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LANGUAGE, LITERATURE, AND INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES (LLIDS)

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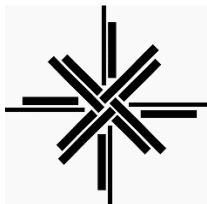
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Deeksha Suri & Md. Faizan Moquim

The genesis of enquiries into trauma in academia can be traced back to the last few decades of the twentieth century where particular circumstances and implications of trauma were studied with reference to wars, postcolonialism, political and social tragedies as well as feminist studies. The etymology of the word trauma, from the root “*trau*,” refers to hurt through “twisting” or “piercing” that later comes to be associated with “a sense of psychic wound,” a self-shattering experience of violence or harm (Harper). The foundational claims of trauma’s conceptualizations primarily understand it as an experience that is overwhelming and yet fails to register itself as an “experience” in the first place. Caruth explains traumatic experience as something that “does not simply serve as record of the past but precisely registers the force of an experience that is not yet fully owned” (151). It is unintelligible—“not yet fully owned”—because it cannot be integrated into consciousness and remains absent as the conscious memory fails to encode the traumatic event, thereby indicating an *elision*.

This unintelligibility of trauma, as an ambiguous gap that is left open after the event, sustains itself within modes of representation as the unrepresentable which implies a revision of everything understandable by our conscious memory about one’s being as well as one’s circumstances. It is the question of unrepresentability of traumatic experience within a discourse that allows for further engagements with matrix of questions in relation to victimhood, nature of violence, disrupted memory, and its effect on psyche. Retrospective responses to confront trauma through its articulation therefore throw into relief a void that is contoured by a sense of ensuing estrangement and absolute loss. These retrospective modes of confrontation serve the purpose of relieving the blockade imposed by the traumatic event by placing them within the familiar vocabulary of our self-constructed worlds. Narrative voices inscribed within these responses may have many facets: fractured, reflective, critiquing, or commenting on the different stages of narration that objectively evince the consciousness of a subject. While it is hard to reach a consensus over arguments concerning the authenticity of narrated experience or the extent of truth in a crafted narrative—owing to the possibilities of fractured and/or partial point of view of the author—the articulations of trauma through these individual acts of writing and recollection contribute creatively to the collective memory at epistemological, individual, social, and political levels.

The inadequacy of language in representing trauma impels renewed expressions of traumatic experiences through various symbolic, semiotic, and structural paradigms. These renewed expressions witness trauma either as a deferral in articulating extreme traumatic events—which Caruth, drawing upon Freud, interprets to be temporal delay and repetition, if not an absence of response altogether—or comprehend its expressions and responses by weighing in cultural and social factors, thereby contributing to the plurality of its representations. These representations of trauma are responsive to historical memory of culturally and socially specific violence, personal abuse and crisis, along with the oral and written codes of their expression.

Personal crises within geopolitical conflicts, ecological imbalances, political suppressions, and other such factors provide a pluralistic understanding of trauma and its effects on isolated individuals. Shared sympathies towards the survivors through these narratives help build a community that fosters a reintegration of the victims after their alienating experiences of trauma. Even though they are a seminal part of our mental constructs, these narratives of trauma can be voiced or grasped only through their causes or effects. This causal structure of a self-shattering traumatic event, as well as the gradual rendition of its individual articulations, manages to generate an intricate understanding of who we are and how we are transitioning through the recognition and acknowledgement of our experience. Susan Rubin Suleiman aptly claims: “trauma is not only a drama of past event, but also, even primarily, a drama of survival” (280). Writing trauma narratives, therefore, becomes a process of integrating the past with the present for the purpose of healing by registering the intensity of the traumatic event within one’s consciousness and regenerating an individual to look towards its future. This position critiques the premise that traumatic experiences resist narrativization owing to their unsayable elements by focusing on its therapeutic or healing potential through articulation.

Life writings have generated a new focus on trauma that allows for an understanding of the question of agency as well as its limits. Recognition and redescription of the traumatic episodes through writing get formulated both as personal recollections and collective cultural documentations of personal testimonies. Trends of narrativization and scholarship generally explore ideological contestations within political memory, forgetting, re-presenting history, and identity politics. First person accounts of trauma confront the issues of silence, resistance, shame, and activism, while narrative undertakings of collective suffering shift power dynamics, question the hierarchy, break the silence, and critically respond to socio-political structures. Therefore, attempts at their articulation are not merely contributions to particular moments in history but substantial moments in themselves. Readings of such narratives encourage relativity and consolidation as they appeal to the emotional and ethical sensibility of the readers who, situated in different social and cultural contexts themselves, are made to identify with these narratives of trauma.

The universalizing tendencies inherent in the critical discourses of trauma-theory in 1990s, are now being increasingly contested for their narrow Euro-American conceptual and historical frameworks. The concepts and cultural expressions originating beyond Eurocentric conventions are distinct from the already existing moulds of narrativization and theorization. They encapsulate nuances that remain particular to the issues of caste, class, gender, religion, migration, and militancy among others. This constituted duality of Western and non-Western narratives of trauma highlights the attempts of existing discourse to attend to the dynamics of traumatic experiences attached to variegated social backgrounds, peripheral groups, multiple levels of oppression, and transgenerational impact which are discussed as the conditions of their possibility. The present range of trauma studies, and its initial critical agendas surrounding Holocaust and Western diktats, thereby gets a breadth that navigates through historiographies, limits of self-representations, identity-formations, and self-reflexivity. The sense of aesthetics, experimented with and implemented by thinkers and writers across different

geographical regions, struggles to develop this space for narrative, non-narrative, descriptive, and non-descriptive forms of expression, which respond to culturally specific sense of both mourning as well as healing. Their styles of expression, and their focus on experiential testimonials along with the trauma of witnessing evolve new dimensions and frameworks that lie beyond Western traditions of writing.

This broadening of trauma theory also revolves around the problematic of scale and the agency of the survivors in its call to decolonize trauma by working within the spectrum of histories around “colonial traumas such as dispossession, forced migration, diaspora, slavery, segregation, racism, political violence and genocide” (Craps and Beulens 3). In addition to mounting a challenge to the assumed universal commensurability of first-generation trauma scholarship, scholars now seek to deconstruct the ethical imperatives of classical trauma theory by moving beyond the traumatic experiences of white westerners to those of Global South. Craps and Beulens argue that “the study of trauma has traditionally tended to focus on individual psychology. Colonial trauma, however, is a collective experience, which means that its specificity cannot be recognized unless the object of trauma research shifts from the individual to larger social entities, such as communities or nations” (4). Connected with the scale of trauma research is the question of agency of survivors. The problem with classical models of trauma is succinctly put by Balaev: “One result of trauma’s classic conundrum accordingly removes agency from the survivor’s knowledge of the experience and the self, which restricts trauma’s variability and ignores the diverse values that change over time” (6). In moving beyond the unrepresentability claim of early trauma thinkers we recognize the agency of survivors in the possibility of finding means and modes of recuperating from and representing trauma.

The field of Trauma Studies has shaped through shared intellectual concerns. The papers in this Issue showcase distinct interpretations of trauma. Drawing upon Arthur Frank and Rita Charon’s work, Shannon R. Wooden’s paper seeks to employ the close reading competencies with a view to read traumatic silence in George Saunders’s short story “Home.” Taking into consideration how classroom pedagogy can help train one in ethics of listening, Wooden demonstrates how literature enables us to read imaginative as well as real life stories in such a way that one may empathize with the suffering of others. Cristina Morales and Octavi Rofes’s paper analyses Lina Meruane’s writings on Palestine to develop a larger critique of world literature and the singularity of her discourse within it. The paper explores different aspects of autobiographical writing, such as collective autobiography and displaced autobiography, to trace her journey of personal and literary associations as well as dissociations. It explores the nature of a literary work as a dimension of life writing that contributes to the creation of a world instead of merely being a part of the general structure of world literature. The sense of becoming in her writings deals with the associations she forms with Palestine instead of simply returning to her roots. The aspect of ‘becoming Palestine’ thereby revises the dynamics of affiliation and evolution, which in turn introduces a new perception of world literature.

In the non-themed section of the journal, Noraedén Mora Méndez attempts to demonstrate the love and friendship between languages along with the loss of meaning in the process of translation with the example of the Spanish word ‘duelo,’ which means ‘mourning’ as well as ‘duel.’ By using the psychoanalytical theories of mourning,

melancholia, and crypt in the works of Sigmund Freud, Nicholas Abraham, and Maria Torok, two short stories by Jorge Louis Borges about the two different meanings of ‘duelo’ are closely read to argue for a cryptic translation, which strives for a friendship that acknowledges the alterity between languages. Benjamin Duke and Saumya Tewari’s paper attempts to analyze the UK’s trade negotiation with Commonwealth countries, especially India, in post-Brexit scenario. Positioning the discourse in the changing landscape of the UK’s relation with the European Union and its previous colonies, they employ a post-colonial lens to argue for better developmental opportunities for India in this scenario along with the UK’s attempts to absolve its colonial guilt.

This Issue continues Volume 5 with the theme of trauma within the purview of life writings. The next Issue of this volume will focus on Travel and Life Writing. This attempt towards a sustained discourse on Life Writing through this volume allows us to develop a critique based on multiple perspectives, ideas and experimental styles of writing. We are thankful to all our contributors for bringing this Issue to shape: our authors, peer reviewers, advisory editorial board, and team members have outstretched themselves to work towards this Issue and we appreciate their earnest efforts. We wish happy reading to all our readers.

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Benjamin Duke (bd158@leicester.ac.uk) holds a PhD in Social Policy (2017) from Keele University, United Kingdom (UK). He works for University of Leicester, at the Institute for Inclusivity in Higher Education (ULIHE); and has previously worked for the University of Nottingham, at the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Nottingham Biomedical Research Centre, UK (2021); University College London, UK on the Global Disability Innovation Hub (2020); University of Northampton UK, on the BAME higher education attainment gap project (2020); University of Nottingham UK, at the Centre for Research in Race and Rights (2019).

Cristina Morales (cristina.dinu1@s.unibuc.ro) is a doctoral candidate in Comparative Literature at Universitat de Barcelona, Spain, whose project explores alternative forms of comparative analysis in the field of World Literature. Her research centers on the meaning of world caught up in “world literature,” aiming to redefine the central term of the Comparative Literature discipline in order to offer a more literary-centered approach. She is Associate Professor at Eina, Centre Universitari de Disseny i Art, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain, and her academic works analyze the impact literary worlds have over our ordinary realities.

Noraedén Mora Méndez (moramend@usc.edu) is a doctoral candidate in the Comparative Studies in Literature and Culture program at University of Southern California, USA. She holds a B.A. in Psychology (Andrés Bello Catholic University, Venezuela), and an M.A. in Cultural and Critical Studies (Birkbeck, University of London, UK). Her approach is transdisciplinary and her interests include the intersections between literature, visuality, and philosophy with a focus on Latin America. She is interested in translation and editing as practices that imply collaboration, mourning, and contamination. Her current research focuses on the motif of the *passage* in aesthetic works to establish a conversation about Venezuela and its borders, media and temporality.

Octavi Rofes (orofes@eina.cat) is an anthropologist. He is Professor at Eina, Centre Universitari de Disseny i Art, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain. He earned his doctorate from Universitat de Barcelona, Spain in 2015. His research is focused on describing the processes of production of locality through artistic practices and the conflicts of representation in the contemporary world. Since then his area of study has been Palestine; he is conducting an ethnographic research on mobility and the poetics of infrastructures.

Saumya Tewari (tewari.saumya@gmail.com) holds a PhD in Development Studies (2020) from Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, India. She is an early career researcher, Honorary Fellow with the Centre for Multilevel Federalism, Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi; and member of the Advisory Board at the Forum for Global Studies, New Delhi. She teaches Political Science and has worked as policy analyst and writer for IndiaSpend, a data journalism initiative. Her research interests include gender, public policy, political economy reforms, and comparative politics.

Shannon R. Wooden (srwooden@missouristate.edu) is Professor of English at Missouri State University, where she directs the programs in Literature and Disability Studies. Her research and publications address literature, popular culture, medicine, disability, and gender. Dr. Wooden is currently working on an analysis of disabled masculinity at the turn of the 21st century, exemplified by the television show *Breaking Bad*, as well as a reflection on teaching in the pandemic as both professor and mother to reluctant online students.

Reading Silences of Suffering: Narrative Medicine Approach to George Saunders's "Home"

Shannon R. Wooden | Missouri State University

<http://ellids.com/archives/2022/09/5.2-Wooden.pdf>

Abstract | Literary writers have for centuries professed literary language's unique ability to convey those aspects of the human condition which are too deep, complex, or painful to simply tell. From Romantic poets insisting on literature's divine vision of truth to Virginia Woolf's exhortation to "turn to the poets" for language compatible with the inexpressible experience of illness, writers have championed the pleasure, the mutuality, and the ambiguity of reading as paths to these profound human experiences and the potential ethicality of reading/listening well. More recently, interdisciplinary thinkers in medical settings have explored the specific tension between a suffering person's urgent need to speak their suffering and the limits of language's capacity to convey its depth and complexity. This essay borrows from medical sociologist Arthur Frank, and the founding director of Columbia University's Program in Narrative Medicine, Rita Charon, the purposeful critical vocabulary they have lent to this ongoing conversation. Frank describes various narrative shapes that may contain the "chaotic" disruption that illness, injury, and trauma may make into a person's life, but even more powerful is the attempt to honor the chaos itself. In the classroom, such an endeavor may provide rich ethical training for readers, students, and teachers alike. In this paper, I read George Saunders's short story "Home" as exemplary of this practice, arguing that attention to the silences and gaps where trauma cannot be spoken affords a teaching tool for cultivating empathy, within and beyond the classroom.

Keywords | George Saunders, "Home," Short Fiction, American Literature, Trauma, Suffering, Narrative Medicine, Narrative Practice, Pedagogy

Trained in nineteenth-century literature before simultaneously widening and narrowing my interest to the literature(s) of disability, illness, and trauma, I have been drawn to the way that writers since the Romantic period have been encouraging an art form of linguistic gestures toward the ineffable: Shelley's sense that language, though a "more direct" artistic medium than most, nonetheless casts only a "feeble shadow" of the poet's thoughts, Wordsworth's insistence that poetry can convey thoughts that lie "too deep for tears," or Keats's need to dwell in the ambiguities of art with "negative capability" rather than "irritably reaching after fact or reason" (Shelley 874, 880; Wordsworth 352; Keats 1017). Writers talking specifically about pain and suffering likewise lament the paradoxical necessity and inadequacy of language. Virginia Woolf, in her essay "On Being Ill" which appeared a hundred years after "Defense of Poetry," bemoans not only a "poverty" of vocabulary that limits our ability to articulate our suffering but a lack of narrative tools with which to communicate illness experiences (34); Tim O'Brien's "How to Tell a True War Story," coming nearly three-quarters of a century later, describes the truth of war as "beyond telling" and the tragedy being "people who never listen" (79; 91). For all such writers, the real work of literary language is to move us toward the mysterious impossibility of empathy, i.e., to exercise, in Shelley's metaphor, that "instrument of moral good"—the imagination—by allowing us to "intensely and comprehensively" occupy experiences that are not our own (877). Well over two hundred years after the publication of *Lyrical Ballads*, George Saunders calls literature "empathy training wheels," a "compassion-generating machine" that allows us to "continually push ourselves in the direction of Open the Hell Up" ("What's On George Saunders' Bookshelf?"). My education—nearly equal parts Romantic and Victorian literature, critical theory, contemporary short fiction, and creative writing—accounts for my equal affection for Shelley and Saunders and explains this thread across centuries. Coupled with this is my own discovery—I was offered opportunities to study the emerging field of "narrative medicine" in the late 1990s and early 2000s—of yet another language for literature's empathic gesture.

Recognizing the inadequacy of language to express trauma and suffering, and yet finding the collaborative work of story-building essential to healing and care, thinkers like Arthur Frank explain how impossible it is to speak suffering even as the suffering person urgently needs to find and to become an empathic "witness" (37). Identifying a variety of responses to the traumatic disruptions that illness can cause, Frank describes specific narrative shapes that people commonly use to speak about their illness experiences and the potential ethical ramifications of each such telling: a "restitution" story of illness does different work from a "quest" story, using different narrative elements and patterns. In 2000, Columbia University's Program in Narrative Medicine emerged under the direction of Rita Charon, whose *Narrative Medicine: Honoring the Stories of Illness* further articulates a method for applying the close reading skills of

literary scholarship to the numerous storytelling occasions that arise from and comprise modern Western medicine. Even though it is enough to respect narrative medicine as a purposeful rethinking of the role of the arts and humanities in medical education, I like to hear of it as an answer to Wordsworth's hope that poets continue "lend[ing] their divine spirit" to our world where human suffering has become bedfellows with the science and technology of medicine (313). Furthermore, it invites all of us, readers and teachers of literature, to channel the power of what we do toward critically listening to, and thus in some small way alleviating, each other's suffering.

This essay builds an argument that literary language is uniquely suited to express trauma, and that post-structural literary language offers a fertile soil for such expressions. Its power lies not just in providing the narrative shapes that Frank describes, but, in the manner of the Romantics, by its gesturing toward the unspeakable and, in a more postmodernist way, by its self-conscious play. The gaps, silences, disruptions, evocations, connotations, and play that characterize contemporary literary works can evoke the sense of languagelessness of trauma. Saunders's works frequently turn abruptly from satire to compassion, surprising readers with their insight into the suffering of richly multidimensional characters. If we believe in the possibility of hearing the unspoken truth in complex literary texts, and also feel that such hearing may be ethically valuable, we must aspire to teach readers to listen for it, and Saunders's work provides a case study for the same.

Reading Suffering: Teaching with Narrative Medicine

Narrative medicine begins with the idea that identity itself is a narrative construct. Even if subconscious and unspoken, people's sense of who they are lies in the story of where they've been and where they're going, along with their selection of details that come together to build their sense of self in a coherent way. This is the fundamental shape of medical practice too. As Charon explains, every intern who asks "what brought you into the clinic today" knows that they expect to hear a story and not "the M104 bus" ("Narrative Medicine: Attention, Representation, Affiliation" 261). But "into any story generally predicated on health," Frank writes, illness may cause "narrative wreckage" (53). Those who provide healthcare to suffering people should focus on the wrecked story, and their treatment goals must include revising the patient's story back into something coherent. Charon states: "Without narrative acts, the patient cannot convey to anyone else what he or she is going through. More radically and perhaps equally true, without narrative acts, the patient cannot himself or herself grasp what the events of narrative mean" (*Narrative Medicine: Honoring the Stories of Illness* 13). For Charon, then, the narrative is in fact essential to medical care, "in order to offer compassionate and effective care to the sick" (13).

Acute suffering, Frank claims, generates an "anti-narrative," a "chaotic" and narrative-resistant shape that can never truly be told, "only [...] lived" (98). This "chaos narrative" nonetheless represents the rawest and most urgent stories of suffering, the most authentic and the most in need of a hearing. Illness is rarely experienced simply and in accordance with these tidy patterns; even when it is not chronic, suffering is seldom linear and seldom returns the sufferer to the same place where she was when the wreckage occurred. The story of wreckage itself demands witness. If that chaotic sense of one's life story arrested or rerouted by the unexpected contingency of the body is a defining

characteristic of suffering, how can we listen only to stories that have resolved? "Until the chaos narrative can be honored, the world in all its possibilities is being denied" (Frank 109).

Most published illness stories fit into one of two narrative shapes: "restitution" patterns, stories of getting better, and, particularly in belletristic writing, "quest" patterns, wherein the ill storyteller learns something upon the illness journey valuable enough to give the said journey. When authentic, these stories are satisfying to hear and can be ethical in their telling; indeed, Frank sees the quest narrative as the ideal vessel for the ideal patient type: a person who can come back from the journey of illness as a witness and advocate for others (126–127). But if forced or phony, they can be sharply limiting for the suffering person.

The impact of such practice on medicine is enormous: "to deny a chaos story is to deny the person telling this story, and people who are being denied cannot be cared for" (Frank 109). The Romantic in me therefore, at least at times, believes that the good of such work may apply far more broadly. Guiding people toward more ethical experiences with suffering through a close reading of narratives in various forms may indeed "strengthen the [...] moral nature of man" regardless of discipline or profession and could lead us all toward more ethical lives (Shelley 877). We can learn (and teach) how to identify and read chaos narratives to ever more ethical ends in our own lives and relationships. Our job is neither to diagnose nor provide medical care, nor even to offer psychotherapeutic support, but we can practice ethicality nonetheless through the critical development of active 'listening' strategies and close reading competencies.

Since I came of age with nearly equal affection for the Romantic manifestos and post-structural theory's general distrust of language, I am entirely at home with the idea that literary language's greatest successes are rooted in its failure. Therefore, my self-professed Romanticism, at least on most days, is neither nostalgic nor naïve. What I find most profound about literature is its attempt to illuminate the complexities of the human heart and mind, even in full awareness of such an attempt's impossibility. The question of suffering, to my mind, provides a perfect test case, augmented by the fact that reading literature's gestures toward suffering has potential benefits far beyond simply appreciating the beautiful mysteries of existence. What I have discovered through more than a decade of teaching with narrative medicine is not only that close reading of literary form and technique can be a productive way into the meanings of chaos, but that the work of literature and the work of creative writing—and of that hybrid middle-term, creative nonfiction—can augment one another in the pursuit of ethical goals.

How can pedagogical techniques invite readers into the unspoken spaces of suffering, and how can we learn to read in such a way that engenders empathy not only in terms of parasocial reactions to texts but practical strategies that could help oneself and others? To offer an answer to these questions, I explicate George Saunders's short story "Home"—borrowing a close reading strategy from Saunders himself—to highlight its methods of recreating the chaotic experience of trauma. The story simultaneously gives information and withholds it, suggests linearity and disrupts it, creates tension and undermines it, and plays with the tension between intellectual control and bodily intrusion. In so doing, it creates a narrative that tells something besides itself: it speaks of traumas, past and ongoing, which it never actually describes. In my teaching, I find

that focusing on the way the protagonist's suffering circles around the impossibility of language leads the readers to a position of ethical witness, seeing, as much as we can, the pain that cannot be spoken and the suffering made worse by the frustrated search for its own expression. The story is unyielding but nonetheless demands a particular kind of listening. In its refusal to speak, paradoxically, it creates spaces in the silence for such listening to occur.

In the classroom, I group this story with similarly perplexing ones: Joyce Carol Oates's "I. D." and Louise Aaronson's "An American Problem," for instance, enhance the lesson on "Home" while benefitting themselves from the juxtaposition. In a different grouping and with a different approach, I have also taught "Home" as exemplary of the pressures of masculinity, the protagonist being an example of the toxicity of hegemonic norms. Similar traits can be seen in other veteran stories or stories of PTSD: O'Brien's *The Things They Carried* seems like an obvious choice. In our discussion of the structures and frustrations of the language(s) of trauma, however, I find greater depth and richer applications. Such an approach beautifully unlocks the text, creates a powerful model for creative writers, and rewards students of literature with a sense of how the work of literary criticism matters in the so-called real world.

In my own life—as a teacher and advisor, spouse, daughter, parent, stepparent, and co-parent—I reap personal rewards from this practice, frequently finding myself employing this critical technique in my nonprofessional life. Listening “with stories,” as Frank says, may give me insight into what an angry or hurt child is *trying* to say when they are using words they don't literally mean or when they lack language for a story they need to tell (23; emphasis in original). Recognizing chaos in the nonlinear narration of a complex and emotionally charged problem helps me to know when to generously listen and when to intervene. What truth may emerge from silences, gaps, ungoverned emotional expression, words unspoken or unknown or not even in existence, if we learn to listen in and through the chaos of suffering!

Suffering in the Silences of “Home”

George Saunders's first craft book, *A Swim in a Pond in the Rain*, issues an arguably neo-Romantic manifesto. Though widely hailed as a distinctly postmodern satirist, Saunders nonetheless reaches for the unsung truth of the human heart even through his strange assortment of possible worlds. The world we readers and writers live in, he says, at least the “essence of [its] realism,” is made up not of objective facts but by “consensus,” a shared heuristic that makes even language possible. Fiction, then, affords a smooth slide to an exploration of human truth by slightly altering that “consensus reality” (*Swim* 275). The “psychological physics” of created worlds can align with the consensual realities of our actual shared space, even if superficial “realism” is eschewed, and we can perceive “truth” in the disruptions of “strangeness” into an ostensibly ordinary world: “It's like a prose version of the theory of relativity,” he explains. “No fixed, objective, “correct” viewpoint exists; an unbalanced narrator describes, in an unbalanced voice, the doings of a cast of unbalanced characters. In other words, like life” (276–77; 282). Language in all its messiness offers countless examples of how any real (empathic) communication must transcend the particular viewpoints that govern the worlds we can see (283).

To address the "messiness" and contingency of language, Saunders says, two models of writing may emerge. The first (arguably evoking the aspirations of the Romantics), is when "we strive upward to express ourselves, precisely, at the highest levels of language" (*Swim* 288). But Saunders's own approach is to celebrate the "poetry" in the flaws: to "surrender to our natural [flawed] mode of expression" and from it make a "not-right" machine that has a true statement inside it and truth in its "not-rightness" (288). With the Romantics, Saunders sees literary exploration as a "vital moral-ethical tool," a force that resists our "degraded era," particularly its superficiality and neglect of human complexity (5).

