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BAKALÁŘSKÁ PRÁCE

Linguistic representation of selected male characters in Mary E. Pearson's
series The Remnant Chronicles

Jazykové ztvárnění vybraných mužských postav trilogie Mary E. Pearson The
Remnant Chronicles

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Odevzdáním této bakalářské práce na téma *Linguistic representation of selected male characters in Mary E. Pearson's series The Remnant Chronicles* potvrzují, že jsem ji vypracovala pod vedením vedoucího práce samostatně za použití v práci uvedených pramenů a literatury. Prohlašuji, že jsem při její tvorbě nepoužila nástrojů umělé inteligence jiným způsobem, než je uvedeno ve vyjádření, které je součástí textu práce. Dále potvrzují, že tato práce nebyla využita k získání jiného nebo stejného titulu.

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ABSTRAKT

Tato bakalářská práce zkoumá, jakým způsobem užití specifických jazykových prostředků přispívá ke ztvárnění postavy v literatuře pro dospívající čtenáře. Soustředí se na textové podněty, které během čtení pomáhají čtenářům utvářet si v hlavě kumulativní představu o fiktivních postavách, jako jsou popisy fyzického vzhledu, řeči, myšlenek a činů, včetně gest a řeči těla a také jejich interakce a vztahy s ostatními postavami. Metodologicky se práce opírá o postupy korpusové stylistiky. Jejím výchozím bodem jsou kvantitativní data (frekvenční seznamy, kolokace, shluky slov), nicméně analýza je z větší části kvalitativní. Analyzovaný materiál tvoří korpus trilogie Mary E. Pearson pro dospívající *Kroniky pozůstalých*. Korpus byl ručně anotován, aby všechny zmínky o vybraných postavách byly dohledatelné pomocí korpusových nástrojů dostupných v programu #Lancsbox X. Tato práce zkoumá a porovnává jazykové ztvárnění dvou vybraných postav, Kadena a Rafeho, na základě shluků slov obsahujících části těla a sloves popisujících činnosti postav.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

beletrie pro dospívající čtenáře, mužské postavy, korpusová stylistika Mary E. Pearson, The Remnant Chronicles

ABSTRACT

This bachelor thesis explores how particular linguistic choices can contribute to the representation of the character in young adult fiction. It focuses on the textual cues that help readers create a cumulative picture of fictional characters in the process of reading: descriptions of their physical appearance, the presentation of their speech, thought and actions, including gesture and body language, and their interactions and social relationships with other characters. Methodologically, the thesis relies on the approaches of corpus stylistics. The study is corpus-driven, in that it draws upon quantitative data (frequency lists, collocations, clusters) as its starting point, but most of the follow-up analysis is qualitative. The material analysed comprises a corpus of Mary E. Pearson's young adult trilogy *The Remnant Chronicles*. The corpus was manually tagged for references to the two characters to allow further analyses using the corpus tools available in #Lancsbox X. The study explores and compares the representation of two male characters, Kaden and Rafe, through body part clusters and verbs denoting agency.

KEYWORDS

young adult fiction, male characters, corpus stylistics, Mary E. Pearson, *The Remnant Chronicles*

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1 Introduction

This bachelor thesis will explore which linguistic choices, and in what ways, primarily contribute to characterisation of fictional characters in a young adult series *The Remnant Chronicles* by Mary E. Pearson. The characters chosen for the investigation, Kaden and Rafe, are of the same gender and of a very similar age but come from diametrically opposite places and backgrounds, which may or may not surface in the analysis.

Thus, the main aim of this analysis will be to determine whether both the similarities and the differences of Kaden and Rafe show in the results and through which means it is achieved, in simple words, what exactly contributes to their characterisation and in what ways.

The bachelor thesis consists of two principal segments, the theoretical and practical part. The theoretical part of this thesis provides theoretical and methodological background for the analysis of the two selected characters. Firstly, it defines what characterisation is and explains that there are two main inputs to consider in regard to characterisation: the piece of writing itself and the reader. Both of these inputs are described in detail. Moreover, the latter half of the theoretical part lists several previously conducted studies on characterisation, providing a brief overview of possible ways to look at characterisation and methodology implemented by researchers in such studies. Lastly, *The Remnant Chronicles* as a trilogy and its author are briefly introduced in the theoretical part, since it is not as widely known of a writing as, for example, the Harry Potter series.

The practical part of this thesis will analyse explicit and implicit textual cues that occur around the nouns that stand for the two selected characters, i.e. Kaden and Rafe. The analysis will be corpus-driven. Using #LancsBox X and its available corpus tools, two of the most significant groups of collocations, body part nouns and verbs denoting agency, will be presented, described, compared and assessed.

2 Theoretical background

The aim of this part of this thesis is to provide theoretical background to the key concepts that are used in the following analysis of *The Remnant Chronicles* trilogy. In regard to said analysis, it is primarily the process of characterisation, which will be introduced in subsection 2.1. Subsections 2.2 and 2.3 then introduce several similar studies to show possible methodological procedures, young-adult literature as a genre and *The Remnant Chronicles* series itself.

2.1 Characterisation

The key concern of this thesis is “how the words of a text create a particular impression of a character in the reader’s head” (Culpeper, 2001, p. 1), or in simple words, characterisation. What is important to add here is that the words of a text are not the only factor contributing to characterisation. Another agent is to be found in the second part of said definition, the reader’s head.

“[T]here are, in a very general sense, two potential sources of information: the external ‘stimuli’ and our ‘prior knowledge’” (Culpeper, 2001, p. 27). Culpeper further explains that by stimulus he means the raw text and prior knowledge stands for the reader’s past knowledge and experience stored in memory. Both of these sources are of interest when studying characterisation because not only are they equally important, they also interact and thus reciprocally influence each other. This can be seen in Culpeper’s model for characterisation in relation to which he says that

comprehension is a combination of both top-down processes (that is, determined by knowledge in memory) and bottom-up processes (determined by textual elements) and that comprehension is cyclic: what you see influences what you know, and what you know influences what you see. (pp. 35 - 36)

2.1.1 Reader’s prior knowledge

The mind

As pointed out by Culpeper (2001, p. 3), “the mind is not a passive recipient of information, but an active manipulator of that information.” “[T]he human mind actively constructs

various types of cognitive representations (that is, codes, features, meanings, structured sets of elements) that interpret the linguistic input” (Graesser et al., 1997¹ cited in Culpeper, 2001, p. 27).

Culpeper (2001) provides a short story to demonstrate what a reader’s mind can do with linguistic input. The story shows how most people assume a surgeon’s gender to be male, which makes the story logically flawed and confusing to the reader. This assumption, of course, stems from our mind, our prior knowledge and experience with the world. It significantly influences the way we interpret new information and what other expectations we may have in connection to that piece of information. And although assumptions such as associating male gender with a certain profession or a social role may be sometimes misleading, it is the only way for us humans to be able to efficiently deal with the world we live in in its complexity.

Categories and schemata

To name but a few concrete instruments our mind may use to cope with new textual input, two knowledge structures will be mentioned: categories and schemata.

“A category consists of a typical or ideal exemplar called a prototype and a range of peripheral or less good examples” (Culpeper, 2001, p. 61). A newly encountered character gains membership in a category according to the amount of similarities shared between the character and the prototype of the category.

This mechanism of category membership is not, however, completely unproblematic. Culpeper (2001) lists several drawbacks of categorisation and explains that it is not clear how one decides a particular example, i.e. character, belongs to a particular category, there is no fixed set of necessary and sufficient features defining a category and that the boundaries between individual categories are not well defined.

A different way of organising information in our mind is represented by schemata. Culpeper (2001, pp. 63 - 64) defines them as “higher-order cognitive structures [that] consist of

¹ Graesser, A. C., Gernsbacher, M. A., & Goldman, S. R. (1997). ‘Cognition’, in van Dijk, T. A. (ed.), *Discourse as Social Interaction*, Sage, 292-319.

particular configurations of variables or slots that may accept a range of concepts or sub-schemata” and their role in text comprehension is irreplaceable.

