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Master's Thesis

**The Potential of Postcolonial Literature for Fostering
Intercultural Competence in Norwegian Upper Secondary
Schools**

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Sammendrag

Denne masteroppgaven har til hensikt å belyse hvordan postkolonial litteratur kan bidra til å øke interkulturell kompetanse blant engelskelever i den videregående opplæringen i Norge. I likhet med læreplaner i andre land, vektlegger den norske læreplanen (ENG01-04) interkulturell kompetanse. I den norske læreplanen for engelsk er interkulturell kompetanse inkludert i fagets kjerneelementer, og denne masteroppgaven drar paralleller mellom læreplanen, interkulturell kompetanse og postkolonial litteratur. Mitt argument er at gjennom å arbeide analytisk med postkolonial litteratur, vil elevene kunne utvikle sin interkulturelle kompetanse: de vil få økt forståelse og respekt for andre mennesker, andre måter å leve på og andre måter å kommunisere på. Postkolonial litteratur er særlig relevant fordi denne litteraturen avslører hegemonistiske maktstrukturer i flere engelskspråklige land og samfunn.

Læreplanen for engelsk er tydelig på at læring skjer i møtet med tekst(er), og denne oppgaven undersøker dette potensialet gjennom å analysere deler av en postkolonial memoar som er skrevet for ungdom: *Born a Crime: Stories From a South African Childhood*, av Trevor Noah (2016). Oppgaven vektlegger til en viss grad lesemotivasjon og løfter fram hvorfor det er viktig å vektlegge lesemotivasjon i skolen.

Et hovedfunn er at *Born a Crime: Stories from a South African Childhood* gir mange muligheter for å utvikle interkulturell kompetanse for elevene i henhold til læreplanens kjerneelementer. Et annet funn er at memoaren som sjanger virker å være særlig egnet for videregåendelever, ettersom den lar den unge leseren få internt innblikk i et annet ungt menneskes liv, erfaringer og følelser, hvor oppvekst og ungdomstid står sentralt. Det er sannsynlig at unge lesere vil kunne relatere seg til memoarens hovedperson, noe som i neste rekke kan bidra til økt sympatisering og følsomhet overfor protagonistens liv og kulturelle kontekst. Dette er nøkkelfaktorer for at interkulturell kompetanse skal få grobunn for å utvikles hos den enkelte elev.

Abstract

This thesis aims to shed light on how postcolonial literature can foster intercultural competence as part of English instruction for Norwegian pupils at the upper-secondary level. In common with other countries' curricula, the Norwegian subject curriculum for English (ENG01-04) emphasizes intercultural competence. Intercultural competence is integrated into the subject's Relevance and Central Values Chapter, and this thesis draws parallels between the curriculum, intercultural competence, and postcolonial literature. My argument is that pupils will develop their intercultural competence through working analytically with postcolonial literature: they will gain an increased understanding and respect for other people(s), other ways of living, and other ways of communicating. Postcolonial literature is particularly relevant as this literature tends to expose hegemonic power structures in several English-speaking countries and societies.

The English subject curriculum in Norway is explicit in stating that learning happens through encounters with text(s), and this thesis explores this potential by analyzing parts of a postcolonial memoir that is written for adolescents: *Born a Crime: Stories from a South African Childhood*, by Trevor Noah (2016). The thesis also touches upon reading motivation and why it is important to work towards increased reading motivation among pupils.

A main finding is that *Born a Crime: Stories from a South African Childhood* provides many opportunities to develop intercultural competence among pupils, in line with the curriculum's Relevance and Central Values Chapter. Another finding is that the memoir as a genre seems particularly well suited for upper secondary pupils, as it allows the adolescent reader to gain an internal perspective into another young person's life, experiences, and feelings, where childhood and coming-of-age are central themes. It is likely that young readers will be able to relate to the memoir's main character, which in turn can contribute to an increased sympathy and sensitivity to the main character's life and cultural context. These are key factors in facilitating intercultural competence to develop and grow within the individual pupil.

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1.0 Introduction

1.1. Postcolonial literature's potential for intercultural competence

This thesis is an attempt to shed light on how a postcolonial work of literature can be used in the upper secondary classroom to develop intercultural competence. The thesis addresses the emphasis the Norwegian curriculum for English (ENG01-04) places on intercultural competence and offers that a postcolonial memoir that is aimed at young readers, can contribute to pupils' development of intercultural competence. *Born a Crime: Stories from a South-African Childhood (BaC)*, by the South-African comedian Trevor Noah, is the memoir this thesis explores through an analysis of three chapters and a discussion that links the analysis to the curriculum and the theory brought forth in this thesis. The thesis explains what exactly intercultural competence entails, with an emphasis on Michael Byram's (1997; 2020) theory on Intercultural Communicative Competence, and how the importance of it is expressed through the curriculum. Concepts of postcolonial literature will also be explored in the thesis, along with a specific approach to literary analysis as means to work with literature to foster intercultural competence. Magne Drangeid (2014) and his approach to literary analysis has been a major inspiration with his approach to literary analysis. This approach emphasizes the important role that the reader has as an active contributor to creating meaning through reading a text and is inspired by reader-response theories and cognitive poetics. The analysis I provide of the three chapters of *BaC* draws on these theories. Finally, the thesis is also concerned with how working with literature to facilitate intercultural competence, might also be of value in terms of increasing reading motivation among adolescents.

My research statement is as follows: Pupils' analytical work with the postcolonial memoir *Born a Crime: Stories from a South-African Childhood* can foster intercultural competence and is also likely to increase reading motivation.

The memoir *Born a Crime: Stories from a South-African Childhood (BaC)*, is written by the South-African comedian Trevor Noah. The memoir, published in 2016, is to my knowledge one of few memoirs that can be considered postcolonial literature aimed at young readers. The term postcolonial literature is a debated term, and I will return to the various aspects of this term in the theory part of this thesis. It is, however, my presupposition that *BaC* can be considered a postcolonial work of literature. The memoir has captured the attention of Norwegian school teachers of English and is currently present through two

excerpts in the textbook *Citizens SF*, which is developed for first-year pupils in the study preparations program of upper secondary school. This is a testimony to how it is considered relevant in education. At the same time, the genre of the memoir can perhaps be considered underrepresented in the English classroom. While several studies have explored the learning possibilities of allowing pupils to write their own memoirs (see Saunders, J. & Smith, E., 2014; Gibney, T., 2012; Goldstein, N., 2004), few studies have been devoted to reading memoirs in the classroom. However, there are some: Barbara Waxman (2008) advocates for using food memoirs in the literature classroom to aid multicultural learning (Waxman, 2008). She argues that through, for instance, understanding the symbolism behind various cultures' food, pupils are invited to see how food contributes to important family occasions, and pupils become more accepting of those cultures' practices, and "initially negative perceptions of the foreignness of these practices may diminish" (Waxman, 2008, p. 367-368). The special position that the memoir holds is perhaps its subjectivity and its ability to tell a story about a certain time period from an internal perspective; what Francis Russel Hart (1979) calls the *personalization of history* (Hart, 1979). Within the subjectivity of the history telling lies possibilities to gain a somewhat personal acquaintance with the "protagonist", and through their experiences gain an understanding of a wider, cultural, and historical context. This thesis explores if this can lead the reader to empathize and gain a deeper understanding of others, and otherness, and is as such highly relevant for gaining intercultural competence.

Intercultural competence is a key element of the Norwegian curriculum for English (ENG01-04). This will be addressed in detail in chapter four of this thesis, which is called "Educational Context". The potential for intercultural competence to be reached through postcolonial literature has already been explored by several scholars (see Bredella, 2000/2008; Delanoy, 2017), and I will return to this in chapter four. Christiane Lütge (2013) states that the new paradigm of intercultural learning has led to an increasing number of postcolonial and minority texts in the foreign language classroom (Lütge, 2013). It is then valid to pose the question of the relevance of this thesis. Again, I would like to draw on Lütge (2017), who poses the question: "Are we in fact concerned with disciplinary crossovers [between postcolonial studies and transcultural learning] or rather with following trodden paths – and possibly even truisms in the discourse of transcultural learning?" (Lütge, 2017, p. 161). While this thesis aims to show the relevance of postcolonial literatures in the upper secondary classroom, it does not attempt to reinvent the wheel and prove that there is a connection between postcolonial literature and intercultural competence. This has already been established, which I will elaborate on below. However, the thesis attempts to shed light

on how an analytical approach to teaching a memoir, which of course is postcolonial, can increase intercultural learning.

As my thesis statement explicitly formulates, it is through *analytical work* related to reading postcolonial literature, that the great potential for intercultural learning lies. Lütge (2017) comments that “postcolonial literature and transcultural learning seem to share a natural connection” (Lütge, 2017, p. 168). Still, she warns against the assumption that this connection denotes an automatic function of learning (Lütge, 2017, p. 159). She reflects upon how “the experience of “otherness” in the literary text [...] [is] sometimes conceived as a kind of “magic formula” that may trigger a change of perspective and foster mutual understanding” (Lütge, 2017, p. 159), and places herself skeptical to this notion. There is no “magic formula” for gaining intercultural competence; it is not likely that simply providing pupils with postcolonial literature will suffice: allowing the pupils to trade some hours of reading into new perspectives and deeper understandings of other people and other cultures. According to Magne Drangeid (2014), the teacher plays a major role in pupils’ understanding of literature. He advocates for explicit teaching in strategies for understanding literary texts in addition to modeling readings of texts (Drangeid, 2014, p. 94). His book, *Literary Analysis and Teaching* [my translation], emphasizes how the teacher can work with analyzing literature in order to teach the selected literature to pupils. It outlines strategies for analysis that are relevant both for the teacher and the pupils, and his book has been highly influential for this thesis. The main reason for this is Drangeid’s (2014) approach to literary analysis as a tool that appreciates the reader’s experiences and meaning-making processes (Drangeid, 2014, p. 21). Drangeid (2014) states that there is a discrepancy between literature didactics and the traditional literary analysis: Literature didactics are concerned with choice of books, reading enjoyment and literary conversations, as well as the pupil’s understanding and experience of the text, while the literary analysis traditionally is concerned with formal features that can aid in interpretation, and does not in any particular grade value the interaction between the text and the reader (Drangeid, 2014, p. 21). He considers it necessary to include the reader’s meaning-making processes more actively in the analysis, without reducing the analytical work to mere opinions. It is worth keeping in mind that when analyzing text, one cannot “simply wander around in a literary text and pick elements here and there, that for uncommunicated reasons seem interesting” [my translation] (Andersen, Mose & Norheim, 2012). Again, this emphasizes the important role the teacher has in guiding pupils in the understanding of literary texts. A key part of the teacher’s didactic work is to guide the pupils toward challenges and aid them in gaining practice in thinking through literature, as well as practice

in reflecting on their own thought processes (Drangeid, 2014, p. 12). In the context of employing postcolonial literature to enhance intercultural competence, Drangeid's theories regarding literary analysis and teaching are highly relevant. These theories provide the framework for my analysis of *BaC*, and by employing Drangeid's form of literary analysis I argue that intercultural learning can be fostered.

The importance of the teacher and their guidance of pupils in meetings with literature, which Drangeid (2014) stresses, should not be underestimated in the work with postcolonial literature. Werner Delanoy (2017) considers engagement with postcoloniality as "cultural translation", in which entails "a careful, ongoing, self-reflexive and open-ended re-contextualization process" (Delanoy, 2017, p. 128). Delanoy (2017), inspired by Gadamer and Gadamer's power-critical hermeneutics, stresses that all understanding is partial, selective, and open to re-definitions (Delanoy, 2017, p. 129). He argues that "such hermeneutics will also argue against assimilating or uncritically giving oneself to other viewpoints. Indeed, the power of dialogue rests in the possibility to (self)critically learn from others, which implies a high dose of meta-reflection" (Delanoy, 2017, p. 129). In line with Drangeid's (2014) belief that the literature teacher plays a key part in guiding and aiding pupils towards gaining practice in thinking through literature and thinking about their own thought-processes, postcolonial literature(s) can provide rich opportunities for pupils to explore and evolve their own thought processes and perspectives. I believe that herein lies the potential for *BaC* to enhance intercultural competence, and perhaps also stimulate an interest that could motivate further reading.

1.2 The necessity of increasing reading motivation

Part of this thesis is concerned with whether it is likely that postcolonial literature can increase pupils' reading motivation. While it would be gratifying to explore this research question in more depth and with more nuances, this is merely a small question within the context of this thesis, which is primarily concerned with how postcolonial literature can foster intercultural competence. Reading motivation as a possible outcome of reading postcolonial literature, or even as an outcome of gaining intercultural competence through literature, is something that would be interesting to explore further in its own right. This is partly the reason why I have chosen to integrate it, at least in some small part, in this thesis.

While there may not be a *literacy crisis* in today's contemporary society, reading fictional material is on the decline among young readers both in an international and in the Norwegian context (see Clark and Teravainen-Goff; 2020, Twenge, Martin & Spitzberg,

2018; Roe, 2020). Stephen Krashen (2004) firmly denies there being a literacy crisis, despite images painted in media of such a crisis, “as nearly everyone in the United States can read and write” (Krashen, 2004), a sentiment that is also true for the Norwegian context. Still, the literacy Krashen insists nearly everyone possesses is “basic literacy”, and he explains that “[m]any people clearly don’t read or write well enough to handle the complex literacy demands of modern society” (Krashen, 2004). Krashen recommends reading as the cure for this:

[people’s] reading comprehension will improve, [...] their writing style will improve, [...], their vocabulary will improve [...] In other words, those who do free voluntary reading have a chance. The research also tells me, however, that those who do not develop the pleasure of reading habit simply don’t have a chance – they will have a very difficult time reading and writing at a level high enough to deal with the demands of today’s world.

(Krashen, 2004).

Krashen’s predicament shows the relevance of working to increase pupils’ reading motivation because those who develop good reading habits have a much better chance of dealing with the demands of today’s society. In our Norwegian context, this truly is food for thought. Astrid Roe and Marte Blikstad-Balas (2022), who both have been influential in the Norwegian discourse about reading in school, write that in our increasingly knowledge-oriented work sector, boys seem to fall off the educational program to a much higher degree than girls (Roe & Blikstad-Balas, 2020, p. 174). Roe and Blikstad-Balas (2022) contribute this partly to the fact that boys are scoring considerably lower on reading tests than girls (Roe & Blikstad-Balas, 2022, p. 174-175). There are significant differences between boys and girls in terms of both reading abilities and overall school performances, and poorer reading abilities likely lead to poorer overall performances in school. In an international context, Norwegian pupils in general had among the lowest scores in the OECD’s Programme for International Student Assessment (the PISA survey) both in 2000 and in 2018 (Roe, 2020, p. 129). The results from 2018 revealed that every other pupil in Norway did not read, “because they did not want to” (Roe, 2020, p. 128), and had negative attitudes towards reading that entailed looking at reading as a “necessary evil” that they only did when they “had to” (Roe, 2020, p. 129). The reading frequency that has been measured as declining relates to traditional types of reading material, such as books and magazines (Roe, 2020, p. 128). It can of course be argued that pupils still *read*; Trude Hoel and Lise Helgevold conducted a qualitative study in 2005 where

they researched Norwegian boys' reading habits, researching both what boys read and whether these boys considered themselves as *readers*. Among their findings were that the boys in the study tended not to consider themselves as *readers*, as reading was for them an activity and not something that related to their identity (Hoel & Helgevold, 2005). In addition to this, the study uncovered that the boys tended to connect the term *reading* with reading literary fiction, which they did not read, whereas a key finding in the study was that the boys read many other things (Hoel & Helgevold, 2020). They tended to choose their reading material based on an orientation towards necessity or usefulness (Hoel & Helgevold, 2005). As many of the reading surveys and the national tests are centered around reading and responding to fictional texts, the image that boys are poor readers might be skewed. For instance, national tests in 2007 showed that boys scored higher than girls in reading texts that were dominated by maps, tables, charts, or diagrams (Roe & Blikstad-Balas, 2022, p. 175). The girls scored higher on assignments that were related to longer, more comprehensive texts and particularly those that demanded justified reasonings or reflections (Roe & Vagle, 2012; as cited in Roe & Blikstad-Balas, 2022, p. 175). Interestingly, the national test from 2007 did have one open reflection assignment tied to the reading of a long, comprehensive text about the Swedish king, Karl XII, and his endeavors in the Nordic War of the 1700s, and the boys scored particularly well on this assignment. They scored better on this assignment than the girls did, and Roe and Blikstad-Balas (2022) suggest that a story about war and murder might have intrigued the boys more than it intrigued the girls (Roe & Blikstad-Balas, 2022, p. 176). This indicates that boys have the *ability* to read long and comprehensive texts and to respond to these texts through reflective answers. It does, however, seem that interest plays a major part in reading comprehension, and boys seem to require literature that will "give them something in return" in terms of either excitement or a sense that the text can be useful for them at a later time (Roe & Blikstad-Balas, 2022, p. 180). Boys also prefer to read fiction that portrays a male protagonist, perhaps to feel like they can relate to the character, whereas girls tend to be indifferent to whether the protagonist is male or female (Roe & Blikstad-Balas, 2022, p. 176-177). This emphasis on boys and reading is the result of a years-long tendency that boys score lower on national tests than girls in most subjects, and this is a tendency that is present both in Norway and in many other countries (Roe, 2013, p. 13). When tests show that while girls' reading accomplishments have remained steady, the boys' accomplishments have weakened over the years (Roe, 2013, P 13), it is cause for concern about reading skills in relation to overall school achievements.

