency and the abundance of more popular synonyms, *fitta sig* poses some translation problems: it is literally translatable to ‘to cunt’, but considering that Felipe is disqualified from the challenge for backing down, we infer from the context that the sense of *fitta sig* is different than its literal meaning. Further new formations with clear meaning are *keffmat*, *svennebrudar*, and *svergekillar*, all occurring in *Elixir*. *Keffmat* is composed of the adjective *keff* and the noun *mat* (food), relating to the poor quality of food at school (2015, 37). *Svennebrudar* and *svergekillar* are synthetic compounds replacing the analytical but more correct *svenska brudar* (Swedish girls) and *svenska killar* (Swedish boys). The use of *Sverige* as a prefix is unusual, which is why *svergekillar*, a graphically improper rendering of *Sverigekillar* (lit. Sweden boys) applies as a neoformation, in which *sverge* (Sweden)

49 “What all this means is not yet known. A second investigation will hopefully be able to give us the answer next autumn, although the likelihood of that is vanishingly small”.

50 “Bad food”.

51 Term not found in any source and still with a mysterious meaning.

52 Literally ‘Swede-women’.

53 *Sverge* is a misspelt rendering of *Sverige* (Sweden). Hence, literally, ‘Sweden-men’.

54 Other terms that, like *Kulås*, find neither attestation nor valid translation.

55 “Only a touch and never in the same place, the one who gives up is out”.

replaces the demonym *svensk* (Swedish). *Kulås*, *öpa* and *zaqwertyuop* have already been discussed in the previous section. These elements can also be treated as neologisms, although they are, as mentioned, obscure and, thus, untranslated.

To conclude this chapter, multilingualism as it is presented in Leiva Wenger not only resists its minor status but rather exploits it. It refuses to obey the constraints of a variety judged as standard to artistic purposes. Encompassing both MS-typical elements of the first two stories and the more unconventional ones of the following four, Leiva Wenger's intricate linguistic system enables him to detach from the literary canon and craft a text that resonates with readers both within and beyond Sweden – which is deemed significant enough to be published in three editions (2001; 2015; 2023).

As Leiva Wenger roots his Swedish deeply in other languages, he simultaneously exposes it to linguistic contact, refusing to leave the reader in the comfort of an intact and seemingly secure language. In doing so, he deconstructs the assumptions of the monolingual paradigm, which views languages as whole entities naturally tied to a specific group of people.

4 Jonas Hassen Khemiri, *Ett öga rött*

Summary 4.1 Jonas Hassen Khemiri: A Short Profile. – 4.2 *Ett öga rött*. – 4.3 Halim's Repertoire: *Halimska*. – 4.4 Morpho-Syntactic Features in *Ett öga rött*. – 4.5 Lexical Peculiarities in *Ett öga rött*. – 4.5.1 Typical MS Elements in *Ett öga rött*. – 4.5.2 Foreign Influences Not Typical of MS in *Ett öga rött*. – 4.5.3 Creative Compounds and New-Words in *Ett öga rött*.

Two years after Leiva Wenger's debut, Jonas Hassen Khemiri published *Ett öga rött*, known as the first novel, written entirely in MS. Renowned for his peculiar and criticised stylistic and expressive choices, Khemiri was interviewed by Gert Svensson for the newspaper *Dagens Nyheter* in 2004, where he explained his linguistic choices as follows:

Det gäller att våga vidga och förändra språket så att det står i samklang med den berättelse man vill skriva, det har jag lärt mig av Chamoiseau. Jag hade inte kunnat skriva historien om Halim utan att använda Halims språk. Men många har blivit provocerade, och det är intressant. Den svenska identiteten är på väg att förändras, och det gör somliga upprörd. (Khemiri in *Dagens Nyheter* 2004)

You have to dare to expand and change the language so that it matches the story you want to write, that's what I learnt from Chamoiseau. I could not have written Halim's story without using



Halim's language. But many people have been provoked, and that's interesting. The Swedish identity is changing, and that upsets some people.

Khemiri asserts that language must align with the themes one intends to explore: a novel about shifting identity, set against a difficult relationship with Swedishness, requires a language that embraces change and challenges established norms. His reference to the French-speaking writer Patrick Chamoiseau is not coincidental: just as Chamoiseau employs Creole, Khemiri draws on the pidgin-like speech styles of the suburbs (Kotsinas 1994; 2005). However, rather than aiming for a faithful representation of an existing variety, he uses linguistic hybridity to shape Halim's unique idiolect, termed by Khemiri himself *halimska* (halimic) (Khemiri in Dagens Nyheter 2004; cf. Große 2007, 25). While MS in literature typically reflect real sociolects, in *Ett öga rött*, the idiolectic element takes on a distinctive role, where the deliberate artificiality of language enhances the work's sense of authenticity.

In the cultural divulgation series broadcast in 2021 on State television SVT entitled *Mästaren* (The Master), Khemiri presented an episode about literary creativity: this episode features archive interviews in which the author, after writing *Ett öga rött*, claimed:

Jag är inte invandrarförfattare. Jag är född här och uppvuxen i Hornstull. Jag har svårt för tvättäkta Rinkebysvenska, för Halim är inte tvättäkta. Han är faktiskt född i Sverige och han med flit bryter ner sitt eget språk [...]. Han har koll på grammatiska regler, men han väljer själv att göra fel, för att han inte känner sig hemma i det svenska språket. (Khemiri in SVT 2021)

I am not an immigrant writer. I was born here and grew up in Hornstull. I struggle with authentic Rinkeby Swedish, because Halim is not authentic. He was actually born in Sweden and he deliberately breaks down his own language [...]. He knows the grammar rules, but he chooses to make mistakes because he doesn't feel at home in the Swedish language.

In Bourdieuan terms, Halim's language retains a certain symbolic and cultural capital (Große 2007, 29, 34), as it is supposed to work as a means of protest against the hegemonic assimilation planned by Sweden's supposed *Integrationsplan* (Integration plan), an alleged political plot to assimilate immigrants through a massive process,

defined by Halim as *svennefiering* (Swedenification).¹ However, this linguistic identification stands in contrast to the symbolic and cultural capital of the more desirable ‘standard norm’, the language of those Halim dismissively calls *svennar* (Swedes). Through *halimska*, he both subverts and at times deliberately mimics social models, challenging normative representations of Swedishness in which he does not see himself reflected (Große 2007, 34-6; Ciaravolo 2020, 218).² For such subversion to occur, his idiolect must be recognised as legitimate (Große 2007). Therefore, Halim conceptualises the diary as a repository of his being “äktast möjliga” (as authentic as possible), telling his everyday life “rakt på pucken” (straight to the point). Not surprisingly, he is inspired by the Egyptian realist writer Naguib Mahfouz, who “skulle aldrig skriva historier om annan än sig och sin liv” (2003, 13).³

In his diary, there are typical MS traits, morphological and syntactic deviations as well as foreign words that recall the phenomena previously analysed in Leiva Wenger. The works of Leiva Wenger and Khemiri, as explained by Massimo Ciaravolo, allowed MS to move “da una posizione di marginalità a una funzione iconica, fornendo stimoli agli studi sociolinguistici oltre che a quelli letterari” (2020, 218).⁴ However, Halim’s language is not authentic, because Halim himself amplifies his own expressive modes. In fact, as Roger Källström (2005) notes, it appears that neither a young student of Swedish as L2 nor a speaker of MS actually speaks or writes like Halim.

4.1 Jonas Hassen Khemiri: A Short Profile

Born in 1978 in Stockholm to a Tunisian father and a Swedish mother, Khemiri is one of the most renowned prose and theatre authors of Swedish contemporary literature. Although he was born in Sweden and grown up in Hornstull, central Stockholm, Khemiri is often associated with the well-known category of *förortsförfattare* (§ 2.6.1), probably due to his ethnicity, his portrayal of characters with non-European (mostly North-African) origins, and his use of MS repertoires (Trotzig 2005; Gokieli 2017). Khemiri often resorts to such styles as both a creative and provocative means to convey political

1 Defined as the assumption of habits relatable to the ‘average Swede’, or adaptation by immigrants to typically Swedish habits (cf. Agazzi 2015, 242).

2 Although with different features, this language takes on greater significance in Khemiri’s second novel *Montecore*, where Kadir and Abbas Khemiri speak a French-like, international Swedish called *Khemiriska* (Khemiric), an idiolect in which all languages mix to the point that no stranger can understand it.

3 “Would never write stories about anyone but himself and his life”.

4 “From a position of marginality to an iconic function, stimulating both sociolinguistic and literary studies”.

messages (Große 2007; Bassini 2009): code-switching, loanwords, compounds, improper morphological declensions and marked syntax challenge the so-called monolingual paradigm.⁵ Published in 2003 for Norstedts, *Ett öga rött* is his debut novel, which represents the outset of MS use as a literary language in a well-structured way, of which Khemiri has made a founding principle in his subsequent works, above all the novels *Montecore. En unik tiger* (Montecore: The Silence of the Tiger) from 2006 and *Jag ringer mina bröder* (I Call My Brothers) from 2012. However, Khemiri abandoned much of his linguistic experimentalism after publishing *Montecore*, as his later works are characterised by a linguistic standardisation rather than subversion. Khemiri has published further novels, such as *Allt jag inte minns* (Everything I don't remember) (2015), which was awarded the prestigious *Augustpriset*, *Pappaklausulen* (The Family Clause) (2018) and *Systrarna* (The Sisters) (2023). In theatre, Khemiri staged the plays *Invasion!* (Invasion!), *Fem gånger Gud* (God Times Five) (both in 2008), *Vi som är hundra* (The Hundred We Are) (2009), *Apatiska för nybörjare* (Apathy for Beginners) (2011) and *≈ [ungefär lika med]* (≈ [Almost Equal To]) (2014). In addition to novels and dramas, Khemiri also wrote a short story for Novellix in 2015, titled *Så som du hade berättat det för mig (ungefär) om vi hade lärt känna varandra innan du dog* (Just as You Would Have Told It To Me (Almost) If We Had Met Before You Died). Renowned for experimental narrative techniques such as autofiction and a multifocal, fragmented storytelling (Ciaravolo 2019, 895), Khemiri frames the postmigrant condition as a dimension able to portray Swedish society as an arena imbued with issues such as integration, intergenerational relations and structural discrimination (Ciaravolo 2020, 220). Although the labels of *invandrar* – and *förortsförfattare* are contested, Khemiri has legitimised this ascribed position in the cultural and political debate thanks to his literary production, linguistic expressiveness and his political engagement. In fact, the author is also known for his open letter *Bästa Beatrice Ask* (Dear Beatrice Ask), published on the 13th of March 2013 in *Dagens Nyheter*, and addressed to the then Minister of Justice Beatrice Ask, who supported the application of the REVA project (*Rättssäkert och Effektivt Verktällighetsarbete*, Legal Certainty and Effective Enforcement). In force from 2009 to 2014, the REVA project aimed at speeding up the expulsion of illegal residents on Swedish soil through unorthodox, if not discriminatory and skin-colour biased, police controls, which affected a large number

⁵ It is no coincidence that, in her essay *Beyond the Mother Tongue*, Yasemin Yıldız mentions *Ett öga rött*, explicitly defining Khemiri as a post-migrant writer (2012, 180).

of non-White Swedish citizens (Gokieli 2017).⁶ In his letter, Khemiri asked Ask to trade skins for a day to make her understand what it is like to live as a non-white citizen in Sweden. Appealing to Swedish society with “denna helhet, denna samhällskropp, detta vi” (Khemiri 2013a; ‘this totality, this social body, this we’), Khemiri exploited transraciality to dismantle the conformity between Swedishness and whiteness, as well as the deformity between Swedishness and non-whiteness (Gokieli 2017; Hübinette 2019, 281).

4.2 *Ett öga rött*

The novel is written in the form of a diary, narrated in the first person by Halim El Boustani, a teenager of Moroccan origin born in Sweden. It was awarded the *Borås Tidnings Debutantpris* in 2004 as best literary debut and had both a theatre (2004) and film adaptation (2007). *Ett öga rött* is divided into four chapters, during which we follow Halim from the end of his summer holiday to Christmas 2000. The time setting is deduced from Halim’s commentary on a live television broadcast about the outbreak of the second intifada, which occurred on the 28th of September 2000: “På fyrans nyheter i kväll dom berättade om nya effekter av Sharons promenad vid Klippmoskén [...] Det är nya intifadan” (2003, 41).⁷ After the traumatic loss of his mother, Leyla, Halim moves with his father, Otman, from Skärholmen to Södermalm. In his new neighbourhood and in a new school, he finds himself in conflict with his classmates and teachers, in particular with the support teacher Alex.

In his sporadic trips back to Skärholmen, Halim becomes acquainted with Dalanda, an elderly woman of Libyan origin who introduces him to Arab history through a blend of myth and fundamentalist ideology. She gives him a diary in which to record his thoughts, which in a “game of metafiction” (Ciaravolo 2020, 222) becomes the content of the novel itself.⁸ It is probably the intimacy of the contents narrated in first person, as well as the linguistic

⁶ On 27 February 2013, the REVA project was also submitted to a European parliamentary question for ethnic profiling in the Stockholm underground (Europaparlamentet 2013).

⁷ “On TV4 news tonight they talked about new effects of Sharon’s walk at the Dome of the Rock [...] It’s the new Intifada”. ‘Fyrans nyheter’ is translated ‘TV4 news’ because it commonly refers to the Swedish TV channel TV4.

⁸ The diary cover is described as richly decorated in gold with a crescent moon and a star on a red background (2003, 11-12), which are the typical symbols of the Islamic religion. The description strongly recalls the cover of the edition published for Norstedts in 2003, thus reinforcing the idea of a metafictional play.

unicity featuring the whole narrative, to intensify the ambiance of authenticity enveloping Halim's diary.

On the one hand, Dalanda's influence prompts Halim to construct a mythical and fabled image of the Arab world but, on the other hand, her influence affects him insofar as she makes him believe in the threats posed by the *Integrationsplan*. When budget cuts force his school to discontinue Arabic lessons under the State's *hemspråksundervisning* (Home Language Instruction) program, Halim gathers evidence of the plan's existence and starts to trust Dalanda, especially after his father's sarcastic reaction:

"Hallå, hör du inte? Arabiskatimmarna är slut. De säger att det saknas pengar". [...] "Jo... min son... Vad pratar man för språk i... säg... Grekland? Va? Gissa? "Sluta". "Hörde jag grekiska?" Tio poäng. Och... hm... i... Frankrike? Nå? Där gick tiden ut... va? Ja! Tjugo poäng. Franska! Och i Sverige pratar man... nu har du chansen... 10000 kronor om du klarar...". (2003, 25-6)

"Hello, can't you hear? The Arabic lessons are over. They say there's no money". [...] "Well... my son... What language is spoken in... say... Greece? What? Guess?" "Stop". "Did I hear Greek? Ten points. And... um... in... France? Well? Time ran out there... huh? Yep! Twenty points. French! And in Sweden you speak... now you have the chance... 10,000 kronor if you get it right...".

Distorted by Dalanda's alarming suspicions, Halim feels betrayed and sees his Arab identity threatened by Swedish authorities. Moreover, the fact that he is not valued by his father Otman, who meets him with derisive indifference, intensifies Halim's pain caused by the recent loss of his mother. Thus, Halim embarks on a journey of self-discovery where Dalanda serves as a maternal surrogate (Nilsson 2010, 92) and refuge from grief, establishing a relationship from which a comforting fascination with a cultural background deemed superior emerges:

Dalanda kan allt om arabernas historia och det är hon som har berättat det är vi som har bäst filosofer och smartast matematiker och grymmast krigare. Också hon har sagt vi araber är inte som andra blattar utan mera civiliserade. (2003, 11).

Dalanda knows everything about the Arabs' history, and she has explained that we have the best philosophers, the smartest mathematicians and the fiercest warriors. She also said that we Arabs are not like other dark-skinned immigrants, but more civilised.