Schemata enable us to construct an interpretation, a representation or situation model in memory, that contains more than the information we receive from the text. We can supply, or infer, extra bits of information from our schematic knowledge. (Culpeper, 2001, p. 66)

Both of these knowledge structures can be (ab)used by the author who can hint at a certain category or schema membership for a character and purposely place it into a wrong one for the reader. When this is realised, the reader is forced to recategorize. “Such recategorisations involve significant cognitive reorganisation” (Culpeper, 2001, p. 96).

Knowledge of the real world

Apart from the various processes, mechanisms and instruments of the human mind, at least one more aspect comes into play when we consider the reader’s perspective and needs to be addressed, namely the contents of the mind, the (prior) knowledge itself.

Knowledge of real-life people is not the only but still a primary source of understanding fictional characters (Culpeper, 2001). A similar view is shared by Stockwell and Mahlberg (2015, p. 132) who propose that “there are continuities in cognition and perception across all life experiences [...]”. What this means is that people perceive real-life people and fictional characters in a very similar way. Specifically, we use, for the most part, the same language when describing real-life people and fictional characters and also, the ways we engage with and relate to people we are able to physically meet and those in stories do not really differ (Stockwell & Mahlberg, 2015).

To give a clear idea of how a mental representation of another person, living or fictional, is created in our mind, Stockwell and Mahlberg (2015) use a theory of mind-modelling. The process of creating a mental representation starts with “the presumption that the other person is a person, and since the most viable and vivid model of a person is yourself, all interaction begins by modelling the other person as having your own experiential qualities” (Stockwell & Mahlberg, 2015, p. 133). This serves as a basis to which we add information we proceed

to gain about the person with time until we are left with an accurate representation of the other person or character (Stockwell & Mahlberg, 2015).

However, fictional characters have certain specifics after all and Culpeper (2001) points out that fictional character types or so called ‘dramatic roles’ need to be taken into consideration. Here, he draws upon Frye’s (1957)² work that emphasises the functional aspect of a character and thus defines a dramatic role as what a character has to do in a story. These dramatic roles may not provide every single detail on characters and their functions but they serve as guidelines for character perception (Culpeper, 2001).

Furthermore, dramatic roles are closely tied to genre. “Our knowledge about different genres [...] includes a set of associated dramatic roles. Thus, recognising the genre one encounters can lead to the activation of a set of dramatic roles, which in turn may guide one’s perception of the characters” (Culpeper, 2001, p. 87). The extent to which readers use either their knowledge and experience with real-life people or dramatic role knowledge in their perception of fictional characters also depends on the kind of genre they are reading (Culpeper, 2001).

Culpeper (2001) concludes that knowledge developed from experience with real-life people is used in the perception of fictional characters, however, other more contextually oriented concepts may come into play as well. Knowledge-based inferences allow us to enrich our over-all impressions of characters. Furthermore, impressions of a character are not set in stone and can change over time.

2.1.2 Textual cues

Despite it still being the reader’s mind processing the text with all its cues that may contribute to the process of characterisation, textual cues can also be discussed on their own.

The most fundamental textual cues that typically paint the picture of a character are: direct descriptions of physical appearance, body language and manner, character’s speech style and personality, the representation of thought, beliefs and intentions, the reactions of other characters and finally, social relationships (Stockwell & Mahlberg, 2015).

² Frye, N. (1957). *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays*. Princeton, Princeton University Press.

These specific textual cues can be further classified into explicit, implicit and authorial ones (Culpeper, 2001).

Explicit cues

Explicit characterisation cues are parts of a text where we find characters explicitly describing themselves – ‘self-presentation’ or others – ‘other-presentation’. In some cases, these processes may happen simultaneously, since the utterance or thought of one character can provide information about multiple characters, not exclusively the one speaking. For example, with terms of address we always obtain information about both the speaker and the addressee and their relationship (Culpeper, 2001).

In spite of explicit characterisation coming straight from the source and having no other medium, apart from the reader’s mind, to interact with the information provided, it is still good to question it. Culpeper (2001, pp. 168-170) states that “the validity of presentation may be affected by strategic considerations and limited by the character’s self-awareness, and, presumably, how efficient they are in self-observation”.

Implicit cues

With implicit cues the reader has to infer character information from both verbal and non-verbal manifestations of the character (Culpeper, 2001). Among implicit cues we thus count, the characters’ behaviour, their speech style, personal affect, the ways in which they interact with other characters, physical appearance and even surroundings.

A character’s behaviour is an important component of characterisation. For every act of a character the reader uses their prior knowledge and tries to build connections between the action, motive and personality (Culler, 1975³ cited in Culpeper, 2001). Readers feel the need to comprehend why a character is behaving in a certain way or taking a certain action in order to feel as if they understand the text and thus the world around them in general (Culpeper, 2001).

³ Culler, J. (1975). *Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics and the Study of Literature*. Routledge & Kegan Paul.

“Language is an intrinsic component of personality. [...] We assume that the way people talk tells us the truth about them” (Lakoff, 1990⁴, p. 257 cited in Culpeper, 2001, p. 13). Speech style truly is able to reveal quite a lot, especially socioeconomic background, intellect of that person or their attitude towards the one they are speaking to. Another aspect concerning speech that further shapes someone’s character is their choice of words. Different lexis may evoke different level of formality or even hint at the age group the person or character might belong in (Culpeper, 2001).

Apart from characters’ speech, their thoughts can also be presented in a similar way, providing the reader with insights into the character’s inner dialogue (Culpeper, 2001).

Personal affect is a broad term encompassing many human emotional states such as moods, attitudes, feelings and also personality (Caffi & Janney, 1994⁵ cited in Culpeper, 2001). As an implicit cue, it can be observed through the character’s behaviour and speech style. For example, a character may utter oaths and imprecations as signs of anger or frustration. This is a commonly used tool by the authors to show what their character is feeling without the necessity to explicitly write it down (Culpeper, 2001).

Interactions among characters provide a space to display all other implicit cues that have been described so far. When interacting, characters behave and speak in a certain way and their personal affect may be indicated. Furthermore, only in interaction are we able to observe power dynamics among characters. “The way in which people interact with one another can reveal, among other things, the relative distribution of power between them” (Culpeper, 2001, p. 173).

The description of the character’s appearance is another key part of characterisation and comprises of a number of different aspects from salient ones to very subtle ones. The most notable features include gender, race and age group. The significance of appearance lies in the fact that “people attribute positive qualities to physically attractive people and negative qualities to unattractive people” (Culpeper, 2001, p. 224). Visual cues can be divided into

⁴ Lakoff, R. (1990). *Talking Power: The Politics of Language*. Basic Books.

⁵ Caffi, C., & Janney, R. W. (1994). Toward a pragmatics of emotive communication, *Journal of Pragmatics*, 22, 325-373.

dynamic and static ones. Dynamic features have to do with movement – positioning oneself around others, facial expressions, gait and various other body movements. Static visual cues are related to a character’s look and are considered relatively invariable – stature, physiognomy, hair colour or clothing, however, clothing is much more variable than any of the other features mentioned before (Culpeper, 2001). *The Remnant Chronicles* trilogy is a perfect example of this – characters wear different clothes to either indicate their sociocultural membership or to be able to slip into a different cultural environment unnoticed. On top of this, a character may be associated with a specific personal item (Culpeper, 2001). For example, a cigar or a personal weapon of choice might be such an item.

Lastly, information can be inferred not only from the character themselves but also from the scene around them. People and characters may be particular about their physical and social surroundings and even this choice provides some information to the reader (Culpeper, 2001).

Authorial cues

Finally, with authorial characterisation cues “character information comes relatively directly from the author. [...] These are cues over which the character notionally has no power of choice”. (Culpeper, 2001, pp. 164-229).

2.2 Previously conducted studies on characterisation

Characterisation as a whole is a very complex and extensive topic. For that reason, many researches choose to concentrate on a narrower aspect of it. In this chapter, a few of such researches are introduced with a short description of each and the methodology implemented, which served as a guideline for the follow-up analysis.

Culpeper (2001)

In his book *Language and Characterisation* Culpeper (2001) describes an empirical study he conducted in 1991 that explores readers’ perception of characters in connection to particular textual cues.