Differences between the adolescent boy reader and the adolescent girl reader aside,

there can be no doubt that an increased appetite for reading would benefit pupils. This is particularly relevant if we keep Roe and Blikstad-Balas' (2020) reasoning in mind: poor reading skills hurt pupils' overall achievements in school. While there also are other benefits of reading that will be addressed further in the theory chapter, especially in chapter 2.1., this is perhaps, for our school context, the main justification of why teachers should work to increase pupils' reading motivation. Throughout this thesis, I aim to have the adolescent reader in the back of my mind, and the theory chapter – while not explicitly focusing on reading motivation – will mirror this. The hypothesis is that if *Born a Crime: Stories from a South African Childhood* successfully can be taught in class in a manner that engages pupils and enhances their intercultural competence, perhaps it can also bring about joy for reading. Further studies in this field could tell us more about this than this thesis attempts.

2.0 Theory

This chapter offers theory on relevant aspects of why reading literature should be included in upper secondary school. It then connects teaching literature to conducting a literary analysis to improve the quality of the teaching of reading. This is an extensive chapter, where I focus on Drangeid's (2014) theories related to literary analysis as an aid to teaching literature in class. These theories create the foundation of the coming analysis of this thesis and are hence particularly elaborated on. The chapter will then address postcolonial discourse, before offering theory about life-writings, which *BaC* falls under genre-wise. Finally, the chapter will address intercultural competence, as well as its connection with communicative competence, as these concepts often are closely tied together.

2.1. Why reading?

Many researchers have explored the possibility that reading can have positive effects or can lead to beneficial developments among readers. These insights are valuable from a didactical point of view. In the following, I will offer an outline of some of the findings from the field.

Dennis J. Sumara (2002) states that “reading literature can be a focal practice that creates the possibility for deep insight” (Sumara, 2002). This carries the notion that reading is an activity that is worthwhile in and of itself, and not just for any results that the reading might lead to. Focal practices require attentiveness, skill, and patience. Sumara (2002) also offers that reading a literary text in common with others can create opportunities to interpret both personal and collective experiences (Sumara, 2002, p. 19). This aligns well with sociocultural learning theories, where the idea is that learning takes place in interaction with

others (Strandberg, 2008, p. 25). From a didactic perspective, it might also be part of justifying teaching a single text in common. While the curriculum emphasizes that pupils should read self-chosen texts, it might still be worthwhile to do a reading project where the pupils read the same material. This can help facilitate for experiences to be interpreted both personally and collectively.

Martha Nussbaum (1997) states that literature plays a role in developing a “sympathetic imagination” (Nussbaum, 1997; as cited in Carlsen et al., 2020, p. 210). She argues that through reading fictional texts, readers are challenged to explore different identities and perspectives on life, which can develop our capacity for understanding the society we live in (Nussbaum, 1997; as cited in Carlsen et al., 2020, p. 210). She considers imagination and wonder as tools that can increase a form of sympathy that provides insight into other people, and oneself (Nussbaum, 2016, p. 32). Nussbaum shares these viewpoints with others. According to J.A. Appleyard, “[reading] is both a highly personal exploration of feelings and thoughts and at the same time a training in the social processing of meaning according to norms prescribed by the larger culture” (Appleyard, 1991, pp. 113-114). There are also other studies that indicate that reading has a positive effect on developing empathy (see for example Djikic, Oatley & Moldoveanu, 2013). Appleyard is particularly concerned with the adolescent reader and sums up the characteristic features of adolescents as “sudden erratic physical growth, intensified sexuality, idealism that is often grandiose as well as naïve, self-consciousness, romanticism, moodiness and ambivalence, ambition and drive, rebellion and crisis” (Appleyard, 1991, p. 96). In slightly different terms: to be a teenager is complicated and challenging, and literature can ideally be a place where the adolescent can explore their own personal feelings and learn more about themselves as well as others. According to Appleyard, adolescent readers tend to identify with the characters and the situations the characters are in (Appleyard, 1991, p.102). To “meet” other teenagers who are also leading complicated and challenging lives within the pages of a book, could perhaps have a positive effect on young readers. Jenny Edvardsson (2023) concludes through her studies regarding pupils and reading, that the pupils’ understanding increases when they are allowed to speak about what they have read, and when they are allowed to participate in each other’s interpretations of a text (Edvardsson, 2023, p. 23). This highlights the importance of not “just” reading, but to work analytically with what one has read.

In addition to this, reading can also have health benefits. An Italian research team found that reading novels and non-fiction are among the factors associated with better cognitive performances in the elderly (Gallucci et al. 2008, p. 286). Their work, as well as

other similar studies, suggest that there is a linkage between reading and the prevention of cognitive declines, such as dementia (Gallucci et al., 2008, p.286). The well-known American linguist and educational researcher, Stephen Krashen, refers to this research in his article “Free Reading: Still a Great Idea” (2013), along with research that indicates that bilingualism can delay the onset of dementia (Krashen, 2013, p.17). There is still more to be learned in terms of which activities might benefit human cognitive performances, but research seems to indicate that reading can have positive benefits on cognitive performances. In addition to this, readers seem to be more social and active than non-readers, though there is no evidence to point to there being a direct correlation between the degree of socialness and reading (Krashen, 2013, p.18). It still offers an interesting perspective, and one could speculate if the social learning that Appleyard, Nussbaum, and others argue that reading facilitates for, contributes to social skills out in the real world.

2.2. “Just Reading” is not sufficient: analysis as a way to work with literature

The chapter above points to the benefits of reading, and some scholars would argue that reading alone is “enough”: that reading in and of itself is didactically beneficial. As Sumara (2002) suggests, reading is a focal practice. Krashen (2004) also advocates for the benefits that reading has in language learning, through his book *The Power of Reading: Insights from the Research*. Among other strategies, Krashen (2004) advocates for free voluntary reading (FVR), where pupils (or people) should “read because you want to: no book-reports, no questions at the end of the chapter” (Krashen, 2004, p. 1). Krashen states that this form of reading is “one of the most powerful tools we have in language education” (Krashen, 2004, p. 1), and summarizes that in-school FVR as well as “out-of-school” self-reported FVR increase reading comprehension, writing style, vocabulary, spelling, and grammatical knowledge (Krashen, 2004, p. 17). At the same time, “[reading] will not, by itself, produce the highest levels of competence [...] [but] it provides the foundation so that higher levels of proficiency may be reached” (Krashen, 2004, p. 1). Paul Nation (2009) stresses that an essential part of the reading skill “is the skill of being able to recognize written forms and connect them with their spoken form and their meaning” (Nation, 2009, p. 9). In this regard, Nation (2009), in common with Krashen (2004) advocates for reading as a tool to be used in technical language learning. As such, Krashen (2004) and Nation (2009) show how beneficial reading is for the beginner learner, and during the earlier stages of language learning.

For the upper secondary classroom, however, one must assume that the pupils have

reached a higher level of proficiency than beginner learners. Still, the insights and perspectives brought forth by Krashen and Nation are relevant. They show that language learning can continue to take place through reading, also for the more advanced pupils. Yet, for this thesis, with the upper secondary classroom in mind, the other possibilities that accompany reading are of greater interest. The main aim is not for pupils to increase their reading comprehension, writing style, vocabulary, spelling, and grammatical knowledge – though this, of course, would be a wonderful bonus. The main aim is for the pupils to increase intercultural competence, through reading a certain type of literature: namely the postcolonial memoir *Born a Crime: Stories from a South African Childhood*. For the pupils to gain intercultural competence, I argue that “just reading it”, will not be sufficient.

Magne Drangeid (2014) advocates for explicit teaching in strategies for understanding fictional texts as well as teacher modeling (Drangeid, 2014, p. 94). One strategy for understanding fictional texts can be through a form of analysis, and Drangeid (2014) stresses the important role the teacher plays when pupils are reading and analyzing fictional texts. Firstly, he states that the teacher’s understanding of the opportunities within the text should form the foundation for teaching in a manner that pupils conceive as relevant (Drangeid, 2014, s. 11). The teacher must have a solid understanding of the text to adjust the text choices and the teaching to the pupils’ level. While the aim is for the pupils to experience both reading enjoyment and a sense of achievement, the teacher plays a key part in guiding them towards challenges and aiding them in gaining practice in thinking through literature, as well as practice in reflecting on their own thought processes (Drangeid, 2014, p. 12). Drangeid (2014) stresses that the great potential for change and development lies in the synergy between literary reading and teaching (Drangeid, 2014, p. 36). “Development and change” can of course encompass many different things, and it is hard to pinpoint what exactly these terms entail. Still, in the pursuit of achieving intercultural competence, it would seem very relevant. Through *both* the literary reading and the teaching or instruction that the teacher provides, there is a potential for pupils to develop competencies and even change perspectives.

Drangeid (2014) states that there is a discrepancy between literary didactics and the traditional literary analysis. He argues that while the didactics are concerned with the choice of books, reading enjoyment, and literary conversations, the traditional analysis mainly focuses on formal text features with the aim to construe meaning, with little emphasis on the encounter between the text and the reader (Drangeid, 2017, p. 24). Drangeid wants the text analysis to relate to both the teacher’s and the pupil’s reading (Drangeid, 2017, p. 26),

drawing on the term “cognitive poetics” which Drangeid is inspired by.

Cognitive Poetics is a relatively new school of literary criticism, that is concerned with how the reader builds mental worlds based on both the text at hand, as well as the reader’s own personal experiences (Drangeid, 2014, p. 26). It differs from much of the existing literary criticism in that it distances itself from advanced, literary interpretations (Drangeid, 2014, p. 26). Cognitive poetics is concerned with what Drangeid (2014) calls “normal reading”, where the mental process of reading and building text worlds are affected by how the text is activating, driving, and shaping stimuli (Drangeid, 2014, p. 26). In other words, the text activates cognitive processes within the reader, and it drives and shapes the reader’s understanding of the text. Peter Stockwell (2002) states that reading evokes a multitude of neurological features:

Neurologically, [the reader] is converting visual stimuli into parsed sentences, neurons are firing, mental work is being activated as different parts of the brain connect up your memories of words and concepts, anticipating and processing the meanings and feelings associated with them.

(Stockwell, 2002, p. 1).

This indicates the active role that the reader has in reading, which I will explore further in chapter 2.2.3, “The reader’s complementing/gap-filling”. The text activates the reader’s mind and is dependent on the reader’s memories and experiences to make sense. In addition to this, Stockwell (2002), emphasizes the cultural and social gains of reading, by stating that the reader gains access to the thoughts of someone who probably is “distant from you, usually in space and often in time” (Stockwell, 2002, p. 1).

Cognitive poetics, and Drangeid (2014), is as such concerned with the interaction between text and reader. It provides an interesting entry to a literary analysis that is reader-oriented while still concerned with the importance of the teacher as a “role model” or guide for the pupils’ learning. In the following subchapters, I will expand on a model of analysis that Drangeid (2014) suggests for the teacher to apply to a text before teaching a text. This model of analysis encompasses the cognitive processes that take place during reading.

In the following, I will introduce three analytical perspectives from Drangeid’s (2014) cognitive analysis, as explained in his book *Literary Analysis and Teaching* [my translation]. These perspectives are *the reader’s navigation*, *the reader’s complementing/gap-filling*, and *the reader’s doubling*. The aim of this analysis is to explore a text’s didactic possibilities and challenges (Drangeid, 2014, p. 86). The analysis should then form the foundation for the

choice of text as well as the planning and execution of the teaching of the text (Drangeid, 2014, p. 86). This form of conducting an analysis is beneficial in terms of bridging the gap between didactic approaches to literature and traditional forms of applying literary analysis in the classroom. The three analytical perspectives outlined below can also be beneficial for pupils who are working with texts. They all portray an emphasis on the reader's participating role in constructing meaning through reading.

2.2.1. The reader's navigation

The analytical perspective that Drangeid calls *leserens navigering* and that I translate to *the reader's navigation* is concerned with how the text builds worlds that the reader navigates in and between, from various positions (Drangeid, 2014, p. 50). One of the main benefits of this perspective is that it allows the teacher to assess how complex the text structure is and how challenging it might be for pupils to connect worlds to a meaningful whole (Drangeid, 2014, p. 50). The purpose of gaining this insight is, for the teacher, to be prepared to understand and support the pupil's navigation through the text (Drangeid, 2014, p. 50). In this sense, Drangeid's (2014) approach aligns with the idea of scaffolding.

Wood, Bruner & Ross (1976) explain scaffolding as a process that allows the novice to solve a problem, carry out a task, or achieve a goal that would be beyond the novice's unassisted efforts (Wood, Bruner & Ross, 1976, p. 2). The teacher is as such an expert, a "scaffolder", that makes it possible for the pupil, or the "novice", to reach a goal or gain a skill. When Drangeid (2014) emphasizes that the teacher must navigate in the text themselves prior to helping their pupils navigate in it, it is evident that the teacher analysis is a form of preparation for scaffolding. Bruner et al. (1976) also suggest demonstrating or modeling an idealized form of an act, as a strategy within the scaffolding process (Bruner et al., 1976, p. 11). When applied to reading and understanding literature, the teacher's analysis can function as a demonstration of an analysis. Here, it is important to stress that the teacher's analysis should not necessarily be considered the absolute answer or the key to the literary text at hand. It is important that the teacher does not function as a "master interpreter", which could discourage pupils from attempting to interpret the text themselves (Drangeid, 2014). The teacher's navigation through the text is meant to help the pupils navigate themselves, and not create the map for them.

The reader's navigation, as Drangeid (2014) puts forth, is concerned with time and space, deictic functions, narration, and perspective and coherence. These are all elements that play a part in creating text worlds that the reader must navigate in. These features are also

familiar from a narratological analysis model, which pupils might be somewhat familiar with. Drangeid (2014) collects these narratological features and places them together in the category of “navigation” and is mainly concerned with how these features contribute to creating text worlds in the reader’s mind.

Time and space can be understood through a concept of *image schemas*, which are developed from our experiences in life (Lakoff, 1987; as cited in in Drangeid, 2014, p. 53). The internal structure of the image schema is arranged to make basic logic (Lakoff, 1987, p. 272), for instance temporal or spatial logic. Prepositions answer to spatial logic: something can be either “inside” something or “outside” something, and verb conjugation answer to temporal logic: something *is* or *was* inside or outside something. The picture schemas help the reader imagine the space the reader is transported into, and help the reader place the various components in relation to themselves or others (Drangeid, 2014, p. 53), for instance through phrasings such as: “the house was facing the lake” or “I was gazing out the window when I heard him enter the room”. Being conscious of the spatial and temporal aspects of a text is not for the benefit of crossing off on a list with narratological terms and calling it an analysis. It enables the reader to place and understand characters and events through a picture schema where there often is a center and a periphery (Drangeid, 2014, p. 54). It contributes to the reader’s understanding of the characters and the world they exist in.

This understanding of the characters and the world that the characters exist in is also informed by the deictic functions, the narrative composition, and perspectives and coherence. In short, the deictic functions are important for the reader’s ability to empathize with the story’s perspective (Drangeid, 2014, p. 53). It creates an “ego-position” from which the world is viewed or experienced (Drangeid, 2014, p. 53). In this sense, it could easily be confused with both perspective and coherence, but the deictic functions in the language are signaled through words such as “here” and “there”, and they rely on the context within the given temporal and spatial setting to make sense. The narrative composition is also important for how the reader experiences the textual world. For instance, it determines how close the reader is allowed to the textual surroundings, and it regulates and filtrates the reader’s access to emotions, thoughts, experiences, and knowledges (Drangeid, 2014, p. 55-56). This is of course connected to the perspective of the story as well; an internal storyteller will affect the perspective and create a greater closeness, but perhaps also less credibility, than an external storyteller. Drangeid (2014) suggests that an internal perspective gives less help in terms of navigating than an external perspective, but in return, it allows for immediate insight (Drangeid, 2014, p. 59).

To summarize, the reader's navigation is concerned with making sense of the world or worlds a text offers. This happens largely through a sort of analysis of language and form and could perhaps be considered the most superficial layer of the text. Nevertheless, it is a very important layer of the text and without an understanding of it, it will be hard to go "further" in exploring what a text has to offer.

2.2.2. The reader's complementing/gap-filling

Drangeid's (2014) Norwegian term *Leserens utfylling* can be translated into English terms in several ways. Even though it makes for a long and unattractive title, I have chosen to use the two terms *complementing* and *gap-filling*. Neither completely encompass the full meaning of «utfylling», but together they convey that the reader has a role in terms of adding meaning to a text both through complementing the text and filling in the gaps of indeterminacies. Roman Ingarden (1973) uses the latter of these terms to elaborate on the reader's creative enterprises: «With his own imagination he 'fills out' various places of indeterminacy» (Ingarden, 1973, p. 53). These "places of indeterminacy" relate to the places in the text where information is omitted. Drangeid (2014) proposes that readers use concept schemas (See also Ingarden, 1973) to fully understand the text, just as we as humans use concept schemas to understand the world around us. To illustrate with an example, a character in a story might "enter a bookstore". The author may elaborate on how the bookstore looks like from within, but even without doing so, readers are familiar with the term "bookstore" and can readily imagine that it is a space that is occupied by bookshelves, various book displays, books with price tags, customers browsing or checking prices and a counter with someone working behind it. The reader can also imagine actions one might take when entering a bookstore. Drangeid (2014) uses the restaurant as an example to illustrate a concept schema of action; you know that when you enter a restaurant you will typically be given a table, you will receive a menu from the waiter, you will order, eat, and then pay before you leave (Drangeid, 2014, p. 68). An author can invoke all this schematic knowledge by simply writing "She entered the bookstore" or "They ate at a restaurant". The reader complements the text, or fills in the gaps of indeterminacies, with their schematic knowledge.

