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LUNA

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Harry Potter and the teaching of otherness in the EFL classroom

Harry Potter og undervisningen i det å være annerledes i klasser med engelsk som fremmedspråk

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Tittel: *Harry Potter og undervisningen i 'det å være annerledes' i klasser med engelsk som fremmedspråk*	
Forfatter: Laura D. Kiewiet	
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Sammendrag: I denne oppgaven skal jeg undersøke og finne ut mer om fordelene ved å bruke litteratur om det å være annerledes med undervisning i engelsk som fremmedspråk. Jeg har valgt konsentrere oppgaven mest rundt en roman, nemlig *Harry Potter and the philosopher's stone.* Jeg ville finne ut mer om de fordelene og ulempene som kommer ved å bruke denne type litteratur i klasserommet, og om viktigheten med å lære elever av EFL om 'det å være annerledes' på skolen. Jeg har basert oppgaven min på relevant litteratur som jeg har funnet gjennom forskning, og leten etter å få en bedre forståelse for undervisningen i 'det å være annerledes' ved hjelp av litteratur. Gjennom dette håper jeg å skape en støre bevissthet blant lærerstudenter som meg selv.	

Abstract

Title: *Harry Potter and the teaching of otherness in the EFL classroom*	
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Summary:

In this thesis I explore the advantages of EFL students in Secondary school learning about otherness through young adult literature. I have chosen to concentrate mainly on one novel, namely *Harry Potter and the philosopher's stone.* I wanted to find out more about the advantages and disadvantages that come with using literature in teaching EFL learners, and the importance of being taught about otherness in school. I have based my thesis on relevant literature that I have found during my research and quest for a better understanding of teaching otherness. Through this I aim to create more awareness amongst student teachers like myself.

1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction

In this thesis I want to discuss and discover more about the advantages that come with introducing young adult (YA) literature that thematises and problematises 'otherness' in an English as a foreign language (hereafter referred to as EFL) classroom in Secondary school. When I say Secondary school, I mean the years 8-13 or the learners that are between 13 and 19 in age. Much of the literature can however also be applied in teaching older students, and I also aim to inspire student teachers that are interested in exploring the use of more literature in the EFL classroom. However, most of all I aim to inspire myself to become more aware of the alternatives out there which one can use when teaching EFL learners about what they are supposed to learn according to the English curriculum and the European Framework.

The idea for this thesis comes primarily from my interest in how 'otherness' is addressed in literature. With this thesis I want to show how EFL learners might benefit from being exposed to otherness through literature, and why their teachers should use it when teaching. Another reason for my interest in otherness is that is has lately become a much-discussed theme in society (Moen, 2014, Rosenlund-Hauglid, 2017). People are celebrating, but unfortunately also shaming, the difference between us people everywhere. It is important that students learn about otherness from a young age, and are continuously exposed to it throughout their education. I believe that using literature is one of the best ways to do this. There is a large amount of literature that teaches us about otherness and other topics without us even realising so. That is what I want to explore in this thesis, and I want to see how we can apply this knowledge and use it in the classroom. Lastly, and maybe most importantly, the English curriculum (2013) states that literary texts in English can create a deeper understanding of others and oneself. In addition to this, the importance of understanding otherness is also mentioned in the European framework (2001). Which makes it a goal for any teacher to create more awareness of the diversity between people and thereby also a greater acceptance between them. It makes the boundary between what is 'normal' and what is 'other' or 'strange' fade away, and more distant than it has been before.

As I want to discuss the advantages of addressing otherness through YA-literature, I think that it comes naturally to also mention and discuss the importance of using literature in the EFL-

classroom. Therefore, I will use some of this thesis to argue for using our immense library of YA literature when teaching EFL learners. I have chosen to use one of my personal favourite book series, Harry Potter, to show how otherness is portrayed and can be used to teach with. In my opinion, there are a lot of aspects that could appeal to both young and older learners of English. Also, since Harry Potter is a fantasy novel it will in a way encourage young adults to consider new horizons in their own thinking with the help of talking animals or magical creatures and races (Cunningham, 2010). In Harry Potter, the reader meets a young boy who struggles with finding his identity after finding out he is in fact, a wizard. Through the novel the reader is taken on a magical journey of friendships, discovering oneself, and dealing with the 'normal' things that teenagers must go through. In addition to this, one is exposed to the separation between classes, for instance 'the muggles', 'the pure bloods' and 'the mudbloods'. Therefore, I have chosen the Harry Potter series to exemplify my arguments in this thesis, because it is quite diverse, and it might appeal to many young readers. As Cunningham states they engage something within us, and "enchant the heart" (2010, Lütge, 2013, p.99)

