COVER PAGE

Title: “Posthuman Intersections in BrexLit: Representing Migration in Contemporary British Fiction”

Author:

María Alonso Alonso
University of Santiago de Compostela,
Department of English and German Philology
School of Philology
Santiago de Compostela, SPAIN
ORCID: 0000-0001-9284-4224
Email: maria.alonso.alonso@usc.es

Abstract:

The United Kingdom European Union membership or, in common parlance, Brexit referendum, held in the United Kingdom on 23rd June 2016, was an unprecedented event in European politics. This article analyses a literary corpus of long fiction, known as BrexLit, which have all drawn inspiration from this poll and its subsequent consequences for British society. Novels such as Ali Smith’s *Autumn* (2017), Anthony Cartwright’s *The Cut* (2017), Mohsin Hamid’s *Exit West* (2017), Jonathan Coe’s *Middle England* (2018), John Lanchester’s *The Wall* (2019) or Ian McEwan’s *The Cockroach* (2019), and others, will be examined through the lens of Posthuman Studies to establish the numerous intersections that can be identified within these texts’ realist and speculative worldviews. BrexLit questions traditional norms, such as the Humanist conception of the white man being the centre of the universe, as well as it provides representation for migratory movements. In fact, migratory and refuge issues will form the centrepiece of this study as the majority of these novels challenge the abundant political discourses against the ‘Other’ that have flourished before, during and after the Brexit campaign.

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Biographical note:

I am an Assistant Professor at the Department of English and German Philology, University of Santiago de Compostela (Spain). My research interests are related to the connection between literature and migration, gender and ecology.

"Posthuman Intersections in BrexLit: Representing Migration in Contemporary British Fiction"

Britain's withdrawal from the European Union in 2016 had some notably pernicious consequences for the country, both economically and socially. This event is known, particularly within the European continent, as 'Brexit'. It should be noted that England and Wales were the only two nations who voted to leave the European Union whilst both Scotland and Northern Ireland had to accept the result, by virtue of the number of Leave votes, despite their populations voting decisively against it. The hostile landscape that Brexit has created for many has been the focus of a new drive in contemporary British fiction to explore the consequences of the most shocking episode in Britain's recent history. This literary phenomenon has been referred to as 'BrexLit' (Day, 2017; Eaglestone, 2018; Korte and Lojo, 2019; or Shaw, 2021) and it appears, primarily, as a long-fiction occurrence. This article aims to explore some different examples of BrexLit, which tell their tales through realist and/or speculative means. This dichotomic approach to BrexLit is illustrative of the cut within British society after Brexit since BrexLit authors seem to reflect on issues regarding re-bordering practices and global nomadism. Accordingly, this paper will make use of the theoretical framework that Posthuman Studies facilitate (Haraway, 2003; Bourriaud, 2009; Braidotti, 2013; Kroker, 2014; among others) to analyse contemporary British fiction around Brexit and the way in which this corpus of long fiction questions the context and outcome of such a radical political event.

Posthumanism, as defined by Rosi Braidotti,

> is the historical moment that marks the end of the opposition between Humanism and anti-humanism and traces a different discursive framework, looking more affirmatively towards new alternatives […] The posthumanist perspective rests on the assumption of the historical decline of Humanism [and works] towards elaborating alternative ways of conceptualizing the human subject." (2013: 37)

Brexit, from this particular perspective, questions the Eurocentric conception of the white man as being the centre of the universe, which is where the Humanistic ideal lies. As some samples of BrexLit illustrate, Brexit implies an othering process in what appears to be a political move to perpetuate hierarchical differences within entire populations. The migrant subject in general and the European one in particular, understood as a 'non-British' subject, becomes the target of political discourse and serves to frame most of British contemporary fiction about Brexit.

1-. Brexit, BrexLit and the Posthuman Divide

During 2015's general election campaign, David Cameron, at the time United Kingdom's Prime Minister and confident of re-election, expressed his intention to run a popular vote to ask British people about their interest in continuing being part of the European Union. This electoral promise became a fact on 23rd June 2016, when a narrow 51.9% of the population voted for Britain's withdrawal from the European Union in a referendum with a huge 72.2% of participation. This result contradicted Cameron's previously-stated intention to negotiate the terms of Britain's membership of the European Union and a new process of withdrawal began by triggering Article 50 of the Treaty on European Union, which begins the process of a member state leaving said Union. Cameron resigned soon after the referendum and one Prime Minister followed the other until withdrawal was finally achieved.

This political move was part of what Andrew Glencross calls a "neverendum" (2016: 3), making reference to the conflictive historical relationship between the United Kingdom and the European Union from the outset. Brexit was framed, according to different scholars (Clarke, 2017; Eaglestone, 2018; Korte and Lojo, 2019; Bellamy and Castiglione, 2019; Bromhall, 2019; De Bruyn, 2020; Hauthal, 2021; among others), by a paradigmatic change regarding border policies enforced after the September 11th terrorist attacks and the European refugee crisis in 2015, which implied a discourse shift in British immigration policies. Accordingly, Brexit is the result of what Kristian Shaw refers to as

> the manifestation of over three decades of Euroscepticism, resistance to mass migration from Eastern Europe and the Middle East, impotent rage regarding the Eurozone crisis and the corresponding failures of the left to either wholeheartedly endorse European integration or acknowledge the values of modern patriotism. (2021: 167)

Richard Bellamy and Dario Castiglione (2019) also consider that Brexit was the consequence of the 2008 global economic crisis and the controversial austerity measures imposed by the European Union to most of its member states. Bellamy and Castiglione additionally highlight the "EU's democratic deficit" (2019: 437) and the "EU structure and the obligations that come from being part of it" (452) as some of the reasons for the United Kingdom's withdrawal as a member state. It seems obvious that there is no single reason for this complex political outcome. Scholars such as Fabbrini (2017), Kohajda et al. (2018), Bellamy (2019), Bulmer and Quaglia (2020), Calvo Vérguez (2020), Gänzle et al. (2020) or Pittock (2021), among others, offer an interdisciplinary approach to the controversial relationship between the United Kingdom and the European Union from their different areas of expertise, exemplifying the multiple reasons for this split. What seems obvious is that, for many Brits, the European Union had become a burden on the United Kingdom.