Drangeid (2014) suggests that concept schemas are particularly interesting from a literary perspective because they allow the reader to complement the text even on such narrow grounds as the examples above provide. A text does not provide a continuous and meaningful presentation by itself but is dependent on a mental contribution from the reader. This mental contribution is also a prerequisite for the text to fully make sense (Drangeid, 2014, p. 69). In

extension of this, both writer and reader work together to create meaning through text. The reader role is the role of an active participant who contributes to the text with their preexisting knowledge, imagination, and expectations. This role is vital for any later interpretations of a text, and it also serves as an explanation as to why two readers of the same book might interpret it differently. This aligns with the reader-response theories that have been gaining traction since the 1970s. According to Wolfgang Iser's (1980) reader-response theory, the text is a co-construction of the writer and the reader (Iser, 1980; as cited in Birketveit, 2021, p. 19). It is the "convergence of text and reader [that] brings the literary work into existence" (Iser, 1978; as cited in Fenner, 2020, p. 247). Each reader brings their own personal experiences to the reading, and the meaning-making is as such partly constructed by the reader's experiences (Birketveit, 2021, p. 19).

2.2.3 The reader's doubling

Drangeid's (2014) term, the reader's "fordobling", or the reader's *doubling*, goes beyond the reader's navigation within the text and the reader's complementation of the text. It is related to seeing the bigger themes and it denotes that the reader understands the specific or particular representations as expressions for something more. According to Drangeid (2014), "the *particular* is mentally transferred into something we consider meaningful and of more common relevance" (Drangeid, 2014, p. 77). I have chosen to simply translate "fordobling" with "doubling", as the term is related to accumulating a bigger meaning from what is specifically written in a text. Drangeid (2014) stresses that a text represents "something bigger" (Drangeid, 2014, p. 77).

The perspective of the reader's doubling is beneficial for the teacher to take, in order to assess what it will take for pupils to construe the text's different themes or subjects (Drangeid, 2014, p. 77). The aim is for the pupils to learn to look beyond the top layer of the text and develop skills to understand what the text really is about. In this pursuit, metaphors serve as a good example of how a text in a particular or specific manner says one thing, but on a deeper level says something else. For instance, the metaphor "cold feet" only denotes that a person has cold feet in terms of the specific words that are used. The doubling of this, however, adds a greater meaning: the person is nervous about something that is about to happen, and there might be a risk that the person will change their course of action due to this nervousness. This is of course a simple metaphor, but it serves as an example to illustrate how doubling works: it can be described as a transfer between something concrete into something abstract (Drangeid, 2014, p. 78).

According to Drangeid (2014), the possibility for literary doubling lies beneath the surface of the text (Drangeid, 2014, p. 78). Already in the navigation, the work with doubling begins: the reader creates mental links that allow doubling to eventually take place (Drangeid, 2014, p. 78). The schematic knowledge explained in the previous subchapter regarding the reader's complementing/gap-filling is also relevant for the doubling. While these schemas help us perceive the physical spaces a text provides, they are also applied when the reader is presented with metaphors. For instance, the word "journey", or the concept of a journey, holds metaphoric meaning. If a text portrays a journey, this can help the reader interpret or double the meaning. The journey could, for instance, be a metaphor for how life is a journey, or perhaps the characters that are partaking in the physical journey are experiencing an inner journey that is of greater importance to the text. While the common use of everyday metaphors, such as "life is a journey", has led to an understanding of everyday metaphors as "dead" metaphors that merely decorate the language, cognitive poetics considers everyday metaphors as highly active and effective in our reading and understanding of texts (Drangeid, 2014, p. 80).

2.3. The biography, the autobiography, and the memoir

While the main concern for this thesis is how the autobiographical memoir can be utilized in teaching, it is necessary to comprehend this literary genre within its context. Marianne Egeland (2000) considers subjective representations as the memoir and the autobiography as subgenres that belong to the main genre of the biography (Egeland, 2000, p. 94).

To supply a precise definition of the biography as a genre and to give a brief outline of the history of this genre, is not an easy task. Egeland (2000) illustrates the diversity in perception of the biography by quoting Lytton Strachey's summary of the biography as "the most delicate and humane of all the branches of the art of writing" and contrasting this statement with the French *Enclypædia Universalis*' definition which describes the biography as a lesser genre "without prestige" (Egeland, 2000, p. 11). It seems that the biography's position and value can be negotiated. The position of the biography might also differ in different contexts and discourses. It is a genre of interest and use both in the field of literature and the field of history and can at times bridge the gap between history and literature.

While the biography as a literary genre is the prime objective for the purposes of this thesis, it is impossible to define the biography without including its shared context with

history. Since their parallel beginnings, history and the biography were perceived as different forms, but still related forms (Egeland, 2000, p. 18). Egeland (2000) argues that the first biographical-like texts can be said to have been produced as early as 400-500 years B.C., by Herodotus, "the father of history", and Thucydides, who wrote about important men from their recent past, using features such as anecdotes and digressions (Egeland, 2000, p. 18). In addition to this, Herodotus and Thucydides aimed to write truthfully and attempted to separate events that had taken place in the past from mythical stories, by verifying their sources (Egeland, 2000, p. 18). This distinguished their texts from prior texts from approximately 500 years B.C. (Egeland, 2000, p. 18). While prior works were less concerned with truth verification, another significant difference was that in earlier texts, virtues had held a more central place in texts than single individuals (Egeland, 2000, p. 18). In summary, Herodotus and Thucydides introduced both the idea of historical accuracy as well as the notion that a single person's life could be of interest.

In describing the early beginnings of the biography there are several problematic elements to consider. One of these elements is the matter of terms. The term "biography" did not exist in antique times, and when referring to "texts" from these times, it does not include oral texts. In terms of the biography, the term that did exist was the Latin term "vita" which describes both "the lived life" and the written representation of it (Egeland, 2000, p. 19). It is also problematic to offer that individualism was born through the early biographies. As Egeland (2000) points out, the antique times did not have "personal" or "personality" as part of the vocabulary (Egeland, 2000, p. 19). Yet, this snippet of history serves to illustrate that the biography as we know it today, is connected to history and has deep roots in human culture and written contexts.

For centuries, the biography continued its quest to tell the story of significant historical figures, until the early twentieth century, when the "The New Biography" emerged in the wake of modernism. The new biography was influenced by modernistic and anti-authoritarian currents in society, and it was critical to the genre as it had been employed so far (Egeland, 2000, p. 67). As a genre, the biography has changed throughout the times, and alongside it grew subgenres, as Egeland (2000) considers them, like the autobiography and the memoir. The term *memoir* is older than *autobiography* and was first used as early as the sixteenth century (Buss, 2006, p. 2). The term *autobiography* emerged in the nineteenth century and was used to describe the more individualistic narratives of the self, which were growing out of the revolutionary period and the Romantic movement (Buss, 2006, p. 2). Max Saunders (2010) offers for reflection that:

Where the biography offered the Victorians the promise of a shared social judgment of an individual's life, the hope of objective knowledge and moral certainty, autobiography has become the quintessential postmodern genre [...] precisely because of the freedom of all these things.

(Saunders, 2010, p. 3).

The autobiography does not aim to provide the reader with objective knowledge and moral certainty, which is likely due to the subjective perspective the autobiography offers. The main difference between the biography and the autobiography or the memoir, is exactly the perspective. The biography is written about someone and has a perspective from the outside of this person, while the autobiography and the memoir are written from within, with first-person narration (Egeland, 2000, p. 94). The author of a memoir has full access to their own feelings and experiences, in contrast to the biography author who must rely on external sources to write about the life of their subject. Still, there is an important similarity between the memoir and the biography as they both are written *after* the events that are described took place, and the author of the memoir has a complete overview of the course of actions before they sit down to write their memoir (Egeland, 2000, p. 94). Throughout the 1980s, there was an increase in writers of autobiographies, and critics have also increasingly turned to it as a legitimate field of study (Saunders, 2010, p. 3). The memoir, on the other hand, has “remained largely unexamined by literary critics and theorists” (Buss, 2006, p. 2). While we now have established some of the differences between the biography and its subgenres, the autobiography and the memoir, the question of what distinguishes a memoir from an autobiography remains.

The Britannica Dictionary states that “An autobiography is an account of a person's entire life, but a memoir usually is only about one part of a person's life” (The Britannica Dictionary). George Fetherling (2001) writes in his preface to *The Vintage Book of Canadian Memoirs* that “people may not agree on what a literary memoir is but they know one when they see one” (Fetherling, 2001). He argues that “we would never call the autobiography of a politician or other professional public figures a memoir” (Fetherling, 2001), as these books follow strict conventions of non-fiction, are formal and “determined to cover the subject's entire life or career and show him or her in the most favorable light” (Fetherling, 2001). The memoir, on the other hand, is “more tightly focused, more daring in construction” (Fetherling, 2001) and can “be of a particular decade – or a particular place” (Fetherling, 2001).

Hart (1979) defines the memoir as follows: “*Memoir*: personal history; the

personalization of history, the historization of the personal. *Memoir*: the personal act of repossessing a public world, historical, institutional, collective” (Hart, 1979, p. 195). These definitions highlight the interchanging relationship between the personal and the historical. Within the term “repossessing” is the notion of gaining ownership over one’s history and agency in preserving or telling this history. According to Hart (1979), the author of the memoir is “seeking an intimacy with history that will give public meaning to personal identity” (Hart, 1979, p. 209). This leads to an understanding of how memoirs “are *of* a person, but they are “really” of an event, an era, an institution, a class identity” (Hart, 1979, p. 195). Following Hart's (1979) train of thought, memoirs are individual life writings that can elevate one person’s personal history to a history of public relevance. Memoirs serve as subjective snippets of history about certain events or a certain period of time in a person’s life. This is certainly the case with *Born a Crime: Stories from a South African Childhood*, where the tightening of the narrative is evident already in the title itself.

2.3.1. The anecdote as a literary biographical feature

While *BaC* is a memoir, it is still relevant to examine some of the literary features of the biography, as there are many similarities between the genres (Egeland, 2000, p. 94). As there is less literary theory on memoirs than on other genres within life-writing (See Saunders, 2010; Buss, 2006), it is useful to go to theory about the biography to shed light on the literary features that often occur in autobiographical life-writings for children and young readers. Nina Goga (2014) states that the anecdote is a dominating feature of biographies aimed at children and young readers, but which anecdotes are included is contingent upon how the biographer wishes to portray the biographed character (Goga, 2014, p. 77). Inger-Kristin Vie (2020) writes in her PhD dissertation that a key feature of biographies aimed at young readers is that childhood and the evolvement into becoming a grown-up, have a central place in the biography (Vie, 2020, p. 310). The biographed character is in this manner portrayed as a regular human being with their possibilities and limitations, which makes them relatable to the readers, while they also possess qualities that contribute to making them special (Vie, 2020, p. 310). Authors of biographies have an arsenal of literary devices to choose from and employ, and anecdotes have been a feature in biographies since the first biography-like texts for children were written (Vie, 2020, p. 88). Anecdotal stories can portray the biographed character in various ways (Vie, 2020, p.88).

The word “anecdote” was imported from Greek, via French, into the English language

in the second half of the seventeenth century, and the meaning of the word was originally “something unpublished” (Gross, 2006, p. 1). John Gross (2006) stresses that while the term itself was late to arrive in the English language, the sentiment is as old as human history; he suggests that the urge to share anecdotes is as deeply implanted in human nature as the urge to gossip (Gross, 2006, p. 1). The anecdote’s literary status was achieved when the Byzantine historian Procopius used it in his “secret history” of Emperor Justinian’s reign, in a confidential and sometimes scandalous chronicle of life at the imperial court (Gross, 2006, p. 1). Goga (2007) also touches on the element of gossip in her definition of the anecdote. According to her, the anecdote is an orally delivered story or *rumor* (Goga, 2007, p. 157). Yet, the anecdote has made its way into the written format, and throughout the eighteenth century, the public’s appetite for anecdotes increased (Gross, 2006, p. 1). Typically, the anecdotes were concerned with people of interest to the public, such as authors, lawyers, clergymen, and other public figures (Gross, 2006, p. 1-2). By the end of the nineteenth century, the anecdote was a well-established feature of biographies, memoirs, diaries, and journalism (Gross, 2006, p. 2). Goga (2007) proposes that the anecdote is, in fact, the biography’s most central verification of truth, or evidence (Goga, 2006, p. 157-158). The anecdote as evidence is also known from earlier times. In Hellenistic times, anecdotes were used as evidence in rhetorical representations (Egeland, 2000, p. 24). Egeland (2000) also suggests that the anecdote’s relationship with the biography might have started as early as in the days of Plato, though the contemporary biography as we know it today did not yet exist (Egeland, 2000, p. 24).

The suggestion that anecdotes serve as evidence for truth in the biography, manifests the anecdote as a crucial literary feature of the biography. That said, the “truth” that the anecdote entails cannot necessarily be trusted. It usually has a single incident as its source and is structured around this incident, which gives it some truth value (Vie, 2020, p. 92), but *which* anecdotes the biographer chooses to include in their work, and where these stories originate from, influences the representation (Vie, 2020, p. 93). The writer’s perspective and choices regarding inclusion, exclusion, and manner of portraying both events and the biographed character, affect the truth value of the anecdotes within a biography. Egeland (2000) describes the tension between authentic, existing data material on the one side and the biographer’s use of it or interpretation of it on the other, as two elements that compose an axis of conflict (Egeland, 2000, p. 86). Nevertheless, whether it holds the actual truth or not, the anecdote is an important device in biographies and memoirs, and almost every chapter of *BaC* contains at least one central anecdote.

2.4 Postcolonial theory

In this chapter, I will introduce postcolonial theory, and explain some key terms within this school of literary criticism. Along with the analytical perspectives described in the previous chapter, this theory will create the basis of the analysis of *Born a Crime: Stories from a South-African Childhood*, in chapter 5. The key terms within postcolonial literature that this chapter is concerned with, are the terms *othering*, *hybridity*, and *epistemic violence*. The chapter is informed by scholars within the field, as well as Justin D. Edwards and his book *Postcolonial Literature: A Reader's Guide to Critical Theory* (2008). Some of the most well-known scholars within the field of postcolonial theory, such as Homi K. Bhabha, Ania Loomba, and Gayatri Spivak, are quoted in this chapter through Edward's work, and therefore, also through Edwards' understanding of their theories.

Postcolonialism refers both to a genre of literature, and a way of reading this literature, namely postcolonial theory (Hauge, 2007). As a genre, Hans Hauge (2007) proposes that postcolonial literature refers to literature that is written in English in the countries that were colonized by British "settlers" (Hauge, 2007). Postcolonial literature is limited to the countries that had a postcolonial period, which occurred after they gained independence (Hauge, 2007). Edwards (2008) defines postcolonial literature as "[the] rich and diverse range of texts by writers who live in or have migrated from former colonies" and Edwards (2008) does not specify that the texts must be written in English (Edwards, 2008, p. 1). On the contrary, Edwards (2008) argues that there is an English-speaking bias in the current, postcolonial discourse, but that postcolonial literature can be found in African, Arabian, Asian, or other European languages as well (Edwards, 2008, p. 1-2). There is no simple way to define "postcolonial literature" or "postcolonial theory". Maria Eisenmann (2015) suggests that postcolonial literature is in fact not singular, but consists of plural literatures (Eisenmann, 2015, p. 2019). The label "postcolonial" has often been criticized for covering too much, and being used as a singular concept that embraces a vast diversity of cultural productions that are produced in different places and within different historical contexts (Döring, 2007; as cited in Eisenmann, 2015, p. 2019). Werner Delanoy (2017) suggests that the term itself is problematic because the prefix *post* indicates that colonialism has come to an end (Delanoy, 2017, p. 122). Still, the term is widely used and can be used to describe the project of gaining independence from foreign control (Delanoy, 2017, p. 122). This foreign control goes beyond political and economic independence, as it also embraces the notion of decolonizing the mind (Loomba, 1998; as cited in Delanoy, 2017, p. 122). This notion entails that decolonizing is not

only concerned with political and economic freedom and agency, but that it also has a deeply personal aspect that is concerned with the individuals within colonized countries.

Edwards (2008) poses two questions in the introductory chapter of his book *Postcolonial Literature: A Reader's Guide to Critical Theory*:

Does postcolonial literature simply represent the histories of violence and trauma that moved peoples, regions and countries from subjugation to liberation? Or does postcolonial writing tell us what is happening in our own lives, mapping out where we come from and where we are going?

(Edwards, 2008, p. 1).