The data were collected through a questionnaire with open questions that were supposed to collect the respondents’ unbiased impressions of two characters based on a dialogue and interactions between them.

The main research questions sought to find out what descriptors people use when depicting a character, how individual descriptors relate to one another and which textual cues evoke the responders' impression of a character.

This study led to many interesting conclusions many of which have already been mentioned in the previous sections of the theoretical part of this thesis – our perception of real-life people and fictional characters is not really different, the context the character is perceived in also plays a role in characterisation and so does our prior knowledge, our impression of a character may develop with time and finally, there is a noticeable agreement in the way different people describe their impression of a character, however, there is still some variation due to different schemata we may have in our minds.

Hunt (2015)

Another study concerned with characters and how they are portrayed was introduced by Hunt. Her 2015 study aimed to find the role of gender in connection to character's agency in children's literature, namely in three of the famous *Harry Potter* books.

To observe this, Hunt concentrates on body parts and the ways how characters of different genders use them. The methodology she employed was critical discourse analysis and corpus linguistics. Corpus linguistics is of great help for such a study because “[it] offers a degree of objectivity and efficiency not possible in manual ideological analysis, as well as a set of tools particularly useful for the lexical analysis of considerable quantities of text” (Hunt, 2015, p. 266) and furthermore, “provides statistical support for interpretations, without sacrificing social sensitivity and the micro-level nuances of discourse analysis” (Hunt, 2015, p. 267). In order to uncover how exactly body parts of certain characters are used, Hunt uses collocations to see which words surround particular body parts. Every noun representing a body part of a human also had to be manually given a male or female tag.

This research shows that the Harry Potter series is to a significant extent gendered. Male characters seem to be more active and powerful physical beings who are able to act on the world whereas female characters are portrayed in a completely opposite way. Females connote with emotions rather than physicality, action and power which often puts them in positions where they cannot effectively contribute in many situations that require their

action. This notion is worth paying attention to since young readers as the target audience of the Harry Potter series may subconsciously adopt or strengthen this distinction between males and females as powerful and powerless. “[W]riting for the young has considerable potential to influence what its intended readers regard as normal, good, acceptable, important, unjust, or to be feared” (Reynolds, 2011⁶, p. 34 cited in Mahlberg & Čermáková, 2022, pp. 1-2).

Mahlberg and Čermáková (2022)

Similarly to Hunt, Mahlberg and Čermáková also looked into gender and agency. In their 2022 paper *Gendered Body Language in Children’s Literature over time* they present the comparison between how characters physically act in 19th century and contemporary children’s literature.

To reveal such differences, two separate corpora were created. In each of them Mahlberg and Čermáková looked for five-word clusters that contained a body part, with which a character can act on the world or interact with other characters, and a pronoun denoting the gender of the agent. They first described gendered body language in each corpus and then proceeded to compare these results.

What this study revealed is a tendency for female characters to act physically in a similar fashion and a lower frequency of actions overall in the 19th century children’s literature. Another notable feature was that there were certain clusters of actions which appeared only with female characters and other ones solely with male characters. Additionally, when female characters do take action, it is usually an act directed towards or in relation to somebody else. With male characters there were instances of actions that did not require any other character to be around. Corpora of contemporary literature showed a shift towards more balanced agency between male and female characters. Even though male body part clusters were still more frequent, there was not a single cluster that would be found exclusively for male or female characters.

⁶ Reynolds, K. (2011). *Children’s Literature: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press.

Apart from these conclusions about gender and agency over time Mahlberg and Čermáková once again highlight the children's literature aspect of their study, as Hunt did. They write that "children learn through texts" (Mahlberg & Čermáková, 2022, p. 2) and that is why it is worth taking notice of what authors write into them.

Dbalá (2022)

Lastly, I would like to mention Dbalá's work. In her bachelor thesis she looked into Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* trilogy and analysed how language contributes to characterisation of selected characters. She chose two very distinct characters – Gollum and Legolas – to be able to clearly observe how differently such characters are portrayed by the author in order to deliver a completely different experience and sense of distinctiveness.

Before creating a corpus, every instance of *he*, *him*, *his* and *himself* referring to one of the examined characters had to be manually tagged throughout the whole length of the trilogy and substituted for a proper name of that character. After replacing pronouns for proper names, a corpus could be created in the CQPweb in which she could effectively search for various tendencies, phenomena and differences of the characters.

In the quantitative part of her thesis, Dbalá found that both Gollum and Legolas appear relatively often throughout the story despite the fact that they are secondary characters. Gollum even three times more often than Legolas, which can be explained by his presence near the main characters. Qualitative part comprises of an analysis of Gollum's and Legolas's collocates. She analysed collocations with body parts to observe their non-verbal behaviour and then verbs denoting action and speech.

She was able to find significant differences between these two characters and show that non-verbal communication truly is a substantial part of characterisation. Gollum's body parts played a very important role in *Lord of the Rings*. They serve as descriptors of his appearance, his split personality and also help him communicate and act in many other ways. Similarly, verbs connected to the character of Gollum enable to better imagine what the character is really like and further support his characterisation. With Legolas, on the other hand, the reader is not able to infer much character information neither from body part collocates nor verbs used to describe his actions.

2.3 About Mary E. Pearson and The Remnant Chronicles

The author

Mary E. Pearson is an American author best known for her young-adult fantasy series of novels. Even though she has always been passionate about stories, reading and characters, her career path actually started with art and later teaching. It was while teaching a class of younger writing enthusiasts that she decided to finally follow her heart and try to become a writer. She came a long way since, faced many obstacles and rejections to get where she is now - New York Times best-selling author whose books have been translated to several languages (Pearson, 2024).

In the *frequently asked questions* section of her website, she discloses a lot about herself and her approach to the process of writing. What is definitely worth pointing out is her viewpoint on readers' perception of her stories.

Different parts have more meaning and importance to one reader than another. I find it humbling because I don't really own the words or their meaning and once a book is published it takes on a whole new life, becoming whatever the reader creates as a result of their own life experiences. It is like my book is many books instead of just one and each one is true and valid. (Pearson, 2024)

This perspective really goes hand in hand with what Culpeper (2001) writes about impressions of characters.

The series

The core trilogy called *The Remnant Chronicles*, containing the novels *The Kiss of Deception* (2014), *The Heart of Betrayal* (2015) and *The Beauty of Darkness* (2016), belongs to her most popular and best-known works. The first book has over 150,000 ratings on Goodreads⁷, the world's largest readers' platform for finding, reviewing and recommending books, which is the highest number of ratings from all of her books published to date.

With this trilogy Pearson was able to manufacture not only a captivating story with numerous interesting characters but also a whole new imaginary world. Apart from the main trilogy

⁷ <https://www.goodreads.com/> (Accessed 4/3/2025)

this world with all its complexity and richness also homes another pair of novels set a few years after the events of the third book and most recently Pearson also provided a look into the remote past of this world in her prequel novella called *Morrighan* (Pearson, 2024).

To give a better idea of the genre of *The Remnant Chronicles*, Biber and Conrad's (2009) framework for analysing situational characteristics might be the most effective way to do so. From all of the characteristics – 'Participants' and 'Relations among them', 'Channel', 'Production circumstances', 'Setting', 'Cummunicative purposes' and 'Topic' that Biber and Conrad provide, the most useful ones for the description of the series are 'Participants', 'Channel' and 'Topic'.

The series of novels can be viewed as an interaction. This interaction takes place firstly between the addressor, the author of the text, and an indefinite number of addressees, i.e. anyone who reads it at any time of the text's existence. In the case of *The Remnant Chronicles* the majority of the addressees are going to fall into the category of teenagers and young adults.

Secondly, concerning the channel, this interaction happens largely through a written text. Some readers might reach for a printed version, others an electronic one. Some addressees might prefer listening to an audiobook to reading. In that case, however, we still refer to a spoken version of the original written piece.

As for relations among participants, this combination of participants and channel would not normally offer much room for interaction. The author of *The Remnant Chronicles*, however, is quite active on social media and enjoys communicating with her readers, which to some extent breaks this standard.