Saunders opens *A Swim in a Pond in the Rain* with a page-by-page explication of Anton Chekov's "In the Cart," meticulously describing how he teaches this nineteenth-century Russian story to his twenty-first-century creative writing workshop students. I borrow his model as a way into what I find one of his most moving stories. "Home," published in the *New Yorker* and in his 2013 National Book Award finalist, *Tenth of December*, follows a young American veteran recently returned from the Middle East. Haunted by an unspoken trauma at Al-Raz, Mike finds the rest of his life also upended: his mother and her new live-in boyfriend are being evicted, his ex-wife and children have made a life with his old friend Evan, his sister and her extremely wealthy husband are afraid of him and won't even let him hold their new baby. As he struggles to respond to these changes, he is painfully aware of the shame and rage that seem to take over his body, and he is frightened of his inability to control emotions that manifest as violent impulses. Mike is a dangerous man with a traumatized psyche, so one might assume that Saunders's story is a critique of war. As Saunders says of the Russians, "Home" is indeed "resistance literature," but I argue that its critique of war is less radical than its affirmation of Saunders's basic principle: that "every human being is worthy of attention" (*Swim* 4).

Beginning "Home" a section at a time, as Saunders does with "In the Cart," we can analyze how the whole story is obsessed with language, how people may fetishize what it's for and nonetheless fail to realize its potential. Teaching the story through Mike's struggles within hegemonic masculinity may illuminate how Mike's suffering, as well as his apparent crime/sin, stem from a hyperbolic definition of male success: having become an exaggeration of the strong, silent, violent (military) protector, he has lost his wife, kids, economic standing, and mental health. With a narrative medicine approach, however, I can invite students into a conversation even more wide-reaching: how may suffering ever be alleviated if it comes from a story that can't be told?

"Home" explores language from the very opening scene, a comic account not only of whose "home" Mike has returned to but whose language matters, and how, and to whom. Upon arriving at his mother's kitchen window, Mike learns that one of the few things to have changed in his mother's unkempt household is her use of profanity. Surrounded by Saunders's signature weirdness—hangers jutting out of the oven, a hunting bow and Halloween costume on the bed—she says, "Still ain't no beeping cleaning lady" (169). When Mike responds with a funny look to this unusual phrasing, she retorts/explains: "Beep you [...]. They been on my case at work." The "beeping" is fond, blunt, and funny, but the conversation that follows is subtly unsettling, built of unanswered questions, contradictions, and—suddenly, surprisingly—the premise that language is intrinsically connected to one's authentic self, or at least the presentation

thereof, and the sense that one may be accepted or rejected based on others' interpretations of the (spoken) self, authentic or not.

"Who's this?" [Ma's boyfriend] said.

"My son," Ma said shyly. "Mikey, this is Harris."

"What's your worst thing you ever did over there?" Harris said.

"What happened to Alberto?" I said.

"Alberto flew the coop," Ma said.

"Alberto showed his ass," Harris said.

"I hold nothing against that beeper," Ma said.

"I hold a lot against that fucker," Harris said. "Including he owes me ten bucks."

"Harris ain't dealing with his potty mouth," Ma said.

"She's only doing it because of work," Harris explained.

"Harris don't work," Ma said.

"Well, if I did work, it wouldn't be at a place that tells me how I can talk," Harris said. "It would be at a place that lets me talk how I like. A place that accepts me for who I am." (170)

The dialogue continues so quickly into Ma's complaining about Harris's laziness that there's no space to reflect on that assertion of his authenticity, and Harris is soon enough determined to be lazy and dishonest, if friendly, so his insistence on being "who he is" at work feels ironic (since "who he is" wouldn't hold a job anyway). The scene is establishing: Harris is a jovial deadbeat, Ma is brassy and brash, and Mike is vaguely uncomfortable in his old house. While the scene hints at the "worst thing" that haunts Mike, it does more to set the serio-comic tone of the story than to provide any necessary expository information.

Over the next few pages, similarly humorous, the themes of naming, interpreting, and truth-telling continue to accumulate: whose house it is and who can speak for it, who's sick and with what and who knows, and who's lying and about what and why. The idea of talking "how [one] like[s]" where one is "accept[ed] for who [they are]," however glossed over in the dialogue where it originates, nonetheless persists as a theme. As section one gives way to section two, the relationship between language and truth becomes even more snarled. In section two, these questions of truthful language, while still comical, also take on bodily significance: "He told the mailman I had a fake leg. He told Eileen at the deli one of my eyes was glass. He told the guy at the hardware I get fainting dealies and froth at the mouth whenever I get mad. Now he's always trying to rush me out of there" (174). Ma does a jumping jack to demonstrate that she doesn't have a brain tumor, then claims that Renee's husband is abusive but insists, "You didn't hear it from me" (174).

The ensuing squabble between Ma and Harris over the gender uninterpretability of the infant Martney layers more comedy, more linguistic confusion, and more potential bodily significance. Since the unorthodox name yields no clue as to the infant's gender, and the color of clothing is likewise uninformative, Ma turns to the semiotics of toys:

"Think. What did we buy it?"

"You'd think I'd know boy or girl," Harris said. "It being my freaking grandkid."

"It ain't your grandkid," Ma said. "We bought it a boat."

"A boat could be for boys or girls," Harris said. "Don't be prejudice. A girl can love a boat. Just like a boy can love a doll. Or a bra." (175)

I invite students to dive into the indeterminacy of this entire section. In the next section, an exhausted Mike asks his sister, "Jesus. Does anybody tell the truth around here?" (180). I daresay readers share his frustration. Claims collapse on themselves: Ma appears willing to lie about having called Harris a liar and Ryan a "hitter" (174); Harris's ostensible compliment of Mike ("I love him like my own son," he says) turns immediately into an insult ("you hate your son," Ma reminds him (171)), and his magnanimous scold about "prejudice" undermines itself not only by the grammatical error but by its bizarre extension to the idea that anyone would ever buy a baby a bra as a plaything (174). Moreover, the intrusion of physical bodies into these failing linguistic constructs highlights the divide between embodied selves and any interpretive language that could be used to understand them. Even the most ominous of signifiers fly around without attaching to anything as bodies persist beneath them: a name, a color, a toy might mean an entire identity to young Martney, or not; a fist beside one's head may mean a fatal illness, or not; a jumping jack may mean good health, or not; Ryan may abuse his wife, or not. The language that just will not connect to truth could otherwise, it would seem, shape an identity, save a life, or protect someone from domestic violence.

None of these questions ever resolves. Does Ryan hit Renee? (She says, "does that look like a hitter?" (179)) Is Martney male or female? (Ma answers with: "Watch. He really don't know." (174)) Is Ma ill? (Renee tells Mike it's not a tumor, it's her heart, but this contradicts both Harris and Ma herself.) Readers, with Mike, are looking around for someone to trust, someone with factual information, but there is never a corroborating or a reassuring voice, only an "unbalanced narrator [...] and unbalanced voice, [and] a cast of unbalanced characters" (282) Saunders builds realism in the very fact that "no fixed, objective, 'correct' viewpoint exists" (*Swim* 282).

So far, just over five pages into a 32-page story, little has really *happened*. But Saunders has done more than make us laugh, more than set up the precariousness of the "home" Mike seeks. He's made language so playful as to be nearly useless—lies comprise at least one character's "hobby" while the text itself refuses to answer questions (173)—while also suggesting both directly and by example that what a person says not only expresses but shapes who they are intrinsically. Furthermore, bodies disrupt the consensually interpreted spaces where an identity may try to articulate itself: gender, illness, and trauma demand to be interpreted lest their presence 'wreck' the emerging self-story. In other words, Saunders has built a deceptively comic vehicle to house the deeply existential crisis of the story, which is also at the heart of Frank's notion of identity-wreckage: if one's words can't speak what their body is experiencing, and the body must speak itself, with or without words or narrative control, what happens to the self? Is it knowable? Is it safe? For Mike, the question is one of literal violence: what might he *do*, with or without his own consent?

Mike's postmilitary body is the site of the story's most inaccessible trauma, and as such it sustains the most painful conflict between pain and language. Mike's traumatic response is, by his own description, so bodily as to circumvent consciousness: his "plan[s] start flowing directly down to [his] hands and feet," urging a feeling of "go go go" toward aggression and violence (182). This brutish psychomotor response contrasts

dramatically with the polite hollowness of the lip service he keeps getting for his military work. No fewer than six iterations of “Thank you for your service” are peppered throughout the story: the man evicting Ma says it twice as he moves the family’s belongings to the yard, the sheriff following up on the eviction says it and then reminds Ma he’s already said it, Ryan’s dad says it, and the young men Mike first encounters in the strange technology shop say it too, though they don’t know what war, whether it’s over, or whether “we” are “winning” (184). What does it mean that Mike’s urgent, languageless physical trauma response is met with entirely performative language? I argue that, as Frank states about illness, while the sufferer’s trauma aches to be articulated into interpretability, disengaged bystanders prefer using a familiar (and superficial) script for complex and chaotic pain that allows them to comfortably misinterpret and oversimplify the sufferer’s experience. Each rote profession of performative gratitude further isolates Mike from the world to which he has returned “home.”

Two more scenes particularly deserve the sort of deep dive that Saunders models with “In the Cart.” First, when Mike seeks an audience with Evan/”Asshole” in section 8, their strained conversation makes Mike’s need to speak but his inability to find either words or a willing listener more painfully obvious. “Are we being honest [...] or tiptoeing around conflict?” Evan says, but even though Mike says “honest,” he never actually gets the chance to speak again (187). Instead, he just opens the door to Evan’s self-indulgent narration: “It was hard for me because I felt like a shit [...] It was hard for her because she felt like a shit. It was hard for us because while feeling like shits we were also feeling all the other things we were feeling, which, I assure you, were and are as real as anything, a total blessing, if I can say it that way” (187). Faced with Evan’s discomfort at having married Mike’s wife, taken his kids, and made a new life without him, Mike turns his pain inward and starts to feel bad for Evan. Though it is not an idea fully developed in the story, Frank’s ideal patient, a “wounded storyteller,” is imbued with a sense that his own trauma can make him a witness for others. I think in this moment we can see Mike not as the “chump” he feels like but as a protagonist who is, even amidst the chaos of his own trauma, potentially closer to being an ethical listener than anyone else in the story. At least, thus reading this moment subtly illuminates numerous other examples of Mike’s empathic tendencies, which will eventually enhance both his allegorical memory of raking tadpoles out of a pond, and the ending, where seeing his mother falter triggers his quick, climactic turn (199–201).

The second moment I zoom in on is actually two paired sections where realism is disrupted by strangeness and we catch a glimpse of the Saunders of *In Persuasion Nation* and *Civilwarland in Bad Decline*. In an unintelligible shop where uninterpretable merchandise takes us to the edge of near-future consumer capitalist dystopia, it seems that Mike might find his partner in conversation, both the auditor he seeks and an occasion to bear witness to a similar sufferer. The two scenes repeat several lines nearly verbatim, though the characters are different apart from Mike. In the first, the dialogue plunges readers into a world of linguistic indeterminacy, as Mike inquires about a plastic tag marked MiiVOX-MAX:

“What is it?” I said.

“It’s more like what’s it for, is how I’d say it,” this kid said.

“What’s it for?” I said.

“Actually,” he said, “this is probably more the one for you.”

He handed me an identical tag but with the word "MiiVOX-MIN" on it.

[...]

"How much?" I said.

"You mean money?" he said.

"What does it do?" I said.

"Well if you're asking is it a data repository or information-hierarchy domain?" he said. "The answer to that would be yes and no."

[...]

"I've been away a long time," I said.

"Welcome back," the first kid said. (183–184)

Not only does Saunders once again use a question/question strategy to resist giving information, he adds a complex either-or/yes-and-no statement that plunges Mike and readers further into doubt. The statement itself is meta: the items in question (either/both do and don't) hold information and (either/both do and don't) arrange that information in such a way that it can be rendered useful.

The shop attendants in this first of the paired scenes, though welcoming Mike home, dismiss the war as too confusing to be understood or cared about. But in the second, a door cracks open. This time, the answer Mike gets to "I've been away a long time," is "Us, too" (196). Discovering that they are also veterans, and that one of them has been in the same place as Mike, Al-Raz, they swap memories—places, people, animals—for a few paragraphs. Then, as Mike answers noncommittally but "in an exploratory way," the other young vet confesses to having had his worst day at Al-Raz (197). The change in Mike is subtle but immediate: he responds with "Yes, me too, exactly," tripling his statement with an enthusiasm we have not seen elsewhere (197). (When Ma suggests that Ryan hit Renee, Mike doubles his response, in the only other time he uses repetition.) The guy goes on, "I fucked up big time at Al-Raz," and Mike finds himself overwhelmed: "Suddenly I found I couldn't breathe" (198).

There is such wonderful tension in the moment, before the guy goes on to tell a story about merely going to a party while his friend suffered from a groin injury, which ended up healing fine anyway. The tension just fizzles out of the scene. When he pauses, "waiting for me to tell the fucked-up thing I'd done," Mike puts down the MiiVOX-MIN, picks it up again, and then puts it down (198). This infinitesimal description of a subtle physical action is easy to skip in the urgency of the dialogue, in the primacy of the memories over the action of the present moment, in the curiosity of the reader to find out what happened at Al-Raz. Keats might say we're "irritably reaching after fact and reason," but in our reaching, we miss a powerful key (1017). Having left the store the first time with the apparently valuable MiiVOX-MAX (but no idea how to use it), Mike is twice encouraged to start with the MiiVOX-MIN. As with some of the tech-speak in Saunders's other stories, students tend to ignore what they do not understand, so they generally see these inscrutable tags as just plot devices that they can understand from context clues. But when examined from their root languages (apparently Latin and Nintendo), the two items represent variations on the holder's voice (roughly, my-voice-big or my-voice-small). The significance of Mike's choice—first to grab and take the MiiVOX-MAX but ultimately not to use either—is profound. Despite walking into the store with a "big voice" tool in his hand, Mike is once again rendered "mute" in his chaos (Frank 97).

The final image of the scene anchors the idea of signification to which everyone but Mike has access.

I looked at the clock on the wall. It didn't seem to have any hands. It was just a moving pattern of yellow and white.

"Do you guys know what time it is?" I said.

The guy looked up at the clock.

"Six," he said. (198)

Mike never does speak his trauma to another character. Indeed, he logs only 270 quoted words in the entire story, an average of 18 words per section. Readers do, however, finally get an analogy, as he describes a "like shame slide" he has experienced as a kid when he realized that he was accidentally torturing tadpoles as part of a job he couldn't justify quitting (199). "It was like either: (A) I was a terrible guy who was knowingly doing this rotten thing over and over, or (B) it wasn't so rotten, really, just normal, and the way to confirm it was normal was to keep doing it, over and over. Years later, at Al-Raz, it was a familiar feeling" (200). That is as close as we ever get to his war crime, though by now astute readers are piecing together details from a court-martial, to the little family in red, to his sister's reluctance to let him hold her baby, to tadpoles swollen "like little pregnant ladies" (199). Though readers may remain curious, I argue that this is sufficient, the ambiguity rendering a "truer war story" than a revelation might.

As the story closes, Mike expresses once again his frustration with language as his psychomotor short-circuit to violence begins again: "You? I thought. You jokers? You nutty fuckers are all God sent to stop me? That is a riot. That is so fucking funny. What are you going to stop me with? Your girth? Your good intentions? [...] Your belief that anything and everything can be fixed with talk, talk, endless yapping, hopeful talk? [...] My face got hot and I thought, Go, go, go" (201). Then, in one of my favorite Saunders's endings of all time, Mike sees and is moved by another's pain—his mother needs help up off the porch swing—and his own need for witness is met by his ability to provide witness. He wades docilely into his family, ready to ask for and accept help. Ready to be heard.

Purpose, Personal and Pedagogical

Charon states that "the receiver of another's narrative owes something to the teller by virtue, now, of knowing it" (*Narrative Medicine: Honoring the Stories of Illness* 55), and though she focuses on medical professionals as the reified, if reluctant, listeners of our culture, I encourage readers to think similarly about Mike at the end of "Home." What does he need for us to know, and what do we owe him by virtue of knowing it? I do not expect that students will blindly exonerate him for his crimes—indeed, I believe that disallowing our specific judgment is a direct function of the story's relentless ambiguity—but we can understand Mike's suffering as a complex and fractured narrative. We have been invited to consider his relationships with his mother, sister, and ex-wife, both present and past, as well as his sense of self relative to other men; in addition, we are given insight to the battered connections between psyche and body, shown fragments from multiple and disconnected pasts. We are called upon to think about the identity-shaping features of social class and gender, including the contrast between a boy's emotional depth and the pressure on him to grow up strong and silent

(though in constant danger of being too much of either). We may also see something of the dysfunctional relationship the United States has with its veterans, who, despite rapidly rising rates of PTSD, often lack access to mental health care (Fales *et al* vi; Reisman 623).

There are at least three ways to use this exercise in "speaking the silences" of chaotic suffering. First, and most simply, readers at all levels can critically examine, and hopefully admire, how literature works. Students see the emotional ramifications of dialogue that won't land, the power of disguising suffering with humor or "strangeness," the responses that stifle rather than encourage others' expressions. At very least, such close attention to the way Mike can and cannot speak makes readers more aware of the space created by literary art, more able to read and appreciate its unique language. Second, readers in healthcare majors or professions can practice listening for what is unspoken, imaginatively participating in the kind of collaboration Charon describes. Mike's analogous story about the tadpoles, his violent response to his mother's eviction, his breaking of the vase when suspected of hurting a child—these things might seem to those in the room unrelated to Mike's war story, or troubling "symptoms" of a disorder he needs to treat, a reason to fear him and keep him from children. Reading the story as a journey in search of witness, though, reveals each of these utterances as an attempt to give his trauma some narrative shape: he's a hero, he's powerful, he's ashamed. We can practice reading analogously and generously throughout the story: what is Ma trying to say, for instance, about Ryan, if she doesn't actually believe Renee is a victim of domestic violence? What pain is there in being "denied" by Ryan and his family? What is she speaking with her jumping jacks, her "beeping"? Such narrative practice may help medical professionals learn to collaborate with a patient who trusts neither his words nor his audience.

Then, as mentioned before, there are the "real world" opportunities for all of us. We may become more deliberate about narrating our own pain: *I know what this sounds like but try to hear what I'm really saying*. We may listen more generously to our partners, our parents, our children: what are they saying *through* their stories? We may use these skills to defuse arguments, listening *with* for what each party means and inviting figurations when literality is impossible.

I finish my semester with a writing exercise that blends theoretical and scholarly thinking with critical reading and creative writing. I ask students first to dwell for a while with someone in pain: in an informal interview, they ask questions and listen to stories. Then, they analyze: what story did the person in pain choose to tell, and how might that story be significant to the "wrecked" self even if it was not a story overtly *of* illness or pain? As they write a piece of creative nonfiction, I ask them to explore the strangeness and "truth" they have been told and to allow themselves some freedom in relaying their own engagement with the story.

This assignment has resulted in some of the most moving experiences I have ever had in the classroom. One student confessed in her final paper presentation how angry she had been as a teenager when she had to miss prom because of her mother's cancer, and how ashamed she was, as an adult, to recall that anger. Her witnessing opened a profound discussion, allowed others to admit similar emotions they had been ashamed to admit. Another student wrote an analysis of interviews she conducted with her autistic

brother in which she reimagined—successfully—how to better communicate with him, applying lessons of thinking *with* him. A third read through her college roommate’s wry humor to the real terror and outrage a catastrophically expensive medical emergency had caused, finding a story underneath the story. A fourth celebrated a friend’s talent, mourning, and private relief at an injury that cost her a professional music career.

It is rare and wonderful—too rare, I daresay—for literary criticism and pedagogy to remind students that “every soul is vast and wants to express itself fully” (*Swim* 287), or to purposefully seek the “great secret of morals” that Percy Shelley proposed: “love,” or a going out of our nature [to identify] ourselves with the beauty that exists in thought, action, or person, not our own (877). In each of these amazing assignments, the writers found things that they did not expect to find—not only in their thinking and writing but in their relationship with the person with whom they had imaginatively dwelled. Borrowing an approach from the medical humanists who first borrowed from us, literary scholars, could blend the critical with the ethical and the creative, to the immeasurable benefit of themselves and the person in pain. Having embarked on the writing assignment myself, I can humbly attest to its power.



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Lina Meruane's Palestine Writing: *Becoming-World* in World Literature

Cristina Morales | Universitat de Barcelona

Octavi Rofes | Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

<http://ellids.com/archives/2022/09/5.2-Morales-Rofes.pdf>

Abstract | Lina Meruane's work on Palestine began in 2012 and comprises what throughout the text will be addressed as the author's Palestine Writing, a mesh of pieces belonging to different genres that, understood through Deleuze and Guattari's framework, constitute Meruane's *literary machine*. Analysing the book's title, *Volverse Palestina*, this paper discusses the two different meanings wrapped in it—Returning to Palestine and becoming Palestine. Meruane's return is impossible because one cannot return from where one has never been, and her transformation is the result of a series of unexpected encounters and collaborations. This paper considers Meruane's Palestine Writing as a form of becoming-Palestine that takes place not only through an inherited identity but also through a kind of cultural contagion. Following this argument, Palestine Writing can be understood as a part of worldish literature; a becoming-world instance of literature that can relate to other literary works, opening the door to a new understanding of world literature, based on a consolidated definition of what the “universe” of world literature is.

Keywords | Lina Meruane, Literary Machine, *Becoming-minor*, World Literature, Palestine, *Volverse Palestina*, Deleuze, Guattari, Comparative Literature, Travel Writing, Worldish

Lina Meruane launched her career in 1997 with *Las Infantas*,¹ a collection of short stories. Soon after publication, she began what we can now consider her “trilogy of sickness”: *Fruta Podrida* (2007), *Sangre en el Ojo* (2012), and *Sistema Nervioso* (2018).² The three books constitute a unique sequence of reflections on the volatility and multidimensionality of illness. Since 2012, however, Palestine has served as the gravitational center around which Meruane’s literary work orbits. This “Palestine writing” has been produced in parallel with, to date, two trips to the West Bank and a failed trip to Gaza triggering a work in progress that embraces different genres, formats, and rewritings. The first issue of this process, “Una Semana en Palestina,”³ was a sketch of a travelogue published in 2012 in the Chilean newspaper *El Mercurio*,⁴ in the section “Mujeres que viajan solas.”⁵ The second issue appeared in an anthology edited by the same newspaper, which included an extended version of the text, fifteen pages of which are now part of the present version: “Palestina en Pedazos.”⁶ The third piece was the first to constitute an actual book: *Volverse Palestina*⁷ was published in 2013 by Conaculta as part of a collection under the name “Dislocados,”⁸ and was already structured into the three parts that remain in the present version: “La agonía de las cosas,” “El llamado palestino” and “Palestina en partes” (which would later become “Palestina en Pedazos”).⁹ The latest version of the book (to date) was published by Random House Mandadori in 2015. It includes a new section called “Volvemos Otros,”¹⁰ written the year before when a planned trip to Palestine was cancelled due to the Gaza bombings. Since its publication in 2015, Meruane has also written a poem named *Palestina, por ejemplo*,¹¹ which formed

¹Editor’s Note (hereafter referred to as Ed.N.): *Las Infantas* can be translated to *The Princesses* from Spanish to English. Translation borrowed from Maruane, Lina. “Who Are You.” *Review: Literature and Arts of the Americas*, vol. 51, no. 1, 2018, pp. 47–51.

²Ed. N.: The title *Fruta Podrida* can be translated to *Rotten Fruit*. *Sangre en el ojo* and *Sistema Nervioso* have been translated into English by Megan McDowell, as *Seeing Red* (2016) and *Nervous System* (2021), respectively. Translation borrowed from Maruane, Lina. “Who Are You.” *Review: Literature and Arts of the Americas*, vol. 51, no. 1, 2018, pp. 47–51.

³Ed.N.: “Una Semana en Palestina” can be translated to “A Week in Palestine.”

⁴Ed.N.: *El Mercurio* can be translated to *The Mercury*.

⁵Ed.N.: “Mujeres que viajan solas” can be translated to “Women who travel alone.”

⁶Ed.N.: “Palestina en Pedazos” can be translated to “Palestine in Pieces.”

⁷Ed.N.: *Volverse Palestina* can be translated to *Becoming Palestine*.

⁸Ed.N.: “Dislocados” can be translated to “Dislocated.”

⁹Ed.N.: “La agonía de las cosas,” “El llamado palestino” and “Palestina en partes” can be translated to “The Agony of Things,” “The Palestinian Call,” and “Palestine in Parts,” respectively.

¹⁰Ed.N.: “Volvemos Otros” can be translated as either “Become Others” or “Return to Others.”

¹¹Ed.N.: *Palestina, por ejemplo* can be translated to *Palestine, for Example*.

part of the 2015 presentation of *Volverse Palestina* in Bogotá, and a short story for the *White Review*, titled “Faces in a Face,” that narrates her last *return* to Palestine.¹²

The dimension of Meruane’s Palestinian writing that is discussed in this paper involves assembling it with the approach to literature advocated by the philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. The aim is not to propose a Deleuze-Guattarian reading of Meruane’s work but to open a discussion on the nature of the literary objects that can be included in the universe of world literature through the Deleuze and Guattarian notions of literary machine and becoming-minor.¹³

Meruane’s Palestine Writing as a Literary Machine

Meruane’s Palestine writing is made up of a heteroclitic set of pieces belonging to different genres which—if we relate it to the author’s biographical condition as a traveler born to a family that is the result of multiple displacements—has led Emmanuela Jossa to characterize her work as “nomadic” (279). To this nomadism one must add, Jossa argues, using Rosi Braidotti’s definition of *nómade*, the *search for and creation of* subjectivities that desire and experience change and transformation (279). But another approach to the nature of Meruane’s motile *writing*-Palestine is to understand the whole corpus as a “literary machine.” The *machinism* of desiring machines, war machines, abstract machines, and musical, literary, or philosophical machines is introduced in Deleuze and Guattari’s vocabulary to distinguish its machinery from that of a structure. In particular, the concept is applied in moments of meaningful breakage, when, in the words of Manola Antonioli, “[t]he subject can no longer be located, as was the case with Lacan, along a chain of relays from one signifier to another; on the contrary, it only appears as the provisional, unstable effect of a machinic operation of cutting, of extracting singularities and discontinuities” (158). According to Deleuze and Guattari, the literary machine, by its malfunctioning and its dysfunctionality, becomes independent of the sole control of the subject that has created it as an object, and opens itself to the *real*, producing transformations in the perceptions and affections of its receivers.