In these questions, there is both a statement that postcolonial literature holds historical accounts of collective traumas and the gain of political independence, as well as a suggestion that these histories might be valid and relevant to other (uncolonized) lives in different contexts. It certainly seems that teaching postcolonial literature can be relevant in the English classroom, where ENG1-04 is explicit that pupils should “explore and reflect on diversity and social conditions in the English-speaking world based on historical contexts” (UDIR, 2020). Between the 18th and the 20th centuries, the sun never set in the British empire – it was the largest empire in the world, and it had colonies all over the globe. This is of course one of the reasons for English developing as a global language. Both the aspect of colonizing and the aspect of decolonizing have affected the colonized cultures through more than just the language.

Postcolonial theory offers a lens to apply in analyzing works that fit into the category of postcolonial literatures. It provides a theoretical framework with terms such as *difference* (*othering*), *hybridity*, and *epistemic violence*. The term *difference* denotes how postcolonial literatures exposes categories of difference:

By categories of difference we mean [...] the discourses that constructed the colonizing distinctions between, among others, “us” and “them”, “civilized” and “savage”, “Christian” and “heathen”, “self and “other”, “British” and “Aborigine”, “subject” and “object”, “colonizers” and “colonized”. [...] [T]he project of imperialism structures the colony around a series of hierarchical differences based on nationality, religion, race and ethnicity.

(Edwards, 2008, p. 17).

These dichotomies that Edwards (2008) emphasizes, reveal a power imbalance that Edwards (2008) argues that postcolonial literature can uncover, drawing largely on the work of Homi K. Bhabha (1997). Postcolonial literature illustrates how difference in colonial times was systematically upheld through the placement within categories, and how these categories denoted different values. It also reveals how the colonizing “self” creates the language and defines everything that differs from the “self” as “other”. This denotes a power center where everything or everyone outside of this power center is considered part of a periphery and is as such “othered” from the power center. The imperialistic thinking was based on these fundamental dichotomies, denoting “us” and “them”, “master” and “servant” (Ashcroft et al, 2003; as cited in Eisenmann, 2015, p. 218). These dualistic and binary concepts have played a central role in early postcolonial texts, while more current approaches emphasize that the two perspectives (the colonizer and the colonized) have become implicated in each other (Delanoy, 2017, p. 122; Eisenmann, 2015, p. 219). This connects to an understanding that an “authentic” native culture or an “authentic” Western culture from pre-colonial times, do not exist: cultures mutually implicate each other, as can be understood through the term of hybridity.

The term *Hybridity* refers to a sense of hybridized self or having a hybrid identity as the result of colonialism. Edwards (2008) states that “the citizens of postcolonial nations regularly find themselves caught between incompatible cultures or dispersed among multiple cultures” (Edwards, 2008, p. 139). According to Edwards (2008), hybridity can also lead to a sense of dislocation and a lack of belonging due to the diaspora of colonization (Edwards, 2008, p. 140). The word *diaspora* “can refer to people who have been dispersed, displaced or dislocated from their homeland due to exile, forced migration, immigration or resettlement” (Edwards, 2008, p. 150). For instance, the term applies to the black Africans who were forcibly taken from their countries and shipped to America to be sold as slaves, or the large number of Cubans who immigrated from Cuba to Miami during Castro’s rule in the 1950s and 1960s. It is closely related to the term *hybridity*, but it is not a precondition for hybridity. The sense of hybridity can also be present among colonized people who were not dislocated or did not dislocate themselves, from their homeland. According to Bhabha (1997), hybridity can also be part of subverting cultural authority:

Bhabha [...] locates the subversion of cultural authority in hybridization. Hybridity is therefore the moment in which the discourse of colonial authority loses its coherent grip on meaning and opens itself outward to the trace of the language of the other. [...]

This is because hybridity undermines the single voice of cultural authority and foregrounds a double-voicing process that includes the trace of the other.

(Bhaba, 1997; as cited in Edwards, 2008, p. 141).

Through this perspective, hybridity challenges and subverts the sense of “cultural authority” imposed upon the colonized nation. Hybridity challenges senses of cultural authenticity by portraying how cultures affect each other and result in one culture including traces of the other culture. This sentiment, put forth by Bhabha, is also echoed by other scholars within the field (see Delanoy, 2017; Eisenmann, 2015). Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin (2002) places hybridity as the very source of cultural redefinition (Ashcroft, et al, 2002, p. 77).

Epistemic violence is part of a larger discourse on *violence*. During the project of colonialism, violence was justified in the name of “spreading civilization” and gaining colonial rule (Edwards, 2008, p. 62). This colonial violence “sought to impose borders and boundaries” (Edwards, 2008, p. 62), including “new borders on the native’s land after the European power declared its ownership of the colony” (Edwards, 2008, p. 62). Physical violence was part of securing ownership of land as well as keeping the land. In terms of establishing and keeping control, several forms of violence were applied, and colonial violence is situated in the frame of regulating and controlling the other (Edwards, 2008, p. 64). Ania Loomba (1998) states that “[c]olonial violence is understood as including an “epistemic” aspect, i.e. an attack on the culture, ideas, and value systems of the colonized people (Loomba, 1998; as cited in Edwards, 2008, p. 65). This attack on a people’s culture, ideas, and value systems is a form of epistemic violence. Gayatri Spivak (1988) states that *Epistemic violence* is the forcible replacement of one structure of beliefs with another (Spivak, 1988; as cited in Edwards, 2008, p. 65). In this sense, *epistemic violence* is also connected to *hybridity*. As a new religion, for instance, is forced upon a people, the people subjected to this might practice a hybridized form of the new religion that encompasses both the new beliefs and traditional beliefs. *Epistemic violence* is at the same time a threat to a nation’s existing ways of living and their belief systems. There are many elements that can be explored in more depth related to *epistemic violence*. In postcolonial theory, the term *memory* is also central. A loss of collective memory regarding, for instance, traditional religious beliefs, can be a result of epistemic violence.

2.5 Intercultural (Communicative) Competence

Intercultural communicative competence has become increasingly important during the last two decades, where it has become apparent that in both politics and in the media, there is a need for intercultural understanding and communication (Hoff, 2020, p. 69). The English curriculum mirrors this increased focus as it has incorporated intercultural competence into several aspects of the curriculum, such as its core elements and central values, which will be examined in detail in chapter four of this thesis, “Educational Context”. The English classroom, or any second language classroom in general, offers a powerful arena for intercultural explorations and learning because the very process of acquiring a second or foreign language entails being socialized into the culture that accompanies the language(s) (Fenner, 2012; as cited in Hoff, 2020, p. 69). While this offers an understanding of why intercultural competence is a well-suited match for the English classroom, it does not explain what intercultural competence really *is*, and how a teacher should work to foster intercultural competence among their pupils. In the following, I will provide an account of what intercultural competence entails, as well as a brief account of its development in the foreign language field, and lastly an explanation of how it fits into ENG01-04. While intercultural competence often is accompanied by the term “communicative competence”, the main area of concern for this thesis is intercultural competence.

2.5.1 Intercultural Competence

Intercultural competence, or IC, is a term that despite it being commonly used in academia and in the field of didactics, seems to have eluded a precise definition with a consensus amongst the users. Darla K. Deardorff (2009) highlights this problem area concerning IC by asking “What exactly is intercultural competence?” (Deardorff, 2009). She further elaborates on the backdrop of asking such a seemingly apparent question by stating that “[t]his question has been debated by experts for decades and a myriad of terminology has been used including global competence, global citizenship, cross-cultural competence, international competence, intercultural effectiveness, intercultural sensitivity, to name a few.” (Deardorff, 2009). While these terms do not disagree with each other, they show that IC is a term loaded with different perspectives: “intercultural effectiveness” and “intercultural sensitivity” seem to have in common that IC is a skillset that can be acquired and used actively to navigate in other cultures and show sensitivity in interacting with other humans from other cultures. “Global citizenship” can, on the other hand, signal that intercultural competence is concerned with a mutual, global culture, and obtaining intercultural competence is part of acquiring “a pass”

into this global community. This perspective is of course not void of agency from the learner or from the person demonstrating intercultural competence, and as Deardorff (2009) points out, “nearly all definitions of intercultural competence include more than knowledge of other cultures, since knowledge alone is not enough to constitute intercultural competence” (Deardorff, 2009). To summarize briefly, intercultural competence entails various factors, such as both cross-cultural/inter-cultural and international/global knowledge, but a key element is that this knowledge must be turned into a competence that can be employed in real-life situations. Intercultural competence involves the development of a person’s skills and attitudes in successfully interacting with others of diverse backgrounds (Deardorff, 2009).

Hild Elisabeth Hoff (2020) also points to the number of theoretical models for intercultural competence and concludes that “Intercultural Competence is a concept which cannot easily be tied down to one authoritative definition” (Hoff, 2020, p. 73). However, she points to Michael Byram as a “pioneering and particularly influential voice in the academic discourse” (Hoff, 2020, p. 73) that is tied to foreign language didactics. Byram’s (2020) definition of intercultural competence builds on existing FLT (Foreign Language Teaching) theory, and further expands on linguistic theory from both Chomsky and Hymes, the latter of which developed the term *communicative competence* (Hoff, 2020, p. 70). Byram employs the definition of “competence” provided by CEFR (the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages): “[competence is] the ability to mobilize and deploy relevant values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and/or understanding in order to respond appropriately and effectively to the demands, challenges and opportunities that are presented by a given type of context” (Council of Europe, 2018b: 32; as cited in Byram, 2020, p. 28). Byram credits Hyme’s emphasis on sociolinguistic competence as fundamental to the development of communicative language teaching (Byram, 2020, p. 28). It is apparent by reading CEFR’s definition of “competence” that sociolinguistic practice has been influential in the FLT field, where learners are to “respond appropriately and effectively to the demands, challenges and opportunities that are presented by a given type of context”. The ability to “respond appropriately” in any given context, denotes knowledge of language beyond just words; it requires knowledge and capability to choose the most appropriate form for conveying one’s meaning through both choice of utterance and delivery. The communicative skillsets that are valued in CEFR’s definition of competence, can be considered outcomes of sociolinguistic insights. While intercultural competence is the main concern for the purposes of this thesis, the competence aspect of it is closely related to a communicative aspect, and thus the communicative aspects intertwine with intercultural competence.

Byram's *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence* from 1997 has been widely read and discussed and, as Hoff (2020) remarked, Byram has been a great influence in the field of ICC. In the 2020 revisitation of his original book, Byram credits both the Council of Europe with its framework for language learning (CEFR) and Jan van Ek, who worked with the Council of Europe in developing the framework (Byram, 2020, p. 29; Byram, 2020, p. 48). While it is beyond the scope of this thesis to expand in detail on CEFR, the CEFR has a strong emphasis on communicative competence and language functions (Carlsen et al., 2020, p. 33). It is also worth remarking that the curriculum ENG01-04 is a "third-generation document with regard to the CEFR" (Carlsen et.al, 2020, p. 35), which further supports the emphasis on intercultural communicative competence in the English classroom in Norwegian schools.

To clarify and offer some summary of this chapter so far, intercultural communicative competence is today an integral part of the curriculum ENG01-04, which is not particular to the Norwegian school context. The concept of ICC has been developed over the last two to three decades by scholars and academics and it has found its way into the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. While this chapter has shown that it is not a concept that can easily be subjected to one authoritative definition, intercultural competence is concerned with developing competence and skillsets that allow people to interact interculturally and cross-culturally, with efficiency in communication and sensitivity to other cultures, around the globe. Cultural learning and understanding are part of developing intercultural communicative competence, which is further influenced by sociolinguistic theory. This elevates language to more than just words strung together in coherent utterances. Language is part of a wider cultural context, and in addition to this, body language, facial expressions, tone of voice, and choice of words become equally important to glossary. In (very) short, intercultural communicative competence should equip pupils with the necessary tools for navigating in a global context.

2.5.2 How intercultural competence can be developed through teaching literature

There are many ways in which teachers can structure their teaching to encourage and foster intercultural competence. While Anne-Brit Fenner (2012) suggests that the foreign language classroom is a powerful arena for intercultural learning because culture accompanies languages (Fenner, 2012; as cited in Hoff, 2020, p. 69), Magne Dypedahl offers that fiction provides numerous possibilities for developing intercultural competence (Dypedahl, 2019, p.

109). Through literature, pupils gain access to language through a portrayal of someone else's culture, through events and characters that are situated in another cultural environment than the pupils themselves live or partake in. Dypedahl (2019) suggests that one way of using literature to develop intercultural competence is to encourage pupils to put themselves in the fictional character's shoes and reflect upon the change of perspective (Dypedahl, 2019, p. 109). Literary texts provide opportunities for pupils to meet literary characters, and adolescent readers tend to identify with the characters they encounter in texts (Appleyard, 1991, p. 102). Through forming a sort of acquaintance with various literary characters, the pupils are exposed to different mindsets, different ways of communicating, and different communicative registers. They gain access to someone else's head, inner thoughts, and feelings, as well as someone else's situation in life, and literature is particularly well suited for reflection both on the level of the individual and the wider sociocultural level (see Appleyard, 1991; Bredella, 2004). The characters the pupils encounter will be situated in a wider context, socially and culturally. Dypedahl stresses that the choice of text is important, as literature also can be a good starting point for reflection and discussion about stereotypes and group identities (Dypedahl, 2019, p. 109). In addition to the text choice, it is equally important to be mindful of how the texts are analyzed (Dypedahl, 2019, p. 109).

3.0 Previous research

In this chapter, I will put forth two studies that have been conducted on teaching multicultural texts in the EFL classroom, and one study that shows the relevance on focusing on didactics that emphasize analytical work. The first study argues that multicultural texts are beneficial for fostering intercultural communicative competence. This study also found that the pupils in the study benefited from interpreting and discussing their readings with each other. The second study shows how *BaC*, as a particular multicultural text, can be used to increase transcultural learning. The final study explores how literature didactics in different European countries vary and argues that analytical and social learning is beneficial to increase literary understanding. This study also shows how national curricula influence literature didactics.

3.1 Multicultural texts can increase intercultural communicative competence

An action research experience that was conducted in an advanced EFL classroom at a public university in Colombia in 2011, proposes the incorporation of authentic, multicultural literary texts in the EFL classroom to develop intercultural communicative competence (Gômes Rodriguez, 2013). The researcher, Luis Fernando Gômes Rodriguez (2013), found that the

students “became critical readers at the level of their own capacities as they were encouraged to read, interpret, and discuss diverse literary selection in a foreign language” (Gômes Rodriguez, 2013). This shows how intercultural communicative competence grew in the environment of three pillars: reading, interpretation, and discussion. Results from this study also indicate that the participants critically discussed deep elements of culture, such as discrimination, marginalization, generation gaps, gender, and social inequality. This shows the potential that multicultural literatures have in facilitating conversations that emphasize the human experience, which in turn contribute to the development of intercultural competence.

3.2 Born a Crime: Stories from a South African Childhood in the EFL classroom

There have been some studies conducted on the use of *Born a Crime: Stories from a South African Childhood* in the EFL classroom. Sabine Binder (2022) discusses the use of several literary works that originate from South Africa for the EFL benefit, in a German-speaking Swiss curricular context. She highlights the benefit of teaching Noah’s *BaC* as “Noah challenges learners’ views of the world and thus facilitates their adoption of multiple perspectives” (Binder, 2022, p. 63). She also states the benefits of the memoir’s inspirational potential, as it is “a story of resilience” (Binder, 2022, p. 63). In addition, she offers for consideration that Noah’s sense of isolation could resonate with adolescent readers, as it highlights a search for belonging that adolescents could identify with (Binder, 2022, p. 63). In her concluding remarks, she offers that *BaC*, along with other texts written in English but originating from South Africa, have a particular educational potential for transcultural learning. These texts are, according to Binder (2022) “intended to promote insights into the hybridity, fluidity, and entangledness of cultures and subjectivities” (Binder, 2022, p. 71). The texts call for “an ethical response” (Binder, 2022, p. 71) to the reading, which is, by Binder’s conclusion likely to positively affect learners’ knowledge, attitudes, and skills (Binder, 2022, p. 71).

While Binder (2022) uses the term *transcultural* and not *intercultural*, the benefits of intercultural learning must be considered equal. Christiane Lütge (2017), who is also concerned with intercultural learning, offers that in recent years the term *transculturality* has emerged as a new approach to culture, that is “particularly suited to exploring the hybridity of individual and collective identities and the cultural connections between people, texts, and narratives in an increasingly globalized world (Lütge, 2017, p. 161). She refers to Werner Delanoy’s essay from 2013, where Delanoy (2013) discusses the shift in the prefixes from “inter- to trans”, and questions whether intercultural learning suggests a dichotomous view

with essentialist notions of “otherness”, whereas the prefix “trans” may open for wider inclusions. Yet, Lütge states, in common with others, (see Maria Eisenmann, 2015), that the two concepts of interculturality and transculturality are not at all contradictory and belong together as part of an inseparable whole (Lütge, 2017, p. 163).

3.3 Analytical approaches to text understanding in the upper secondary classroom

Maritha Johansson (2021) discusses literary socialization through education in her comparative study of Swedish and French upper-secondary pupils’ reception of a narrative text and the paradox of literature education. The paradox of literature education is concerned with the balance between reading for pleasure and reading for assessment (Johansson, 2021, p. 4). Johansson’s study discusses literary socialization through education in relation to cultural contexts and educational traditions which are reflected in national curricula for upper secondary schools, to gain a better understanding of how two Western European countries organize their literature education. The study is of particular interest as it found that a combination of analytical and emotional reading seems to be the most efficient way to create skillful readers (Johansson, 2021, p. 21). The study highlights the influence that national curricula have on literature education. It also validates the analysis as a tool to gain literary understanding rather than considering the analysis an end goal.