What I aim to achieve with my thesis is that I want to create a greater understanding of how otherness in literature can be used to teach and work with the English curriculum. I also want to make myself more aware of the literature that is out there, and I want to teach myself about how YA literature can be used in the classroom. I aim to inspire myself and other student teachers to become teachers who think outside the box filled with dusty old, outdated course books. Lastly, I want to investigate and find out more how about the advantages that YA literature gives the EFL learners in life in general and how learning about otherness through literature can be ideal.

My thesis is greatly based on the chapter written by Christiane Lütge in the book *Children's Literature in Second Language Education (Bland & Lütge, 2013).* The chapter emphasises the importance of otherness and shows how different works of literature engage with the term and its definition. The choice of *Harry Potter* was made mostly because there is a great variety of literature that discusses the use of the series in the classroom, which made it easier to find relevant sources for my discussion. Other than that, I have chosen literature that argues both for the importance of otherness and for the importance of the use of literature in the EFL classroom. Munden & Sandhaug published a book, *Engelsk for secondary school,* earlier this year which includes a chapter on literature in the same type of classroom as the one that I want to focus on in this thesis. Along with this I used books that are related to my thesis question,

with which I aim to investigate how literature can help EFL learners to make sense of the world that they live in and open their mind to new experiences.

1.2 Definitions

1.2.1   Otherness

According to Merriam Webster 'otherness' is a term that can be defined as, "the quality or state of being other or different" or also as "something that is other or different". In *the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (1995) it is defined as, "the quality of being different or strange" (p.820). The way I have understood otherness is according to these definitions, but I have also understood that for something to be other, there must be somebody deciding what is other and what is 'normal'. That gives the one defining the power in the situation, which is something to keep in mind while reading and analysing literature.

The way the *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (1997) portrays otherness is not only through the fact that there is magic and magical creatures, but it also shows other types of otherness. The wizarding world has as one of their main goals to never let the muggles find out that there is indeed a magical world where wizards roam freely, although it quite often is right under their noses. It shows also how a 'human' monster such as Voldemort or *"he who shall not be named"*, has become the 'different' kind of wizard, and how his 'followers', the "*deatheaters*", don't really belong to the 'ordinary' world of witchcraft and wizardry. It shows otherness on a deeper level, and that is what I want to address in this thesis, along with the usefulness of these kinds of otherness in the EFL classroom.

2. Theory

2.1 Addressing otherness when teaching EFL learners

The English curriculum states that "literary texts in English can instil a lifelong joy of reading and a deeper understanding of others and of oneself" (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2013, p. 2). This means that the teaching of otherness in the EFL classroom is already incorporated into the curriculum. Thereby, it encourages teachers to explore a variety of texts that address certain topics in the curriculum. However, it seems that there are still a lot of teachers who seem to be using the coursebook often, even though there is a sea of literature out there. The danger of this is when teaching is that the texts in the coursebooks are not necessarily long enough to develop extensive reading skills. This can mean that the EFL learners will therefore not have the same learning experience as when using novels or short stories. (Rasmussen & Lund, 2015, Birketveit & Williams, 2013)

The Common European Framework explicit the importance of learner's need to possess the ability to learn about and to relate to otherness. It is even explicitly addressed:

> In an intercultural approach, it is a central objective of language education to promote the favourable development of the learner's whole personality and sense of identity in response to the enriching experience of otherness in language and culture. (Council of Europe, 2000, p.1)