Throughout the story, the diary bears witness to how the mythologisation of Arab belonging leads Halim to assume polarised ideological positions, placing him in constant conflict with his father. For Halim, society is fundamentally divided into two factions: *svennar* (Swedes) and *blattar* (immigrants). The primary distinction between these groups is racial, as Halim defines a *blatte* as a non-white individual (cf. Hübinette 2019, 118). Identifying himself as a *blatte*, he further distinguishes between two subcategories: *knasare* (hooligan) and *duktighetskille* (diligent boy). However, Halim positions himself beyond these binaries – both between Swedes and immigrants and between hooligans and diligent immigrants – by creating a third, self-assigned category: the *tankesultan* (sultan of thought):

Men idag jag har filosoferat fram det finns också en tredje blattesort som står helt fri och är den som svennarna hatar mest: revolutionsblatten, tankesultanen. Den som ser igenom alla lögner och som aldrig låter sig luras. (2003, 38)

But today I have been philosophising about a third type of immigrant, who is completely free and is the one the Swedes hate the most: The Revolution Immigrant, the Sultan of Thought. The one who sees through all the lies and who never gets fooled.

Following the Manichean schemes based on the principle “One language = One identity”, as Ciaravolo also notes, in his role of Sultan of Thought, Halim “rifiuta sia di assimilarsi in modo acritico e servile agli svedesi (*svennar*), sia di attuare una sterile protesta da teppista (*ligist*)” (2020, 225).⁹ Throughout the first part of the novel, Halim attempts to produce a personal identity with a completed meaning, especially through the linguistic style constructed in his diary, which differs from MS: being neither a *svenne* nor a *blatte*, but a sort of superior being, Halim needs a language that is appropriate to his revolutionary identity. In the second part of the novel, Halim embarks on a deconstruction of the values taught by Dalanda that will lead him – at least in part – to redefine his own position in Swedish society (Lacatus 2008). The conclusion of the novel suggests that his quest will result in a conciliatory affiliation with himself, his father and Alex (Gendolavigna 2021b). From this point of view, *Ett öga rött* can be seen as a coming-of-age novel which signals Halim’s transition from a Manichean and ethnocentric view, where he shares an exoticising view of Arab civilisation, to a more open negotiation of his own identity and its complexity, coming to terms with himself

⁹ “Refuses both to assimilate uncritically and submissively to Swedes (*svennar*) and to engage in a pointless hooligan protest (*ligist*)”.

not only as an heir to Arab culture, but also as Swede who accepts the existence of multiple versions of Swedishness (Nilsson 2010).

4.3 Halim's Repertoire: *Halimska*

Halim's repertoire has been investigated by several scholars, such as Corina Lacatus, who considers Khemiri's *halimska* as the literary attempt to construct a language that overcomes what initially appeared to be irreconcilable dichotomies as a tool in his personal coming-of-age process (2008, 98). When Otman finds out how Halim expresses himself in the diary, he notes that his style has changed compared to the past: "För några år sen pratade du helt perfekt och nu? Ey gussen baxa baxa. Vad håller du på med?" (2003, 215).¹⁰ Halim's excessive use of MS reflects his transitional phase, emphasizing that his language is deliberately constructed. This becomes evident as he adapts his speech to specific characters and contexts throughout the novel, adjusting his style to align with what is perceived as standard in different situations. This shift occurs when he quotes other characters or navigates formal settings where a more refined Swedish feels appropriate. For instance, he adopts an apparently standardized form of Swedish in an episode where he raises money under the pretence of funding a school trip when, in reality, he intends to buy a gun:

Eftersom jag vet hur dom tänker jag använde töntigaste svenneton: "lite tilltugg för att stödja 9B:s klassresa? Tio kronor för en kaka." [...] "Oj, ja absolut. Jag är ny i skolan och ville liksom bara bidra med lite extra till klasskassan. Men i så fall ber jag om ursäkt." För att komma loss jag lånade Alex mesigaste tonfall. (165-6)

Since I know how they think, I used the lamest Swedish accent: "Some snacks to support 9B's class trip? Ten crowns for a cake". [...] "Oh, yes, absolutely. I'm new at school and just wanted to contribute a little extra to the class fund. But in that case, I apologise". To get out of it, I borrowed Alex's cheesiest tone.

In this excerpt, we see how Halim resorts to what he calls "töntigaste svenneton" (the lamest Swedish accent), avoiding the reproduction of broken accent, and showcasing his ability to adjust his language in order to accommodate other characters. It can be argued that Halim wants to pass as a respectable and polite person. However, his

¹⁰ "A few years ago you spoke perfectly and now? Hey chick, fuck fuck. What are you doing?"

parodic mimicry of Swedish could be read as a rhetorical weapon of social critique towards the dominant ideologies according to which, in order to pass as a respectable member of Swedish society, a young guy with migration background must speak perfect Swedish.¹¹

Another instance where Halim resorts to a more refined register is when he addresses the cafeteria council (*matrådet*). He does not report in direct speech what he says, but provides a description of it:

Först jag använde vanliga snacket och sen för att ingen skulle misstolka jag puttade in lite svenneton. Jag föreslog man skulle ha matvecka där det inte bara gavs svennemat utan istället mat från andra länder. (2003, 229)

First I used the common speech and then, so that no one would misinterpret, I put in a bit of Swedish accent. I suggested that we should have a food week where not only Swedish food was given but also food from other countries.

Halim uses the so-called *vanliga snacket* (common speech) adding some *svenneton* (Swedish accent) as part of his communicative repertoire (Rymes 2014). As we can see, depending on the contexts, Halim is able to consciously activate (and perform) specific linguistic and behavioural patterns, which are easily associated with Swedishness. The linguistic contaminations displayed in his *Halimska* are thus complemented by constant metalinguistic reflections. Consider, for example, the excerpt in which Halim guesses several of Alex's answers to a class test and fantasises about making fun of him by alternating two distinct versions of himself: first imagining himself giving him an answer in polite tones, and then one in far more aggressive tones resorting to MS:

Länge under lektionen jag satt och filade på grym förolämpning. Med svenneton: "Oj, jag visste att du inte kunde något om din historia men att du inte heller kunde något om din nutid var en överraskning." Eller kanske blatteversionen: "Du ser, len, jag knäcker gulingar som spelar hiphopparnegrer. Kåkar er som kex". (2003, 111)

During the lesson I sat and thought about a cruel insult. With a Swedish tone: "Wow, I knew you didn't know anything about your history but that you didn't know anything about your present was

11 For similar evidence in more recent (post)migration-related literature, see the novel *Inte din baby* (Not your baby) written by Seluah Alsaati in 2020, on which Rydell and Ganuza (2024, 14) carried out a study on this aspect.

a surprise". Or perhaps the blatte version: "You see, len, I smash gooks who play hip-hop negroes. I chew you up like cookies".

In this sense, Halim's mimicry is not unconscious, as his goal is not to assert his belonging to Swedish society, but rather to reach his own purposes: in the first quotation, Halim fakes this accent to convince people funding the school trip; in the second one, he performs the reliable and polite guy to have his proposal for a multi-ethnic food week accepted; in the third one he displays his ability to perfectly master two slightly different registers. Depending on the situation, Halim is skilled at modulating his register, proving that MS (or his self-developed variant) is not the only language available to him. His usage of different styles is in itself a linguistically and culturally conscious performance that cannot be labelled as a result of ethno-cultural otherness (cf. Jonsson, Franzén, Milani 2020), but rather a process of writing back to the very social construction that, what is generally known as 'standard' Swedish, is an abstract model used by speakers to assess their own and others' language.

This is also demonstrated in another episode, in which Halim comments on his own style when writing a recommendation letter for his father's friend Nourdine, composed "på finaste svenskan så ingen skulle misstänka jag kände Nourdine mer personligt" (2003, 235-6).¹² Curiously, in this episode Halim believes that writing in a rather elegant form of Swedish can reduce the suspicion that he already knows Nourdine. Furthermore, he signs himself as Håkan Kjellman, a made-up and perfectly Swedish-sounding name to give his letter an authoritative and reliable touch. In fact, he notes: "det är konstigt hur annorlunda allt blir bara med lite namnbyte" (235-6),¹³ pointing out that switching to elegant Swedish, and choosing a Swedish name instead of an Arabic one, lends it greater symbolic capital, just as blue eyes and blond hair do in Leiva Wenger's *Elixir*. In doing so, Halim's transit, at least on paper, towards a standardised language, signing himself with a Swedish name, highlights the banality of linguistic and name-giving prestige as powerful tools in the construction of Swedish identity. Furthermore, there are several episodes in which Halim writes in correct Swedish, such as when he reports dialogues in Arabic with Dalanda, providing a sort of translation of service through processes of translational mimesis: "Jo, visst har han berättat, det var bara för länge sen" (2003, 31);¹⁴ "Förut läste han

¹² "In the most elegant Swedish so no one would suspect I knew Nourdine more personally".

¹³ "It is strange how everything changes with just a small name change".

¹⁴ "Yes, he did tell me, it was just a long time ago".

en massa andra böcker. Men nu läser han nästan bara Omar” (31).¹⁵ Both in the transition from *Halimska* to Standard and in the mimesis of Arabic into Swedish, a switching in repertoire is demonstrated that highlights how Halim navigates multiple linguistic landscapes (Behschnitt, Willems 2012, 13).

4.4 Morpho-Syntactic Features in *Ett öga rött*

Drawing on studies about syntax in MS carried out by Natalia Ganuza (2008; 2011), it appears that missing verb-subject inversion is one of the most stereotypical phenomena, both in oral and written production (2008, 96). As Roger Källström (2010) also demonstrates, the lack of verb-subject inversion in writing pertains more to literary multilingualism, particularly in Leiva Wenger and Khemiri’s texts, where syntactic markedness is accentuated in comparison to other authors who use MS in their fiction. The fact that Khemiri writes a novel with systematically marked syntax may have contributed to the judgement that it is a novel entirely written in MS and, therefore, a clear sign of linguistic incompetence (Ganuza 2008, 142). There are countless examples in the novel, including the title, *Ett öga rött*, which literally means ‘One Eye Red’. Moreover, just as in Leiva Wenger’s *Borta i tankar* and *Elixir*, the very first sentence of the incipit contains a V3 structure (verb-at-the-third-place): “Idag det var sista sommarlovsdagen och därför jag hjälpte pappa i affären” (2003, 3), whereby “Idag det var” should have been constructed as “Idag var det”.¹⁶

Halim’s language is also characterised by omissions in the construction of final sentences: “jag behövde åka till stan för köpa böcker” (2003, 3);¹⁷ “för få pappa ute på gatan” (2003, 203),¹⁸ where the preposition *för* is used instead of *för att*. Propositions are omitted also in cases such as “lida sitt slut” instead of “lida mot sitt slut” (coming towards the end) and “han var god humör” instead of “han var på god humör” (he was in a good mood) (2003, 223), where the prepositions *mot* and *på* are missing respectively. Concerning prepositions, deviances also occur through systematic distortions of collocations, resulting in malapropisms such as “eld i lågor” (fire in flames) instead of “eld och lågor” (fire and flames), or “rakt på pucken” (honestly),

¹⁵ “He used to read a lot of other books. But now he almost only reads Omar”.

¹⁶ “Today was the last day of the summer holidays and therefore I helped dad in the shop”.

¹⁷ “I had to go to the city centre to buy books”. Literally transposed into English, the sentence reads “I had to go to city centre for buy books”.

¹⁸ “to get dad out on the street”.

resulting as a mixed up form of “rakt på sak” (straightforward) and “raka pucker” (plainly, unadorned) (2003, 30, 13).¹⁹

In *Ett öga rött* we also see a peculiar declension of verbs, as in the case of *riva* (to tear), declined in the weak participle (*rivda*) instead of the strong declension *rivna* (2003, 151). In other cases, Halim mistakes adverbs of negation, as in “Jag tänker ingenting på Marit” (lit. I think nothing of Marit) (2003, 163), using *ingenting* (nothing) instead of *inte* (not/don’t).

4.5 Lexical Peculiarities in *Ett öga rött*

Contrary to the claims that his vocabulary is poor, Khemiri himself stated: “Halim är inte okunnig. Han konstruerar sig själv med hjälp av sin halimska, han expanderar svenskan, krokas till den och klamrar sig fast vid skevheterna för att försöka hitta sin identitet” (Khemiri in Dagens Nyheter 2004).²⁰ Through his *halimska*, Khemiri distances himself from MS, with which he only minimally converges, as the former is an idiolect constructed in a literary text, while the latter is a set of languages recorded in everyday life (Große 2007, 25). The effect of *halimska* works as a caricature of the salient features of MS in which the lexical boundaries of Swedish are expanded and deterritorialised.²¹ Quoting Anne Grydehøj:

Halim’s conscious choice to break the grammatical rules of Swedish [...] forms part of his rebellion against the pressure placed upon him to become Swedish and forget his Arab roots. Halim’s creative use of broken syntax and invented vocabulary is an example of a subversive productivity arising from imposed cultural constraints. (2020, 150)

In the novel, there are numerous instances in which elements from Swedish slang and foreign languages appear, with a strong presence of loanwords, resemantisations and neologisms. The vocabulary of the novel is analysed below in three sub-sections: typical MS elements, non-typical elements and new-words.

19 These linguistic behaviours coincide with findings from a study by Julia Prentice and Emma Sköldberg (2010), in which young speakers of Swedish as an L2 often recombine conventionally used figurative expressions.

20 “Halim is not ignorant. He constructs himself using his Halimish, he expands Swedish, hooks it and clings to the obliquities trying to find his identity”.

21 This concept of deterritorialisation is perhaps most visible in Khemiri’s second novel, *Montecore*. As Ciaravolo notes, in *Montecore*, the figure of Kadir frenchifies Swedish with a “linguistic destabilisation and carnivalisation” (2021, 211) that makes the Swedish used in the text hybridised.

4.5.1 Typical MS Elements in *Ett öga rött*

Typical MS words and expressions are frequent in the novel.²² These items are shown in Table 3, divided by parts of speech:

Table 3 Typical MS Elements in *Ett öga rött*

Nouns	Verbs	Adjectives / Adverbs	Interjections
<i>aina</i> (7) (b, c, d); ¹	<i>axa</i> (11) (b, c, d); ¹⁰	<i>fet</i> + noun (4) (b, c, d); ²¹	<i>ey</i> (3) (b, c, d); ³¹
<i>bangare</i> (p. 116) (b, c, d); ²	<i>baxa</i> (4) (a, b, c, d); ¹¹	<i>fett</i> + adj. (45) (b, c, d); ²²	<i>inshallah</i> (2) (b, c); ³²
<i>flous</i> (14) (b, c, d); ³	<i>baza</i> (6) (b, c, d); ¹²	<i>keff</i> (12) (a, b, c, d); ²³	<i>jalla</i> (3) (b, c, d); ³³
<i>guss</i> (64) (a, b, c, d); ⁴	<i>beckna</i> (b, c, d); ¹³	<i>lack</i> (3) (b, c, d); ²⁴	<i>sho</i> (p. 177) (b, c, d); ³⁴
<i>jidder</i> (9) (a, b, c); ⁵ <i>knas</i> (19) (a, b, c, d); ⁶	<i>gitta(-ish)</i> (20) (b, c, d); ¹⁴	<i>maricon</i> (2) (b, c, d); ²⁵	<i>walla</i> (2) (b, c, d); ³⁵
<i>knasare</i> (2) (b, c, d); ⁷	<i>jiddra</i> (11) (a, b, c, d); ¹⁵	<i>maxad</i> + adj./noun (13) (b, c); ²⁶ <i>skum</i> (19) (a, b, d); ²⁷	
<i>len</i> (4) (b, c, d); ⁸	<i>kapish</i> (p. 202) (b); ¹⁶	<i>tjock</i> + adj./noun (19) (b, c, d); ²⁸ <i>total</i> + adj./noun (22) (b); ²⁹ <i>värsta</i> + adj./adv./noun (36) (b, c, d); ³⁰	
<i>shunne</i> (20) (b, c, d); ⁹	<i>lacka ur</i> (7) (a, b, c); ¹⁷		
	<i>planka</i> (5) (a, b); ¹⁸		
	<i>spela bonanza</i> (2) (b, c, d); ¹⁹		
	<i>spela mangas</i> (b, c, d); ²⁰		

¹ Cf. Leiva Wenger 2015; Sattarvandi 2008.