In the 1970 edition of his book on Proust, which had originally appeared six years earlier, Deleuze added a second part, “The Literary Machine.” Here, Deleuze describes the functioning of three “orders of truth”¹⁴ (*Proust and Signs* 148): that of singularities which, once isolated, produce reminiscences; that of pleasures and pains, which do not reach fulfillment in themselves and point in other, often unnoticed, directions; and that of the production of catastrophe (as in aging, illness, and death) (148–149). These three orders of the Proustian machine act as a force of dislocation to produce a world that, in

¹²For further reading on the different issues and publications, see Dunia Gras’s “En el nombre del padre: Volverse Palestina. Volvemos otros, de Lina Meruane, versiones de una obra en marcha.”

¹³In this sense, it differs from strict Deleuzian readings of literary works such as, for example, Naeem Nedaee’s interpretation of Toni Morrison’s *Beloved*, Miyeong Kim’s study of Han Kang’s *The Vegetarian*, or Sarah Posman’s analysis of Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre*.

¹⁴Deleuze argues in *Proust and Signs*: “Why a machine? Because the work of art, so understood, is essentially productive—productive of certain truths. No one has insisted more than Proust on the following point: that the truth is produced, that it is produced by orders of machines that function within us, that it is extracted from our impressions, hewn out of our life, delivered in a work” (146). And continues later on: “The Search [*In the Search of Lost Time*] is indeed the production of the sought-for truth. Again, there is no truth, but orders of truth, just as there are orders of production” (148).

Antonionioli's words, "has neither meaningful contents nor ideal significations according to which one could establish an order or a hierarchy, assorted points of view on the world that affirm their irreducible difference, and above all a subject that is never unique and that no longer guarantees the unity of the world" (160). Deleuze's reading, once again with Guattari, of Kafka's work, revolves around the question (which could also be addressed to Proust) about the nature of the literary character in relation to the author. Are the three K's (i.e., the narrators or characters in "The Process," "The Metamorphosis," and "The Castle") present in Kafka's three novels one and the same character? Are the different K's actually Kafka, or is the narrator Marcel in *In Search of Lost Time* actually Marcel Proust?¹⁵ Through Deleuze and Guattari's approach, the answer leaves no room for doubt: K, like Marcel and, we might add, Meruane, is not a subject "but a general function that proliferates over itself, and that doesn't cease to segment itself and to run across all of the segments" (*Kafka* 84). But perhaps the most remarkable thing about the categorization of the literary character as a general function is that what is meant by "general" is the individual's connection to all the terms of the series through which K passes. The multiple segmentation of K is a proliferation that does not require splitting, an assemblage between a solitary individual and diverse collectives.

Meruane's return to Palestine is also a literary machine that produces a proliferation of segments that assemble the general function of the solitary character with different collectives: Meruane in Chile among the signs of the saga of losses that make up the family landscape; Meruane in New York among the emissaries of the Palestinian appeal for travel and writing; Meruane in Heathrow among the supervisors of her "authentic" identity; Meruane in Palestine among fragments of the life that could have been her own; Meruane in a Manhattan library among words raised as flags for attack and defense; Meruane in front of her audience among verses that record the present; Meruane back at the airport trying to erase from the bathroom mirror the many faces hiding in her face. Each of these segments is advanced by the assumed conventions of a literary genre, yet Meruane's writing simultaneously jeopardizes these same literary conventions, producing ambiguous and wobbly readings.

If Deleuze found three orders of truth in Proust, this paper proposes three orders of *identity* in Meruane. In this sense, Meruane's first order of identity is that of the travelogue, which anticipates its development through one of the most characteristic sub-genres of contemporary Palestinian literature: the displaced autobiography. Assad Al-Saleh, in his comparative study of two of the most representative works of this sub-genre, Edward Said's *Out of Place* and Fawaz Turki's *The Disinherited*, stresses that one of the essential characteristics of a displaced autobiography is that it constitutes narratives of affiliation where, beyond the tradition of autobiography centered on the self, emphasis is placed on relational aspects and intersubjective presentation that deepen the sense of belonging. Instead, as discussed in the third section of this article, the literary journey and its connection between narrative and the experience of displacement serve Meruane,

¹⁵"The letter K no longer designates a narrator or a character but an assemblage that becomes all the more machine-like, an agent that becomes all the more collective because an individual is locked into it in his or her solitude (it is only in connection to a subject that something individual would be separable from the collective and would lead its own life)" (*Kafka* 18).

as opposed to what is proper to the genre, to problematize the sense of belonging and the narratives of affiliation.

The second order of identity takes the form of a literary genre, and is the essay “Volvernos Otros,” included in the Penguin Random House edition of *Volverse Palestina* (108–195). “Volvernos Otros” is a segmented piece that acts as a guide, given that it unfolds a complex weaving of voices in which Meruane refers to more than forty writers and cinematographers. According to Dunia Gras, the commentary on other texts in “Volvernos Otros” brings together a multiplicity of sometimes contradictory voices (Gras 185) which Meruane incorporates, assimilates, and embodies, making the essay an exercise in a sort of collective autobiography.¹⁶ Nonetheless, the essay’s structure is the point of arrival, not the point of departure, and rather than a logical and hierarchical organization of references, the reader encounters something akin to the experience of traveling or the serendipity inherent to doing research in a library. This reading path is punctuated by keywords which, instead of underpinning the argument, highlight the difficulty of its development. This is expressed graphically by an inordinate distance between letters, so that the highlighted words take up more space and appear dislocated, en route to vanishing, in the reading.¹⁷ In her effort to go against the grain with the language of conflict, Meruane contrasts these spaced words with their opposite, the crossed-out phrases that appear in the first part of *Volverse Palestina* as a sign of self-censorship (44–46). The crossed-out words make the reading impossible, thus words inevitably say more than what can be said, while the spaced-out words, in their “super-readability” always say less than what should be said (See Appendix A). In other words: the unreadability of the crossed-out words force the reader to extend the meaning of the text, whilst the spaced-out words become mere commonplaces that are unable to express the complexity of the specific problematics they address. For instance, in the correspondence between Meruane and her novelist friend in Jaffa, many sections of the text are crossed out; maybe because they were never written at all but merely imagined, maybe because they wanted to be written but the circumstances made it impossible. Be it as it may, the result is still the same: when the novelist friend in Jaffa changes his mind about writing the text Meruane asked him to, the reader is left only with scraps and pieces of the real reasons why. Words such as “violence” and “my country” can be glimpsed beyond the black marks, but such marks are what become the actual form of the text’s identity: anonymity instead of signature (*Volverse Palestina* 45).

Finally, the third order of identity of Meruane’s *literary machine* manifests in *Palestina, por ejemplo*, through metaliterary poetry written as a public presentation in verse that acts both as a political and a poetic statement. The literalness and vehemence of the utterance in this text, as discussed below, is sometimes interrupted by the presence of clusters of nouns without verbs, prepositions, or punctuation marks to articulate them, which disrupt the body of the poem.¹⁸ Andrea Kottow has compared these groupings, also present in the novel *Sistema Nervioso* by the same author, to a kind of corporeal

¹⁶In this second part of *Volverse Palestina*, the autobiographical experience is amplified through the incorporation of a multitude of testimonial voices discovered through library research.

¹⁷Keywords such as “problema a e l i m i n a r” (literally; problem to solve, the word *solve* being written with a wider interspace) in page 119, or s i l e n c i o (silence) in page 125.

¹⁸The words act as scattered semantic fields: they have no apparent relation to each other nor guide the following texts, but, as Kottow notes, they work as Meruane’s unconscious writing.

unconscious that makes it evident that the subject does not write the story but that there are events beyond the author's control that are largely responsible for how the story is written and how the subject is inscribed in it (14). A clear instance can be found in Kottow's highlighted paragraph of *Sistema Nervioso*, "There is no cake or candles or salt shots. There's no ocean to cross, just a *killer amnesia amniotic fluid*"¹⁹ (38). In Kottow's words:

Repeatedly, the flow of the story is interrupted by grammatically disjointed words, which burst in as if they came from somewhere else. A kind of bodily unconscious, a memory that comes from materiality and that forces us to pay attention to it, although it never allows us to fully decipher it. The words come from an involuntary order, where it becomes evident that we do not write our history, but rather, to a large extent, we are written by events beyond our reach. (13)

The joint action of the segments in which Meruane multiplies herself serve a general function, together with the three literary mechanistic orders that, from their dysfunctionality, alter the conventions of the genres they traverse. They bring Meruane's writing closer to Palestine. To use an expression that will be developed in the Conclusion of this article, they turn this Palestinian writing into *worldish literature*, a singular space within the discourse of world literature.

Meruane's Palestine Writing in the Universe of World Literature

In statistics, "universe" is the term that designates the set of units concerned with the research goal. Sometimes, given that the totality of units may be infinite or exceed the scope of the resources available, it becomes necessary to reduce this universe to a subset that has to be, on the one hand, significant and, on the other hand, affordable; in other words, to a fraction of the total universe—a *sample*. Therefore, the definition of the research universe does not determine *what* will actually be studied, but rather *where* the conclusions of the study will be directed. The distinction between universe and sample avoids confusion between the nature of the elements of the study and the methodological problem of designing a viable research procedure. Here, the expression "the universe of world literature" designates nothing beyond the reference class of the concept "world literature," the search for a proper answer to the question about the total set of objects, in this case literary works, which possess the properties attributed by the concept "world literature." Therefore, that *proper answer* must respond to the question about the common qualities of the literary works that are considered part of world literature. Consequently, the choice of a broader or narrower definition of "world literature" should not be conditioned by the possibilities of carrying out its study; the universe exists beyond the resources available for us to observe it.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe mentioned the word *Weltliteratur* in his writing twenty-one times between 1821 and 1827. Despite their brief, scattered, and sometimes

¹⁹"No hay torta ni velas ni tragos de sal. No hay océano que cruzar, sólo un líquido *amniótico, amnésico, asesino*" (Italics in original). All translations, apart from Editor's Notes, are by the authors from Spanish to English.

contradictory nature, these mentions served to coin the term that started a whole field of study—world literature seems to have been conceived not merely as an aggregate of all literary works produced worldwide, nor as a canon of universal masterpieces. In his 1830 introduction to Thomas Carlyle’s *Life of Schiller*, Goethe locates the universe of world literature in the body of works that enable nations with a long history of conflicts between them to become aware “of having imbibed much that was foreign, and conscious of spiritual needs hitherto unknowable. Hence arose a sense of their relationship as neighbors, and, instead of shutting themselves up as heretofore, the desire gradually awoke within them to become associated in a more or less free commerce” (301). For Goethe, therefore, the universe of world literature is not equivalent to that of the literature of the world and should refer only to those works that contribute to overcoming the boundaries of national cultures by promoting a free flow of ideas and a better relationship between peoples.²⁰

Goethe considers the mediating role between nationalism and cosmopolitanism as the fundamental quality of world literature. This attribution must be understood within the intellectual context of the Enlightenment, an optimistic time that saw in commercial exchanges between nations the basis of what Kant conceived as the possibility of perpetual peace. This mediating function was forcefully reiterated a century later by Fritz Strich in a different context. To overcome the risk of cultural enclosure stemming from the conception of nation states based on the principle of common descent, a new fear was added: that of a progressive cultural uniformization as a result of the standardization processes characteristic of modern rationalism. The double pressure that world literature had to face gave a dramatic urgency to the requirement of its mediating function “that is able to help us resolve the battle now raging between the idea of the nation and that of humanity” (48). It is this double pressure that leads Strich to define in a restrictive way the nature of the works that form the universe of world literature. This nature is not related to the literary value of the work but to its capacity to respond to that double pressure. World literature will be “a harmony of voices of the most different sounds” only “when it is fed by the blood of the nation, yet is infused with the spirit of general humanity” (42). Strich was aware that his characterization of the dual nature of the works that constitute the universe of world literature went against the predominant naturalistic ontology of Western modernity: instead of voices from different national “bloods” merging into a common universal harmony (different exterior bodies that can accommodate the same interior spirit), he himself admits that, under rationalism, humanity is instead represented as a single universal voice (48) capable of producing different local modulations (the same exterior accommodating different interiorities).²¹ It is perhaps because of this ontological discrepancy that the object of world literature often appears strange, unstable, and difficult to grasp. Confronting the ontological approach, David Damrosch observes that:

²⁰For further accounts on the commercial and cosmopolitan dimension of world literature, see Alex Matas’s “El règim global i l’homogeneïtzació cultural del cosmopolitisme,” where he analyzes the global world and its geocultural domains.

²¹On the distinction between forms of interiority and exteriority as a criterion for drawing up ontological categories, see Philippe Descola’s *Beyond Nature and Culture*.

As it moves into the sphere of world literature, far from inevitably suffering a loss of authenticity or essence, a work can gain in many ways. To follow this process, it is necessary to look closely at the transformations a work undergoes in particular circumstances, which is why this book highlights the issues of circulation and translation and focuses on detailed case studies throughout. To understand the working of world literature, we need more a phenomenology than an ontology of the work of art: a literary work manifests differently abroad than it does at home. (6)

There is, thus, according to Damrosch, no intrinsic quality of the literary work that makes it part of the universe of world literature because, eventually, such a universe would not exist. World literature would not, in fact, have any constituent elements of its own; it would only be the processes of circulation, translation, and reading that would be responsible for constructing the “sphere” of world literature. For Damrosch, then, literary works are not active mediators in the relationship between local cultures and humanity as a whole, but patient objects that receive an external agency that brings them into the category of world literature. This passivity is evident in the forcefulness with which Damrosch characterizes literary works as “works that would serve as windows into foreign worlds” (13). Yet, can all literary works, of whatever kind, be susceptible to being opened up for use as windows to the world? If so, the study of world literature should shift its focus from literary works per se to particular uses of works that construct the extra-literary sphere of world literature. In order to maintain the notion of “universe” with which to designate the group of literary objects towards which the conclusions of our study will be directed, we must, instead, recover the consideration of a mediating agency of the literary work. Furthermore, instead of seeing literature as a window waiting to be opened, we can now imagine it as a complex system of revolving doors that *facilitate* access to different places. This does not reduce the interest of the phenomenological inquiry of the processes of circulation, translation, and reading, but, at the same time, it recognizes the singular nature of those literary works that activate such processes.

What is the quality of a literary work that makes it capable of transcending its local context of origin? What makes it an object of cosmopolitan circulation and translation that facilitates the conception of humanity as a community united by the principles of equity and justice? One frequent response sees, in certain literature—considered part of the World Literary Canon—the capacity to create ideal worlds that allow us to reformulate our perceptions of our lived worlds. Pheng Cheah in *What is a World?* calls the various theories in which literature is able to make a world “appear” in our imagination “spiritualist” (313). Cheah suggests that literature is ontologically infrastructural with lived worlds because it depends on and expresses the temporal structure of the world. According to Cheah, certain literary works open up new worlds governed by a “heterotemporality” alternative to the conception of time in which we live; this gift of time “also destabilizes the temporal reckoning of teleological time and disrupts its self-returning closure” (313). Although Cheah bases his own re-reading of Heidegger on the contributions of Hannah Arendt and Jacques Derrida, the infrastructural nature that he attributes to literature in relation to the world, instead of being understood as the temporal disruption that *worlding* implies, can also be considered a form of mutation: what Deleuze and Guattari would call a product of deterritorialization. For Deleuze and Guattari, deterritorialization is a process by which a certain milieu has its current

organization and context altered (*A Thousand Plateaus* 143), which relates to what happens when a literary work becomes worldly (i.e., makes world, in Cheah's terminology). As explored below, if we understand Cheah's worlding oeuvres through Deleuze and Guattari's deterritorialization and becoming-minor, the complex process of cosmopolitanization literary works go through can be understood as a never-ending *becoming-world* that is not born out of the common place, but out of expressions of alterity, of non-belonging. In Lina Meruane, this alterity is to be found in the several moments in which she finds herself in no man's land: not an identifiable part of a group, but an exception that jeopardizes the stereotypes and standards of recognition of a determined group. In this regard, the difference between Cheah's spiritualist literatures and our proposal of becoming-world literatures is that whilst in Cheah worlds appear through literature, in the becoming-world account, a certain model of world (with its patterns, its common places, and its guidelines) is being contested by an exception that is able to expand its structural and conceptual horizons becoming, in the process, a new instance of world.

If we limit the universe of world literature to those works that do not create worlds but *become* worlds, perhaps it is time to revise the question previously posed in this section: instead of asking *which is the universe of world literature*, it would now be more accurate to ask *which is the world of the universe of world literature?* Mariano Siskind, in his essay "Towards a Cosmopolitanism of Loss: An Essay About the End of the World," exemplifies the modern process of world production with the saying, "they have a world to win" with which Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels close *The Communist Manifesto*:

In this context, "world" should be understood, not only as the geospheric cultural-political territory whose function was to negate the national determination of local forms of agency, but perhaps most importantly, "world" named the modern and modernist symbolic structure that supported humanist discourses of universal emancipation through global connections, translations, interactions, displacements and exchanges; "world" as the symbolic realm where demands of justice, emancipation and universal inclusion (whether political, cultural and/or aesthetic) were meant to be actualized. (Siskind 207)

But Siskind finds that this notion of world is no longer useful. The idea of world literature must be reconceptualized to fit the traumatic experience of the end of the world. Siskind does not refer to the end of the world in its biospheric but in its historical sense: "the symbolic closure of the horizon of universal justice and emancipation that had defined the modern/modernist relationship between cosmopolitan politics and culture" (211). How can we think of world literature when there is no longer a horizon of expectations where redemption and emancipation have a place? Faced with this approach, can there be any other response than to mourn the loss of the world and thus to understand art and literature as the place where we can engage in this labor of mourning? (215). Perhaps an alternative proposal to Siskind's melancholic mode would be to consider other variants of world—understood as the symbolic structure on which modernity built its subjectivities and aesthetic projects—other horizons of expectations that modernity itself has generated. Thus, when Siskind refers to the loss of the emancipatory horizon, he is referring to the idea of emancipation that, since Kant, has been predominant in the West,

which considers “man’s emergence from his self-imposed immaturity” a priority. But, as Diogo Sardinha has shown, there is, at the very heart of the Modern project, another chain of thought that is in direct opposition to that posed by Kant. This chain brings together Beaudelaire, Bataille, Foucault, and Deleuze as the deserters of the Kantian program for the coming of age of humanity. Meruane’s Palestine is located on this axis of opposition to the idea of universal emancipation, in the area where alternatives are discussed, rather than where the lost dream is mourned.

Sardinha distinguishes two forms of opposition to the Kantian sense of emancipation, both of which promote a “becoming-child” as opposed to the biographical metaphor of humanity’s coming of age through emancipation, but this becoming something less rather than more can be quantitative or qualitative. Foucault best argued the quantitative alternative when, in “What is Enlightenment,” he discussed the equivocality of Kant’s use of the term *Menschheit*.²² Does humanity refer to the human species as a totality or does it refer to that which constitutes the humanity of human beings? Foucault opts for the second option and therefore sees modernity as an ethical attitude, “a voluntary choice made by certain people; in the end, a way of thinking and feeling; a way, too, of acting and behaving that at one and the same time marks a relation of belonging and presents itself as a task” (309). Instead of the emancipation of humanity as a whole, we are thus faced with the choice of a minority that decides to reinvent itself, with creative and experimental practices, to break with the limits and tutelage imposed by life “in the majority”:

This means that the historical ontology of ourselves must turn away from all projects that claim to be global or radical. In fact we know from experience that the claim to escape from the system of contemporary reality so as to produce the overall programs of another society, of another way of thinking, another culture, another vision of the world, has led only to the return of the most dangerous traditions. (Foucault 316)

For Foucault, emancipation thus implies a twofold process of becoming minor. On the one hand, it entails choosing an aesthetic of existence that distances itself from any possibility of universalization or compatibility with the majority. On the other hand, this attitude will lead to incomprehension, and those who adopt this mode of relating to contemporary reality will be relegated as immature and incapable of reaching the majority. In the poem *Palestina, por ejemplo*, Palestine is that minority Meruane turns to in order to write, and, in writing—to subscribe to Virginia Woolf’s call in “A Sketch of the Past”—to do something “more necessary than anything else” (8). The alliance with Woolf is justified:

Because she didn’t have
cold blood (or maybe warm)
nervous stability
trained musculature
to hold banners
against the war

²²*Ed.N.*: Translated from German as ‘Humanity.’

to take the streets, the weapons
against the lasting peace that war,
they said, would provide once ended.²³ (8–9)

Just as Woolf once was herself a minority—a woman-writer in a *world of male soldiers*—the writing proposed by Meruane becomes a minoritarian act of emancipation of minorities, of the disarticulated. Writing, according to the author, should be understood as a:

fight for the articulation of
ideas, [in which] women
were never really alone
with them there were the disarticulated of the world
with them more than ever
the Cristian Palestinians, the Muslim Palestine
the covered and uncovered Muslim women
that lack their own image
in the political discourse, that lack
the legal power to move
their legitimate claims, to transcend their *ideas, words, wills*.²⁴ (*Palestina, por ejemplo* 16; italics in original)

Palestine can become a suitable setting for writing because Meruane's writing requires minority, and, quoting the poem again, Palestinians “[a]lways lack the majority”²⁵ (17).

Becoming minor in its qualitative sense, on the other hand, is to be found in the work of Deleuze and Guattari. It is through the authors' argument, as Guillaume Sibertin-Blanc and Daniel Richter point out, that the minority ceases to be an “object” of reflection or of historical, political, or social knowledge, and is instead understood as a dynamic process entangled in social practices, a creative action that transforms the collective regimes of enunciation (120). According to Deleuze and Guattari, becoming minor is not becoming a simple part of the minority that antagonizes the majority, but becoming an exceptional part of the majority instead. Becoming-minor is not a collective grouping, it is an act, a minoritization which, by problematizing endogenous conflicts, weakens a majoritarian system from within. As reflected in *A Thousand Plateaus*: “[t]here is no ‘becoming-majoritarian’; majority is never becoming. All becoming is minoritarian” (106). Thus, in this particular case, minority languages are *minoritarian* in terms of

²³“Porque ella no tenía / sangre fría (o tal vez caliente) / estabilidad nerviosa / musculatura entrenada / para sostener pancartas / contra la guerra, / para tomar la calle, las armas / contra la paz duradera que la guerra, / se decía, iba a aportar cuando concluyera.”

²⁴“lucha por la articulación de / ideas, [en la que] las mujeres / nunca estuvieron completamente solas, / con ellas han estado los desarticulados del mundo / con ellas ahora más que nunca / los palestinos cristianos, los musulmanes palestinos / las musulmanas veladas y descubiertas / que carecen de una imagen apropiada / en el discurso político, que carecen / de fuerza legal para mover / sus legítimos reclamos, para hacer trascender sus / *ideas palabras voluntades*.”

²⁵“[s]iempre les falla la mayoría.”

numbers and relative ratios, but they are truly *minor* when they enable the potential 'becoming minor' of languages as a whole.

What, then, is the becoming-world of literature? It is not the result of transnational circulation, translations, readings, nor their inclusion in anthologies and canons that a literary work becomes worldly. The becoming-world of literature happens alongside an analogous becoming-minor process; or, to return to Meruane's poem:

It is our time to write
to rummage again in the fictions of history, of memory
to measure the words again against the elusive reality
to free them from their kidnap
to return to the language
that dares
to think beyond all
crystallization.²⁶ (*Palestina, por ejemplo* 36–37)

***Volverse*, or how to “become-return” in Palestine**

Meruane's trilogy of sickness constitutes what is understood as the “first phase” in the author's writing. The Palestine writing is, therefore, considered her second phase, displacing sickness in order to introduce “Palestinity” as a central axis in the text. Yet, if we consider some of the traits common to both phases, understanding her writing as a literary machine allows us to identify a series of disarticulated, entangled features that link both the narrative lines together. Among these are constant motion, and the reflection on inheritance and its *becoming*-something different. The characters in Meruane's stories are landless people, caught between territories. Yet their stories are not about nationality, nor roots, nor even identity. Their stories are about a sort of movement that triggers transformation; they are therefore created in motion. There is action in displacement in all four books: (1) in the New York-Chile flights Meruane takes in *Sangre en el Ojo* (Smith), where an incipient sort of cannibalism is awakened; (2) in the cosmopolitan journeys undertaken by fruit and characters in *Fruta Podrida* (Recchia); and (3) in the rare displacements between planes and times in *Sistema Nervioso* (Bournot). Likewise, *Volverse Palestina* is a story about displacement and inheritance. It is about displacement inasmuch as it is about *returning* somewhere, about a journey in both the transformative and the expeditious sense. Yet, as we will discuss, it is also a book in motion itself, as the different publications and versions demonstrate, lived and written in an entangled motion.

Volverse Palestina is also about an inherited disorder; just as the sicknesses from the trilogy are inherited pathologies, the *Palestinian* is also thought of as a contagion brought by the main character's filial relations. In Meruane, inheritance is a contagion with predisposition; an abeyance that is triggered and attempts to take over the host's body. However, Meruane still sees a potential appropriation in contagion and inheritance: genetics are not always a destiny, but a road to self-

²⁶“nos toca escribir / volver a hurgar en las ficciones de la historia, de la memoria / volver a medir las palabras contra la esquiva realidad / liberarlas del secuestro / regresar al lenguaje / que se atreve / a pensar más allá de toda / cristalización.”

expression, as the main character in *Fruta Podrida* demonstrates by the chant “this sickness is mine, I won’t let anyone take it away from me”²⁷ (89).