There is a general consensus, though, that migration was the main issue around which Brexit concerns were articulated. The migrant subject became the target of political discourses, which tried to condition public anxieties over immigration. The need to strengthen border control policy became a major issue, both before and after Brexit, as Barbara Korte and Laura Lojo suggest when they affirm that

> [t]he issue of immigration has long coloured electoral debates in the United Kingdom and resulted in a continual re-evaluation of the country's social and legal obligations to the European Union and the European continent more generally. Immigration was the defining emotive electoral issue in the 2016 EU referendum with both Leave and Remain camps purposefully refusing to promote merits and benefits of immigration either in their political rhetoric or respective manifestos. (2019: 39-40)

Thus, Brexit did not divide the nation; it was merely the result of an already divided nation. This divide is exactly what BrexLit illustrates, both by means of literary genre and by means of internal structure. As Shaw wryly notes, "[a] study of Brexit through the medium of literature is somewhat appropriate given the extent to which the referendum was based on mendacious fictions" (2021: 218), a statement that supports Robert Eaglestone's assertion that "post-Brexit fictions […] demonstrate[e] literature's potential to engage with emergent political realities" (2018: 4). This is the reason why the following pages will focus on the dichotomic nature of BrexLit. On the one hand, literary works published after the announcement of the result of the referendum such as *Autumn* (2017) by Ali Smith, *The Lie of the Land* (2017) by Amanda Craig, *The Cut* (2017) by Anthony Cartwright, *Middle England* (2018) by Jonathan Coe, or *A Stranger City* (2019) by Linda Grant are pieces of long fiction which follow, from a realist perspective, the most immediate consequences of the referendum. On the other hand, *Exit West* (2017) by Mohsin Hamid, *Times of Lies* (2017) by

Douglas Board, *Perfidious Albion* (2018) by Sam Byers, *The Wall* (2019) by John Lanchester, and *The Cockroach* (2019) by Ian McEwan utilise speculative fiction to imagine the immediate future of an isolated, divided and hopeless United Kingdom. In order to approach this corpus from a comparative perspective, the following pages will rely on the theoretical framework postulated from within Posthuman Studies to analyse the seemingly imposed divide found in BrexLit.

Scholars such as Hayles (1999), Haraway (2003), Bourriaud (2009), Braidotti (2013; 2017), Clarke and Rossini (2017), and Bartosch and Hoydis (2019), among others, offer convenient avenues of research to engage with the various configurations of 'being' from transversal and multifaceted perspectives, contributing reflections that are much needed about the human condition after exposing the flaws of Western anthropocentric and androcentric understandings of human relationships. Accordingly, Posthuman Studies facilitate the approach to BrexLit by interrogating the dominant configurations of political discourse against the 'Other'. As Braidotti highlights, "[i]n sofar as difference spells inferiority, it acquires both essentialist and lethal connotations for people who get branded as 'others'. These are the sexualized, racialized, and naturalized others, who are reduced to the less than human status of disposable bodies" (2013: 15). Posthumanism, being both a theoretical and an empirical frame that is applicable to many fields of enquiry and, significantly, to literary criticism, has put the focus on the recognition of the others either within or in opposition to the self. Therefore, Western humanist focus on the white male subject as the centre of the universe has been challenged in the last decades by exploring the important role of disenfranchised communities in contemporary societies, including British and European societies. BrexLit relies on alternative forms of agency to highlight the possibilities and challenges of the outcome of the Brexit referendum in the configuration of new literary subjectivities in order to reconsider basic notions of citizenship, individual freedom and, above all, that of the borderland. In this case, migrants, including European migrants in the United Kingdom, are at the core of the conflict, becoming the target of political discourses. Therefore, there is a close connection between Posthuman Studies and BrexLit that transcends theoretical boundaries, and which will be analysed in the following pages through the scrutiny of the previously mentioned corpus.

2-. BrexLit from a Polarised Present

Brexit was the beginning of the end of an era. This beginning can be dated on the 23rd June 2016 when David Cameron was still a Prime Minister and the end can be observed two days after Liz Truss resigned after only a few weeks as Prime Minister. Though the death of Queen Elizabeth II, during Truss' remarkably short spell in office, on the 8th September 2022, undoubtedly, marked the true end of an era. Those six years were possibly the most convulsive years in the recent history of the United Kingdom during peacetime. According to Shaw, "the referendum debate entailed a broader struggle between the forces of cosmopolitanism and nationalism" (2018: 15-16) that implied a reconsideration of the concept of the 'nation-state' not only from a political or institutional viewpoint, but also by means of identity. Koegler, Malreddy and Tronicke (2021) reflect on key concepts such as 'identity', 'independence' and 'nation' in the introduction to their special issue on the connection between BrexLit and Postcolonial Studies. They address issues previously mentioned by Paul Gilroy (2004) and what he referred to as British 'postcolonial melancholia' and which can be observed in certain texts. Gilroy points to mobility and diaspora as a mayor challenge to nationalism thanks to the transcultural intersections that migration creates. Accordingly, and as Braidotti explains, "this political economy of difference resulted in passing off entire categories of human beings as devalued and therefore disposable others: to be ‘different from’ came to mean to be ‘less than’” (2013: 28). As the texts under analysis in this section will illustrate, the process of becoming member of a minority, such as of becoming part of the European migrant minority in the United Kingdom, involves rejection in this Brexit context. Thus, this implies a new turn of the screw towards the implementation of certain practices of exclusion and discrimination that were once put into practice by different European empires during colonisation, and that work against certain members of these former grandiose empires once they become the ‘Other’.

There are a number of novels narrated from the most immediate present, post-Brexit referendum, that utilise symbols such as fences to illustrate not only the divide between the ‘British’ subject vs the ‘non-British’ subject, but also between ‘Leavers’ and ‘Remainers’. In the Brexit argot, ‘Leaver’ is a term that makes reference to those who voted for Brexit and/or campaigned in favour of the United Kingdom leaving the European Union, and ‘Remainer’ makes reference to the opposite, that is, to those who voted against Brexit and manifested their disconformity with this political decision. Ali Smith’s *Autumn* (2016) is possibly the first sample of BrexLit as it was published immediately after the referendum and, even though it does not revolve around it, there are certain references addressed to it. For Sibyl Adam, *Autumn* “summarizes the mood of Remainers following the European Union (EU) referendum when the protagonist’s mother ‘points to the words European Union at the top of the cover of [Elisabeth’s new] passport and makes a sad face’ (195)” (2022: 60). Clearly inspired by the events that took place over the course of the first half of 2016, Smith wanted to reflect through this novel on the polarisation of British society. In order to achieve this dichotomy, Smith offers a transhistorical narration full of juxtapositions with temporal jumps from the present to the past, playing with fiction and reality in a thought-provoking way. Brexit, as mentioned before, is not a capital topic in the novel. Actually, there is only one implicit reference to it in the text: “All across the country, people felt they’d really lost. All across the country, people felt they’d really won” (Smith, 2016: 59). This is exactly what Harald Pittel highlights from the novel while affirming that “[w]hat makes *Autumn* more convincing than other approaches to Brexit fiction, then, is that it avoids being lured too much into the discursive arena of Leave and Remain camps” (2018: 63). Thus, the author seems able to capture the spirit of the nation through a number of descriptions, like the previous one, that take the reader to a time of huge migratory crises at the gates of Fortress Europe, something that made a clean sweep though the media. For example, Smith makes reference to the bodies of drowned children found in the Mediterranean Sea, in a clear allusion to Alan Kurdi, a two-year old Syrian child of Kurdish ethnic background who was found dead in Turkish shores the 2nd September 2015.