² Cf. Leiva Wenger 2015; Sattarvandi 2008.

³ Variant of *floos* (cf. Leiva Wenger 2015). Occurring in three compounds.

⁴ Variant of *guz* (cf. Leiva Wenger 2015). Occurring in eight compounds. Cf. Bakhtiari 2012.

⁵ Noun from Romani, from the Sanskrit root *jīv* (to live) (Carling, Lindell, Ambrazaitis 2013, 177). Attested in Swedish since 1970s (cf. <https://svenska.se/so/?sok=jidder&pz=1>). Attested in Kotsinas as ‘quarrel’ (1998, 93). Attested also as agent noun *jiddrare* (quarreller) (Doggelito, Kotsinas 2004, 95).

⁶ Troublesome situation. Attested in three compounds; cf. Leiva Wenger 2015.

⁷ Cf. Leiva Wenger 2015.

⁸ Cf. Leiva Wenger 2015.

⁹ Occurring in one case in the compound *knarkarshunnar* (drug dealers, literally drug guys) (2003, 84).

¹⁰ Cf. Leiva Wenger 2015; Bakhtiari 2012.

¹¹ Cf. Leiva Wenger 2015; Sattarvandi 2008.

¹² Occurring also in the compound *bazmusik* (lit. sex music) (2003, 170). Cf. Leiva Wenger 2015; Sattarvandi 2008.

¹³ Occurring twice in the compound *nybecknade* (recently sold). Cf. Leiva Wenger 2015; Sattarvandi 2008.

¹⁴ Occurring in one case as *gittish* (2003, 98). Cf. Leiva Wenger 2015; Sattarvandi 2008.

¹⁵ Verbal form from the aforementioned *jidder* (see footnote 205). Attested as ‘to talk shit’. Attested by SAOB since 1994; in Carling, Lindell, Ambrazaitis as *jiddra*, *jìdra*, *jida*, *jidda* as ‘to live’ and ‘make noise’, from the same aforementioned Sanskrit root *jīv* (2013, 177). In MS, the verb undergoes semantic shift, taking on the meaning of ‘to quarrel’. (Kotsinas 1998, 93; Doggelito, Kotsinas 2004, 95). Cf. Sattarvandi 2008.

¹⁶ From Italian *capire* (to understand); in Doggelito, Kotsinas attested as *capish* (2004, 53).

²² Measuring the frequency of typical MS elements in relation to the total number of words used in the novel would be very interesting. However, this kind of research is beyond the scope of the present work.

- 17 Attested by SAOB since the seventeenth century as ‘to seal’, ‘to stick’, but also ‘to blame’, (cf. https://svenska.se/saob/?id=L_0001-0050.zvVI&pz=5). When used with the preposition *ur* (out) its meaning becomes ‘to fly into rage’ (Kotsinas 1998, 117; Doggelito, Kotsinas 2004, 102; <http://www.slangopedia.se/ordlista/?ord=lacka+ur>).
- 18 Occurs in one case as *plankish* (2003, 30). Attested by SAOB since 1885 meaning ‘entering an event by evading controls’. Today it is used almost only for ‘jumping the turnstyles’ (cf. Kotsinas 1998, 53; Doggelito, Kotsinas 2004, 53). *Planka* should not be confused with the homograph noun, meaning ‘plank’.
- 19 Cf. Leiva Wenger 2015.
- 20 Cf. Leiva Wenger 2015; Sattarvandi 2008.
- 21 Cf. Leiva Wenger 2015.
- 22 Cf. Leiva Wenger 2015; Sattarvandi 2008.
- 23 Cf. Leiva Wenger 2015; Sattarvandi 2008.
- 24 Cf. Leiva Wenger 2015; Bakhtiari 2012.
- 25 Cf. Leiva Wenger 2015.
- 26 It requires an adjective in seven cases, a noun in six; attested as ‘strong’, ‘big’, ‘fast’, ‘good’ in Kotsinas 1998, 129. Cf. <http://www.slangopedia.se/ordlista/?ord=maxat>.
- 27 Occurring in one case as *skummish* (2003, 134). Cf. Leiva Wenger 2015; Bakhtiari 2012.
- 28 It requires twelve times an adjective, one time a noun. Cf. Leiva Wenger 2015; Sattarvandi 2008.
- 29 It requires four times an adjective, sixteen times a noun, and two times one verb; Kotsinas attested it as a strengthening form for adjectives and nouns (‘totally’) (1998, 223).
- 30 It requires two times an adjective (*värsta kameleontiskt* and *värsta rasisten*, 2003, 102, 241), 34 times a noun. Cf. Leiva Wenger 2015; Bakhtiari 2012.
- 31 Cf. Leiva Wenger 2015; Bakhtiari 2012.
- 32 Arabic expression for ‘if God will’ (Doggelito, Kotsinas 2004, 90): <http://www.slangopedia.se/ordlista/?ord=inshallah>; Cf. Bakhtiari 2012.
- 33 Arabic word meaning ‘let’s go’, ‘hurry up’; cf. Kotsinas 1998, 92; Doggelito, Kotsinas 2004, 92.
- 34 Used by Halim in the greeting *sho len*. Cf. Leiva Wenger 2015; Sattarvandi 2008.
- 35 Cf. Leiva Wenger 2015; Bakhtiari 2012.

Concerning nouns, the elements in Table 3 show a strong coincidence with the more classical MS terms: words such as *guss* stand out for a high frequency compared to other rather frequent terms such as *floos*, *knas* and *shunne*. Most of these words constitute a common vocabulary with Leiva Wenger and Sattarvandi’s works. Verbs also show little change compared to *Till vår ära* [tab. 1] where elements such as *axa*, *baxa*, *baza*, *beckna*, *planka*, *spela bonanza* and *spela mangas* reinforce the constitution of a shared, intertextual lexical ground. Compared to Leiva Wenger, however, Khemiri’s novel is distinguished by the use of verbs such as *lacka ur*, *kapish* and *jiddra*. Concerning adjectives, Khemiri shows many similarities with those used by Leiva Wenger and Sattarvandi, especially *fett* + adj./noun, *keff* + adj., *tjock* + adj./noun, and *värsta* + adj./adv./noun. *Fett* + adj. is the most recurrent structure in *Ett öga rött* (45 hits), followed by *värsta* + adj./adv./noun (36 hits). Consider constructions such as “*värsta horror*”, “*värsta ugglan*”, “*värsta trimmade mopeden*”, “*värsta kamaleontiskt*” (nastiest whores; most horrible owl; worst

rigged moped; awfully chameleonic) (2003, 94, 95, 102), in which the superlative form *värsta* is used as a strengthening agent in both positive and negative senses (Sundgren 2010, 303). It is worth noting that, when translating constructions involving *värsta*, depending on the nouns or adjectives that follow, *värsta* in English is almost never translated with a simple (and easily predictable) 'worst'. Rather, it takes on a wide variety of meanings, depending on the nouns that determine the construction.

Differing from the other authors, Khemiri employs the adjective *total* as a superlative prefix, e.g. *totalhora* (total whore) (2003, 192) and *totalotagbara* (totally uncatchable) (2003, 212). Strengtheners also include *maxad* (maximised), e.g. *maxad mjuka* (maximally fluffy) (2003, 210). Even with regard to interjections, the novel differs not so much from *Till vår ära* [tab. 1], except for the Arabic interjections *inshallah*, *jalla* and *beshuaya* spelled in dialogues in Arabic between Dalanda and Halim as clichés of selective reproduction (Sternberg 1981, 225): "Just precis. Jag vet att med Allahs hjälp kommer du snart kunna skriva arabiska lika bra som du pratar. Inshallah!" Jag svarade också 'Inshallah'" (2003, 9);²³ "Hon såg inte på mig, bara tog tag i Dalanda och sa: 'Jalla, det är dags att gå hem'. Eftersom jag tyckte hon var lite respektlös som avbrutit mitt i samtal jag sa 'Beshuaya, beshuaya' men tjejen verkade inte höra" (2003, 24).²⁴ One of the ways in which Khemiri tries to lend a touch of (fake) authenticity to *Halimska* is the overabundance of *-ish* occurrences to build adjectives. Consider the following excerpt: "Men, om hon är så grymmish braish som du säger varför hon är inte kändish?" (2003, 93),²⁵ where *grymmish braish* replaces *grymt bra* (awesome, literally 'terrifically good'), while *kändish* replaces *känd* (famous). Further *-ish* occurrences are in adjectives such as *skummish* (from *skum*, strange), *lögnish* (from *lögn*, lie, instead of *lögnaktig*, mendacious), and *klokish* (from *klok*, clever). Consistent with its use in MS, *-ish* also acquires a verbal function in Halim's speech: *gitta* becomes *gittish* (to leave, to run away), *ragga på* becomes *raggish på* (to catch up). As indicated above, *-ish*, recurs in everyday speech in very specific and well-motivated cases, such as camouflaging words or actions referred to crime and/or violence. In Khemiri, on the contrary, the suffix expands its use, joining common sense words in a symbolic-aesthetic rather than referential function. Indeed, the overabundance of *-ish* words in Halim's speech is a clear

23 "Exactly. I know that with Allah's help you will soon be able to write Arabic as well as you speak it. Inshallah!". I also replied 'Inshallah'".

24 "She didn't look at me, I just grabbed Dalanda and said: 'Jalla, it's time to go home.' As I thought she was a bit disrespectful interrupting in the middle of conversation I said 'Beshuaya, beshuaya' but the lady seemed not to hear".

25 "But, if she is as awesome as you say why isn't she famous?". The literal translation would be: "But, if she is grimly goodish as you say, why isn't she a celebrityish?".

example of what Ben Rampton defined *stylization* (§ 1.2.1), i.e. the employment of specific words or expressions by which a speaker, here Halim, shapes an iconic feature producing “specially marked and often exaggerated representations of languages [...] and styles that lie outside their own habitual repertoire” (2009, 149).

4.5.2 Foreign Influences Not Typical of MS in *Ett öga rött*

In addition to the elements analysed, *Ett öga rött*’s vocabulary also consists of foreign influences, presented here, for their limited quantity, without using tables. Many of these words are part of the everyday language or stand for individual foreignisms associated with a certain culture (Anglisms and Arabicisms above all). These do not include the noun *kalabalik* (four hits), which SAOB attests in Swedish since 1713, which is widely used in everyday language.²⁶

There are lesser-known Arabicisms such as *tsbahallsher* (good night, three hits), occurring in Arabic dialogues between Halim and Otman, highlighting other instances of selective reproduction. Additionally, we also find nouns for food and traditions, such as *abolit djadj* (2003, 73), *samak mashwi*, *tabboule*, *homus*, *kafta mahlije* (2003, 247). Although these words do not contribute to the discussion under investigation, they represent further multilingual traces and cultural references to other traditions and places, which contribute to deterritorialise the reader from exclusively Swedish coordinates. The novel provides entire dialogues in English, such as in the moments when Alex proposes Halim to do some language training by having conversations in English: “Fattar du hur grymt bra det här är? Är du med mig, mannen? Va? Are you with me? Don’t front, man, you bezzer recognize!” (2003, 95);²⁷ “Jag fattade att det var du typ i september. Just for your information” (207);²⁸ “Men what the fuck man! Är du seriös nu? Driver du med mig?” (208).²⁹ Another example is “Jag trodde vi hade en deal du och jag?” (206).³⁰

However, there are also individual loanwords adapted to Swedish morphology: consider the verb *rusha* (2003, 144; ‘to rush’), or *dissa* (to dis/diss), from which Halim also derives compounds such as

26 Cf. the link: <https://svenska.se/tre/?sok=kalabalik&pz=2>.

27 “Do you realise how awesome this is? *Are you with me*, man? Huh? *Are you with me? Don’t front, man, you bezzer recognise*”. Here and in the following footnotes 241 and 242, the English text has been italicised in order to separate the linguistic content translated from the content untranslated.

28 “I realised it was you like in September. *Just for your information*”.

29 “*But what the fuck man!* Are you serious now? Are you making fun of me?”.

30 “I thought we had a deal you and I?”.

disssrim (dissing rhyme) (2003, 93), *fetdiss* (big dissing) (2003, 109) and *hårddiss* (heavy dissing, two hits). These examples also indicate the context in which the characters in the corpus act: a ‘glocal’ context, where the languages of immigrant groups play a dominant role locally, combining with the global vehicular language: English.³¹

4.5.3 Creative Compounds and New-Words in *Ett öga rött*

One of the most interesting elements in Khemiri is lexical creativity. Examples are given in Table 4, divided by part of speech.

Table 4 Creative Compounds and New-Words in *Ett öga rött*

Nouns	Verbs	Adjectives/Adverbs
<i>bazmusik</i> (p.170); ¹	<i>rasthängla</i> (p. 44); ³⁰	<i>cp-miffo</i> ; ³² <i>joksostor</i> ; ³³
<i>blattefråga</i> (p. 76); ²	<i>totalknäcka</i> (2); ³¹	<i>miljötönt</i> (p. 230); ³⁴
<i>blattemärken</i> (p. 36); ³		<i>servitörtönt</i> (p. 166); ³⁵
<i>blattesort</i> (3); ⁴		
<i>blatteversion</i> (p. 111); ⁵		
<i>drottningguss</i> (p. 184); ⁶		
<i>falskguss</i> (pp. 160-161); ⁷		
<i>fikaflous</i> (p. 36); ⁸		
<i>flouskontrakt</i> (p. 249); ⁹		
<i>flousstrategi</i> (p. 163); ¹⁰		
<i>fulguss</i> (p. 38); ¹¹		
<i>ghettoguss</i> (2); ¹²		
<i>ghettotuttar</i> (p. 97); ¹³ <i>gussilago</i>		
(p. 107); ¹⁴ <i>horstefan</i> (p. 192); ¹⁵		
<i>hästsvanssnubben</i> (p. 129); ¹⁶		
<i>knashot</i> (p. 161); ¹⁷		
<i>knasrisk</i> (p. 172); ¹⁸		
<i>ligistblatte</i> (3); ¹⁹		
<i>lyxsvennarna</i> (3); ²⁰		
<i>Magdatönten</i> (p. 151); ²¹		
<i>mickesnubben/-killen</i> (5); ²²		
<i>mulattguss</i> (p. 95); ²³		
<i>revolutionsblatte(filosof)</i> (3); ²⁴		

31 Glocal describes the process in which global and local are mutually connected and co-constitutive (Featherstone, Lash, Robertson 1995).

svennealkis (p. 98);
svennefamiljer (p. 61);
svennefittor (p. 49);
svenneföräldrar (p. 108);
svenneguss (p. 33); svennekillar
(p. 157); svennekund (p. 96);
svenneland (p. 104); svennemat
(2); svennepappa (5);
svennepjäs (2); svennepolitiker
(2);
svenneroll (2);
svennesjuan (p. 230);
svennesnack (p. 215);
svennesnubbar (pp.
175-6); svennesort (p.
37); svenneton(fall) (5);
svenne-tv (p. 35); svennevis
(p. 36);²⁵ teaterguss (p.
251);²⁶ Thailandguss
(p. 227);²⁷ totalknas (p.
125);²⁸ tönstvennefilosof (p.
80);²⁹ vimmelkanter (p. 143);²⁹

- 1 Sex(ual) music.
- 2 Immigrants' question.
- 3 Immigrant Brands.
- 4 Kind of immigrant.
- 5 Immigrant version.
- 6 Literally 'queen girl'.
- 7 Literally 'false girl'.
- 8 Money for coffee.
- 9 Literally 'money contract' (remunerative contract).
- 10 Strategy to make money.
- 11 'Ugly girl'. Instead of the analytic form *ful guss*, Halim creates one compound.
- 12 Literally 'ghetto girl'.
- 13 Ghetto boobs.
- 14 Pun between *guss* and *tussilago*, scientific name for coltsfoot, a kind of herbaceous plant.
- 15 Literally 'whore-Stefan'. Compound formed by *hora* (whore, shortened *hor*) and by the name Stefan.
- 16 Literally, 'the ponytail guy'.
- 17 Trouble threat.
- 18 Risk for problems.
- 19 Criminal immigrant.
- 20 Luxury Swedes.
- 21 Literally 'Dumb-Magda'.