Thus, we must do our best as teachers to help EFL learners with breaking away from prejudice and looking for several sides to a story. The addressing of otherness, and finding it in literature gives great opportunities to do exactly that. The novel *I am J* by Chris Beam brings up a topic that is very much important to our society today. It is about a girl who does not feel as if the body she was given was right for him, as she identifies as a boy. This can give the EFL learner a greater understanding of how a trans-person feels while undergoing a great change in life, which is not something they could have simply learned through life. It also gives young (and older) people the feeling that they are not alone when having certain feelings or feeling as if they do not belong. It educates not only those who are not aware, but it can also create a safe place for misunderstood readers. We can say that because culture and cultural identity is in a constant movement and becoming more diversified, we can say that the individuals within a society are also in a constant state of changing. Therefore, we are constantly in need to define

and redefine ourselves, which often is showed through the literature that is produced during a certain time. (Munden & Sandhaug, 2017)

There are many advantages to using literature while teaching. It is a way to introduce students to different people and situations, and it might normalise the conflicted feelings of young EFL learners. Stories from different perspectives and places around the world give the learners a wider perspective and it might show them that there are others like them (Iversen, 2013). Although the world of Harry Potter mostly is about a wizard boy in a magical world, the story still has many themes and aspects that can be relatable for many students. For instance, Draco's continuous pestering towards Harry can relate to students that have unfortunately been exposed to bullying in any way.

In the core curriculum, which evolves around the general aims that a human must possess when it finishes school, it says that we are supposed "to nurture the individual's uniqueness, the distinctions that make each individual a fount for others" (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2011, p.40). The quality framework states that "the education shall promote cultural understanding and develop self-insight and identity, respect and tolerance. The pupils shall experience art and cultural expressions that express humankind's individuality and togetherness..." (Utdanningsdirektoratet, n.d., p.3). I understand this as that we as teachers should learn our students to avoid prejudice and instead embrace the diversity that is found between people. Through exposing the EFL learners to diverse types of otherness, be it physically or mentally, it might create a greater acceptance within them and thus make them better at adapting in 'abnormal' situations.

One of the fundamental topics in the English curriculum, called *culture, society and literature* covers several key topics, amongst these there are that the learner must make itself known with the English language and its many areas of use. It also states that to do this the teacher may use different types of texts, for instance literary texts, which teach the learner to "develop knowledge about, understanding of and respect for the lives and cultures of other people" (2013, p.4). This in addition to the competence aims for the secondary levels (years 8-13) under the *culture, society and literature* one finds aims where young adult literature can be used. For instance, when working with indigenous people in the US, one can use *the absolutely true diary of a part-time Indian* written by Sherman Alexie, which tells us a story about a Native-American boy. It also gives us a greater insight of what is going on in the Native-American reservation that he lives in and what might also be the situation in others. As it is a

book written from the perspective from a teenage boy, and it addresses the normal problems that teenagers go through, with the addition that it creates a greater understanding of the Native American society.

2.2 Using literature in teaching

As I mentioned earlier, the English curriculum states that the reading of literary texts can bring forward a lifelong joy of reading within a person. In the book written by Birketveit and Williams, *Literature for the English classroom* (2013), the same thing is mentioned. "We firmly believe that learners who encounter a variety of texts which engage and enthuse them are much more likely to be motivated to continue as active independent readers" (p.7). This brings forward the importance of bringing varied examples of literature into the classroom. It does not necessarily give young EFL learners joy when they must read stories that they do not manage to identify with, and which they never would have read if it were not for the fact that they were 'forced' to do so in school. There are novels that one can use in the classroom instead of the 'boring' classics, so they appeal more to younger readers. Strobbe (2013) suggests some novels that can for instance be used instead of *Hamlet* when introducing Shakespeare to a class. The novels still have the same plot, but they come in a different jacket. Once the students have read them, they will see that *Hamlet* might be closer to their world than they initially thought. One could also invite other novels into the classroom, by letting the EFL-learners choose from a list of novels that might also appeal to them when not in school. By doing this one might prevent "the divide between 'books that are read' and 'books that are studied'" (Munden & Sandhaug, 2017, p.389).

Using young adult literature in the classroom can be beneficial because "it often incorporates interesting features of spoken language that are absent in the more traditional coursebooks" (Strobbe, 2013, p.46). Strobbe also states that it therefore can be essential to use other literature than the literary canon, because it might show a more realistic picture of how English is used today. The language that is used in coursebooks is often outdated in some way, and it almost always is written with the education of teens in mind. Novels, however, are written for the purpose that hopefully they might entertain people at some point. Therefore, novels might show a more realistic picture of how English is used in the real world, and thus it can also teach the EFL learners how to apply this knowledge in an everyday life situation. It also shows

how certain phrases or expressions are used in different settings, this is very beneficial because one of the keys to learning is repetition (Birketveit & Williams, 2013).

