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NORGES
ARKTISKE
UNIVERSITET

Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education

“Narrating the Migration Experience”

How can the use of young adult migrant narratives and authentic experience in the EFL classroom increase both knowledge and understanding regarding society, history and adolescent migrant identity?

Bodil Tamnes

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Abstract

This thesis explores how Said's idea of Orientalism; how the *Self* mirrors the *Other* and recognizes *otherness*, and how these terms and processes influence and interfere with the establishment of personal identity. However, considerable examples in YA migration narrative demonstrate how Orientalism and *othering* are outdated and archaic mechanisms of identification, although they still intervene with contemporary YA (migrant) identity. Since our modern, multicultural world embraces diversity and distinctiveness, the idea of *Self* and *Other* needs to be reconsidered. Hence, the challenges the protagonists of four YA migration novels, *We Need New Names*(2014) by NoViolet Bulawayo, *Sumitra's Story*(1996) by Rukshana Smith, *Little Bee*(2010) by Chris Cleave, and *What is the What*(2008) by Dave Eggers, experience as they attempt to reconstruct their identity in a host society distanced from their familiar cultural categorizations of identity, are analysed. Their narratives are used to demonstrate how YA EFL learners might benefit from reading YA (migrant) literature in order to increase historical and/or social understanding, and to form personal identity in a complex world. The four novels *We Need New Names*, *Sumitra's Story*, *Little Bee*, and *What is the What* represent contemporary narratives of YA migrants' struggle to settle with fixed terms of identity. The protagonists experience a bewilderment of identity, floating in-between past and present existence, where their former life and identity interferes with their attempt to establish a personal *Self* in a host society. Thus, Bhabha's idea of hybridity and a hybrid space, where cultures and identities interact, is suitable to hermeneutic involvement with these novels after Said's ground-breaking theories of *Self* and *Other*. Said's idea of Orientalism and Bhabha's hybridity and hybrid space of interaction to young adolescents' experience of in-betweenness, bear upon its educational purpose in the EFL classroom: How the illustrations of a fluid identity in-between childhood and maturity, and simultaneously, how deconstructing the binary opposites of *Self* and *Other* and the possibility of reconstructing identity in a third space, facilitate the YA's understanding of a reconstructed and self-empowering personal identity. Such studies of transmutable *Self* also imply new understanding and interactions with the *Other*. Thus, the importance of using YA migration narrative for the benefit of increased knowledge and understanding in the EFL classroom, both regarding personal development and interaction is substantial, in addition to the

individual's position in social and historical context, and in overcoming the restrictions regarding the binary oppositions of *othering*.

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1 Introduction

A literary text speaks more or less directly of a living reality.

(Said 1995:291)

The way we travel, move and connect with other people and cultures has significantly developed over the last hundred years. Multicultural societies increase in numbers and several countries and cities are established or formed by their global settlers and their cultural diversity. The dismantling of colonies and requirement of workforce to reconstruct the West after the World War II initiated an escalation of migration from other continents into the West. Simultaneously the world's economy turned global, and advanced means of communication and transportation developed. The accelerating progression resulted, and still results, in increased mobility and thus globalization of the world's population. The escalating contact between people, societies, and ethnicities results in additional discovery and experience of numerous cultures and traditions. Hence, instinctively, people compare and measure each other to what is familiar to themselves. We mirror difference to recognizable characteristics and ideas in order to comprehend or explain the abnormal. In today's globalised world, where people from all over the world interact with one another, it is important to be aware of the difference in both awareness and experience concerning culture, tradition and perception of identity. Still in the 21st century we face both racism and prejudice regarding gender tradition, race, and culture. When *the other* is yet unknown, undefined and possibly unencountered for in ourselves and our culture, Levinas' idea of equal significance, which is based upon an unbalanced relationship in the encounter of the other becomes relevant: The other is in focus, and not you. Only by approaching *the other*, will people discover the true human being, not by comparing everything to personal experience or reference (Bergo 2017). Thus it is important to investigate whether it is possible to increase the understanding of the immigrant experience and the question of identity through literature: Can the use of the narrative of the immigrant experience and struggle to adapt increase both knowledge and tolerance towards - *the Other*?

Awareness increases tolerance, and tolerance decreases conflict and misunderstanding. Thus, in this thesis, four different novels have been selected and are presented in which the adolescent migrant experience is fundamental: *We Need New Names* from 2014, set in both

Zimbabwe and the USA, written by NoViolet Bulawayo and *Sumitra's Story*, from 1996, by Rukshana Smith and is set in both Uganda and England, demonstrate the whole course of the migrating event; from the reasons to their emigration to their settlement and experience of life in a host country. Additionally, the novels *Little Bee*, 2010, written by Chris Cleave and set in both Nigeria and England and Dave Egger's *What is the What*, 2008, set in Sudan and its south-eastern bordering areas and in the USA, visualize similar challenges with a slightly different closure to the story. These stories serve as examples of novels that are relevant in this study since they portray both conflict, political and historical events, and personal challenges related to migration in general, and conflict of identity in particular. The main characters demonstrate how Orientalism and *othering* interfere with their perception of personal identity, in addition to illustrate their attempt to understand their existence in an open space in-between polarized traditions and societies.

To explain Orientalism, the thesis will be based upon Edward Said's concept of *Self vs Other*, and how *othering* establishes a distance between people, ethnic groups, cultures and societies. The *self* and the *other* are traditional concepts of the superior vs the inferior, which originates from the colonization, and was introduced as a term by Edward Said. However, in today's globalized world, these ancient and outdated concepts of identity need questioning and examination. Immigrants still face prejudice and racism, and several struggle to understand and adapt to a new, often unfamiliar, society. Historical backgrounds and theories that support the ideas and concepts that lead to the establishment and experience of the distance between the *Self* and the *Other*, how *Orientalism* and *Othering* contribute to conflict of personal identity, is essential to this discussion and thus will be investigated and presented. With the publishing of *Orientalism* in 1978, Said introduced and brought awareness to the relationship between subject and object, which played a significant role in developing the ideas related to postcolonial theory. Said was one of the first to name and explain the thought of difference, and how colonialism formed the idea of a superior and an inferior. He discusses the relationship between the dominant West and the Middle- and Far East, naming the opponents: *The Occident* and *the Orient*. The relationship between the Occident and the Orient is established in the name of dominance and oppression. Said offers an explanation to the dominant Occident and the inferior Orient, and asserts that these terms are conceptions made out of socio-economic relations, originating from the European colonizers and the non-European colonized territories. These thoughts have formed the racial opposites of *us* and

them, self and other (Leitch 2001: 1871). The thought of a dominant *self* and an inferior *other* is a mentality that has imbued western dominant culture ever since colonial times. These are thoughts, which have sustained and survived decades of racial amends. Said's discussion is important in order to understand how prejudice and racism that originate from colonial times influence the conflict of identity in the minds of today's adolescent migrants. It is additionally fundamental in order to identify and analyse the concept of *self* and *other* in young adult literature.

Because of the immense influence the concepts of *self* and *other* still have on multicultural societies today, narrating the immigrants' experience can establish an awareness regarding the issue, and even contribute to dissolve and dispel such a racist mind set. Said's *Orientalism* provides an excellent description and structure of the relationship or interaction occurring when two cultures establish a relationship, mutual or not. Encounters between cultures provide a description of how social, cultural and historical matters interrelate through discourse. Orientalism does not only display the Western idea of the Orient and *the Other*, but it additionally provides us with an understanding of the general strength of Western culture. This strength or understanding of superiority applies a dominant culture to the discourse and canon of central works published and read, which means that this is a structure applied to both oneself as well as to others.

Following this, Said, in 1978, pointed out that there has been an increase in stereotyping the Orient. The western prejudice against the Orient accelerated after the 9/11 attacks and the following War on Terror, and has become even more intensified with the substantial growth of ISIS the last decade. Today's stereotyping, prejudice, and increasing suspicion and distrust of *the other* derives from imperialism and the colonial mind set formed already in the early 18th century – *Orientalism*. In the western world, especially Arabs and Muslims experience racism, biased opinions, and dehumanisation - all which originate from colonial times and is upheld by Orientalism, both politically, culturally and through narrative and discourse. My intention is to prove that literature and culture, as Said claims, are not culturally or politically independent, and that we should not be ignorant to the importance of literature and narrative in promoting political and social views or opinions. We need to keep this admonition in mind when reading literature, using Said's philosophical corrective in educative purposes as well as when analysing literature. The point here is that the close connection between culture,

literature, and historical-and/or social issues should be utilized in language learning processes. When teachers and students investigate and explore specific historical or social issues in the classroom, they might benefit from reading literature and narrative from that specific period of time, or by authors representing the era or issue at matter. In other words: How can studying the social structures, conflicting ideas, and questioned truths as well as perception of identity increase understanding?

To strengthen my point and demonstrate how the ideas of *self* and *other* influence the establishment and/or reshaping of migrant identity, both Jacques Derrida and Homi K. Bhabha are additionally significant. Derrida's ideas on deconstruction and Bhabha's hybridity and Third Space are important related to determining personal identity. Where Derrida discusses the deconstruction of opposites and the dismantling of Said's idea of Orientalism, Bhabha points at the ambiguity occurring in the middle of interaction of two races or two cultures, and how migrants are often caught in the middle of these, perhaps especially young adults and adolescent migrants. Juxtaposing Derrida's deconstruction and Bhabha's hybridity is necessary in order to understand the liminal signifying space of reconstructing identity. Their ideas are both fundamental since YA migrants are usually torn between family and native tradition, and their new friends and host culture. The concept of experiencing a condition of "in-betweenness" and fluidity can evoke empathy and thus apply to students in their extensive reading. Utilizing young adult immigrant narrative of experienced ordeals and conflict of identity extend the students' horizon. The reading experience and possibility of increased knowledge, in addition to create awareness and tolerance, will be important in this discussion. Thus, Bhabha's discussion of hybridity and its effect on identity and culture in his *The Location of Culture* from 1994 is decidedly relevant. His idea of hybridity and "in-betweenness", which he describes as mutual feelings towards the *self* and the *other* regarding both aversion and fascination, are the mixed feelings occurring in between two polarized parts, i.e. the *self* and the *other*. However, without Derrida's deconstruction of opposites it will be difficult to define Bhabha's third space of interaction. Thus, in this research, linking Derrida's deconstruction and Bhabha's hybrid space to the development of identities within young adult migrants, especially focusing on their exploration of race and youth culture, will be fundamental: How does young adult narrative portray the experience of conflict of identity, the struggle for acceptance, and the feeling of displacement? Will investigating narratives of the challenge of forming new identities contribute to establish greater understanding among

adolescents? Hence, the novels introduced in this thesis represent narratives of racial identity in young adult literature, and they portray the challenges young migrants face in a foreign country. Additionally, they depict how dealing with past lives intrudes with the present ones. So, is it possible to draw any conclusion from these narratives of forming identity? Are people able to relate and thus increase their knowledge by reading fictional stories?

To prove my point regarding (extensive) classroom reading and the possible acquisition of knowledge and/or development of understanding, I will bring in research study and discussion done by for instance Twitchell, Kotsumpou, and Lütge and Bland, who all argue in favour of so called “free reading” or extensive reading, and how it is effective in order to increase knowledge, provide familiarity and connection to the issues raised, in addition to diverge language learning. These studies will support my theories and claims concerning knowledge acquisition: How reading literature can evoke people’s emotions, engage empathy, trigger anger, and thus generate engagement followed by increased knowledge and understanding through the reader’s connection to the protagonist and/or the story. Provoking stories or stories that evoke empathy motivate reading, especially when the reader can relate to the plot. Additionally, by including authentic novels in the extensive classroom reading, students are presented authentic examples of language and language styles, varieties of use, ways of communicating and communicative approaches. When the narrative is not fabricated or adjusted to a specific level of knowledge, students are presented the fundamental structures, vocabulary, and systems of language in which the native speakers employ, which altogether will contribute to their language learning progress.

Finally, is it possible to draw any conclusion of the advantages of using literature in the English as a Foreign Language classroom? Will reading a fictional narrative of the young adolescent migrant’s experience and his/her conflict of identity help increase students’ understanding of growing up in a multicultural society? Hence, is it possible to change a biased mind set and potentially increase the students’ awareness and tolerance by introducing historical and/or social issues through novel reading?

2 Is globalization and multiculturalism challenging the concept of *Self* and *Other*?

Previously, identity was kept defined within a nation-state, where nowadays the increased and developing technology, economy and flow of cultural exchange both challenge and question the fixed notions of identity. Identity is formed opposed to, in contrast of, and in contact with others, both on an individual level as well as in a social context. People and individuals understand and form themselves in relation to society. Thereby identity has become something that fluctuates, is questioned, and formed where different cultures meet. Edward Said advocates the identification of contrasts between the *Self* and the *Other* in order to be able to establish and/or confirm an identity: Opposites establish the *Self*. In the interaction of one another individuals promote their distinct culture, ensuing societies are influenced and negotiated by every culture represented, both cross- and transculturally. As a result, the different representatives of culture and/or ethnicity contribute to specific notions and ideas of identity, cultural understanding and traditions. In such multicultural areas various distinctions are encouraged and preferred while others are rejected, which furthermore changes both the culture and society within. According to Bhabha, cultures and traditions meet, interact, negotiate and influence each other in the Third Space. This is a liminal space where differences, cultures and traditions meet and connect. Following this, culture is characterized by differences, where people are in search of “common grounds” in order to identify distinctiveness and uniqueness. In a changed, new, and often relocated situation, the individual searches for acknowledgment of the differences within him/herself in order to understand others and different cultures. Welsch states that *“it is precisely when we no longer deny, but rather perceive our inner transculturality, that we will become capable of dealing with outer transculturality”* (Welsch 1999: 8). When determining ones identity, both differences and Said’s idea of *Self* and *Other* – Orientalism, and the spaces where differences interact, Bhabha’s Third Space/liminal signifying space, are significant ideas of how new identities are formed.

