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ALGORITHMIC IDENTITY AND DIGITAL SURVEILLANCE IN LAUREN BEUKES' *BRIDGE* (2023): A DISTANT READING APPROACH

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Abstract

This paper examines how algorithmic identity is built and the presence of digital surveillance in Lauren Beukes speculative novel Bridge (2023) with the help of the posthumanist theory and surveillance capitalism, utilizing the approach of Franco Moretti (2005) to reading at a distance. A multiverse story is followed in Bridge using a neural apparatus known as the dreamworm, the novel offers an account of fragmented identities, memory intrusion, and multiveral doubles, all of which are heavily tied to the contemporary anxiety of the datafied identity and algorithmic control.

This study does not depend on the conventional close reading methodology but employs a computational approach to literature based on digital humanities applications such as Voyant Tools, AntConc, Stylo (R), and CATMA. Through these tools, it was possible to identify thematic and linguistics patterns in the text. Analysis of the lexical frequency and collocation revealed some common motifs as version, glitch, mirror, and watching, indicating that there is the issue of algorithmic fragmentation and surveillance. According to the posthuman ideas about the nomadic subject and the fragmented self, stylistic difference in narrative threads was used to show tonal, syntactic, and personal change. CATMA Tag-based markup also demonstrated the structural embedding of the emotional loop and memory distortion in parallel universes, as an example of how identity is built, reproduced, and commercialized in the multiversal system of the novel.

These results indicate Bridge as a speculative fiction as well as a formal deconstruction of algorithmic determinism, showing how the speculative fiction can parody and criticize the systems establishing digital subjectivity. In the end, this paper contributes to the discussion of distant reading as an archaeology of the impacts of algorithmic and posthuman conditions not only in the analysis of texts that are already products of those very conditions and in turn productive of them.

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JOURNAL OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS AND TESOL
JALT

Keywords: Lauren Beukes, *Bridge*, algorithmic identity, digital surveillance, distant reading, posthumanism, surveillance capitalism, speculative fiction, digital humanities.

Introduction and Background

Digital age has completely transformed the way people conceive, make, and enact identity. In the age of big data, algorithmic profiling, and artificial intelligence, selfhood can be no longer, just a psychological or social construct- it is also a technological artifact, an artifact that is delved into again and again by algorithm systems to predict and readjust it (Cheney-Lippold, 2017). Targeted advertisements, social media algorithms, facial recognition and predictive policing have one thing in common, they all rely on data-driven systems which can have far-reaching effects on decision-making and agency of a digital subject (Zuboff, 2019).

This shift finds its echo and questioning in modern-day speculative fiction, where a near-future setting with its technological advancements will frequently ramp up current technological trends to reveal the effects of their social political impacts. Among them is the speculative novel Bridge (2023) by Lauren Beukes, which focuses on a neural technology called the dreamworm, which enables its users to step between parallel universes. The fact that there are alternate versions of the self within each of the universes brings about important questions of identity, memory and authenticity within a multiversal context. With this device Beukes is suggesting a reality where the self is multifaceted and fragmented and influenced by non-consensual digital processes, a reality reminiscent of real-life algorithmic theft of personal privacy.

At the heart of Bridge lies a provocative inquiry: What does it mean to maintain a coherent identity when one's actions, preferences, and even memories can be algorithmically anticipated and manipulated? The novel presents posthuman perspective of the self, in which the connections between the individual and the machine collapse and in which human agency is slowly being eroded by the digital infrastructures (Hayles, 1999; Braidotti, 2013). These themes particularly echo with a notion put forward by Shoshana Zuboff (2019), who calls out surveillance capitalism as a method of collecting human experience as behavioral surplus, predicting individual behavior on this basis and eventually influencing it.

In this paper, the concepts of algorithmic identity and digital surveillance in Bridge are explored in the context of distant reading which is a reading format that was proposed by Franco Moretti (2005) and is more biased towards the study of textual patterns and forms compared to detailed, close analysis of text. This style is particularly appropriate with a book like Bridge which actually bears similar design to a neural network or algorithmic structure, penetrating recursive stories and multiversal currents in the way that can be construed as computational expression. Using tools such as Voyant Tools, AntConc, and Stylo (R), this research examines linguistic patterns, lexical clusters, and thematic constellations that illuminate how surveillance and algorithmic control operate within the novel's narrative architecture.