The contagion in *Volverse Palestina*, although the result of an inherited history, surpasses the filial relationships shared by the land and character: “The recap of the past has become dubious even for my father,”²⁸ the author writes in the first part of the book (20). Furthermore, the father usually delegates hindsight to the sisters “he has left” (21), yet the main character’s needs and memories often differ from those offered by the aunts: “What was done of the rest, of the sheets that hung from a rope in the garden, of the tiny ivory elephant that my aunts say I invented because they do not remember it. Palestinian things mysteriously disappeared while I was killing time with other things”²⁹ (33). The character rejects neither her inheritance nor her Palestinian heritage, yet the confused reasons that take her to actually *return* to Palestine transcend family history. Moreover, the filial relations and the supposedly inherited sensibilities towards her Palestinian family and towards the Palestinian landscape are not lived as expected from the character:

I don’t know what I expected to feel when I met Maryam Abu Awad [...]. I don’t know if I expected to see a family trait in her or to feel a stirring, to hear the call of genetic recognition. Suddenly someone raises a hand and crosses the street, gesturing. Nothing. No emotion, just uneasiness: this could be a mistake. That short and almost old woman could be looking for a niece or a friend who is not me. And now that woman is hugging me without asking me if I really am who she believes me to be.³⁰ (75)

The family bond is not enough for the character to actually *become* Palestinian, just as much as it is not enough for her to *return*. Neither is the Palestinian cause itself, nor the landscape she encounters: “The four parts of the old city should seem extraordinary to me, its Jewish, Armenian, Christian and Muslim markets should enthuse me. The guides proclaim that the old walled city is unforgettable and I am looking for something special in it, something that will leave a mark on my transient memory”³¹ (85). The actual “emissaries,” as the author puts it, that bring Meruane to *return* to Palestine are anomalous subjects, with whom she establishes affiliative alliances that can mirror the filial relations that constitute her Palestinian heritage. One such is Jaser, the New York taxi driver who instigates her return by claiming she *is* already Palestinian and therefore she should visit her land, instantly “triggering” the character’s “Palestinity” (40). Other

²⁷“la enfermedad es mía, no dejaré que me la quiten.”

²⁸“La recapitulación del pasado se ha vuelto dudosa incluso para mi padre.”

²⁹“Qué se hizo de lo demás, de las sábanas que colgaban de una cuerda en el jardín, del minúsculo elefante de marfil que mis tías aseguran me inventé porque ellas no lo recuerdan. Las cosas palestinas desaparecieron misteriosamente mientras yo mataba el tiempo en otras cosas.”

³⁰“No sé qué esperaba sentir cuando me encontrara con Maryam Abu Awad [...]. No sé si esperaba ver en ella un rasgo familiar o sentir un palpito, recibir la campanada de un reconocimiento genético. De pronto alguien alza una mano y cruza la calle haciendo señas. Nada. Ninguna emoción, apenas desasosiego: esto podría ser un error. Esa mujer bajita y casi vieja podría estar buscando a sobrina o a una amiga que no soy yo. Y ahora esa mujer mujer se está abrazando a mi sin preguntarme si verdaderamente soy quien ella cree.”

³¹“Las cuatro partes de la ciudad vieja tendrían que parecerme extraordinarias, sus mercados judío, armenio, cristiano y musulmán tendrían que entusiasmarme. Las guías pregonan que la vieja ciudad amurallada es inolvidable y yo busco algo especial en ella, algo que deje huella en mi memoria transeúnte.”

emissaries include a writer friend from Jaffa of Jewish descent, in love with a Muslim writer, who congratulates Meruane for being recognized as Palestinian at Heathrow, and who welcomes her to his house in order for her to visit “the land of her ancestors” (45); and Hamza, the “almost Palestinian” student from her university class, who encourages her to go back and visit his family’s land “Yalo, or Yalu,” on the outskirts of Ramla, the city of sand. Even Meruane’s past self is at times an emissary, as when she recalls what she wrote for a Chilean newspaper after 9/11: “I thought of my own Palestinian genealogy, of my own surname dragged into this battle, of the possibility of becoming a suspect before a community of individuals who came together in the time of the calamity to claim their rights and demand security guarantees against a supposed adversary”³² (49). The truly transcendental relationships the character establishes before, during, and after the Palestinian *return* are not those born out of inheritance as the reader would expect. They are not filial but transversal affinities, crosswise communications between anomalous and heterogeneous subjects. Exceptional subjects that, like Meruane herself, do not entirely belong to the community in which they find themselves entrenched.

In reality, *Volverse Palestina* is neither about “returning” nor “becoming” Palestinian in the common significance of the word. It is not merely about joining a cause, nor about rediscovering past roots. As Emanuela Jossa points out, the verb “volver” has two differentiated meanings in Spanish: the first one is *to return*, and, the second, in its reflexive form (*volverse*), to *turn into* (281). Yet neither of these meanings actually occur in the book per se. As Meruane regularly says in the first part of *Volverse Palestina*, the Palestinian return is not a return at all, since you cannot *return* to somewhere you have never been. The author writes, “it wouldn’t be my own return. It would be a borrowed return, returning in someone else’s place”³³ (17). The term *return* anchors the narrative to the previous texts, placing nomadism, motion, and movement in the center of the plot. It also refers to the longing for Palestinian “right to return” although such a return is also impossible in itself: to return somewhere that no longer exists. In the second part of the book, Meruane meets Hamza and they discuss Meruane’s *return*, which fills the student with enthusiasm as his own family has been denied entrance to Palestine since the eighties:

What is there, in Yalo or Yalu? I ask him instead, not knowing what else to ask. Nothing, he says, there is nothing more than truncated biographies and sliced stone walls at ground level. Over what was his house and that of so many neighbors, there is now a national park. A park, that is, a protected area under an ecological premise where those Palestinians, even if they could return, could not build again. A park where history was covered with trees. Traces of the eviction can still be found there, the foundations of those uprooted houses. Because the olive trees, says Hamza, continue to grow where they were left off, they continue

³²“Pensé en mi propia genealogía palestina, en mi propio apellido metido en esta batalla en la posibilidad de convertirme en sospechosa ante una comunidad de individuos que se unen en el momento de la calamidad para reclamar sus derechos y exigir garantías de seguridad contra ese supuesto adversario.”

³³“no sería un regreso mío. Sería un regreso prestado, un volver en el lugar del otro.”

to fill their branches with olives even though there is no one left to harvest them.³⁴
(51–52)

The impossibility of return is also embodied in the constant negations that can be found throughout the text. *Returning* to Palestine is, according to the character, a way to “add to that subtraction” (50). The text is filled up with incompatibilities that refer to the impossibility posed by the title of the book. Meruane’s house is not her house, “the telephone bell reaches me at the door of my house which is not mine but leased, and not even all of it”³⁵ (47), as much as her inheritance leads her to an impossible return. On her second encounter with Jaser, he argues that his family, “clings to what little he has left because that’s all they have to do now [...]. Hold on to what’s left of Palestine so it doesn’t disappear. Don’t let them erase it because we’ve left the doors open. This is the time to stay, it is the time to go back”³⁶ (43). The last phrase is as contradictory as Meruane’s return. Through the presence of incompatibility, contradiction, and negation, the author presents the impossibility of fulfilling the first of the meanings evoked by the word *volver*. It is also present in the last sentences of *Volverse Palestina*: “I don’t know if I have returned. I’m not sure I can [...]. Don’t ever say you won’t return, Meruane, you will return. You’ll be back soon”³⁷ (107). The character can be found “compulsively surrendering to abandon” “not living” somewhere or even speaking in a language she has already started to forget (41, 35, 29–30). The rare structure of negation that floods the text hints at the *impossibility of return* the book continually refers to, in both (of its) senses.

Impossibility and negation thus play a corresponding role throughout the text. The architecture of denial and incompatibility reinforces the contradictory statement Meruane articulates through her alleged *return*. Yet returning is not the only impossibility to be found in the book’s title. Phrased in its reflexive form, the verb *volver(se)* can also signify to transform, become, grow, or turn *into*. The book thus displays a journey towards a new form of self that is born from the main character’s Palestinian heritage. Such heritage is, in the first place, commonly avoided, not only by Meruane, whose interest in Palestine emerges subtly as a “slender rumor,” but also by her father, who constantly refuses to engage with the subject (17). The first part of the book begins with the narration of the two different occasions on which Meruane’s father found himself at the border of his former homeland: once on the border between Gaza and Egypt and later in the Jordan Valley. On both occasions he turned around and walked away:

³⁴“¿Qué hay ahí, en Yalo o Yalu? Le pregunto en vez, sin saber qué otra cosa preguntar. Nada, dice, no hay nada más que biografías trucas y muros de piedra rebanados a ras de suelo. Sobre lo que fue su casa y la de tantos vecinos hay ahora un parque nacional. Un parque, es decir, una zona protegida bajo una premisa ecológica donde esos palestinos, aun si pudieran regresar, no podrían volver a construir. Un parque donde la historia quedó tapizada de árboles. Todavía se pueden encontrar ahí las huellas del desalojo, los cimientos de esas casas arrancadas de cuajo. Porque los olivos, dice Hamza, continúan creciendo donde quedaron, siguen cargando las ramas de aceitunas aunque no haya quien las coseche.”

³⁵“el timbre del teléfono me alcanza en la puerta de mi casa que no es mía sino arrendada, y tampoco toda.”

³⁶“se aferra a lo poco que le va quedando porque eso es lo que hay que hacer ahora [...]. Aferrarse a lo que queda de Palestina para que no desaparezca. Que no la hagan desaparecer porque dejamos las puertas abiertas. Este es el momento de quedarse, es el momento de volver.”

³⁷“Yo no sé si he vuelto. No sé si nunca pueda [...]. No digas nunca que no vuelvas, Meruane, que sí vuelves. Vuelves pronto.”

Another time he found himself at the edge of Jordan: his sight could encompass the desert that crossed the border [...]. Seeing an opportunity in doubt, my mother pointed, in the distance, her small, stretched and stiff index finger, to the extensive valley of the Jordan River that flowed from Mount Nebo [...]. But my father turned around and walked in the opposite direction. He was not going to put himself through the arbitrary waiting, the meticulous search of his suitcase, the abusive interrogation of the Israeli border and successive checkpoints. He wasn't going to risk being treated with suspicion. To be called a foreigner in a land that he considers his, because it still contains, intact, his father's house.³⁸ (18)

The father not only refuses to go back to Palestine, he also delegates the Palestinian conversation to his sisters, particularly to Meruane's oldest aunt, albeit with the fear that that time might have sown oblivion with them as well (21). The Palestinian heritage is a bond that slowly fades away throughout the text, adding distance between relatives and family memories. Therefore, even though inheritance is what draws Meruane to Palestine in the first place, what actually sets her *return* in motion are the singular affiliations she establishes along the way, as debated in the section above. Those same affiliations are the ones that will set in motion the character's *becoming*-Palestine, which will determine the nature of her *Palestinity*. In other words, those same affiliative relations are the ones that will condition the sort of *becoming* the character will experience throughout her *becoming*-Palestine.

A literal approach to the book's title would suggest Meruane's becoming is smoothly defined, i.e., from Chilean to Palestinian. Yet the actual situation the character finds herself in is an entangled mesh of inherited family histories and a multiplicity of affiliative relationships that problematize the *purity* of the result—if indeed there still is such a thing as being *truly* Palestinian (*Volverse Palestina* 21). Furthermore, Meruane refuses to simply become a Chilean with Palestinian roots, as much as she refuses to be a Palestinian born in Chile, or any sort of identity mixture, a *Chilestinian*, as she states in the note written for the White Review in June 2021: “I've spent years explaining that I'm not *French Italian Greek Egyptian Spanish Turkish*,” the author writes, right after being *recognized* as Hebrew at Berlin's Tegel Airport.³⁹

The sort of becoming that *Volverse Palestina* is concerned with is a non-resulting one, a fruitless transformation. Deleuze and Guattari's approach to *becoming* in *A Thousand Plateaus* is interesting in this sense, for they understand the concept as a form of transformation that, even though *real*, lacks the terminology for the resultant subject. A *becoming*- has no other subject than the self, the authors write (238). Meruane does not mimic the Palestinian, she does not mirror her family's traditions nor does she completely identify herself with her heritage. In the same way, Deleuze and Guattari

³⁸“Estuvo, otra vez, mi padre, en el borde de Jordania: su vista pudo abarcar el desierto que atravesaba la frontera [...]. Viendo una oportunidad en la duda, mi madre señaló, a lo lejos, su pequeño índice estirado y tieso, el extenso valle del río Jordán que se desprendía del monte Nebo [...]. Pero mi padre se dio la vuelta y caminó en dirección opuesta. No iba a someterse a la espera arbitraria, a la meticulosa revisión de su maleta, al abusivo interrogatorio de la frontera israelí y de sucesivos puestos de control. No iba a exponerse a ser tratado con sospecha. A ser llamado extranjero en una tierra que considera suya, porque ahí sigue, todavía intacta, la casa de su padre.”

³⁹<https://www.thewhitereview.org/feature/from-our-archive-faces-in-a-face/>.

assert that “becoming is not a correspondence of relationships. But neither is it a resemblance, an imitation, and ultimately an identification” (238). The Deleuzian *becoming* endured by Meruane arouses nothing but *herself*, a new and changing form of selfness.

If Meruane was to strictly adhere to her inherited relations, such *becoming-Palestine* would have been impossible. The sort of *becoming-* Deleuze and Guattari propose is always “of a different order than that of filiation” (238). Meruane’s inherited relations towards people and places lead her to situations without continuity, often part of a “saga of losses” (*Volverse Palestina* 31)—the earthquake, the seaquake, the burned church, and, finally, even Mayriam’s death—all that is geographically placed in Meruane’s inherited *Palestinity* is broken or impossible to pursue. What is pursuable of her *Palestinity* is only what is created in the alliances she establishes along the way. These alliances between heterogeneous subjects—sometimes affinity affiliations, sometimes hostile encounters—are what make her transformation into a Palestinian a *becoming-Palestine*, where the result lacks a conceptual term because it is itself a difference beyond differentiation. Such affiliations are forms of recognition, manners in which the character relates to her surroundings, either identifying the subjects as allies or enemies, nevertheless displacing the significance of the conventional symbols and situations she encounters. For instance, when an agent of Israel in the airport discovers the insulin bomb Meruane carries on her skin, it is mistakenly identified as a *real* bomb, a real threat that instantly activates Meruane’s *Palestinity* and causes her to be seen as a terrorist. However, since her forms of affinity fluctuate and are often a response to singular situations, Meruane never becomes a new Palestinian entity capable of becoming part of the Palestinian-group. She is still a landless subject, still caught up in between territories. She will now be a foreigner in her own land, as much as she will be a foreigner in Palestine. But being a foreigner in Palestine is more alluring than being foreign anywhere else: since Palestine is an occupied territory, no territory can be Palestinian land, and thus Meruane is bound to be a *foreigner everywhere*. She is meant to be displaced, conjured by her anomalous affiliations.

Her *becoming-Palestine* is thus a sort of involution. *Becoming-*, according to Deleuze and Guattari, does not imply a familiar relationship. “If evolution implies true becomings-,” the authors argue, “it is in the vast domain of symbiosis, that brings into play beings of completely different scales and kingdoms, without any possible filiation” (*A Thousand Plateaus* 238). Likewise, evolution, *inheritance*, is what brought the slender rumor of Palestine towards Meruane, yet it is because of the *symbiosis that brought into play completely different scales and kingdoms, without any possible filiation*, that Meruane’s *becoming-Palestine* was assembled, transcending conventional transformation. Evolution would have made Meruane a *Palestinian citizen*, involution is what makes her Palestine, the projection of a cultural context. Through her Palestine Writing, Meruane does not become a part of the Palestine collective, but an expression of its alterity. As Deleuze and Guattari assert in *A Thousand Plateaus*, “Becoming- is involutorial, and involution is creative” (245). With Meruane a whole new form of *becoming-Palestine* arises. It does not resemble *being* Palestinian. It does not refer to *looking* Palestinian. It has nothing to do with any sort of looking nor being *like* anything else. The form of *Palestinity* Meruane “suffers from” has nothing to do with the *Palestinity* that may have existed before, because it does not refer to the Palestine

demonym. It is not *becoming*-Palestine in the sense of *belonging* to Palestine, nor in the sense of *being* Palestinian. A demonym is a word that identifies a group of people in relation to a particular space. However, Meruane does not relate to the Palestinian-group but to the herd of heterogeneous, anomalous subjects she encounters, and with whom she establishes affiliative relationships. Her *becoming*-Palestine transcends adjectivation. When Meruane *becomes*-Palestine, she becomes “not a demonym but a nation”⁴⁰ (*Palestina, por ejemplo* 24).

Conclusion

Understanding world literature with a universal scope means understanding there are several attributes inherent to the text itself that make the oeuvre world-*ish*. The “world” in world literature is not a fixed space, nor simply a *worlding* in the sense that it “shapes or constitutes” the world as we know it, as Pheng Cheah would argue, but *worldish* in the sense that it is constantly *becoming*-world(s). Although it might sound odd, the word *is* indeed worldish, in the sense Wittgenstein talks about reddish-green or yellowish-blue in his *Remarks on Colour*. Wittgenstein argues that if two colors are seen in the same place at the same time, they are not two colors, but one (120). For instance, as Bernhard Ritter explains in his article “Reddish Green – Wittgenstein on Concepts and the Limits of the Empirical,” “the only way for red and green to be perceived as being present in one colour is to perceive reddish green” (12). Just as Wittgenstein’s reddish green is not simply a combination of red and green but an “intermediary color,” the result of a *becoming*- is not a hybrid entity born out of a mixture; they both are “-ish” substances, always *almost*-, *sort of*-, *roughly*-something. The word shall be worldish because it is not the world per se, yet it actually *is* to some extent, since it is a continuous *becoming*-world, that is, intrinsically a non-achievable, unnamable entity. Its literatures generate a form of reality that was previously undisclosed, and this reality is not only caught up within the narrative, but can expand upon and contaminate its surroundings.

The worldish texts include a series of affiliative relations that alter the nature of the self, instigating a transformation that constitutes the journey itself. Leopold Bloom and Stephen Dedalus, in James Joyce’s *Ulysses*, are meant to find each other; not because of their similarities, not because of their resemblance, not because they *are* the same, but because they are intrinsically different; two heterogeneous anomalies that, once encountered, do not create a new hybrid form, nor adapt to each other, nor merge into a new entity. They simply become themselves, yet the journey to do so is intrinsically *a becoming*. In *Ulysses*, the Circe chapter acts as the *becoming*-’s triggering moment. In *Volverse Palestina*, the emissaries she encounters along the way activate her Palestinity. In Han Kang’s book, *The Vegetarian*—also a book in motion, much like *Volverse Palestina*—the main character’s dreams are what triggers the involution. In her *becoming*-, the protagonist Yeong-hye ultimately *refuses* to belong to the human race. In her *becoming*-tree, the affiliations are created among completely different species, in altogether distinct scales. All three books are instances of a *becoming*-world, understanding such a *becoming*- as a revelation of an extraordinary form of both self and world. The world is not only an unstable, ever-changing entity in the tradition of Cheah’s interpretation of Heidegger, but a series of unstable and ever-changing forms of reality.

⁴⁰“no un gentilicio, una nación.”

The *becoming-world* is real, but to rephrase Deleuze and Guattari's question: what form of reality is it? For if *becoming-* does not consist of making- or of imitating-, it is also evident that one does not "really" *become-*. *Becoming-* does not produce anything other than itself, which means the world is nothing other than the world itself, yet—and here we find ourselves at a critical milestone—the world is new in form, the world configuring a new form of reality. Furthermore, the autonomy achieved by the characters in their *becomings-* is not an emancipation, nor a growth, nor a maturation. They do not evolve as their species would require. It is an involution in the sense that it requires *becoming-minor*. To a greater or lesser extent, it is a rebellion against one's own evolution.

The *becoming-Palestine* encompassed in Meruane's *Volverse Palestina* configures a new reality about *Palestinity*, one that could not have existed if it were not for the anomalous conditions she encounters. The term-less realities born from different *becoming(s)-* are the unstable result of a process that constitutes a reality in itself; in other words, the new reality exists in and because of the *becoming-* process they are part of. Yet who then, or what, *becomes-Palestine*? It is not the author herself, nor simply her literary character. It is something bigger, something that allows the new reality of Palestine to contaminate and spread over new formats, patterns, and structures. *Volverse Palestina* is the story of a unique process, created in the midst of a series of singular and unrepeatable moments of assemblage between heterogeneous subjects. It neither offers nor explains a new way of *being* Palestinian, it does not present the reader with a third neutral space that can embrace Meruane's *abnormal*⁴¹ Palestinity. Indeed, her abnormal Palestinity does not even belong to the character, since it surpasses the narrative voice, infecting the new instances of the text and its new narrative forms. Ultimately, it is Meruane's writing that has been infected, that has become-Palestine. It is her writing that has been altered, resulting in nothing but itself, a new term-less reality of writing that is, essentially, Palestine. A literary machine that is now a Palestine-literary machine. *Volverse Palestina* is a *worldish* book not because it presents itself as a canvas where we can "articulate, in the idiosyncratic syntax of our critical desires, the urgency of confronting an end of the world that might just never end," as Mariano Siskind argues (232), but because there is no canvas, no representation, and no unfolded reality⁴²; simply a process of *becoming-world* that might just never end, never be, and never *actually* become. The term *world* in world literary studies does not work as a stabilizer of similarities in the sense that it encompasses a canonical motif of ways of "doing literature" around the world. The term world refers to the massive, immeasurable amount of literatures which, under their own miscellaneous processes, contain a form of

⁴¹In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari propose the following distinction between the anomalous and the abnormal:

It has been noted that the origin of the word anomal ('anomalous'), an adjective that has fallen into disuse in French, is very different from that of anormal ('abnormal'): a-normal, a Latin adjective lacking a noun in French, refers to that which is outside rules or goes against the rules, whereas an-omalie, a Greek noun that has lost its adjective, designates the unequal, the coarse, the rough, the cutting edge of deterritorialization. The abnormal can be defined only in terms of characteristics, specific or generic; but the anomalous is a position or set of positions in relation to a multiplicity. (243–244)

⁴²In this sense, it differs from, and sometimes even contradicts, the recurrent characteristics of the Palestinian diaspora that Helena Lindholm in *The Palestinian Diaspora* situates around an absence of homeland and a new transnational condition.

becoming- that brings out a previously hidden form of anomalous reality, which is the result of a subject's *becoming*-self. It is not that a different reality is created in the text, towards which we run in order to "displace the unbearable sense of loss and the inescapable violence that define our present" (232), but that the text registers the alterity contained in specific, singular encounters, exposing forms of existence that were hitherto concealed. It is in such cases that we can say that literature world-*ishes*.



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Appendix A

de idea. «Me duele tener que escribirte este mensaje. Desafortunadamente no podré escribir el texto. En los últimos meses a dos ciudadanos israelíes se les ha impedido el acceso cuando regresaban de viajes de turismo (un eufemismo para decir que fueron deportados). Los dos eran judíos por línea materna, ~~eran judíos en toda regla, y los dos habían hecho aliyá, el proceso por el cual un judío pide ser miembro del Estado de Israel.~~

Source: Meruane, Lina. *Volverse Palestina*. Conaculta, 2013, pp. 44–46.

Duelo, or the Cryptic Translation of Mourning: Friendship Between Languages

Noraedén Mora Méndez | University of Southern California

<http://ellids.com/archives/2022/09/5.2-Mendez.pdf>

Abstract | The experience of loss and the possibility to overcome mourning has been a concern for both psychoanalysis and philosophy. Loss is also important in the practice of translation; Walter Benjamin and Jacques Derrida, among other thinkers, have insisted on the complication between texts in translation and the concepts of life, death, survival, and love and friendship. This paper follows these complications to argue that the word *duelo* in translation, as well as translation itself, enacts and symptomizes the frictions that arise between languages and friendship. By closely reading Sigmund Freud's and Nicholas Abraham and Maria Torok's psychoanalytic theories of mourning, melancholia, love object, and crypt, the paper traces loss of meaning *in translation* and translation as a work of mourning. The word *duelo* in Spanish is a homonym that comes from two different roots in Latin, one corresponding with the term mourning, *dolus*, and the other with duel, *duellum*. By reading two of Jorge Luis Borges's short stories about different *duelos* the paper shows how translation embodies the loss of meaning between languages that is also present in friendship and love. This paper reads friendship *between* different languages and examines how the idea of friendship is transformed in translation. In this sense, this work takes *duelo* as the struggle between languages to suggest a cryptic translation, a seemingly contradictory task based on friendship that aims to highlight the nuances of the text in translation. This paper wants to insist on friendship and alterity between languages as part of the dynamic that translation entails, not an ideal or diplomatic friendship, but one that is complicated and involves love, mourning, and combat. To translate cryptically, to maintain a *duelo* in translation, would mean to resist the impulse of one language comprehending or dominating the other, and strive for a loving friendship.

Keywords | Mourning, *duelo*, translation, crypt, friendship, love, Jorge Luis Borges, Jacques Derrida, Sigmund Freud

The thing is that all work of translation, like seduction, takes time. Seduction does not occur in the ‘crush’ but in the courtship, in the loving development of a dialog that goes beyond the verbal. Translation also matures little by little, in the midst of a difficult (intolerable) friendship with another language; it advances thanks to the indispensable resistance offered by the other language [...] There is a share of intimacy with everything that is translated.¹

—María Fernanda Palacios, *Saber y sabor de la lengua*

The word *duelo* in Spanish is a homonym that comes from two different roots in Latin, one corresponding with the term mourning, *dolus*, and the other with duel, *duellum*. With this difficulty of translating the word *duelo* from Spanish to other languages, this paper argues that translation symptomatizes the frictions between languages when exposed to each other and explores the experience of loss, mourning, and the (im)possible love between languages. These concepts and ideas have been a concern for both psychoanalysis and philosophy, but also in the practice of translation and in the sole experience of alterity. This paper will follow Walter Benjamin, Jacques Derrida, and other thinkers’ insistence on the complication between texts in translation, the task of translators, fidelity, love, and the concepts of life, death, and survival. By closely reading Sigmund Freud’s, and Nicholas Abraham and Maria Torok’s psychoanalytic theories of mourning, melancholia, love object, and crypt, this paper will emphasize the need to recognize not only the experience of loss, but also the intimacy between languages and texts, involved in the process of translation. Thinking through the complication of translating the word *duelo*, the paper highlights the frictions that arise between languages with two of Jorge Luis Borges’s short stories about *duelo*. This work dwells in the loss of meaning in translation to understand mourning and duel as related to the concepts of friendship, love for the other, loss, and rivalry.