2.1 Edward Said and Orientalism

“Authority is formed , irradiated, disseminated; it is instrumental, it is persuasive; it has status, it establishes canons of taste and value; it is virtually indistinguishable from certain ideas it dignifies as true, and from traditions, perceptions, and judgements it forms, transmits, reproduces” (Said 1995: 20).

In his book “Orientalism” published in 1978, Edward Said introduced the term and concept of *Orientalism*. This book and his discussion have become highly influential in post-colonial studies, and has become an important work in defining the western relationship and link to the Orient. He also gave a specific description of the close relation between the social, political and cultural connection in establishing and maintaining orientalism. He describes orientalism *“as a style of thought based upon ontological and epistemological distinction made between the Orient and the Occident”* (Said 1995:2). He claimed that western artists, scientists, theorists and governmental administrators have created a concept and a belief of *a West and an East*; the *we* and the *others*: How Orientalism was established as a means for the Western world to gain and maintain dominance and authority over the Orient. Said claims that orientalist discourse was systematically used in order to *“manage – and even produce – the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively”* (Said 1995: 3). Western culture placed itself as an opposite to the Orient, creating a distance and an *“otherness”*, and established itself as the superior and primary one. Following this discussion, Said has been granted credit for introducing the idea of identifying politics within literary studies. Thus his idea of *Othering* is relevant in order to understand the establishing of identity, and how people relate ideas of personal distinctiveness to cultural contexts. It is important to analyse how people determine the concept of *Self* in relation to culture. The identification of a specific culture or society is both valuable and necessary when aiming at establishing personal identity. We can relate this to the idea of mirroring personal identity to something one is not. Mirroring the *Self* to another is important in order to recognize and analyse one’s identity and uniqueness. Thus, Edward Said’s discussion concerning *self* vs *other*, and the forming of identity in contrast to the *other* and the creation of *otherness* is fundamental. Of equal importance is his attention provided to how literature, narratives and discourse contribute and add means to how we are identified or form personal identity.

2.1.1 Said and Post Colonialism

Edward Said's *Orientalism* set the premises for what later was established as post-colonial theory. This became a term and a theory used to name the social sciences and humanities, in addition to cultural geography, that arose in the late '70s. The prefix "post" refers to the time after the colonial time, and not a theory following colonialism. However, post-colonialism has its reference back to colonial times, starting in the 18th century, when western European countries, including Britain, Spain, France and Germany, colonized non-western territories. In the 20th century, when the colonized nations gained their independence, the previously colonized nations refused to be identified according to the western perception of race, gender and class. They demanded a change in how the dominant white class defined the terms of their identity. Postcolonial criticism arose as one became conscious of this uneven relationship between the West and the Orient. In observing this relationship, Western "archaism" was accused of having values and beliefs that were oppressive and exceedingly ethnocentric. Thus, the term Orientalism is believed to represent the dominating biased view upon the Orient deriving from the colonial times, which displays prejudice and the colonial mind set. Orientalism illustrated the idea of a divide between and an identification of *us* and *them*; the West and the East, the ones who have and the have-nots. It intensified the division and intended to make it a permanent separation of the superior and the inferior visualized through the colonizers and the anti-colonizers, and the white vs the coloured. However, when identifying the conflicting relationship between the *self* and the *other*, where the *other* is basically everyone who is separate from yourself and your kind, the *self* needs to admit to the presence of the *other* in order to define itself as being the standard, and to establish its position in the world. Clearwater explains "*othering as a way of defining and securing one's own positive identity through the stigmatization of another*" (Clearwater 2010 as cited in Nirmala 2013: 1). Another idea identifies the concept of *self* and *other* as "*a territorialisation of space*". This idea confirms that "*to territorialize means to assign identities for collective subjects within structures of power, and, therefore to categorize and individualize human beings*" (Balibar 2009: 192). This shows that in order to be able to establish identity, we additionally need to compare and mirror ourselves to something we are not: We are dependent on the *other* to determine (personal) identity.

According to Said, post-colonial theory deals with how literature representing the colonized countries fails to present the colonizer's real treatment of the colonized, as well as the colonized's attempt to express his/her real identity. During post-colonialism, discourse was often interpreted to be a description of how the western colonizers constricted territories and identified the natives. In order for imperialists to identify themselves, they must see the *Other* as something different from the *Self*, something that is *not me*. The *Other* is described as something foreign that needs to be controlled in order for the *Self*, the colonizer, to maintain its power and control. Afaf Ahmed Hassan Al-Saidi, a professor of English language and literature at King Khalid University describes the *Other* as "*the one who does not belong to a group, does not speak a given language, does not have the same customs; he is the unfamiliar, uncanny, unauthorized, inappropriate, and improper*" (Al-Saidi 2014: 95). Al-Saidi further explains the *self* vs *other* relationship in the way "*the oppressor projects his negative identity which is undesirable and dangerous into the oppressed, and that projection makes him feel superior*" (Al-Saidi 2014: 97). The aim of the colonizer is to force one's own culture on the *Other*, a culture that might be perceived as something negative and undesirable by the *Other*, which further makes the oppressor feel superior. With the establishing of the opposite *Other*, the *Self* is able to maintain his distinctive superiority:

"European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self" (Said 1995: 3).

To prove his point, Said's study was mainly based upon British and French (and after World War II additionally American) discourse, since they were the dominating colonists from the 18th century up until World War II. He argued that due to their dominance, power and size they set the standards in world politics and culture. This, according to Said, meant that both German and Dutch (among others) discourse were based upon the already established British and French discourses. As a result of his investigation, he concluded that, Orientalism "*can be discussed and analysed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient – dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it; in short, Orientalism is a western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient*" (ibid). He suggested that we need to identify and acknowledge discourse as a means to establish, produce and maintain the Orient as a concept of otherness and superiority.

2.1.2 Establishing the Orient

When determining the term Orientalism and its impact on and through discourse, Said reasoned that *“it is a dynamic exchange between individual authors and the large political concerns shaped by the three great empires – British, French, American – in whose intellectual and imaginative territory the writing was produced”* (Said 1995: 15). By identifying the Orient as an *Other*, Said illuminated how literary works and other works of art favoured the western white over the non-western. He presented the significant role of literature; how western authors, politicians and critics have “created” the orient in their discourse. Said gives a warning that such scholars need to be aware of their contribution to racism and how they promote an imperialist mind set; i.e. serving the historical interests of European imperialism, and that they should avoid forwarding the hegemonic mentality that identifies European culture as superior to the non-western cultures:

“It is hegemony, or rather the result of cultural hegemony at work, that gives Orientalism the durability and the strength I have been speaking about so far....a collective notion identifying us Europeans against all those non-Europeans, and indeed it can be argued that the major component in European culture is precisely what made that culture hegemonic both inside and outside Europe: the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures” (Said 1995: 7).

He claimed that orientalism is a power of knowledge, and that the western “knowledge” and “supposed truths” about the natives were taught through discourse and written works: That the geographical regions of the Occident and the Orient have not just merely been formed out of nowhere, they did not just come into existence, someone defined them at some point in history. The idea of the *Other* was constructed or fabricated by people and their discourse:

“As much as the West itself, the Orient is an idea that has history and a tradition of thought, imagery and vocabulary that have given it reality and presence in and for the West” (Said 1995: 5).

This was a way of oppressing and keeping control of the Orient, and was not only limited to the Orient, but any group that did not belong to the dominant white European culture.

Following this, Said stresses his conviction that the Orient and the image of it, are created in a Western mind set. The Western creation of the Orient is not made out of a mutual correspondence, however, rather established as a thought or image thereof. He asserts that

“the Orient was Orientalized not only because it was discovered to be “Oriental”, but also because it could be made Oriental” (Said 1995: 6). He uses Flaubert’s description of the Egyptian courtesan in order to demonstrate his point:

“She never spoke of herself, she never represented her emotions, presence or history. He spoke for and represented her. He was foreign, comparatively wealthy, male, and these are historical facts of domination that allowed him not only to possess her (Kuchuk Hanem) physically but to speak for her and tell his readers in what ways she was “typically Oriental” (Said 1995: 6).

The western male dominance over the inferior, submissive Eastern woman becomes the visualized image of the Orientalist’s dominance and authority over the Orient: An *Other* that is different because it could both be identified as and additionally made divergent. Said emphasizes his point with another example of Gustav Flaubert’s colonialist viewpoint of the Orient, in his travelogue *“Flaubert in Egypt: A Sensibility on Tour”* he describes his experiences of Egypt:

“This is indeed a funny country. Yesterday, for example, we were in a café, which is one of the best in Cairo, and there were, at the same time as ourselves, inside, a donkey shitting, and a gentleman who was pissing in a corner. No one finds that odd; no one says anything” (Flaubert 1949:95).

Flaubert’s observation and description offer another example of the biased perspective demonstrated by Western narratives. He is stereotyping what was the common Western perception of the Orient: Savage, primitive, ignorant and inferior. Flaubert’s description and belief demonstrate and exemplify the colonial pattern of ideas regarding the Orient. Said argues that Orientalism is the symbol of Western domination over the Orient, and that Orientalist discourse in several ways represents ideologies, socio-economics and politics deriving from Western ideas and perspective. His main argument is that the Western idea of the Far East is not just a romantic or imaginary fantasy, but rather a constructed idea made into practice, visualized through generations of discourse and (re)presentations. He names this *“a system of knowledge about the Orient, an accepted grid of filtering through the Orient into the Western consciousness”* (Said 1995: 6), which has formed into an idea *“of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures”* (Said 1995: 7). Due to the political sovereignty as imperial powers one would identify oneself as the colonial power first, comparing oneself to the power of the nation-state, then characterizing oneself as an individual (Said 1995: 11). This means that any discourse given

by any western *Self* is biased and coloured by his nation's sovereignty. The colonialist is fully aware of the advantages of and his interests in dominating the *Other*; how the Orient is conducted, maintained and identified politically by superior cultural- and literary discourse. Thus Said claims that "*Orientalism is a distribution of geopolitical awareness into aesthetic, scholarly, economic, sociological, historical, and philological texts; it is an elaboration of geographical distinction, of a whole series of "interests"which not only creates, but maintains; it is, rather than expresses, a certain will or intention to understand, what is a manifestly different world....a discourse that is produced and exists in an uneven exchange with various kinds of power, shaped to a degree by the exchange with the power political (colonial and imperial establishment), power intellectual (reigning sciences), power cultural (orthodoxies and canons of taste, texts, values) and power moral (ideas of what "we" do and what "they" cannot do or understand as "we" do)*" (Said 1995:12).

Thus Orientalism in discourse and narrative was produced from the biased western point of view, forming a misrepresentation of the Orient rather than constituting the actual truth. Both authors and their narrative favoured the imperial idea, since they advocated established western knowledge: An idea, which makes discourse an important contributor to continued superiority, the dominating *self* vs the inferior *other*:

"Orientalism responded more to the culture that produced it than to its putative object, which was also produced by the West" (Said 1995: 22),

Said's claim further demonstrates that "*Orientalism depends for its strategy on this flexible positional superiority, which puts the Westerner in a whole series of possible relationships with the Orient without ever losing him the upper hand*" (Said 1995: 7). Said points out the western bias and oppression represented through literature, and thus, fortunately created an awareness towards the unbalanced presentation. However the intention of the oppressive western literature, Said's discussion has brought the issue into public awareness. Hence, non-western authors and literature are more welcomed and given approval, which contribute to realistic and true descriptions of experiences. A representation which is necessary in order for people to receive the actual truth, understand, and make up a fair and unbiased mind.

2.1.3 Criticism

Said's analyses of Orientalism confirms that hegemony is the leadership or dominance of one state or social group over another, and supports the "Gramscian concept of hegemony" as *an*

indispensable concept for any understanding of cultural life in the industrial West (Said 1995:7). What he means is that in any culture preferred cultural- and social systems or structures will occur, which means that some ideas and structures appear more influential than others. This is what maintains the idea of the Orient, and withholds Orientalism as a dominant Western concept. Because of this support to Gramsci's idea of hegemony, Said has been criticised for simultaneously supporting a western humanism, which advocates European, white, male, middle-class reference. He embraces the western superior male yet criticises his dominance. Additionally, Valerie Kennedy criticises the way he is mixing Foucault's ideas on discourse and power with Gramsci's idea of hegemony:

"...problems arise from Said's attempt to reconcile Foucault, Gramsci and certain features of Western Humanism. Foucault's ideas on discourse and power are evoked in conjunction with Gramsci's argument that culture is an important factor in establishing hegemony that is the dominance of one people or group over another. But these perspectives occur alongside appeals to notions such as 'human reality' or 'human experience', which emerge from the philosophical tradition which both Foucault and Gramsci challenge" (Kennedy 2000:20).

Following this, she points at the confusion and contradiction of Said's way of combining these ideas with certain features of Western humanism, i.e. the human reality and experience developed from traditions within philosophy, which is challenged by both Foucault and Gramsci. This only serves to contradict his own position and debate, which further makes him appear inconsistent, vacillating throughout his discussion (in Orientalism). One example is how he at one point claims that "*scholarly Orientalism paved the way to imperialism and was then superseded by it*", while at another point he sees imperialism as something that has come to establish the study of scholarly Orientalism (Kennedy 2000: 24). Furthermore, the fact that Foucault was of high influence to Said and one of his main sources, contradicts his discussion on Orientalism, since Foucault was under the impression that "*analysis rarely leads to any action*" (Kennedy 2000: 25). However, both Said and Gramsci, believed practice to succeed theory. Therefore, one (of Kennedy's) major allegation(s) is how Said, who "*sets out to reconnect European scholarship and literature on the Orient with the political context of imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism*", can choose to mainly found his ideas on a theorist who "*fails to connect the European and non-European worlds*" (Kennedy 2000: 27).