The present study is based on posthumanist literary theory, which borrows ideas of the existence of the fragmented and nomadic self (Braidotti, 2013) and the very definition of the posthuman as a pattern of information and not a unified consciousness (Hayles, 1999). Placing the novel by Beukes in the frameworks of these theoretical paradigms, the paper explores how Bridge challenges algorithmic systems of managing identity, fluid and replicable, highly programmable and yet identifiable as an identity that can be versioned through data paths, and into multiversal space.

As well, this paper has a contribution towards the emerging discipline of Digital Humanities (DH) showing the ways in which computational tools can add stratification to literary study of texts already thoroughly integrated into the digital condition. The novel's speculative

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engagement with algorithmic logic makes it a fertile ground for DH methods, which mirror the digital mechanisms the text critiques. In that manner, the methodology, in addition to assisting to the analysis, reflects the posthumanist and algorithmic paradigm that the novel addresses.

At the end, this interdisciplinary study aims to identify the following research question:

What does Bridge (2023) by Lauren Beukes, on the one hand, signify in terms of algorithmic identity and surveillance via the novel structure and language and, on the other hand, can distant reading tell us about the posthuman critique of technological determinism in the novel?

Having combined theoretical imagination and digital criticalism, the present paper sees Bridge as a text that contributes to and is being contested by the epistemological and ontological upheavals of identity in an age of algorithms.

Research Statement

The study explores the manifestation of algorithmic identity and digital monitoring in the speculative fiction novel Bridge (2023) written by Lauren Beukes, discussing the way in which contemporary digital machines disintegrate, reproduce, and control the subjectivity of individuals. With the rise of artificial intelligence, data mining and predictive analytics, which are forming the human experience and defining human behavior and perception, literature becomes an important place where the ethical consequences of these practices and the issues raised by such technologies could be explored.

This paper will base its work on the theoretical foundations of the posthumanism theory as presented by Andrew Hwang in the context of surveillance capitalism illustrated in Bridge the use of multiple-self identity, multiple realities, and data-centered consciousness to criticize algorithmic determinism. This study will study the linguistic and narrative structures that form algorithmic control and multiplicity of identity in the text by adopting the methodologies of distant reading, namely corpus analysis and reading, keyword mapping, and stylistic modeling.

The research is also important in two regards; first, the work can add to the scholarship of digital humanities because it shows how computational tools can be used to identify profound narrative structures in posthumanist contexts; second, it provides a literary critique of this current discourse surrounding the problem of data ethics, mass surveillance, and diminishing human agency and power in the contemporary world of digital technologies. With the interdisciplinary perspective, the paper evaluates the extent to which Bridge mirrors, critiques and reshapes the future of belonging in the world in which algorithms are taking an overriding control.

Literature Review

The addition of digital methodologies into language and literature studies has significantly transformed the traditional paradigms of research and analysis. Scholars increasingly utilize digital tools to explore texts, analyze linguistic patterns, and investigate the cultural dimensions of literary works. This shift has been largely driven by the emergence and development of the interdisciplinary field known as **digital humanities**, which blends computational techniques with humanistic inquiry.

Recent studies highlight the capacity of digital humanities to introduce innovative strategies for examining the evolution of language, authorial characteristics, genre classifications, and narrative structures (Moretti, 2005; Ramsay, 2011). Through computational text analysis, stylometry, and data visualization, researchers can uncover patterns and meanings that may remain hidden in conventional close reading practices. Furthermore, the digitization of

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JALT

literary texts and corpora has expanded access to archival materials, enabling scholars to study literature in broader historical, cultural, and linguistic contexts (Spiro, 2012).