-
- 22** In four cases it recurs as *mickesnubbe*, in one *mickekille*. Halim combines the proper noun Micke (Mikael) with *snubbe* and *kille*, which refer to a male person, in this case translating as Mike-dude or Mike-guy.
-
- 23** Here too, as in the case of *fulguss*, Halim summarises the concept ‘mulatto girl’ in one word.
-
- 24** In two cases occurs as *revolutionsblatte*, in one *revolutionsblattefilosof*.
-
- 25** From *svennealkis* to *svennevis*, in order: ‘drunk Swede’; ‘Swedish families’; ‘fucking Swedes’; ‘Swedish parents’; ‘Swedish girl’; ‘Swedish guys’; ‘Swedish customer’; ‘country of Swedes’; ‘Swedish food’; ‘Swedish dad’; ‘Swedish politician’; ‘Swedish play’; ‘Swedish role’; ‘the Swedish of the seventh [class]’; lit. ‘Swedish speech’ (i.e. Swedish language); ‘Swedish guys’; ‘Swedish kind’; ‘Swedish accent’; ‘Swedish TV’; ‘Swedish way’.
-
- 26** Literally, ‘theater girl’.
-
- 27** Literally, ‘Thailand girl’. Khemiri shows affinities with the expression *svergekillar* attested in Leiva Wenger (2015: 36), where the structure ‘country name’ + ‘boy’ or ‘girl’ shapes ethnonyms.
-
- 28** Total chaos.
-
- 29** Compound formed by the adjective *tönt* + nouns *svenne* and *filosof*. Literally ‘stupid Swedish philosopher’.
-
- 30** Noun variant of the adjective *vimmelkantig* (‘dizzy’): “På morgonen jag vaknade med hela skallen full av vimmelkanter” (“In the morning I woke up with a head full of vertigo”) (2003, 143).
-
- 31** Make out during the break.
-
- 32** Totall distroy.
-
- 33** Literally ‘abortion with cerebral paralysis’. *Cp* is an abbreviation for *cerebral pares* (cerebral paralysis), while *miffo* is a slang abbreviation for *missfoster* (abortion) (Sjödén 2017, 121). Kotsinas attests to 21 hits with *cp* + adj./noun, in which *cp* serves as a strengthening expression, but none of these bear the *cp-miffo* composition, which was apparently coined by Halim (1998, 29-30). Cf. Bakhtiari 2012; Sattarvandi 2008.
-
- 34** Literally ‘Jokso-sized’.
-
- 35** Literally, ‘environment-nerd’; the term describes a student obsessed with environmental issues.
-
- 36** Literally, ‘dumb-waiter’.
-

As logically expected, compared to verbs and adjectives or adverbs, the category of nouns is the richest in this table. First of all, we observe creative strategies for different compounds with rather recurrent prefixes or suffixes: we can see the repeated use of *blatte* – and *svenne* – as prefixes, despite the fact that these are semantically independent nouns, usually not used in compounds. Of particular interest is the toponym *svenneland* (country of the Swedes) which replaces the official name *Sverige*.

While Halim also invents new words such as *gussilago* and *vimmelkanter* (cf. Leonard 2011), most of the terms attested as new-words are creative compounds, by which Halim tries to explain more complex concepts with minimal effort: *flousstrategi*, *håstsvanssnubben*, *miljötönt*, *svennesjuan*. Among the adjectival

neologisms in the table, one compound that deserves special consideration is *joksostor*, mentioned in the sentence “Curre stod längre bort och gömde joksostora kroppen bakom liten björk” (2003, 47).³² Exploring sources to understand the meaning of this compound, we notice that the word-prefix *jokso* is neither found in dictionaries, glossaries, scientific studies, nor in online sources. Further investigation into news reports from the past decades in Stockholm’s suburban communities has led to the person, from which the adjective would originate: Dragan Joksović, known as Jokso, a famous Serbian mafia gangster based in Sweden, murdered in 1998. Joksović was famous for his imposing physical size, which made him a feared street fighter (Aftonbladet 1998; Sveriges Radio 2018). Hence Halim’s expression *joksostor*, an uncommon adjective and thus probably a veritable neologism, which is found exclusively in *Ett öga rött*.³³

32 “Curre stood further away, hiding the Jokso-sized body behind small birch”.

33 It is not yet known whether this invention originated from MS speakers. The lack of occurrences in the sources known to this study suggest that it was an invention of Khemiri, who in fact never really intended to write a novel faithful to such styles. The adjective *joksostor* is evidence of it.

5 Marjaneh Bakhtiari, *Kalla det vad fan du vill*

Summary 5.1 Marjaneh Bakhtiari: A Short Profile. – 5.2 *Kalla det vad fan du vill*. – 5.3 Linguistic Features in *Kalla det vad fan du vill*. – 5.3.1 Explicit Attributions of Exclusive Multilingualism. – 5.3.2 Phonographic Mimesis of a Deterritorialised Swedish. – 5.3.3 Morphological Features in *Kalla det vad fan du vill*. – 5.3.4 Typical Elements of MS in *Kalla det vad fan du vill*. – 5.3.5 Foreign Influences not Typical of MS in *Kalla det vad fan du vill*. – 5.3.6 Creative Derivations and Compounds in *Kalla det vad fan du vill*.

The third novel examined, Bakhtiari's *Kalla det vad fan du vill*, differs from the two previous works, both in the quantity of typical MS elements and in the frequency of deviant morpho-syntactic constructions. In fact, Bakhtiari's novel can be said to be less close to MS, although there are significant phenomena of literary multilingualism.

5.1 Marjaneh Bakhtiari: A Short Profile

Marjaneh Bakhtiari was born in 1980 in Tehran and moved to Malmö, Sweden, at the age of 7, where she currently lives as a professional novelist and dramatist. Bakhtiari has worked for the Swedish daily *Svenska Dagbladet* and for *Sveriges Radio* (Radio Sweden). In 2005 she published her debut novel *Kalla det vad fan du vill* for the publishing house Ordfront, followed by *Kan du säga Schibbolet?* (Can You Say Shibbolet?) (2008), *Godnattsagor För Barn Som Dricker*



(Bedtime Stories for Children Who Drink) (2013), and her latest novel *Oändligt Underbart* (Infinitely Wonderful) (2022). In her first three novels, Bakhtiari narrates the diasporic intertwining between Iran and Sweden, and the reverberations of the first generation's sense of uprooting on their children. Bakhtiari is very close to typical postmigrant topics, such as memory, the negotiation of identity beyond binarisms and intergenerational dialogue, which can also be found in her short stories *Farväl till dem på land* (Farewell to Them in the Country) (2016) and *Födelsedagen* (The Birthday) (2018), as well as in her radio plays *Salongen* (The Saloon) (2016), and *Ballongen* (The Balloon) (2017).

5.2 *Kalla det vad fan du vill*

Kalla det vad fan du vill is a multifocal novel narrated in third person by an external narrator, and it is composed as a mosaic of episodes where the reader encounters a myriad of characters in a sequence of separate and (only apparently) unconnected life scenes (Jankowska, 2010, 39). The novel was translated into Danish and Norwegian, and was reprinted in 2012.¹ The plot does not follow a central linear thread, but it focuses on the integration process of the Irandoust family into Swedish society from the late 1980s to the early 2000s, paying particular attention to the coming-of-age process of Bahar, the novel's main character, whom we follow from the end of her childhood to adulthood. Bahar displays a critical attitude towards both cultural-religious stereotypes and attachment to national affiliations. Since she carries migration as part of her cultural capital, but considers herself as a person capable of defining herself in a coherent manner regardless of her Iranian origin, Bahar adopts a postmigrant perspective, embracing the condition of *mellanförskap* (between-ship).² She is engaged to a Swedish boy, Markus, whose parents are very curious about the origin and traditions of Bahar's family, often generating comic episodes in which misunderstanding and prejudice dominate.

As discussed in Chapter 2, the period during which the novel is set was characterised by mass migration flows and vehement political debates, in which far-right movements gained more public attention, while prejudice and suspicion characterised the relationship between

¹ The reprinted version from 2012 is the one we employ in this study.

² Defined as a bi-radical condition arising from dichotomies (e.g. Swedish vs. non-Swedish, white vs. non-white, inside vs. outside the normative ethnocultural framework). Living in *mellanförskap* means to occupy a position between two negativities, neither foreigner nor Swedish.

Swedes and immigrants. In this framework, *Kalla det vad fan du vill* represents a polemical title, motivated by Bakhtiari in an interview as a reaction to the excessive and all-encompassing use of the prefix *invandrar*- (immigrant): “Därför att hur mycket jag än tjarar om att det är en roman vill en del klämma in ‘invandrar-’ före” (Bakhtiari in Neuman 2005).³ In this sense, the title, in English *Call It What The Hell You Like*, is interpreted as a cry for emancipation from stereotyped conceptual cages, such as *invandrare*, *nysvensk* (neo-Swedish) and *mångfald* (diversity), questioning their often superficial employment as tools to define otherness as an element that, in Swedish society, is hopelessly irreconcilable with Swedish identity.

Kalla det vad fan du vill can be defined as an urban realist novel, i.e. a narrative genre featuring a “socially aware novel in which contemporary communities are made up of complicated families, friends and strangers” (Tew 2015, 249), mainly in a (sub)urban setting. Indeed, Bakhtiari’s novel draws a composite geography of Malmö, placing the characters with multicultural backgrounds and events between the areas of Triangeln, Möllevång, Södra Förstadsgatan and Lundavägen.

Bakhtiari’s criticism is characterised by an ironic style, even though there is no lack of serious moments, and more reflective tones provided by an omniscient and heterodiegetic narrator. Themes such as nostalgia, racism, exile and suicide are sometimes dealt with through a comic filter, which lightens serious tones by prompting the reader to reflect on everyday life’s small misunderstandings, linguistic ambiguities and everyday intercultural ‘clashes’ between people of different backgrounds and languages.

5.3 Linguistic Features in *Kalla det vad fan du vill*

Although narrated in a mainly monolingual, and grammatically correct register, some dialogues between specific characters show a much more complex linguistic scenario, where literary multilingualism clearly emerges.

5.3.1 Explicit Attributions of Exclusive Multilingualism

Not unlike the dialogues in Arabic Halim entertains with both Dalanda and Otman in *Ett öga rött*, communication within the Irandoust

³ “Because, no matter how much I say that it’s a novel, some people want to put ‘immigrant’ before it”.

family takes place in Farsi, but is textually realised in Swedish.⁴ The dialogues in Farsi often include expressions pronounced in Swedish, marked by italics to distinguish the Swedish words in translational mimesis from the actual Swedish words: “‘Men det hör du ju. *Tusen tack*, det betyder att man alltså tackar tusen gånger. Det är som *tack så mycket*’. ‘När säger man *tack shelv*?’” (2012, 40).⁵ In this dialogue, in which Bahar explains to her mother Panthea different ways to thank someone in Swedish, the expressions *tusen tack*, *tack så mycket* and *tack shelv* (phonographic mimesis of *tack själv*) are marked in italics to underline a case of CS from Farsi to Swedish.⁶ While, on the one hand, the application of italics helps the reader to understand that there are segments in Swedish in the Farsi dialogues, on the other hand, a pact between reader and narrator is made: in order for the reader to accept that Swedish is only spoken when marked in italics, while the rest is in Farsi, a suspension of critical faculties is required. Although the whole text is mediated by Swedish, it must be kept in mind that the language of conversation is Farsi.

Another strategy Bakhtiari almost systematically applies is explicit attribution (Sternberg 1981, 231), through which the narrator indicates that a dialogue is taking place in Farsi, while it is actually written in Swedish: “Bahar [...] såg sig omkring för att se om någon överhuvudtaget hade lagt märke till dom och det främmande språk dom pratade. [...] Alla samtal inom familjen skulle föras på farsi” (Bakhtiari 2012, 30).⁷

Swedish works here as a language of translation, through which the dialogues are read in a context where metalinguistic comments, such as “[a]lla samtal inom familjen skulle föras på farsi” (All conversations in the family were to be in Farsi), provide the reader with the idea that Farsi flows ‘latently’ in another language.⁸ Through such a strategy, Bakhtiari shows her own literary creation as partly constructed from a ‘pseudo-translation’, i.e. a “fictitious representation of linguistic otherness” (Fulginiti 2014, 141). As a matter of fact, literary multilingualism, as it is displayed in Bakhtiari’s novel, also

⁴ Rydell and Ganuza define the textual representation of a foreign language by Swedish as “a commonly used strategy for representing multilingualism in literature” (2024, 15).

⁵ “‘But you hear that. *Tusen tack*, that means thank you a thousand times. It’s like *tack så mycket*’. ‘When do you say *tack shelv*?’”. Translation note: *tusen tack* and *tack så mycket* translate ‘many thanks’, while *tack själv* is a way of returning a word of thanks (‘my pleasure’).

⁶ See the concept of ‘explicit multilingualism’ theorised by Johanna Laakso (2012) and the concept of *manifest commutation* theorised by Eriksson and Haapamäki (2011, 46).

⁷ “Bahar [...] looked around to see if anyone had even noticed them and the foreign language they spoke. [...] All conversations within the family would be in Farsi”.

⁸ See, for instance, the concept of ‘latent multilingualism’ (Eriksson, Haapamäki 2011).

includes texts “som tematiserar och gestaltar flerspråkighet utan att för den skull vara skrivna på flera språk” (Tidigs 2020, 144).⁹ There are some situations in the novel where the mediation of Swedish does not contribute to comprehension or does not occur at all. In fact, the presence of other languages is sometimes made explicit, as in one scene with Bahar, Panthea and Moses, a Jamaican immigrant: Panthea tries to speak Swedish, but her pronunciation is strongly influenced by her mother tongue. At some point, Bahar and Panthea speak to each other in Farsi, while Moses answers Panthea’s questions in Patois:

“Min filicka, hon har varit hos dig. Do har inte varit esnell”, sa hon och släppte försiktigt dörrhandtaget. “A who dat?” “Chi?” “Cho!” “Ferstår do vad sejer jag? Do har inte varit esnell mot min filicka” “Ok, dat is yuh dawta. Why yuh choble me?” “Chi mige?”, vad säger han, frågade Panthea nervöst sin dotter. [...] “Her i Esverige vi peratar svenska! I Esverige om do inte kan lesa tidning, do inte behåva eslenga ot ferom fånster. Har do inte... Satle ashghal chi mishe?”. “Papperskorg”, svarade Bahar. (2012, 91-2)

My daughter was at your place. You were not kind”, she said and carefully released the door handle. “Awho dat?”.

“Chi?”.

“Cho!”.

“Do you understand what I say? You were not kind to my daughter”.

“Ok, dat is yuh dawta. Why yuh choble me?”.

“Chi mige?”, what is he saying, asked Panthea nervously to her daughter. [...]

“Here in Sweden we speak Swedish! In Sweden, if you cannot read a newspaper you don’t need to throw it out the window. Don’t you have a... Satle ashghal chi mishe?”. “Trash can”, answered Bahar.