Besides being criticized for his support of western reference, which contradict his points, Edward Said has additionally been criticized for establishing his discussion and studies on male-based references only. The way he disregards any consideration regarding class or gender has become one of the main arguments against his credibility (Kennedy 2000: 16). In her criticism, Valerie Kennedy stresses Said's neglect of the female presence, and how it is impossible to ignore the significance of both the male and the female gender in Orientalism. She illustrates the foreshadowed expectations of an upcoming gender discussion in Orientalism by illuminating Flaubert and his description of Kuchuk Hanem (see earlier description). As Said states that Flaubert was "*foreign, comparatively wealthy, male and these were historical facts of domination that allowed him not only to possess Kuchuk Hanem physically but to speak for her and tell his readers in what way she is not an isolated instance. (It fairly stands for the pattern of relative strength between East and West, and the discourse about the Orient that it enabled)*" (Said 1995: 6), and points at the western male dominance over the female eastern inferior. However, he leaves the discussion there and never elaborates on his assumptions. Kennedy furthermore brings in numerous examples where the discussion regarding gender would be both appropriate and expected, and accuses Said of gender-blindness. She additionally points at Said's generalisation regarding both sexes, whereas he considers Orientalism a "male province", since his primary focus was male dominated discourse (Kennedy 2000: 40). Following this, by choosing to neglect the gender discussion and female presence in Orientalism, he undermines a broader significance of his work. His description of the feared, despotic male Occident could easily have been turned into a debate and an examination of male-female relations:

"For the West, the Other is embodied in the Orient; for men, the Other is embodied in women" (Kennedy 2000:41).

By including gender inequality in his discussion, his debate would have proved to be more precise regarding historical relevance and in illustrating the relationship between the Occident and the Orient (Kennedy 2000:44). Thus, with an examination of the gender inequality regarding the occident and the orient, Said would have brought in more evidence to his claims. As a result, his discussion would be based on broader material, and his claims regarding the western dominance and prejudice would be strengthened. Additionally, a discussion of how the female population was equally influenced by the western representation of the Orient in literature, would emphasise his claim and thus arouse more interest. An

exclusion of half of the population only serves as an undermining and a deterioration of his points.

2.1.4 The Shift in Orientalism into ethnocentric, prejudiced, and racist views in identifying the *Other*.

The end of World War II marked a shift in the focus of Orientalism. Britain and France, which former occupied the world dominion, were surpassed by a strong and vital United States. The US entered the leading position of world politics and thereby became a leading voice in political world discourse. This is naturally transferred to a shift in orientalist thought. Where the original British and French Orientalism earlier was centred on the Semitic – the Arabs and the Hebrew, USA shifted its orientation toward the Arabs exclusively (Said 1995: 307). Due to the establishment of the Israeli state in 1948 and each of the following Arab-Israeli wars, the Arab became a figure in American discourse. The Arab experienced biased stereotyping and unbalanced “know how”. Both popular culture as well as social science pictured him as intimidating and threatening. The Arab oil embargo in 1973, which was a response to US military support to Israel in the Yam Kippur War increased the negative attention brought upon the Arabs. The US fed the world with updated advanced extension of the imperialist view of the Orient. Related to this, Said, for instance, brought attention to the American movie industry, which portrayed the Arab as bloodthirsty and dishonest. The Arab was characterized as sadistic, treacherous, low, a slave trader, camel driver and a menacing moneychanger (Said 1995: 287). Additionally, Said, pointed at how the news and papers picture the Arabs; always in large numbers and hordes, never individually or showing any personal identity:

Lurking behind all these images is the menace of Jihad. Consequence: A fear that the Muslims (or Arabs) will take over the world (Said 1995: 287).

He brings in several examples of different discourse contributing to creating a wider distance between the Orientalist and the Orient. For instance, an Arab Course guide in a college described Arabic to be a language “*where every other word has to do with violence*” (ibid). Another example is an article in Harper’s Magazine where the author claims that “*the Arabs are murderers and that violence and deceit are carried in the Arab genes*” (ibid). He even points to a serious survey on Arabs published in an American textbook, where the survey confirms that “*few people of this area(the Arab) even know that there is a better way to*

live... What links the people of the Middle East together? The last link is the Arab hostility – hatred – toward the Jews and the nation of Israel” (Said 1995:287). Even highly educated and promoted professors add fuel to the racist portraits of the Arab, where after a survey on the aspects of the Middle East’s importance to the US, the professor conducting the survey proclaims:

The modern Middle East and North Africa is not a centre of great cultural achievement, nor is it likely to become one in the near future. The study of the region or its languages, therefore, does not constitute its own reward so far as modern culture is concerned.....the region is not a center of great political power nor does it have the potential to become one... (Said 1995: 288).

Said’s purpose with these examples was to prove the shift in orientation, where Orientalism turned from existing as a philological discipline and more of a general perception into becoming a special field within social science:

“Genealogically speaking, modern American Orientalism derives from such things as the army language schools established after the war, sudden government and corporate interest in the non-Western world during the post-war period, Cold War competition with Soviet Union, and a residual missionary attention towards Orientals who are considered ripe for reform and re-education” (Said 1995: 291).

The American contribution to Orientalism was the shift where western oriented description of the Orient in all discourse changed into emerging as mere facts and a science investigating the Orient.

2.1.5 Is Globalization and Multiculturalism Challenging the Concept of *Self and Other*?

With his study, Said brought awareness regarding cultural domination, and how it might intervene with the actual truth; that Orientalism only emerged as a representation of an idea not representing facts. His information contributed to a refreshed consciousness and opinion. He intended to replace the biased opinion with the truth; to eliminate the Orient and the Occident as concepts. He proposed an awareness of what Raymond Williams has called the “*unlearning*” of “*the inherent dominative mode*” (Said 1995: 28). Said’s aim was to bring his ideas to people’s attention so that there would no longer be an idea and a concept of determining *us* and *them*:

“The real issue is whether indeed there can be a true representation of anything, or whether any and all representations, because they are representations, are embedded first in the language and then in the culture, institutions and political ambience of the representer. We must be prepared to accept the fact that a representation is implicated, intertwined, embedded, interwoven with a great many other things besides the “truth”, which is itself a representation (Said 1995: 272).

Said ensures that his intention with his discussion was to suggest and prove that the Orient only emerged out of a constructed and biased discourse. The idea that there are geographical areas inhabited by indigenous groups, who are characterized as distinctively different and *other* due to a believed common description based upon religion, ethnicity, culture common to that specific area, is something that needed and still needs to be debated (Said 1995: 322). Following this, he believed that anyone who is able to impartially and attentively observe his/her own society and culture from the outside, is more likely to make (more) just observations and evaluations of it. Said firmly believes and fronts an awareness that this makes people capable of making detached, selfless judgements regarding accurate perspectives of both him-/herself and others:

“The man who finds his homeland sweet is still a tender beginner; he to whom every soil is as his native one is already strong; but he is perfect to whom the entire world is as a foreign land.” (Hugo of St. Victor, Didascalicon as cited in Said 1995: 259).

What Said tried to demonstrate is that the *Other* is never a real threat, rather a constructed and imagined fear, and that the actual fright was never that the Orient would eliminate or overthrow the Western culture, rather an intense fright of a dismantling of the actual ideas and mind-sets which separate the East and the West (Said 1995: 263).

Today we have a moral and ethical obligation to question and neutralize these notions and racist beliefs. In the modern world we are obligated to be sensitive to racial thinking and unthinking, not automatically accepting assertions and authority uncritically. People should be sceptical and critical; keep a doubtful distance and a moral consciousness. Said’s orientalism provides a critique towards ideological mechanisms and western thought systems of how we perceive and determine others; migrants, societies, cultures and ethnicities. He caught people’s attention regarding the system of *othering* and the underlying processes, which are used to designate or dominate others. Hence, people should be conscious of and

work to prevent the orientalist ideas, which provide us with unconscious structures concerning how we identify, prejudice or stereotype others.

2.2 Mirroring the Other in Establishing Identity: Conceptualizing Difference as Means of Identification.

“Foreignness does not start at the water’s edge but at the skin’s” (Geertz 1985:261)

Culture is recognized as one of the main arenas where identity is formed, where societies share several traits, and where sets of ideas, values, customs and social behaviour are shared (Pauls 2009). Based on colonization, and what recently has developed into globalization, both have contributed to an increased spreading of diverse cultures. This creates settings in which, still and increasingly, the Occident west and the Orient east interact and relate to each other. When discussing the establishing of one’s identity, observation of and comparison to others are significant and highly relevant. However, of even equally importance is identifying difference; we mirror ourselves to what is divergent.

Jacques Derrida defined difference in terms of what it is not when he stated that *“it governs nothing, reigns over nothing, and nowhere exercises any authority.....there is no kingdom of difference, but difference instigates the subversion of every kingdom”* (Derrida 1982: 22). He offers a suggestion that difference alone does not apply for any superiority or domination of one over another. Following this, Derrida criticizes the way philosophy has tried to diminish the world so that it can be explained. Since there is no such thing as a fixed truth, he rather fronts the multiple understandings of “truths”. He objects the illusion that everything has a centre, a fixed truth, and that things are organized in some sort of pattern, or set guidelines. His idea of *deconstruction* identifies the contrasting of couples, such as good vs evil, self vs other etc., however, Derrida argues that there is no such thing as a hierarchy between these couplets. People must be aware of the fact that *such an opposing couple cannot be hierarchized in either direction without violence* (Selden et al 2005: 167). No word, interpretation or understanding is superior, one is not more important than the other.

Derrida’s term *deconstruction* originates from the idea that one deconstruct firm and fixed foundations, which means that believed truths and firm ideas are dismantled:

“The foundation is not a unified self but a divisible limit between myself and myself as an other” (Lawlor 2018: 5).

Deconstruction disagrees that the world is structured in opposites, and that these opposites are ranked where one is superior and more important than the other. Rather the superiority is reversed, and this will only work if we consider every existence to be temporary:

“The previously inferior term must be re-inscribed as the “origin” or “resource” of the opposition and hierarchy itself” (Lawlor 2018: 5).

Anyway, not only is the difference non-dualistic, it is additionally insignificant, difficult to define and even notice:

“We cannot decide if we are experiencing the past or the present, if we are experiencing the present or the future” (ibid.).

Considering the difference to be impossible to determine, *“it destabilizes the original decision that instituted the hierarchy” (ibid.)*. Deconstruction reverses (two) hierarchical ideas, which means that what is believed to be inferior is implemented and enforced into the superior. In such couplets the first is believed to be dominant since it is closely connected to the original idea. However, Derrida aimed his focus at questioning such fixed notions of truths and perception of certainties. He evoked understanding by implicating that the unspoken or the opposing ideas will always influence an indicated or underlined point. According to Derrida, the hierarchy of binary oppositions and the understanding thereof must be deconstructed, so that every alternative of assumptions or understandings is equal. Deconstruction asserts that it is not possible to put aside the metaphysics, rather one should accept one’s own idea of the truth. There will be a chain of continuing temporary assumptions: There cannot be any fixed, true interpretation, rather a set of several assumptions, which again will bring forward yet other assumptions, in a chain:

“Each time that I say ‘deconstruction and X,’ this is the prelude to a very singular division that turns this X into, or rather makes appear in this X, an impossibility that becomes its proper and sole possibility, with the result that between the X as possible and the ‘same’ X as impossible, there is nothing but a relation of homonymy, a relation for which we have to provide an account...” (Royle 2000: 300).

Derrida’s ideas of deconstruction are relevant when it comes to determining (personal) identity, especially related to the previously discussed idea of Said’s orientalism; that culture and identity is formed and mirrored in relationship to the *Other*. Derrida aims at deconstructing Said’s binary system of *self* and *other*, which creates an open, undefined space of fluidity, where Homi Bhabha is able to define his idea of hybridity. In post-colonial times,

the idea of hybridity and a third space complicates cultural definitions in which nations and people identified themselves. Cultural hybridity is believed to be THE leading system that has the power to dismantle the fixed boundaries in which social inequalities are preserved. It becomes “*the means of reimagining an interconnected collective...and asserts the notion that representation of collective must be analysed contextually*” (Yazdiha 2010: 36-37). In order to understand the fluidity of determining identity, we need to recognize that the binary oppositions are not the only option of labelling terms. Whereas Derrida deconstructs the binaries, although he never concludes with a solution or an alternative, Bhabha manages to identify a Third Space, in-between the binary oppositions. Where Derrida is more into deconstructing the opposites, he facilitates Bhabha’s construction of the liminal signifying space, where new identities will form.