A translation practice that takes language systems as complete and penetrable means erasing the nuances and singularities of texts, aiming for a full decryption and dominance from one language to another. That is why, where more automatized linguistic systems and literary indexes demand transparency and equivalence in translations, this paper turns to the possibility of cryptic translation, a seemingly contradictory task that signals a form of reading within alterity. To write about life, death, and translation perhaps means to be already thinking with Walter Benjamin’s famous essay “The Task of the Translator.” This essay and the foreword to his own translation of Baudelaire’s *Tableaux Parisiens* work as a very intricate introduction which talks less about

¹Translated by author.

Baudelaire and more about the complexities of poetic language in translation. Benjamin insists on how translation is not about transmitting information or simply communicating one idea in one language to another, in fact he highlights how this premise of transmission is the “hallmark of bad translations” (253). In the essay, Benjamin seems to be after something else in translation, a task that goes beyond the exchange of words and is deeply related to loss—and even more so loss in poetic language.

In Benjamin’s text, the terminology frequently elevates the task of the translator to the level of dealing with sacred language, as he says towards the end of the essay where he suggests that the greatest texts already hold their potential translation, like the Scriptures that serve as a prototype for all translations (263). In this regard, Paul de Man suggests that Benjamin echoes a sacred language to repair certain loss of uniqueness implied in modernity.² Benjamin studies Baudelaire as the writer who registered the “Loss of Halo” (“Perte d’auréole”) of the poet in modernity, the ruins of an aura.³ For Benjamin, translation implies a loss that has to be incarnated (to continue with the sacred language) in the task of the translator who tries to bring back or to reconstitute the words that are *already* lost in the original, like the halo of the poet lost with modernity. Benjamin’s famous translation metaphor of the broken vessel, where the pieces fit each other to be glued but the pieces are not identical to each other, attest to this conception of translation where communication or imitation is not at the center (260). The task of the translator is to “lovingly and in detail incorporate the original’s way of meaning” (260), writes Benjamin, making both original and translation recognizable parts of the vessel. In this loving action, one text does not cover the other, but both texts constantly reflect the “longing for linguistic complementation” from each other (260). That is to say, there is no completeness in the original nor in the translation, one is the reminder of the loss of the other.

In his essay, Benjamin carries out two major tasks, that of translating poetry from French and that of introducing the work of a poet, which we could consider to be already a form of translation. Benjamin’s language is pregnant with impossibility, longing, debt, loss, and the attempt to make sense of what is already broken. It is in this context that words like *life*, *survival*, and *death* appear. Benjamin states:

Just as the manifestations of *life* are intimately connected with the phenomenon of *life* without being of importance to it, a translation issues from the original — not so much from its life as from its *afterlife* [*Überleben*]. For a translation comes later than the original, and since the important works of world literature never find their chosen translators at the time of their origin, their translation marks their stage of *continued life* [*Fortleben*]. The idea of life and *afterlife* [*Fortleben*] in works of art should be regarded with an entirely unmetaphorical objectivity. (254; emphasis added)⁴

Harry Zohn translates both the words *Fortleben* and *Überleben* here as afterlife, and on some occasions *Fortleben* is rendered as continued life. The two words are related, and

²de Man follows Gadamer’s take on modernity which is the evocation of loss and reads this motif in Benjamin’s introduction to Baudelaire (17).

³Aura is another word that signals loss and decay in many of Benjamin’s writings.

⁴The terms in German are inserted from Benjamin’s “Die Aufgabe des Übersetzers.” *Gesammelte Schriften*, pp. 9–21.

both contain *leben*, but each of them produces a different meaning or effect in the text. In his essay, “Des Tours de Babel,” Derrida delves into the difference and relation between these two terms using the French translation of Benjamin’s text by Maurice de Gandillac, who also conflates both words in one, *survivre* (202). *Überleben*, then, means survival, afterlife, or life after death and *Fortleben* is closer to *living on* or *continued life*. For Derrida, both terms—welcoming Gandillac’s confusion as productive—are forms of survival and bring a certain untimely rhythm to the relationship between the original and translated text. Benjamin’s insistence on the life and death of works in translation can be understood in its articulation within a more complex flow that he calls history: “The philosopher’s task consists in comprehending all of natural life through the more encompassing life of history. And indeed, isn’t the afterlife [*Überleben*] of works of art easier to recognize than that of living creatures?” (255). Here Benjamin is drawing parallels between the translator, the philosopher, and perhaps the art historian, as all these tasks are related to the life, survival, and the time of works.

A translation, then, goes beyond the life and death of the original, it makes both texts survive and, at the same time, it lovingly promises its continuation and enhancement. Not only is translation the carryover of life after death, but the prefix *Über* also brings the idea of a plus or a magnification, and also of something in transit, like *translation* and *transference* in German *Übersetzung* and *Übertragung*, correspondingly. Translation brings not only life to texts after death, but also a continued and better life. The relationship between the original and its translation, as Derrida suggests while reading Benjamin’s essay, is that of survival even before death: “Such sur-vival gives a surplus of life, more than a surviving. The work does not simply live longer, it lives *more and better*, beyond its author’s means” (“Des Tours” 203; emphasis in original).

Even when Benjamin seems to establish a progression between the original and its translation—one comes after the other—his metaphors, like the vessel, often illustrate or translate this relationship dynamically, denoting some sort of contact between them (254). As Benjamin articulates: “Whereas content and language form a certain unity in the original, like a fruit and its skin, the language of the translation envelops its content like a royal robe with ample folds. For it signifies a more exalted language than its own and thus remains unsuited to its content, overpowering and alien” (258). If there is a contact or a relation between the original and the translation, it is like a royal robe covering, preserving, and exalting the king’s body, the original. The king’s clothes in their royalty only highlight his body. The robe, in a sense, will survive the king’s life, but his possible nakedness demands clothes while he is ruling, while he is alive. Translation invokes a form of contact that implies the loss of the original (of meaning and words) and also its survival or living on (*Überleben/Fortleben*); translating involves a transit between two languages where the original body never arrives complete but, at the same time, is preserved and exalted.

If we follow Benjamin’s insistence on life then translation is a form of survival, but, as Derrida points out, this survival does not imply a definitive separation between original and translation; in fact, it can hardly guarantee a sequence between the two:

Isn’t this what a translation does? Doesn’t it guarantee these *two* survivals by losing the flesh during a process of conversion [*change*]? By elevating the signifier to its meaning or value, all the while preserving the mournful and debt-

laden memory of the singular body, the first body, the unique body that the translation thus elevates, preserves, and negates [*relève*]? Since it is a question of a travail—indeed, as we noted, a travail of the negative—this relevance is a travail of mourning, in the most enigmatic sense of this word [...] A faithful and mournful memory. (“Relevant” 199; emphasis in original)

Derrida highlights the possibilities of *survival* of the text in translation working through Benjamin’s words: *Fortleben*, living on or living better; and *Überleben*, life after death or survival.⁵ This implies exalting the words to preserve the body of the original. But it is not only the preservation of the body, it is also the *mournful and debt-laden memory* of that body. In other words, survival is the loss of the original body and the preservation of its memory or its aura at the same time. A relevant translation, for Derrida, must deal with the notion of *relève*: the arrival or replacement of a new element for an old one, a substitution or a relay in translation, but the word *relève* is also linked to work and value. A relevant translation is a matter of work, a task; it is a work of mourning, of preserving its memory and its aura already lost. In translation there is a re-enlivening of the dead text through preserving its memory. With loss and mourning, there is already an interrogation of the linear chronicity of life and death, and thus, the life of translations.

The concepts of mourning and loss inevitably take us to psychoanalysis. In Sigmund Freud’s essay from 1917, “Trauer und Melancholie” [“Mourning and Melancholia”], he describes these two possible outcomes or syndromes in reaction to loss. For Freud, loss is considered a natural process in life, and patients present two different ways of coping with it: a healthy or normal response in the form of mourning and a pathological reaction called melancholia. Freud states:

Mourning is regularly the reaction to the loss of a loved person, or the loss of some abstraction which has taken the place of one, such as one’s country, liberty, an ideal, and so on. In some people the same influences produce melancholia instead of mourning and we consequently suspect them of a pathological disposition [...]. We rely on its being overcome after a certain lapse of time. (243–44)

It seems that both conditions are similar or have similar symptoms, which are difficult to differentiate. Perhaps their likeness is the main reason Freud indexes the concept of mourning in contraposition to melancholia, as delimited different processes: one normal and the other abnormal. Mourning is an in-passing healthy reaction that will be over after a certain period, while melancholia is an ongoing pathology that supposes a more permanent condition.

Mourning, for Freud, is related to a real or identifiable loss. Since the death of a loved one, for example, is recognizable, the self will just need time to adapt. This means that once the subject gets over it and eventually understands that the love object no longer exists, the phase will end successfully and “all libido shall be withdrawn from its attachments to that object” (“Mourning and Melancholia” 244). When loss is overcome the attachments or cathexis will be recovered or regained by the self, thus the self is

⁵In his article “Jacques Derrida, Un Plus de Vida,” Javier Pavez emphasizes the importance of a “surplus” or “plus” in Derrida’s notion of survival. It is not just life after death but an excess of life, more than life or “plus que vie” (102).

reconstituted and regains its integrity. In Freud's theory, the self works economically, namely, the self *invests* libidinal energies or cathexis in love objects. When the loss happens, the investments are still attached to the lost love object within the mournful self but, once this phase is over, the investments must go back to the self.

Freud acknowledges that in both mourning and melancholia the *confusion of the self*, or the impossibility to distinguish between what is lost in the love object and what the self entails, appears as the love object. However, because mourning is just a transitory phase, it would successfully have a resolution and the self would regain the investments and integrity, it would know its limits again, or as Freud puts it, "when the work of mourning is completed the ego becomes free and uninhibited again" ("Mourning and Melancholia" 245). Melancholia, on the contrary, is a much more complex pathology where the loss cannot be simply contrasted with reality. In melancholic cases, it is not as if the patient is not aware of the loss that provoked the melancholia, but as Freud puts it, the patient "knows *whom* he has lost but not *what* he has lost in him" (245; emphasis in original). Melancholia implies certain awareness and, more importantly, a complex unconscious process, a narcissistic confusion that reality cannot resolve, whereas in the mourning process, "there is nothing about the loss that is unconscious" (245). Freud emphatically does not want to see a pathology in mourning; he writes, it is "because we know so well how to explain it [mourning] that this attitude does not seem to us pathological" (244). It is as if the clarity of the situation would make the condition obvious and healthy, even transparent, as if loss does not need any unconscious mediation or translation to be overcome by the subject.

This insistence on only conscious loss in mourning—as Freud states that nothing regarding loss during mourning is unconscious—is noteworthy, especially coming from the thinker of the unconscious *par excellence*. If we think about dealing with the death of the love object as entirely conscious, then the love for that object would operate entirely in the realm of consciousness too. It is as if the self is not touched unconsciously at the moment of the death, or before. The word *love* that composes the formulation *love object* seems to do nothing to the unconscious part of the self before or after the loss. Not only death is simplified here, but also the notion of love and life, particularly if we think for a moment again of all the words that Benjamin uses that include life: *Leben*, *Überleben*, *Fortleben*.

But how are these ideas about mourning and love related to translation? Melancholy, as the state of continuation, if we were to apply it from Freud and follow Benjamin, should be the way we translate, a melancholic work of translation that has an ongoing relationship with the text. But Derrida in his essays insists on mourning and its relation to death. However, we cannot take directly from Freud what Derrida calls the work of mourning as the very task of the translator; instead, we would have to resort to Derrida's translation of mourning. Psychoanalysts Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, whose elaborations on loss were extremely provocative for Derrida's work, complicate the whole notion of loss—and especially mourning—through two crucial mechanisms: introjection and incorporation ("New Perspectives in Metapsychology" 125). For them, mourning is no longer always just a healthy reaction: what they call successful mourning implies introjection, while pathological mourning may lead to incorporation. Incorporation implies a difficulty and refusal to reclaim parts of the self placed in the love object that is now lost, and as Abraham and Torok insist, introjection is "the refusal

to acknowledge the full import of the loss, a loss that, if recognized as such, would effectively transform us” (127). Namely, incorporation as a mechanism to cope with loss would act as the refusal to introject into the self what was lost with the death of the love object.

In their psychoanalytic language Abraham and Torok elaborate on how loss and the recognition of loss, not only affect, but are constitutive of the self. Loss contributes to the formation of the self and pierces it in its very core. This is a polemic assertion since it means that the self is always already incomplete and formed by the loss of the other, it is not an untouchable whole. This is connected to the notion of the original as a complete and ideal text, that both Benjamin and Derrida destabilize by complicating the relationship between the original text and its translation. In their practice of translation, the original already lacks and it is always incomplete without translation. Similarly, Abraham and Torok elaborate on how the loss of the other carries the potential of transforming the self through introjecting the other and its loss. But if this loss cannot be recognized, the self would swallow the other or incorporate it without being able to introject it. In this sense, Freud’s mourning may be a misunderstanding or simplification of the complexity of loss and its repercussions in the self. That is why the term introjection is key to understanding this dynamic, especially for Torok who carefully describes the difference between introjection and incorporation.⁶ When introjection fails, there might be a refusal to mourn, and in consequence, the need of the subject to incorporate or swallow the love object.

In some cases—like in Freud’s Wolf Man⁷—a shameful memory is associated with the loss and not only is the other incorporated, but a crypt is formed, a “*secretly perpetuated* topography” (“New Perspectives in Metapsychology” 125; emphasis in original) where the loved one and their secrets are kept. Abraham and Torok describe this kind of cryptic grieving as a total isolation of the experience within the self where the grief cannot be discussed or even be accounted for, “the words that cannot be uttered, the scenes that cannot be recalled, the tears that cannot be shed—everything will be swallowed along with the trauma that led to the loss [...]. Inexpressible mourning erects a secret tomb inside the subject” (130). The crypt appears only when the shameful memory is the other’s doing and when this other is not only a love object but serves as an ego ideal for the subject (131).

The crypt is then the reaction to a trauma, a wound, where the loved one is preserved inside the self in a sort of tomb that seals the secret or shameful memory of the other. The exceptional cryptic infrastructure divides the subject since before the death of

⁶In her article from 1968, “The Illness of Mourning and the Fantasy of the Exquisite Corpse,” Torok elaborates on the genealogy of introjection and demonstrates how Freud and other psychoanalysts misused the term or confused it with incorporation.

⁷Freud’s case Wolf Man is described as a severe infantile neurosis where a series of dreams or nightmares were affecting the patient (“From the History of an Infantile Neurosis” 16–30). Freud concludes that the dreams are related to a sexual trauma in early stages of childhood (“From the History of an Infantile Neurosis” 104).

In *The Wolf Man’s Magic Word: A Cryptonymy*, Abraham and Torok reinterpreted this case and go beyond what Freud concluded, they introduce the concept of *the crypt* and sustain that the patient statements were hiding other statements (49). They say that the secret with the older sister and the Wolf Man were encrypted to both preserve and forget the issue and the way this manifested was in his bi-lingual background and with wordplays between Russian and German (17).

the other and when the actual loss happens, this division remains there. It is interesting how psychoanalytic terminology strives for language metaphors when trying to explain the work of the psyche. In this regard, it is widely known that Jacques Lacan states that “*the unconscious is structured like a language*” and that we use signifiers and signified to organize human relations which need encoding and decoding (20; emphasis in original).⁸ Translation also works here as a metaphor of a relationship and as the actual transit between two languages or subjectivities. But what Abraham and Torok bring with encrypting opens another possibility in a relationship between two unconscious that are separated and in contact, at the same time, in an untimely manner.

Derrida is interested in this pathologic formation where the mortuary process, the encrypting, starts even before the actual loss in a sort of deranged temporality. By reading Abraham and Torok, Derrida elaborates on how loss does not have a discrete occurrence and mourning itself does not take place only once. Encrypting before death, then, represents the possibility of losing the other in an anticipated ongoing mourning. The concept of the crypt as a reaction to loss allows the discussion for a theoretical redistribution that puts emphasis in the division of the self into different forums [*fors*], a “‘false unconscious,’ an ‘artificial’ unconscious lodged like a prothesis, a graft in the heart of an organ, within the *divided self*” (Derrida, “*Fors*” xiii; emphasis in original); and the relationship with the other always takes place within that divided (not-complete) self.⁹ The crypt of the other is already its death; therefore, the identification of the actual loss is not what could alleviate the symptoms and resolve mourning. On the contrary, if we follow Derrida, mourning continues in an already touched self.

The *topos* of the crypt divides the self into forums [*fors*], “the crypt can constitute its secret only by means of its division, its fracture. ‘I’ can *save* an inner safe only by putting it inside ‘myself,’ *beside(s)* myself, outside” (Derrida, “*Fors*” xiv; emphasis in original). In what is described as a pathological formation there is a way of thinking a possible relationship with the other. There can be an inner safe *inside* myself that is *beside* myself: the crypt of the other. For Derrida, mourning is always cryptic, or even melancholic; but dealing with the possibility of loss before is not melancholic in a narcissistic manner because the self is already divided by the other. The other—carried in the crypt—represents a fundamental infrastructural piece of the self.

If we follow Derrida, then mourning’s conception cannot be found in its opposition to melancholia, nor in the delimitation of incorporation and introjection.

⁸Lacan’s assertion about language is central to his psychoanalytic theory where he brings linguistic formulas and anthropological resources to make sense of the subject and the unconscious. Drawing from anthropology, he resorts to the linguistic structure as a ground that organizes signifiers and shapes human relationships (20). For Lacan, it is the linguistic structure that gives the unconscious the status of something definable (21).

⁹In “Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego,” a work posterior to “Mourning and Melancholia,” Freud acknowledges a division of the self in the melancholic structure: “these melancholias also show us something else [...] They show us the ego divided, fallen apart into two pieces, one of which rages against the second. This second piece is the one which has been altered by introjection and which contains the lost object” (109). Freud will go on to say that this is the mechanism in which an instance like the Superego can be established, another conscience (a critical one) within the Ego, all (including the Id) constitutive parts of the *normal* self. We can read here how a foreign instance within the self is already in Freud’s elaborations towards his second topic (Ego, Superego, and Id). Perhaps Freud’s second topic already complicates the dynamics of loss described in his earlier article on mourning and melancholia.

Mourning implies the two mechanisms working separately and together, and they fail, for there is never a total incorporation or a total introjection: “I speak of mourning as the attempt, always doomed to fail (thus a constitutive failure, precisely), to incorporate, interiorize, introject, subjectivize the other in me. Even before the death of the other, the inscription in me of her or his mortality constitutes me [...] my relation to myself is first of all plunged into mourning” (*Points* 321). The process of *reappropriation* of the other, as other, is always incomplete. In this sense, the notion of mourning supposes a rigorous conceptual and theoretical ambiguity—that is to dissolve the boundaries that separate mourning from melancholia (or incorporation from introjection) and to accept the insufficiency of the concept to account for death acknowledging, at the same time, its efficacy to invoke loss. We would have to mourn the isolation of the concept, but also its total confusion with other terms. If anything, mourning is a contaminated concept. Mourning convokes contamination of different times, different disciplines, and different languages.

Mourning as a constitutive mechanism of alterity requires to think how the self can love an object (the other) to the point of grieving them. Psychoanalyst Sándor Ferenczi, one of Freud’s colleagues, very early on in his work puts an emphasis on love, transference, and introjection. For him love is part of the ego, “I considered *every sort of object love* (or *transference*) both in normal and in neurotic people [...] as an extension of the ego, that is, as introjection” (Ferenczi 316; emphasis in original). Although Ferenczi firmly believes that love is always narcissistic, namely, the self can only love itself because the love object is always taken into the ego (316), our reading of mourning precisely challenges this psychoanalytic narcissistic love. Instead, our interest resides with how mourning can be a manifestation of love for the other and how it allows a form of alterity between languages; as Benjamin insisted, the task of the translator involves love and longing.

Psychoanalytic literature on relationships and loss calls for a declaration that is worth emphasizing: there is no mourning without love; and we may add, there is no love without survival. Love is frequently studied within the realm of romantic relations or reserved to familial kinship. However, the theory regarding the formation of the self and love objects, and its potential loss, applies to friendship as a form of love—like in romantic relationships, it involves intention and the risk of losing the loved one. To be affected by others before and after death also means to recognize a more porous self that cannot simply recover its integrity by recognizing material loss. Intersubjectivity, or relating to the other, will imply a more complex dynamic of encryption and translation where loss plays an important role. In *The Politics of Friendship*, Derrida points to ongoing mourning as constitutive of friendship because friendship implies love and transference—but not to be swallowed by the ego—and the sole possibility of the death of the other anticipates their survival. As he elaborates: “one can still love the deceased or the inanimate [...]. It is indeed through the possibility of loving the deceased that the decision in favour of a certain love comes into being” (*Politics* 10). Love and friendship seem to continue in spite of death, in fact the possibility of loss, or the anticipation of it, already signifies friendship. “The anguished apprehension of mourning (without which the act of friendship would not spring forth in its very energy) insinuates itself a priori and anticipates itself; it haunts and plunges the friend, before mourning,

into mourning” (*Politics* 14), Derrida further articulates. Friendship would imply love and loss side by side, an act of anticipated and constant mourning.

We may say that it is precisely *in translation* that the very word “mourning” can interrogate the possibility of mourning as a phase that is successfully overcome after the death of the other. This paper contends that ongoing mourning, where the other is alive *in the self* but preserved *as other*, is implied in the word for mourning in Spanish: *duelo*.¹⁰ This word in Spanish is a homonym that comes from two different roots in Latin, one corresponding with the term mourning, *dolus* (*deuil* in French also comes from this Latin root), and the other with duel, *duellum*.¹¹ *Duelo*, as mourning, and *duelo*, as duel, are two separate meanings that convey loss, pain, and combat in relation to the other. Two different concepts that coincide and coexist in the same word, related but without synthesis. The possibility of death is implied both in mourning and duel. However, how is a duel relevant to the notion of mourning, how do I fight and mourn in a *duelo*? This takes us back to the process of encryption as anticipation of loss. In the formation of the crypt, it operates a dynamic between preservation and struggle with the other at the same time. This infrastructure within the self is there not only to safeguard the other, but to prevent their complete integration with the self. It is an ongoing combat to preserve the other as other. Thus, *duelo* conveys a form of mourning that encrypts, keeping the other *inside me*, but also rejecting their total incorporation *into me*.

The transit between the English *mourning* or the French *deuil* and the Spanish *duelo*, may help us insist on an affinity between translation and mourning. There is, on the one hand, the loss of meaning between languages and, on the other, the impossibility of equivalence without residue between the languages. In the translation from English to Spanish, meaning is gained, another association adheres to *duelo*. The homonym dynamic can also be a duel, a battle of two or more meanings over the same signifier, but also a place of ambiguity, of encryption. *Duelo* and *duelo* may help us grasp the paradoxical nature of something like a translation that encrypts. In the very notion of Abraham and Torok’s crypt reinterpreted by Derrida,¹² we can see how it operates not only the refusal of loss, but also a resistance to reappropriation:

With the real loss of the object having been rejected and the desire having been maintained but at the same time excluded from introjection (simultaneous conservation and suppression, between which no synthesis is possible), incorporation is a kind of theft to reappropriate the pleasure object. But that

¹⁰There are two main definitions of *duelo* in the *Real Academia Española* online (<https://dle.rae.es/duelo>):

1. From medieval Latin *duellum* ‘war,’ ‘combat.’

“Combat or fight between two, a consequence of a dare or a challenge.”

2. From late Latin *dolus*, ‘pain.’

“Demonstrations that one makes to manifest the feeling of sorrow for the death of someone.”

Definitions translated by the author.

¹¹In his book *Faire part: cryptes de Derrida*, Jacob Rogozinski argues that in antique French *deuil* (mourning) was written *duel*, so the connection is also possible in French. I owe this reference to Javier Pavez.