In this excerpt, Panthea asks Moses for an explanation about his impolite behaviour towards her daughter. The reader finds several instances of misspelt Swedish words, CS between Swedish (matrix language), Farsi and Jamaican Patois. Panthea’s low proficiency in Swedish makes the dialogue hard to read, as she is strongly influenced by Persian phonetics and, in particular, by the presence of epenthetic vowels in words like *filicka* for *flicka* (girl), and *peratar* for *pratar* (speak), or prosthetic vowels in *esnell* for *snäll* (kind, polite), *Esverige* for *Sverige* (Sweden), and *eslenga* for *slänga* (throw). Moses is only able to interact by reproducing the shibboleths of his Jamaican patois,

⁹ “Which thematise and portray multilingualism without being written in several languages”.

such as the expression *cho*, and the features contained in the following sentence: “Ok, dat is yuh dawta. Why yuh choble me?”, which in correct English spelling reads as follows: “Ok, that is your daughter, why do you trouble me?”. In her broken Swedish, Panthea reproaches Moses, but she can’t understand his reply, so she switches to Farsi to ask Bahar “Chi mige?” (What is he saying?). Then, when Panthea asks Moses if he has a trash can at home, she forgets the Swedish word for the object, so she switches to Farsi again asking Bahar for help: “Satle ashghal chi mishe?”. Her daughter promptly replies “papperskorg” (trash can), switching back to Swedish.¹⁰ These instances of (re) switching are sporadic in the novel, but have a powerful estranging effect on the monolingual reader: indeed, if the cue “chi mige?” is made clear by a translation into Swedish placed immediately after “vad säger han?” (what is he saying?), the meaning of “Satle ashghal chi mishe?” is left unclear. Bahar sheds light on this cue by replying “papperskorg”, confronting the reader with a constant contamination between different linguistic strands, making full text comprehension never attainable, but only conceivable through the communicative context. In general, no explanations for single words or sentences in Farsi are given, pointing out that Bakhtiari’s intention is to make the reader follow the story even though he/she does not understand it completely. The fact that, except for a few isolated instances, expressions in Farsi are neither explained nor translated is a sign that the text makes multilingualism one of its main assets, leaving the multilingual *dilemma* intentionally unresolved.¹¹ The presence of multilingualism may generate incomprehension, as it could be argued that such linguistic choices complicate the understanding and the readability of Bakhtiari’s work. However, as explained by Julia Tidigs and Markus Huss, in the multilingual aesthetics of the literary text,

[i]ncomprehension [...] is not a sign of failure, at least not if the readers notice that they have missed something. An initial sense of exclusion on the part of the monolingual reader can be transformed into participation. [...] Surprise or a sense of irritation can lead to a struggle that results in new perspectives. (Tidigs, Huss 2017, 213)

By giving voice to Farsi, Bakhtiari shows that, while the centrality of Swedish as a vehicular language seems to assert itself undisturbed, ‘textual interstices’ inhabited by other languages are created in

10 Bakhtiari’s peculiarity of putting sentences or verses in Farsi is also common to other Iranian writers who have emigrated to Europe. Two emblematic cases are Kader Abdolah, who writes in Dutch, and Bijan Zarmandili, author of novels in Italian who used to resort to Farsi terms or sentences in his Italian prose.

11 Jonsson 2012; Tidigs 2014; Nittve 2015; Björklund, Lönnröth 2016.

which Swedish is deterritorialised and the reader is estranged from his own language. In combination with Leiva Wenger's reflections on language as a means of inclusion and exclusion, the reader is invited to reposition him-/herself, to see things from a provisional and incomplete perspective. Although belonging to the linguistic majority of society, in fact, the reader is the object of what Johanna Laakso calls "exclusive multilingualism" (2012), a use that alienates the monolingual reader from the text (cf. Busch 2017, 341). The effect of this type of multilingualism is defined by Tidigs as a strategy that results from the inclusion of one or more foreign words in the text, which the reader is not familiar with as he/she "sets off an exploration of a *Verfremdung* from the mother tongue, or, rather, the mother tongue's distance from the lyrical self, and not least a sense of inner exile" (Tidigs 2009, 363). On the other hand, the presence of "främmandegörande drag" (estranging features) (Tidigs, Bodin 2020, 145) makes the reader aware of two things: that linguistic boundaries are crossable, and that these are often boundaries of power, in which the subordination to a traditionally more prestigious language (Swedish) to a less prestigious one (Farsi), generates estrangement (145). The reader, then, is first urged to critically note the fact that the narration unfolds as linguistic boundaries are regularly broken, alternating in a transitional relationship (Helgesson, Kullberg 2018, 147), in which the dominant language is minorised.¹²

5.3.2 Phonographic Mimesis of a Deterritorialised Swedish

A multilingual novel requires multilingual characters, and Bahar is a prototypical one. The following quote describes the creation of her linguistic repertoire along her biographical trajectory:

Hon lärde sig flytande svenska samt hackig serbiska, ett par turkiska fraser och lite urdu, några vardagliga svordomar som var bra att känna till ifall hon skulle känna sig orättvist behandlad i respektive land. [...] Språket [...] kryddades med en blandning av Ricki-Lake citat samt mer eller mindre smickrande internationella ord. (2012, 32)

¹² In contemporary Swedish literature, Bakhtiari is not alone in including foreign terms without translation. For instance, in the collection *Lugna favouriter. Berättelser i urval 1989-2004* (Quite Favourites. Selected Stories 1989-2004) from 2005, the Swedish-speaking Finnish writer Kjell Westö makes use of numerous Finnish words without providing translations. The same is verified in Ann-Helén Laestadius' novel *Stöld* (Stolen) from 2021, where Sámi words are present.

She learnt fluent Swedish as well as broken Serbian, a few Turkish phrases and some Urdu, some everyday swear words that were good to know in case she felt unfairly treated in the respective countries. [...] The language [...] was spiced up with a mixture of Ricki-Lake quotes and more or less flavoursome international words.

Bahar's (and other young characters') repertoire is partly rooted in African-American hip-hop culture. The text mentions Queen Latifah, Tupac, Ice Cube, Bob Marley, TLK and many others from whom Bakhtiari often quotes verses. In addition to international artists, the novel establishes an intertextual dialogue with other works of contemporary mass culture. The repertoire of Shervin (Bahar's brother) and his friends, for instance, borrows entire quotations from the movie *Scarface* (1983), which works as an intra-group source of linguistic and aesthetic inspiration. Along with Leiva Wenger, Bakhtiari also gives importance to local varieties, taking up and phonographically imitating the features of skånska (Scanian) through a process known as *respelling* (Freeborn 1996, 228), i.e. the detailed rendering of the characters' pronunciation, which was also Panthea's and Moses' case analysed above (cf. § 5.3.1). Just to provide an example, Bahar's pronunciation of the first-person pronoun *mig* (me) is written *maj*, which is the way people pronounce *mig* in Scania. Another example is the way Bertil, Markus' grandfather, pronounces the following sentence: "Lärarna har snaort inget åo saj till om. Naj, annat va de när en annan gick i skoulän. Då va de mer åordning åo reda. Man fick sidda i bänkar åo saj: Goddao åo Ajöu" (2012, 174).¹³

As can be seen, Bakhtiari conveys words pronounced with local strong inflexions, not limiting herself to characters with foreign origins who speak broken Swedish, but displaying phonographic mimesis in native-speaking characters too. The effect is achieved, for instance, by taking certain Scanian features to their extremes, by adapting long vowels to diphthongs: *snart* becomes *snaort* (soon), *skolan* becomes *skoulän* (the school), *goddag* becomes *goddao* (good morning). Furthermore, by rendering *sitta* with *sidda* (to sit), Bakhtiari reproduces the typical consonant weakening, which is a feature of Danish heritage. On a lexical level, both the characters and the narrator use regionalisms such as *tös* (girl) (2012, 77, 290), *sär* (stupid), a typical insult spread in southern Swedish dialects, as well as typical Scanian terms, such as *brillor* for *glasögon* (glasses) and *lide*

¹³ "Soon the teachers will have nothing to say. No, it was different when one went to school. Back then there was more order and decency. People sat at their desks and said: Good morning and goodbye". A transcription of this sentence sounds as follows: "Lärarna har snart inget att säga till om. Nej, annat var det när en annan gick i skolan. Då var det mer ordning och reda. Man fick sitta i bänkar och säga: Goddag och Adjö". For reflections on the use of Scanian and other varieties in Bakhtiari, see Leonard 2022, 200.

for *riktigt* (really) (2012, 77, 121). Bakhtiari implements phonographic mimesis not only in relation to dialect and regionalisms, but she also concentrates on Swedish words written in deviant spellings in order to faithfully reproduce the phonetic influence of foreign languages, especially Farsi, on Swedish. This is evident not only in Panthea, but also in his father Amir. One interesting example is a linguistic play caused by the spelling of *nåjda* instead of *nöjda* (satisfied) (2012, 20), where the reader could risk confusing it with the Sámi shamanic figure of the *nåjde* (or *nåide/noaide*) (Sjödén 2017, 132). Furthermore, Amir often replaces long - *u* by - *o*, as in the case of *hor* in place of *hur* (how), which creates an ambiguous play with the word *hora* (prostitute). As noted above, Panthea often places an epenthetic *e* - before words beginning with -*s* + consonant or in inter-consonantic context. This is found in Amir too, as in *estolta* for *stolta* (proud), *ferom* for *från* (from) and *pelåtslit* for *plötsligt* (suddenly). As for consonants, Amir and Panthea struggle to articulate the Swedish palatal fricative *sj*-, which does not belong to their phonetic repertoire. Therefore, the word *sjukhuset* (hospital) is rendered as *khokhosen* (2012, 65), in which, moreover, the noun's gender shifts from neuter to common. In their dialogues, Amir and his friends Ahmed, Said and Sharif show syntactical inconsistencies typical of MS, such as in Sharif's following sentence: "I detta jävla land man måste alltid vara snäll" (2012, 185),¹⁴ where the verb-subject inversion between the impersonal pronoun *man* and the verb *måste* is missing. In lexical terms, however, Amir and his friend Ahmed possess a vocabulary rich in interjections and exclamations from Arabic, which is also a common trait of MS:

Om en mannikha är khok, man kan hämta doktor. Inshallah han kan hjälpa. Men om en mannikha är dom då man inte kan göra nåt" [...] "Amir, do är som min kompis, min bror. Do vet vi jobba micke, micke. Wallah, jog vet inte om jog en mannikha eller åsena ibland. Jog jobba och köpa för mina barn. Mashallah dom är tre killar och en tjej. Men sejer dom tack? Hjalber dom mig? Dom bara titta på tv och sepela computer! (2012, 197)

If a person is ill, one can call a doctor. Inshallah he can help. But if a person is one of them then nothing can be done". [...] "Amir, you are my friend, my brother. You know we work a lot, a lot. Wallah, I don't know if I a man or a donkey sometimes. I work and buy for my children. Mashallah they are three boys and a girl. But do they say thank you? Do they help me? They only watch TV and play computer!

14 "In this fucking country you always have to be nice".

In this quotation, we find similar cases to those analysed above: the missing palatal fricative – *sj* – in words such as *mannikha* (*människa*, person) and *khok* (*sjuk*, sick); the unpronounced long – *u* – (*do* instead of *du*, you; *dom* instead of *dum*, stupid); the epenthetic – *e* – (*åsena* instead of *åsna*, mule). But we also find instances such as *micke* for *mycket* (very), *jog* for *jag* (I), *hjalber* for *hjalper* (help). Ahmed's vocabulary contains several Arabicisms, which are reported in Table 5 below.

From these examples emerges a link between language and nationality in an ironic and stereotypical key: while, on the one hand, phonographic interference risks anchoring a person to a specific place by the way he/she speaks, on the other hand it allows us to reflect on the possibilities of understanding Swedish language despite various interferences. Apart from Leiva Wenger's *Elixir*, in the four literary texts analysed spelling is rarely used to characterise the language of the speakers who are portrayed as having grown up in Sweden in a multilingual context or in contact with MS.¹⁵

5.3.3 Morphological Features in *Kalla det vad fan du vill*

Concerning morphology, Bahar and other characters recall several MS-like phenomena. One such feature is the lack of inflectional variation in personal pronouns: “Vad ska du göra? Släppa han och komma hit?” (2012, 44);¹⁶ “Och de e helt fattit för man kan inte gå nånstans me hon heller” (2012, 264).¹⁷ In both examples, the object pronoun *honom* (him) in place of *han* (he), and *henne* (her) in place of *hon* (she) are absent. We also find curious verb conjugations: “Som om du verkligen skulle slått han” (2012, 264),¹⁸ with the past participle *slått* from *slå* (to hit) instead of *slagit*.

¹⁵ A study on the graphic rendering of MS in more recent literary works was conducted by Maria Rydell and Natalia Ganuza (2024). Both show that phonographic attention to pronunciation is not present, except for the novel *Spelet är spelet* (The game is the game), written in 2017 by Cyril Hellman, and Leo Carmona. Therefore, it is deduced that Bakhtiari and Leiva Wenger still constitute a more unique than rare case of phonographic stylisation of pronunciation-related peculiarities in MS in contemporary Swedish literature.

¹⁶ “What are you going to do? Let him go and come here?”. Literally, “What are you going to do? Let *he* go and come here?”.

¹⁷ “And it's a shame because you can't go anywhere with her either?”. Literally, “And it's a shame because you can't go anywhere with *she* either”.

¹⁸ “As if you would really beat him”.

5.3.4 Typical Elements of MS in *Kalla det vad fan du vill*

The novel displays less typical MS elements than the other three texts analysed. This is due to the fact that Bakhtiari's novel involves figures of different ages and backgrounds, extending its multilingual nature far beyond the almost exclusively youth-oriented MS. Part of the multilingualism in the novel is unrelated to MS. Thus, nouns such as *bira* (beer), verbs such as *dilla* (to babble), *palla* (to stand) and *sno* (to steal), adjectives such as *flummig* (strange) and *klyschig* (trivial) do not appear in Table 5, as they are attested in SAOL and Swedish slang sources (Kotsinas 1998, 56, 103) and not attested in MS sources.

Table 5 Typical Elements of MS in *Kalla det vad fan du vill*

Nouns	Verbs	Adjectives/Adverbs	Interjections
<i>gus</i> (3)	<i>banga</i> (p. 204) (b, c, d); ²	<i>bull</i> (4) (b, c); ⁵	<i>ey</i> (2) (b, c, d); ¹²
(a, b, c, d); ¹	<i>chilla</i> (p. 168) (a, b, c); ³	<i>cp</i> (2) (b, c, d); ⁶	<i>inshallah</i> (2); ¹³
	<i>flippa</i> (p. 147) (a, b, c); ⁴	<i>fett</i> (p. 130) (b, c, d); ⁷	<i>mashallah</i>
		<i>lack</i> (3) (b, c, d); ⁸	(4) (b, c); ¹⁴
		<i>shii</i> (3) (a, b, c); ⁹	<i>wallah</i> (4)
		<i>skum</i> (p. 91) (a, b, d); ¹	(b, c, d) ¹⁵
		<i>värsta</i> + noun (2) (b, d); ¹¹	
1 Cf. Leiva Wenger 2015; Khemiri 2003.			
2 Cf. Leiva Wenger 2015; Khemiri 2003; Sattarvandi 2008.			
3 From English <i>to chill</i> . Today lexicalised into Swedish, and used in MS as 'to chill', 'to relax'. Cf. https://svenska.se/tre/?sok=chilla&pz=8 ; Kotsinas 1998, 27; Doggelito, Kotsinas 2004, 57; Agazzi 2015, 59; Sjödin 2017, 34.			
4 Attested in SAOB followed by prepositions <i>ut</i> and <i>ur</i> (out) with the meaning 'to lose control', or 'to joke'. Cf. Kotsinas 1998, 55; Doggelito, Kotsinas 2004, 74; http://www.slangopedia.se/ordlista/?ord=Flippa .			
5 Adjective with negative nuances, meaning 'bad' (Kotsinas 1998, 22; Doggelito, Kotsinas 2004, 51).			
6 Cf. Khemiri 2003; Sattarvandi 2008.			
7 Cf. Leiva Wenger 2015; Khemiri 2003; Sattarvandi 2008.			
8 Cf. Leiva Wenger 2015; Khemiri 2003.			
9 From Romani to express negation. Attested in SAOB as <i>tji</i> from the nineteenth century (https://www.saob.se/artikel/?seek=tji&pz=2). Cf. Kotsinas 1998, 220; Doggelito, Kotsinas 2004, 150.			
10 Cf. Leiva Wenger 2015; Khemiri 2003.			
11 Cf. Leiva Wenger 2015; Khemiri 2003.			
12 Cf. Leiva Wenger 2015; Khemiri 2003; Sattarvandi 2008.			
13 Also attested in the novel in the form <i>Insha Allah</i> (2012, 256).			
14 Arabism meaning 'as God desires'. Cf. Doggelito, Kotsinas 2004, 113; http://www.slangopedia.se/ordlista/?ord=mashalla .			
15 Cf. Leiva Wenger 2015; Khemiri 2003.			