2.2.1 Bhabha and Hybridity

According to Homi Bhabha, professor of English and American Language, the concept of hybridity develops in the interaction between cultures. He published *The Location of Culture* in 1994, where he elaborated the mind-set of hybridity, and brought Said’s discussion related to colonizer and colonized even further. He, too, discusses the notion of *self* and *other*, the polarity of the Orient and Occident, and orientalism demonstrated by Edward Said. His idea of hybridity originated from the platform of shared or interacting cultures (Yazdiha 2010:31). In the area of encounter a space is conceptualized, which encourages transformation, a place in-between, where cultures meet, interact and change: A cultural “metamorphosis” as a result of migration, diaspora, displacement and relocation (Bhabha 1994:247). With his introduction of the concept of “in-betweenness” and hybridity, Bhabha offers an explanation to the mixed and mutual feelings that arises between *self* and *other*, including both aversion and fascination. These are the mixed feelings occurring in between two polarized parts; the dominant and the oppressed. With the publishing of *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha introduced hybridity and its effect on identity and culture. He explained the ambiguity occurring in the middle of interaction of two races or two cultures: When the colonizer attempted to sustain power of the natives, the ethnic differences were not entirely rejected, rather repeatedly marked as something different. He affirms that the existence of both the colonizer and the colonized arise only in relation to each other. They create some sort of symbiotic world: The presence of one cannot be evident without the other, troubled

relationship or not. Even though the oppressor rejects the existence of the other, he has to recognize it, since they relate to each other in order to exist. The colonizer will not be the authority without the presence of the subservient; without its presence, there will be no superior identity (Waugh 2006: 355). In the relationship between colonizer and colonized, the dominant colonizer required the colonized to “reshape” himself, to entirely adapt to European culture. This was in order to become more like the colonizer; to transform in the image of the European. The colonized was supposed to arise as something different than he used to be, yet still inferior. In this reconstruction of identity, there would always be some kind of failure, never assimilating entirely: A hybridization. The colonized would not be entirely the same as he used to, and yet not quite adapted into the dominant culture (Waugh 2006: 356). This perception is important to keep in mind when we examine the stress of determining one’s personal identity, especially as a migrant, since the migrant will always experience polarized expectations from numerous arenas and societies. Both native culture as well as host culture interfere and negotiate when defining the migrant *Self*. Thus confusion of identity and a possible reshaping of the *Self* happens in Bhabha’s hybrid space, in-between polarized parts.

2.2.2 Bhabha and the Third Space

Following Said’s establishment of Orientalism and his concept of the *Self* and the *Other*, Bhabha, subsequently, introduces a space where the opposites meet. He advocates his idea of an arena where Said’s *Self* and *Other* will connect and negotiate identity. In this space Bhabha’s and Said’s ideas merge: A recognition of *the Other* and what is different is necessary in order for the convergence of differences. Bhabha’s space of interaction and in-betweenness, where differences meet, is actually based upon Said’s opposites, which makes negotiation possible and thus refreshed ideas of identities will appear. As a consequence, Bhabha discusses the idea of enunciation and the act of expressing culture, which takes place in a *Third Space*. Since it is not given in advance, culture must be expressed in order to be determined and recognized. Bhabha argues that cultural *difference* is identification through process, opposed to *diversity*, which rather categorizes and compares in order to identify. *Difference* is something that is constructed instead of pre-given, while *diversity* places culture as *an object of empirical knowledge* (Bhabha 1994: 34). As a result, it is the enunciation and possibility of difference, which can clear the cultural target from the traditional, fixed, and stereotyped articulations concerning how to signify racial ideas. A new culture is established

as different cultures meet and conflict occurs. Thus, the *Third Space* is a developing area of crossing and conflict, where cultures or individuals interact. Bhabha claims that "*cultural statements and systems are constructed in this contradictory and ambivalent space of enunciation. It challenges our sense of the historical identity of culture as a homogenizing, unifying force, authenticated by the originary past, kept alive in the national tradition of the People*" (Bhabha 2006: 155). He suggests that the *third space* is neutral ground and the rank of the individuals is not necessarily important. The mood of this space is usually calm and without tension, and the *third space* can additionally be described as "a home away from home" in the sense of rootedness, warmth and feelings towards being at ease.

According to Bhabha, the *third space* or "liminal signifying space" is an effective place in order to analyse segregation and difference between the *self* and the *other*:

"We are confronted with the nation split within itself, articulating the heterogeneity of its population. The barred Nation It/Self, alienated from its eternal self-generation, becomes a liminal signifying space that is internally marked by the discourses of minorities, the heterogeneous histories of contending peoples, antagonistic authorities and tense locations of cultural difference" (Bhabha 1994: 148).

Furthermore, he introduces "a temporality of the in-between" and proposes that "*the boundary that marks the nation's selfhood interrupts the self-generating time of national production and disrupts the signification of the people as homogenous*" (Bhabha 1994: 148). He suggests that the dominant state that acts as a "signifier" is unstable: How heterogeneous groups within the borders challenge the nation-state. He further suggests that a nation exists only because the inhabitants believe that they all have something in common, that they are all connected through a unified national identity. Borders might shift, both as physical and abstract concepts, when the idea of an essential national identity is challenged. The nation's minorities and their narratives challenge the nation's collective and unified conception of the nation-state, the *Self*:

"As long as a firm boundary is maintained between the territories, and the narcissistic wound is contained, the aggressivity will be projected on to the Other or the Outside" (Bhabha 1994: 149).

This means that to be in control, the superior *Self* needs to pursue maintenance of its dominance. For the dominant culture, this might be an argument for maintaining the notion of difference or withholding the expectation of fully adapting to the new culture; that the ideas

of cultural differences, the opposing *self* and *other*, and fixed beliefs of identity serve as means to preserve the *Self*. Such archaic ideas and “the narcissistic wound” only serve as self-destructive processes:

“A major factor in the nation’s cohesion lies in its ability to displace aggression by turning its potentially destructive internal tensions outward towards its others “ (ibid).

However, Bhabha challenges the idea of a boundary of difference related to the postcolonial idea, and rather points at how the third space could turn former *Others* into fellow *Selves*. With this, Bhabha withholds his idea that the third space should be a place of peace and harmony where differences are blurred and merge into invisibility. People will never come at ease if the divide between the *self* and the *other* is preserved. Such ideas will only maintain the conflicts of difference in a multicultural society. Thus, the third space constitutes a place of interaction and establishment of a balanced and stable society.

2.2.3 Criticism

As Said conceptualizes the *Occident Other*, where the colonized is constructed in a collection of conflicting and suppressive notions, Bhabha opposes these ideas and argues that this will never succeed. His proof of this failure of conceptualization is that the colonized is created and classified according to unjust and often prejudiced and oppressive classifications, “*which renders him or her the site of both fixity and fantasy*” (Bhabha 1983: 204). Knowing that Bhabha is inspired by the Derridean idea of difference, which states that “*whenever an effect of presence is produced it is possible to relativize and unsettle it by referring to the difference on which it rests*” (Easthope 1998: 343), and this means that any fixed idea of identity can be questioned when referring to the hybridity or difference from which it is formed. Thus, Bhabha does not account for the presence and the connection between relative and absolute identity, which is necessary in order to establish subjective identity (Easthope 1998: 344). Easthope further argues that since Bhabha fails to identify relative identity, he unintendedly supports fixed identity, of which he initially disagrees. When considering hybridity to be an ever changing space in between floating binary oppositions of identity, Easthope argues that Bhabha is left with “*a binary opposition: either full identity or no identity at all, only difference....Bhabha privileges difference over identity and effectively treats hybridity as a transcendental signified*” (Easthope 1998: 345). With this, Easthope illuminates Bhabha’s problem of identity and hybridity:

“It refuses a notion of subjectivity which would explain, substantiate and make sense of the identity hybridity undermines.....his (Bhabha’s) account of identity is single and unitary” (Easthope 1998: 344).

He argues that Bhabha does not illuminate any presence in determining identity.

Following this, Antony Easthope argues that Bhabha’s cultural hybridity should be discussed regardless of and without any dictated or fixed hierarchies. Considering ethnic hybridity, Easthope argues that this then implies that two mixed ethnicities joined in hybridity were formerly two individual pure ones, and since ethnicity does not have one clear definition this makes the entire classification both blurry and subtle. He uses Alan Sinfield’s remark as an evidence of hybridity losing its characterization:

“It is quite hard to envisage a culture that is not hybrid...for who and what is not hybrid?” (Sinfield 1996: 278).

Without any fixed identities there will be no safe or stable identification of Said’s *Self* and *Other*, hence you cannot argue that the third space of interaction is constructed in the confrontation of two or more binary oppositions. Thus, it will be impossible to conclude any firm ideas or rules on how to establish personal significance and identity. The focus turns into individual understanding, values, habits, and systems when forming an identity, instead of identification through mirroring the *other*. Cultural relativism becomes the basis of forming personal identity: Culture is identified through personal *Self*, opposed to being compared to an *Other*.

When Said determines the binary opposites of *Self* and *Other*, where one is mirroring the other in an intradependent and suppressive relationship, he discloses suppressive structures although he is entrapped by binarity. Derrida with his deconstruction of binarity and such an uneven relationship additionally acknowledges binarism, and with the deconstruction of the two opposites, an open space is created, in which Bhabha focuses on constructing and reshaping in a third space. Bhabha opens a third semi-deconstructed space, and even though this goes into the possibility of producing a third, fourth, or even fifth space, his ideas feed into the ideas of multiplicities, fluidity, creativity and future change of *self* and *other*. Derrida, Said and Bhabha all acknowledge that identity cannot be constructed from a singular enclosed entity, i.e. identity, culture or nation, because of continuous relationality. With the dismantling of fixed spaces, open spaces will appear, and Bhabha’s third space constitutes the

relativity of identity: You do not know what you will end up with. By reconstruction through Hegelian stages, we will have the possibility of a *Self* turning into the opposite, which can be reconstructed as one reshaped whole. This means that with the destruction of two binary oppositions, new ones can emerge and form in the opposite of another. Thus, according to Said, there will always be a possibility of binary opposition, and a reconstructive, hybrid area can reappear. Hence, determining identity out of fixed or true mechanisms is impossible. Identity is a fluidity in itself, however, if determined, could and should only be so by the individual itself.

2.2.4 Immigration, multiculturalism and the development of new identities, ethnicities and forms of racism.

With the confirmation of Said's orientalism and how it is still applicable to identification and identity, one has to admit that people, nations and ethnicities in today's global, modernized world identify themselves in contrast to others, comparing themselves to what is different. Al-Saidi identifies this in terms of *territorialisation*; stating identity, and believes that a creation of distance between *self* and *other* is necessary in order for the colonizer to maintain authority. The dominant *self* must have someone to dominate: The subservient, an *Other*. The imperialist depends upon the "savage enemy" to define itself and maintain its sovereignty and national idea:

"White, to be conceivable, relies upon the conception of Black, cold must have hot; inside must be what is not outside, and civilization needs barbarism" (Al-Saidi 2014: 97).

Regardless of theories and ideas contradicting *otherness*, people and nations create borders in which to be able to categorize themselves and others, and David Newman states that borders that separate *us* and *them* have "*traditionally constituted the physical and highly visible lines of separation between political, social and economic spaces*" (Newman 2006: 2). However, such borders appear not only as physical, separating barriers, but also in mental maps (Newman 2006: 4). This means that no matter how you define borders or separating spaces – spaces of interaction of differences will "*always determine the nature of group belonging, affiliation and membership, and the way in which the processes of inclusion and exclusion are institutionalized.../ distinguishing between those who belong and those who do not*" (Newman 2006: 5). In other words, ethnicity, culture, tradition, where you belong, and

where you come from are of equal importance when determining whether you belong or not, who you are and how you are identified. Newman's idea demonstrates that the concepts of the *Self* and the *Other* will always be constructed in binary oppositions: Us/them, civilized/barbarian, black/white, colonizer/colonized, male/female, and that they are originally and/or intentionally constructed in order to maintain the dominant culture and to alienate the subservient *other*. Al-Saidi alleges that "*under colonial conditions some become the masters and some the servants, some have the power and some are totally powerless – the oppressors are far away from their native countries trying to create something that reminds them of home. The oppressed are no longer masters of their own country since they do not have any rights anymore; their land, money, raw materials and freedom are taken away from them*" (Al-Saidi 2014: 98). Still today, this colonial mind-set applies to ideas regarding nations, nationality and ethnicity in several societies. Even though, in some cases, there has been a shift of where these ideas are related, we still face such beliefs. The oppressor is not necessarily a colonizing power any more, however, the idea of oppressor and oppressed, and a relocated "inferior" migrant facing decreased rights and lack of control of *self* and identity, is still relevant.

Newman and Al-Saidi's ideas illustrate that Homi Bhabha's elaborations on the mind-set of hybridity, that takes place in the interaction between cultures, focus on the thresholds themselves; the third space, rather than pointing out the opposites i.e. colonizer/colonized, civilized/barbarian, black/white, man/woman etc., is highly relevant. Nowadays, Bhabha's model of hybridity appeals to people, opposed to Said's idea of the contrast of the *Self* and the *Other*. People want to believe that racial opposition, the concepts of *self vs other*, oppressor vs oppressed have become irrelevant, and that the third space has become a space of interaction and debate, rather than a separating border between ethnicity and nationality. The migrant identities are formed in a *Liminal Signifying Space*: Where they combine previous knowledge of their traditional *Self* with their reconstructed uniqueness. Victor Turner embraces Derrida's deconstruction and identifies the forming of identity by stating that "*liminal phases are more about doffing of masks, the stripping of statuses, the renunciation of roles, the demolishing of structures, than about putting them on and keeping them on*" (Turner 1984: 26). Tradition, culture and ethnicity are questioned, altered, and diminished in the liminal space of negotiation. Likewise, Les Black argues that "*ethnicity is always about negotiations...Between individual actors interacting in a specific micro context....and between*

publicly generated definitions of identity and the way people re-fashion these notions of identity.....These syncretic cultures produce inter-racial harmony while celebrating diversity” (Black 1996:158-159), which means that both the social framework (i.e. ethnical/racial composition and discourse) and public pressure influence how culture and identity develop in the liminal space of interaction and negotiation (Black 1996: 245). Thus, the idea of *Othering* could be recognized as nothing else but an outdated historical concept, which is possible to reject as means of identification in a modern globalized world.