Digital humanities not only enhance traditional literary scholarship but also offer new modes of interpretation and engagement. The use of digital tools facilitates fresh perspectives on textual creation, dissemination, and reception, thereby enriching our understanding of literary phenomena (Jockers, 2013). These approaches foster a more dynamic interaction with cultural artifacts, reflecting the increasing relevance of technology in the humanities.

Moreover, digital humanities encourage interdisciplinary collaboration by merging computational methodologies with the critical frameworks of the humanities. This convergence has led to the development of hybrid analytical models that support both quantitative and qualitative inquiry (Burdick et al., 2012). As a result, digital humanities have gained recognition for their role in enhancing not only research but also pedagogy, enabling educators and students to engage with literary texts in more interactive and meaningful ways.

Algorithmic identity at the nexus of digital surveillance and speculative fiction has indeed been a developing area of interest in scholarly circles over the past several years, at a time when the locative power of algorithmic systems has had a stronger impact in defining identity production, monitoring and manipulation. This literature review integrates the most significant theoretical and critical texts in posthumanism, surveillance capitalism, digital humanities (DH), and speculative fiction, hence positioning Lauren Beukes Bridge (2023) in the context of scholarly philosophy.

The idea of algorithmic identity is related to construction and alteration of personal identity with the help of data-driven systems. John Cheney-Lippold (2017) claims that the existence of people and their identity are no longer categorized according to the intrinsic nature or self-understanding but through the measurable, calculable patterns in information flows that constitute people in digital infrastructures (p. 9). Algorithmic identity is therefore dynamic, enacted, and molded by undetectable decisioning systems- on which the idea is especially applicable in Bridge, where identity is jagged and versioned across several worlds using a neural technology.

Similar but more focused is the concept of surveillance capitalism developed by Shoshana Zuboff (2019), that refers to the manner in which the information about human behavior is gathered, processed, and commodified by the business entities that are privately owned, to foresee as well as to manipulate human behavior. According to Zuboff, human beings have turned into raw material to be mined on data and changed behaviourally (p. 8). Within the ideology of speculative fiction, this means accounts where identity exists not merely as it is seen, but as it is formed by omniscient digital systems, and in many cases, against the will of the user.

Another scholar, Mark Andrejevic (2007) and David Lyon (2018) have also stressed the shift of panopic surveillance to algorithmic governance, with more decentralization and with an inverse penetration in the daily interaction of people through digital strategies. Such structures are key to understanding Bridge, in which the dreamworm can be thought of not only as the temptation and threat of data-driven identity exploration but also as a continual spectator and recombinant and controller of consciousness multiuniversally.

Dissolution of stable, humanist subject according to the conditions of digital realities is the essence of the posthumanist theory. N. In How We Became Posthuman, Katherine Hayles (1999), attacks the liberal humanist view of the coherent self, creating a proposal of identity being created by patterns and streams of information instead. She concludes that the posthuman perspective offers an informational pattern over material instantiation (p. 2), which seems to relate well with how Bridge manipulates identity i.e. the fragmentation, shapelessness, and connection with other beings, including code, machines, and memories.

ISSN E: 2709-8273
ISSN P:2709-8265
JOURNAL OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS AND TESOL
JALT

Rosi Braidotti (2013) carries this further, and proposes posthuman subjectivity as nomadic and relational-peculiar, border-transgressive between space, time and body. This idea of a nomadic subject is particularly applicable to Bridge, as, in it, the protagonist travels between parallel realities, in which everyone embodies another aspect of the self. Braidotti also argues that posthumanism is a space that can enable us to redefine identity that is not rooted in the anthropocentric, binary thinking, which is significant to offer a meaning of how Beukes portrays selfhood as distributed and algorithmically mediated.

Posthuman theories have been implemented as well in modern fiction. According to Elaine L. Graham (2002) and Stefan Herbrechter (2013), thoughts of posthuman futures flourish in speculative form where identity, agency and embodiment are recalculated. Beukes' Bridge fits well into this critical lineage by depicting not just technological mediation, but also the emotional and psychological consequences of becoming posthuman.