Finally, "any text will have its own specific topics" (Biber & Conrad, 2009, p. 46) and this series contains a large number of them, the most pivotal one being a young runaway princess along with two companions, the selected characters for this analysis, trying to find her place in a world interlaced with secrets, political machinations and ancient prophecies.

Both selected characters come from different fictional kingdoms but meet through a central female character, the runaway princess. One of them is Rafe, a prince who was left at the altar by her and the second one is Kaden, an assassin sent to kill her.

3 Material and Method

3.1 Material

The source material for this thesis comprises of three Mary E. Pearson's novels called *The Kiss of Deception*, *The Heart of Betrayal* and *The Beauty of Darkness* that together constitute *The Remnant Chronicles* trilogy. All three novels were accessed in digital versions.

Other works by Pearson that take place in the very same fictional world as *The Remnant Chronicles* trilogy, namely *The Dance of Thieves* and *The Vow of Thieves*, that also feature mentions of the two selected characters, are not considered in this thesis, as the contribution of these novels is negligible.

3.2 Method

Prior to creating a corpus, the texts had to be manually tagged in order to ensure an effective search later in the corpus. Each of the pronouns *he*, *him*, *his* and *himself* referring to the main male protagonists, i.e. either to Kaden or Rafe, were replaced with a respective proper name of the character or its possessive form. Since several chapters also present the story from Kaden and Rafe's perspectives every relevant *I*, *me*, *my*, *mine* and *myself* representing either Kaden or Rafe had to undergo the same process. The result is demonstrated in examples 1a, representing the original version, and 1b, representing the tagged version.

(1a) Kaden nodded and sat back in *his* chair as if *he* was already satisfied with *his* meal, though *he* hadn't yet touched a bite.

(1b) Kaden nodded and sat back in *Kaden's* chair as if *Kaden* was already satisfied with *Kaden's* meal, though *Kaden* hadn't yet touched a bite.

As for the reflexive pronouns *himself* and *myself*, these occurrences were rewritten to either *Kaden self* or *Rafe self* with a space in between. This procedure enabled searching in the corpus simply for *Kaden* or *Rafe* without the need to search for the instances with reflexive pronouns separately, which was not required for the purposes of this thesis.

Some minor parts of the texts had to be deleted as well. Namely beginnings of chapters, which often contained the word *chapter* and the names of the characters close together, causing them to collocate in the corpus, and also fictional ancient and religious passages that

could often be found at the ends of chapters causing the same issue with collocates. The deletion of these passages enhanced the relevance of future collocates.

The tagging being finished a corpus containing all three texts was created in #LancsBox X⁸, a powerful corpus software for effective analysis of large amounts of data, with both pre-loaded corpora and the option to create one's own corpus and subcorpora.

In order to create a systematic overview of all textual cues connected to Kaden and Rafe, a list of collocations from the whole corpus was generated for both of them using the GraphColl tool in Lancsbox. The statistics used was Log Likelihood, which according to the description available on CQPweb⁹ “scores collocations by significance: the higher the score, the more evidence you have that the association is not due to chance.”

The collocates were identified as word-forms (case-insensitive) occurring within the span of three words to the left and three words to the right (L3 to R3) of the node. This list was then manually sorted to eliminate any irrelevant collocations, such as articles or, for example, the word *days*, which collocated with both characters but for neither was a relevant collocate. It is simply that time is commonly measured in days in this series rather than any other unit of time. Subsequently, the collocates were classified semantically and ranked by their frequencies.

⁸ Brezina, V., & Platt, W. (2024). #LancsBox X (Version 5.0.3.) [software], Lancaster University, Available from <http://lancsbox.lancs.ac.uk>.

⁹ Hardie, A. (2008-2023). CQPweb (Version 3.3.18). [software], Available from <https://cqpweb.lancs.ac.uk>.

4 Analysis

The practical part of this thesis provides a detailed analysis and comparison of two selected male characters who both play a significant part in the story of *The Remnant Chronicles*. It explores explicit and implicit textual cues that contribute to the characterisation of the two selected male characters. From explicit cues, it is primarily other-presentation, considering the way in which the trilogy is written. Implicit cues can be included as a whole: behaviour, speech, personal affect, interaction, appearance and to some extent even surroundings. Authorial cues are not really a relevant category for this analysis, as the story is always narrated by one of the characters. The author herself never explicitly interferes.

The only note that needs to be made is that this thesis does not analyse direct speech. Therefore, in relation to implicit cues, speech is narrowed down to speech style. The content of utterances and choice of lexis is not the subject of this thesis.

Both selected characters appear in all three books of the series and for the majority of the time in the presence of the central female character. Often times they also appear in the presence of each other and share many interactions and situations, which has an effect on their collocates. Apart from these and many other similarities, however, they are still two distinct characters. The aim of the analytical part is to explore whether and in what ways do these differences surface.

The lists of all collocates for Kaden and Rafe revealed two prevalent groups of collocations for both of them: collocations containing body part nouns and verbal collocations. These two groups of collocates will be explored in detail in the following sections.

4.1 Body parts

Collocations containing a body part noun constitute a significant part of all collocations for both characters and much information can be inferred from them. Body part collocates were searched in a span of three words to the left and three words to the right of the node, i.e. the characters' names. Table 1 presents ten most frequent body part collocates for both characters with their absolute frequencies. It is important to note here, that the absolute

frequencies in the actual corpus are higher than in Table 1. It is because all results were manually filtered to eliminate any irrelevant instances¹⁰.

Four most frequent collocations containing a body part noun, which are identical for the chosen characters, are analysed in detail below.

| Kaden | | Rafe | |
|-----------|--------------------|-----------|--------------------|
| Collocate | Absolute frequency | Collocate | Absolute frequency |
| eyes | 118 | eyes | 126 |
| hand | 70 | face | 73 |
| head | 63 | hand | 59 |
| face | 43 | head | 57 |
| shoulder | 41 | lips | 51 |
| chest | 33 | hands | 41 |
| hands | 23 | arms | 41 |
| back | 21 | chest | 31 |
| jaw | 17 | mouth | 27 |
| arms | 17 | fingers | 25 |

Table 1. The most frequent body part collocates of Kaden and Rafe

Eyes

The eyes are the most frequent body part collocate for both chosen characters. Their eyes often enable other characters and the reader to uncover what Kaden and Rafe truly feel, as the feelings and emotions are either signalled by eye movement or mirrored in the eyes. Thus, the eyes can be analysed as either an active part of the body executing an activity or a means of characterisation of the whole person or personality.

In terms of movements, Kaden frequently *narrowed* his eyes (7 instances), which may signal anger and rage (Argyle, 2007). A bit less frequently he *closed* his eyes (5 instances) and also used them to *search*, *graze*, *rest* on something or someone, *remain fixed*, *focus* or *drill* into someone, showing the intensity of his look.

As for descriptions that extend beyond the eyes to Kaden's whole personality, Kaden's eyes reflect a wide range of emotions, mostly negative, *anger*, *frustration*, *fury* and *sorrow*. Other feelings, such as *concern*, *worry*, *relief*, *regret*, *weariness* and *earnestness*, can be found as

¹⁰ For example, **Kaden** took my **hand** and guided me [...] is irrelevant, as it is not Kaden's hand.

well. These emotions and feelings sometimes have the power to *form* or *deepen worried lines* around Kaden's eyes.

A slightly different perspective is provided by other characters who interact with Kaden and mostly describe his eyes as *warm* (5 instances) and *kind*. In moments like these *a smile lights* or *warms Kaden's eyes*. Less frequently, there are scenes in the books that capture Kaden with *dark* and *deadly cool* eyes as well. Example 2 is a perfect demonstration of a description of one's eyes that actually serves as a characterisation tool for the whole character of a stealthy assassin.

(2) *I had the eyes of a cat*, the Komizar claimed, seeing in darkness what no one else could.¹¹

Rafe's eyes are also very expressive and provide a wide variety of collocates. Not a single phrase about his eyes regarding both motion and description of personality can be found more than four times in total in the whole corpus.

Rafe's eyes, for example, *remained fixed*, *locked onto* something or someone, *warmed*, *turned*, *narrowed*, *blazed* and quite unsurprisingly *closed* and *were looking*. Instead of feelings simply appearing in his eyes, rage, warning, reassurance or frustration frequently *sparked* in Rafe's eyes. What is more, in Rafe's case especially, the eyes were capable of actions that would normally require different body parts in order to be properly executed, as shown in examples 3 and 4.