3 Ethnic identity and narrative: *Establishing a Self and a personal identity.*

“How do you tell who is indigenous to the country and who is not? Given a history of migration, what is the dividing line between the indigenous and the nonindigenous?” (Mamdani 2005: 10)

In the question of determining ethnicity and identity, people and societies identify differences and mirror themselves to others. Thus Said’s idea of othering and orientalism must be given a serious consideration when we attempt to understand the adolescent migrant and his/her questions of identity. In addition, the focus is brought upon Derrida’s deconstruction and Bhabha’s construction of a third space from an open space or a liminal signifying space, since migrants often consider themselves in-between cultures; that they are gradually distanced from their native culture, both physically and psychologically, however, not included or assimilated into their host culture. The open space becomes a place of bewilderment and delusion, however, might eventually turn into a place where the different cultures negotiate, interact and transform into new and unique cultures, in a third space. Since migrants in general and adolescent migrants in particular are confronted with both their *otherness* and the challenges of tradition interacting with their adaption to a host culture, both Said’s, Derrida’s and Bhabha’s theories are essential when determining personal identity and belonging.

Following this, Bhabha discusses the idea of how relocation disturbs personal identity. In “*On the Irremovable Strangeness of Being Different*” from 1998, he points at the tension people experience when they are dislocated. The questioning of personal identity and location causes insecurity and stress, and Bhabha calls to attention what he recognizes as “anxiety of displacement” (Bhabha 1998:34). He confirms that “*the anxiety of displacement that troubles rootedness transforms ethnicity or cultural difference into an ethical relation that serves as a subtle corrective to valiant attempts to achieve representativeness and moral equivalence in the matter of minorities*” (ibid.). He argues that both cultural and/or ethnical difference, as well as dislocation are reasons for causing unease and stress in confirming ones identity. According to Bhabha, discomfort constitutes a passage and a place of uneasiness and anxiety adjudicating distinction and cultural boundaries: An anxiety constructed in “*a transition where strangeness and contradiction cannot be negated and must be constantly negotiated*

and worked through” (Bhabha 1998:35). You are disconnected from your own culture yet not integrated into your host’s. Your identity is caught in between; always expected to be a participating part, however, still regarded and located on the outside of society. The migrant finds him-/herself in a state of in-betweenness, where he/she is neither a foreigner nor a native.

In order to understand the idea of determining identity, The Oxford Dictionary defines it as “*the characteristics determining who or what a person or thing is*” (Identity: Oxford Dictionary). Hence, personal identity is the perception of *self*; what is specific, real and typical for oneself. Forming your identity means to accept a concept of *self* that you can match and live up to, and that harmonizes with your personal beliefs. This coincides with John Locke’s idea of identity examined as early as in 1689 where he stated that *identity of persons consists of sameness of consciousness* (Locke 1689 as cited in Shoemaker 2017). Generally, this would be explained in terms of memory; that one uses facts of memory in order to construct identity:

Someone existing now is the same as someone existing yesterday because he remembers the thoughts, experiences, or actions of the earlier person (Shoemaker 2017).

This means that you bring what formed your identity yesterday and adds this to the experiences that will form you today. Locke’s idea claims that identity is formed unconsciously through adding new experiences to the old ones. However, your identity is formed both within yourself as well as related to cultural and social surroundings. You understand your *Self* related to the various groups you associate with, all of them interconnecting and mirroring different aspects of yourself (Identitet: SNL 2016). Following this, your identity is formed not only out of experiences, but out of expectations, environment, influences and consequences: How you process and convert every impact determines your personal identity.

More recently, Jerome Bruner examines the creation of the *Self*, and questions the 20th century idea that identity is established unconsciously. He opposes the idea that identity is formed intuitively and automatically. Rather we establish and re-create a sense of *Self* dependent on the situations we are confronted with. Bruner states that we use our “*memories of the past and our hopes and dreams of the future*” in order to do so, and names the personal forming of

identity “*self-making stories*” (Bruner 2011: 2). We grow older, educated, become wiser, experience different situations, and meet new people and societies, which all update our references. Such events help people form new stories, which will develop and change their personal identity as time passes. Furthermore, Bruner claims that the making of the *Self* happens both from the inside as well as from the outside. He points at memories, feelings, beliefs, ideas, and thoughts to be the subjective designations in the construction of *Self*, where the outer influence is directed from expectations and demands conducted from the culture and society surrounding you. He argues that our culture provides a set of ideas of “*what selfhood should be, might be and should not be*” (Bruner 2011:3); that there are certain culturally given assumptions and views upon identity. However, identity and the forming of the *Self* is a matter of becoming one-of-a-kind, nurture our uniqueness, and recognize the *Self* in comparison to the demands and expectations of others: “*Self is also others*” (ibid.).

In this regard, in 1996, Les Black stressed the importance of negotiation when confirming *Self* and identity, especially related to the question of ethnicity. Young migrants immerse in narratives, dialogues and confrontations in school, playground and in the streets of the neighbourhood. Thus these encounters of difference and mixing within their society make them adjust and learn to know themselves. Black points at this negotiation happening on two different levels: On the individual level among their peers, and on a community/national level, where they have to consider the major expectations on a larger scale i.e “*the wider meanings associated with race and nationhood*” (Black 1996: 123). Very often migrants emotionally struggle with the feeling of being placed on the outside of society, due to labelling regarding race, language, class or gender – *Othering*. When people make the life changing decision to leave their accustomed and familiar world and relocate into an unfamiliar custom and society, they are often met with hardships and inhospitable conditions; they fail to meet the expectations and demands of their new and strange society. The feeling of not belonging, the estrangement and the distance to what used to be familiar are of significance in forming a new, adjusted identity. In their attempt to adjust their identity to their relocation, migrants have to review their idea of home and traditional concepts of identity, where both belonging and inclusion are questioned. Although post-modern theory declares that a stable *Self* is non-existent and highly vacant, migrants and their narratives reveal a desire to belong, and to reconstruct and form some sort of balanced or fixed identity, especially since their surroundings often are unsettled (Leese et al 2013: 108). Additionally,

for migrants the question why you are migrating will be of significance when struggling to determine your identity: Whether you are a migrant of choice, force, or personal decision, and what “motivated” the migration is fundamental to how you will settle, integrate, distance, and determine yourself. A relocation of home disturbs your fixed ideas of identity and belonging, which creates a feeling of dislocation and alienation. In addition, how to determine what is home and your nationality will no longer be defined within your familiar framework. This is the reason why the migrant frequently experiences a disruption or conflict between host country and country of origin, between his/her past and present existence. The complexity of belonging yet at the same time feeling dislocated creates a situation of distress. The sense of rootlessness, homelessness, and nomadism, can add up to a disturbed mix of discomfort, loss and mental suffering, since the familiar means and references of identification are mixed and confused. Forming a personal identity and a *Self* becomes complex and difficult, and leaves the YA migrant at the peril of frustration, depression and agony. However, at the same time the in-betweenness provides a hybrid space and an opportunity for self-creation, where multiple identities can meet and negotiate, a fluidity of existence, unpredefined movement towards an unknown future, yet to be discovered.

3.1 Young Migrant Identities

“Ethnicity is produced in situations where two or more social collectives are defined in relation to one another in a situation of contact” (Barth 1969 as cited in Black 1996:158).

In *Childhood, Migration and Identity* from 2013, Carly McLaughlin advocates to grant the young migrant with a voice of significance. Until recently, migrant children have solely been regarded as dependants of their migrant parents, and the only attention given to these minor migrants has been as a part of a larger company. They have not been allowed an opinion or a voice of their own when it comes to the forming or questioning of identity. Thus, McLaughlin has named them “the Hidden Immigrants” (McLaughlin 2013:52). Related to migration, they have been considered to be either left behind when parents emigrate or arrive later through family reunion. Hence they have not been given any separate childhood/adolescent migrant voice of identity. However, the minor or adolescent migrant needs to be acknowledged for his individual development separately from the experiences (conflict, persecution etc.) of their

parents. They form their very own personal distinct identity disparate from that of their parents.

Fortunately, this focus has recently changed and Jacqueline Knörr, for instance, emphasizes the need to concentrate our attention towards migrant children, and consider “*children as autonomous and creative beings producing reality and culture*” (Knörr 2005: 10). Young migrants are equally important as adults, and provide a different angle to the forming of (the migrant) identity. They face different situations, on diverse and different levels than that of the grown up migrant population, and the disparity of age is of additional significance. The young migrants’ struggle for acknowledgement, acceptance, and inclusion needs to be given a voice and an agency in the debate of forming transcultural identities. The children of families with dual nationality parents, asylum seekers, 2nd generation immigrants, and residents of refugee camps are equally important when it comes to forming, confirming and contributing to young multicultural and migrant identities. To illustrate this, Carly McLaughlin points at how children especially experience the issue of returning “home” as completely different from that of their parents. While the parents often long for the home they left and await the time when they finally are able to return, either to visit or permanently, migrant children can be of another opinion. They feel estranged from a distanced and foreign home that by their family and traditional society is expected to be familiar (McLaughlin 2013:52). Following this, Pollock and Van Reken name these young migrants “Third Culture Kids”, and describe them as “*persons who have spent a significant part of their developmental years outside the parent’ culture. The Third Culture Kid frequently builds relationships to all of the cultures, while not having full ownership in any*” (Pollock 2009: 13). They are additionally identified as “Cross-Cultural Kids”, who are “*persons who are living or have lived – or meaningfully interacted with- two or more cultural environments for a significant period of time during childhood*” (Pollock 2009:31). As they experience and are influenced by two or more cultures simultaneously there is a chance of experiencing displacement and confusion of where to belong. They hover around in Bhabha’s open space attempting to form an alternative culture; a third culture identity. Thus the “Third Culture Kid” needs to be considered important in the study of transculturalism and the third space, where identities and cultures are formed. These children, although they fit perfectly into specific categorizations of ethnicity, gender and class, might struggle with conflicting, inner, invisible identities in terms of value, upbringing, culture, and how they consider the world. The conflict increases as these notions differ from

those of their surroundings (ibid.). Thus the common mistake of identifying these migrant children/adolescents by their exterior will usually conflict with their personal values, beliefs and inner perception of *Self*. This means that in today's mobile and global world society must turn to recognize the YA migrant outside of the traditional categories of identification. Race, language, ethnicity, and gender are no longer of necessary importance when it comes to identification of YA immigrants' *Self*. Personal identity will no longer be attached to specific places or nationalities. The outcome of what appears to be a lack of means in order to establish identity will be a constant search for fixed characteristics of identification. Without the traditional characteristics there will be multiple floating self-perceived, conflicting mechanisms invented in an attempt to form a *Self*. This is joined by the essential need of security, shelter and safety, the lack of which forced them to leave their original home and "identity". The adolescent migrant is more likely to adapt to the wish of self-fulfilment, finding both meaning and purpose in searching for acceptance in the new home "away from home". The sudden change from the safe and familiar home into a sudden, foreign and unfamiliar home represents both a physical as well as a mental ordeal, evoking both agonizing and stressful feelings. This creates "*a rift between their inner and outer world*" (Leese et al 2013:117).

According to Bhabha, "*the problem of cultural interaction emerges only at the signifying boundaries of cultures, where meanings and values are (mis)read or signs are misappropriated*" (Bhabha 1994:34). He acknowledges Said's claim that the western or general human character is always attempting to characterize *the other* opposed to oneself. The YA migrant experiences these boundaries not only as separating cultures, however, additionally unifying cultures. As demonstrated in this thesis, the border which separates the *Self* and the *Other* simultaneously becomes a hybrid space of interaction where existence, difference of identity, ethnicity, culture, relationship, acceptance, and affiliation interfere, negotiate, and are recreated. The YA migrant experiences a liminality: Through the stages of movement and dislocation, his/her identity is in transit, where personal identity transforms from established ideas into relocated and confusing concepts:

"Identity becomes ambiguous, neither here nor there, betwixt and between all fixed point of classification; he passes through a symbolic domain that has few or none of the attributes of his past or coming state" (Turner 1974:232).

By using narrative, the migrant demonstrates a reconstruction of the *Self* through the act of migrating, moving and displacement; a home away from home encompassed in the home of *the other*: A stranger among strangers. Thus personal stories of various kinds and experience are important contributors to global understanding and enlightenment. They serve as realizations of contemporary transformation and reconstruction of identities, where conditions of major changes, traumatic experiences, cultural unification, confusion, and dislocation play significant roles. The narratives provide voices to the migrant experience and exploration of identity, as well as attempting to resist biased ideas regarding culture, ethnicity and identity. Narrative and fiction become a liminal space, a third space, in which children/YA can explore a flourishing imagination of personal *Self*.

However the traumas experienced, narratives of dislocation and nostalgia additionally suggest the possibility of a recreated home and identity. The remapping of (reconstituted) personal (third) spaces in which personal identity is determined makes reshaping of identity possible. According to Jopi Nyman, “*the transformation of identity is personal, cultural and national*” (Nyman 2017: 14). He argues that refugees construct temporary identities in order to endure the unfamiliar, prevalent and often racist culture. When examining migrant narratives and/or experiences there are often close links between experiences of the past, understanding memories of former life, culture and identity connected to the present. Memories and reminders of past lives, according to Nyman, are important in order to establish some sort of cohesion between past and present life. (Nyman 2017: 91/ Creet 2011: 3). Memory constitutes not just nostalgia and mourning, but additionally calls upon confrontations of trauma, cruelties and xenophobia during the relocating process. According to Sidonie Smith, migrant narratives of memories can be characterized by intending to share memories with others, by linking their memories to particular places or objects, and/or to visualize memories in order to establish identify (Smith 1998: 40). A constant juxtaposition between the past and the present, tradition and contemporary life is consistently present, interfering with identity and *Self*. As my novels will demonstrate, we learn that the protagonists are perfect examples of Nyman’s claim that they are not “*products of one single culture or nation*” (Nyman 2017:4), rather a consolidation of every experience, adaption and understanding from their total existence. Thus the fluid and unsettled identity hover in Bhabha’s hybrid space where binaries are deconstructed.