According to Birketveit & Williams (2013), motivation has become a greater part in EFL research over the last years. Literature seems to create more motivation with the learners, and has many other positive side-effects with a wide variety of activities within linguistic, cognitive, social and cultural aspects (Ellis et.al., 2002). The negative way in which young people sometimes talk about themselves often comes from their childhood and is related to a number of things. Those negative feelings often tie together with how they react to teaching and themselves in general. They are more likely to give up when things become difficult, and are often fearful of expressing their opinions. In a classroom situation one would want to create an open and accepting environment where differences and the opinions of others are respected and valued. Through literature one can enlarge the EFL learners vision and knowledge of how their feelings and relationships work. They also learn to use a large vocabulary with which they can express themselves with (Traverso, 2013, Petter, 2007).

2.3 Benefits of learning about otherness through literature

The benefit of learning about otherness through literature is that it "[…] challenges and transcends the binary opposition of 'self' and 'other'" (Lütge, 2013, p. 97). Lütge also states that the fantasy genre "encourages young adults to consider new horizons in their own thinking is the common device of talking animals or magical creatures and races" (2013, p.99). Through using literature as a teaching device when approaching some of the aims in the English curriculum, the teacher can reach the learners in a different way than when just using the course material that one finds in the coursebook or using any other generic teaching device. "Opportunities for encountering difference and for creatively engaging with diversity are numerous in children's literature and allow for playful and yet differentiated approaches towards the understanding of otherness" (Lütge, p.97). By using literature to teach otherness one has a much larger library to choose from than if one only uses relevant theoretical texts or texts that one finds in coursebooks.

The chance of meeting otherness in literature is quite great, and the types of otherness vary equally as much. Having to deal with difference in any form, and how it affects children and young adults is something that is a part of many YA literature. The reason why a lot of YA literature that addresses otherness is relatable to so many, is because it often also includes a

universal human experience, namely that of growing up (Lütge, 2013). In Harry Potter one is introduced to many magical beings, things and experiences, but most of all it is about the growing up of the main characters.

The way otherness is treated in literature differs often from how it is treated in real life. The stereotypical outsider and the way it, he or she is treated in literature versus in real life is that is often romanticized. In novels the outsider-protagonist often become the hero or heroine, which is often not what would happen in a real-life experience (Garcia, 2013). Harry who starts out as a poor boy, being dressed in whatever Dudley could no longer fit or wanted to wear, turns into a hero when he is told that he is a wizard. As soon as he steps through the door to *The Leaky Cauldron* he turns into "the boy who lived" and is treated in the complete opposite way than what he is used to by most of the being in the wizarding world. This romanticizes the way the outsider is treated, because an outsider in the real world would rarely suddenly find out that they are special in some way, which completely changes the way they are treated. However, novels such as *Wonder* may portray an outsider in a more truthful way. In *Wonder*, the perception of a situation is changed to the better once the other pupils in August's school understand that there is more to August's than his physical otherness. Although there are some key events in the novel, I cannot say that August is portrayed as a hero in the same as Harry Potter is.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie gave in 2009 a talk about the danger of the single story, in which she gives examples from her own life. She was told one story about her family's houseboy, and then later discovered that there was so much to him than she at first had thought. Because she had only been told a single story, she had created a stereotype in her head (Munden & Sandhaug, 2017). One of the things that literature can do, is break away from stereotypes, and give room for a greater understanding between peoples and individuals. In addition to this Adichie talked about how the literature she read were about what for her were foreigners, and therefore she also thought that the stories she wrote also had to have foreigners in them. However, there is so much more literature out there now, and one can find literature from most parts of the world which means that it often should not be a problem to find diverse literature to teach in the EFL-classroom. Stories such as the ones Adichie writes, such as *Half of a yellow sun,* which both teaches learners about the Biafran war, and how English is spoken in some countries of Africa. *Wonder* written by R.J. Palacio tells a story about a boy who looks different on the outside, and he is not given a fair chance for people to get to know him. He is judged by his different face, and therefore becomes an outsider. These books give those who

read them a greater picture of a story they might not have known much about, and the learners will be educated to adjust their prejudice. They give us more information, and because both these books are written or inspired from personal experience and thorough research has been done, we can believe them to be based on truth and therefore we can draw knowledge from them.