As can be seen, the novel shares with the other works a common vocabulary including nouns such as *gus*, verbs such as *banga* and *chilla*, adjectives with strengthening functions such as *fett* and *värsta*, and interjections such as *ey* and *wallah*. Most of these come from the dialogues between young, male figures Shervin, Soroush, Cezar and Mirza, while the interjections *inshallah*, *mashallah* and *wallah* are uttered by adult characters of Arabic origin (above all Ahmed). Concerning adjectives and adverbs, we notice both already analysed elements such as *fett*, *lack* and *skum*, and new elements such as *bull*, which although not originating in MS is often used in these styles. The use of the negation *shi/tji*, on the other hand, is unique in the corpus, since it occurs only in *Kalla det vad fan du vill*: “Man fattar shii när hon läser den” (2012, 63);¹⁹ “saj att du försökte få maj å saj nåt, Men shiii fick du!” (94).²⁰ Similarly to Leiva Wenger and Khemiri, the use of the superlative *värsta* + noun is also attested in Bakhtiari as in the case of “*värsta maffiatypen*” (the nastiest mafioso) (133), and “*värsta adrenalinkicken*” (huge adrenalin rush) (204).²¹

Concerning interjections, Bakhtiari’s novel displays a pool of expressions common to the other texts analysed, particularly in relation to the use of *ey* and *wallah*.

5.3.5 Foreign Influences not Typical of MS in *Kalla det vad fan du vill*

This section will discuss and analyse foreign elements which are not typical of MS. These are mainly loanwords or elements occurring in CS. However, everyday and generally known words recurring in the novel, such as *apartheid*, *cool*, *hejab*, *hiphop*, *ramadan*, *talkshows*, *touché* and *underground* are not considered in this section. Similarly, entire quotations and direct speech in English and Spanish are excluded, such as cues uttered by Moses (Jamaican) and Rosa (Chilean), who actually never express themselves in Swedish.

This section also excludes lexical items occurring in a business call between Bengt and his associate Mr. Kanyuang, where the so-called Swenglish (English with a strong Swedish accent and idioms) is spoken. To give a brief example, in the conversation between Bengt and Mr. Kanyuang, the former takes his leave saying “Aj kan hit jo a signal ven aj nå de exakt date. But aj think it vill be in veek fartyfår”

19 “You do not understand anything when she reads”.

20 “Say you tried to make me talk. But you got nothing out of it!”.

21 The way adolescents create adjectives is also distinguished by the use of superlative prefixes such as *över* - (ultra/above: *överbra*, *övergott*, very good. Bakhtiari 2012, 201, 207). However, unlike *värsta*, *över* - does not seem specific to MS.

(2012, 84), which, correctly transcribed into English, sounds as follows: “I can hit you a signal when I know the exact date. But I think it will be in week fourty-four”. Here, we are faced with the transposition of expressions typical of Swedish culture and language into a dialogue held in English. Indeed, on a cultural level, we note that Bengt uses the formula ‘I can hit you a signal’ to express what in English commonly goes as ‘I’ll give you a buzz’. The problem is that Bengt’s expression sounds ambiguous as it accurately replicates the Swedish expression *slå en signal*, i.e. ‘to give a call/buzz’. Coming to final greetings, Bengt uses another expression typical of Swedish culture: “Vi sej dat den. Havv it good” (We say that then. Have it good) (2012, 84). In this case, Bengt draws on the classic Swedish form of leave-taking, *Vi säger så. Ha det bra*, which approximately means ‘let’s do that. Take care’.

Bengt employs a form of communication that, according to the terminology adopted by Sternberg, is called “conceptual reflection” (1981, 230), i.e. a very complex strategy concerned with identifying (reflecting) the presence of different socio-cultural norms, semantic conceptions of reality and semantic nuances of one’s mother tongue (Swedish) into the language of communication used (English). Conceptual reflection lies, as Sternberg puts it, at the intersection between language and reality (1981, 230). This strategy explains the verbal idiosyncrasy within utterances produced in a code that appears monolingual but is strongly influenced by the linguistic and cultural background of the speaker and, therefore, as a result of ‘crossing’, is to be considered a case of multilingualism. Although part of Moses, Rosa and Bengt’s dialogues will not be part of Table 6, it is important to point out that they make an important contribution to the novel’s multilingualism (cf. Leonard 2022, 200). As discussed, although the dialogues in Farsi are conveyed in Swedish, there are also moments in which the Irandoust’s mother-tongue is revealed, not only in the episode in which Panthea asks Bahar how to say *papperskorg*, but also through selective reproductions such as *hichi* (nothing), *tarof* (good manners),²² and nouns for typical dishes such as *zaboon*, *noghl*, *hallvaa*, *zereshkpolo*, *ghormezabsi*, *khoreshte gheyme*. Farsi also emerges in short sentences, as in the case of Bijan who, in a letter to his friend Amir, quotes an old Persian saying: “boro ghavi sho gar rahatie jahan ra talabi | chon zaif paye mal hast” (2012, 102).²³ In this passage, the reader is, once again, excluded from

²² *Tarof* is a kind of *bon ton*, a ritual of hospitality, courtesies and precedence widespread in Iranian culture. The term is a *realia* reflecting socio-cultural norms.

²³ This is a verse by the poet Ali Akbar Golshan, better known as Golshan Azadi (1901-1974), the meaning of which is: “Make yourself strong and if you have the ease conquer the world | because the weak are annihilated”. I’m indebted to Professor Natalia Tornosello for her kind linguistic advice concerning translations from Farsi.

understanding: Bakhtiari does not provide a translation into Swedish, hence the meaning of these lines cannot be guessed. The only clue to unravelling this passage comes from a subsequent, metalinguistic comment provided by Bijan, who notes that these words carry a “smärtsam sanning” (painful truth) (2012, 102), hinting at the need to be strong in a world where the powerless are overwhelmed. Other instances in which a part or a whole sentence in Farsi has no translation is when Amir asks Markus how he is doing: “Chetori Markos?” (2012, 139), and when he tries to soothe his son Shervin after fainting: “Chizi nist. Khoubam” (2012, 248).²⁴ Moreover, in a passage in which Amir projects himself into the future, he imagines a supposed 12-year-old nephew Amir Junior telling him: “Mikham esmamo avaz konam” (2012, 298).²⁵ While in other contexts it may not be relevant to know the exact meaning of sentences in Farsi, the saying quoted in Farsi by Bijan prevents us from knowing the secret and wisdom of those poetic lines. Table 6 shows foreignisms in the form of loanwords and CS, divided into two main categories: loanwords from English, whole cues in English, Anglisms adapted to Swedish morphology; elements from other languages.

Table 6 Foreign Influences not Typical of MS in *Kalla det vad fan du vill*

Linguistic elements from / related to English	Linguistic elements from other languages
<i>Back in the days, way back in the days</i> (p. 210) E; <i>battla</i> (p. 30) V; <i>bitch</i> (3) S; ¹ <i>bullshit</i> (p. 164) S; <i>busted</i> (p. 202) V; <i>computer</i> (p. 197) S; <i>dawg</i> (3) S; ² <i>date</i> (2) S; <i>digga</i> (2) V; ³ <i>dissa</i> (8) V; ⁴ <i>girlpower</i> (p. 47) S; <i>fajtas</i> (p. 203) V; ⁵ <i>fuck</i> (p. 163) S; <i>fuck da polis</i> (p. 133) E; <i>fuck that</i> (p. 276) E; <i>g-ride</i> (p. 132) S; <i>here we go again!</i> (p. 298) E; <i>homeboys</i> (p. 124) S; <i>I'm a G</i> (p. 220); E; <i>imagen</i> (p. 221) S; ⁶ <i>in your face-attityd</i> (p. 76) S; <i>kick</i> (p. 24) S; <i>kicka</i> (p. 203) V; <i>no</i> (p. 165) Adv.; ⁷ <i>no matter what</i> (p. 206) E; <i>payback-time</i> (p. 48) S; <i>pissa ner</i> (p. 123) V; <i>please</i> (p. 241) E; <i>punchline</i> (p. 76) S; <i>pussy</i> (p. 164) S; <i>shit</i> (5) S; <i>slowmotionscen</i> (p. 110) S; ⁸	<i>allahu akbar</i> (2) E; <i>allhamdullillah</i> (p. 208) E; <i>astaferallah</i> (4) E; <i>consiglieri</i> (p. 97) S; <i>et voilà</i> (p. 25) E; <i>haji</i> (8) (b) S; ¹² <i>hichi</i> (5) Adv.; <i>la Allah al il Allah</i> (2) E; <i>imparfait</i> (p. 111) A; <i>mal educado</i> (p. 229) A; <i>mamita</i> (p. 230) S; <i>mano a mano-blick</i> (p. 41) S; <i>menage à quatre</i> (p. 122) S; <i>nada</i> (5) Adv.; <i>salamati</i> (3) E; <i>shukrallah</i> (p. 208) E; <i>sura</i> (p. 190) S; <i>tarof</i> (6) S; <i>vive la Reine</i> (p. 11) E;

24 “It’s nothing. I’m fine”.

25 “I want to change my name”.

smooth criminal (p. 132) S; *tajming* (p. 293) S;⁹ *take five* (p. 208) E; *tarzan-approach* (p. 20) S; *thug* (p. 135) A; *thug for-life-plansch* (p. 268) S; *you talkin' to me?* (p. 200) E; *what's up* (p. 121) E;¹⁰ *what's up dawgs?* (p. 202) E; *whatch this!* (p. 274) E; *why oh why-min* (p. 192) S;¹¹

1 It also occurs adapted to Swedish morphology in the determinative form *bitchen* (the whore).

2 Phonographic rendering of 'dog'. Morphologically adapted into *dawgsen* (lit. the dog) (Bakhtiari 2012, 203).

3 A Morphological adaptation of 'to dig', meaning 'to appreciate'; 'to like'. Cf. Kotsinas 1998, 34.

4 Cf. Khemiri 2003.

5 Phonographic rendering of 'to fight', with the deponent suffix – s (cf. *brottas*, 'to fight').

6 Attested in Kotsinas as 'attitude', 'style', 'profile' (1998, 89).

7 Used by Ahmed in place of *nej* in his broken speech.

8 Multilingual compound composed of *slowmotion*, and the Swedish noun *scen* (scene).

9 Phonographic adaptation from *timing*.

10 Also attested in *wazup* and *sup* (Bakhtiari 2012, 121).

11 Multilingual compound composed of *why-oh-why*, and the Swedish noun *min* (look, face).

12 *Haji*, *Hadji* o *hajji* is in Islamic cultures a title obtained after completing the pilgrimage to Mecca (called *hajji*). In MS it stands for 'friend' and 'brother'. Cf. Doggelito, Kotsinas 2004, 84.

Among CS cases there is a high number of intersentential constructions in which Swedish is combined with English, which is typical in dialogues between Shervin and his friends: "My ass att ni bryr er" (2012, 165);²⁶ "Hur fan vet du att det är acetone? Haha, Busted. Jag visste du va bög" (202);²⁷ "Du vet att man asså... no matter what, ska försvara dom" (206).²⁸ Apart from the dialogues between Shervin and his friends, even the narrator's voice frequently resorts to both inter- and intrasentential CS, highlighted by italicising foreign words or expressions: "Det hade blivit hög tid för lite *girlpower* och *independent woman shit*" (47);²⁹ "Hon visste att *the revolution will not*

26 "My ass that you care". Here, as in the following translations in footnote, CS into English are italicised.

27 "How the hell do you know it's acetone? Haha, Busted. I knew you were gay".

28 "You know that *no matter what*, you have to defend them".

29 "It was about time for some *girl power* and *independent woman shit*".

be televised. Hon var redo att *fight the power*" (75);³⁰ "Mirza ryckte på axlarna och gav ärligt talat inte ett *fuck*" (163).³¹

As stated in the first chapter (cf. § 1.7.3), we notice how literary CS involves alternations that are not strictly regulated but rather manifest itself free from formal delimitations or precise sociolinguistic motivations. Further examples are the expressions "in your face-attityd" (2012, 76) and "why oh why-min" (2012, 192), whereby the Swedish words *attityd* (attitude) and *min* (look, face) are combined with English replacing the final part of fixed expressions.³² These instances of individual borrowings or CS display the rise of a postmonolingual paradigm, in which the characters manifest a very extensive linguistic competence, ranging from MS to Malmö dialect. The fact that Shervin and friends express themselves in the ways mentioned above brings reflection on a new postmonolingual paradigm in terms of what Ann-Carita Evaldsson calls "flerspråkig ordning" (multilingual order), i.e. "situationer där deltagarna inte uppmärksammar användandet av flera språk och låter kodväxlingen ske obemärkt" (Evaldsson 2007, 263),³³ In other words, readjusting a key concept of the postmigrant theoretical framework, Bakhtiari's characters are in a multilingual 'ease of presence'. As can be deduced from the text, Shervin, Soroush and Mirza share Iranian origins, while Cezar, most likely, has South American origins. Despite their heterogeneity, what they have in common is that they belong to a "community of practice" (Eckert 2004, 44), i.e. a community in which identity is constructed in interaction, through resources for sharing common knowledge, impressions and experiences, adopting a style in which they recognise each other. Although Shervin and friends employ other languages, dialectal elements and slang terms in their communication, this does not mean that Swedish disappears. Although it becomes 'minor' through a multilingual repertoire, Swedish still remains the matrix language of the group. Concerning Arabic words and expressions, we find *allahu akbar*, *allhamdullillah*, *astaferallah* and *shukrallah*, which mainly belong to the domain of Islam. Almost all of these terms are pronounced by Ahmed and Mandana (Soroush's grandmother) and allow us to note how a foreign language is rendered in Swedish according to the already discussed

³⁰ "She knew that *the revolution will not be televised*. She was ready to *fight the power*".

³¹ "Mirza simply shrugged and honestly didn't give a *fuck*".

³² These examples of intra-sentential CS are not only limited to migration-related literature but characterise contemporary Swedish literature in general. Similar phenomena are typical of Jens Lapidus' style, a native Swedish-speaking writer who resorts to the same strategies in his noir novels (Enell-Nilsson, Hjort 2016).

