TNA ACTIVITY REPORT

NEW YORK SCHOOL OF POETRY

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Current position: Professor

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Host institution: UNED - Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia

Mentor(s): Salvador Ros Munoz, Alvaro Perez Pozo

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New York School of Poetry

My question for this research project is on movements or schools of poetry. That is, are there identifiable characteristics of an artistic movement? In the case of the New York School of Poetry (roughly 1955-1980), does the work of these poets share particular features, or are these poets a part of the school simply because they are living in New York at the same time?

To prepare for the fellowship I had a student scan the first book of poetry by each of these poets since all of their work is copyright protected. I also gathered information about what magazines and journals the poets published in and where they gave readings of their poetry. So, I came to Madrid with the texts of the poetry and data for network analysis. There was one main flaw in the data, and that was that it is not balanced. Because some of the poets write short poems, such as haiku, the word counts of their documents were quite short. Other poets wrote expansively, so the word counts of their documents were much higher than the rest of the data.

Once at Madrid, I met with Salvador and Alvaro and talked about the data and how to analyze it. Alvaro would develop Jupyter Notebook codes, and we would run through them together. We worked through topic analysis, clustering, and stylometry, among other things. Nothing was working, so we added poems by poets from earlier in the twentieth century, from early in the 19th century and from the Renaissance (Shakespeare) to our corpus. To word frequency and topics, we added features from the Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count program. We tried putting all the poems by each poet into one document and used sampling. Clustering was still not pulling the poems from other time periods out from the others.

In the meantime, Alvaro showed me how to use ChatGPT to support my programming skills. I put together a network of the poets. Alvaro helped me make the network image look better. I then created an interactive graph, and he again helped me through the final stages of it.

The last week of my fellowship, Salvador and Alvaro met with José Manuel Fradejas, who works on Medieval Spanish poetry, for advice about how to get better results on this data. He suggested multiple approaches for analysis,

1. balance the data set more
2. make the comparisons less broad
   a. compare only two authors at a time
   b. compare one author with the rest of the group
   c. This school of poetry falls into two generations of poets, so he suggested comparing the two generations.
3. Tools for these comparisons
   a. Part of Speech, Word Frequency
   b. Lexicon
      i. Use vernacular speech or localisms to create a lexicon
      ii. Use Frank O'Hara's manifesto on Personism to create a lexicon
   c. Topic Modelling. Select small number of topics (~5), 10-15 most frequent words

Alvaro is going to create Notebooks for each of these tools for me to work on over the rest of the summer.

Fradejas suggested two books—*The Secret Life of Pronouns* and *Nabokov's Favorite Word Is Mauve*. In addition, Alvaro suggested that I look at the work of Laura Hernandez Lorenzo who works on stylometry in Spanish poetry to predict authorship.

I need to say here that even though we were not successful in figuring out how to analyze these texts, this fellowship was just an amazing experience. I have applied for several fellowships in the past few years and I have been rejected by them simply because I am not a part of a team. The university where I work is neither large nor wealthy. We do not have librarians trained in the digital humanities; we do not have computer scientists who conduct research. Because the university's region is rural, consortiums do not develop. I must, therefore, learn to do this work on my own, and I believe that this fellowship has given me the footing that I will need to get through this project on my own. Plus, both Salvador and Alvaro are absolutely lovely—they really helped me. Alvaro made sure that I understood what we were working on, and he is setting me up to do this work for the future. So, thank you so much for not dismissing me because I work by myself. I will ensure that this project will come to something.