4.0 Educational Context: The English curriculum in LK20

The aim of this chapter is to shed light on how and why postcolonial literature, and more specifically *BaC*, belongs in upper secondary education. The chapter connects ENG01-04 for grade 11 in General Studies to relevant theory about postcolonial literature in the classroom put forth by Christiane Lütge, Werner Delanoy and Lothar Bredella. In this chapter I discuss elements from the *Relevance and Central Values* for the curriculum, as well as elements from the *Core Curriculum*. There is a particular emphasis on the core element *Democracy and Participation*, which belongs to the *Core Curriculum* of LK20, as this is particularly relevant for *BaC*. The main emphasis of this chapter is on the curriculum’s explicit dealings with intercultural competence, and the chapter offers a brief discussion on how postcolonial literature can meet the demands from the curriculum. The chapter also outlines some of the competence aims for year 11 in General Studies, as these competence aims justify the reading of literary texts in the classroom.

4.1 Competence aims from ENG01-04

The Norwegian curriculum for the English subject after year 11, is divided into 17 competence aims. Three of them explicitly regard reading, stating that pupils shall:

1. *read, discuss, and reflect on the content and language features and literary devices in various types of texts, including self-chosen texts.*
2. *read, analyze, and interpret fictional texts in English.*
3. *read and compare different factual texts on the same topic from different sources and critically assess the reliability of the sources*

(Utdanningsdirektoratet [UDIR], 2020).

These aims show that reading is an important part of the curriculum. To fulfill the second aim, “read, analyze and interpret fictional texts in English”, literature seems like an apparent match. This aim could at the very least justify reading literature in the classroom, and it legitimates spending time and effort on researching the use of literature for classroom purposes. At the same time, it is important to be aware that “fictional texts” are not limited to literary fiction.

Even though reading literature still holds a central place in the curriculum, we should perhaps be cautious of taking this position for granted. There have been many interesting developments in the field of literacy that challenge the traditional view of reading, which in turn might challenge the view of reading literature. David Barton (2007) suggests that a precise definition of “literacy” might be an impossible task, but the term has expanded in recent years and can entail economic literacy, cultural literacy, and political literacy (Barton, 2007). Multimodal and visual media with symbolic imagery can also be a part of the extended literacy term or be considered a visual form of literacy (Franker, 2013, p. 681). This challenges the previously natural connection between reading fiction to increase literacy, as many other forms of materials could be used in their place. The extended literacy term renders “text” a term that entail many other forms of written and oral presentations, which I will return to later in this chapter.

The second competence aim that I have included here, and that includes *reading*, specifically emphasizes *fictional texts*. *BaC* cannot be considered strictly *fictional* as it is also very much a factual text. Still, the competence aim is relevant as the genre of the memoir shares many features and devices with fictional genres: such as descriptions, the building of narratives (often through anecdotes and digressions), and a rich character gallery. As such, it

lends itself to analyzing and interpreting on the same level that a fictional text such as a novel does.

The third competence aim that explicitly regards *reading* is concerned with factual texts and reading and comparing factual texts on the same topic. On the topic of democracy, for instance, *BaC* is suitable both as a fictional and factual representation. Pupils are also to learn to critically assess their sources and their reliability, and the subjective representations put forth in *BaC* provides a valuable foundation for discussions about first-person narration and trustworthiness. Pupils could, for instance, be encouraged to fact-check *BaC* by turning to other factual sources, such as history entries or factual articles.

4.2. Relevance and Central Values

While there have been developments within the field of literacy, and the term “fictional text” today encompasses more than a novel or a short story, there are other parts of the curriculum that can be met appropriately by using literature in the classroom. In the section called “Relevance and Central Values” for ENG01-04, it is stated that:

The subject shall give the pupils the foundation for communicating with others, both locally and globally, regardless of cultural or linguistic background. English shall help the pupils to develop an intercultural understanding of different ways of living, ways of thinking, and communication patterns.

(Udir, 2020)

Reading literature can offer an entry into helping pupils develop an intercultural understanding of different ways of living and different ways of thinking, as well as expose them to different communication patterns. The “Relevance and Central Values” also formulates that: “The subject shall develop the pupils’ understanding that their views of the world are culture-dependent. This can open for new ways to interpret the world, promote curiosity and engagement and help to prevent prejudice” (Udir, 2020). This, along with the earlier extract from Udir, reflects that the curriculum emphasizes intercultural communicative competence.

4.3 Democracy and Participation

Since the 1990s, the potential of literature for cultural learning has been emphasized in the EFL classroom (Lütge, 2017, p. 160), largely because of how cultural learning has been connected to language learning. Delanoy (2017) suggests that there are several main

cornerstones to introducing postcolonial literature in the ELT (English Language Teaching) classroom. He argues that “the inclusion of power-critical perspectives is indispensable” (Delanoy, 2017, p. 134) in the ELT classroom. Postcolonial literature can function as a lens for pupils to explore power dynamics and become aware and critical of power structures. Power-critical perspectives must be from angles, or human experiences, that are outside the center of power. If pupils are to gain cultural learning that encompasses critical awareness, it is crucial that they are allowed to experience literature through lenses that can look *at* power holding centers, and not through lenses *within* the power center. Delanoy (2017) stresses that the power centers go beyond Western or Eurocentric perspectives, as today’s world is a globally interconnected world that struggles with colonial legacies and gross social inequalities (Delanoy, 2017, p. 134). He considers the teaching of power-critical perspectives an opportunity for pupils to gain learning that can “help address practices of oppression in the interest of a more equitable and democratic world” (Delanoy, 2017, p. 134). Delanoy also suggests that this form of learning entails creative processes of developing new perspectives for both teachers and learners, which places both teachers and learners in roles of agency (Delanoy, 2017, p. 134). This connects to the curriculum’s emphasis on democracy and participation, where “school shall provide the pupils with the opportunity to participate in and learn what democracy means in practice” (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2017).

An entry to learning what democratic practices and values do mean in practice, can be to explore contexts where democratic practices and values are not present. The curriculum clearly states that pupils are to gain an “understanding of the basic rules of democracy and the importance of protecting them” (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2017). Pupils can gain an understanding of the general rules of democracy and the importance of protecting these rules, by exploring contexts that are void of democratic practices and through perspectives that do not come from the power center, such as the perspective of the mixed-raced child, Trevor Noah, in *BaC*. By reading *BaC*, pupils will experience a society and context situated in the transition between Apartheid rule and democracy, which can lead to many insights about democracy as a political system. The importance of perspective is also mirrored in the curriculum’s core values, which emphasize the inclusion of minority and indigenous perspectives in the teaching (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2017). History shows how minority groups and indigenous people have been treated unfairly where undemocratic practices have led to exploitation and oppression. Postcolonial literature, where power-critical perspectives are employed, can be a powerful representation of both this history, and the legacy left behind after it.

4.4 Core Elements in ENG01-04

The Core Elements in the curriculum uses an extended literacy term (see Franker, 2013; Barton, 2007), where “the concept of text is used in a broad sense: texts can be spoken and written, printed and digital, graphic and artistic [...] [and] [t]he texts can contain writing, pictures, audio, drawing, graphs, numbers and other forms of expression that are combined to enhance and present a message” (Udir, 2020). This makes it necessary to define what type of text *Born A Crime: Stories from a South African Childhood* is: it is a memoir that can be considered postcolonial literature, and it portrays both elements that are arguably fictional and nonfictional, with a storyline than spans from the 1990s and up until today, as the storyteller often includes his own, present-day reflections on various matters. While the story claims to be true, as an autobiographical representation of the storyteller’s life, it includes anecdotes with detailed dialogues and descriptions from Noah’s childhood that he could impossibly remember to the precise detail they are conveyed in. This creates a hybrid text that is both fictional and non-fictional. This resonates with Fetherling’s (2001) description of the memoir as “more daring in construction” than the autobiography, which follows stricter conventions of non-fiction (Fetherling, 2001).

The extended literacy term opens for a multitude of texts, where there is an inclusion of a variety of expressions used to enhance and present a message that was not previously considered as text. *BaC* is as such a traditional form of text, and it is a literary text. The core elements also express that the texts can be “formal and informal, fictional and factual, contemporary and historical” (Udir, 2020). *BaC* lends itself particularly versatile in this regard, being a memoir that is informal, fictional, and factual at the same time, in addition to telling a story that is both historical and contemporary. As such, it manages to meet several of the form-related criteria outlined by Udir (2020).

In terms of content, the texts employed in class should, according to the core elements, help the pupils develop “knowledge and experience of linguistic and cultural diversity, as well as their insight into ways of living, ways of thinking and traditions of indigenous peoples” (Udir, 2020). The core elements emphasize that pupils should acquire language as well as knowledge about culture and society through encounters with texts (Udir, 2020). The encounters with text will contribute to the pupils’ intercultural competence and will enable them to “deal with different ways of living, ways of thinking and communication patterns” (Udir, 2020). The encounters with these texts should be based on reflection, interpretation, and critical assessment (Udir, 2020). Pupils “shall build the foundation for seeing their own

identity and others' identities in a multilingual and multicultural context" (Udir, 2020). These requirements can be met by using all the texts described through the core elements' broad understanding of what constitutes as a text, and a literary text such as *BaC* can certainly be relevant to meet many of the content-related requirements that should enable pupils to develop intercultural competence. Linguistically as well, the memoir offers many interesting possibilities: there is a multitude of languages in use in South Africa, and the English language that is most used has stronger parallels to British varieties of English than American varieties, due to colonial heritage. A textual and literary analysis approach to classroom work with *BaC* opens for reflection, interpretation and critical assessment of the text and its content.

Yet, with the extended literary term that encompasses *text*, it is important to consider whether a memoir such as *BaC* is as worthwhile as other forms of texts. One could for instance ask if the same learning outcomes could not be met with other texts and other medias than a traditional, literary text in book-format. In fact, the use of literary texts in the foreign classroom is disputed (Bredella, 2004, p. 375). One argument is that the language of literary texts is not important for mastering practical situations in the foreign culture (Bredella, 2004, p. 376). This critique seems to contain a presupposition that literary texts cannot entail relevant, practical language that can be transferred from the pages of the book to real-life situations. Furthermore, Bredella (2004), puts forth that another critique against reading literature in the foreign classroom is related to a view that reading is class-related, and that literary texts can as such present disadvantages for lower-class pupils (Bredella, 2004, p. 376). Lastly, Bredella (2004) points to the argument that it is not motivational for foreign language learners to "have to identify stylistic and structural characteristics of literary texts" (Bredella, 2004, p. 376). These arguments against using literary texts in the classroom stem from those who are "primarily interested in learning foreign languages" (Bredella, 2004, p. 376). This triggers the question of what a language actually *is* – and does perhaps indicate a perspective on language as a system: a language consists of morphology, phonology, syntax and semantics. While these technical elements are undisputable factors of a language, there is also the perspective that "culture accompanies languages" (Fenner, 2012; as cited in Hoff, 2020, p. 69). The core elements of the curriculum are particularly explicit in emphasizing the importance of intercultural competence, insight, and knowledge about societies and cultures as well as learning about other identities in a multicultural context. So, while more technical approaches could be argued for in terms of learning the system of a foreign language, a literary text is a solid opportunity for integrating language learning with cultural learning.

There are a multitude of arguments for why literary texts lend themselves well for intercultural understanding (Bredella, 2004, p. 378). Firstly, these texts

encourage readers to imagine a world different from their own and to put themselves in the position of others. Being able to see things from the other's perspective comprises two aspects of intercultural understanding: first, we become aware of the relativity of our attitudes, values and world views; and then we transcend them when we extend our sympathies and become aware of the needs, hopes and fears of others.

(Bredella, 2004, p. 378).

This sentiment resonates with Nussbaum's (1997) "sympathetic imagination" and shows how literary texts allow us to gain perspective not only of the "others" that we encounter through textual worlds, but also of ourselves and our integrated worldviews. Furthermore, literary texts offer encounters with characters who are situated in a foreign culture as complex, dynamic characters who perhaps are holding and negotiating contradictory values – they become subjects, and not objects (Bredella, 2004, p. 378). Bredella states that intercultural understanding can result in "reducing members of the foreign culture to objects when we believe we know what determines their behavior" (Bredella, 2004, p. 378). The literary encounter with characters that are the result of reading literary texts, prevents this objectification, as the characters we meet through aesthetic reading are presented as complex subjects we can identify with (Bredella, 2004, p. 378). Postcolonial and minority texts are particularly significant for intercultural understanding that emphasizes the subjectivity of the members of a culture, as they "often dramatize intercultural conflicts and reveal causes for misunderstanding and misrecognition of others" (Bredella, 2004, p. 378). *BaC*, as a postcolonial memoir, can then be considered a particularly useful text in enhancing intercultural competence, which the core elements stress as an integral part of language learning.

5.0 Analysis

Born a Crime: Stories from a South African Childhood (2016) is a collection of autobiographical stories from the life of the South African comedian Trevor Noah. The combined stories provide an insight into a multitude of topics that can be relevant in the English classroom and the book lends itself as useful for teaching, as discussed in the chapter above. The stories vary in both form and content and many of the stories are "bite-sized" and revolve around a funny incident in Noah's life. The stories are anecdotal and often

humorous, while at the same time informative. The backdrop of Noah's personal experiences is the wider cultural context of South Africa at the end of the apartheid regime and the early post-apartheid years. Postcolonial history is intertwined with Noah's life story and his memories of childhood in South Africa. His childhood experiences are as such a portrayal of South Africa in the 1990s from the perspective of one of the lowest-ranking members of society: a half-white and half-black child, who, by definition, was an illegality. Noah was born a crime, and the choice of the title indicates that the book will tell a story that is both personal and societal, which is, of course, in line with the genre of the memoir.

This chapter is structured in a manner that has been inspired by Drangeid's (2014) approach to literary analysis for classroom purposes. As put forth earlier in this thesis, Drangeid (2014) outlines an analysis model that aims to explore a text's didactical possibilities and challenges (Drangeid, 2014, p. 86). The analysis should give the teacher a broad understanding of the text, both in terms of form and content, in addition to an understanding of how the text will work for the pupils (Drangeid, 2014, p. 86). The main goal of this type of analysis is not to reach a definite conclusion about what the text is about, or to place the teacher in a position as the "master interpreter" of the text, but for the teacher to gain an understanding of the didactic potential of the text (Drangeid, 2014, p. 86-87). These theories, along with postcolonial theory, create the foundation for this analysis.

I will refer to the protagonist of the memoir as Trevor and the author as Noah. I will also break the book down into different "texts". The book is not one text or one story, it is a collection of texts and stories. This chapter will not provide a collected analysis of the full book but of three specific texts from the book. These texts are Chapter 1, "Run", chapter 4, "Chameleon", and chapter 15, "Go Hitler". I have chosen these particular chapters from the memoir, as they each have particular elements that are well-suited for intercultural learning. "Run", as the first chapter of the memoir, is also particularly suited for the reader to begin navigating in the worlds within this memoir. It offers necessary contextual information that will be helpful for the reader throughout the reading of the memoir. "Chameleon" was chosen because it clearly portrays Trevor's sense of hybridity, both culturally and linguistically. Cultural hybridity is also portrayed in "Run", but "Chameleon" is to an extent more personal. Where "Run" portrays how society is affected by colonial heritage, for instance through the epistemic violence through the Christening of the native people, "Chameleon" shows how Trevor as an individual navigates his identity in society. Finally, "Go Hitler" offers a valuable representation of perspectives and power dynamics, as it shows how history representation is skewed and it questions the concept of "the world's biggest atrocity". This chapter also

utilizes humor to a great extent and shows how cultural misunderstandings can occur when cultures do not have reciprocal knowledge of each other.

Before digging deeper into the texts, I will look at some general aspects they have in common. While the chapters can be read as independent texts, they are written in a chronological order that takes us from Trevor's early years and into adulthood, and the memoir functions as a complete entity with features that occur throughout the book.

5.1. General features of *BaC*: texts in bold and narration

Throughout *BaC*, there are some specific features that repeat themselves and that are of importance to the understanding of the memoir. For instance, there is an untitled and unnumbered text typed in bold writing before every new chapter. These *texts in bold*, which I will call them, vary in both form and content, but they are all written with first-person narration. As such, they do not differ from the main body of the book, by which I mean the chapters. Some of these texts in bold are Noah's reflections about his own life, often in the present tense. Others are written in past tense and are informative to the point that they resemble short factual texts one might expect to find in textbooks for young readers. There is a certain playfulness in bending the norms of factual texts that point in the direction of "reader-friendliness" toward youths, such as implementing the word "you", structuring the paragraphs in short sentences, and conveying messages through a made-up monologue that is easy to follow. The texts in bold offer information that is two-fold: firstly, they offer context in terms of how the book is structured. Secondly, they offer context about the historical and cultural setting the chapter we are about to enter is situated in. It becomes apparent that each bold text will be relevant to the coming chapter. This helps the reader to create image and content schemas that will be necessary for the understanding of the proceeding chapter; it practically scaffolds for the reading ahead.