³³ "Situations where participants do not recognise the use of multiple languages and let code-switching go unnoticed".

procedure of selective reproduction. Just to provide one example, we analyse how Mandana's speech in Farsi is mediated by Swedish: "ALI?! Må Gud ta mitt liv, är det du Ali? Astaferallah! [...] Må Gud ge honom hälsa. Så det var Ali! Vad han har blivit... vuxen, Mashallah" (2012, 257-8).³⁴ These short cues exemplify selective reproduction by using code-switching, reflecting Mandana's cultural, linguistic and religious background. Expressions like *Astaferallah* and *Mashallah* retain an emotional charge too, as she has just arrived in Sweden and met her grandson again after several years. Obviously, Mandana does not speak Swedish, as she has spent her entire life in Iran, so Swedish is used to convey her speech. This creates instances of linguistic blending where not only multilingual environment of Mandana's family is reproduced, but also deeper cultural meanings that would otherwise be lost in translation.

Among the Arabic words listed in table 6 it is worth to discuss the case of the title *haji*, pronounced no less than eight times by Ahmed. As described in footnote 334, *haji* is a title obtained after completing the pilgrimage to Mecca. However, Ahmed addresses Amir by using the title *haji* understanding it as 'friend', not least because Amir has never been on a pilgrimage to Mecca:

Även om Amir aldrig varit på pilgrimsfärd envisades Ahmed med att kalla honom haji. Det var lättare att umgås med Amir om han lurade sig själv att Amir gjort den heliga vallfärden till Mecka som alla rättroga. (2012, 179-80)

Although Amir had never been on pilgrimage, Ahmed insisted on calling him *haji*. It was easier to socialise with Amir if he deluded himself that Amir had made the holy pilgrimage to Mecca like all the faithful.

In fact, upon careful analysis of the novel, there is much irony in this appellation, given not only Amir's laicism, but also his critical stance towards religion, which probably leads his acquaintances to 'provoke' him by calling him that title. This semantic shift proposed by Ahmed demonstrates how, over time and for geographical dislocation, a term pertaining to the religious realm loses its spiritual meaning once imported into Sweden, taking on a more 'secular' connotation. In a cultural context where the dominant ideological framework is that of a close relationship between people, territory and language, the interfering presence of minor languages, patois and multi-ethnolects, mixed with *passe-partout* languages such as English and French,

34 "ALI? May God take my life, is that you Ali? Astaferallah! [...] May God give him health. So that's Ali! Look how he has grown up, Mashallah".

distinguishes *Kalla det vad fan du vill* as a text that no longer follows the reassuring uniformity to a single language (Walkowitz 2015, 30). Indeed, Bakhtiari's novel fully represents new expressive possibilities within Swedish literature, reflecting the complexities of a postmigrant society.

5.3.6 Creative Derivations and Compounds in *Kalla det vad fan du vill*

Unlike other authors examined in this study, Bakhtiari's style is not particularly inclined to lexical creativity, as new-words and creative compounds are quite scarce in the novel. Therefore, it is not considered necessary to present a dedicated table for the following few terms: *spagettiben* (spaghetti legs) (2012, 21), *imparfaitmänniskor* (imperfect people) (71), *blattetid* (immigrant time) (129), *hobbymuslim* (hobby Muslim) (271), and the derivation *falafelisering* (falafelisation) (293). The peculiarity of these five terms is that they are all nominal compounds and derivations constituted by very common, bilingual lemmas (*spaghetti*, *imparfait*, *hobby*, *falafel*, *blatte*). Among the most interesting ones we discuss *imparfaitmänniskor*, which Bakhtiari borrows from the French adjective *imparfait* to create the concept 'imperfect people', with which she describes an attitude characterised by the tendency of first-generation Iranian immigrants to hide problems, pains and imperfections from the others:

Man konfronterade aldrig varandra. Det pratades istället om vädret. [...] Men aldrig, aldrig sa dom att det skulle vara några problem just nu. För det har inte *imparfaitmänniskor*. Så just nu var allt perfekt även om det också skulle ändras med tiden. (2012, 71)
They never confronted each other. They talked about the weather instead. [...] But never, never they said that there would be any problems at the moment. Because imperfect people don't have that. So right now everything was perfect although that would also change with time.

This compound condenses the deep implications of diaspora, where immigrants hide each other's problems and nostalgia behind a silent veil of fake perfection, happiness, satisfaction and gratitude.

Through the appropriation and hybridisation of the Swedish language, Bakhtiari forges a patchwork term that allows her not only to transform Bahar's family condition into a universal story, but also to create a lingua franca that transcends idiomatic and experiential boundaries. Therefore, *imparfaitmänniskor* is to understand as an attempt to frame Persian diaspora as the result of a process of deterritorialisation, characterised by the impossibility of living in

a world of simulated harmony, and well-being. Another compound worth discussing is *hobbymuslim*, a patchwork through which Bakhtiari describes how Bahar freely combines aesthetic codes of Islam – such as the decision to wear the veil – with her typically Western habits, such as clubbing, applying make-up and dating a non-Muslim boyfriend (Markus):

Hon hade blivit en hobbymuslim. [...] Hon hade en svensk icke-muslimsk kille som hon inte var gift med [...]. Till slut lyckades Bahar reducera religionen till en accessoar. (271)

She had become a hobby Muslim. [...] She had a Swedish non-Muslim boyfriend to whom she was not married [...]. In the end, Bahar managed to reduce religion to an accessory.

Falafelisering is a derivation referring to the process of Middle Eastern culinary influence on Swedish culture. Obviously, the noun is derived from falafel, a deep-fried fritter featuring in Middle Eastern cuisine. This meal has had a very positive impact in Sweden and, given its popularity, it can easily stand as a pars pro toto of today's multicultural Sweden. The analysis of the structure and inner meaning of these compounds and derivations allows for some reflections on the novel's content. Through linguistic creativity, Bakhtiari manages to delineate Bahar and her family as the prototype of the postmigrant subject who overcomes the perceptual barriers between 'migrant' and 'Swede', 'Muslim' and 'non-Muslim'. More specifically, the words presented above shed light on feelings related to exchange, but also dislocation, (im)possibility to feel at home, (un)ease of presence in the new country, and, last but not least, freedom to perform and transform one's own identity.

6 Hassan Loo Sattarvandi, *Still*

Summary 6.1 Hassan Loo Sattarvandi: A Short Profile. – 6.2 *Still*. – 6.3 Linguistic Peculiarities in *Still*. – 6.3.1 Graphic Peculiarities in *Still*. – 6.3.2 Intertextual Links to Musical Culture in *Still*. – 6.3.3 Typical Elements of MS in *Still*. – 6.3.4 Foreign Influences Not Typical of MS in *Still*. – 6.3.5 Creative Compounds, and New-words in *Still*.

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.¹ 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

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),² 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).³ 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

dadam dadam dadadadadadam dadam dadam [...] beaten började
om från början, jag tryckte in sedeln i näsan, drog in det i bihålorna,
ut i blodet och sen – Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa
aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa
aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa. (Sattarvandi 2008,
23-4)

No no no no no no nooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo
oo and nothing was more relevant than that and I repeated the
word silently over and over again until we rolled another joint
that calmed the inner down or was it a line that created the total
euphoria as the music slowly vibrated out Bob Marley's voice
saying, No no no no no no no no, that's not how it went, and I
leaned my head against the wall and felt life fading away and the
beat – Paul Oakenfold – Dadam dadam dadam dadadadadadam
dadam dadam [...] the beat started all over again, I pushed the
banknote into my nose, pulled it into my sinuses, out into my blood
and then – Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa
aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa
aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa

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 vilsna, 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, – – -----
-----,

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).⁴ 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

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

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).⁶ 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’,⁷ 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),⁸ 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),⁹ 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).¹⁰ 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),¹¹ 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).¹²

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; ¹ <i>buffed</i> (p. 156) A; <i>bushweed</i> (6), S; ² <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; ³ <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; ⁴ <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; ⁵ <i>señor</i> (p. 193), S
1 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” (https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=Bolea).		
2 In one case it is shortened to <i>bush</i> (Sattarvandi 2008, 209).		
3 Attested in <i>Slangopedia</i> as synonym to ‘to hit’, ‘to beat up’ (cf. http://www.slangopedia.se/ordlista/?ord=jabba).		
4 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. https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/mecka).		
5 From Farsi, meaning ‘pimp’ (cf. https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=koskesh).		

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).¹³ 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).¹⁴ 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

¹³ “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”.

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

abbor're,¹⁵ *Dohano* (2008, 191),¹⁶ *majtomano* (2008, 91),¹⁷ *muchengo* (uncertain meaning, probably associated to 'guy'),¹⁸ *rajban*,¹⁹ *maich* (much, nothing).²⁰ Given the lack of attestations and information, as is also evident from the reflections developed in the respective footnotes, *Dohano*, *majtomano*, *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),²¹ or "ge muchengo en smäll till" (2008, 141),²² 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. Doggeligo, 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; Doggeligo, 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',²³ and 'to vanish'/'to make a dramatic exit'.²⁴ 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.

23 Cf. https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=mack_

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

7 Conclusions

Summary 7.1 Multilingual Data From *Till vår ära*. – 7.2 Multilingual Data From *Ett öga rött*. – 7.3 Multilingual Data From *Kalla det vad fan du vill*. – 7.4 Multilingual Data From *Still*. – 7.5 Concluding Remarks: MS as the Expression of a New Way to Frame Swedishness.

As is well known, the vocabulary of MS in everyday speech and in literature is composed of both endogenous elements (resemantisations, recycled archaisms, *-ish* suffixations, etc.) and exogenous elements (loanwords, morphological adaptations, CS, etc.). In this conclusive chapter, we discuss the exogenous data extracted from each work with a comparative and synthetic approach, paying attention to the most recurrent items, semantic domains and the most relevant foreign languages, in order to provide some reflections on the multilingual features collected. In the analytical section (see chs 3-6), we have tried to answer the question how MS manifest themselves in the selected works and how they become expression of deterritorialisation of the Swedish language. The linguistic analyses revealed a large number of shared features and differences. The linguistic peculiarities shared by some characters allow to draw clear lines between the styles adopted by younger characters and styles adopted by adults. Usually, while the parents, and other adult migrants, are comically depicted as struggling to learn and use Swedish, the young protagonists are mostly depicted as proficient in Swedish. This aspect, especially present in Khemiri and Bakhtiari, may have inspired the narrative and linguistic models of more recent novels, such as Melody Farhin's *Mizeria* (2018), where

we can see the same characterological categories facing the same linguistic issues as in both Khemiri's and Bakhtiari's novels. As stated by Rydell and Ganuza, this contrast "also serves to accentuate the generational boundaries and fluctuating relations of power that exist between the protagonists and the adult migrants, particularly their parents" (2024, 18).

7.1 Multilingual Data From *Till vår ära*

From the analysis of *Till vår ära*, one can firstly discern the aesthetic need of a young Leiva Wenger who, by turning to styles and expressive modalities drawn from TLK and youth languages, heralds the onset of the ethnic breakthrough. The lexical items analysed reveal the potential of a language that is strategically inauthentic with respect to the sociolinguistically known MS, which can both express intra-group belonging and exclude the reader from understanding. In *Till vår ära*, Swedish language is deterritorialised on several levels, ranging from spelling, as in *Elixir*, to morpho-syntax and, of course, vocabulary, both in the first part, where MS dominates, and in the second one, where Leiva Wenger resorts to loanwords (*venceremos*, etc.) and new-words (*kulås*, *lija*, *oja*, etc.). In *Borta i tankar* and *Elixir*, the occurrence of nouns, verbs, adjectives and interjections from the main immigrant languages contrast with Swedish, limiting a full comprehension of the text. However, it is in the third story *Sakers riktiga namn* that deterritorialisation can be said to be at its height, where terms such as *Kulås*, *oja*, *kaminerade*, *apagerade*, *lija* and *öpa*, challenge the monolingual paradigm with a metalinguistic deconstruction of the claims that literary language should be comprehensible according to a standard. The fact that this deterritorialisation is most evident in the story where Leiva Wenger encourages a reconsideration of the 'real name of things' (*Sakers riktiga namn*) is no coincidence: the story is about the utopian idea of changing Stockholm's identity. Within this philosophical reflection is also included a reconsideration of the Swedish language, its borders and its relations with the linguistic realities with which it comes into contact (thanks to migration).

Till vår ära contains thirty-four foreign lemmas (ninety-eight occurrences in total), among which we distinguish: seven lemmas for persons (thirty-five occurrences in total): *bonanza*, *guz*, *kardash*, *len*, *mangas*, *maricon*, *morre*, *shuno/shonne*; five lemmas for exclamations (twenty-three occurrences in total): *abou*, *aide*, *compañeros*, *orre*, *venceremos*. The most influential language in *Till vår ära* is Turkish, with no less than twelve headwords and fifty-nine occurrences, i.e. 58.5% of the foreign words recorded in the collection (*abou*, *aina*, *amchuk*, *benim*, *gitta*, *guz*, *kardash*, *len*, *orre*, *para*, *shok*, *shuno/*

shonne); Turkish is followed by Spanish, with ten headwords and eighteen occurrences, corresponding to 18.5% of the foreign words recorded (*apagera, bonanza, compañeros, conchetumadre, kaminera, lija, maricon, oja, pass, venceremos*); Thereafter follows Arabic, with four headwords and ten occurrences, amounting to 11% of the recorded foreign words (*floos, keff, walla, zutta*); Arabic is followed by Greek, with three headwords and seven occurrences, equal to 8% of the total (*aide, mangas, morre*); English, with four headwords and the four of occurrences, i.e. 5% of foreign words (*bitch, fuckade upp, dissa, skippa*). While *Till vår ära*'s linguistic data confirm the low prestige of English, with Arabic and Turkish holding a stronger influence, they also highlight the fact that the language of an author's home country does not necessarily play a primary role in his/her multilingual lexical choices. At first glance, this may seem surprising, given that many of *Till vår ära*'s characters, particularly Felipe, have a Hispanic background. However, this detail takes on a different significance when considering that Turkish is the most widely spoken and socially influential language in the areas of Vårby and Fittja (Parkvall 2009, 89), where Leiva Wenger both lived and set parts of *Till vår ära*. This suggests a deliberate attention to the local sociolinguistic context and the multilingual styles characteristic of his literary setting. Turkish is in fact used more than twice as often as other languages in the collection, especially because of the very frequent use of the noun *len* (eighteen occurrences). As proposed in the aims of this study, it is possible to observe a deterritorialisation of Swedish to the extent that, in certain textual segments, the dominant language of the text undergoes a minorisation, incorporating languages into its repertoire that become common expressive ground.

7.2 Multilingual Data From *Ett Öga Rött*

With *Ett öga rött*, the line of deconstruction of Swedishness as a monolingual entity follows in the footsteps of Leiva Wenger but is inspired by the idea, drawn on Chamoiseau, that social identities in change must be matched by a language in change. Beginning with Khemiri's reflections on the provocative value of his *Halimska* as a symptom of a changing Swedish identity, *Ett öga rött* addresses the overcoming of a language certainly judged as standard by Halim, but minorised on behalf of an idiolectal form of MS.