3.2 Migration Narrative and Literature

“Migranhood has become the representative modern experience, and as a consequence more and more people now recognize themselves in the narratives of displacement”
(Hall 1993:115).

Migrant narrative and literature have developed into an important medium in which people can experience and explore differences and questions of identity. When exploring and determining personal identity, mental images are of equal importance as the more obvious physical means of identification. YA migrants analyse ideals, dreams, emotions, thinking and language when exploring or determining means of personal identity, hence, identity formation is influenced by numerous variations of characteristics. Related to this, narrative and literature becomes one out of several means of identity formation, which will provide the YA migrant with ideas, examples and suggestions on how to form her personal identity. Therefore, narrative and literature are significant arenas where third culture kids are able to enter an open or a third space, where an awareness of Said’s orientalism is established, since many people live on and experience three or multiple margins, cultures and discourses. Stories of relevance facilitate their definition and exploration of personal in-betweenness. The YA migrant is constantly subject to Orientalism, always mirroring himself to his surroundings by the means of personal reference. The frequently projection of a *self* opposed to the *other* questions his personal existence and individuality, and the fluidity of his identity, in-between defined notions, disturbs and disrupts the idea of a defined third culture or space. Related to Bhabha’s idea where identity is questioned and reconstructed in cultural interaction; not until YA migrants comprehend and acknowledge their varieties of cultural identity, are they able to settle in a third space. Thus, exploring migrant literature in which YA migrants can relate and understand, will relieve and comfort their perils of confused identity.

To understand how the contemporary migration narrative has changed and why its and Bhabha’s significance has enhanced, the term “*migrant turn*”, which appeared during the late 1980’s needs an explanation. Migration narrative and literature shifted from focusing on being anti-colonial into appreciating hybridity, in-betweenness, identity, mobility, migration and border crossing (Moslund 2010: 9). This turn in migration narrative diminished the idea of polarised opposites; the superior vs inferior, the *self* vs *other*. Instead the *migrant turn*

introduced Bhabha's third space where literature and narrative express a melting pot of differences. The third space serves the purpose of writing a globalized world of identity, and prevents the polarization of the *Self* and the *Other*. However, a change in the fixed polarized opposites can develop new, changed dualisms; such as rootless vs rooted, the mobile vs sedentary, and hybrid vs pure. This will imply that the only developing figure is the hybrid migrant whereas the rooted and settled is to remain constant and at halt. Thus, it is important to prevent migration narrative from becoming one metamorphosed unit, and claiming that forming new identities happens with an even influence from the polarised binaries in the third space. Instead the binaries will influence each other unevenly, and the binary oppositions will be "contaminated by the other" in an endless process of a constantly changing formation of identity and representation (Moslund 2010: 10, 11, 14).

Focusing on the idea of destructing the binary oppositions when linking personal-, ethnic-, and cultural identity to mobility and globalization, migration literature should celebrate the migrant experience. Dealing with dislocation and displaced identities, young adult migration literature illuminates opinions and bias regarding immigrants, in addition to explain some of the mental states and acts conducted by the protagonists in such narratives. According to Joanne Brown, "*their stories are stories of ordinary people made extraordinary by undertaking an extraordinary experience*" (Brown 2011: 23-24). By reading young adult migrant literature, the stories of the individuals' experiences enhance the reader's understanding of the motives that imposed their decision to leave their home country, in addition to the resulting emotional equivocation originating from the emigration:

"We must remember that migration is carried on by individual immigrants who, although their actions may conform to larger patterns, are each acting on what, to them, is a unique combination of motives" (Daniels 2002: 22).

The spreading and sharing of personal experiences can ease the feeling of loneliness, acknowledging that their stories are not unique, rather part of a larger, universal experience, which serves as therapy and a personal value as migrants are able to relate to each other's stories and experiences. Authentic experiences of migration picturing the loss and trauma of a home and an identity constitute a therapeutic importance, which establish a mutual language to express their experiences. To retell stories of dislocation and longing contributes to the individual's consciousness regarding personal experience and identity. Narratives of shared experience unify the adolescent migrants, and the therapy comprises not feeling completely

alone in their confused mental *Self*; lost and deprived of a personal identity. Telling and reading these stories increase the understanding of who the migrant used to be and what he is enduring, which increases awareness and recognition within the migrant himself as well as within the general reader of the narratives. Regardless of how imaginative, surreal and creative these stories are there will always be elements of reality and recognition to the reader. Entertainment merge with education and/or therapy. Fictional stories even contribute to further creativity in the attempt to form new ideas and personal identities by bringing in images and examples of how to deal with personal traumas and challenges. Thus migratory narrative becomes an important part in the process of identifying the *Self*.

Hence, acknowledging the equal importance of all signifiers in the question of difference, culture, and in forming identity, will hopefully enhance understanding of trauma and loss of identity. Regarding the recognition of migrants and their challenges of identity, in an ideal society, an atmosphere of diversity will be celebrated, and young adolescent migrants are allowed and able to experience, explore, and develop their personal ethnicity and identity. By narrating their stories and by reading them, the stories are brought into the public, hopefully resulting in increased knowledge, insight and acknowledgment. Additionally, according to Yazdiha, studying race and national identity related to forming new identities are “*essential in deconstructing xenophobic nationalist claims to nation and the resulting miscegenation of immigrant Others*” (Yazdiha 2010: 36). Thus, the migrant discourse and narrative will be of significance and importance in decreasing racism, prejudice and xenophobia due to ignorance and inexperience. Based on these theoretical considerations of orientalist hegemony and the identity formation of young individuals, the principle question develops into: Will increased awareness concerning conflict of identity in young adult, YA, narrative reduce, or even better, prevent, the concept of alienation and othering?

Thus, my novel analysis is mainly focused on contemporary, “unestablished” novels, which authors’ more or less narrate personal experiences of trauma, loss, displacement and migration especially related to determining a personal *Self*. The readers experience what appears to be testimonies of a self-lived reality, which triggers emotions and personal engagement. Due to their relatively recentness, the novels’ lack of or very limited critical coverage becomes an advantage, since the readers will not be disturbed by thorough and numerous academic interpretations, in which presents fixed forms of interpretation. Thus the

reader is able to form personal, just and unbiased opinions. Related to my thesis, each novel is both interesting and appropriate because of how they narrate the deconstruction of binaries, related to the social and cultural hybridity when determining identity beyond restrictions in third space processes.

4 Novels introduction: *The authentic young immigrant experience and its representation in literature.*

“The study of world literature might be the study of the way in which cultures recognize themselves through their projections of ‘otherness’. Where once, the transmission of national traditions was the major theme of a world literature, perhaps we can now suggest that transnational histories of migrants, the colonized, or political refugees – these border and frontier conditions – may be the terrains of world literature. The centre of such a study would neither be the ‘sovereignty’ of national cultures, nor the universalism of human culture, but a focus on those ‘freak social and cultural displacements’” (Bhabha 1994: 17)

Bhabha suggests that literary attention should change its focus from Said’s Orientalism and Othering into rather focus on literature with and by migrants; that we should change from determining the *self* and *others* into just narrating transnationalism - the unbiased multiculturalization of societies and cultures. Stories of nationality or nations are irrelevant, and the proper literature of the present is narratives of the mobility of people, culture and identity.

Related to Bhabha’s idea, the following novels are all representatives of more or less recent YA migration narrative. Since they are all contemporary stories, mainly published the last decade, critical reviewing is scant. This thesis appears to be the first to discuss them in a theoretical perspective of Said’s orientalism, Derrida’s deconstruction and Bhabha’s third space. Since such meditation upon these novels is actually non-existent, or at least relatively unspoken of, my analysis is mainly based upon personal interpretations, which will be included in the subsequent analysis.

These four titles were chosen from a larger body of ten relevant novels: *We Need New Names* by No Violet Bulawayo is the story of a young African girl, who experiences the political instability in an unnamed African country in the aftermath of decolonisation. She migrates to the USA, where she attempts to fulfil her childhood dreams of prosperity in a western country. However, the tale of a comfortable life in the “promised land” turns into one gigantic disappointment. She struggles to understand the social structures and to determine who she is

and her position in society. The comparisons of her former and present life, which causes confusion of identity, is a fundamental issue. Her conflict of identity is strongly visible as she is constantly faced with orientalism; challenged and identified as the opposite *other*. The readers experience the deconstruction of her African (Zimbabwean) identity and her bewilderment in reconstructing her *Self* in Bhabha's hybrid space.

Sumitra's Story by Rukshana Smith narrates a similar story. The story is another tale of political instability, in a decolonized Uganda, where the protagonist's identity is split in three different directions: Her Indian heritage, her Ugandan childhood and her adolescent Britishness, all of which challenge and conflict with her inner, personal *Self*. We are presented a brief visualisation of her childhood experiences in Uganda, with especially focus on the question of racial difference. Considering her childish innocence, xenophobia and racial segregation is incomprehensible to her, thus we are presented her bewilderment through her naive perspective upon life and identity. The main setting in the story takes place in London/Britain, where the protagonist continues to question racial difference and prejudice, which further questions her personal *Self*. She experiences the bewilderment of fixed characteristics of how to determine her identity, floating in-between her numerous identities, which she struggles to merge into one whole unified *Self*.

In addition to these two main works, I have chosen to support my analysis and discussion by adding two more subsidiary novels: *Little Bee* by Chris Cleave depicts yet another African girl escaping the oil-conflict massacres in Nigeria. Since this novel is split between two protagonists; one YA illegal immigrant and one fortunate white British female, the reader is presented with a more nuanced illustration of the conflict of identity. The two protagonists interact and mirror their experiences, understanding of each other's backgrounds and circumstances, and question of identity. In both their search for a determination of who they are and what to become after experiencing life changing ordeals, they seem to find some sort of shared comfort and solace, and thus develop a mutual trust.

The other subsidiary novel is *What is the What* by Dave Eggers; the agonizing story of one of Sudan's Lost Boys. The childhood protagonist's travelogue surviving and escaping the perils of conflict in Sudan and its bordering areas merge with his present challenges of establishing a life and reconstruction of identity in the USA. His past intervenes with his present and he

struggles to understand and settle in the American society, since his Sudanese past constantly challenges his comprehension of western customs. His narrative concentrates on how his affection for the possibility of once more experiencing a peaceful life in his home country joint with his difficulties adapting American traditions, disturbs his identity. He suffers from bewilderment of personal existence, torn between gratitude, mourning, and understanding, and struggles to visualize a future for himself and determine a *Self*; his present constantly mirroring his past. The differences between now and then, *self* and *other*, are always contrasted as he attempts to understand his host society.

These four novels were chosen due to their demonstration of bewilderment of identity, for the protagonists' experience of floating in a hybrid space between *Self* and *Other*, and for illustrating the complex issue of forming a personal identity as a YA migrant. A number of novels overlap the thematic interest and theoretical relevance, but will be preserved for later research and projects: *I Love Yous Are For White People* (2009) by Lac Su, set in Los Angeles, USA, which narrates the story of a Vietnamese boy's experience of *othering*, constantly mirroring himself to the white/multi-ethnic society surrounding him. *Americanah* (2014) by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is the story of the African YA female student, migrating to USA, who later returns to her native country. She experiences *othering* in her American host society, however, when she returns home, experiences reversed *othering*, due to her gradually "Americanisation". *Mornings in Jenin* (2011) by Susan Abulhava illustrates the Israeli-Palestinian relationship through four generations. While some of the protagonists are internally displaced, others migrate to the USA, where their past identities intervene with the reconstructing of a new one. *Refugee Boy* (2002) by Benjamin Zephaniah narrates the story of the Eritrean-Ethiopian boy escaping internal conflict in his home country trying to settle in London alone as an orphaned minor. *The Kite Runner* (2011) by Khaled Hosseini illustrates coming of age in Afghanistan during the Soviet occupation and the subsequent Taliban rule, where the protagonist finally migrates to the USA. All these novels were placed second to my analysis since I found the four of my choice demonstrate orientalism and *otherness* in a larger scale and thus made my analysis linked to Orientalism more accessible. The demonstration and exemplifying of the YA's challenge of forming an identity in-between societies and social comprehension, the visualisations of binarism and attempts to deconstruct these, and demonstrations of various polarised parts were striking, and hence, strengthened

my decision. Finally, *We Need New Names*, *Sumitra's Story*, *Little Bee*, and *What is the What* proved to be, at least to me, more enjoyable.

Each of the novels I have chosen deals with the adolescent experience of being the *Other*. The novels were all chosen from the perspective of, at various degrees, representing the migrant *Other*, and for giving a voice to the challenge of forming an (adolescent) identity in Bhabha's third space. The novels narrate the experience of constantly moving around in-between cultures, where the protagonists are given an unbalanced influence from all parts of culture. This makes these stories important signifiers in representing the transcultural discourse. They depict the stories of individual migrants instead of stories of national traditions. These depictions represent a third-person point of view of the world, or more specific, a third-person creation of the world, in a hybrid space. The main characters struggle to form or settle a personal identity, since they are subjects of multiple expectations and influences. The inner conflict of identity forms one fundamental issue of all the novels in this analysis. In every story, except Sumitra's, one or both parents are either dead or missing, thus the protagonists are children, who grow up without the safety and influence of their family:

"They are pushed from their native countries and pulled by hope of what lies on the other side of the ocean....their view of the future is a mix of optimism, sorrow, and uncertainty (Brown 2011: 70).