(3) We looked at each other, and *he sent me a massage with his eyes*.

(4) I sat at the table directly across from Kaden. Staring. *Cutting him into small pieces with my eyes*.

Similarly to Kaden, various attributes ascribed to Rafe's eyes describe in a figurative sense his personality. Unlike Kaden's, though, Rafe's eyes mostly make the opposite impression on other characters, which is a surprising outcome for a prince that is compared to an assassin. His eyes are referred to as *fierce*, *sharp*, *wild*, *a deeper cutting blue* or even *cold*

¹¹ Examples 2-41 are in the original wording (not the tagged version). In cases of ambiguity, the name of the character is written in parenthesis.

and accusing. A mischievous gleam and fire could also be spotted in his eyes. Purely positive attributes can be found in Rafe's eyes as well, albeit very scarcely.

Hand

Hand is the second most frequent body part collocate for Kaden and third on the list for Rafe. What both have in common is a larger number of collocates with *hand* in singular rather than with *hands*. In Kaden's case especially, the frequency of the plural form is substantially lower (cf. Table 1).

The majority of collocations that contain the nouns denoting the characters, Kaden and Rafe, and the noun *hand* also contain a verb. Therefore, these collocations primarily reveal what these two characters do as agents. Secondly, we learn what objects they manipulate with using their hands.

Kaden's recurring collocates reveal that his hand *swiped, reached, held* something or *tightened*. The hand is also Kaden's primary means of physical interaction with the people around him. These interactions nicely show both sides of Kaden, the kind person other characters often take him to be and the dangerous assassin he is. Kaden is seen *offering his hand* to help others or *holding her chin with his hand*. Other scenes mention that someone *died by Kaden's hand* or that somebody *struggled against* or *strained against Kaden's hand*. These collocations may be linked to some other collocations, such as *a cut on Kaden's hand, to wrap Kaden's hand* and *bandaged Kaden's hand*.

Interestingly enough, Kaden sometimes operates with his hand subconsciously as shown in examples 5 and 6. This might be connected with releasing tension (Argyle, 2007).

(5) He was propped up on one elbow, and *his other hand absently stroked* the lines on his ribs.

(6) Instead, he stared into the darkness and *his hand absently fingered* the sheathed dagger at his side.

Rafe's hand collocates with various verbs as well, such as *lift, hold out, stroke, slip, circle* or *reach*. Considering the passive voice, quite often something *is shoved* in Rafe's hand. An important role Rafe's hand plays is also signalling in many ways (ex. 7 - 11). Giving orders and signals this way may have to do with Rafe's position as a leader.

(7) This time it was *he who motioned with his hand*.

(8) *I raised my hand*, and our convoy stopped.

(9) *He lifted his hand* toward me. “May I present Princess Arabella [...]”

(10) [...] *Rafe stretched his hand out* to stop me.

(11) [...] I saw *Rafe flex one hand*, a quiet signal.

As for Kaden’s interactions with the inanimate world, his hand explicitly manipulates with three different objects: a golden vial, an axe and a sword. This is a narrow range of items in general, each appearing only once. What is more, Kaden’s primary weapon of choice is a knife. The search for “Kaden’s knife” in the corpus returns 19 relevant results, yet it never collocates with his hand.

Rafe’s collocations containing his hand and an object are equally narrow, however, they reflect his character well enough and are a good fit for a character of a prince. Rafe has *a goblet*, *a mug* or *a sword in his hand*, the sword appearing three times. Rafe’s fighting spirit and elite military training also enables his hand to be considered a weapon itself (ex. 12).

(12) Sven would have reprimanded me for acting with my heart instead of my head and putting a potential weapon, *my hand*, at risk [...].

Head

The head is another frequent collocate for both characters with 63 and 57 hits for Kaden and Rafe, respectively. Unlike with the other body parts, this group of body part collocates shows very similar results for Rafe and Kaden in many aspects.

Both characters are captured shaking their heads. Rafe does this movement 27 times and Kaden 26 times, which is an extraordinary similarity. Additionally, both of them also use this movement to express disapproval or doubts to other characters during dialogues or in an effort to clear their minds (ex. 13).

(13) *He shook his head* as if trying to figure it out [...].

Another similar aspect is the movements they do with their heads. Both Kaden and Rafe *shove* or *dunk* their heads under water, they *turn*, *tilt* and *cock* their heads. Differences appear rarely and each only once in the whole corpus.

Diversity starts to appear only after the reader is allowed to have a look inside of their heads, where the noun “head” rather represents their mind. It is a peephole into their inner lives and reflections. For example, in Kaden’s head previously said *words* or *conversations echo through his head*, he is *rolling the thought in his head* or *a scene is playing in his head*. For Rafe, *lost days burned*, *words swirled and a question circled in his head*. Rafe’s mind also highlights Rafe’s antipathy towards Kaden and his comrades (ex. 14 – 17).

(14) [...] *my encounter with Kaden in the surgeon’s bungalow pounded in my head*.

(15) We walked in silence the rest of the way to Sanctum Hall, but *his (Kaden’s) words hammered in my (Rafe’s) head*.

(16) A crease deepened between his brows as if *Griz made his head ache*.

(17) Preserving his identity as a foppish emissary was more important to him (Rafe) than *parting my (Kaden’s) head from my shoulders*.

Another difference the corpus revealed is that Kaden’s head is strongly connected to accidents and injuries. Collocations such as, *pain splitting his head*, *a gash on the back of his head*, *she swung her canteen at his head* or *his head throbbed* are only a few examples from the list. In contrast, in the whole corpus Rafe’s head is only injured once (ex. 18).

(18) A soldier *butted Rafe’s head* with the handle of his sword.

Face

The last category of body part collocates worthy of closer analysis is the face. Out of all the collocates in Table 1, the face is the only body part collocating significantly more with Rafe. The observations of Rafe’s face are quite detailed, given the closeness between him and the main female character, whose narration provides most of these collocates.

Having said that, closeness plays an important part in connection to Kaden’s face as well. With Kaden, however, it is primarily physical proximity. On several occasions, Kaden’s face is described as *only inches from mine*. His face *hovered closer*, *pressed close*, *dipped close*,

drew to somebody else's or even *was getting too close*. These examples picture Kaden as a person often invading other characters' personal space.

Another remarkable trait of Kaden's face is its connection to specific verbs, namely *paint* and *throw*, that do not describe any action of his face itself. These instances are shown in examples 19 and 20.

(19) I saw the struggle, his search for the false calm *he always painted on his face*.

(20) He hadn't missed the irony of *his own long-ago words being thrown back into his face*.

As mentioned above, quite detailed descriptions of Rafe's face are to be found in the trilogy. Thus, when it comes to emotional states being reflected on the face, it is the character of Rafe who provides most of the collocates. In total, his face displays sixteen different emotions. *A scowl, a smile* and *strain* can be seen in Rafe's face, each expression three times. Twice other characters observed *anger* and *rage* on Rafe's face. Eleven other emotions appeared only once. Examples 21 to 23 present some of them.

(21) *Exasperation flashed across Rafe's face*.

(22) I saw *the anguish in his face* [...].

(23) *A flash of surprise suddenly brightened his face*, and he laughed.

Attention to detail is further supported by qualities ascribed to Rafe's face, which are yet again more frequent and varied in comparison to Kaden. Rafe's face is *unshaven, serene, glowing, different, calm, gaunt and bruised*.

The first quality, *unshaven*, is particularly interesting. There is one scene in the series where Rafe's face *gleamed with a close shave*. The reader may observe that a parallel can be drawn between the state of Rafe's face and how well it is taken care of and his state of mind. Rafe's face is in need of a shave when he is busy and under pressure that stems from his role of a leader. This and many other aspects of the face work the exact same way as Rafe's eyes.