3. Discussion

3.1 Defying normalcy

The very first sentence that one is met with in *Harry Potter and the philosopher's stone* is "Mr. and Mrs. Dursley, of number four, Privet Drive, were proud to say that they were perfectly normal, thank you very much" (Rowling, 1997, p.7). Already here it is indicated how much the Dursleys appreciate everything in their lives that is normal. When Vernon that day walk to and from work, and meets people dressed in cloaks, which he thinks is strange, but he thinks not much of it until he comes home later that day and sees strange reports on the news. He then asks Petunia, his wife, "… maybe … it was something to do with … you know … *her* lot," (Rowling, 1997, p.13) referring to Petunia's sister, Harry's mother. Already in that first chapter, the emphasis on otherness is obvious. Mr. Dursley refers to Harry's mother as *her*, because Lily Potter is not someone who they still consider to be a part of their family and the reason she is not considered as a family member is because she is a witch. Not only is she a witch, but so is her husband and the son they have together. This goes against the very core of the foundations upon which the Dursleys have built their life. Then when baby Harry is left on their stoop after Voldemort brutally killed his parents, they try to raise him as a 'normal' boy, but still as an outcast from the family. The way that they refer to the members of the wizarding world mimics how we sometimes refer to people that are different from ourselves, and therefore also how young EFL learners might refer to those that are unlike them. To avoid this, I think the importance of exposing the learners to otherness becomes prominent, and one great way to do so is by showing them the magical world of Harry Potter.

Garcia writes that "though his world was mysterious and rife with danger and wonder, it was also a humanizing world of pathos, anger; and learning to accept the world for what it is" (2013, pp.13-14). As Harry grew up being completely shut off from the wizarding world, he was naturally not prepared for what was waiting for him on the other side of the gate in the wall at the Leaky Cauldron. Although the world of the Harry Potter series is filled with whatever could be found in Rowling's imagination, it still also shows how Harry must adapt to his new life, and he has no real choice but to accept the world for how it is. The EFL learners might learn from Harry's experience because as our society is in constant change, we sometimes have no choice but to accept things we are not familiar with. It can however make it easier if we are already exposed to a lot of different situations due to literature.

3.2 Challenging preconceptions and prejudices

Lütge writes that "the imaginative world of fantasy often challenges the reader's preconceptions and prejudices, thus opening up unusual perspectives" (2013, p.104). As Harry potter is written around the magical creatures and peoples from a world parallel to our own, it gives the reader the feeling of closeness which makes us wonder if there is such a thing as magic. It opens our mind for the possibility that not all things are as they might seem at first, and gives the reader the possibility of dreaming beyond what they know to be true.

Harry Potter is written with a heavy emphasis on otherness. In the series one meets all these different types of otherness which can be related to different things in a young reader's life. Also, since the novels are multi-layered, it does not only relate to the young reader, but also to the older one, which is why the books are loved by such a wide variety of people all around the world. It addresses the evil, which resides a little bit in all non-magic people, through Slytherin and Voldemort. It has the magical element of otherness with walls opening with the touch of a magic umbrella, and flying broomsticks. The divide between muggles (non-magics) and wizards or witches. The non-human otherness, which comes especially forward in the second book where we meet Dobby, the house elf, and see how he is treated by Lucius Malfoy. Also, of course, the human otherness. The way Harry is treated different than all the others because he is "the boy who lived", which causes both negative and positive relationships. However, he is also very much treated as an outsider. Garcia has commented on the challenges with creating an outsider in that "the challenge with labelling certain kinds of protagonists as outsiders is that they essentially become the definition of outsiders" (2013, p.60). How this relates to Harry Potter is that he becomes the hero of the story. He goes to a secret room where he finds the mirror of Erised, takes on Voldemort and eventually ends up defeating him with the love of his mother. This is all very lovely, and enjoyable to read, but it might however not be quite the situation for many young readers of YA literature that struggle with feeling like an outsider. If they are bullied they will probably not be able to fight off their bully with the love from their mother, unfortunately. Also, Harry Potter becoming the definition of an outsider is not necessarily a good thing. He is after all a famous boy who beat one of the most powerful wizards of all time while he was still laying in a crib.