The body of Alan Kurdi turns, therefore, into a discursive referent within what Achille Mbembe would refer to as a ‘necro-politic’ subject; that is, a political category that divides people into “rebels, child soldiers, victims or refugees, or civilians incapacitated by mutilation or massacred on the model of ancient sacrifices, while the ‘survivors’, after a horrific exodus, are confined to camps and zones of exception” (2003: 34). The brutality of the new wars, the dehumanisation of migrants and refugees, the governance of fear through media and political discourse manifests in the novel through this concise reference to the dead body of an innocent child whose image became global. The death of Alan Kurdi, and the thousands of human beings at the gates of Fortress Europe, did not imply a change in the migration policies from the European Union, though. To Leavers, it actually reinforced their belief to abandon the European Union, not only, because of those questionable migratory policies but also due to the implied threat of mass-migration from the continent to the island.

Smith, a remainer herself who defined Brexit as “a massive lie [that came] from parliament” (in Eaglestone, 2018: 41), does not focus the plot of her novel around Brexit or migration but around the state of the British nation, a nation in crisis both economically and socially, which blames the European Union and the most precarious of migrants for that. For Shaw, *Autumn* illustrates British postcolonial melancholia “with a wider cyclical process of British history and natural decline” (2021: 208) with, for example, references to 2012 London Olympics which generated a moment of unity for the United Kingdom prior to its forthcoming division. Actually, Smith does not seem interested in British hegemonic past, but in the British social fracture that Brexit implied. This is clear from page one, where Smith rewrites Dickens’s famous first line in *A Tale of Two Cities*: “It was the worst of times, it was the worst of times. Again” (Smith, 2016: 1). *Autumn* reproduces certain far right mantras to expose the media-led manipulation of 2015’s migratory crisis with sentences such as “Rule Britannia […] Britannia rules the waves. First we’ll get the Poles, and then we’ll get the Muslims. Then we’ll get the gyppos, then the gays” (Smith, 2016: 197). But *Autumn* is not only highly critical of these mantras; it also ridicules the far right’s obsession with migration as the author visualises an electric fence alongside razor wire and surveillance cameras in the middle of the tranquil, and ever so white, English countryside.

If *Autumn* is considered the first post-Brexit novel inspired by the referendum, Anthony Cartwright’s *The Cut* (2017) is the first commissioned novel about Brexit. The novel revolves around the occasional relationship between Cairo Jukes, a middle age English ex-boxer from Dudley, and Grace Trevithick, a London-based middle class film director of Romanian background. The narration begins *in media res* with “Friday afternoon in the middle of England” (Cartwright, 2017: 8) with an ambiguity that implies that the action could be set in any random location. It could, indeed, be set anywhere in England but, in fact, the action takes place in Dudley, where the author himself was born, which is significant due to the fact it is next to Birmingham, one of England’s biggest and most multicultural cities. *The Cut*, as *Autumn*, is narrated through temporal jumps from the ‘before’ and ‘after’ of Brexit. Actually, each of the novel’s chapters is named after these adverbs and appear one after another to construct temporal lapses. Brexit, without any doubt, is the ‘cut’ to which the title of the novel makes reference; a temporal cut that extrapolates to a more metaphorical dimension. This cut can also be observed throughout British society. This cut represents, as the author indicates at the beginning of the novel, “always this crossing of borders, real or imagined” (Cartwright, 2017: 12). Notwithstanding this, it is this cut that structures the novel due to the constant references to the social dichotomy found among British citizens, both before and after the Brexit referendum. This cut is, therefore, also a social cut due to the fact that Cairo and Grace belong to two different realities: Cairo, the English native, survives thanks to precarious contracts while Grace, who is identified as a European migrant, has a successful career. This is just one of the cuts found between these two, something that, according to Shaw, “dramatizes the divide between nationalist and cosmopolitan forms of identification […] demonstrating how class inequality continues to run deep and informs the public mood towards European integration” (2018: 23).

The time of the narration in *The Cut* is the ‘after’, which appears in the present simple, whereas the ‘before’ appears in the past simple. It is not a nostalgic past though, but an immediate past that sounds preterit. Cairo and Grace, despite their incipient relationship, are unable to find a common place to reconcile their political standpoints, something doomed to failure:

> when Cairo is unable to bear the difference, he feels driven to a most melodramatic (self-) destructive response. The gendered and class-marked divide thus evoked brings up several key issues in which, dramatized and distorted as they are under the fatal influence of the populist right, one can see the extent of social alienation, financial hardship and lack of solidarity that has marked pre- as well as post-referendum England. (Pittel, 2018: 60)