Rather than in vocabulary, which is essentially similar to Leiva Wenger's but distinguished by a greater creativity in forming compounds, Halim most explicitly deterritorialises Swedish through morphology and syntax. With the systematic deviation from word order, issues with gender concordances, misplaced prepositions, and frequent use of the well-known suffix *-ish*, Khemiri's experimentalism

does not merely break with canonical precepts – something literature has long done – but rather reconfigures Swedish in a way that foregrounds linguistic hybridity and creative deformation as narrative strategies. By deliberately undermining expected grammatical structures, Khemiri challenges the perception of linguistic correctness and explores the expressive potential of multilingualism, engaging with contemporary discussions on identity, and power in Swedish literature. The sense of deterritorialisation also emerges in the cases where Swedish serves as a language of service, i.e. when using translational mimesis to cover Arabic dialogues, and where the morpho-syntactic rules are perfectly respected by Halim. With this novel, Khemiri does not want to tell us that Halim rejects Swedishness a priori, but that a different way of interpreting it can blossom through liberation from assimilatory representations, of which language is a fundamental element. *Ett öga rött's* findings reveal twenty-two foreign lemmas (186 occurrences in total), among which seven lemmas for persons and relationships stand out (98 occurrences in total): *aina*, *bonanza*, *guss*, *len*, *mangas*, *maricon*, *shunne*, of which *guss* and *shunne* occur sixty-four and twenty times respectively. Similar to Leiva Wenger's *Till vår ära*, where Spanish is not the most employed language, in Khemiri's novel Arabic is not the most represented foreign language, but Turkish, with twelve headwords and 115 occurrences, i.e. 62% of the novel's foreign words (*aina*, *gitta*, *guss*, *len*, *shunne*); Arabic comes just next, with seven entries and forty occurrences, representing 21.5% of foreign words (*flous*, *keff*, *inshallah*, *jalla*, *kalabalik*, *tsbahallsher*, *walla*); Third comes Romani, with two entries and twenty-one occurrences (*jidder/jiddra*, *beckna*), equal to 12% of foreign words. As in Leiva Wenger, Khemiri's novel also shows a negligible presence of English, although some dialogues between Alex and Halim are entirely reported in English. Since the data collection proposed in this study only covers instances in which Swedish comes into contact with other languages (CS, loanwords and morphological adaptations), excluding entire dialogues in other languages, English is considered only in cases of language contact, i.e. with only three lemmas and eight occurrences, amounting to 4.5% of the total number of foreign words recorded in the novel (*bitch*, *rush*, *dis* and the related compounds *dissrim*, *fetdiss* and *hård diss*).

7.3 Multilingual Data From *Kalla det vad fan du vill*

Although with a minor presence of typical MS elements, in *Kalla det vad fan du vill*, the monolingual paradigm is criticised through other strategies, primarily involving translational mimesis, selective reproduction and a rich presence of foreignisms (mainly from English). In fact, Bakhtiari's multilingualism draws not so much on the extra-European languages used in MS, but on English as well as on games of faithful phonographic rendering of Swedish, which is often full of morpho-syntactic inaccuracies. Moreover, the novel's multilingualism is enriched by the fact that Swedish is flanked by frequent traces of Farsi, sometimes mediated by Swedish, as in Mandana's case, sometimes working as a language of service in cases of translational mimesis, as in dialogues in the Irandoust family. Indeed, the sense of deterritorialisation reaches its peak in various textual interstices, where Farsi dominates without any translational intermediation. Some of Panthea's, Bijan's and Amir's cues are in fact left in Farsi, to which are added several Arabisms, Anglisms (many of them morphologically adapted) and Hispanisms, which are often left untranslated. The subversive presence of an 'exclusive multilingualism' (Laakso 2012) is thus manifested, compromising the monolingual reader's understanding of the text and destabilising his or her accessibility to it. Analyses of *Kalla det vad fan du vill* reveal sixty-three foreign headwords (128 occurrences in total), among which the following stand out: ten headwords for persons (twenty-four occurrences in total) (*bitch, bonanza, consiglieri, dawg, gus, haji, homeboys, imparfait, mamita, mangas, smooth criminal*), ten headwords for exclamations and/or invocations with religious content (twenty-eight occurrences in total) (*allahu akbar, allhamdullillah, astaferallah, ey, fuck, inshallah, la Allah al il Allah, mashallah, salamati, wallah*). The most influential languages in *Kalla det vad fan du vill* are: English, with no less than forty-one headwords and sixty occurrences, corresponding to 47% of the foreignisms in the novel (among the most frequent Anglisms: *dissa, shit, dawg, fuck*); Arabic, with ten lemmas and twenty-six occurrences, i.e. 21% of the foreignisms (*allahu akbar, allhamdullillah, astaferallah, haji, inshallah, la Allah al il Allah, shukrallah, mashallah, sura, wallah*); Farsi, with three lemmas and fourteen occurrences, equal to 11% of foreignisms (*hichi, tarof, salamati*). Other languages present in the text, albeit to a lesser extent, are Spanish, French and Italian.

Kalla det vad fan du vill's data reveal a countertrend to *Till vår ära* and *Ett öga rött*, firstly because English dominates, while Arabic carries less influence and Turkish, which is dominant in *Till*

vår ära and *Ett öga rött*, is here only present in the word *gus*.¹ It should be pointed out that a large part of the collected Anglisms is morphologically adapted to Swedish (*battla*, *chilla*, *digga*, *dissa*, *fajtas*, *flippa*, *imagen*, *kicka*, *tajming*).

7.4 Multilingual Data From *Still*

Lastly, in *Still*, we find all the aspects noted and discussed in the three previous works: from a lexical point of view, there is a rich presence of MS elements and new words that reveal, as in Leiva Wenger and Khemiri, a stylised and deliberately stereotypical use of MS, with interesting outcomes such as *abbor're*, *Dohano*, *maich*, *majtomanio*, *muchengo* and *rajban*, which, besides deterritorialising the language, complicate comprehension even for a reader already 'initiated' into MS. Moreover, multilingualism is enriched by the presence of Anglisms and entire quotations from English and Arabic lyrics.

From a morpho-syntactic point of view, Sattarvandi does not introduce any particular deviance from the norm, while with respect to graphic conventions, he introduces interesting twists, such as the repetition of the same character or sound on the page, the use of barred fonts and the scarce presence of punctuation marks. All these graphic devices do not directly constitute typical features of literary multilingualism. However, combined with Nemo and his friends' language uses, the graphic experimentation intensifies the estrangement effect experienced by the reader.

The analyses of *Still* revealed sixty-two foreign headwords (281 occurrences in total), among which the following stand out: eleven headwords for persons and relationships (42 occurrences in total) (*aina*, *clown*, *gajo*, *homie*, *koskesh*, *mangas*, *mavro*, *meckare*, *punani*, *señor*); five headwords for exclamations (105 occurrences in total): (*abou*, *aide*, *ey*, *pass*, *sho*); seven headwords for drugs (ninety occurrences in total) (*blaze*, *bushweed*, *joint*, *meck*, *moude*, *skurre*, *zutt*).² The most represented languages in *Still* are English, with thirty-four headwords and 150 occurrences, corresponding to 53.5% of the foreignisms attested in the novel. Among the most frequent Anglisms we have *joint*, *moude*, *shit*, *fucking*. The second most frequently occurring language is Romani, with nine headwords and thirty-three occurrences, accounting for 12% of foreignisms (*ava*,

¹ This probably depends on the setting: compared to Leiva Wenger and Khemiri's Stockholm, where Turkish has a strong status, the dominant language in Malmö is Arabic (Parkvall 2009, 89, 113, 153).

² In the novel we also find the wording *La la la*, which we have considered ambiguous since it is not certain, after careful analysis of the context in which it occurs, whether it refers to drugs.

beckna, jidra, haja, kera/kirra, lover, rakli, tjalla, tjura); Turkish, with four headwords and twenty-three occurrences, i.e. 8% of foreignisms (*abou, aina, cok, gitta*). Further languages featured are Arabic (*keff*), Spanish (*bravo, cojones, señor*), Farsi (*koskesh*), Greek (*aide*). The typical MS vocabulary detected in Sattarvandi's novel draws on a common linguistic pool shared with Leiva Wenger and Khemiri (*axa, banga, baxa, baza, beckna, ey, gitta, jidra/jiddra, keff, sho*), headwords now firmly established as part of *invandrarlitteratur* vocabulary. Along with *Kalla det vad fan du vill*, however, *Still* features the prevalence of English,³ which is morphologically adapted to Swedish (*checka, chilla, disrespecta, dissande, hooka, hypa, najs, outrot, pumpa, toucha, tripp, wanka*). In contrast, usually dominant languages in MS such as Arabic and Turkish only occur sporadically. Moreover, what distinguishes Sattarvandi from Leiva Wenger, Khemiri and Bakhtiari is essentially a mere biographical fact, i.e. that Nemo and his friends' mother tongue is not explicitly mentioned, thus his linguistic-cultural context of origin cannot be exactly established. Furthermore, *Still* differs from the other three works by a greater presence of Romani headwords (nine, as opposed to two in *Ett öga rött*).⁴

7.5 Concluding Remarks: MS as the Expression of a New Way to Frame Swedishness

In conclusion, this research has attempted at achieving its aims, providing a comprehensive examination of multilingualism within the selected Swedish literary works *Till vår ära* by Alejandro Leiva Wenger, *Ett öga rött* by Jonas Hassen Khemiri, *Kalla det vad fan du vill* by Marjaneh Bakhtiari, and *Still* by Hassan Loo Sattarvandi. Through detailed analysis, we have tried to elucidate the intricate relationship between literary language and its socio-cultural context, revealing how multilingualism serves as a significant textual element that challenges the monolingual paradigm that, nowadays, has come to be significantly criticised in Swedish literature. By dissecting the authors' stylistic choices and multilingual vocabulary, it has become evident that their use of diverse linguistic resources (typical elements from MS, foreignisms, creative compounds and derivations) is not merely an aesthetic decision but rather a deliberate and conscious act

³ Not surprisingly, by setting his novel in Hagalund, Sattarvandi reflects the multilingualism of Solna, where English is one of the most widely used languages (Parkvall 2009, 94, 119).

⁴ Contrary to Parkvall's findings (2009; 2019), Romani does not seem to be present in Solna.

of resistance against the prevailing norms that distances high-quality literature from writing with multilingual styles.

This study has also tried to underscore how the selected texts utilise multilingualism to shade new light on the dominant narrative surrounding literary quality in Sweden. Furthermore, it illustrates how the deterritorialisation of the Swedish language within these works serves to challenge and criticise the linguistic hierarchy, ultimately contributing to a richer understanding of identity, belonging, and expression in contemporary Swedish literature. The findings reveal that multilingualism is not just a stylistic flourish but a vital mechanism for authors to navigate, through idiolectic peculiarities, the complexities of cultural and linguistic identities in Sweden today, marking a significant contribution to the ongoing discourse on language, literature, and society.

Not surprisingly, the four works analysed have circulated little or not at all in translation outside Sweden and Scandinavia. Phonographic idiosyncrasies, code-switching, loanwords and morphosyntactic inaccuracies make these texts closer to Doris Sommer's (1999) conception of "particularist work", i.e. texts addressed to a relatively small group of readers who can navigate into its multilingualism. Particularist authors, as Sommer states, know their readers, but they also know who they are excluding, i.e. monolingual readers who do not have access to a text's multilingualism (Sommer 1999, 2). For this reason, particularist works do not circulate globally, but rather within a limited geography, reflecting on specific socio-linguistic realities, while also creating a unified discourse on the postmigrant experience beyond cultural, political and linguistic boundaries between Sweden (and Swedish) and the cultures that the country hosts (and their languages). As a matter of fact, particularist works do not circulate globally, but it doesn't mean that they do not have a global quality: as said, particularist works highlight how certain texts engage deeply with specific linguistic and cultural codes, seemingly narrowing their audience to those who share these references. However, through their multilingualism, such works can reach a much wider public. By embedding multiple languages and cultural nuances, they reflect the complex, multicultural reality of the society they emerge from. This linguistic hybridity, while appearing to cater to a particular group, invites a wider audience to recognize and engage with the pluralistic identities and experiences shaping Swedish society, transcending any single cultural or linguistic boundary.

In much the same way, if, as Sommer suggests, it is precisely those readers who struggle to understand foreignisms who get the most out of their reading, highlighting the active and progressive nature of reading, as opposed to a passively consumed reading (Sommer 2004, 30), it is possible to think that such readers get a richer and more engaging experience of literature, thus relating more actively to the

novel. However, regardless of the relationship readers create with the text, it is undeniable that these texts perform a profound cultural mediation, introducing Swedish-speaking readers to socio-cultural references typical of geographies and cultures located elsewhere.

The investigation of the selected texts does not fully explore the field of Swedish literary multilingualism. Far from aiming to show the linguistic developments of the contemporary Swedish novel as a whole, through the selection of a limited number of texts published in a specific period, this study has attempted to provide a basis for subsequent linguistic studies that can provide a comprehensive and up-to-date picture of certain new forms of literary expression within the Swedish literary landscape. Undoubtedly, new technologies and computational methodologies make it possible to handle and analyse large amounts of linguistic data, so hopefully stylistic investigations, especially on lexical aspects, can provide interesting new contributions to the field.

According to the linguist Olle Josephson, at least since 1970, the recent developments of contemporary Swedish (*Nusvenska*) have increasingly encountered changes and innovations posed by the advent of a multilingual society (*mångspråkigt samhälle*). In Sweden, Swedish remains the main language, but it is not the only one spoken and, furthermore, there are Swedish citizens who do not speak it as their mother tongue or do not speak it at all (2018).⁵ Josephson hints at the emergence of a new historical period in *Nusvenska*, which he does not precisely name. One question arising is to what extent, and for how long, will this designation remain valid? As the scholar Jörgen Birch-Jensen critically notes in a volume on the history of the Swedish language, one might wonder whether the use of the term *Nusvenska* does not suggest that

svenska språket har utvecklats färdigt och att vi inte kommer att behöva ytterligare benämningar för vårt språk längre fram. Men hur länge ska perioden kallas Nusvenska? Vad ska nästa period i svenskans historia kallas? (2007, 79)

The Swedish language has finished developing and that we will no longer need new designations for our language in the future. But

⁵ The modern history of the Swedish language is divided into *äldre nysvenska* (Early Modern Swedish, 1525-1732), *yngre nysvenska* (Late Modern Swedish, 1732-1879), and *nusvenska* (Contemporary Swedish, 1879-present). Traditionally, Early Modern Swedish is considered to begin with the translation of the New Testament (1526), while Late Modern Swedish starts with the publication of the periodical *Den Svenska Argus*, edited by Olof von Dalin (1732). Contemporary Swedish, on the other hand, begins with the publication of the novel *Det röda rummet* (The Red Room) by August Strindberg in 1879.

how long should the period be called *Nusvenska*? What should the next period in the history of Swedish be called?

Without delving further into Birch-Jensen's theory regarding the drawing of chronological and terminological boundaries in the historical periodisation of the Swedish language, in which he proposes subdividing *Nusvenska* into *nittionhundratalsvenska* and *tjugohundratalsvenska* (twentieth - and twenty-first-century Swedish), it is clear that the Swedish language has changed considerably over the last 120 years, especially in vocabulary. Equally evident is the question that arises: in what direction is the Swedish language heading today? Thanks to multilingual phenomena and multiculturalism, it is possible to envision as 'post-monolingual Swedish', the outcome of Sweden's current post-migrant transition. This new linguistic era, if we can acknowledge its advent, should be characterised by a greater awareness of monolingualism as the norm. If we are currently witnessing the extensive use of multilingualism by many young people in a social landscape marked by a high degree of diversity, and if we are seeing the use of multilingualism in literary and audiovisual works of international success, then we might agree with Bijvoet's prediction (2003) that we could be in the midst of a process where a different way of speaking will progressively become conventionalised. Constituted as a plurality of elements, MS refute the monolingual paradigm without proposing a multilingual one but rather dismantle the idea that we must think according to mono - or multilingual paradigms.

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Scandinavica venetiana

1. Ciaravolo, Massimo (2022). *Libertà, gabbie, vie d'uscita. Letteratura scandinava della modernità e della città: 1866-1898.*
2. Salmoiraghi, Davide (2024). *“Dámusta saga”. La saga islandese di Dámusti, il Cavaliere della Vergine.*

In contemporary Sweden, migration and linguistic diversity have reshaped society and culture. This volume explores how these transformations emerge in literature through multilingual practices. Focusing on works by Leiva Wenger, Khemiri, Bakhtiari, and Sattarvandi, the volume analyses code-switching, strategies for conveying multiple languages, and hybrid registers as negotiations of identity, belonging, and resistance. Multilingualism appears here as both a stylistic device and a political stance, redefining what Swedish literature can be and revealing the complex interplay between language, identity, and (self-)representation in the postmigrant condition.

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