¹²Ivan Trujillo, in one of his seminars called “La Contaminación,” linked the ideas of nature (*physis*), love, and encrypting through Derrida’s commentary on Heraclitus’ phrase “Nature loves to hide.” The phrase can be read—and Derrida reads it that way—as nature loves to encrypt itself pointing to love and encryption in this operation. This emphasis in Heraclitus’s phrase appears in *The Politics of Friendship* and “Heidegger’s Ear: Philopolemology (Geschlecht IV).”

reappropriation is simultaneously rejected: which leads to the paradox of a foreign body preserved as foreign but by the same token excluded from a self that thenceforth deals not with the other, but only with itself. (“*Fors*” xvii)

Losing the other, but at the same time rejecting its appropriation, is what Derrida calls ex-appropriation, “appropriation caught in a double bind: I must and I must not take the other into myself; mourning is an unfaithful fidelity if it succeeds in interiorizing the other ideally in me, that is, in not respecting his or her infinite exteriority” (*Points* 321). It is a battle that is implied in love and friendship, a tension between making the other my own and rejecting total incorporation, a *duelo*. When Georg Gadamer died in 2002, Derrida wrote a mournful eulogy to his friend where he approaches mourning as an ethical position towards the other (following Emmanuel Levinas). In this homage, Derrida talks about friendship and death imagining the end of the world with a poem by Paul Celan:

In-
to what
does he not charge?
The world is gone, I must carry you.
(Stanza quoted in “*Rams*” 141)

This last verse is phrased and rephrased throughout the eulogy while remembering Gadamer and Celan, both dead by the time Derrida writes this text. With Celan’s poem, Derrida translates what Freud describes as the confusion of the self in mourning and melancholia into carrying the other: “according to Freud, mourning consists in carrying the other in the self” (Derrida, “*Rams*” 160). Nevertheless, for Freud, this carrying has to end shortly after the loss, but for Derrida if mourning is friendship, it cannot simply have an end. This means, carrying the crypt of the other within oneself before and after the friend’s death, even if it is a bit melancholic:

There is no longer any world, it’s the end of the world, for the other at his death. And so I welcome in me this end of the world, I must carry the other and his world, the world in me: introjection, interiorization of remembrance (*Erinnerung*), and idealization. Melancholy welcomes the failure and the pathology of this mourning. But if *I must* (and this is ethics itself) carry the other in me in order to be faithful to him, in order to respect his singular alterity, a certain melancholy must still protest against normal mourning. (“*Rams*” 160; emphasis in original)

But does this mean that the anticipation of loss, as a sort of melancholy, is implied in love and friendship? Would a depressive or melancholic position towards love and translation be the healthier one? To start answering these questions it is necessary to address the indivisible barrier between mourning and melancholia. Mourning is central here, because from its very conception it was not considered a pathology and supposedly is less concerned with traumatic events. Abraham and Torok, and even Derrida, had to reconsider this phase and its mechanisms to complicate the dynamics of loss and love. Mourning is an ongoing anticipation and a memory, a dislocation of time and an ethical position towards the other. This may be another definition of love: to anticipate loss and to carry the crypt of the other in me, besides me; to both, introject and incorporate.

In melancholy, according to Freud, the confusion between the self and the lost object represents a narcissistic defense, and this narcissism is also what Ferenczi suggests for love, however Derrida insists, “to keep the other within the self, *as oneself*, is already to *forget* the other” (“Rams” 160; emphasis in original). So, it is not a matter of a definitive melancholy, perhaps a certain melancholy that would allow not to forget the other and resist total fusion or total forgetfulness. The ethical demand, “I must,” that Derrida repeats in his eulogy appears as the responsibility not to appropriate the other, and in translation this means a translation that is never quite finished. The dueling ground for preserving the other as other, the combat over ex-appropriation, is thus a fight over not forgetting. It is impossible not to hear the echo of Emmanuel Levinas in the ethics that Derrida is invoking, since it this “I must” is not just a presupposed moral ground of laws, it is the ethical demand before any law. Levinas places ethics before thought and philosophy, an ethics that imply an encounter with the other in its otherness before any thematization or understanding, and with this an unavoidable responsibility towards the other. Derrida takes this injunction of *carrying* the other as the ethical implication and responsibility towards the other that he takes from Levinas.

In one of his essays on Levinas, Derrida puts pressure on how Levinas’s ethics, at the basis of any philosophy or politics, entirely define the rules of his discourse. “Is it not the Law of laws?” he asks, and argues that by constituting the laws of all laws it closes the doors to the other that it emphatically invokes (“Violence and Metaphysics” 138). But is not Derrida calling for ethics when he is reading Celan’s poem? He even sustains that if there is any ethical relation possible, it will be the possibility of carrying the other as other—to mourn the other. In dialogue with Levinasian alterity, even if it imposes itself as the one and only rule, Derrida can find a paradoxical ethical demand; there must be an injunction to welcome the other, but this cannot remain as the *only* law. It is as if Derrida would invite us not to abandon Levinas, Freud, or Benjamin right away, because it is in the mournful translation of their work that we could start opening a welcoming to the other-text.

As Celan’s poem declares, there is no longer a world for the other, but the other’s world continues in me, because I am carrying their crypt and that world already existed in me. The world ends each time a loved one dies, and many times before with the possibility of that loss; there is no longer *one* end of the world. Following Derrida, Geoffrey Bennington writes how excruciating it is to lose a loved one and realize that “*the world does not end when it ends*, that it simply carries on after its end, has no end, that the end of the world is not the end of the world, that its end in death is also the perspective of an endlessness” (xiii; emphasis in original). The world carries after that ending of *a* world, but I carry the crypt of the other and then it survives that ending.¹³ As suggested earlier, this responsibility of friendship, of carrying the other, is a struggle, “but I can no longer carry the other or you, if *to carry* means to include oneself, in the intuition of one’s own egological consciousness” (Derrida, “Rams” 161; emphasis in original). If there is any responsibility or ethics towards the other, then, it would be the ethics of *duelo*, which means carrying (loving) the other at the risk of losing them, while

¹³The “I” used here is influenced by the “I” used by Derrida in his reading of Celan, specifically the ethical demand that Derrida condenses in the “I must.” The use of the “I” presupposes the implication and responsibility of the first person, as in the “I must” that we read in “I must [...] carry the other” (“Rams” 160) and “I must translate, transfer, transport” (“Rams” 162), both as ethical demands.

having a persistent duel to preserve the other besides me. *Duelo* in translation and translation as *duelo* would mourn the loss of the original and guarantee its survival by translating it in an act of love for the word.

We can take a literary detour to trace the word *duelo* in two of Jorge Luis Borges's stories: "El duelo" ("The Duel") and "El otro duelo" (there are two different translations of the title "The other Duel" and, a more imaginative one, "The End of the Duel"). In *Brodie's Report*, one story follows the other as if the two were related by contiguity. In this duplet of stories Borges seems to present two versions of duels or two stories of *duelo*. In "El duelo," the story takes place in Buenos Aires, but the narrator tells us that a different location would not modify the narration; a typical Borgesian assertion. The two protagonists, Clara Glencairn and Marta Pizarro, are friends and artists who endure a friendly rivalry.

The story tells us that Clara decided to be a painter after the death of her husband ("The Duel" 381); she started painting, perhaps—the story insists—because her friend Marta influenced her (382–383).¹⁴ Up to this point, in the Spanish version, one may infer that the word *duelo* in the title refers to Clara mourning her husband. However, the narration quickly develops into a story about Clara becoming an artist and sharing the artistic scene with Marta, who is an inspiration and a rival at the same time (383). There is a third painter, Marta's sister, who was also an artist and was considered by the critics as Clara's artistic contender. The story continues, "perhaps the duel was between those two women" (382), placing the artistic *duelo* momentarily between Marta's sister and Clara. But, after this incursion of a third, the story goes back to the friends, Marta and Clara.

As one reads the story, the notion of *duelo* keeps changing, always contrasting what is being narrated to the title that seems to promise a revelation, the duel or *el duelo*. The friendship between Clara and Marta keeps developing with the particularities of the Buenos Aires' artistic world as Marta ends up working in a cultural administrative position ("The Duel" 383). As soon as she is able to make decisions, she decides to benefit Clara without Clara's knowledge, by including her in exhibitions. Borges writes, "The secret duel [*duelo*] had now begun" (383), as he describes how Marta benefited Clara. Moreover, we read, "Marta had supported her friend, yet the unquestionable if mysterious truth is that the person who bestows a favor is somehow superior to the person who receives it" (383). It seems that the version of *duelo* that Borges wants to develop is not just the artistic competition—which is already complicated—but a more secret and loving devotion between the two friends. Marta's sister, Clara's husband, and the artistic world are possible reasons for *duelos* in the story, but it is the friendship between the two that concerns the secret devotion that the narration seems to be after.

The secret *duelo* involves giving and receiving without necessarily being able to sustain an *equivalent* exchange between the two friends. We learn that when Clara dies something also dies in Marta as she is unable to find meaning in her painting alone and dedicates her last piece to Clara—a mournful painting, perhaps ("The Duel" 385). The story tells us that in this *duelo* "there were no defeats or victories" (385), it is not a duel

¹⁴Page references from Borges's short stories in English are from Andrew Hurley's translation, unless otherwise specified.

with guns nor is it just a story about the life of a person after a loved one has died. The *duelo* is an ongoing friendship that includes death, love, admiration, and rivalry. In this very short story, we read how the word *duelo* in translation symptomatizes the ambiguity that is also present in friendship with the anticipation of loss that affected the work of the two friends:

Life must have its consuming passion. The two women found that passion in painting—or rather, in the relationship that painting forced them into. Clara Glencairn painted *against*, and in some sense *for*, Marta Pizarro; each was her rival’s judge and solitary audience. In their canvases, which no one any longer looked at, I believe I see (as there inevitably had to be) a reciprocal influence. And we must not forget that the two women loved each other, that in the course of that private *duel* [*duelo*] they acted with perfect loyalty to one another. (“The Duel” 384–385; emphasis added)

As traced throughout this paper, in friendship there is an implicit love combat: a friend is faithful but must struggle so that faithfulness does not destroy the other by total comprehension, like the crypt that is formed by the secret of the other before death. It is, as Derrida would phrase it, a faithful infidelity. When Borges’s story is translated from Spanish to English, the translator must decide which meaning of *duelo* will be haunting the story, since this word corresponds with the title and, since there is a tradition of Argentinian duel and combat stories, the decision is settled but we lose the homonym. This paper contends that “The Duel” is also about mourning as a form of friendship, and here friendship is not a total surrender to the other, but an ambiguous relationship, like the translation of the word *duelo* itself.

The second story, “El otro duelo,” is about two gauchos, Cardoso and Silveira, who cannot stand each other (“The Other Duel” 386). They are always competing for the land, sheep, and love of one lady (387). The story is told, like many Argentinian traditional gaucho stories, as if it is the recounting of an old tale. As we learn about their impasses, the revolution “caught” them, and they ended up serving the nation (387). Even as soldiers they hate each other, and the other soldiers know about their feud (388). At the end of the story there is a duel and they cut each other’s throats at the same time (389). The narrator says that Cardoso won the duel, but he probably never knew because they both died (389).

Perhaps Borges suggests that a classical duel, in which characters hate each other, would lead to an ideal mutual killing and dying at the same time. But what is interesting here is this story in relation to the first one; in “El otro duelo” the *otro* (other) perhaps implies that this *duelo* is supposed to be different from the first story. But “El duelo,” the first story, is not exactly the antithesis of this *other* duel; it does not portray total acceptance and consuming love between the two friends, rather it is an ambiguous relationship with admiration and rivalry. Perhaps the discrepancy between the two English translations might help trace the dynamic between the two stories.

The first translation of “El otro duelo” is rendered as “The End of the Duel” by Norman Thomas di Giovanni and a newer translation by Andrew Hurley reads as “The Other Duel.” The first collection was presented as a translation “in collaboration with the

author,” perhaps to show fidelity not just to the text but also to the author.¹⁵ The second translation is certainly more accurate, however, there is something interesting in di Giovanni’s modification that makes the first and the second *duelos* (stories) the same but in two different stages. As if the first story was the beginning of the duel and the second was the end, suggesting a culmination or resolution.

If translated back into Spanish, di Giovanni’s title, “El fin del duelo,” could easily be an alternative title to Freud’s essay on mourning and melancholia alluding to the end of the mourning phase. Perhaps di Giovanni wanted to put pressure on the ending as death or even the end of the story. Many duels end with a victory and a defeat, or maybe this was a duel with an ending, as opposed to the open-ended duel in the first story. Duels, perhaps, are already an ending or a way to get rid of rivalry. The interesting dynamic between the two stories here is *duelo* as a homonym and the ambiguity of friendship and competition. But the duel, the combat itself, is also interesting in Derrida’s elaboration on the topography of the crypt: “A forum is always defined, from the start—and this will be concretely verified in this case—as a politico-judicial instance, something more than a dueling ground, but like a dueling ground requiring a *third*, a witness; a tribunal preparing a case, summoning before it for indictments, statements of counsel, and sentencing, a multiplicity of persons called up by *sub poena*” (“*Fors*” xv; emphasis in original).

The division of the self, the different forums, is not just a combat or a dueling ground. It supposes a politico-judicial instance, as Levinas suggests with a third term (16), more than one other, and more than two others to which the ego must respond to.¹⁶ This division of the self implies a certain notion of sovereignty of the self, one that is divisible and that is not just one or two individuals fighting; it requires a witness. This means the integrity of the self, ironically, is only complete with the other and others, similarly, a language’s integrity can only be found in its friction with other languages. The relation with the self entails the other that is not just *another*, but every other. In Borges’s duet of *duelos* and in Derrida’s dueling ground of the crypt, there is a *duelo* in translation. It is in translation that we find the notions of duel, mourning, death, and friendship unsettled and incomplete; separated, yet permanently linked in the same word in Spanish.¹⁷

¹⁵In 1971, di Giovanni (and Borges) gave a series of seminars in the Writing Program at Columbia University; he later published these seminars as *Borges on Writing* in 1973. The first seminar was on fiction, and they worked on “The End of the Duel” where Borges made a comment on the short story: “For all I know, I was telling the truth. I had to account for the hatred between the two men—after all, that is the story—the fact of two gauchos hating each other in the solemn way they do” (qtd. in di Giovanni 27).

¹⁶In *Otherwise than Being*, Levinas moves from ethics to politics to insist that this third term is crucial, and this third can be a neighbor, but it could also be the neighbor of the neighbor, not just a fellow or a friend (157), it is every other that comes to this politico-judicial instance.

¹⁷Jacques Lezra in *Untranslating Machines* proposes a tension between the two concepts “Sovereignty or Translation” (97). By placing that *or* in this formulation he introduces both a decision *or* an equivalence between the two; they could be opposites or synonymous. Translation can be sovereignty, explains Lezra, precisely in the sense in which the translator decides what and how to translate, but also translation emerges as an alternative to imperial sovereignty in the sense that words are in constant transit—a dynamic that perhaps echoes the homonyms in *duelo*. Lezra follows these tensions in early modern literary scenes and *decides* for an undecidable path of defective and untranslating sovereignty. A path where the body of the sovereign or the self or the text is never complete, not quite translated. Invoking Cervantes, Lezra

A crucial element of this ethical dueling ground, then, is the inclusion of a third term both linguistically as well as theoretically echoing Levinas—a third language, Spanish, between this English and French understanding of mourning; a third discipline, literature, between psychoanalysis and philosophy. Levinas’s third is not just a matter of the encounter with the other, but also the possibility of justice that arises with a third, as he writes: “To be on the ground of the signification of an approach is to be *with another* for or against a third party, with the other and the third party against oneself, in justice” (16; emphasis in original). Even when the root of *duelo* takes us to a second (duet, double, *dos*), it implies also a third, the very possibility of a witness of the *duelo*.¹⁸ As in Borges’s stories, the condition of possibility for these *duelos* are precisely the scenes in which they take place: the artistic world, revolution, and war. Here mourning and ethics are entangled; the double sense of *duelo* always implies more than one or two; the third(s) comes down to the ground of ethics and the political.

In “Living On: Border Lines” Derrida follows Ferenczi’s and Freud’s notion of transference to write about love and translation. He formulates the following provocation: “I say what must not be said: for example, that a text can stand in a relationship of transference (primarily in the psychoanalytical sense) to another text! And, since Freud reminds us that the relationship of transference is a ‘love’ relationship, stress the point: one text loves another” (147). In “Des Tours de Babel” Derrida also writes about the love for the physical body of the word and the mourning of the original body. Texts in translation are bodies, says Derrida, but also, texts are in transference, transcription, and translation, with an emphasis on this *trans* or transit.¹⁹ The original and the translation bodies, for Derrida, are untouched but, at the same time, they consummate matrimony; a contradictory relationship that works like the homonym—yet another one—*hymen*, a word that signifies both virginity and consummation of marriage (213–215).

The untouched-consummation tension works like the crypt of the other in me, besides me. In Abraham and Torok’s rereading of Freud’s Wolf Man, they identify a pre-verbal trauma or wound that is translated into a crypt to protect and love the other. What cannot be processed by language is already translated into symptom or into this architecture that divides the self. Derrida asserts that even the self exists because the possibility of carrying the crypt exists; the division of the self is constituted by the other, and the love for the other works like a pre-condition (“*Fors*” xv–xvi). Everyone is potentially a crypt carrier: *I carry*²⁰ the other in my crypt and am carried by another;

formulates: “To govern and to interpret entail, in Cervantic modernity, taking on as the condition of political relations what Barataria dramatizes as the spectacle of intolerable indeterminacy: *No acabar de determinarse*, which we can also render as *No acabar de traducirse* not to finish translating/being-translated/translating oneself” (114).

¹⁸Valeria Campos Salvaterra proposes an interesting thread between Derrida’s notion of *différance* and Levinas’s ethics and responsibility towards the other in the double meaning of *duelo*. She states: “Subjectivity as responsibility and substitution, although we have observed that it is the closest model Derrida proposes of *différance* as that which always involves more than one and that, cannot be dissociated from an exercise of synthesis of the struggle, of the combat, of the *duelo* [duel and mourning] in its double meaning” (143; translated by the author).

¹⁹In “Freud and the Scene of Writing,” Derrida emphasizes this connection between translation, transcription, and transference, and insists on the preposition *trans* or *Über* (264).

²⁰As explained in footnote 13, the “I” used here is influenced by the “I” used by Derrida in his reading of Celan and Levinas in regards to ethics and responsibility for the other.

likewise, all texts are already inscribed in this alterity dynamic with the other-text, they presuppose this contract of untouched-consummation or cryptic-translation with language and with other texts. As María Fernanda Palacios emphasizes in her work on taste and language, reading is a form of translation and translation is a labor that involves love: “The text also communicates through the wound and demands its lover’s reading: it demands to be penetrated, to be talked to. It is the double tear what allows access to the other (to the text): a relationship in which no one remains safe because the incidence is double and mutual” (42).²¹

This ambiguous relationship between languages and texts places translation as the most basic linguistic operation and displaces the idea of the original as a simply untouched piece; before any text or verbal speech, there is translation. And translation as a task and as a work of mourning implies love, implies *transference*. Derrida writes: “if I love the word, it is only in the body of its idiomatic singularity, that is, where a passion for translation comes to lick it as a flame or an amorous tongue might: approaching as closely as possible while refusing at the last moment to threaten or to reduce, to consume or to consummate” (“Relevant” 175). Similarly, we can revisit the epigraph of this paper where Palacios writes about love, seduction, and intimacy and how these concepts are involved in translation. In translation, Palacios insists, love and intimacy demand certain resistance where the friction between languages can transpire; translation is a work of mourning that requires an active courtship and longing.

Likewise, the relation with the other is a relation *in translation* where the other is preserved intact but at the same time one gets to lick it, to taste it, and to love it. Translation presupposes a permanent mourning and active love that always faces the possibility of loss, losing the original, losing meaning; this means a work of translation is never quite finished or definitive. Translation as mourning is the survival of both texts; survival as *Fortleben* and *Überleben*, to go back to Benjamin. In this regard, Lisa Foran suggests a transit between the other and the other-text in Derrida’s work: “The relation to the other as translating is to appropriate the other and hence to *almost* erase, to *as if* murder, their alterity; yet their alterity, the *arrivant* in every other, is precisely that which *remains*” (247; emphasis in original).

But does this rapport with the other mean that the other must always be a friend or a lover? How is love involved before knowing what or who will come? Peggy Kamuf theorizes a certain process of survival that begins only with the promise of a relation:

“It is impossible that we should each survive the other,” [Derrida in “Aphorism Countertime,” (422)] and yet no relation to the other begins except with this impossible double, at least double survival, destining and promising the relation to infinite repetition. And it is not only lovers or friends who destine each other to this experience. To every stranger as well is extended, even before one begins to speak, the promise of the word’s repetition. The given word binding one to another does not even have to be given “in person,” as we say. It binds me as well to all those I never encounter except by responding to an address tendered in mediation, through what is called a text, that is, through any kind of trace left by one to be repeated by another. (55–56)

²¹Translated by author.

Kamuf emphasizes here the promise of the impossibility of survival, of mourning, as the ground for any relationship. This experience of alterity, of the other, is anterior even to speaking—like the crypt for *The Wolf Man*—and we are bound by this promise to every other in a sort of text that leaves a trace, perhaps precisely, *in translation*.

To go further, texts are cryptic. The crypt arises in this translation or transference to carry and preserve lovingly the original body even after this original body has been translated or touched-untouched. To translate a text means to ensure its encryption. Similarly, translation can also be a form of reading that presupposes the condition of no transparency, dilution, equivalence, or direct understanding. Translation preserves the original text cryptically, it carries its secret—like Clara and Marta’s friendship in Borges’s story—without total assimilation, and is always indebted to what can never be translated. In translation, the world of the language of the original is carried into the translated text ensuring its survival. Not only this paper wants to insist on friendship and relationships between languages as part of the dynamic that translation entails, but also on a friendship that is complicated, not an ideal or diplomatic one in the pursuit of maintaining an economy of exchange or exploitation from one language over another. To write about friendship *between* different languages, one needs to take into account how the idea of friendship is transformed in translation. In this sense, translation would be a relationship that is marked by mourning (*duelo*) and moved by the impulse to encrypt preserving meaning, yet longing what is lost, while still transporting that encryption. To translate encrypting, to maintain a *duelo* in translation, would mean to love and resist the temptation to decrypt and dominate the text, or place one language over another, to strive for a friendship. When Benjamin insists on translation not being about communication (260), he seems to suggest the unfolding of the potentiality of languages producing meaning. In his metaphor of the broken vessel, the parts need to be lovingly glued and make both original and translation recognizable parts of the vessel, not one the ideal of the other (260).

Duelo, mourning or *deuil*, and their meanings incarnate the difficulty of translation: there is not a unified language or equivalent meanings, there is no unbroken vessel. There are always more than one and more than two languages in translation. If a text is already in translation, it is already in a duel, but not just a combat between two, a duel of ex-appropriation that implies witnesses and the multiplicity of all languages. A permanent mourning or *duelo* in translation implies encrypting to protect the text, thus, translating to ensure its survival from the dueling ground of all languages. To carry the other-text in translation is to know that texts are already indebted, but this debt cannot be repaid. As Derrida writes: “I carry *you* and must do so, I owe to you [...] these laws or injunctions remain untranslatable from one to the other, from some to others, from one language to another, but that makes them no less universal. I *must* translate, transfer, transport (*Übertragen*) the untranslatable in another turn even where, translated, it remains untranslatable” (“Rams” 162; emphasis in original).

In other words, the labor of encryption-translation means to mourn a transparent translation or an intact vessel; the text must be transported into the already indebted land of another language. For some psychoanalytic approaches, the idea of a cure, a resolution, or a healthy relationship seems to be the ultimate goal. Even in the relationship between cultures, there can be a desire of total recognition between one and the other, as if it were in fact possible. In a way, this emphasis on healthy conscious processes, has

(unconsciously?) influenced translation with a quest for clarity that tries to comprehend texts completely. In his theory of translation, for example, Antoine Berman seems to suggest that a successful translation can be achieved if a well-trained translator is freed from deformation after undergoing the proper analysis.²² This method would allow translations to reach the other “real” texts, no matter how foreign any text might be for the translator. In other words, by means of removing any cultural deviations from the translator, one text can actually understand the other in its foreignness.

The work of the translator, for Berman, starts with a healthy practice that can cure the translator, preventing texts from mistranslations or from obscure cryptic meanings. But, mourning as a process that is doomed to fail, or as encryption, makes us think about the complications of concepts like *self* and *other*, or *original* and *translation*, a certain contamination that attempts to destroy their integrity as concepts. In this regard, Abraham and Torok suggest that even Freud in his own description of The Wolf Man’s case could not understand how the consequences of the loss of the loved ones kept chasing his patient. Perhaps what eluded Freud came from the theoretical assumption that when real loss is recognized, there is no pathology, a form of conscious dealing with death. But as we have insisted, the sole possibility of losing the other is constitutive of the self in its conscious and unconscious formations. When Derrida discusses the impossible translation or the failure of mourning, this does not mean that we should not translate or mourn. It is quite the opposite: the text and the other call for and resist translation, much like the two painter friends in Borges’s story that endure in an artistic rivalry and inspire each other.

Reading *in translation* would mean revisiting concepts precisely to translate from within their own theorization and safeguard their survival. To be able to move between psychoanalysis, philosophy, and literature also implies a certain ethics of the multiple—to move between languages, the possibility of more than one body of text in translation, an ongoing translation that carries more than one crypt. But the place we give to the crypt of the other or the other-text needs to remain undefined—even if we already *know it*—like a translation we cannot anticipate. Attuned to the radical alterity that Levinas proposes, a relationship with the other in translation would make the notions of identity, territory, genre, or language tremble. Translation as a work of mourning, then, would imply the inevitable loss of the original but also its survival, the carrying of an undefined crypt with a topography that cannot be reduced to one language or discipline. To translate cryptically would mean to remain in a *duelo*: to be confronted with an unexpected other (text) that I potentially love and want to preserve but *must* never make my own.



²²Antoine Berman’s theory consists of a list of twelve deformations that can damage translation and for him they occur to try to make the text clearer, less strange. For Berman translation needs to be “The trial of the foreign”; this means that the text needs to feel strange, and the text does not have to be softened or adapted. Even when Berman advocates for a *foreign* translation, his list of deformations work as a prescription for a very specific notion of healthy translation or for curing of the text. Also, in his practice, Berman translated from German and Spanish. Borges is one of the authors he translated.