The references to this cut are obviously in relation to the issue of European immigration in the United Kingdom. It is there where Cartwright makes sure he exposes the far right rhetoric that allegedly enabled the referendum. From the beginning of the text, we can find expressions such as "[t]*hese people*" (Cartwright, 2017: 12, emphasis in the original), "[w]e've had enough" (Cartwright, 2017: 21), "[y]*ou people*" (Cartwright, 2017: 24, emphasis in the original), "[t]hem and us" (Cartwright, 2017: 111), or "[t]hese fucking people" (Cartwright, 2017: 111). These quotations appear in the chapters that are narrated before the referendum and they illustrate the increasing hostility toward the migrant subject. "These people" turns into "these fucking people" when Grace is working in her documentary in Dudley. She is even the victim of verbal violence when someone "swore at her, told her to go back to where she belonged" (Cartwright, 2017: 111). Dudley clearly represents the complexity of Brexit, something that goes beyond a straightforward polarisation of British society. The English Midlands achieved, in some places, a wide 87% majority in favour of Brexit. What Grace considers a racist problem sheltered by populist discourses turns into something more problematic. Actually, Grace chose Dudley for her documentary about Brexit because she thought the town represented "prejudice on the scale of a whole country" (Cartwright, 2017: 12) where one could "get the voices of ordinary people, conscious of saying ordinary people and all that might mean, on the way they might vote, and why" (Cartwright, 2017: 22). In this game of juxtapositions that forms the novel, Grace turns from being a sophisticated film director concerned about exposing the leavers' prejudices to being, herself, similarly prejudiced for condemning a whole population in the same terms. According to her, Brexit succeeded due to "racism because people were stupid" (Cartwright, 2017: 32), a simplification that the novel problematises. Cartwright seems to materialise in fiction some of the most iconic discourses of Brexit politicians, such as Theresa May or Nigel Farage, and which were focus of Janine Hauthal's research. For Hauthal, the opposition to the European Union was key for the development of a new sense of national identity, which she defines as "British self vs European Other" (2021: 303) and which I would reinterpret as 'English Self' vs 'Non-English Other'. European migrants in the United Kingdom, such as Grace, had to undergo an othering process not due to the colour of their skin but due to them not having the craved 'Blue Passport' that now represents British nationality. European migrants became the 'other', they became undesirable foreigners, abject subjects, as Julia Kristeva would name them. Kristeva reflects on the concept of 'foreignness' in her foundational text *Étrangers à nous-mêmes* (1991). For Kristeva, the concept itself implies a rejection of difference. She postulates the term 'abjection' to refer to these disposable subjects, redundant, discardable subjects who are not convenient anymore and, thus, are turned into waste. The European migrant, in this context, became the abject subject of Brexit, a posthuman figure that lives in a limbo until British politicians 'get Brexit done'. The European migrant, as an abject subject, is rejected both by the host-country (England in this particular case) and by the home-country (which does not provide the means for having a dignified life onsite). This is the reason for the European migrant to move within a border-free European Union for others to profit off. The European migrant, thus, is rejected twice and that is why it represents a challenge to very concepts of 'identity' and even 'nation'.

The Cut is a novel that questions the real integration of England within the European Union, but it also questions the integration of England within the United Kingdom. It is a novel that deals, as Chloe Ashbridge points out, with the "English 'local' and the British 'global'" (2020: 4). Actually, Ashbridge considers that the novels regards Brexit as an internal issue, leaving the European Union aside; this is, she considers that the Brexit vote was "the local […] form of working-class nostalgia" (2020: 3); a depressed working-class due to the deindustrialisation of England, a group that has been historically ignored in socio-economic debates. Accordingly, the result of the referendum was due to internal tensions rather than to problems with the European Union and its impositions. This is actually one of the core elements of Jonathan Coe's *Middle England* (2018), a novel that entirely revolves around Brexit. It is, without any doubt, one of the most paradigmatic examples of BrexLit. *Middle England* is the last volume of Coe's trilogy, which complements *The Rotters Club* (2001) and *Closed Circle* (2004), novels where most of the characters in *Middle England* also appear. *The Rotters Club* is set during Margaret Thatcher's years in office and *The Closed Circle* during Tony Blair's. *Middle England* completes this trilogy in this 'condition-of-England' series. The novel is inspired by both real and fictional events that led to Brexit and the aftermath of the referendum. It does so through a three-fold structure: 'Merrie England' (before the referendum), 'Deep England' (during the referendum campaign) and 'Old England' (after the referendum). The titles themselves are illustrative of Coe's attitude towards Brexit. Actually, the title of the novel itself is also illustrative of the author's concerns. *Middle England* could perfectly make reference to the Midlands, where most of the action takes place, but also to the middle class that seemingly voted for Brexit. The title might also make reference to the generational gap between an old generation of English citizens who were in favour of abandoning the European Union and a young generation of people who felt both English and European. The novel covers all these temporal, class and generational differences to inquire into the reasons for such an unusual political event.

As Boujke Van Den Eijnden comments, "[a]ll characters have a different take on the current developments and by this, Coe manages to represent the different sides on Brexit and national identity in British society" (2019: 27). Colin Trotter, the father of the novel's main protagonist, represents an old generation of English leavers who do not understand current England: "[i]f we don't make anything then we've got nothing to sell, so how … how are we going to survive?" (Coe, 2018: 266). This critical attitude towards England's deindustrialisation process, implemented by Margaret Thatcher, does not figure in his democratic take since he is a supporter of the Conservative party. The massive generational gap between Colin, who represents the older generation of English voters, and his granddaughter is illustrated in a conversation with his son, Benjamin, who is disappointed about the referendum's result and asks his father is he feels guilty for jeopardising the future of his granddaughter, Sophie: "I've done her a favour. She'll thank me one day" (Coe, 2018: 312). Theoretical concepts such as those of 'English nostalgia' or 'English melancholia' bloom naturally from the text through Colin and also from other characters that challenge national identity, which is also how Sara Alessio (2020) interprets the book as she highlights the novel's conflicting inter-generational attitudes towards Europe. This cut, echoing Cartwright's previously analysed novel, is illustrated through the different Trotter generations. On the one hand, Benjamin, the main protagonist, and his daughter Sophie represent the remainers. On the other, Colin, Ian and Helena do not feel European at all, nor do they feel at home in modern multicultural England which they can no longer recognise as *their* home country. Both Colin and Helena represent those who voted against David Cameron during the Brexit referendum, as Helena says at some point: "The people of Middle England […] voted for Mr Cameron because they had no real choice. The alternative was unthinkable. But if the time ever comes when are given the opportunity to let him know what we really think of him then believe me – we will take it" (Coe, 2018: 219). The referendum was, obviously, that opportunity. These types of familial debates increase as the narration moves onward towards voting time. The book's timespan covers eight years of Britain's recent history helps the reader understand the rapid evolution observed in the English middle and working classes and their increasing interest in political affairs that generated such a massive turnout for the referendum.