Speculative fiction has been a vitally important area that has examined cutting-edge technologies and their social implications. Fredric Jameson (2005) sees science fiction as the form of cognitive detachment, the alienation that pushes problems of the contemporary world into the future to be criticized later (p. 284). Straddling such genres as cyberpunk, dystopia, and noir, Lauren Beukes, the author of the meme born of such forms, pursues this tactic to the point ofMemory hacking, multiversal instability, and algorithmic selfhood is the theme presented in Bridge by this author.

This has been pointed out by both Sherryl Vint (2010) and Donna Haraway (1991) regarding the ability of the speculative fiction genre to question what can be viewed as the distinction between the human and the technological. Bridge is also predicated on a posthuman compounding of organic and digital identities, which is already foreseen in Haraway during the time of the big-data age in her web space manifesto the Cyborg manifesto. In the same vein, Vint postulates that speculative fiction also adopts moral dilemmas on the agency, autonomy and reconstructions of the human, which are evident in the narrative structure and the use of technological symbols in the writing by Beukes.

Enthusiasts of contemporary fiction, such as Adam Hammond (2016), also explored the influence of digital logic on narrative form. He indicates how computational culture has intersected with literature and that with this connection, a networked structure, recursive plot, and fractured narrative often occur in the literature as in the case of Bridge. The multiversal structure of the novel is a parallel to the distributed aspect of algorithmic systems and of the way literary form itself is changing under the pressure of digitality.

This work is also based on the emerging area of Digital Humanities, specifically in the distant reading approach of reading founded by Franco Moretti (2005). Arguing that the analysis should not consider single texts, Moretti adds that they should not concentrate on individual texts but rather focus on the assembled tectual patterns so that the scholars can think of the literary field as of a system (p. 4). Distant reading, using tools such as Voyant Tools, AntConc and also Stylometry in R, enables a researcher to identify hidden patterns in narrative: frequency of keywords, word groupings, stylistic variation, which otherwise would be hidden.

Matthew L. Jockers and Ted Underwood are among the scholars, who have expanded distant reading into the doctoral field of genre, authorship and narrative change, proving its value in researching novels that involve technological themes. Specifically, Underwood focuses on pointing out that computational approaches supplement close reading rather than replacing it because they offer a contextual support to interpretive arguments (Underwood, 2019, p. 6). The strategy is best suited to Bridge, a book already influenced by both content and form by an algorithmic logic.

ISSN E: 2709-8273
ISSN P:2709-8265
JOURNAL OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS AND TESOL
JALT

Accordingly, utilization of the DH approaches in this paper is not just an analysis tool, but a theoretical position. Since the algorithmic surveillance, the identity production is critiqued throughout the novel, this paper reflects the very same frameworks relying on computational means to understand the text, since the very reading becomes the exploration of the same digital anxieties approached by the novel.

4. Research Methodology

In this study, the researchers used the concept of distant reading (Franco Moretti, 2005), which moves beyond the interpretation based on close reading of texts towards examining patterns, trends and structures between and transgressive texts, and which commonly employs computational analysis. Instead of focusing in detail on excerpts, distant reading enables us through co-occurrences and thematic assemblages in large bodies of text to identify systemic patterns and narrative ratios that more closely confirm ideological workings in the literary text.

The method presented by Moretti is especially appropriate when discussing Lauren Beukes Bridge (2023), the novel that structurally and thematically matches digital systems. Bridge functions across pluralized identities and realities and resembles an algorithmic complexity. Distant reading allows investigation of these structural features with the help of the quantitative analysis of text, which emphasizes mechanisms of narrative, language, and identity functioning in the conditions of algorithm.