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Post-Brexit Trade (re)Negotiations: Geopolitical Implications for India, UK and EU

Benjamin Duke | University of Leicester

Saumya Tewari | Tata Institute of Social Sciences

<http://ellids.com/archives/2022/09/5.2-Duke-Tewari.pdf>

Abstract | International relations for the UK are set to change fundamentally. The nation is amidst the process of renegotiating trade relationships with the remaining EU member states and the world. This paper discusses one aspect of the changing geopolitical relationships caused by Brexit: new trade negotiations with Commonwealth countries. Having chosen to leave the EU brings the UK to a critical juncture geopolitically. The new trade relations trajectory is still to be set. The beginnings of the de-colonisation process changed trade ties for the British state in the 20th century. And the UK again looks towards the former colonies for trade. The UK's post-Brexit geopolitical relations provide an ever-evolving framework for researchers who study global trade ties. The UK and Indian perspectives are considered in this paper to interpret the new landscape of the UK's trade relationships. A postcolonial lens is employed in the paper for the critical review of ongoing post-Brexit trade relations with Commonwealth countries. In doing so, the paper delivers a comparative case study, describing the developmental benefits India may receive from new UK trade relations after Brexit. It argues that India's trade relationship with the UK will be uncertain, whilst its position with the EU27 may strengthen.

Keywords | Post-Brexit, Trade Negotiations, Colonialism, Geopolitics, UK, India, Commonwealth Countries

The paper aims to present key narratives and policy suggestions for Commonwealth, Indian, and UK decision-makers. Towards this, the views of key stakeholders, such as elected government representatives or appointed public service officers, and business lobbies who are responsible for negotiating new international trade relationships with foreign countries are studied (Evenett 29). This paper is structured to examine four aspects. First, a literature review is presented where two main principles are discussed: ‘preferential access’¹ and ‘economic principle’² in international trade relations. Preferential access trade arrangements can be difficult to explain and justify to neighbouring members who sell similar products. There could be tension between how the EU’s Product Specific Rules of Origin are applied compared with what is permissible, if adopting the 2015 Nairobi Decision on Preferential Rules of Origin for LDCs (World Customs Organisation 6).³ This position has been complicated by UK Brexit, whilst the UK still remains a WTO member and head of the Commonwealth. There are many economic principles in international trade relations, in passing, our paper touches upon the economic and political damage that would be done by dumping. The UK’s ideal to implement a post-Brexit laissez faire economy, of virtually no regulation, or taxation of international trade with other countries is another (Hall 67).

The literature review reflects a critical juncture in the Commonwealth country’s historical background and the UK. In this paper, a critical juncture is implied as the view from the historical institutionalists who describe it as a moment of openness for radical institutional change, in which a relatively broad range of options are available and can plausibly be adopted (Capoccia 89; Nwankwo 16; Wood and Wright 832; Rosamond 866). These issues in turn also affect the analysis of the nature of future trade deal policy formulation with the UK post-Brexit. We discovered a paucity of literature in this field written by Indian academics⁴ as well as other non-British Commonwealth countries

¹Preferential access refers to trading agreements or arrangements, which enable a weaker partner to trade with a stronger body. In practice, preferential access trade agreements “provide non-reciprocated preferential market access for projects originating from developing countries and least developed countries (LDCs)” (“EU initiate WTO dispute complaint”).

²Economic principle refers to the general principle nuanced in most global trade policies, that trading enterprises should not be economically subsidised resulting in unfair advantage compared to other trading organisations (European Commission; see also IMF, OECD, World Bank, and WTO 9).

³The 2015 Nairobi Decision was a World Trade Organization policy “to ensure that the rules are simple and transparent and contribute to facilitating market access for LDCs” (least developed countries) (WCO 3).

⁴Recent articles exploring opportunities and trade implications for India can be cited here. The focus is on geopolitical opportunities (Pant and Milford), implications for skilled workers’ migration and Diaspora (Chanda and Betai 289–300) and trade relations or negotiations (Tripathi 234–247; Mukherjee 3–8; Chauhan 189–198).

which makes it more EU and UK centric. In addition, we found the subject is also under-theorised as it has been less explored by diverse academics.

Policy advocacy papers, reports, and media briefings from business lobbies and industry think-tanks such as UK India Business Council (UKIBC), Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), and Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry (ASSOCHAM); consulting firms like Deloitte and PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) can help researchers interpret the narratives around the changing nature of business relations between India and the UK. Data on trade and other policy initiatives between the UK and India is also available from the British Parliament and the Commonwealth Secretariat. Domestic and international observers can interpret a new focus on the Commonwealth by the UK government from this literature. Industry think-tanks from India and Indian media reports on post-Brexit India-UK trade hint at how the UK has been strategizing trade re-negotiations with India. These sources help in qualitatively assessing business trends, stakeholders' perceptions, and changing economic and business relations between the UK and India in the post-Brexit scenario.

In the second section we show how the Commonwealth nations are not overly heterogeneous in profile. There are significant differences between Australia and Pakistan or Canada and India, all of which were historically colonial members of the British Empire. There may be diplomatic sensitivities such as sudden flare ups of tension between India and Pakistan to consider (Centre for Preventive Action; International Crisis Group). The UK has indicated that negotiating a trade deal with the remaining EU27 member states is its priority post-Brexit (Sloan). Other Commonwealth countries could have exactly the same approach, choosing to finalise trade ties with the EU before beginning UK trade negotiations. That would have negative consequences for the United Kingdom, as regards its geopolitical status post-Brexit. There is an existential threat, the UK could once again become "the sick man of Europe" (Blanchflower). Barack Obama's pre-Brexit prediction that "the UK could find itself at the back of the queue" will be proved to come to pass (BBC).

Furthermore, the paper discusses the UK's constant dithering with regards to India and how it contradicts the clearly intended aim of developing a key global partnership. The UK's colonial past with India features strongly on several fronts. For example, Indian irritability caused by perceived UK prevarication on the legitimacy of the jurisdictional status of Jammu and Kashmir. The thorny issue of visa liberalisation, or differentiated visas is discussed, as is the sensitive issue of security and defence. There has been reluctance from India to increase its bilateral trade agreement with the UK (Dave) despite India having a significant trade presence in the UK. The level of UK's trade presence in India depicts reverse colonialism (Artata 623). Colonial role reversal is manifested in the way the UK heavily relies on investment from former British Commonwealth colonies, especially India. In the late 2021, the UK and India were set to discuss terms and conditions of Free Trade Agreement. Brexit beleaguered UK was keen to commit to a trade deal as the head of the Commonwealth. The UK became an independent European country, in direct competition with the EU27, on 1 January 2021.

In the fourth section the differential trade access is analysed. Various problems could arise with differential visa and trade policies for the macro stakeholders, as well as

the Indian and the UK Governments, within the global trade community. Another constituent of the problem constellation is the USA's decision to remove India from its list of developing countries. In practical terms this increases the likelihood of the USA launching countervailing investigations regarding Indian exports to the US (Dhar). The increased propensity for such an investigation to happen will affect both sides of trade deals negotiated between India and the UK. Countervailing is when a country's government subsidises a business, enabling that corporation to sell its goods at lower prices than its competitors (Descartes Customs Information).⁵ The United Nations (UN) Addis Ababa Action Agenda could affect trade negotiations between India and any of its international partners including the UK.⁶ The nature of special and differential treatment received by India could be adversely affected by a post-Brexit trade deal (United Nations/ITFFD 110). The consequences could be quite acute, especially if India is perceived to have negotiated more favourable arrangements than other least developed or comparable countries. The paper analyses several policy drivers which may make India wary of striking a trade deal with the UK post-Brexit. India might conclude that it is not in her geopolitical interests to be seen as aligned with an isolated fading light on the international stage. Neither might it be in India's interest to unduly profit from a trade deal with the UK post-Brexit. For India, enabling more of its population to access a supposedly highly prized UK work visa may not be the panacea it first appeared to be (Tripathi 234; Stojanovic).

Historically, membership of the Commonwealth was a controversial issue among Indian political groups in the 1950s (Srinivasan 445; Wheare 1016). But the Commonwealth was more of a strategic alliance rather than an economic one. For the newly independent India, it was a platform to make connections in the international sphere, and for the UK, it was a platform to give a new face to the changing institution of imperialism in the transition to the post-colonial era by allowing India, a sovereign republic, to stay a member (Kreling 50). The Commonwealth has started transforming since the Brexit vote (Hearne et al.). The UK government, perhaps, also views the Commonwealth nations as havens of potential economic opportunities, given that the new Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) was established recently (in 2020), merging the Department for International Development (DFID) and the Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office.

The decolonization process after the Second World War was an important juncture for the development process in newly independent colonies. The post-Brexit tilt towards the commonwealth nations is a similar strategic change. India and UK's economic relations in the Commonwealth over the past decade can be studied with a new focus. The changing nature of development goals in the economic ties needs more investigation in the context of Commonwealth Nations and UK's imperialist past. This paper aims to outline the scope for future studies in this regard, especially given the "pro-

⁵Descartes Customs Information website is a global tax and consultancy online business. The website is regularly updated with harmonised tariff code and other relevant overseas trading information. The webpage with the countervailing information we used was undated, the date of access was 12 July 2021.

⁶The United Nations (UN) Addis Ababa Action Agenda is a UN facilitated global financial package, which can be used for sustainable development.

business drift” in the economic relations between India and the UK (Kohli, “State-directed Development” 281).

The paper concludes by providing a brief theoretical overview of the main policy considerations, revealed in the literature search and following sections. Critical issues which will need to be addressed in India-UK relationships post-Brexit, are answered along the way as the paper develops. We investigate three policy drivers which indicate that newly agreed upon trade deals would be beneficial for India. First, the UK’s fear of being left behind, i.e., finding itself geopolitically diminished ‘at the back of the queue.’ Secondly, the UK needs as many trading partners as possible to keep its supply chains functioning and large markets to sell to. Thirdly, the UK feels embarrassed by its colonial history (Gregory). Agreeing to new trade deals with former Commonwealth colonies will help level up the international playing field.

The UK Trade Policy Observatory (UKTPO) (October 2016) highlights an important aspect of the UK’s former colonial history, manifest as the British Empire, as quoted below.⁷ This issue has major implications for future trade negotiations between the UK and Commonwealth countries post-Brexit (Dugal 6).

Its purpose is to inform the development of policies governing trade between the UK and developing countries in a post-Brexit era. Currently, membership of the EU Customs Union binds the UK to the preferences given to the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries under the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) and ensure that its bilateral development policies would have to be consistent with general EU obligations. (Hoekman et al. 3)

The UK wants a more laissez-faire approach to international trade, with less red tape, rules, and regulations. This motivation for choosing Brexit is a salient issue which will influence the nature of trade deals negotiated with the Commonwealth countries. UK’s population is said to have voted to leave the EU because the citizens wanted to “take back control” and “reclaim their sovereignty” (Igwe 5). From an international trade perspective, “Brexit has enormous ramifications for legislation and implementation” (Rudloff and Schmieg 1). From 2015, British political leaders started indicating an allegiance towards the Commonwealth, as the ‘leave’ propaganda started. What was ironic though is the fact that ‘leave’ was also an anti-immigration narrative. Despite this, the voters from Commonwealth nations in Britain were mobilised to vote in favour of the Brexit campaign, claiming and/or fearing easier immigration for commonwealth members (Evans and Mellon 78; Namusoke 465). Evans and Mellon (2019) in their ‘Immigration, Euroscepticism, and the rise and fall of UKIP’ study: confirm that Commonwealth immigration was the highest source of net migration; before being replaced by migration from EU accession countries as ‘the largest source of foreign immigration’ (Evans and Mellon 78). This confirms that more UK net migration was sourced from non-Commonwealth countries, than from Commonwealth states. Another aspect of the paradox, is that people with a Commonwealth country heritage with dual UK citizenship, were voting to prevent other people from acquiring UK citizenship.

⁷This is a scoping report for DFID, the Department for International Development.

The UK's aversion to regulatory alignment, coupled with the recognition that fundamental changes to the UK legislation are required post-Brexit, resonates in numerous sectors. The service industry including banking and financial services is a case in point (Crowley 6). In principle the UK wants a comprehensive free trade agreement (FTA)⁸ with the EU. The UK cannot sell its goods independently. As the 2020s progress the UK will probably find it can't sell its goods in EU markets without complying with EU trading legislation. However, the UK may well be able to sell its non-EU complying goods to Commonwealth countries. A bigger problem for UK trade arises if it does not adhere to World Trade Organisation (WTO) membership rules. WTO has indicated that it will take legal action against the UK for any significant breaches of its regulations. If the UK was to somehow no longer be a member of the WTO, it will have negative consequences for them to be able to secure FTAs with other nations globally (World Trade Organisation, "EU initiate WTO dispute complaint").⁹

The EU has offered a tariff-free, little or no borders check FTA to the UK. However, the UK must agree to the EU's four principles of the single market, which includes free movement of people and goods (Jacques Delors Institute 2).¹⁰ The type of laissez-faire, tariff-free, virtually no regulations FTA the UK desires is only given to countries with an EU assessed least developed rating. The EU's four founding principles are entrenched, politically written in stone. We argue there is no realistic prospect of the EU allowing the UK to negotiate away these principles. There is no way the EU would agree to let the UK have tariff-free non-regulatory alignment access to EU27 markets without the free movement of goods. The latter point resonates in future trade ties considerations because EU founding principal terms include goods as well as people. This means that border arrangements (with by proxy associated costs) come into play in FTA negotiations (Lyons et al.)¹¹

The negotiation mandates diverge in significant respects: The European Union wants to safeguard its Single Market, with its strong, shared regulation. The United Kingdom seeks liberation from EU trade rules. These differences are substantial, and significant compromises will be needed if the talks are to reach a successful conclusion. (Rudloff and Schmieg 1)

The UK's quest for trade deals with no regulatory alignment with the EU is also impeded by the necessity of compliance with World Trade Organisation (WTO) rules (Watt).¹² The WTO often decides the health requirements by which certain goods can be sold internationally. This also includes the sanitation standards from agricultural production by which animal, food, or human organic waste can be disposed of (Swinbank). For example, WTO regulations apply to the hygiene standards of food

⁸A free trade agreement is a pact between two or more countries to reduce barriers to trade.

⁹See also, Sparrow, Andrew and Peter Walker. "Steel Tariffs to be extended despite WTO rules, Boris Johnson indicates." *The Guardian*, 26 June 2022. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2022/jun/26/steel-tariffs-plan-still-on-despite-potential-wto-breach-boris-johnson-tells-g7>.

¹⁰The European Union has four fundamental freedoms, which are the free movement of capital, goods, people and services.

¹¹See also Stewart et al. 28–29.

¹²This is a BBC Newsnight interview discussing a UK Government letter from the Chancellor's Department to the Business Department. The letter alerts people to the possibility of the WTO taking legal action against the UK for non-compliance of their regulations.

preparation before it can be sold on the global market. Although voluntary, key purchasers, for example large corporates, will not buy food from international suppliers whose produce does not have the WTO's seal of approval. In addition, other compliance and certification standards are set out by various other global agencies. In practical terms international trade will be difficult for companies which are unable to match up to the expected international standards. In the event of the UK negotiating a trade deal delivering non-regulatory alignment with the EU27, many other countries would probably not buy from UK companies (Wright et al. 29; Menon and Hall 2). Rudloff and Schmieg make this point succinctly: “[I]n the medium term the UK will have to orientate on EU standards” (5).

One of the main principles to consider when negotiating trade deals between a Commonwealth country and the UK is whether both parties will benefit economically. Boris Johnson, the UK Prime Minister (in office from July 2019 to September 2022) (UK Government), argued that Commonwealth economic growth rates at 4.4% are higher than the EU's 2%. India, a large Commonwealth country, achieved growth of 7% in the financial year from April 2019 to March 2020 (McBride). This means that trade deals negotiated post-Brexit with Commonwealth countries offer greater opportunity for the UK. But in a globalized world, Commonwealth countries including India are not as dependent on the UK market compared to when they were under the British Empire.

The economic principle is affected by the likelihood that current preferential access agreements for developing countries would need to remain in place post-Brexit. One policy instrument which will clearly remain in position in some form or other post-Brexit is Aid for Trade (A4T) (United Nations/ITFFD 114–115). One of the rationales behind the UK's decision to leave the EU is the amount of money it pays for membership. That figure included a payment element towards A4T, which is about 6% of the EU's total annual contribution of €750 million (Hoekman et al. 41). This means the UK's A4T contribution for 2020 was approximately €4,500,000 over £4 million. The UK's financial contribution towards the EU ceased other than for previously agreed payments, when the transition period ended on 31 December 2020 (Sandford). The UK disburses its A4T payments on an independent unilateral basis, whilst for an EU member state these payments were classed as EU contributions. This means the UK having left the EU can use the £4million, it is saving by not paying EU, for international trade purposes. The UK can unilaterally, without the agreement of others, use this money to facilitate trade with developing countries. The remaining EU27 member states continue to pay A4T disbursements, which effectively is public expenditure for additional EU contribution for international development.

Post-Brexit, the UK could choose to pay less in A4T contribution, or stop paying this money altogether, which is used to help least developed countries to trade. The latter means that the EU27 will have no UK funds for EU initiatives to improve trading conditions for least developed countries.

Trade policy today has many facets and dimensions, cutting across the remit of many domestic ministries as well as regional and global competencies. From a development perspective a key challenge is to ensure that economic development considerations are integrated coherently into trade policy and that they are

consistently applied and pursued. A4T is one mechanism to do so. Ensuring the coherence of trade policy with A4T and more generally development policy is a challenge confronting all governments and many different models have been adopted by countries that aim to inform policy formulation and to act as co-ordination mechanism. (Hoekman et al. 41)

The UK has existing preferential trade arrangements for lesser developed countries, which originate from non-EU sources; commitments which increase the propensity that Commonwealth countries will be able to negotiate more favourable trade deals with the UK post-Brexit. The UK is anxious to continue to honour its international obligations, for example, compliance with the General Agreement on Tariff and Trade (GATT) agreement. The GATT came into being after a signing ceremony in Geneva on 30 October 1947, coming into force on 1 January 1948. The GATT became the WTO on 1 January 1985 (Chase 12; McKenzie 1;¹³ Palmeter 453). The UK is also equally committed to behaving in line with trading requirements indicated by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development Services Trade Restrictiveness Index (OECD STRI)¹⁴ (Jackson 42). The UK's STRI rating (before the COVID-19 global pandemic) suggests that the UK could lower its trade restrictions on some services. A post-Brexit UK looking to develop new international trade links will be more conducive to using its STRI headroom in agreements with Commonwealth countries.

The problems that could emerge in future trade negotiations between India and the UK post-Brexit are very complex. These potential difficulties are likely to arise because of the problems the UK is facing while negotiating with the EU in the early 2020s. The UK is facing operational difficulties in trading with each of the 27 remaining EU states, because each member state has slightly different trading rules with non-EU states. This means that often a separate set of rules and regulations apply, requiring a separate set of paperwork to trade with each EU country. The result of the additional paperwork has led to substantial delays and the interruption of supply chains, especially in perishable goods like fresh food and vegetables (Bakker et al. 12; Helm). It is likely that this will also apply to trade deals with most of the Commonwealth countries including India, unless cautiously negotiated.

Joe Biden's administration (the US president) has indicated a reluctance to sign a trade agreement with the UK. This is mainly due to the US perceiving a threat of the UK EU Withdrawal Agreement on the Northern Ireland Good Friday Agreement (Northern Ireland Assembly)¹⁵ (O'Carroll).¹⁶ The threat of the creation of a hard border between

¹³The information referenced is on page 1 of the copy of the journal we accessed. The article is 23 pages long. The University of Melbourne only stores unpaginated copies of archived issues of the *Melbourne Journal of International Law* in their repository. Therefore, the reference entry listed is marked pp. 1–23.

¹⁴The STRI provides information on regulations affecting trade in services in 22 sectors across all OECD member countries and Brazil, the People's Republic of China, Costa Rica, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Russian Federation, and South Africa.

¹⁵The Northern Ireland Good Friday Agreement is the more common name of the Belfast Agreement, which was agreed on Good Friday 10 April 1998; hence its name. The Belfast Agreement is a social, political, and economic template, signed up to by most of the political parties in Northern Ireland, which decides how Northern Ireland is governed.

¹⁶O'Carroll (March 2022) describes the initial threat of legal action regarding the Northern Ireland Protocol. The UK Government (May 2022) explains how it intends to address the Northern Ireland border

Northern Ireland and all of Ireland is also perceived by many others. In June 2022, the UK signalled its intention to unilaterally change the UK EU Withdrawal Agreement, so that the island of Ireland remains border free. This was due to the mounting operational difficulties the UK was encountering in importing and exporting EU goods in and out of Northern Ireland. This is in direct contradiction of the Withdrawal Agreement the UK negotiated and signed up as part of being an independent non-EU sovereign state. The EU signalled its intention to take legal action against the UK in early March 2021 (BBC Newsnight 0m–3m). The pending EU legal action against the UK came a step closer to enactment, when the UK Parliament passed the Northern Ireland Protocol Bill in June 2022 (Mason and Boffey).¹⁷ As regards a potential trade dispute, the EU and the UK have been here before, experiencing some political near misses detailed as follows. In January 2021, the export of COVID-19 vaccine dispute resulted in the actual triggering of Article 16 of the Northern Ireland Protocol (The Irish News),¹⁸ which itself is part of the EU UK Withdrawal Agreement (Campbell).¹⁹ This situation was, for both parties, a politically uncomfortable trade war near miss. Observers maintain that this potential political ticking time bomb could yet explode, on this or some other import or export issue (Curtis), for example, in the case of potential sanctions for breaching WTO regulations. These are substantial ongoing trade problems the UK has and will continue to face throughout the 2020s. They are geopolitically very damaging, they give potential non-EU trade partners, for example India, considerable reasons for hesitancy.

Several EU27 member states are concerned about the knock-on effects of Brexit. These fears include being politically manoeuvred into acceptance of certain aspects of the EU they disagree with. Non-Eurozone EU member states such as Denmark and Sweden have, to varying degrees, opposed greater Europeanisation or subsidiarity. “In addition, the northern member states, worry that the EU, pushed by Macron, will adopt a more protectionist outlook on issues like competition, industrial policy and trade policy” (Brattberg et al. 2). Different EU states have social concerns regarding the safety and general well-being of their citizens in the UK post-Brexit. The UK EU Withdrawal Agreement (12 November 2019) ensures that the rights of EU nationals residing in the UK will continue post-Brexit. Some Central European EU countries have expressed reservations that what is intended in the Withdrawal Agreement (2019) will materialise. For example, although EU nationals in the UK will be safe, future changes in legislation post-Brexit could reduce remittance flows.

problems that adversely affect EU-UK trade. Blenkinsop (July 2022) details why the EU have commenced formal litigation against the UK again, due to stresses caused by UK Brexit on the Good Friday Agreement, the Northern Ireland Protocol.

¹⁷Mason and Boffey (13 June 2022) inform us that the UK Government is aware that the Northern Ireland Protocol Bill, if enacted, would not meet the UK’s obligations under international law. The Northern Ireland Protocol Bill would create different border check and trade arrangements regarding trade between the EU, All of Ireland, Northern Ireland, and the UK.

¹⁸Article 16 of the Northern Ireland Protocol describes the process by which either the EU or the UK can take unilateral action to safeguard their social, economic, and political interests; if either party, the EU or the UK, conclude the Protocol will have a serious adverse effect on their trade.

¹⁹The following explanation from UK in a Changing Europe (UKICE) (2021) alerts us to how potentially damaging the difficulty in importing lifesaving COVID-19 vaccine would have been in the long-term: “It is common for trade agreements to contain provisions which enable either, to take unilateral action, if the implementation of the agreement gives rise to negative consequences” (Rice).

Out of the approximately 3 million EU citizens in the UK, Central European residents are among the top nationalities. There are nearly 827,000 Poles, 86,000 Hungarians, 64,000 Slovaks and 44,000 Czechs living in the UK. These Central European countries worry that their citizens' ability to live and work in the UK could be jeopardised. (Brattberg et al. 3)

Another concern which can affect new trade policies post-Brexit is the status of people's employment rights, access to healthcare (especially during and after the COVID-19 pandemic), and housing and welfare payments. Some observers feel it is likely that the UK will experience an economic downturn post-Brexit, putting pressure on its public services (Hope 69; Ries et al. 2). A drop in the UK economic growth will act as a policy driver, resulting in relaxation of employment legislation that protects workers. The UK's commitments to preferential trade access for least developed countries, enabled, for example, by GATT and STRI, have been discussed previously. On the one hand, these commitments could become conditional, especially in trade negotiations with Commonwealth countries, predominantly in the global south region, wanting to protect people's rights. On the other hand, the commitments could find themselves under pressure from non-EU global north countries, who do not view preferential trade access as a priority. It must also be said that the various groupings of countries might act in the reverse, conversely, completely opposite to most predictions. An exogenous shock, for example, a repeat of the 2008 global financial crisis or the COVID-19 global pandemic, may render such predictions invalid.

However, the political and economic contexts provide reasons for concern that in practice there will be downward pressure after Brexit, especially on workers' rights. In the past UK governments have pushed back against regulations on working time and the right of part-time and agency workers. Taking back control may in this case mean diluting protection, especially given the need to attract inward investment once outside the EU. Worker's rights are also likely to be affected by trade agreements. Commitment to matching EU social and employment rights could very well be a condition of a close trade relationship with the EU. But if such an arrangement is not reached, rights might become vulnerable in attempts to secure trade deals with other countries. (Stewart et al. 9)

Geopolitically, the UK is at a critical juncture having chosen to leave the EU, severing its formal ties with the supranational. The EU is the UK's largest trading partner (Goldsworthy 2; Ward 3). India and the UK both recognise the joint benefits of effective bilateral trade ties. During the early 21st century it was clearly apparent that India was a major international player at the dawn of the global digital world. Due to the Indian population's skills and availability to work in the sector, the UK also realised the growing geopolitical edge this gave to India. The UK Prime Minister, Tony Blair, visited India in January 2002, leading diplomatic and trade delegations. A subsequent UK Government 2003 white paper advised that the UK must seek to agree a "strategic partnership" with India (FCO 57WS). Blair's diplomatic and trade delegation visit in 2002 was mirrored by his Indian counterpart, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit in September 2004. A joint statement signed by both was produced after the diplomatic visits of 2002 and 2004 (Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India). This joint statement provides

a contemporary context for developing new trade ties between India and the UK post-Brexit (Scott 169).