Middle England is possibly the piece of BrexLit that best illustrates the population's disaffection for the political elite of the country. Politicians such as David Cameron suffer a process of dehumanisation through certain dialogues, similar to the dehumanisation the characters consider British population was subject to by those very same politicians: "People see these guys in the City who practically crashed the economy two years ago and never felt any consequences […] Wages are frozen. People have got no job security. No pension plans […] A few years ago they felt wealthy. Now they feel poor" (Coe, 2018: 14). The novel, together with *The Cut* and *Autumn,* shows the radicalisation of the well-known British moderation. As Dulcie Everitt points out, "over the course of the novel, we watch as a microcosmic example of England's perpetual struggle for identity unravels, and the country experiences marked shifts from national cohesion to national division, from acceptance to intolerance, and from futility to hope" (2020: 138-9). The central chapter of the novel, 'Deep England', is the one that particularly highlights this evolution. The shift in England was so profound that this central chapter of the novel describes an attack that shook British society, the assassination of the Labour MP Jo Cox, by a white British Brexit supporter, who shouted "Britain first. This is for Britain" before shooting her. The online threats that many anti-Brexit politicians had to endure were materialised through this wholly unexpected crime in a place and at a time where white terrorism was not considered a threat. The assassination of Jo Cox MP represents the climax of the dehumanisation process. It follows anti-human postulations similar to those that motivated the most terrible of historical events that characterised the 20th century, the rise of fascism which decreed that one could be killed for their political views. Anti-humanism for Braidotti "rejects the dialectical scheme of thought, where difference or otherness played a constitutive role" (2013: 27). The rise of fascism, not only within England or in Europe, can be seen in the migratory and border control policies of certain countries, which Fabian Georgi defines as "the severely restrictive and violent elements of today's migration and border regimes as well as a future scenario in which these elements are massively expanded, possibly as part of a twenty-fist-century fascism" (2019: 572). Georgi is not the only one who warns from within the academia against the anti-human turn of contemporary politics. New terms, such as 'global Apartheid' (Golash- Boza, 2015), 'bordered capitalism' (Chang, 2017) or 'national chauvinism' (Bieber, 2018) have appeared in the last few years to highlight the way in which the new world order is leaving aside universal humanistic concerns in favour of an anti-human approach.

Autumn, The Cut and *Middle England* are three examples of BrexLit that evoke the state-of-the-nation question and the subsequent reaction regarding British migration policy. They illustrate the division that Brexit highlighted within British society. However, these are not the only examples of realistic BrexLit though. Amanda Craig's *The Lie of the Land* (2017) and Linda Grant's *A Stranger City* (2019), among others, also cover similar ground. *The Lie of the Land* starts with the body of an illegal Romanian immigrant discovered in the River Thames before following the life of a divorced English couple who need to relocate from London to Devon as they cannot afford to live in the capital anymore. Brexit is also behind the polarised discourses found when dealing with the foreign workforce, particularly from Western Europe. According to Vedrana Veličović, in the novel "[t]here is a strong sense of being 'left behind', an easy byword for the north-south divide that, instead of attempting to account for the long-term inequalities, stagnating wages, and deindustrialization suffered by the north, is directed at scapegoating the migrants" (2021: 69). *A Stranger City* is set in London during the Brexit transition. Here, the characters of the novel belong to different ethnic backgrounds and generations, most of them being first or second generational migrants in the capital city. London is the centre of the narration and an indispensable character in the text since "[t]he city itself is a storyteller, with urban myths that feed off the paranoia of a collective unconscious, and topographical digressions that take us into the realm of the absurd" (Arnott, 2019: online). In *A Stranger City* there seems to be a 'cut' between the old and new generations of the capital city, which now seems to be a view shared between most of the corpus under analysis in this section. The authors display how new and old and generations of English citizens struggle to find a common point both before and after the Brexit referendum. They also try to illustrate the sizeable gap in attitudes between the English countryside and English metropolises such as London or Manchester. These locations are meaningful since they seem to condition political attitudes through lived experience. All in all, although Brexit might not be explicitly mentioned in some of these texts, the referendum is paramount to understanding the social dynamics that guide the plots.

3-. BrexLit through the Lens of Speculative Fiction

This section will feature a posthumanist reading of a series of novels that could be described as BrexLit speculative fictions. As Stefan Herbrechter and Ivan Callus put forward,

> a posthumanist reading […] focuses on the ambiguities around the human [,] can strategically exploit the ambiguity of the term *posthumanism* [,] can evaluate examples of posthuman representation in terms of their potential for a critical *post*-humanism [,] may be critical of both representations of the posthuman and of humanism, and instead envisages the human as something or someone that remains to arrive, as a potential that remains to be defined or realised. (2008: 96-7, emphasis in the original)

Speculative fiction is an umbrella term that refers to those texts that include science fiction elements (like in *Perfidious Albion*), horror (like in *The Wall*), magical realism (like in *Exit West*), among others, to speculate about the present or about the near future. Speculative fiction, therefore, allows the reader to imagine alternative possibilities of human perception in order to reflect on human nature. For Carole Guesse, "many stories can be read from a posthumanist perspective, whether this story challenges the categories and borders of the human in an obvious way (as in speculative fiction) or more discreetly" (2020: 33). Accordingly, a posthumanist reading of BrexLit speculative fictions appear more pertinent than ever since their creative potential enables a reinterpretation of Britain's most recent history. History, actually, is paramount to approaching speculative fiction. Linda Hutcheon and Mario Valdés (2002) were some of the first to highlight the importance of reconsidering history from a different perspective. For them, "rethinking is not only thinking again; it is thinking anew" (2002: ix). They work towards defining what 'historiographic metafiction' actually means in the 21st century, which is a term coined by Hutcheon herself in 1988 and which she drafted as a concept that "plays upon the truth and lies of the historical record" (114). Thus, Hutcheon attempts to go beyond the limits of epistemological knowledge in order to explore further possibilities of interpretation. This is exactly what speculative fiction allows readers to do. By analysing BrexLit speculative texts, this section will bridge the gap between some of the realist manifestations of BrexLit, as explored in the previous section, and other, more ambiguous, approaches to Brexit.