Other noteworthy body part collocations

The remaining body part collocations of both selected characters in Table 1 with the count of fifty-one or less are not analysed in such detail. Nevertheless, they deserve at least some

attention, as they still contribute to the characterisation of Kaden and Rafe and to making them distinct individuals rather than flat generic characters. In this section, specific collocations that appeared relatively frequently, i.e. at least five times, in the corpus have the number of occurrences given in parentheses. Other, less frequent collocations are listed as well, as they contribute to the overall picture of the characters.

What is most prominent about these less frequent collocates, is the fact that they are not completely identical for both Kaden and Rafe, unlike the most frequent collocates. Kaden's list of collocations contains *shoulder* (41 instances), *back* (21 instances) and *jaw* (17 instances), which Rafe's list does not and Rafe, on the other hand collocates with *lips* (51 instances), *mouth* (27 instances) and *fingers* (25 instances).

It is important to note here that the fact that some collocations are missing on one or the other character's list does not mean these collocations do not exist in the corpus at all. In fact, every single collocation on Rafe's list is to be found with Kaden as well and visa versa. These collocations simply did not appear frequently enough to be in ten most frequent for one or the other character. What is more, the collocation Rafe's jaw actually appears twenty-one times, which is a higher score than Kaden's, however, not high enough to find a place on Rafe's list of collocates, as Rafe's collocates generally have higher numbers of frequency.

What is undoubtedly worth mentioning about Kaden's lower half of the list of collocates containing a body part noun, is the presence of *back* and slightly higher frequency of *chest*. This is an illustration of the influence of a powerful backstory. Kaden's chest and back are marked with deep scars that never go unnoticed by any other character. Specific unerasable features of a character are significant for characterisation and draw much attention to the respective body parts.

Kaden's shoulder and Kaden's jaw are similarly to his head results of unfortunate situations Kaden found himself in. The majority of the collocations suggest injuries during accidents or fights. Kaden's shoulder being injured also explains why there were so many occasions for other characters to see Kaden's scars, as he sometimes had to take off his shirt to bandage his shoulder. Another reason Kaden's shoulder appears relatively high on the list is that other characters often make physical contact with Kaden by touching his shoulder. Kaden's jaw

also serves another distinct purpose. His jaw sometimes *tightens* or *clenches* as a display of his negative emotions.

Rafe's collocates from the fifth place onwards also nicely reflect how the story of *The Remnant Chronicles* unfolded. The relationship of Rafe and Lia, the central female character, slowly became a romantic one, hence the references to *Rafe's lips* and in a few cases *Rafe's mouth*.

Most cases of *Rafe's mouth* offer even more information about him as a character. Particularly strong collocation is *the corner of Rafe's mouth* (8 instances). The corner of the mouth in singular moves to visibly express his stance or emotions and with such frequency of the phrase, this might be interpreted as a signature expression of Rafe's, as illustrated in examples 24 and 25.

(24) *An evil grin pulled at the corner of his mouth.*

(25) *A smirk lifted the corner of his mouth [...].*

Finally, the last collocate on Rafe's list, *fingers*, possesses similar characterisation abilities as his mouth. When frustrated, *Rafe raked his fingers through his hair* (5 instances), which is another example of a movement or habit triggered by a specific emotional state.

Conclusion of body part collocations

In conclusion, the involvement of collocations containing a body part noun in the process of characterisation of the selected characters is very significant. Apart from characterising, these collocations also contribute to making Kaden and Rafe round and peculiar fictional characters.

Many differences in the lists of most frequent body part collocations are also reflections of the main female character's perspective. She had a more friendly relationship with Kaden, which caused her to notice or interact with Kaden's more neutral body parts. On the other hand, her relationship with Rafe gravitated towards a more romantic one, which is reflected in the list especially by *face* and *lips*, suggesting closeness and intimacy.

4.2 Verbs denoting agency

The analysis of body parts in the previous section, in fact, partially covers agency, since both selected characters often act on the world or characters around them through their body parts. This chapter tries to explore agency in a more general sense, looking at verbs and their modifiers that involve the character as a whole and not just a specific part of the body¹².

Table 2 shows a list of twenty most frequent verbs in base forms for both characters to illustrate the characters' purely verbal collocations. The rest of the list, reaching up to a few hundreds of items, behaves very similarly to this selection of twenty verbs.

| Kaden | | Rafe | |
|-----------|--------------------|-----------|--------------------|
| Collocate | Absolute frequency | Collocate | Absolute frequency |
| have | 346 | have | 420 |
| be | 281 | be | 349 |
| say | 157 | say | 168 |
| do | 81 | do | 128 |
| look | 70 | know | 74 |
| know | 65 | look | 73 |
| ask | 45 | see | 49 |
| see | 37 | ask | 42 |
| walk | 36 | turn | 41 |
| turn | 32 | tell | 40 |
| reach | 29 | answer | 36 |
| answer | 29 | take | 33 |
| step | 27 | walk | 33 |
| whisper | 24 | nod | 33 |
| nod | 24 | want | 32 |
| stand | 23 | step | 28 |
| tell | 22 | reach | 26 |
| think | 22 | pull | 25 |
| shake | 21 | think | 24 |
| want | 21 | whisper | 23 |

Table 2. The most frequent verbal collocates of Kaden and Rafe

The most evident feature of this table is that it provides two almost identical lists of verbs frequently collocating with Kaden and Rafe. The similarity in both content and absolute

¹² For the search of verbal collocates the following query was used: NAME []{0,2} [pos="V.*"]. This formulation ensures that the characters are the subjects of a sentence and therefore, the agents.

frequency numbers is high and much unlike the results of body part collocations. The most frequent verbal collocates of both characters' names comprise, apart from *be*, *do*, and *have*, communication verbs (*answer*, *ask*, *nod*, *say*, *tell*, *whisper*), mental and perception verbs (*know*, *look*, *see*, *think*, *want*), activity verbs (*walk*, *turn*, *reach*, *step*, *shake*, *take*, *pull*), and verbs of existence (*stand* and copular *look*) (Biber et al., 2021, pp. 359-362).

A noticeable difference is that on either of both lists there are two items exclusive for one or the other character. Kaden's verbal collocates feature *stand* and *shake* and Rafe's *take* and *pull*. Upon further inspection, however, even these four verbs do not prove to differentiate the lists, since they can be found lower on the lists of collocates of Kaden and Rafe. What is more, the collocates are even very close in frequency. The only exception to this is the verb *stand*, where there is a ten-hit gap in frequency. Despite that, after manually checking individual concordance lines, this verb contributes minimally to the process of characterisation, as shown in example 26, and so do the other verbs.

(26) *He stood in the doorway* looking sternly at Aster.

Additionally, three verbs present on both lists have considerably different frequencies. The frequency of the verbs *see*, *tell* and *want* varies by ten or more hits. However, this observation does not contribute very significantly either, given that all the verbs rank among the most frequent lexical verbs in the corpus.¹³ Studying individual concordance lines containing these verbs showed that despite the variation in frequency, the verbs are used in the same way when describing what the characters did. The verb *see* is mostly followed by objects of different kinds, the verb *tell* captures situations where Kaden or Rafe transmitted information to other characters and both characters either *want something* or *want to do something*. With both Kaden and Rafe, the verb *see* is used both with physical objects (ex. 27) and in situations where sensory perception is connected with understanding or interpretations (ex. 28). The only miniscule differences are that three times *Kaden saw somebody staring* at him, suggesting that he draws attention of others considerably more, and twice Rafe expressed that something is *the last thing he wanted*, capturing an

¹³ The most frequent lexical verbs (with more than 600 occurrences) in the novels are *say*, *know*, *see*, *look*, *go*, *take*, *make*, *tell*, *think*, *come*, *want*, *get* and *leave*.

overwhelmed state of his mind and him wanting to avoid a certain situation. These small details are the only contributions to characterisation considering the verbs with different frequencies.

(27) Then *I saw the scars*.

(28) [...] but *I saw the hunger in his eyes* when I laid it out.

In order to determine whether Pearson uses verbs to characterise and whether the rest of the verbal collocates offer some nuances or similarities in the way Kaden and Rafe act, individual concordance lines were checked for every remaining verb. The majority, if not the entirety, of individual instances of lexical verbs was realised by past simple or past perfect forms. Therefore, attention was paid primarily to those. The results, however, are not very conclusive.