Another feature that is at work throughout the memoir, is the employment of two narrators. While Drangeid (2014) suggests that an internal perspective makes it harder for a reader to navigate in a text, the spatial and temporal information in *BaC* at times resemble a third-person perspective and a storyteller that is omnipresent. This is partly accomplished through tense changes, as the tense alternates between present and past tense, though it is predominately written in the past tense. The alternation of tense creates different forms of narration and indicates two "versions" of Trevor as the narrator. The texts in bold and the chapters both have the same first-person narrator in terms that it is Trevor, but it is not the same Trevor, as one Trevor is situated in the past, and one is situated in the present. As

mentioned, some of the texts in bold are written in the present tense, and some are written in the past tense. The ones in present tense serve as comments and reflections from Grown-up-Trevor, a Trevor that looks back and knows how the story we are just entering, will end. The Trevor we meet within the chapters, written in the past tense, is the “child-Trevor”, along with whom we experience the life grown-up-Trevor wants to show us. Grown-up-Trevor is still very much visible in the chapters, adding to much of the humor with the adult perspective looking back at childhood, but the child’s perspective is also central. The adult perspective denotes a greater spatial distance to the story than the child-Trevor provides. At the same time, both narrators are connected as they are the same person, just narrating from different temporal and spatial positions, and as a consequence of being first-person narrators, they appear reliable. This is part of what the memoir, as a biographical genre, promises: the reader expects authenticity and reliable information. The two narrators even contribute to an increased sense of reliability: the ethos of the text is strengthened by Grown-up-Trevor’s commentary, as it is easier to rely on an adult than on a child’s perspective.

The element of two narrators might sound confusing, but it is smoothly integrated and functions as a useful aid in both navigation and contextualization. In the very first text in bold, there is no childish perspective present. As such, the first narrator, or the first representation of the protagonist, is grown-up-Trevor who explains the genius of Apartheid. In chapter one, “Run”, Child-Trevor’s experience of apartheid is portrayed. The text in bold has effectively introduced the reader to Trevor’s position as an all-knowing storyteller who has contextualized the world of Apartheid South Africa for the reader, and the reader can then sympathize with child-Trevor’s experiences of Apartheid. As the reader proceeds throughout the memoir, they must navigate between the perspective of grown-up-Trevor and child-Trevor. This is a feature that repeats itself throughout the memoir, and the reader quickly becomes accustomed to the two narrators, most prominently signaled through a change from past tense to present tense. This is not to say that young readers would necessarily identify there being two narrators. However, the functions that the two narrators denote, regarding navigation and contextualization, remain, regardless of an awareness of the inner workings of these functions.

Finally, before proceeding with an analysis of “Run”, it is well worth spending some time on the opening pages of *BaC*. Before the table of contents, an extract from the “Immorality Act” of 1927 is included. Prior to this, there is a dedication to Noah’s mother, as well as a photograph of the two of them, where Trevor’s mother is young, and Trevor is a child. The front cover of the book also depicts a graphic representation of Trevor as a young

adult graffitied on a building, and a picture of a woman on the street below the graffitied picture, most likely his mother, looking at him. It is important to stress how the opening pages allow for the reader to easily begin to navigate in the text. Drangeid (2014) proposes that the reader's navigation within the text is often the most beneficial first step to make when beginning to grasp a text (Drangeid, 2014, p. 90). Focusing on this aspect first allows for the reader to understand which world they have entered, without getting stuck in one way of interpreting the text (Drangeid, 2014, p. 90). It simply informs the reader of "where they are", so to speak. In *BaC* we understand from the front cover, the childhood picture, and the dedication, that Noah's mother is important to Noah, and therefore important to the story we are about to enter. The inclusion of the extract from the "Immorality Act, 1927", informs us that we are in South Africa, as it explicitly states that this act is enacted by "the King's Most Excellent Majesty, The Senate and the House of Assembly of the Union of South Africa". The aim of the Immorality Act from 1927 is "[t]o prohibit carnal intercourse between Europeans and natives and other acts in relation thereto" (Noah, 2016). Readers might already draw a connection between the inclusion of this act, and the title of the book. The Immorality Act from 1927 serves as an explanation as to why Trevor is in fact born a crime: his parents broke the law in conceiving him. This contextualization introduces the reader to a world where different laws apply. Now, we are ready to proceed to chapter one.

5.2 Analysis of Chapter 1, "Run"

As the previous subchapter points out, each chapter in *BaC* is accompanied by a text in bold. While these texts come before the chapters and are not as such included in any chapter, it is still necessary to include the text in bold in the analysis of the coming chapter. As explained, they are relevant for the understanding of the coming text. As mentioned, the bold text proceeding "Run" comes across as a somewhat playful factual text, clearly directed towards young readers. The playfulness is however strictly restricted to the form, as the content is far from joyous. The text explains that "[t]he genius of apartheid was convincing people who were the overwhelming majority to turn on each other. [...] you separate people into groups and make them hate one another so you can run them all." (Noah, 2014, p. 3). The colloquial phrases "turn on each other" and "run them all", as well as the choice of directing the text directly to an imagined "you" indicates that the intended reader is a young reader. Noah also places himself in the text, by using the pronoun "my": "My mother is Xhosa" (Noah, 2016, p. 3), which adds to a personalization and strengthens the ethos of the text: it invokes a sense of "he was there, he knows what he is talking about". All these elements speak to the young

reader. In terms of navigating in the text, we have, with the inclusion of the opening pages discussed in the prior subchapter, already established many things: we are in South Africa, we are in the historical time of apartheid, our storyteller was born into this time, and he is telling “us” his story. Roles have as such been assigned.

Noah begins his storytelling by establishing that apartheid was much more complex than the white population having rights and privileges over a uniform black population:

All non-whites were systematically classified into various groups and subgroups. Then these groups were given differing levels of rights and privileges in order to keep them at odds. ... the starkest of these divisions were between South Africa’s two dominant groups, the Zulu and the Xhosa.

(Noah, 2016, p. 3).

The white man created divisions between the different tribes of blacks and everyone “non-white”, and Noah emphasizes the ramifications of this: “[t]hen Apartheid fell, Mandela walked free, and black South Africa went to war with itself” (Noah, 2016, p. 4). The text in bold is just a bit over one page, and the shortness of it indicates that the information that has been provided will be important for the rest of the book, or at least for the following chapter. It has also effectively contextualized the story at hand and the reader can make up some expectations about where the story will go from here.

The first chapter, “Run”, depicts a conflict between Trevor’s Xhosa mother and a Zulu bus driver, and due to the opening pages, the reader already knows that relations between Xhosa people and Zulu people are complicated. Grown-up-Trevor in the bold text has provided important information that the reader can use to complement and fill in the gaps in the chapter at hand. For instance, the argument between Trevor’s mom and the Zulu bus driver becomes heated when the Zulu driver hears her Xhosa accent. From the bold text, the reader knows that Zulus and Xhosas are the two dominant black groups in South Africa, and the division between these groups is particularly strong.

The chapter is centered around one main anecdote. Through detours and explanations related to various components of this anecdote, Noah manages to paint a picture of the troubled political landscape of South Africa in the 1990s, as well as of colonial heritage and the everyday dangers lurking for regular people living in Johannesburg at this time. Literary devices, such as foreshadowing and humor, are employed, making the text an interesting hybrid between fiction and non-fiction. The opening lines foreshadow that Trevor will at some point in this story, be thrown out of a moving vehicle:

I was nine years old when my mother threw me out of a moving car. It happened on a Sunday. I know it was on a Sunday, because we were coming home from church, and every Sunday in my Childhood meant church.

(Noah, 2016, p. 5).

The story will not return to the matter of Trevor being thrown out of a moving car before the final pages of the chapter, but this is how the anecdote begins, and what it will circle back to towards the end. This circle-composition captures attention, and the reader continues to read while anticipating action.

The first detour from the narrative of the anecdote is Trevor's experience with religion in his upbringing, which Noah connects to colonial rule over South Africa. He explains that his mother is a "deeply religious woman. Very Christian" (Noah, 2016, p. 5), and that "every Sunday in [his] childhood meant Church" (Noah, 2016, p. 5). Humor and irony are employed to convey how Christianity became a part of black South African culture:

Like indigenous peoples around the world, black South Africans adopted the religion of our colonizers. By "adopt" I mean it was forced on us. The white man was quite stern with the native. "You need to pray to Jesus, he said. "Jesus will save you". To which the native replied, "Well, we do need to be saved – saved from you, but that's beside the point. So let's give this Jesus thing a shot.

(Noah, 2016, p. 5-6).

Noah understates the gravity of what was in fact epistemic violence toward the natives of South Africa, with the phrasing "the white man was quite stern with the native". At the same time, it can be read just as ironically as the previous sentence ("by "adopt" I mean it was forced on us"). The word "stern" brings connotations to a parent raising their child and underlines the power dynamic between the white man and the native. The image of a parent raising their child also invokes the idea that it is for the benefit of the child. The parent is stern to help the child develop. This aligns with the idea of "the white man's burden", a common sentiment at the time of colonial rule and a phrasing coined by Rudyard Kipling (1899) through his poem by the same name. The sentiment of this phrasing being that it is the white man's responsibility to civilize and help the native man evolve, "the white man's burden" aligns with the image of a parental figure being "stern" with their child.

At the same time, the quote above is not void of resistance: "Well, we do need to be saved – saved from *you*" (Noah, 2016, p. 6). Christianity might have been forced on the native

people, but the native people could take it and use it to pray for salvation from their oppressors. They could also take it and make it their own, by integrating Christian beliefs with their existing beliefs, as Trevor's grandma does: "my grandmother balanced her Christian faith with the traditional Xhosa beliefs she grew up with, communicating with the spirits of our ancestors" (Noah, 2016, p. 6). The way Trevor's grandma integrates Christian beliefs with traditional Xhosa beliefs creates a hybrid religious identity in her. This hybridity challenges the notion that Christianity only can be practiced in the manner that the dominant culture practices it. Homi K. Bhaba (1997) states that "hybridity undermines the single voice of cultural authority and foregrounds a double-voicing process that includes the trace of the other" (Bhaba, 1997, as cited in Edwards, 2008, p. 141). Grandma's way of practicing religion shows that there is no "single voice", and as such subverts the dominant religious culture despite having adopted Christian beliefs. Her mixed religion is an example of double-voicing where Xhosa beliefs are present in a Christian context.

While Trevor's grandma allows for a mixture of beliefs which keeps her traditional beliefs alive, Trevor's mother is "Team Jesus all the way" (Noah, 2016, p. 6). As Trevor himself learns from years of going to various churches:

If you're Native American and you pray to the wolves, you're a savage. If you're African and you pray to your ancestors, you're a primitive. But when white people pray to a God who turns water into wine, well, that's just common sense.

(Noah, 2016, p. 6).

Again, Noah uses an ironic sense of humor when contrasting the different beliefs and showcasing the absurdity that one should be superior to others. Yet, this is what Trevor as a child comes to understand as the truth, and he understands why "so many black people had abandoned their indigenous faith for Christianity" (Noah, 2016, p. 6). It is a case of epistemic violence, in line with Gayatri Spivak's (1988) argument that epistemic violence is the forcible replacement of one structure of beliefs with another (Spivak, 1988; as cited in Edwards, 2008, p. 65). Though Trevor's grandma keeps the traditional Xhosa beliefs alive, time has slowly erased them from the younger generations that her daughter and grandchild are part of.

The three different churches that Trevor's family attends, also portray economic and cultural differences between mixed, white, and black churches:

The first church offered jubilant praise of the Lord. The second church offered deep analysis of the scripture, which my mother loved. The third church offered passion and

catharsis; it was a place where you truly felt the presence of the Holy Spirit inside you. Completely by coincidence, as we moved back and forth between these churches, I realized that each one had its own distinct racial make-up ...

(Noah, 2016, p. 6).

The mixed church is what Trevor calls “Christian Karaoke”, with “arena style seating and a rock band jamming out with the latest Christian contemporary pop” (Noah, 2016, p. 7), and it was “one of those huge, supermodern, suburban megachurches” (Noah, 2016, p. 6). The white church, which offered deep analysis of the scripture, was placed in Rosebank Union in Sandton, “a very white and wealthy part of Johannesburg” (Noah, 2016, p. 7). The black church was typically in the townships, and it was “rough ... no air-conditioning. No lyrics up in Jumbotrons. And it lasted forever” (Noah, 2016, p. 8). The differences that Trevor notices point to a hierarchical layer in society, where white church portrays the highest wealth, mixed church a suburban middle ground, and black church is situated in the poorest environment in the townships. These differences demonstrate the injustice of the Apartheid regime and serve as a very physical metaphor for the hierarchical structure of human worth in South Africa in the 1990s. While this display of racism is restricted to within South Africa, Noah also criticizes the larger world society for supporting a narrative that favors the white: “The triumph of democracy over apartheid is sometimes called the Bloodless Revolution. It is called that because very little white blood was spilled. Black blood ran in the streets” (Noah, 2016, p. 12).

While Trevor’s childhood never has been safe, it becomes even more dangerous right after Nelson Mandela is released from prison. Trevor is at this point in the story nearly six years old, observing that everyone is happy, but not quite able to understand why: “[I knew there was a thing called apartheid and it was ending and that was a big deal, but I didn’t understand the intricacies of it” (Noah, 2016, p. 12). Trevor’s perspective as a child is emphasized in this part, where what he remembers and “will never forget” (Noah, 2016, p. 12), is the violence that follows the release of Mandela. The child Trevor becomes witness to a multitude of riots and brutal scenes; on his way home from school one day he sees a charred body on the side of the road, who has been subjected to “necklacing”, which Noah explains as: “people would hold someone down and put a rubber tire over his torso, pinning his arms. Then they would douse him with petrol and set him on fire and burn him alive” (Noah, 2016, p. 12). Thousands of people were killed as black South Africa “went to war with itself” (Noah, 2016), knowing that as Apartheid had fallen, the black man was going to rule, but not

knowing *which* black man, or more importantly: which black tribe. In terms of telling the story of early post-apartheid South Africa, Noah's depictions serve as an important voice contradicting simplified images that Westerners might hold. Through Trevor's visual memory, the reader gains an understanding of the bloody mayhem that followed the dismantling of apartheid, and a simplified view that "apartheid fell, Mandela became president, everything became good" is contradicted.

The violent scenes with riots, as well as fires and road blockages, are the backdrop to Trevor's trips to school and church as a child. While most of Trevor's neighbors ("wisely") stay behind closed doors, Trevor's mom goes about her day as usual, tagging Trevor along and carrying Trevor's baby brother on her arm: "It didn't matter that there was a war on our doorstep. She had things to do, places to be" (Noah, 2016, p. 13). This places Trevor in a unique position of being out in the world, observing, and he is not sheltered from the happenings around him.

Initially, I set out to show how "Run" portrays the troubled political landscape of South Africa in the 1990s, the heritage of colonial rule, and the everyday dangers lurking for regular people living in Johannesburg. The final point is best illustrated with the inclusion of the anecdote the whole chapter has been built around:

When we came to the next traffic light, the driver eased off the gas a bit to look around and check the traffic. My mother reached over, pulled the sliding door open, grabbed me, and threw me out as far as she could. Then she took Andrew, curled herself in a ball around him, and leaped out behind me.

(Noah, 2016, p. 16).

As explained earlier, Trevor's mom is involved in an argument with a minibus driver, largely on account of her being Xhosa and him being Zulu. The bus driver is initially upset that Trevor's mom decided that they would hitchhike with a private car when the minibus did not turn up on time. He has already revealed how dangerous is, as he stopped the car that picked up Trevor's family by blocking the road with his minibus. He then "got out with an iwisa, a large, traditional Zulu weapon – a war club basically" (Noah, 2016, p. 16). Trevor is scared that he will beat the man to death, as he "knew that happened sometimes" (Noah, 2016, p. 16). This illustrates both how dangerous this particular man is, and how Trevor as a child has come to understand this type of danger as normal. It underlines that Johannesburg is not a safe place. However, Trevor's mom is able to convince the driver to let the man they hitch-hiked with go, as she assures the minibus driver that she will ride with him instead. As it has been a

long day for Trevor in three different churches, he is only partly aware of how the argument between his mother and the minibus driver develops during the ride:

My mom kept telling him off, and he kept calling her names, yelling at her from the front seat, wagging his finger in the rearview mirror [...] growing more and more menacing until finally he said, “that’s the problem with you Xhosa women. You’re all sluts – and tonight you’re going to learn a lesson”. [...] he sped up [...] death was never far away from anybody back then. At that point my mother could be raped. We could be killed.

(Noah, 2016, p. 15).

This is the prelude to Trevor’s mother deciding the safest course of action is to throw herself and her children out of the minibus and run away from the driver. It portrays a dangerous Johannesburg, where violence and threats of violence are very much real. Trevor’s mom fearlessly navigates through this landscape, and Noah tells the story of it with humor fitting the anecdotal genre that is evident in this chapter.

The use of humor is not merely a device that Noah employs in the writing, it is also an important part of how Trevor and his mother deal with the dangers they are faced with. All along, Trevor did not want to go to church this Sunday, as the family car had broken down and they had to find alternative means of transport both to and from church. Having nodded off before the argument reached its climax, he is shocked that his mother threw him out of the car and then made him run for his life. In exasperation, he asks: “What was *that*?! Why are we running?!” (Noah, 2016, p. 17). His mother seems equally surprised by his question; “What do you mean, why are we running? Those men were trying to kill us.” (Noah, 2016, p. 17). It leads to a tiff between Trevor and his mom, evolving into an argument where Trevor insists they should not have gone to church, and Trevor’s mother insists that they should, because it was God’s will. Finally, Trevor says: “Look, mom. I know you love Jesus, but maybe next week you could ask him to meet us at our house. Because this really wasn’t a fun night” (Noah, 2016, p. 17). This leads the two of them to erupt in laughter, and it showcases brilliantly how humor stays present even in the face of danger. As the conclusion of the first chapter, it also sets the tone for the chapters to come, where even the most serious issues are tackled with humor.