However, Harry shows that there are several ways to being an outsider. He lost his parents at a very young age, and this is something he carries around with him in more than one way. He lost the chance of becoming a 'normal' wizard, because he never was allowed to know

anything about magic, he never became educated in how he was supposed to act and what to do. He becomes the famous wizard who knows nothing about magic, which Snape thinks is very disappointing and "clearly fame is not everything" (Rowling, 1997, p.150). Harry also feels that he has no real family. Although the Dursley's feel that they treated him better than he ever deserved, this was not the case. This is something that makes him feel like an outsider as well. When he meets the Weasley family he gets to experience what it is like to have a big family, where most of the members take care of each other. He ends up almost being adopted into their family from the moment he is told how to walk through the gate to the train.

By using a longer work of literature, I believe there is a greater chance of learning, and a better chance of exposure, which is something that is important for this thesis. The learners will also be exposed to a wider range of language, and there is a possibility to meet more diverse characters, and have a stronger relationship with the characters in the book. It avoids the disadvantages that come with just using a coursebook, because there are shortcomings with the literature in those. The texts that often are in them, are mostly passages taken from novels, and therefore it does not introduce the characters properly, and it also does not give the EFL learners the feeling of closure. Through using a novel, the reader will come with the characters through the whole journey, from the start of the novel to the end of it. In *Harry Potter and the philosopher's stone* (1997) one is first introduced to Harry's uncle, Vernon Dursley, and exactly how normal he thinks he is. After that one is introduced to the rest of the Dursley family. Harry is the 6th character introduced to the reader in chapter one. The first chapter gives the reader a greater picture of how Harry came to be where he is in chapter two, ten years later. Thus, the reader is given a greater picture of how the main character works.

3.3 Creating lifelong readers?

By introducing EFL learners to a book series such as Harry Potter, one might motivate them to become lifelong enjoyers of literature. Harry Potter has enchanted many hearts, which is shown through its many dedicated fans all over the world and its, so far, 8 year long stay on the New York Times bestseller list (2017). The fact that it has enchanted that many might also mean that it will be able to enchant students now, and once they are hooked, there is so much more Harry Potter related literature in English out there for them to enjoy. Thus, one might, by only using a small passage, instil a lifelong joy of reading within EFL learners. Although I am using Harry Potter as a main example in this thesis, the theory can also be used for other

novels. Munden & Sandhaug (2017, p.387) talk about a 'home run' book, a book which hits home and make an avid reader out of you. As a teacher, it can be a goal to find this book for your students, but mostly it is important to encourage EFL learners to explore more literature. It comes in many forms now, and one does not necessarily have to read to experience literature. Audiobooks are great for students that can't sit still and like to do things while also listening, or for visually impaired learners (Munden & Sandhaug, 2017). This can make it easier for those students that prefer listening to reading, but the learners should be encouraged to either have to book close by as well, or that they note down important words, sentences or passages.

The problem with using a whole novel when teaching is that it can become repetitive if one goes through it chapter by chapter, lesson for lesson. This makes it a danger for the EFL learners to become bored with the book, and the literature that was chosen with the best intentions in mind can quickly become 'one of those books' that makes the learners resent reading. Therefore, it might be beneficial to choose to work with just a part or a chapter of the book. Then it will still give the learner a taste of how the rest of the book might be, thusly tempting the students into wanting to read the rest of the book also. There is however also a drawback with just using a small snippet from a YA novel. It can be frustrating for a student because he or she might want to read more and find out how something ends. However, they will not always have the chance to do so because they might not have immediate access to the full text. Then using a novel can have create the opposite effect of what one wants to achieve when using literature in an EFL classroom. The same problem can happen when only using the texts in the coursebooks that are available. Often these are extracts from longer texts, and they might engage the EFL learners in some ways, but they also might leave the learners wanting more which takes away all the fun with literature (Birketveit & Williams, 2013).