Satire is the genre of choice by Ian McEwan in his particular re-writing of Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*. *The Cockroach* (2019) is a novella clearly inspired by the Brexit referendum and its aftermath. Chen Jiayi describes it as an ‘unnatural narrative’ that “offers an uncanny experience of expressing trenchant criticism against Brexit” (2022: 68). In this political satire, McEwan departs from the hypothesis that Brexit – or Reversalism as it is knows in the text – is the revenge of the insect world against humanity. In this case, a cockroach wakes up one morning turned into a human, who happens to be Britain’s Prime Minister. For Ian Tan, “[a]dapting Kafka’s parable of alienation in this way allows McEwan to explore the cloistered familial drama in the source text and re-centre his critique on the abstract workings of the modern state” (2021: 572). That is, while Kafka’s *The Metamorphosis* is a familial drama, McEwan’s *The Cockroach* is a social drama. The so-called ‘Reversalism’ is a metaphor for Brexit, a ridiculous plan to shift the way in which global economy works. The decision to choose a cockroach as the main protagonist of the novel is significant: Britain’s Prime Minister is the corporeal manifestation of one of the strongest, yet most disgusting, insects on earth; an insect that hides to avoid being uncovered; an undesirable insect that everyone wants to get rid of but is almost impossible to eliminate. The cockroach is a repulsive creature that is typically killed by smashing it, but it is also a creature that will purportedly outlive humankind in a cataclysmic event. The only aim of this cockroach is to ‘get Reversalism done’ (in reference to ‘get Brexit done’) in Britain. Reversalism is based on an economic theory which implies that providers have to pay consumers to consume; that is, the total opposite of our current economic system. Jim Sams is the human for whom this cockroach is substituting for much of the narration. Like David Cameron, Sams runs for the 2015 British general election with the promise to allow a referendum to ask British population if they actually want to apply Reversalism. Sams is actually supported by US President Tupper. Thus, Reversalists in the novel substitute leavers the real political arena and Clockwisers, remainers. This cockroach utilises a rhetoric that echoes that of Brexit when promoting Reversalism: “Britain must go it alone and convert the rest of the world by example” (McEwan, 2019: 30-1), “[w]e will stand alone just as we have stood alone in the past” (McEwan, 2019: 47), or “Britain stood alone!” (McEwan, 2019: 96). But this cockroach has an ulterior motive: the only rationale for implementing this ridiculous plan of Reversalism is to exact the insect world’s revenge against its main enemy, humans. McEwan offers an interesting caricature of a contemporary British society that is led by a consortium of politicians whose motivations are, at best, questionable.

The Cockroach is the most obvious example of Brexit satire; however, migration is not even residual in the text. The cockroaches that inhabit 10 Downing Street are the posthuman elements utilised by McEwan to question otherness and the dichotomy between human and other-than-human characters. In the text, non-human animals (all the cabinet members are also cockroaches) interact with the human world in the political arena which takes usage of the animal trope way beyond the typical ecocritical interpretation (Buell, 2005; Clark, 2011; Coupe, 2000; Garrard, 2004; Glotfelty and Fromm, 1996; among others). Here, McEwan was not addressing the environmental crisis when he chose a cockroach to be his main protagonist. The cockroach is not a metaphor for the need to find environmental sustainability in a world menaced by humankind. An ecocritical reading of *The Cockroach* would be doomed to failure as the cockroaches only represent the metaphor for political nonsense. McEwan’s point is more that humans might not be the cleverest beings in the planet, questioning this cornerstone of Humanism and so, thus, humans are no longer the centre of *this* universe. The process of becoming-insect that McEwan utilises is radically different from that which was employed by Kafta or even Clarice Linspector, whose use of the cockroach figure is also meaningful in this respect. McEwan’s satire provides a powerful critique of contemporary British politicians – not just of British politics – and suggests that anthropocentrism is reaching its end. The posthuman condition of the cockroach in the novel underlies the tensions between alienation and chaos. It is the representation of what escapes human comprehension. McEwan sifts the most common metaphors related to the presence of cockroaches in literature: he questions the 'becoming-insect' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987) process; he even questions the process of 'becoming-other' (Said, 1978), or that of turning into a 'subaltern' subject (Spivak, 1988). It is the cockroach which becomes human and the humans are the subaltern subjects that become abject and, in turn, become the 'other' of the cockroaches' world. In this reading, it simply does not matter that the Prime Minister and the rest of his cabinet are cockroaches nor does it matter how nonsensical their political decisions are; people will still ideologically stand by their side.

Also inspired by Brexit is Mohsin Hamid's *Exit West* (2017), a novel framed by the 2015 migratory crisis at the gates of Fortress Europe. It is a refugee novel about border crossing that reflects the current migratory crisis and provides a reasoned account of what migrants have to endure. Hamid employs fiction to make readers consider the connection between history, geography and the supernatural to imagine a world without borders where people can safely move from one place to another through magical portals. Nadia and Saeed are the protagonist couple who try to escape from violent conflict in an indeterminate place thanks to a number of these portals that are located all over their world and which, in turn, are connected to different locations such as Mykonos, London and California. Hamid favours humanity over cruelty while he advocates for unrestricted travel across borders. This is possibly the reason why Shaw refers to the text as a "geopolitical novel" (2018: 26). The portals bridge the gap not only between different geographical locations but also between a present of unprecedented migratory crises and a speculative future where teleportation will make physical borders redundant. However, these magical portals are highly conflictive as they exemplify the hostility that migrants and refugees suffer in the different host countries they arrive in. Ultimately, *Exit West* is a strong critique of not only Britain's migratory policy but Europe's also as it is almost impossible to not connect the images Hamid conjures of, for example, refugee camps in Mykonos with the implacable activity performed by Frontex, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, whose practices have been highly questioned by human rights NGOs. In the novel, the harsh criticism of Fortress Europe is complemented by references to a post-Brexit United Kingdom, extremely hostile and violent towards migrants and refugees. Accordingly, the novel illustrates the fact that in certain contexts, "[a]sylum seekers and refugees complicate (and force a reconceptualization of) unconditional hospitality, revealing the stark limitations of cosmopolitan discourses when discussing issues of national belonging, humanitarian intervention, and openness to otherness" (Shaw, 2018: 26).

Despite the possibilities that these magical portals offer, Nadia and Saeed are forced to live in undesirable conditions once they leave their home country. Their place of origin is never identified by the narrator, although some references might take the reader to an indeterminate South Asian country; perhaps Pakistan (the author's country of origin) with Syria or Iraq amongst other potential locations. They leave their home, once they hear rumours of these mysterious portals, as it appears to be on the cusp of civil war.

> that could take you elsewhere, often to places far away, well removed from this death trap of a country. Some people claimed to know people who knew people who had been through such doors. A normal door, they said, could become a special door, and it could happen without warning, to any door at all. (Hamid, 2017: 69)

Thanks to these portals, "an unprecedented flow of migrants was hitting the rich countries, who were building walls and fences and strengthening their borders, but seemingly to unsatisfactory effect" (Hamid, 2017: 71). These portals, which represent the magical realist element found in the novel, reveal the existence of porous edges in border security. As the portals become more evident to people, they start being closely monitored and watched by government surveillance. Therefore, a seemingly positive element that might imply a more humane approach to global migration soon becomes another element of control. Thus, as the narration moves on, the destinations within these magical portals become military controlled refugee camps where hunger and inhuman conditions await migrants. This is exactly what happens to Nadia and Saeed as they arrive on Mykonos.