These adolescent migrants are not acquainted with their host country, hold little knowledge of the realities they will face, and often take their illusions and dreams to be facts. Very often they will be struck by a reality that does not match their imagination, expectations and dreams (Brown 2011: 42).

Furthermore, the novels were chosen because the main characters must adapt and adjust a new culture. The protagonists develop within special social settings; dealing with traumas of the past, attempting to comprehend and appreciate a life in an unfamiliar setting, accepting (and settling with) a rediscovered identity. The novels represent the perils of the third culture kid, who brings for the kid as subject, which furthermore brings for the novels as subject: Illustrating references from native traditions into a host culture, the adaption of various qualities, and attempting to reconstruct a personal identity. Orientalism causes severe confusion, since othering is the cornerstone of their bewilderment. They mirror themselves to their surroundings, constantly reminded of their otherness, simultaneously attempting to

deconstruct the opposites of their identity. Every protagonist's disorientation of identity pushes them into an open space of hybridity, where they pursue an identity formed in the third space; constructing their personal third culture. Thus the novels constitute the typical bildungsroman, which is a German term for a novel that demonstrates the influence tradition, culture and society brings on forming identity (Bildungsroman: SNL 2018:

“The protagonists are spurred in their journey by circumstances that separate them from the family setting with which they have long been familiar, and they must overcome a series of obstacles before reaching a level of maturation that allows them to make a knowledgeable accommodation to their new circumstances in their new country” (Brown 2011: 17).

What is additionally typical for the novels, and therefore significant for my study, is that each of the stories is or at least appears to be self-experienced and has a biographical tone, which brings the reader closer to the actual experience:

The authors have close psychological connections to the stories that they tell, and therefore each story rings with emotional resonance” (Brown 2011: 70).

The author addresses the reader directly on issues of a self-lived reality, whereas the story and the main character appear more trustworthy. With personal description and involvement, both the experience and narrative become more interesting, and the reader feels included and committed to the experience, it engages the reader emotionally and empathically. Hence, the story becomes more meaningful and relevant, and hopefully will contribute to the reading- and learning experience, which further makes both the story as well as the reading experience more purposeful.

4.1 We Need New Names – No Violet Bulawayo

We Need New Names is a typical bildungsroman, where the protagonist grows up in a country of political chaos and instability somewhere in Africa. The author Elizabeth Zandile Tsele uses the pseudonym NoViolet Bulawayo, and confirms that she constructed her pseudonym in remembrance of her late mother, Violet, and her hometown, Bulawayo in Zimbabwe (Ndlovu 2016: 133). Considering her pseudonym to represent loss and nostalgia (both for her dead mother and her abandoned hometown), it is likely to believe that this is transferred into her novel writing. Whereas Bulawayo herself is a Zimbabwean migrant and the story first is set in an African country and then in the USA, inclinations are made that she writes out of personal

experience (although this is never fully revealed). Thus, the novel engages in issues like political and governmental malfunction, dreams of prosperity through migration, ambiguous concern for and/or sympathy towards what and who is left back home. Furthermore, the novel engages in lack of identity, and in mourning memory, discontentment and melancholia of displacement, which perfectly illustrates the perils of a YA migration experience.

The novel's first part takes place in Paradise, a made up shanty town in an unnamed country. The name of the protagonist's home, Paradise, contradicts itself. Knowing that a paradise is a place of great harmony and peace, where you are given the opportunity of prosperity and fulfilment, we soon learn that this is not the case in this story. Its name serves as an ominous foreboding of the eviction into a more problematic world, where the absence of proper food and decent living conditions, and political instability serve as the backdrop of the protagonist's childhood. Darling's home is built out of whatever they find lying around, and they live in constant lack of food and other life essentials. When she describes the rise of Paradise, the author changes the narrative from Darling's point of view into an omniscient point of view, which makes this an issue that concerns the entire society, not just Darling and her family:

They (people) did not come to Paradise. Coming would mean that they were choosers.....They did not come. They just appeared....They appeared single file, like ants. In swarms, like flies. In angry waves, like a wretched sea....They appeared with the dust from their crushed house clinging to their hair and skin and clothes, making them appear like things from another life....They appeared with tin, with cardboard, with plastic, with nails and other things with which to build and they tried to appear calm as they put up their shacks.....far too many appeared without the things they should have appeared with (75-76).

The residents of Paradise are compared to angry fly swarms, which appear in places where dirt, garbage, and sewage pile up. Thus the reader knows that this is a slum without proper sanitation and infrastructure. Darling and her friends belong to families who have been forcibly relocated by the government. They used to live in decent quarters, however, for reasons not revealed in the story they were removed and now reside in poor shelters with basically nothing. 10 years old, Darling remembers comfortable housings with proper living conditions and even respectable names. With their removal and relocation, they "lost" their real names and now name each other *Darling, Bastard, Godknows* and *Chipo* etc., as if being

relocated distances themselves from their former identities. They construct an alternative identity in order to endure the loss of a stable and familiar life and identity. A fabricated identity turns their ordeals into temporary experience: Temporary names equals temporary location. With perishable identities, their existence in the shanty town is not persistent, which indicates that life will improve.

As a result of growing up in a place like Paradise, all the children long for and dream of a prosperous life and future abroad, preferably in, what they describe as *a country-country* (a prosperous, developed country), like the USA, Britain, Sweden, Germany, etc. Thus, the contrast between growing up in a western developed country and a developing African conflict area is constantly pictured. The contradiction of *us* and *them* in the novel demonstrates Said's idea of Orientalism. The border between Darling and her society's *self* and the industrial world of *others* is constantly visible as the narrator repeatedly compares her present existence to her dream of a promising future abroad: For instance through the games Darling and her friends play. Even though the story is narrated from a child's point of view, we understand the ongoing political opposition and dissatisfaction. Through Darling's childish, naive observations, thoughts and descriptions, and knowing the political situation in Zimbabwe during the 70's, the population's dissatisfaction pervade her narrative. We are presented with childish observations, which describe what the children experience, but do not fully understand. However, this is easily accessible to the reader. Like when Darling and her friends amuse themselves with games such as *Country game*, *Find Binladen*, and by imitating the freedom fighter Bornfree. Through the children's interpretations of grown up issues when playing these games, Bulawayo illustrates the challenges and conflicts of the country. The children's naïve way of observing and mirroring the grown ups' centre of attention as well as illustrating a severe issue with a touch of humour and childish innocence, makes the seriousness of their situation more accessible. When playing the *Country Game* the participants first have to fight over which country to represent in order to participate. The scene where the novel's protagonist explains the rules demonstrates the ranking of countries; how some countries are preferred over others:

Everybody wants to be the U.S.A and Britain and Canada and Australia and Switzerland and France and Italy and Sweden and Germany and Russia and Greece and them. If you lose the fight, then you just have to settle for countries like Dubai and South Africa and Botswana and Tanzania and them. They are not country-countries,

but at least life is better there. Nobody wants to be rags of countries like Congo, like Somalia, like Iraq, like Sudan, like Haiti, like Sri Lanka, and not even this one we live in... (51).

The narrator ends the explanation with a resignation that states the obvious:

Who wants to be a terrible place of hunger and things falling apart? (ibid).

These are serious matters transferred from the grown up experience into child's play. Children mirror the discontent present among the people: Where is it safe to live and where do they have a chance of prosperity and a safe, decent life compared to their present existence? The children unconsciously (or not) mirror their *selves* and their conditions to the *others* abroad.

Furthermore, through the children's narrative, we get hints to the ongoing revolution or revolutionary attempts: How the inhabitants are not satisfied with their situation and their government. The children witness a funeral while playing near *Heavenway*, the graveyard, an intimidating yet fascinating playground:

We have seen quite a few coffins like that lately; it's the Change people, like Bornfree, in the coffins (135).

We sense the people's growing dissatisfaction, for being betrayed by their own government, whom they fought for and supported during the liberation fights against the colonial powers: A trusted black government, who has turned against and betrayed its own population:

"The men (Mugabe's) knock down our house... When the bulldozers finally leave, everything is broken, everything is smashed, everything is wrecked" (68).

This is when we learn what forced them to end up in the shanty town of Paradise: Betrayed by Mugabe, their own leader. Instead of rewarding his people, Mugabe treats them like enemies of the state and forces them to live like animals. Naturally, the inhabitants mourn lost property and home, feeling dislocated and deprived of safety and stability. They demonstrate the ongoing frustration by stating:

"We fought for this fucking lizwe mani (Xhosa for country), we put them in power, and today they turn on us like a snake" (89).

The snake symbolizes the duality of good and the evil, and describes how the freedom fighters fought for a black government, black rule and a liberation from the colonial powers. Whereupon their own representatives, who used to represent the good, suddenly become the enemy and the villain:

“They shouldn’t have done this to us, they shouldn’t have. Salilwelilizwe leli, we fought to liberate this country. Wasn’t it like this before independence?...Better a white thief do that to you than you own black brother (77).

They, the former black *selves* have suddenly become the present black *others*, distanced and separated from themselves. The narrator clearly demonstrates the distance between *us*, the people, and *them*, the government, emphasizing the unmistakable distance between the *self* and the *others*, which demonstrates that Said’s Orientalism is still relevant and maintained through contemporary narrative. The children and their resemblance-game demonstrate the people’s opposition and how they constantly compare themselves to those more fortunate. They require equal opportunities and their fight for change becomes accessible to the reader when it is first described through the funeral of the revolutionary. However, it is even more accessible through the children’s spontaneous imitation in the revolutionary game they play afterwards. First they demonstrate the government’s attack on Bornfree, the revolutionary, who is recognized as one of the *Change People*:

“Who is paying you? America and Britain? ...Friend of colonists! Selling the country to whites! You think you can just vote for whoever you want?...You want Change, today we’ll show you Change! Here’s your democracy, your human rights, eat it, eat, eat, eat!” (143).

This is an example of how children obliviously and unconsciously pick up ongoing conflicts or struggles, and re-enact the course of events. The reader is presented the revolutionary *you* and *your* democracy opposed to the governmental *us*, distancing democracy from the present government. The children do not necessarily understand the seriousness of the situation, but however innocent they are, they are still involuntary involved in and suffer from the political instability. Through their naïve observation of the adult population’s reaction to the defeat of the revolutionaries, we understand a silent criticism of impotence:

“The people of Paradise too don’t make any sounds. There is this big black silence, like they are watching something holy. But we can see, in the eyes of the adults, the rage. It is quiet, but it is there. Still, what is rage when it is kept in like a heart, like blood, when you do not do anything with it, when you do not use it to hit, or even yell? Such rage is nothing, it does not count. It is just a big terrible dog with no teeth” (145).

A couple of western journalists from BBC are witnessing the funeral and revolutionary-game, clicking their cameras. Their presence demonstrates the distanced, often criticised as naïve

interest of the western world. A world that just observes and does nothing to help fighting the authoritarian government. The western and distanced *others* does not understand the seriousness of the situation nor how the children are affected by this:

“What kind of game is that?...What kind of game were you just playing? And Bastard puts his shirt on and says, Can’t you see this is for real?” (145-46).

The journalists’ questions illustrate western ignorance. They are outsiders, observing from the outside, not understanding the seriousness of the situation and how the children are affected by the conflict. To the children, the game serves as serious participation in the revolution, where the journalists, with their western fortunate reference interpret their naïve rebellion as child’s play. The journalists’ reaction and naïve understanding constitute the mental border between their western *self* and the native inhabitant *others*. The children grow up in a society, which is pervaded with political instability, and the journalists’ reaction is a perfect example of the distanced and ignorant western *Self* that consciously (or unconsciously) creates a mental border between himself and the native *Other*.

The western ignorance and distance reappear after Darling has moved to the USA where her white, rich employer demonstrates Orientalism and the different conceptions of *us* and *them*. Through his pathetic attempt of conversation, he reveals a biased idea of the African *Other*:

“So how is it going back there?” Elio says. He means my country. He likes this stupid phrase, ‘back there’, and I hate the way he says it, as if my country is a place where the sun never rises (267).

Following this, it infuriates Darling that her boss appears to be in control of what is going on “over there”, although he has no clue:

“He has travelled all over Africa but all he can ever tell you about the countries he has visited are the animals and parks he has seen” (271).

Darling’s employer is the personification of the western mind and Said’s occident *Self*; how people of the West believe they understand Africa and what is going on there, and that their idea and narrative constitute the reality. Yet, the only reference the employer possesses comes from vacation trips, where the tourists only are presented the glamorous parts; only available to the rich and fortunate. Additionally, the phrase *over there* distances him and the US from an Africa far away. It forms a mental image of a distant area, which has nothing to do with *us*: It is *them, over there, the others*.

Where the first half of the novel pictures the challenges and experiences growing up in the non-specific African country, the second half narrates the experience of being an immigrant adolescent in the US. In her new American home, Darling feels dislocated and displaced. Her personal identity is constantly questioned, and the feeling of being located somewhere in the middle of nowhere; in between her former and present home, is constantly demonstrated. She does not entirely belong anywhere, and never feels fully accepted. This is clearly visualized as she has just arrived to live with her aunt and her family in Destroyedmichygen (Detroit, Michigan), US. The misspelling of the name reflects Darling's (and often the general migrant's) language difficulties, which often constitutes a barrier when settling abroad. This illustrates how language might confirm Orientalism, and distance and form a border and a contrast between host and foreigner; *Self* and *Other*. In addition, the misspelling visualises Darling's feelings towards her host country and new home, where her expectations of living the American Dream is never fulfilled. Every imagined advantage and expectation is undermined, and she gradually realizes that her dream and hope of a life in luxury and prosperity was nothing but a "destroyed" illusion.