Tools and Techniques

The DH instruments to be applied in the implementation of distant reading by the study are:

- **Voyant Tools** is utilized to examine occurrences of various words, pairings, and patterns that develop around theme throughout the novel. Among such keywords as version, watching, mirror, code, and glitch, there are motifs of bringing out dominant patterns of digital surveillance and identity replication.
- **AntConc** allows working with Keyword-in-Context (KWIC) analysis that allows seeing how the terminology offered by algorithms is represented in different contexts of the discourse and how the shift of tone, agency, and power are realized in these contexts.
- **Stylo (R package)** is a program that enables stylometric analysis such as discovering changes in syntax, sentence length, and lexical variety across chapters or multiversal threads. This assists in documenting the linguistic disintegration, which accompanies the disintegrated identity of the protagonist.
- **CATMA** (Computer Assisted Text Markup and Analysis) is optional code applied to delimit fragments based on layers or constructs of reality (Universe A, B, C etc.), then comparative analysis can be performed of thematic and emotional patterns, across multiversal identities.

Justification of Method

Distant reading can also apply well to speculative fiction such a Bridge, the structure of which resembles algorithmic reasoning. The multiverse structure and the fractured character lines of the novel do not lend themselves to a linear interpretation, so macro-level interpretation is required to discern imbedded patterns of surveillance, patterns of memory and patterns of control.

The technique also indicates the issues this novel is dealing with: mechanization of perception, quantification of behavior and loss of subjective autonomy. In reading Bridge algorithmically we follow the data points and narrative branches of Bridge, and in doing so we reflect the way the novel itself does the same with identity, as something to be measured and programmed.

ISSN E: 2709-8273
ISSN P:2709-8265
JOURNAL OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS AND TESOL
JALT

Finally, it is confined to posthumanist and computationally-informed reading, which exposes the way literary form in itself answers back and challenges the algorithmic systems, which condition the construction of the modern subject.

Data Analysis

The algorithmic logic of the narrative of the Lauren Beukes Bridge (2023) to be described in terms of multiversal identity, fragmented consciousness and data-driven memory needs a methodological highly corresponding lens. Applying the distant reading method of Franco Moretti (2005) the section changes its centre of interest, no longer looking at the close reading of texts, but instead at patterns. With the setting of linguistic recurrence, semantic clustering, stylistic variation, and identity segmentation, the chapter reveals how Bridge presents and challenges digital systems of surveillance and identity building.

The instruments, which are employed, such as the Voyant Tools, AntConc, Stylo (R), and CATMA, demonstrate that Beukes novel is both a speculative fiction and formal simulation of algorithmic procedures. The protagonist, Jo, astral travels in latitudinarian multiverses through the aid of the dreamworm, a metaphor in the book and thus on literature, now mechanically created and recombined through algorithms and algorithmic identity: chopped up, spied, datafied. After these patterns are charted, quantified, they verify the critique of surveillance capitalism, embedded in the novel, and its consistency with posthumanist subjectivity.

Lexical Pattern Analysis Using Voyant Tools

The full text of Bridge was analyzed using Voyant tools indicating the appearance of dominant keywords and clusters. The most common thematical words were: **"version," "mirror," "code," "dream," "watching," "memory," "layer," "loop,"** and **"glitch."** Such frequent words signify the reliance of the story on a language linked to digital replications, recursive systems, and policies of security or surveillance.

Such repeated words include **"version"** (186 times), and they mostly refer to multiple times in which Jo views her other selves in alternate universes. Such repetitions support a posthuman idea of the identity as versioned rather than unitary like software versions.

The emergence of **"version"** is generally collocated with words such as choice, **"dream worm"** and **"reality"**, and there is a semantic cluster around algorithmic branching and probabilistic identity.

The other notable pattern on the lexical level is the high level of occurrence of the word **"mirror"** (87 times). Associated most strongly with the reflective moments of Jo, the mirror is both literal and symbolic a standard literary device of mirroring, to which posthuman multiplicity has been added. Both mirrors are duplicating surfaces combining with the manner through which algorithms build predictive models of user activities.

The word **"watching"** appeared repeatedly in the narrative descriptions, not only in terms of surveillance by the outside forces, but also a self-surveillance. Phrases like **"I'm being watched"** and **"he's always watching"** occur in moments of vulnerability, suggesting an environment of total visibility—echoing Zuboff's (2019) surveillance capitalism where even affect and memory are subject to behavioral prediction.