Boris Johnson, the UK Foreign Secretary (2016–18), and UK’s Prime Minister (2019–2022) had said, “We in the UK are beneficiaries of reverse colonialism” (Canton). These comments at a UK function to celebrate seventy years of Indian (and Pakistan) independence were quite telling. They tend to signify the UK’s fear of slowly being taken over by formerly subjugated people. Subconsciously, Johnson’s light-hearted remark shows a sense of embarrassment regarding the British Empire’s colonial past. Artata aptly articulates the UK’s schism with being a fading global light and its shameful colonialist history “But fantasies of reverse colonization are more than products of geopolitical fears. They are also responses to cultural guilt” (623). Boris Johnson’s 2017 statement highlights the thought process underpinning the UK’s Brexit strategy. A strategic approach which is significantly dependent on maintaining good trading relations with former British colonies, in this case India. Trade deals would be atonement for colonialism. Modern 20th century events, for example, mass consumerism, global depression and industrial concentration, also explain why reverse colonialism has occurred (Thomas and Thompson 162).

The first point to note is that the talk in 2002 of being *partners* in various areas was further pursued in the 2004 joint declaration with its announcement of an overarching *strategic partnership*, its claim that ‘as India emerges as a global [economic] power ... India and the UK are natural economic partners,’ its welcoming of growing trade, and its assertions that the ‘real partnership lies in the strength of the partnership in both directions.’ (Scott 169; italics in original)

There are security and defence implications post-Brexit, which will affect forging new UK trade ties with Commonwealth countries including India. Many have predicted that UKs economy will shrink after Brexit (Fitch Ratings; Lawrence 14). Observers question if the UK will be able to continue its current level of NATO engagement post-Brexit in case of a deep recession. Experts feel that a withdrawal from the EU could imply a diminished role geopolitically for the UK (Kassim 8; Whitman 528). Post-Brexit, the EU and NATO may view the security and defence landscape, minus the UK, as an opportunity to re-orientate remaining existing relationships. The UK could see a more integrated level of cooperation between the EU27 and NATO, a more united EU working with the Alliance. The UK may feel the need to invest in NATO to protect their standing on the international stage (Oliver and Williams 549, 565–566). To remain geopolitically relevant, the UK needs to negotiate trade deals with other NATO members, especially Canada which is also a Commonwealth country. Paradoxically, increased calls for social support, as unemployment rises due to UK Brexit, will increase political pressure to reduce defence spending. The effect of this paradox could be to incentivise the UK to streamline its defence expenditure. The UK’s geopolitical standing would be less diminished post-Brexit by pooling its defence spending, making joint investments with other NATO allies (Black et al. 148).²⁰

²⁰See also Puntel, Angelica. *A “Global Britain” in a Post-Brexit Scenario*. Centre for Geopolitics & Security in Realism Studies, 2018. <http://cgsrs.org/files/files/file-1552946695.pdf>.

The UK may need to invest more heavily in NATO and its bilateral partnerships, especially in the near term, in order to demonstrate its continuing or reenergised engagement with the world after Brexit. As well as to offset its diminished influence as part of a European bloc. The need to also establish trading relationships with the rest of the globe may accelerate and already-growing shift towards a UK security interest in securing global lines of communication and partners in Asia-Pacific, the Indian Ocean and other economies. (Black et al. 149)

To interpret the trade relations between the UK and India over the past decade, it is important to elaborate upon the trade statistics, the key sectors for trading partnerships, and the changing nature of support that the UK government lends to India's development. The two countries also share a common historical relationship—that of a colony and imperialist ruler, when put in the binary of the dependency view.²¹ From this perspective, the impact of colonization on the Indian economy is well documented.²² The analytical approach to this paper does not disregard that, but studies it with a postcolonial lens. India's post-colonial developmental trajectory: economic relations with Britain after joining the Commonwealth and in the post-Brexit times are the main junctures that form the subject of discussion in this paper.

Table 1: Macro-economy Profiles: The UK and Key Commonwealth Trade Partners

	Population (In Thousands)	GDP (In Million, Current US\$)	GDP Per capita Purchasing Power Parity (Current International\$)
Australia	25,687.04	1,330,900.93	51,420.0
Canada	38,005.25	1,643,407.98	48,072.6
India	1,380,004.39	2,622,983.73	6,454.3
United Kingdom	67,215.20	2,707,743.78	44,916.2

Source: World Bank Data (2020–21 figures and estimates)²³

While India surpassed the UK's rank among top economies with highest GDP in 2018–19, the size of the population implies lower per capita income and poorer standards of living of the population. This also points to income inequalities and lack of equitable distribution in India. The data used gives a macroeconomic view of the countries discussed here.

Policies pursued by India's pro-business rulers since the 1980s have generated both rapid economic growth and growing economic inequality, the latter

²¹The dependency view for understanding international political economy is implied in this context. Colonial past of a nation and continuing economic dependence adversely impacts the socio-economic development of nations according to dependency theories. (For commentaries on dependency theories, see Namkong; Ghosh).

²²See, for example, Tomlinson; Sen; Chandra who highlight the impact of the colonial past on independent India's economy.

²³World Bank Data. World Bank. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator>.

especially during the post-1991 period, leading to only modest gains for those at the bottom of Indian society. (Kohli, “Poverty amid plenty in the new India” 144)

Poverty levels in India are high and have been a developmental concern for not just Indian policymakers but also for various international agencies. In the 1990s, new poverty estimation methodologies were developed (“Report of the Expert Group on Estimation of Proportion and Number of Poor”). A headcount of the number of poor in India was estimated. Between 1993–94 and 2004–05, the headcount of the number of poor people living below under the poverty line increased from 403.7 million to 407.1 million (“Report of the Expert Group to Review the Methodology for Measurement of Poverty”). There have been recent reforms in India’s top policy institutions since 2014, namely, the Planning Commission of India. It was responsible for assessment of the poverty line, but Indian economics experts cannot form a consensus on the poverty line methodology since NITI Aayog reforms (Gupta).

Analysing differences in poverty and inequality between industrialized countries and developing nations is quite complex. The differences can be considered from a dependency and postcolonial perspective. The narrative of inequality from the industrialized countries focuses on how institutions allow the richest to corner more wealth (Stiglitz 1). More wealth also gives them more agency. This approach is used by agencies such as Credit Suisse (“Global Wealth Report 2019”) to show how the richest one percent corners 90% of the wealth of the world. There is little in the way of regulation, governance or oversight, making it difficult to keep predatory corporates in check. In developed countries where the State ensures social security, the poorest are at least able to maintain a better living standard compared to the developing countries. In developing countries, there are layers of economic exclusion that come from social, racial, and cultural demographic factors. Some of these economic exclusion layers are peculiar and particularly apply to their specific, subaltern social settings. Given these complexities, it is beneficial to consider the effect of Brexit on India-UK relations using a post-colonial lens (Strongman 1343).

Challenges for Indian policymakers towards inequality are substantially different from the UK. India is home to about 17% of the world’s population (according to 2011 census estimates) and its share in the world’s GDP was 6.77% in 2020 (Statista). The distribution of income and opportunities to India’s population strikes as the first challenge. India is starting from a low base comparatively; the poorest of the poor in India are much worse off compared to most of the world. The distribution of not just income and resources, but also of public goods such as sanitation, transport, healthcare, education, quality of air and drinking water, is also a governance challenge. The size of the population and the lack of sufficient and effective public infrastructure imply poor physical quality of life for India’s large population. The role of international development governance is a vital issue to consider during India-UK trade negotiations. Reducing inequalities and the eradication of poverty is not just limited to checking income distribution. International development is also about making public goods equally accessible to all of India.

Other aspects of regional inequalities in India come from a large (69%) rural population. Rural and agricultural sectors don’t grow at the same rates as industrial

sectors. In 2015, Moody's report had indicated that India's slow growth of the rural economy was impacting overall growth indicators (The Economic Times). Indian states (provincial governments) also show growth variations in terms of size, geography, resources, urbanisation, health indicators, and education levels. Additional Indian population demographics, along the lines of tribal or scheduled castes people, also experience differences in economic growth. One policy response could be to target development funding in specific Indian regions assessed as being a priority. There needs to be a "Rawlsian framework of "differential treatment" (or "special status") to realise both vertical and horizontal equity in a genuinely federal system" (Kumar).

India had been among the net beneficiaries of aid from the UK, given its high poverty levels. In 2014, India was the top recipient (among the Commonwealth Nations) of Official Development Assistance (ODA) from the UK. "The largest amount of ODA the UK contributes is US\$459.43 million to India" (The Commonwealth Secretariat). In 2015, the UK stopped giving aid to India, since it had started on a trajectory of economic growth (Rowlatt). In 2018, political leaders from the opposition started raising objections in parliamentary debates in relation to the £98m aid money given to India by the UK government ("Fury over UK's 'unjustifiable' £98m foreign aid injection for India"). But by this time, the assistance to India from the UK government was in the form of "investments" and "technical assistance," not aid. The Department for International Development (DFID), now known as Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), is responsible for disbursement of the UK's foreign aid budget. DFID claims that these initiatives benefit both the poor and marginalised in India and help create opportunities for the citizens of the UK ("UK aid to India"). India's economy has seen marked shifts under the contemporary political regime (between 2013 to 2022). Older institutions of development policy have been reformed with changing economic conditions. The role of the state has transformed from 'welfare facilitator' as in the flagship schemes under the older political regime, to a 'business facilitator.' India's economy has shifted markedly in the early 2020 decade due to the COVID-19 global pandemic and India-UK economic ties and future trade agreements will be continuously influenced by such factors.

The top trading sectors where UK and India partner are advanced manufacturing and engineering, digital innovation, higher education, and life sciences. There are also UK-India joint partnerships trading in healthcare, food and drink, financial/legal/professional services, and sports and gaming.²⁴ There is no certainty that growth in these sectors will percolate to the rural economy or for the benefit of the least advantaged in India. The government needs to implement a differential re-distributive approach towards the development of these trading sectors. Skill and education initiatives must be targeted in rural regions of India for more employment opportunities for them as well as to pull these potential consumers out of poverty.

²⁴See London-based UK India Business Council's report "UK India Business Council: Advocating Business Success in 2020."

Immediately after the Brexit vote in 2016, Indian business groups were uncertain about trading future with the UK.²⁵ But trade ties between India and the UK grew. With ‘business facilitating’ policies, India’s Ease of Doing Business world ranking improved from 160th in 2016 to 63rd in 2019. This has been particularly encouraging for foreign investors, including the UK, as was noted in the UK India Business Council advocacy reports (“UK India Business Council’s 5th Annual Doing Business in India Report: The UK Perspective, 2019”). Due to India’s much improved business landscape, India-UK trade agreements should be more easily formed post-Brexit in the 2020s.

The UK had the largest trade deficit with India among the Commonwealth nations in 2019. India’s share of imports for the UK, overall, was 2.2%. Among the commonwealth nations, India was the largest source of UK’s imports in 2019, with almost a 25% share (House of Commons Library Briefing). The UK exports to India increased in value by nearly a fifth (19.3%) between 2017 and 2018. Of these, nearly 70% were goods, with total goods exports from the UK to India totalling £5.5 billion in 2018 (“Department of International Trade”). In 2016, the UK was the third largest investor in India. About 8.0% of the total FDI inflows in the country came from the UK. Since then, several British companies have become interested in forming business links and investing in India, especially after the launch of the Make in India campaign (FICCI, India Report). By 2020 India became the second largest investor in the UK (Business Standard).

Another key strategy in India’s trade promotion is the idea of *Competitive Federalism*.²⁶ India has a federally structured government which tilts towards the union. The state governments in the states were also given autonomy with respect to trade agreements by mid-1990, after the liberalisation reforms. The coalition central government of the United Front in 1996 was led by leaders from regional parties, who reformed the Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB) (Jenkins 1999). This restructuring placed a development onus on the chief minister in each Indian state to negotiate for economic growth in their state (Rudolph and Rudolph 231). Competitive Federalism also implies that the state governments must negotiate their share in the central government’s allocation of resources for development. They also must compete for investments and reduce bureaucratic delays or red tape. Business lobbies, such as the UK India Business Council (UKIBC),²⁷ acknowledge India’s regional diversity in this context too. Subaltern heterogeneity of India’s regions will impact the new discourses of development from the FDI investment point of view.

Trade negotiations are difficult at the best of times. They can become derailed if factors not prevalent at the time of successful completion of a trade negotiation gain increased significance. It has been indicated earlier how a country’s least developed country status could be re-designated over time. The EU, WTO, UN, or some other

²⁵A survey was conducted among business groups to understand their perceptions about India-UK trade relations post-Brexit by FICCI. Report based on the survey was published in July 2016, Titled “BREXIT: Views and Suggestions from India Inc.”

²⁶See NITI Aayog, Government of India, mandate, “Competitive Federalism,” <https://www.niti.gov.in/competitive-federalism>.

²⁷See UK India Business Council’s 15 Oct. 2015 online post “Competitive Federalism in India,” <https://www.ukibc.com/competitive-federalism-in-india/>.

supranational agency or the USA could re-position a country's development effecting preferential or differentiated trade access. Special conditions enable the UK to remain compliant with WTO regulations and insulate India from a future upgrading of her development status. There is broad harmony among other global supranational agencies, for some of the principles of the WTO regarding agriculture. The WTO uses a decision-making tool called Aggregate Measurement of Support (AMS) to assist least developed countries in selling their crops. The AMS is a price support mechanism where qualifying countries get subsidies for their agricultural produce. There can often be a shortfall between the domestic procurement price of a developing country's crops compared to the external reference price set by the WTO. Using AMS, the WTO can give a least developed country up to 10% of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to subsidise its agricultural produce. For a developing country, AMS price support is capped at 5% of the country's GDP. There is a WTO differential between the amount of AMS a least developed country can receive, compared to the cap applied to developed countries. This cap is called the de minimis percentage level of support (WTO, "Examples of provision for differential and more favourable treatment of developing countries"). Other global supranational entities have similar agricultural crop price support schemes, which can also be used to pay import. They can choose to change the differential de minimis percentage from that of the WTO's 5%. The WTO itself has special conditions to suit individual commitments prevailing at a given time. This flexibility with de minimis WTO AMS price support has resonance in future trade negotiations between India and the UK post-Brexit.

(e) special and differential treatment in respect of commitments has been provided a set out on the relevant provisions of the Agreement and embodied in the Schedules of concessions and commitments. In the Schedules the developing country Members with a total AMS have had to make reductions of 13.33 per cent as against 20 per cent for the developed country Members. Similarly the single average reduction of tariff for the developing countries Members was only by 24 per cent (subject to a minimum of 10 per cent) as against 36 per cent (subject to a minimum of 15 per cent) for the developed country members. (WTO, "Examples of provision for differential and more favourable treatment of developing countries")

Complexities surrounding the rules of origin of various goods, from agricultural produce to car parts, can make trade negotiations problematic. The EU has list rules, known as Product Specific Rules of Origin, to abide for obtaining preferential originating status when exporting goods. The two main EU principles to consider under the list rules are: one, 'wholly obtained products,' where just one country is involved in the materials used to manufacture the goods; and two, 'sufficiently worked or processed products,' which is applicable when one country supplies some raw materials, and a different country partly manufactures the articles for export. Appraisal of the sufficient proportion of 'working or processing' required to obtain preferential origin trading access is decided by the EU list rules. There are other existing trade agreements and rules-based stakeholders that India and the UK will need to consider in their trade negotiations post-Brexit. For example, both CETA (EU-Canada Comprehensive and Economic Trade Agreement) and PEM Convention (The Regional Convention on pan-Euro-Mediterranean preferential rules of origin) combine additional preferential rules of origin

criteria to exporting manufacturers. These criteria generally fall within the following basic classifications: ‘Wholly obtained requirement,’ ‘Change in tariff classification,’ ‘Value or weight limitation,’ and ‘Specific working or processing’ (European Commission 16–17).

These list rules describe the working or processing of non-originating materials that have to undergo to acquire preferential origin. Each preferential arrangement contains list rules.

Products which have been “produced exclusively from original materials” will always be considered as originating products either by being wholly obtained, sufficiently worked or processed, or having used originating materials from a partner country through cumulation. This is mentioned in some preferential arrangements as a third criterion, like CETA. (European Commission 16)

The WTO AMS price support mechanism, and/or the policy harmonisation around EU rules of origin regulations, provide an early warning. India and the UK will have to be aware of these complexities in complying with such regulations. They need to consider the effects of any future trade negotiations on existing FTA and international relationships elsewhere post-Brexit. Both parties could be diminished geopolitically, if a negotiated trade deal results in unintentionally damaging other countries. Externalities beyond the control of either India or the UK could be problematic to one or both parties. A new trade agreement could tip the balance, resulting in certain suppliers now not being able to sell their agricultural or other goods. India has been involved in a legal case between a European company and an EU Customs Office, regarding Non-preferential Origin assessment. The Claimant alleged the Defendant had allowed the dumping of unfairly subsidised goods, in breach of EU rules of origin legislation (CJEU Case C-373/08).

Our conceptual theoretical review has shone a critical lens on some causal factors, which will have traction in the UK’s post-Brexit trade negotiations. We found there are two main principles which may influence the development trajectory of new trade relationships between Commonwealth countries and the UK post-Brexit. The ‘Preferential access’ principle was manifest in many forms. We discovered several potential problems with suggested policy formulation regarding visa liberalisation. There were also foreseeable difficulties with differential access for some citizens compared to others. Student exchanges maybe curtailed if the Erasmus+ type schemes prevent participation of Commonwealth countries in the UK post-Brexit. Our review of literature harmonised with findings from other research studies which predict a significant economic downturn for the UK post-Brexit. The likely prospect of a shrinking UK economy has security and defence implications too. Questions have been raised regarding the UK’s ability and/or desire to continue to contribute to NATO at pre-Brexit levels. In 2020, the UK Government reconfirmed assurances given earlier in the affirmative. NATO is not part of or controlled by the EU.

We found a multitude of compliance and trade regulations issues, which would have to be addressed in future trade negotiations post-Brexit. To understand which subsidies can be applied, where and when, is exceedingly complex. The appraisal landscape continually keeps shifting when we consider policy, protocol, and what is

intended by various legislations. We found the critical review challenging due to the numerous externalities which could affect trade negotiations. Trade subsidies could change if India's development status were to be re-designated by a supranational organisation, for example the EU or the WTO. This could make negotiating trade deals in, for example, food, commodities, or IT even more complex. The British Commonwealth will remain after Brexit, but its former importance, along with the geopolitical status of the UK will diminish. The United Kingdom may disintegrate altogether if Scottish, Welsh, or Northern Ireland people were to choose independence. There is an increasing swathe of the UK citizens living in these regions who are unhappy at being forced to leave the EU. In the event of successful regional votes for independence, the United Kingdom may begin to collapse.

India and the United Kingdom have a long history of trade relations. It can be traced back to colonization by the British East India Company, an enterprise formed by the Royal Charter of 1600. The Company operating in India even had judicial powers at the beginning of the establishment. It was deemed necessary by the Crown to vest judicial powers with the company for its smooth functioning. Until 1726, when the Mayor's Courts were established, the company was all powerful, able to administer justice according to "equity and good conscience" (Cowell 11). The trading elites had extensive legal agency, concordant with considerable societal power in the seventeenth and eighteenth century. But as India became an independent state, the membership of the Commonwealth was a contentious issue among the political elites from various factions. However, the Indian government decided to stay in the Commonwealth because it did not want to be isolated internationally. The Commonwealth offered a degree of autonomous flexibility and was compatible with the non-aligned policy as well (Brecher 65). At this point, India was a closed economy, remaining so until the 1990s. The Commonwealth was not an economic platform, but the UK did provide aid and technical assistance to its members.

Within the Commonwealth, India's share of trade as a percentage of all of UK's trade (imports and exports balance) with the Commonwealth was the highest at 18.5% in 2019 (House of Commons Library Briefing). This indicates India's increasing economic importance within the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth has positioned itself as the mediator for trade ties between the UK and the member-nations post-Brexit. However, a former Prime Minister of Australia has been boldly critical of the Commonwealth, serving as the post-Brexit saviour for the UK (Rudd). But the Indian government and business lobbies have used UK Brexit to their advantage, at least in the popular narrative. With the growth spurt in the economy, India has become a popular destination for investments. Since the Brexit vote in 2016, direct investments between India and the UK have increased. The two nations share a common historical, cultural, and economic relationship; their post-Brexit relations should be conducive to trade. Postcolonial and dependency frameworks can complement each other by critiquing their extremities and filling up the analytical gaps left by each (Kapoor 647). Both India and UK can redefine industrial policy by making it more socially inclusive, as well as economically empowering for some of India's population.

The UK's colonial past manifest in the form of the British Empire will affect future trade negotiations with Commonwealth countries post-Brexit. However, the nature

of that effect may well work in the former colony's favour. The perception of who will benefit from these changes largely depends on a particular stakeholder's remit and standpoint. Increased sales from India to the UK on some goods could produce geopolitical tension. The effect Brexit will have on the Commonwealth as a whole will be more nuanced. We found three policy drivers which increased the likelihood that trade deals would be finalised between India and the UK relatively swiftly. One factor is the UK's self-esteem; it would not want to be seen as having difficulties establishing trade ties with the Commonwealth countries. The second policy driver is pragmatics, the UK will need to conclude trade arrangements quickly, having severed internal trading relations with the EU27. There are acute UK domestic problems manifest as supply chain blockages caused by ongoing trade problems with the EU. The third policy driver is that the UK is genuinely ashamed of its exploitative colonial past with India. Securing trade deals which are mutually beneficial to both parties will help assuage some of the guilt. The UK-India new trading relationship will flourish post-Brexit, with a reversal of the commercial roles from the colonial times (Giddens).²⁸



²⁸Anthony Giddens gave the Reith Lectures series in 1999. There were five lectures in the series, each discussed some of the main concepts in Anthony Giddens' book *Runaway World*. This is a transcript of Lecture 1 from the Reith Lectures 1999 called "Globalisation." Giddens here elaborates on the reversal of colonial roles of the East and the West in the globalized world.

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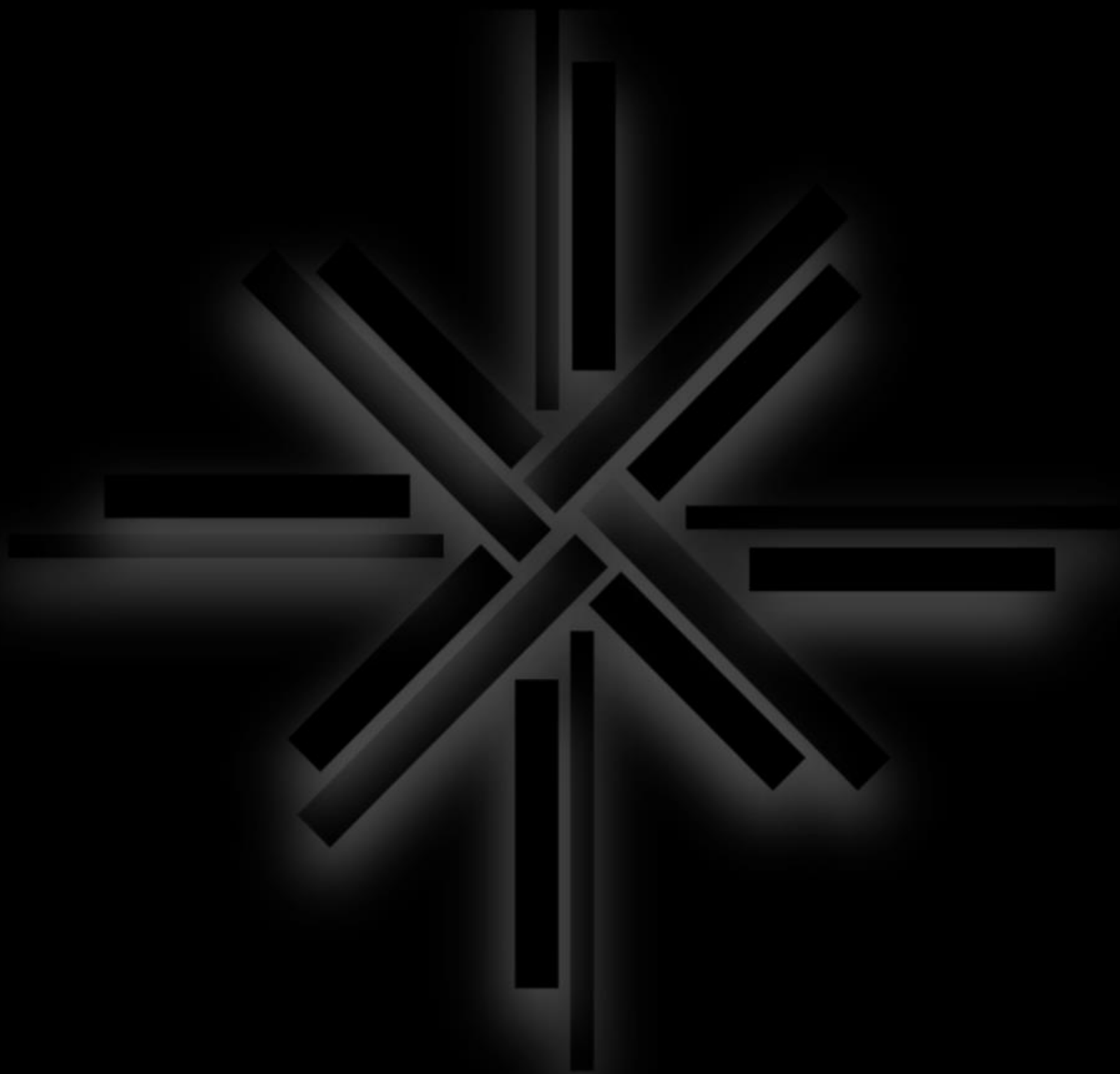
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