Once on Mykonos, the couple finds a newly opened portal which would take them to a luxurious house in London where they settle with other refugees. London, contrary to being represented as the welcoming anti-Brexit, multicultural site that appears in the novels analysed in the previous sections, is an incredibly hostile place. Here, migrants and refugees are immediately othered and regarded with concern by the natives. This intimidating environment is constructed within the narration through slogans that echo those heard during the Brexit campaign. This is what Stefano Bellin considers when he says that "[t]he nativists' threats and slogans echo the Brexit campaign […] in a dystopian direction to lay bare the potential outcomes of today's anti immigration and 'great replacement' ideologies" (2022: 5). London's supposed multiculturalism is questioned in the novel in the most radical way. Refugees are secluded in a ghetto and are subject to constant violence exerted by both the military forces and the natives, who are defined in the novel as "nativist extremists [who] reclaim Britain for Britain" (Hamid, 2017: 132). During their stay in the capital city, a nativist mob "looked to Nadia like a strange and violent tribe, intent on their destruction, some armed with iron bars or knives, and she and Saeed turned and ran, but could not escape" (Hamid, 2017: 131). Living in London soon turns into a nightmare as migrants and refugees are victims of extremely racist and xenophobic attacks. Walls, fences, police cordons, monitoring points and barricades are built to keep the foreigners under control. These intra borders are created to compensate for the impossibility of controlling national borders due to the portals that seem impossible to neutralise. Thus, the capital city turns into two distinctive worlds, referred in the novel as 'dark London' and 'light London':

> From dark London, Saeed and Nadia wondered what life must be like in light London, where they imagined people dined in elegant restaurants and rode in shiny black cabs, or at least went to work in offices and shops and were free to journey about as they pleased. In dark London, rubbish accrued, uncollected, and underground stations were sealed. The trains kept running, skipping stops near Saeed and Nadia but felt as a rumble beneath their feet and heard at a low, powerful frequency, almost subsonic, like thunder or the detonation of a massive, distant bomb. (Hamid, 2017: 142)

Ultimately, Nadia and Saeed decide to leave the United Kingdom and move through another magical portal to a favela-like shanty on the hills of San Francisco, California. There, they feel welcome as the natives seem to be scarce in the place where they moved to. However, it is once life gets easier that the couple break apart. Nadia tries to integrate and connect with other refugees and people of other nationalities, while Saeed seeks comfort from his fellow nationals and a gap, inevitably, appears between them. Nadia becomes more independent whilst Saeed becomes more of a conservative who tries to keep with the customs and most repressive traditions of their new host country. Hamid posits, over the course of his novel, the categorical distinction between what Braidotti refers to as "the given (nature) and the constructed (culture)" (2013: 2) when he defines "people [as] monkeys who have forgotten that they are monkeys, and so have lost respect for what they are born of, for the natural world around them" (Hamid, 2017: 137). Nadia and Saeed, as refugee migrants, turn into abject subjects anywhere they go. They exemplify Hannah Arendt's 'figures of exclusion'

(2004), condemned to wander whilst searching for shelter. Migrants and refugees are posthumans because they are otherized and dehumanized by the Humanist ideal due to their cultural and/or racial background. Accordingly, the term ‘human’ is not necessarily a negative term but one that implies regulation, exclusion and discrimination.

As Braidotti points out, “[t]he process of becoming-minoritarian or becoming-nomad of Europe involves the rejection of the self-appointed missionary role of Europe as the alleged centre of the world” (Braidotti, 2013: 53). A similar phenomenon appears to happen in John Lanchester’s climate fiction *The Wall* (2019), a novel also inspired by Brexit and the refugee crisis. Additionally to the concerns exposed by Hamid in *Exit West*, Lanchester adds his very own take on climate change and its consequences in the near future. He details a voluntarily-isolated United Kingdom thanks to a huge wall that was built covering the coastline to protect the country both from the rise of sea levels and from the hordes of refugees that try to reach safe shores. The wall was built just before the so-called ‘Change’. Indeed, the novel is full of terms that frame the dystopian sense of the plot. This ‘Change’ is known beyond British shores as ‘the end’, due to the inhospitable living conditions existing in the rest of the world and, apparently, the United Kingdom is the only safe place left on Earth. Life in the United Kingdom is relatively normal with the only difference being that the youngest generation has to serve two years as ‘Defenders’ at the wall. ‘Defenders’ are surveillance subjects whose only aim is to identify and expel ‘Others’ before they reach British shores. These ‘Others’, obviously, are climate refugees who escaped from their home countries. Accordingly, if an ‘Other’ manages to reach British shores, a ‘Defender’ is put out to sea. Additionally, those ‘Others’ who enter the country have to choose between: being returned to the sea, euthanasia or becoming ‘Help’; that is, working as slaves for the natives.

Jimmy Packham describes the novel as a British fiction where “contemporary political discourses that settle coast – the space illuminates a Britain’s relation to the wider world – as a potent site to explore a current crisis of national identity” (2018: 206). At this respect, Kirsten Sandrock (2020) identifies three big themes in the novel, which she connects with what she refers to as ‘British border epistemologies’: new processes of re-bordering like that implied by Brexit, environmental crisis due to climate change, and global nomadism. The huge wall that separates Britain from the rest of the world illustrates all this. The wall is, without any kind of doubt, the main protagonist of the novel: “the Wall is the dominant thing in your life and the life of everyone else around you, and your responsibilities and your day and your thoughts are about the Wall, and your future life is determined by what happens on the Wall” (Lanchester, 2019: 14). The first person narrator of the novel is Joseph Kavanagh, one of the ‘Defenders’ that start serving on the wall. ‘Defenders’ are assisted by all types of new technologies that allow them to spot refugees, who are never referred as such in the text but as ‘Others’, even at night. Lanchester’s use of new surveillance technologies to keep control on borders appear to follow Braidotti’s postulations, who considers that “[p]ost-anthropocentric technologies are also re-shaping the practice of surveillance in the social field. Border control of immigration and the smuggling of people are major aspects of the contemporary inhuman condition and central players in the necro-political game” (Braidotti, 2013: 127). This wall in the novel certainly reminds the reader of many others: from the Berlin Wall to the one that Donald Trump wanted to build between Mexico and the United States. Frontex’s practices at the gates of Fortress Europe are also echoed in the novel. Thus, the novel “obliges readers to confront uncomfortable scenarios of global migrancy through its portrayal of contrasting border perspectives” (Sandrock, 2020: 167).