5.3. Analysis of Chapter 4, “Chameleon”

Noah’s chapter 4, “Chameleon”, depicts Trevor as a child with a hybrid sense of identity. The chapter demonstrates how Trevor’s hybridity both sets him apart from other people as well as provides him with fluidity and practical skills when interacting with people from opposing “worlds”. The young child Trevor spends his first years identifying as nothing but *Trevor*. His mother is black, his grandmother is black, his cousins are black, and he spends his early childhood years in Soweto where “[n]inety-nine percent of [the people] were black – and then there was [Trevor]” (Noah, 2016, p. 53). Due to his differences, Trevor is treated differently than the other kids in Soweto. When Trevor and his cousins misbehave, their grandma punishes Trevor’s cousins physically but does not lay a hand on Trevor because he is white. As she explains to Trevor’s mother: “... I don’t know how to hit a white child [...] A black child, I understand, you hit them and they stay black. Trevor [...] turns blue and green and yellow and red ...” (Noah, 2016, p. 52). Trevor’s grandma sees Trevor as a white child, and so does the fellow people of Soweto: “I was so unique people would give directions using me as a landmark. ... At the corner you will see a light-skinned boy. Take a turn there” (Noah, 2016, p. 53) and the kids in the street would yell out “The white man!” when they saw Trevor (Noah, 2016, p. 53). Trevor knows he is treated differently than others, but as a child, he is unable to see that it is because of race and color. In his mind “It wasn’t “Trevor does not get beaten because Trevor is white”. It was “Trevor doesn’t get beaten because Trevor is Trevor” ... ” (Noah, 2016, p. 53). Outside of Soweto, Trevor is not considered white; he is seen as either black or colored; a mixture of black and white. Through Trevor’s reflection, we understand that Trevor mostly sees himself the way the people around him see him: “The world saw me as colored, but I didn’t spend my life looking at myself. I spent my life looking at other people. I saw myself as the people around me, and the people around me were black.” (Noah, 2016, p. 59). This serves to illustrate the point that for the child Trevor, his identity is first and foremost connected to the people he is surrounded by, and secondly, he just assumes that he is like the people around him, even though his difference sets him apart from his cousins and other children.

When Trevor is 11 years old, he attends a government school, H. J. Jack Primary. Here, for the first time, Trevor realizes that his position as a colored child places him in a position where he must make a decision regarding his identity. At recess the very first day of school, he sees segregation with his own eyes. He notices that groups move in patterns of

color and that people “[were] occupying the same space, yet choosing not to associate with each other in any way” (Noah, 2016, p. 57). This is a major discovery for Trevor: “I was 11 years old and it was like I was seeing my country for the first time” (Noah, 2016, p. 57). Trevor is standing in the middle of the schoolyard and does not know whether to move with the white pattern or the black pattern. He has to make a physical choice and move his body towards the “black side” or the “white side”, and this physical choice leads Trevor to feel like he has an inevitable choice to make in terms of deciding whether he should identify as black or white. Prior to this experience, he has not considered it necessary to choose between a black or a white identity. He has quite seamlessly been able to fit into both “worlds”, as a mixed child who grew up in Soweto, attended white Sunday school, had a white father, and (on a scholarship) attended a private catholic school with white, black and mixed kids until he was 11 (Noah, 2016, p. 57). At the government school he sees segregation for the first time and decides that “his” people are the black people: “With the black kids, I wasn’t constantly trying to be. With the black kids, I just was” (Noah, 2016, p. 59). Trevor’s choice of identity seems a natural consequence of his upbringing, where the majority of people around him are black. Still, the experience is significant in Trevor’s life because it illustrates that there are “sides” to be picked.

While Trevor feels like he chooses between identities and decides that he belongs with the black part of the community, his identity is clearly hybrid. If it had not been hybrid, there would not have been a choice to even consider. His mother is an important character in Trevor’s life and influences him through her way of living. She does for instance not “separate herself from anyone” (Noah, 2016, p. 57). She takes Trevor to a white church and “go[es] right up and sit[s] with the white people” (Noah, 2016, p. 57). She uses different languages to accommodate different situations, and Trevor learns that language is a powerful tool in a multilingual society. Trevor observes how his mother “used language to cross boundaries, handle situations, navigate the world” (Noah, 2016, p. 55), and he “learned how to use language the way [his] mother did: [he] would simulcast – give you the program in your own tongue” (Noah, 2016, p. 55). The way Trevor uses language as a skill shows the benefit of his hybridity. He is able to use language and, in this way, create a sense of similarity and familiarity with people who would otherwise look at him suspiciously, either on the account of him being “too white” or “too black”:

I’d get suspicious looks from people just walking down the street. “Where are you from?” they’d ask. I’d reply in whatever language they’d addressed me in, using the

same accent that they used. There would be a brief moment of confusion, and then the suspicious look would disappear.

(Noah, 2016, p. 55).

The powerful ways in which Trevor breaks the language barriers and employs language as a tool to glide in, chameleon-like, and gain social acceptance among different groups of people, illustrate the benefits of his hybridity, as well as the importance of language and communication skills.

Structural racism is also portrayed in this chapter. When Trevor first arrives at the government school, H. J. Jacks, he is placed in the “A-class” after an aptitude test. It turns out that almost all the pupils in this class are white, except for Trevor, one Indian kid, and maybe one or two black kids. After the epiphany-like recess where Trevor makes his decision regarding his identity, he only lasts one day in the “a-class”. He goes to the school counselor and asks to be moved to the “B-class”. The school counselor’s reaction to Trevor’s wish shows both prejudice and racism. First, she dismisses Trevor’s wish and says “I don’t think you want to do that” (Noah, 2016, p. 59). When challenged by Trevor’s question “why”, her reply is: “Because those kids are... you know” (Noah, 2016, p. 59). Her statement indicates two problematic elements: firstly, she refers to the pupils in the “b-class” as the homogeneous group “those kids”, which creates a difference between Trevor and the pupils in the “a-class” and the pupils in the “b-class”. She effectively “others” the pupils in the “b-class”. Secondly, she seems to be under the impression that she and Trevor share a common knowledge about “those kids” that is negative and makes further explanations redundant. She is reluctant to offer any more information, which indicates that there is no reasonable explanation as to why the “B-class” is not suitable for Trevor. She states that “Those kids are gonna hold you back. You want to be in the smart class” (Noah, 2016, p. 59), finally admitting that she considers the pupils in the “B-class” stupid. She also warns Trevor that “you don’t want to be friends with those kids” (Noah, 2016, p. 59), again drawing on an assumed shared knowledge, and when Trevor does not budge, she makes sure that he understands that his (bad) choice will have negative implications for the rest of his life (Noah, 2016, p. 59). The counselor clearly does not see any value in the potential of the “B-class” and seems to consider the pupils of the “B-class” inferior to the pupils in the “A-class”. Incidentally, the pupils in the “a-class” are mainly white, and all the pupils in the “B-class” are black. As the counselor advises Trevor not to be friends with the pupils in the “B-class”, she is clearly prejudiced against them. She also seems to think that her school offers poorer teaching and instruction to these pupils,

which does not strike her as problematic; her solution is simply to place Trevor in the “A-class” and let the “B-class” continue as “inferior”.

This part of the chapter also draws on the reader’s schematic knowledge: the notion of an “A-class” and a “B-class” combined with the term “aptitude test” is likely to evoke the reader’s prior knowledge, experiences, and expectations of a “good class” and a “bad class”. As this form of analysis emphasizes the reader’s experiences and meaning-making (Drangeid, 2014), I will include my own schematic knowledge here: I can readily picture the “a-class” as sitting quietly at their desks, reading, writing, and listening attentively to the teacher, raising their hands to answer questions. Equally easily, I can picture a “bad” class with rowdy pupils, messy desks, loud voices, and chaos, who are more likely to challenge the teacher than comply with the teacher’s demands. This is evoked by my pre-existing expectations when hearing that one class is named “A” and the other “B”, as “B” then seems inferior, and also opposite, of “A”. The counselor’s reluctance to allow Trevor to “downgrade” to the “B-class”, also invokes my schematic knowledge and allows me to fill in the gaps of what she is not *explicitly* saying. In Trevor’s case, one could say that his complementing and gap-filling led to an understanding that she was racist, which is a highly likely interpretation. At the same time, other images, such as the behavioral ones as described above, can also be evoked.

5.4 Analysis of Chapter 15, “Go Hitler”

Chapter 15 is called “Go Hitler”, and this chapter – along with the less than one-page short text in bold that proceeds it – offers interesting insights into how Westerners and Africans perceive the “world’s history”. It shows that “common knowledge” is not necessarily common knowledge all over the world, and it also questions the autonomy of Hitler and the holocaust as the worst atrocity in human history. This chapter utilizes both anecdotal features and humor to build up towards a climax at the end of the chapter, where a culture clash between South Africa and the West is illustrated through a horrific, yet comical, misunderstanding. The bold text functions as the prelude to the chapter “Go Hitler”. As has been the case with the earlier bold texts I have addressed in this analysis, this text contextualizes and provides important background information.

In the text in bold, Grown-up-Trevor, indicated through the present tense, explains how different countries have different approaches to teaching history. The text offers that there is no unified, worldwide standard of how history is taught in school, and contrasts the way history is taught in Germany and Britain with how it is taught in America and in South

Africa. Naturally, this text is subjective, and Trevor is present in the text through the pronoun “we:” “we [South Africans] weren’t taught judgement or shame” (Noah, 2016, p. 84). While this text comes across as factual, the presence of Trevor invites us to question the reliability of the text. As a memoir, with the constant presence of Trevor, this is of course true for the whole book. It is still particularly relevant to stop and reflect upon reliability in this text due to the certainty about other countries’ teaching policies that Trevor expresses: “In Germany, no child finishes high school without learning about Holocaust. Not just the facts of it but the how and the why and the gravity of it” (Noah, 2016, p. 184). Grown-up-Trevor’s certainty in stating facts of German teaching policies, offers a reminder to be critical of the reliability. As Trevor did not grow up in Germany, it can be questioned whether the information in this text is factual or rather based on guesses and opinions. At the same time, knowing that Trevor has a German father strengthens the authenticity of the text, along with the fact that Trevor grew up in South Africa, and moved to the U.S. as a grown up. These facts strengthen the credibility of the text, and the reader is likely to, rightly or wrongly, trust that the reflections grown-up-Trevor provides on history teaching, are grounded in some truth.

These reflections encompass that German pupils learn about the Holocaust in a manner that includes the “how and the why and the gravity of it” (Noah, 2016, p. 84), in addition to the “dry facts”, all in order to make them “appropriately aware and apologetic” (Noah, 2016, p. 84). According to grown-up-Trevor, the same is to an extent true for British schools; “their children are taught the history of the Empire with a kind of disclaimer hanging over the whole thing. Well, *that* was shameful, now wasn’t it?” (Noah, 2016, p. 84). These teaching practices are then contrasted with American and South African teaching practices, where Noah puts forth that the history teaching of slavery and apartheid was limited to a few facts and “never the emotional or moral dimension” (Noah, 2016, p. 84). In chapter 5.2., I suggested that Noah contradicted a simplified view of Apartheid history, and this simplified view is illustrated in the bold text here as well, where Noah explains how Apartheid is taught in South African schools: “Apartheid was bad. Nelson Mandela was freed. Let’s move on” (Noah, 2016, p. 84). This approach gives little opportunity for reflection or deep learning, which Noah in this text criticizes.

In “Go Hitler”, Trevor and his friends demonstrate a lack of both historical knowledge and cultural competence when they chant “Go Hitler” in front of a Jewish crowd at a Jewish high school. They are ignorant of how inappropriate this is, and Trevor is taken by complete surprise by the reactions that follow. At this point in the story, Trevor has matriculated from High School and runs a business with his friend Sizwe. Trevor mixes CDs and DJs, and Sizwe

works as his manager, securing them gigs at different parties. They are hired to do a gig at a Jewish school, and along with them is their team of dancers. The best dancer and star attraction is Hitler, a friend of Trevor who is “mesmerizing to watch” (Noah, 2016, p. 193) and who “had a looseness and fluidity that defied physics” (Noah, 2016, p. 193). Trevor and Sizwe create a routine for their dance crew to perform at gigs:

We built the whole set around Hitler. [...] the dancers would come out and do a couple of numbers. Once they’d gotten the party started, they’d fan out and form a semicircle around the stage with a gap in the back for Hitler to enter.”

(Noah, 2016, p. 193).

Evidently, Hitler is an important part of the gig. He is also “like a status symbol” (Noah, 2016, p. 193) for the crew because “[w]hen you’re poor you don’t have cars or nice clothes, but the best dancer gets girls, so that’s the guy you want to roll with” (Noah, 2016, p. 193). It is therefore natural that Trevor and Sizwe have built their dance routine around Hitler. They want to show his talent, which again reflects well on themselves and their business. The problematic part which they overlook is, of course, his name. In addition to this, because they play hip-hop “the [dance]crew would do that thing where you shoot your arm out in front of you with your palm flat, bopping it up and down to the beat” (Noah, 2016, p. 193). This movement is paired with a chanting to the beat that sounds: “Go Hit-ler! Go Hit-ler! Go-Hit-ler!” (Noah, 2016, p. 193). Presented along with this chanting, the palm-bopping movement can of course be considered a visual parallel to the nazi tribute where the nazis would reach their hand out and slightly up, with the palm facing down. The whole routine is in other words deeply problematic. Trevor, Sizwe, and the crew are oblivious to this, which results in them offending their Jewish audience when the dancers perform this routine at their school.

The text in bold has provided the reader with important background knowledge to understand how Trevor and his friends could end up in such a predicament. The value of the text in bold is that it allows the reader to fill in gaps of indeterminacies with specific knowledge: Noah does not rely on the reader to have the pre-knowledge he wants the reader to have, so he provides it through the text in bold. Having read it, it is made obvious to the reader that cultural misunderstandings or clashes easily can occur when countries have vastly varying approaches to teaching history. The “facts only”, and “no emotional dimension” advocated by South African schools, serve as some explanation as to how a clash like the one described above could take place. This is, however, only part of the picture.

In this chapter, Noah gives cause to reflect upon, and question, the common agreement

in the West, that Hitler and the Holocaust is the worst atrocity that has happened in the world's shared history. There is a section in this chapter, from page 194 through to the first lines of page 196, where the narration changes. The text is separated from the preceding and the following text through two empty lines before and after, and the text in-between is written in the present tense. It functions as a step out of the main story in "Go Hitler", and the voice is the voice of grown-up-Trevor again. This differentiation, which the reader is familiar with from the bold texts, signals a change of story-world: we have moved from the autobiographical childhood stories to a present-tense story-world where we are now about to receive information that is important to have before moving back to the story-world of Trevor's childhood. This text is informative and the information it provides is crucial to understand how the misunderstanding, or culture clash, at the Jewish school came to happen. Noah explains that "[t]he name Hitler does not offend a black South African because Hitler is not the worst thing a black South African can imagine" (Noah, 2016, p. 195). There are other names that would be more offensive for a black South African than Hitler, and Noah suggests: "if Black South Africans could go back in time and kill one person, Cecil Rhodes would come up before Hitler" (Noah, 2016, p. 195.). Noah also criticizes the West:

Every country thinks their history is the most important, and that's especially true in the West. [...] I often meet people in the West who insist that the Holocaust was the worst atrocity in human history, without question. Yes, it was horrific. But I often wonder, with African atrocities like in the Congo, how horrific were they? The thing African people don't have that Jewish people do have is documentation.

(Noah, 2016, p. 195)

While Noah agrees that the Holocaust was indeed horrific, he is reluctant to call it "the worst atrocity in human history". He gives two reasons why Westerners consider it the worst in history: firstly, he suggests that every country believes their history is the most important. This signals an ego-centric view of the world that Noah considers human nature. It also challenges the notion of "common knowledge" related to historical events: if every country considers its history the most important, this will have an impact on what is taught in schools around the world. Secondly, he stresses the difference that documentation makes. African people do not have the same documentation that Jewish people have. Noah elaborates further on this, explaining how the "Nazis kept meticulous records, took pictures, made films. [...] Holocaust victims count because Hitler counted them" (Noah, 2016, p. 195). While it is, at least in the West, common knowledge that 6 million Jews were killed during the Holocaust,

there is no such number for the people who were killed in Africa during colonial times. “How many black people died harvesting rubber in the Congo? In the gold and diamond mines of the Transvaal?” (Noah, 2016, p. 195). By asking these questions, Noah raises awareness of the skewedness in history representation. He also states that as we can only guess the numbers of the people killed, “[i]t’s harder to be horrified by a guess” (Noah, 2016, p. 195), than by a fact, such as the fact that 6 million Jews were killed. By not having historical records and historical accuracy, the history of the Africans becomes “less real”, and the atrocities committed towards Africans become inferior to history that is more thoroughly recorded.