There were a few instances that described the way in which Kaden and Rafe *nod*. Whilst Kaden nodded *without hesitation*, Rafe nodded *not trusting his voice* and *absently*. It might be interpreted that Kaden uses nodding as a signal of agreement and confidence, whereas Rafe nods when feeling uncertain or when his mind is occupied.

The rest of the verbs from the list either do not contribute to the characterisation of selected characters at all or provide quite limited descriptions of ways in which the characters executed their actions. The reader primarily learns about the ways in which the characters speak, as there are a few adverbs to be found around the verb *say* and *answer*.

In situations where the characters spoke and the narrator also mentioned the manner of that utterance, the reader learns that both characters say something *firmly*, *quietly* or solely in Kaden's case, *simply*. This is a certain contribution to their characterisation, yet it does not distinguish them as different individuals in terms of speech style. On a similar note, Kaden answers *quickly*, *firmly* or *calmly* and Rafe either *simply* or *without hesitation*.

The verbs *to have* and *to be* offered a wider variety of results, especially in terms of what follows these verbs, and thus enabled a deeper analysis.

Have

The verb *have* alone does not provide much to work with, since it predominantly occurs as an auxiliary verb in past participle constructions. However, certain instances contained *have* as a part of modal *have to*¹⁴.

Firstly, it is worth mentioning that *have to* in connection to Kaden only appears 14 times and the results do not tell much about him as a character either, they rather push forward the storyline. On the other hand, *have to* in connection to Rafe returns 35 relevant results. Rafe may, therefore, be associated with duty and obligation, which is an apt result for the character of a prince and later even king. Specific instances also refer to Rafe's leadership (ex. 29, 30). Moreover, there is a semantic similarity in four instances where Rafe had to do something, all suggesting pretence. Examples 31 and 32 show two of such situations.

(29) Even now *I had to be an example of strength* for all of them [...].

(30) *I had to live in a hundred fractured moments* that held our futures in the balance.

(31) With Calantha there, *I had to pretend* I didn't care.

(32) My story had given us time, and *I had to continue to make them believe it*.

Be

The verb *to be* appears in the corpus predominantly as a copular and auxiliary verb and in both functions contributes to the process of characterisation quite significantly. The results are presented in tables for better lucidity.

Perhaps the most straightforward characterisation is provided by the search for any form of the verb *be* followed by a determiner¹⁵. This search displays all nouns that stand for the roles both characters played throughout the story, both their true roles (e.g. assassin or prince) and the ones they had to take on in order to achieve certain goals (e.g. farmer). Table 3 lists all of these roles for both characters with the frequency numbers in brackets.

¹⁴ To find all results the following query was used: NAME : []{0,2} [hw="have"] to

¹⁵ NAME : []{0,1} [hw="be"] [pos="DT"]

| | | |
|-------|---|--|
| Kaden | BE + 'determiner' (+ 'adjective') | assassin (6), barbarian (1), child (2), guest (1), next Komizar (1), prisoner (1), soldier (1), different person (1) |
| Rafe | | soldier (6), farmer (5), prince (3), child (2), cadet (1), grown man (1), guest (1), heir (1), ruler (1), king (1) |

Table 3. The roles of Kaden and Rafe

Most of Kaden's results are labels and social roles connecting his character to the poor and often unheeded kingdom of Venda and his position in it. From Vendan perspective, Kaden has a very high social standing. The *Assassin*, often to be found with a capital letter in the book, is perceived with great respect, fear even. The highest possible status in Venda bears the title of the *Komizar*, which is a parallel to a king or ruler and the results suggest Kaden might possess this status one day. In contrast, other kingdoms see Venda as barbaric. This is also mirrored in Kaden being referred to as *one of them*, where the pronoun they indicates that other characters see Vendans as *barbarians* and the others, the ones below us. *Guest*, *soldier* and *prisoner* are simply roles that become connected to Kaden as the story evolves.

Rafe's roles show some similarities between the two characters, such as with *guest* and *soldier*, though the association of Rafe with *soldier* is much stronger. Moreover, both characters have *child* (in contrast to *grown man* in Rafe's collocates) among their results as the story sometimes reflects on their childhood and upbringing (ex. 33). *Farmer* relates to a cover story Rafe manufactures to blend in and keep his true status a secret. The rest of Rafe's results in Table 3 (prince, cadet, heir ruler, king), however, accentuate Rafe's true royal status. Coming from a powerful kingdom, his high social standing is not once questioned in the story.

(33) My past held on to me today as strongly as it had *when I was a child* [...].

Another numerous category of what follows the verb *to be* in the corpus and says quite a lot about the characters directly are passive and progressive verb forms. To gather all results, all forms of *be* were searched for¹⁶, individually for each character, and the right context of this search was narrowed down to verb forms located on position one or two after the verb

¹⁶ NAME : []{0,1} [hw="be"]

be. Relevant results are listed in Table 4 and 5 with frequencies higher than one stated in brackets.

| | | Passive |
|-------|-------------|---|
| Kaden | (not) BE | born (3), ordered (3), frustrated (2), driven (ex. 30), engaged, occupied, escorted, allowed, hidden, forced, appeased, puzzled, drunk, tempted, trained, beaten, whipped, injured, punched perched over the well, thrown, wounded, raised, schooled, loved, given |
| Rafe | | dressed (2), forced (2), found (2), given (2), caught (2), trained (2), trapped (2), betrothed, welcomed, included, assigned, brought, goaded, headed, raised, rested, set on, reminded, torn, broken, grieved, frozen, unsettled, tongue-tied, left to wonder, sent back, slammed with the truth, thrown, thrust, tossed, dunked, matched against, punched |

Table 4. Passive constructions connected to Kaden and Rafe

Phrases with Kaden’s name followed by passive voice to a certain degree support what has already been written about him in the previous section about body parts and therefore, contribute to his characterisation. He deals with negative emotions (*frustrated*), example 34 proves this too, even though not at first sight, and his role and mission bring about many dangerous situations and injuries (e.g. *beaten, whipped, injured* or *punched*). There are again references to his childhood and upbringing (*raised, schooled*), including the word *loved* and his life seems on many occasions to be influenced by something that has been present ever since Kaden was born, hence the instances with *born* (ex. 35).

(34) I was *driven by eleven years of anger*.

(35) My life had been patched together with lies *from the day I was born*.

Rafe’s results match his character as well highlighting especially his role of a soldier, such as by *assigned* or *trained*, and rescuer of a princess kidnapped by a barbaric kingdom (e.g. *caught, welcomed*). Signs of his royal status cannot be really spotted in this listing of results. Moreover, it displays many perilous situations Rafe had been in (e.g. *trapped, thrown* or *tossed*) and also how he occasionally felt (e.g. *broken, grieved, torn* or *unsettled*), which is captured also by *caught* (ex. 36, 37).

(36) [...] I was *caught by a surge of pride*.

(37) *I was caught by surprise* when I first saw her too.

To sum up, passive constructions connected to Kaden and Rafe reveal both similarities between the characters themselves or the situations the storyline presents them with and also many differences. Interestingly enough, certain results that may seem to deepen the similarities between Kaden and Rafe are in fact disguised differences. For example, Kaden was *engaged in combat* whereas Rafe was *betroted* to someone's daughter. Similarly, the collocate *given*, even if used in the same way, had a completely different impact on each of the characters' lives (ex. 38 – 40).

(38) [...] *Kaden was given to passing beggars* without a backward glance.

(39) *I (Rafe) was given to him as apprentice* at eight, became a cadet at twelve, [...].