In the novel, the difference between being a ‘Defender’ and becoming an ‘Other’ is remarkably fragile. There is no mercy for British nationals who allow refugees to reach national shores. Therefore, national identity does not play a fundamental role in the novel, since nationals are expelled without any further contemplation. There is a sense of equality in this respect, which turns citizens into radicant subjects, using Nicolas Bourriaud’s term to refer to those individuals “caught between the need for a connection with its environment and the forces of uprooting, between globalization and singularity, between identity and opening to the other” (2009: 51). This is one of the conclusions that Kavanagh reaches once he becomes an ‘Other’:

> I’ve been brought up not to think about the Others in terms of where they came from or who they were, to ignore all that – they were just Others. But maybe, now that I was one of them, they weren’t Others any more? If I was an Other and they were Others perhaps none of us were Others but instead we were a new Us. (Lanchester, 2018: 203)

For Arthur Kroker, the paradoxical, complex, and often contradictory implications of the posthuman condition have constituted the central focus of the most important intellectual explorations of the emerging episteme” (2014: 5). Speculative fictions somehow inspired by Brexit create an interesting corpus of analysis to consider the way in which current migratory and refugee crises affect human relationships. *Times of Lies* (2017), by Douglas Board, and *Perfidious Albion* (2018) by Sam Byers are another two texts that could be added to this list of BrexLit speculative fictions that deal with the need to keep people under control by any means possible. The portrayal of British politicians is particularly meaningful. They are ridiculed, satirised, exposed and contradicted. Primary and secondary characters that mock those who led the Brexit campaign are perfectly identifiable in these texts that change the context, but not the content, of the events. In *Perfidious Albion*, for example, Hugo Bennington is the leader of the ‘England Always’ party, in a clear reference to UKIP, a party which rejects immigration altogether and its former leader, Nigel Farage. The mottos and slogans repeatedly uttered by politicians such as Bennington penetrate into the voters’ collective psyches, as Byers illustrates through this dialogue:

> ‘They’re making room.’
> ‘Making room for ___’
> ‘For all of the foreigners.’
> ‘What foreigners?’
> ‘What foreigners. Listen to you. You know how many foreigners come to this country every year?’
> ‘About ___’
> ‘Too many, that’s how many’ (Byers, 2018: 50-1)

Immigration, thus, focuses any debate regarding national identity and national security: “[c]ontrol over our borders, our laws, our culture. We need to ensure we’re all, literally and hypothetically, speaking the same language” (Byers, 2018: 253). Speculative fiction, also for Byers, represents an opportunity to expose the dangers of xenophobic political discourses and the way in which citizens assume and mirror these discourses in the most hostile way. As most of the texts here analysed illustrate, it seems obvious that the gap between reality and fiction is too narrow. The different migratory crises in the beginning of the 21st century are behind the plots of most of these novels, which include samples of political satire and dystopias in the most paradigmatic sense. All these texts question the human race and the Humanist ideal as such. As Katherine Hayles once pointed out,

> “[t]he posthuman does not really mean the end of humanity. It signals instead the end of a certain conception of the human, a conception that may have applied, at best, to that fraction of humanity who

> had wealth, power, and leisure to conceptualize themselves as autonomous being exercising their will through individual agency and choice." (1999: 286)

4-. Posthuman Intersections in BrexLit

This article started with the premise that Brexit questions the Eurocentric conception of the white man as being the centre of the universe since Western subjects can also be othered within certain contexts, such as the one that gave rise to Brexit. Accordingly, "[t]he becoming-nomad of Europe entails resistance against nationalism, xenophobia and racism, bad habits of the old imperial Europe. As such, it is the opposite of the grandiose and aggressive universalism of the past, which is replaced by a situated and accountable perspective" (Braidotti, 2013: 53). BrexLit shows the conflictive historical relationship between the United Kingdom and the European Union in the most diverse way. Re-bordering practices and the various configurations of 'being' within that current political context are indicative of the different approaches to the outcome of the Brexit referendum.

As this article aspires to illustrate, an analysis of BrexLit through the lens of Posthuman Studies serves to interrogate dominant configurations of political discourses against othered subjects. The motivation for applying a posthumanist reading to BrexLit departs from Braidotti's postulations. Accordingly, posthumanist theory can develop in two directions: posthumanism and post-anthropocentrism. These currents undermine the supremacy of Man, as "white, urbanized, speaking a standard language, heterosexually inscribed in a reproductive unit and a full citizen of a recognized polity" and as a "hierarchical, hegemonic and generally violent species". This supremacy is held, in the first case, against "sexualized and racialized others", that is, women and non-whites, and in the second, "naturalized others", such as "animals, insects, plants and the environment" (Braidotti, 2013: 65–66). We find samples of this in both realist accounts of Brexit and speculative approaches. BrexLit, thus, relies on alternative forms of agency to highlight the outcome of the referendum. The dehumanisation of migrants (and of politicians, most strikingly) that appear in the majority of these texts are illustrative of the way in which British and European migratory polities have turned migrants into disposable others, into abject subject. This is the reason why a posthumanist reading of BrexLit is more pertinent than ever.

If, as Bartosch and Hoydis highlight, "[a]s a philosophical concept, posthumanism interrogates the legacies of Western humanism: meanwhile posthumanist ethics comes with a criticism of the Western tradition of humanist thought" (2019 :12), the multiple dichotomies found among the texts under analysis seem to go a step forwards in the reinterpretation of the bases of humanity. Realist novels such as *Autumn* (2017) by Ali Smith, *The Lie of the Land* (2017) by Amanda Craig, *The Cut* (2017) by Anthony Cartwright, *Middle England* (2018) by Jonathan Coe, or *A Stranger City* (2019) by Linda Grant illustrate the malintegration of European migrants in the United Kingdom. However, BrexLit speculative fictions such as *Exit West* (2017) by Mohsin Hamid, *Perfidious Albion* (2018) by Sam Byers, and above all *The Wall* (2019) by John Lanchester, turn migration into a global issue. There are more dichotomies other than migration. Observing the generational gap between the old and new generation of British citizens is paramount to understanding the complexity of such a seismic political event such as Brexit. Plus, the rural vs urban divide is also significant in how polarisation works whilst dealing with discriminatory practices. Ultimately, if posthumanism propagates "new forms of human self-understanding namely as an embodied self based on an interpretation of mental and physical processes, which may lead to a bodily identity in the first place, but which also constitutes an identity that is not fixed but dynamic" (Hebrechter

2013: 106), BrexLit could assist readers in understanding how conflictive human relationships can be, even in the 21st century, a century which has envisioned the end of Humanism as we knew it.

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