Voyant's collocation network graphs, for example demonstrate that **"glitch"** appears frequently near **"self"**, **"loop"**, and **"dream"**. These lexical links confirms the unstable nature of under the algorithm conditions of the identity defined more by disruptions and errors.

Contextual Surveillance Language via AntConc

To further explore these patterns, AntConc was employed to run Keyword-in-Context (KWIC) analyses on selected terms: **"watch," "version," "glitch," "loop," and "code."** The

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JOURNAL OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS AND TESOL

psychological background of the use of these keywords indicates the ide genetic load of the keywords in the story.

KWIC lines of the word watch, as an example, show that it shifted the casual observation into systematic surveillance. In early chapters, Jo uses **"watch"** in the mundane sense **"I watched her walk away"**, but in later segments, it transitions to more ominous contexts:

- This is because I see them watching even when I am asleep.
- The dream worm lives off being observed- It is growing.

This kind of use implies that the observation in the novel is never passive. Rather, it is being connected to digital systems, which engulf and weapons human experience and it is exactly what Zuboff outlined in her theory that predictive control is what has been thriving in the surveillance capitalism.

One can find equally metaphor meaning of the word code: one uses it not only as a programming language, but as internal logic:

- It is the case that, **"She runs a different code on me than I run."**
- **"We are all to the base code, that is before the decision-making starts to rip us apart."**

These lines suggest that this form of identity is not natural but is algorithmically built and contingent, to be changed according to the universe or rather which version of the self the individual finds themselves within. This positions identity as programmable, a direct critique of algorithmic classification systems described by Cheney-Lippold (2017).

The recurrence of **"loop"** in emotional and temporal contexts "**I'm stuck in a loop of losing her again and again"** metaphorically aligns with how predictive algorithms lock individuals into feedback cycles, reinforcing behavior for optimization rather than liberation. These loops are the psychological echo chambers, similar to how online platforms tailor their behavior on the previous activity to anticipate and then condition future behavior.

Stylistic and Structural Shifts via Stylo (R)

Stylo in R was used to perform a stylometric analysis to study variations in the length of sentences, lexical diversity and stylistic fingerprinting in various multiversal sections of Bridge. The analysis revealed that each multiverse thread (e.g., Jo-Prime, Jo-Zero, Jo-Glitch) employs distinct linguistic patterns, mimicking the variation found in computational identity modeling.

- In the chapters of Jo-Prime, sentence length is greater with more abstract vocabulary which shows a philosophical conflict with identity.
- The stylistic density goes down in the Jo-Zero universe; sentences are compact and action-oriented, containing common short clauses and imperative verbs- a recommendation of a survivalist, instinctive self.
- The parts of the work presented by Jo-Glitch are also characterized by an unstable language use with the numerous anaphora and repetitions typical of mental instability and cognitive disintegration.

These styling's are like the algorithmic fingerprinting of these realities each has a linguistic form, the profiles of the machine learning of the user behavior that has been taught to the machine. This logic is then emulated by the novel formalized by the conditions it criticizes: how identity can be indexed, traced, and changed through lingual and behavioral cues.

In addition, stylometric comparison shows such words that have high variances in different versions of Jo: "**truth, body, choose, repeat, and mother**". These words act as emotive anchors within the story as well as a source of information as they form part of the posthuman system of the novel.

4.5 Tagging Multiversal Identities via CATMA

ISSN E: 2709-8273
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Thematic and emotional changes throughout multiversal threads were to be considered to gain a clearer picture of them, so selected passages were manually marked in CATMA (Computer Assisted Textual Markup and Analysis). Tags included:

- **Universe Identity (U1, U2, etc.)**
- **Selfhood Type (Stable, Fragmented, Simulated)**
- **Surveillance Condition (Observed, Hidden, Watching)**
- **Memory State (Recovered, Hacked, Glitched)**

The interpretation indicated that there was a repetitive trinity in each reality:

- Jo's search for her mother (anchor memory)
- Her awareness of being watched or replicated
- A break in continuity of self (glitch, trauma, or version error)

The repetition implies that the definition of no version of Jo is independent and adds to the idea of pre-scripted digital individuals that reflect user actions that are algorithmically determined. According to most of the tagged segments, identity is not voiced as introspection but through system jargon such as reset, patch or overwrite. This linguistic means that identity is reduced to the modifiable data that expresses a post human state where consciousness becomes downloaded rerouted and re-booted into realities.