Choosing to use a whole novel as a learning experience for EFL learners, can be a hit or miss. It is not always a given that the learner knows where to look for literary themes and devices, therefore it might be beneficial to choose a chapter of a passage in the novel that brings forward the chosen topic. In this case it is otherness, so as a teacher one can choose to pick a chapter in Harry Potter which I think will teach the EFL learner about otherness in a good way, while also bringing the joy of reading to the learners. This way one can go more in depth with the text, and teach the EFL learner about close-reading as well as otherness and other themes and literary devices. (Reichl, 2013)

An amazing thing about literature is that the reader has the chance to meet others. Young people often go through a phase where they feel disconnected or different

3.4 Benefits

One of the benefits with using literature in the classroom is that the stories can teach the EFL learners about how to deal with conflicts and how to communicate through words in a better way. It can create a more positive learning environment in the classroom, because literature often teaches us that no matter who you are, you are a valued character of society, and there is space for you. The way stories work is that they defy the borders of what is normal, and it enlarges the way they see the world and their knowledge of how relationships and feelings work (Petter, 2007). The way this is beneficial is because they become better members of a class, and better member of society. Their ability of seeing beyond the single story has been developed by having been exposed to varied types of literature, which makes them more likely to accept others for who and what they are. Creating this type of environment in the classroom is crucial in all EFL classrooms. This is because there often are conflicts happening with a young EFL learner. They might think that they are not good enough, or that their opinion is different than everybody else's and therefore not valid or important enough for sharing. This is however an environment that is most beneficial when established from an early age, which makes otherness in children's literature that more important. (Traverso, 2013)

Blair writes that "good reading skills and good writing skills go hand-in-hand at all levels" (2013, p.235). As writing and reading are two of the main basic skills that students needs to learn in school according to the English curriculum, it is important to address how literature can help here also. The advantage of reading texts to become better at writing is that the EFL learners are exposed to a varied amount of languages the more they read. This both expands their vocabulary, and widens their horizon when it comes solving problems or conflicts. Also, the more they read, the more will they be able to make meaning of texts which will make them better at writing, because they are able to see the greater picture of things. (Blair, 2013)

4. Conclusion

In this thesis I have tried to explore and argue for what I think are the advantages of bringing more YA literature that thematises and problematizes 'otherness' into the EFL classroom in Secondary school. What I have found out is that there are many advantages with doing so, but there can also be argued for the negative side effects of finding a book the students love and then only using one chapter of it. Much of the YA literature that one can find out there has the element of feeling different and like an outsider in it, because they are written for children and young adults, and that is what they often go through. The otherness in the novels opens the young adult's mind up for all sorts of possible things that it might have to overcome and adapt to in life. YA literature gives the readers chance to meet people and creatures from all over the world, and from worlds that we did not even knew existed. Harry Potter guides them through his magical world of witchcraft and wizardry while exploring and figuring out things just when the reader does also. The Harry Potter series can be a very good point of departure when introducing the EFL learners to literature outside the coursebooks which nobody really wants to read. The series opens up for both teaching the students valuable lessons about life, but also teaching them about creatures and adventures that are out of this world. Along with this the novels might create a craving for more. When one has read the first Harry Potter novel it does make sense to read the other six of them also. That is how one could give EFL learners the lifelong joy of reading.

However, there are certain disadvantages with using longer works of literature in teaching as well, one could do more bad than good by making working with the novel repetitive and predictable. One could go for using only a chapter or a passage, but also this might backfire and make the learners annoyed because it does not give them the closure that they might want from a literary text. This does not keep me from concluding with that I believe there to be more advantages to using literature than disadvantages. The pros outweigh the cons when it comes to what literature can show EFL learners, which can never be taught equally as good through just giving lectures. There is so much varied literature out there which show us all the different ways one can use language to express situations in life and the feelings that one goes through. There is an importance of creating awareness amongst young people and creating an acceptance within them, so that the EFL classroom becomes a safe place where differences are valued, and opinions may vary. The writing of this thesis has brought me to the realization that in most cases using literature can be beneficial to teach EFL learners about otherness and

other themes. Although I have explored some of the advantages in this thesis, there may still be many that have yet to be discovered.

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