Another important precondition for the “Go Hitler” incident to take place, is the matter of poor education, as well as the lack of political participation in the global community, during the colonial rule of South Africa. The historical and cultural ignorance that Trevor and his crew portray in chanting “Go Hitler”, is a result of colonial rule, because as “colonial powers carved up Africa, [they] put the black man to work and did not properly educate him” (Noah, 2016, p. 194). Black Africans did not have access to the same education as the white population, nor did they hold positions of power in society. There is no logical reason why World War II would be important for black South Africans, as it was a “world” crisis that they to every extent were excluded from. Knowledge about the war was sparse: “[Trevor’s] own grandfather “thought “a hitler” was a kind of army tank that was helping the Germans win the war” (Noah, 2016, p. 194). What suddenly made Hitler a name of importance to black South Africans was, according to Noah, when the white man asked the black man for help in defeating him. This gave the name “Hitler” a meaning for black South Africans:

if the white man has to stoop to ask the black man for help fighting someone, that someone must be the toughest guy of all times. So if you want your dog to be tough, you name your dog Hitler. If you want your kid to be tough, you name your kid Hitler. There’s a good chance you’ve got an uncle named Hitler. It’s just a thing.

(Noah, 2016, p. 194).

This illustrates how the name “Hitler” carries a different cultural meaning in the black South African culture that Trevor and his crew are part of. For Trevor and his friends, the name “Hitler” does not evoke images of a ruthless mass murderer and horrific concentration camps, as it does for most Europeans. The name denotes “toughness”, as is the case with other names from European war history, such as Mussolini and Napoleon. Noah reflects that “Westerners are shocked and confused by [this], but really it is a case of the West reaping what it has sown” (Noah, 2016, p. 195). This serves as a critique of how the West expects other cultures

to be appropriately educated and respectful about what the West considers a shared world history, despite the fact that it is the West that has deprived other cultures of both education and participation in the world community.

6. Discussion

Delanoy (2017) offers for consideration that “the inclusion of power-critical perspectives is indispensable” (Delanoy, 2017, p. 134) in the ELT classroom, and postcolonial literature can as such be a lens for pupils to explore power dynamics and become aware and critical of these structures. Power-critical perspectives must be from angles that are not in the center of power. As portrayed in the analyses above, it is evident that *BaC* offers such a perspective from Trevor; a mixed-raced child who was by definition born a crime, and who was raised by his black single mother with poor economy. “Run”, “Chameleon” and “Go Hitler” provide three different perspectives, in addition to the steady perspective that we throughout the memoir gain from Grown-up-Trevor. In “Run” the perspective is of Trevor as a very young child, and he observes brutal violence in the streets around him and experiences the threat of violence and death as the result of a simple mini-bus-ride. In “Chameleon” the reader gains Trevor’s perspective as Trevor is slightly older and his own perspectives are widening, as he begins to recognize segregation and racism. His mother is a vital character, and as she “did not separate herself from anyone”, she is in opposition to the power dynamics in society. Through Trevor, the reader also gains her perspective on society. In “Go Hitler” Trevor is an adolescent who navigates life in Johannesburg where different cultures clash. In this chapter, Grown-up-Trevor is particularly present, offering a critique to Western superiority and challenging notions of worldwide common knowledge(s).

The potential for intercultural learning is manifold. As the analysis chapter shows, *BaC* addresses and expands on several concepts that are central within the postcolonial discourse, such as othering, hybridity, and epistemic violence. These concepts are relevant for intercultural learning in a complex world that deals with the legacy of colonialism, especially (though not exclusively) in the context of English-speaking countries, that naturally are English-speaking due to colonial legacy. The curriculum’s “Relevance and central Values” are explicit in stating that the subject “shall help the pupils to develop an intercultural understanding of different ways of living [and different] ways of thinking” (Udir, 2020). The analysis chapter shows that *BaC* offers perspectives on different ways of living and thinking, and some of these perspectives are linked to a colonial heritage. This colonial heritage gives cause to reflect upon epistemic violence and the other concepts that are linked to the

postcolonial discourse. Some form of literary analysis or analytical work is crucial to open for conversations among pupils about these concepts portrayed in *BaC*. For instance, the epistemic violence that “Run” deals with demands unpacking. While Noah is explicit in stating that Christianity was forced on native South Africans, and that “the white man was quite stern with the native” (Noah, 2016, p. 5-6), this is merely a top layer of deeper issues, and it is necessary to address what these deeper issues really entail: such as epistemic violence, oppression, racism, and inequality. The analysis put forth in the previous chapter is an attempt to be a “teacher analysis”, and as such it allows the teacher to single out the two examples above that relate to epistemic violence, oppression, racism, and inequality. The teacher can then structure their teaching around these understandings and guide the pupils in their own reading and understanding. Equally important, the pupils are to be encouraged to think for themselves through the literature, as well as to reflect on their own thought processes (Drangeid, 2014). The teacher is merely a guide; the pupils must be allowed to work analytically with the text for themselves, for instance through group discussions and conversations. As the curriculum emphasizes, pupils shall acquire language and knowledge of culture and society by “reflecting on, interpreting and critically assessing different types of texts in English” (Udir, 2020). This highlights the importance of allowing the pupils to learn through text encounters that involve activities that facilitate reflection, such as group conversations and discussions. As Edvardsson (2023) concludes through her studies regarding pupils and reading, the pupils’ understanding increase when they are allowed to speak about what they have read, and when they are allowed to participate in each other’s interpretations of a text (Edvardsson, 2023). This resonates with Sumara’s (2002) claim that reading a literary text in common with others can create opportunities to interpret both personal and collective experiences (Sumara, 2002, p. 19). The teacher analysis in the previous chapter unpacks Noah’s statements that Christianity was forced on the white man and that the white man was “stern” with the native, and this allows for a foundation for teaching this chapter in an analytical manner. It is through this approach that revolves around the text, the pupils’ reading, and the analytical dimension that intercultural competence is likely to grow, because the pupils are encouraged to “dig” in the text for a deeper meaning, or what Drangeid (2014) would consider a doubling of the text’s meaning. To understand the concepts related to the postcolonial discourse is also to gain an understanding of cultural dynamics and intercultural “otherness”.

“Chameleon” is particularly well suited to explore the themes of identity and hybridity, race, and racism. It also features language as a powerful tool for mediating one’s

identity, and it places language in a position that might be unfamiliar to the Norwegian pupil. Norwegian pupils are likely to have a different way of considering language use. Norwegians are most likely familiar with the concept of having a single “mother tongue”, and although this term is debated and more often than not replaced with the term “first language”, it denotes a Westernized or Globally North based idea that one person has one language, one culture has one language, and one people share one language. South Africa clearly does not operate with language in the same manner, as a single person, such as Trevor, can have many different languages from early childhood. Still, Trevor’s way of utilizing language to claim connectedness to others, does indicate that also in South Africa, language is tied to identity and culture. These perspectives on languages invite reflections among Norwegian pupils on various aspects of language use. It is also interesting because it shows the benefit of being interculturally competent, as Trevor himself displays high intercultural, and communicative, competence, for instance by answering people in the same language and with the same accent that they employ when addressing him. The exposure to other language cultures that *BaC* provides is highly relevant in terms of structuring teaching around the curriculum’s “Relevance and Central Values”, where English should help the pupils develop an intercultural understanding of different communication patterns, as well as experience “that the ability to speak several languages is an asset at school and in society in general” (Udir, 2020).

Another valuable entry for reflection and learning among pupils that the analysis uncovers, is the manner in which 11-year-old Trevor observes the schoolyard as a sort of microcosm for South Africa. As Noah put it; “I was 11 years old, and it was like I was seeing my country for the very first time” (Noah, 2016, p. 57). This renders the chapter particularly useful for learning analytical strategies, and to gain experience in doubling meaning. It is not overly complicated; Noah explains the dynamics in the school yard where “groups moved in color patterns across the yard” (Noah, 2016, p. 57), and then connects these observations to the larger society of South Africa. The way Noah draws a parallel between the school yard and the larger society, allows the pupils to experience a strategy for doubling meaning, where the particular (the school yard) is transferred into something more abstract and wider (the political system of segregation). By spending time discussing this in class, for instance by allowing the pupils to look up and explore the meaning of the term *microcosm* and relating it to the text, pupils can develop their strategies for understanding metaphorical aspects in literature. At the same time, this part of “Chameleon” is thematically relevant to increasing intercultural competence, as it deals with segregation and racism in South Africa. While I

offered in the theory section of this thesis that intercultural competence is not a concept that can easily be subjected to one authoritative definition, it is concerned with increasing sensitivity to other people's cultures around the globe, and cultural learning and understanding are part of this development.

The potential for intercultural learning is perhaps particularly great through working with "Go Hitler". As the analysis discusses, this chapter challenges Western perspectives and criticizes the West for notions of superiority. The curriculum's "Relevance and Central Values" emphasizes that the English subject "shall develop the pupils' understanding that their views of the world are culture-dependent" (Udir, 2020). "Go Hitler" is well suited for this purpose, as the chapter allows the pupils to take a sidestep away from their own (Western) culture and consider Western culture from an alternative angle. This text also illustrates how a *lack* of intercultural competence can lead to misunderstandings and miscommunications, as is the case with the "Go-Hitler" incident at the Jewish school. In this sense, the text highlights the importance of having knowledge about other people's cultures and meeting other cultures with both understanding and sensitivity, which are important skills within the concept of intercultural competence.

Both "Go Hitler" and "Run" have in common that they challenge a simplified Western view of how Mandela was freed from prison, became president, and democracy won in South Africa. The way Noah portrays this simplified view can be worked with in class to both allow the pupils to see that their world views are culture-dependent, as well as be an entry to discuss and reflect upon what a democracy entails. Democracy and participation are integral parts of the curriculum, and Trevor's experiences of a South Africa without democracy, as well as Noah's more mature reflections about the struggles that followed after democracy "won" – where "black South Africa went to war with itself" (Noah, 2016, p.4) – allow for opportunities to discuss the importance of a functioning democracy. It portrays the fight that South Africans went through to gain democracy, which can be a reminder that we should not take democracy for granted.

Additionally, another benefit of this chapter is that it, through the proceeding text in bold, provides the necessary information to fully comprehend how the culture clash that is portrayed, could come to happen. As mentioned in the analysis, the texts in bold have a scaffolding function. Drawing on Wood et al, (1976) and their definition of scaffolding as a process that allows the novice to solve a problem, carry out a task or achieve a goal that would be beyond the novice's unassisted efforts (Wood et al., 1976, p. 2), one could say that the text in bold assists the reader with comprehending the text in the following chapter. This

scaffolding provides a lens for the pupils to apply when comprehending the text. While scaffolding is not traditionally assigned to the author of a text, but rather to the teacher, the scaffolding function of providing pre-knowledge to a reading is highly valuable. The teacher can then continue the scaffolding process by, for instance, adding to it and modeling an understanding of the reading.

Lastly, “Go Hitler” portrays a Trevor who is in a similar age group as the intended pupils. This could make him more relatable, even though the culture that is described, with for instance mixing CDs and operating with technology that is outdated today, might seem foreign to young readers. This gives an opportunity to discuss differences across both culture and time. In considering the relatability of adolescent Trevor, we are moving towards a discussion on how *BaC* could increase reading motivation. As Appleyard (1991) put forth, young readers tend to identify with the characters they read about. The identification process is likely easier when the protagonist is of a similar age. Roe and Blikstad-Balas (2022) additionally state that boys often seem to prefer a male protagonist, while girls tend to be indifferent to the gender of the protagonist. While this does not mean that teachers should exclusively teach material with male protagonists to accommodate the male readers who prefer a male protagonist, Trevor’s gender is likely to contribute to these boys’ reading enjoyment and ability to identify with Trevor. At the same time, it will not offer a disadvantage to the other pupils.

To discuss how *BaC* might increase reading motivation, it is important to stress how the memoir is structured to meet a young audience. As Goga (2014) points out, the anecdote is a dominating feature in life-writings aimed at young readers. My analysis shows that “Run”, “Chameleon” and “Go Hitler” are all structured around central anecdotes. In “Run”, the main anecdote is of when Trevor is thrown out of a moving car by his mother, in “Chameleon” there is an anecdote about when Trevor first attends his new primary school and in “Go Hitler” the most central anecdote is what I earlier called the “Go Hitler” incident. These anecdotes are interesting and fast-paced, but more importantly; they serve as the central evidence for truth in the memoir (Goga, 2007). Appleyard (1991) stresses how adolescents tend to prefer reading literature that is true to life, and the memoir, offering itself as a truthful account of events, must then be considered well-suited for motivating adolescents to read.

BaC is also genre-typical for life-writings aimed at young readers, in that it focuses on Trevor’s childhood and evolvment into becoming a grown-up. Trevor is portrayed in a manner that Vie (2020) considers typical for biographed characters in biographies for young readers: as a regular human being with their own possibilities and limitations, which again

makes Trevor relatable to young readers (Vie, 2020). Relatability seems an important motivator for pupils to read, but at the same time, the protagonist must have something that makes them special and sets them apart from others to be interesting (Vie, 2020). Trevor is portrayed as a unique character, or at least, he is uniquely represented and portrayed for young readers who do not share Noah's cultural upbringing. The time in which Trevor was born adds to this uniqueness: he was born a crime, but the Apartheid regime ended when he was a child. As such, Noah can tell a story that revolves around both sides of the Apartheid regime, and a story that is historically relevant and hopefully interesting to adolescent readers. The *personalization of history* (Hart, 1979) that Noah offers through *BaC* seems likely to appeal to young readers, and *BaC* utilizes the memoir as a medium where history is delivered through humorous, true-to-life anecdotes by a relatable character. Through the personalization of history, the history is brought closer to the reader. This is perhaps likely to spark an interest in readers, although this cannot be firmly concluded. At any rate, it is likely to contribute to fostering intercultural competence. As Waxman (2008) concluded, initially negative perceptions of foreignness might diminish through intercultural experiences through literature (Waxman, 2008).

Finally, the memoir seems to allow the reader to gain a personal acquaintance with Trevor and must be considered likely to enhance what Nussbaum calls "sympathetic imagination" (Nussbaum, 1997). Through the three texts that have been analyzed, the reader experiences Trevor as a "regular person" in extraordinary settings, and through the first-person narration the reader is allowed inside Trevor's head, sharing his thoughts, joys, and concerns. It is easy to sympathize and relate both to the child Trevor who is bored with church and annoyed with his mother, and to the adolescent Trevor who makes mistakes due to his cultural ignorance. The reasons behind his annoyance with his mother – namely the fact that she threw him out of a car, and the ignorance he portrayed relating to the name Hitler, are what makes his stories unique. Yet, the dynamics of the feelings that he experiences (childish annoyance and adolescent confusion) are relatable. His feelings are also contextualized in a personalized and subjective manner, which is perhaps one of the main strengths of the memoir.

7. Conclusion

This thesis set out to show how pupils' analytical work with the postcolonial memoir *Born a Crime: Stories from a South-African Childhood* can foster intercultural competence, and how it is also likely to increase reading motivation. The thesis has offered a framework of theory

that is concerned with the benefits of reading, postcolonial discourse, an analytical approach, and theory regarding intercultural competence, and life-writings and life-writings aimed at young readers. Through a separate chapter, the relevance of teaching a post-colonial memoir such as *BaC* has been placed in an educational context, with regards to how this type of literature relates to the curriculum. I will offer as a conclusion that *BaC* meets LK20's demands in terms of specific competence aims in ENG01-04, as well as in terms of elements that fall under the categories of *Relevance and Central Values* for ENG01-04, and elements from the core curriculum. *BaC* is a suitable text, either in full or through excerpts, to work with to meet the criteria of the curriculum relating to democracy and participation, intercultural competence and to read and interpret texts in line with the competence aims. It offers intercultural learning that portrays different ways of living, thinking, and communicating, to what pupils would be expected to encounter in their daily lives in Norway.

The discussion of this thesis shows that *BaC* provides many opportunities for intercultural learning to take place through an analytical approach to reading. The discussion shows that there is potential for *BaC* to contribute to intercultural learning through analytical work with the text, or analytical work with the different texts within the memoir. The didactic form of the analytical work could with benefits be based on sociocultural learning theories that allow the pupils to share both personal and collective interpretations of the text. Through both the analysis chapter and the discussion, this thesis has shown the benefits of the teacher conducting a literary analysis based on Drangeid's (2014) model for literary analysis, prior to teaching the memoir in class.

In addition to this, the discussion shows that the memoir is a suitable genre for young readers. This might lead to an increased appetite for reading, but the thesis is limited in terms of proving that a *postcolonial* work of literature would be particularly beneficial for increasing reading motivation. I will still offer that this seems a likely outcome, as my discussion highlights the ways in which approaches to teaching *BaC* can succeed, which in extent could contribute to pupils experiencing a sense of accomplishment and development in terms of widened perspectives and increased intercultural competence. Further studies could perhaps explore if post-colonial literatures do connect to increased reading enjoyment and reading motivation among adolescent readers.

My concluding remarks are that *BaC*, as a postcolonial memoir, seems particularly well suited for increasing intercultural competence. It allows the reader to gain an internal perspective through its narrative form and through the ways in which it is a personalization of historical events. It is also likely to increase feelings of relatability which is important for

adolescent readers. As Trevor is portrayed as a relatable character, it is a likely outcome that pupils will sympathize with him which can lead to a greater sensitivity and a greater sympathy to his cultural context, which again is crucial for intercultural competence to grow.

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