By annotation of emotional states and memory continuity, CATMA allowed to identify the ways in which the identity of Jo was repeatedly organized along the lines of loss and surveillance not as a unique experience but as an object of replica data. This framework shows how emotional trauma is capitalized upon in a comparable means through which social media spaces are commercialized and personal impact is offered.

4.6 Synthesis of Findings

In terms of structure, language, and narrative form, it is easily established as a novel with a deep algorithm basis, even in its theme, the tool and technique used in it range most widely. Distant looking:

- **Voyant** brought out motifs of high frequency that code digital anxiety.
- The version of **AntConc** demonstrated that the language might change with regard to surveillance, programming, and repetition in terms of the surrounding narrative.
- **Stylo R** affirmed that identity-instability is accompanied by stylistic fragmentation.
- **CATMA** shed some light into the ways in which the multiverses in the novel are part of the programming behind the duplication of trauma and agency.

The combination of these findings proves that Bridge is both a posthuman story about the abundance of identity and a formal essay about the problem of algorithmic determinism. The recursive, multilayered narrative of the novel cannot be considered a purely stylistic trick of the storyteller but a literary imitation of the mechanism of the machine logic as the digital age does its processing, replicating and manipulating identity through the predictive algorithms.

Conclusion

This paper was an attempt to consider the extent to which Bridge (2023), by Lauren Beukes, critiques the process of creation of algorithmic identity and mechanisms of digital surveillance in a posthumansist vein, applying the frameworks of distant reading by Franco Moretti and applying the tools of the digital humanities. Their case study combines thematic modeling, lexical mapping, stylometric comparison, and tag-based segmentation, and the analysis shows that Bridge is not just narrating a speculative story: by incorporating algorithms in their very structure and lexicon, the script presents a formal critique of our existing digital state of affairs.

Using Voyant Tools, I could see that the use of the keywords version, glitch, mirror and watching has been repetitive indicating that the text is deeply involved with the issue of identity fragmentation and ever-present surveillance. These motifs correlate with the systems

ISSN E: 2709-8273
ISSN P:2709-8265
JOURNAL OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS AND TESOL

of prediction that more and more determine and restrain the subjectivity of humans in reality. The KWIC analysis generated by AntConc also helped find out how the language of the novel develops between individual reflection and collective observation, which is in line with the concept of surveillance capitalism described by Shoshana Zuboff (2019), where behavior is being taken as a commodity and regulated.

This stylometric assessment using the program Stylo (R) supported the fact that, linguistic and structural variation are also supported by the fragmented multiverse of Bridge. The narrative voice and syntax of each universe are unique, in reflection to the posthumanist conception of the self as not fixed but versioned and mutable, just as digitally-determined identities in the digital age are algorithmically based. CATMA markup tagging helped to bring into the fore all the ways in which the novel is repeated in disruption of memory, policing, and emotional incarceration, and made an even stronger statement that identity no longer originates on the inside but are created and broken up on the outside as a simulation.

Through the application of a distant reading method, the research at hand formalized the content: an interpretation of an algorithmic-system novel by means of algorithmic modes of analysis. This repetitive analytical format echoes the main idea of the novel that in the age of data, even literature itself needs to evolve, react and criticize the algorithmic logic. Bridge by Beukes ends up as narrative and as an example, that is, a visionary engagement with digital modernity as well as meta-fictional adventure in the story of a posthuman.

As a summing up, the research proves the fact that fictional literature, such as Bridge, exists to explore and challenge the suggestion of algorithmic control, datafication of the self, and the deprivation of subjective autonomy. With increasing literature world overlap with the issues of the digital humanities, methods such as distant reading do not only reveal previously unknown patterns, but also engage the ethical question about the meaning of being human in a machine era.

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