(40) While *I (Rafe) had been given some liberties* in my movement, [...].

| | | Progressive |
|-------|-------------|---|
| Kaden | | trying (7), taking (4), reading (2), fighting (2), watching (2), standing (2), riding, spying, confusing, making excuses, playing, using, asking, telling the truth, beginning, recalling, savouring, emerging, smiling, walking, feeling, missing, thinking, waiting, shuffling, sleeping, following, leaving, loading, pulling, returning |
| Rafe | (NOT) BE | trying (9), talking (5), looking (5), standing (3), leaving (3), lying (2), searching (2), facing (2), returning, using, dressing, deluding, entertaining a dangerous fantasy, brokering, cultivating their trust, taking care of it, making the right decision, dealing, meeting his duty, saddling, scouting, spying, staying, studying, checking, dragging, battling, struggling, commiserating, spitting with fury, second-guessing, hoping, getting worried, beginning to fear, acknowledging, having second thoughts, holding back words, letting go, losing, reeling from the loss, taking it personally, laughing, moving on, feeling, thinking, waiting, walking, expecting the worst, raising Kaden's hackles |

Table 5. Be followed by progressive verb forms

Apart from verbs that solely describe what the characters did, such as *watching*, *standing* or *walking*, the results of *be* followed by a progressive verb form provide a slightly different point of view on both characters and even provide completely new information.

Both characters are seen *leaving* but also *returning*, suggesting they are not present in the main storyline and thus in the life of the main female character all the time. What may

perhaps be surprising is that both Kaden and Rafe were *spying*. This verb form is no surprise in connection to an assassin, a bit surprising with a royal.

In Kaden's case, multiple results do not picture him as a very nice person, which probably makes this the first query pointing out Kaden's bad side and wrongdoings to a considerable degree with verbs like *spying*, *confusing*, *making excuses*, *playing* and *using* (ex. 41 and 42). On the other hand, his kindness and connection with people is mentioned as well (ex. 43).

(41) *He was deliberately confusing me* – and it was working.

(42) What if *he was still using us* for another purpose the way he had before?

(43) [...] but *he was already reading my eyes*.

Rafe's results are very numerous but three subcategories from Table 5 are truly standing out. Through the progressive verb forms Rafe is pictured as a leader and soldier responsible for many actions and decision-making (e.g. *brokering*, *dealing* or *making the right decision*). This position also brings a lot of struggles, negative emotions and doubt that is captured in these results as well (e.g. *battling*, *spitting with fury*, *getting worried* or *second-guessing*). Thirdly, Rafe loses people around him, which has a strong impact on him (e.g. *reeling from the loss*, *losing* or *letting go*) and thus, shapes him and for the first time a query revealed this aspect of his story.

Conclusion of verbal collocations

In conclusion to this section, it can be said that verbs are strong and frequent collocates for Kaden and Rafe and the verbs *have*, *be*, *say*, *answer* and *nod* suggest, at least to some degree, indications of characterisation and even distinction of Kaden and Rafe. However, purely verbal collocations are not the primary means of characterisation Pearson uses in *The Remnant Chronicles*.

5 Conclusions

The analysis has shown that linguistic choices of the author concerning the way fictional characters in the trilogy *The Remnant Chronicles* are described truly do have an impact on the process of characterisation and thus, the perception of characters by the reader. It is not only the explicit cues, direct self-presentation or other-presentation of the characters, but also the implicit cues, such as the way characters look, behave, speak or interact, that paint the overall picture of the character.

The thesis tested the advantages and limitations of corpus-stylistic methods in identifying the similarities and differences between the characteristics of two fictional characters. The analysis has shown that in Mary E. Pearson's novels, different semantic and word classes of collocates play different roles in describing the fictional characters.

General conclusions

The analysis of both Kaden and Rafe's two most prominent collocation categories, collocations containing a body part noun and verbs denoting agency, allows to arrive at several general conclusions.

To begin with, the analysis has highlighted the fact that Mary E. Pearson's writing style is quite rich. This causes less repetition to appear throughout the whole corpus. As a result, in her writing not only identical words or phrases but also semantic similarity have to be taken into account. Many collocates (e.g. collocates connected to the activity of Kaden's eyes) are realized by different but semantically related words (such as: *remain fixed, rest, focus*), which all significantly contribute to characterisation and the overall impression.

Apart from characterisation, many results also contribute to the distinction of Kaden and Rafe, making them idiosyncratic round characters. Having said that, many similarities between the two surfaced as well.

Undoubtedly, the whole narrative, and thus also the collocations, are influenced by the narrator's point of view. Despite the fact that several chapters place Kaden and Rafe in the position of the narrator, a lot of information is still conveyed through the main female character and other characters' point of view as well. As a result, for example, the prince's

eyes are perceived as *cool* and the *kind eyes* are attributed to the assassin, as they tend to make such an impression on the other characters.

An important feature of the analysis is also agency. It is not, however, only verbs that, obviously, denote agency and the characters' states. Body part collocations, for the most part, relate to the activity of Kaden and Rafe as well.

The last and perhaps most important general conclusion is that body part collocations contribute much more substantially to the process of characterisation in Mary E Pearson's writing. The amount of information that can be inferred from the ways Kaden and Rafe use their body parts is much greater than from verbal collocations. Verbs are not frequently used to characterise the protagonists in *The Remnant Chronicles*.

Conclusions regarding the analysis of body parts

To summarize the most important findings regarding solely collocations containing a body part noun, the most prominent body part with the highest frequency of occurrences for both characters are the eyes. The reason why the eyes occur so frequently is that they serve many different purposes: observation, reflection of emotions and thought, communication and connection with other characters and lastly, as a means of characterisation of Kaden and Rafe. This is also reflected in the variety of parts of speech collocating with the noun eyes. The collocates include verbs denoting the movement of the eyes and the direction of the gaze, nouns typically referring to emotions reflected in the characters' eyes, and adjectives, which either describe the physical properties of the eyes or perform functions similar to those of the noun collocates.

The eyes especially were also used by the author to create certain impressions of Kaden and Rafe, especially at the beginning of the first book, that are later found to be inaccurate. The characters which interact with Kaden and Rafe, as well as the reader, are then forced to alter and recategorize the way they see the main protagonists.

As mentioned before, body parts are the primary means of describing the characters in greater detail. It is because through their body parts Kaden and Rafe's inner lives are made accessible to the reader and other characters. Specifically, the head represents the mind in

many instances, but also the eyes and the face transfer a lot of information about Kaden and Rafe.

To give a full picture of the collocations containing a body part noun, it should be pointed out that the category of number of the noun is worth paying attention to. For both Kaden and Rafe, most body part collocates are in the singular. The only exception to this are the *eyes* and *arms*, which prefer the plural form.

Conclusions regarding the analysis of verbs denoting agency

As for collocations containing a verb denoting agency, these contribute considerably less to the process of characterisation. The lists of twenty most frequent verbs collocating with Kaden and Rafe are almost identical and required a careful manual analysis of individual concordance lines in order to deliver results.

As for lexical verbs, *nod*, *say* and *answer* can be marked as contributing to characterisation. Additionally, the verbs *have* and *be* functioning as copular and auxiliary verbs provide interesting results as well.

The protagonists

The analysis of the body part and verbal collocates has revealed both differences between the characteristics of Kaden and Rafe and the features that both protagonists share.

The collocates which contribute most substantially to Kaden's characteristics include *assassin* and *barbarian*. His character is also strongly connected with negative emotions, many wrongdoings against other characters and injuries. Despite that, many characters were able to see the good in Kaden and particularly strong collocations with Kaden's eyes are *warm* and *kind*.

Rafe, on the other hand, has a very high royal and military status and is mostly characterised as *a soldier* and *a prince*. Many collocates capture Rafe in leading positions. As a character he is experiencing strong emotions and feelings are involved even in connections to the main female character, Lia. Especially the list of Rafe's body part collocates reveals his closeness with her.

What the descriptions of Kaden and Rafe share is their gravitation towards negative emotions, involvement in perilous situations, both dangerous ones and mentally demanding

ones, and their mutual rivalry and antipathy. Perhaps these might be qualities associated generally with Mary E. Pearson's male characters.

It might also be interesting to compare the collocates associated with the male characters with those related to the central female protagonist. This could contribute further to discriminating between the general features of Mary E. Pearson's authorial style (and in particular, the way she describes a character) and the specific linguistic means used to characterise and distinguish between the individual fictional characters in her works.

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Statement on the use of artificial intelligence tools – Vyjádření k užití nástrojů umělé inteligence

No artificial intelligence tools were used at any stage of the preparation of this bachelor thesis.

V žádné fázi přípravy této bakalářské práce nebylo využito jakéhokoli nástroje umělé inteligence.