Through the conversations within her household in America, we learn that Darling's American family consists of Darling and Aunt Fostalina, uncle Kojo from Ghana, and TK, the son, who is born in the US. Darling's personal inner conflict of belonging and identity is illustrated shortly after Darling's arrival in the US, when her homesickness and disheartenment is exposed. She misses both her home and her friends when she solemnly states:

"Some things happen only in my country, and this here is not my country, I don't know whose it is" (149).

She points out her struggle to adapt her new home and thus experiences to be an outsider. This is not her country, not her home: She does not belong. Whereupon TK answers:

"This is America, yo, you won't see none of that African shit up in this motherfucker" (ibid).

They both demonstrate the clear invisible borders between the *Self* and the *Other*, *we* and *them* and the contrasting of Darling's Africa vs TK's America: "*We* are here, *you* are over there". TK repeats Darling's employer's ide of Africa: Africa is 'over there' with all its 'shit'. America, here, is preferred and excelling. Even though they both originate from Africa, 1st and

2nd generation, they demonstrate an identity and origin that is divided by both physical and mental borders.

Because she experiences disappointments and delusion trying to adapt the American society, Darling continuously compares her former life in Africa to her present. Her comparison demonstrates the distance between her past and her present, between Africa and America, between *us* and *them*. Darling naively and innocently observes and contrasts everything that differs from 'home', and she struggles to determine whether she belongs to the *we* or the *others*. She interprets and understands the western society from her Zimbabwean point of view, and compares the strange new customs to the life familiar to her back home, thus she distances herself from her presence in the USA. Her naïve comments and comparisons add a humorous touch to a severe and serious matter. For readers familiar with the western way of life, with all the facilities available at all times, this creates a contrast, which is both entertaining and comical. She naively observes what the reader will recognize as the presidential election:

“On TV that pretty man Obama who has been saying ‘Yes We Can, America, Yes We Can’ is becoming president. He don’t look old like our own president; he looks maybe like our president’s child.....There are crowds and crowds of white people and black people and brown people, just people, and they are happy and cheering and clapping....That is democracy, we can’t even say that word back home” (158).

Darling compares her African dictator to Obama, their age to father and son, which is an amusing idea of contrasting home and 'home away from home', orient and occident, totalitarianism vs democracy. With several African dictators' lifelong rule, her statement regarding presidential age has a comical effect, and makes the reader relate to her difficulties of comprehending western society. She observes the cheering crowd of all ethnic colours, and solemnly states that together the crowd constitutes one unified group, where every citizen is allowed to vote and has a saying in governing the country. Hence, she polarizes dictatorship vs democracy, her former African home vs her present American home, *Self* vs *Other*. She additionally contrasts her past and present, by illustrating how growing up in constant lack of food makes Darling question her cousin's gorging:

“When the microwave says nting, fat boy TK takes out a pizza and eats it. When the microwave says nting again, he takes out chicken wings. And then it’s the burritos and

hot dogs. Eat eat eat. All the food TK eats in one day, me and Mother and Mother of Bones would eat in maybe two or three days back home” (ibid.).

Through her observations and statements, Darling establishes her present existence and identity to be floating in a hybrid space. She is located in-between culture and understanding, where she uses her African references to comprehend the American society and create a personal understanding. While living in the US Darling demonstrates an identity formed in Bhabha’s third space, in-between recognition and comprehension. Her in-betweenness is furthermore illustrated by the constant demands from the people back home in Africa, how they, like Darling herself used to, believe that the answer to any solution and prosperity is to emigrate to a “*country-country*”. Once you are settled abroad you are expected to share your wealth:

“...every so often we listened over the phone to the voices of our parents and elders, shy voices telling us what was needed.....Our extended families sent requests and we worked, worked like donkeys, worked like slaves, worked like madmen. When we hesitated, they said, ‘you are in America where everybody has money, we see it all on TV, please don’t deny us’ ” (246-247).

Darling and her aunt are pulled in all directions, and they are forced to toil and endure various jobs and conditions in the US. The demands from relatives back home to share their wealth constantly disturb and challenge their personal prosperity. Because Darling and her aunt persistently work long and brutal hours, their immigrant *otherness* is demonstrated by repeated questions by the Americans:

When we were asked: You guys work so hard, why do y’all work so hard? (ibid.).

The American citizens generalize ‘*all you constantly working others*’. They notice their diligence and thus establish their *otherness*. Their (African) work ethic is juxtaposed with the American, like two opposites. Thus the immigrants are observed from “the outside” by the host population, and the stigmatizations polarize and establish their *otherness* in contrast to the native *selves*.

Darling’s idea of not belonging, being placed in between her relatives back home and the American society never ceases to exist throughout the story. Darling explains how “*we went everywhere and took and took and took pictures and sent them home, showing off a country that would never be ours*” (247). The migrant *we* is contrasted to the *others*, the host society, in which she feels excluded; not belonging to a whole unit. She and other immigrants are

estranged and never fully accepted or entirely becoming American. They live in a country that will never be theirs. Despite their attempt to establish a life in the new country, they cannot negate their heritage and origin. Even with the attempt to deconstruct the binary oppositions, Darling floats in the open space of in-betweenness, however, never manages to form a reconstructed identity in Bhabha's third space. The fluidity of her identity remains as she experiences the common challenge of the YA migrant: Your host culture would like you to dismiss your culture and adapt the new one, while your traditional culture remains a part of you. You are never fully accepted as either this or that, rather constantly considered to be the *Other* to both societies, thus a negation of any culture seems impossible. Gikandi names these immigrants *rejects of failed states* (Gikandi 2010: 23):

People who suffer from a sense of un-belonging at home and will also not be welcomed in the countries where they seek refuge (Ndlovu 2016: 140).

Likewise, Achille Mbembe introduces the expression "*the economy of unsatisfied desires*" (Mbembe 2001: 31). With this he points at the migrants' and Darling's position in between relatives back home, their personal expectations and the demands from the countries where they seek refuge. Through all this, migrants are constantly reminded of their forever lasting status as someone in-between: The individual's expectation of the American Dream, expectations from relatives to share an imaginary wealth, expectations to adjust, and experiences of prejudice from the host country. Pulled in various directions, the immigrants never find acceptance nor belonging. Mbembe identifies this in his discussion of migrant identity when he states that "*there is no identity that does not in some way lead to questions about origins and attachment to them*" (Mbembe 2001: 26): No matter where you relocate yourself there will always be reminders from the host population referring to your foreignness. You are always stigmatized and reminded of your otherness.

As time passes, the migrants, as Darling experiences too, remove themselves from what used to be familiar back home, which creates a distance between the migrant and his/her native home:

And then came the times we called home, and young strangers answered the phone...When did it happen, when did all these children have their own children? (248).

Darling's disorientation when calling home illustrates the migrant delusion that as time passes abroad, life back home would stand still. Migrants seem to form an opinion that even as time

passes abroad everything would remain the same back home. They uphold the romanticized image of what used to be and what was familiar to them. A conversation with an old friend back in Africa represents the turning point in which Darling realizes she has changed; she is transformed from being the foreign *Other* in America, into additionally being regarded the *Other* and the opposite of her family and friends back home. She is confronted with being increasingly distanced from her home country, and at the same time experiences the feeling of not fully belonging to the American society. During the conversation she expresses sympathy for her people back home, who are left without any hope of affluence or fulfilment:

What they have done to our country. All the suffering (287).

Whereupon her friend responds:

You are not the one suffering. You think watching on BBC means you know what is going on? No, you don't, my friend, it's the wound that knows the texture of the pain,; it's us who stayed here feeling the real suffering, so it's us who have a right to even say anything about that or anything and anybody (ibid).

With this accusation, Darling realizes her position “in-between”. She is disconnected from the *us* back home and has become the *other*. She does not fully belong anywhere. Her childhood friend accuses her of not belonging to her native society, she is no longer part of *the us*, and is thus not allowed to utter any opinion regarding the government and the conditions her people has to endure. Darling has suddenly become the *Other* to her African society, as her friend establishes ‘*us who stayed here*’ as the *Self*. Her friend confirms a mental border and a distance between them, and Darling is not included within her former traditional *Self* anymore. She is dismissed by her own. The traditional means of identification are no longer applicable to her, just as she is not fully accepted by her host society: She constantly floats in the open space of “in-betweenness”. Her childhood friend gives her the coup the grace when she confirms:

If it's your country, you have to love it to live in it and not leave it. You have to fight for it no matter what, to make it right (288).

Darling is accused of abandoning her people and her country in order to achieve personal prosperity: She left and never returned. Who is she to express any concern or interest in what is going on back home? She is considered selfish and ignorant, faithlessly and disloyally draining the country of brains and revolutionaries. How her former *Self* turns into the *Other*, demonstrates Said's idea of Orientalism; a polarization, which creates estrangement of personal identity:

You left it.....and you have the guts to tell me, in that stupid accent that you were not even born with, that doesn't even suit you, that this is your country?(288).

Darling finds herself in a condition of 'statelessness', where she does not belong nor is appreciated anywhere. She never feels complete; always mourning her home, the past, and what used to be familiar yet constantly struggling to adapt the American way of life:

I'm busy thinking about home and I feel like I can't breathe from missing it. It's a heavy feeling that I know will not go away (286).

She illustrates the stress the YA migrant faces when attempting to determine who he/she is in a host society as she reflects upon feeling displaced and deprived of a firm identity. She demonstrates the conflict of determining a *Self* and personal origin through generations, when she projects one reference of personal identity through her female relatives' different interpretations of 'home':

"There are two homes inside my head: Home before Paradise, and home in Paradise; home one and home two. Home one was best...

There are three homes inside Mother's and Aunt Fostalina's heads: Home before independence, ...when black people and white people were fighting over the country. Home after independence, when black people won the country. And then the home of things falling apart....home one, home two, and home three.

There are four homes inside Mother of Bones' (grandmother) head: home before the white people came to steal the country....home when the white people came to steal the country and then there was war; home when black people got our stolen country back after independence; and then the home of now. Home one, home two, home three, home four" (193-94).

Darling presents the different perceptions of home through the generations of her female relatives, each generation remembering an increasing number of different homes:

"When somebody talks about home, you have to listen carefully so you know exactly which one the person is referring to" (194).

The observant reader will notice that her present home in the US is not mentioned. She does not yet acknowledge the US as her home. Since she feels bewildered in identity and floats in the open space without settling in the third space, the US is still just a place of sojourn to her.

Identity and concept of home is difficult to understand and/or establish. You need to be focused and determined, and it is complicated, psychologically, to determine who you are

when you are deprived of your familiar traits of identity. All through Darling's story, Orientalism and the concept of *othering* and a division between *us* and *them* is highly visible: From the country-game dividing the world into rich and poor countries, through the Americans' ignorant image of the African migrant, into how Darling feels displaced and a citizen of nowhere. Thus the novel serves as an eye-opener to the reader and establishes an awareness of the perils experienced by the immigrants: The reader understands why Darling had to leave, how she feels deprived of and bewildered in identity. We learn that there is no future left in a country of political instability, and that the only dream for everyone is to leave. However, the fantasy of a prosperous life abroad often needs adjustments. Unfortunately life expectancies frequently turn from a vision of affluence and prosperity into merely managing life with the basic essentials:

“Look at them leaving in droves, the children of the land....Those with nothing...Those with strength...Those with ambitions....Those with hopes....Those with loss...Those in pain...Moving, running, emigrating, going, deserting, walking, quitting, flying, fleeing – to all over, to countries near and far, to countries unheard of, to countries whose names they cannot pronounce.

Look at the children of the land leaving in droves...leaving everything that makes them who and what they are, leaving because it is no longer possible to stay. They will never be the same again because you cannot be the same once you leave behind who and what you are, you just cannot be the same.

Look at them leaving in droves despite knowing they will be welcomed with restraint in those strange lands because they do not belong” (147-48).

The YA migrants, when they for various reasons leave their home, leave a familiar identity and thus will experience frustration, alienation and stress in their attempt to regain a personal identity in a strange, unfamiliar culture far away from home. When they leave, they forsake a society familiar to them, what determines their cultural distinctiveness, and what makes them who they are. Experiencing new cultures and societies will both question, interfere with and change your identity, because once you leave, you initiate individual change and transformation.

4.2 Sumitra's Story

"I try to accept the mystery of my children, of the inexplicable ways they diverge from parental expectations, of how, however much you know or remember of them, they don't quite add up." (Smiley 2011, *Ordinary Love and Goodwill*)

Sumitra in *Sumitra's Story* is subjected to similar experiences as Darling in *We Need New Names*. She is a young Indian-British girl, whose parents emigrated from Uganda, where she and her siblings were born. Since both India and Uganda were subjects to British rule during the era of the British Empire several Indians moved to the East African British colonies to work in the fields where the British did not want to work and the natives were considered unable. After the independence wars and the rise of Idi Amin in the 1970's the "foreigners" were forced to leave the country. Since several Asians kept their British passport, they were considered British and therefore an enemy of the state. To demonstrate his patriotism and devotion to his country, Idi Amin expelled 50 000 Asians in 1972, which was an attempt to re-Africanize Uganda (Smith 1996: 229). This puzzles and confuses Sumitra, who considers herself a Ugandan native. She does not understand the rules of the nationalist adult world, where politics and history of suppression play an important role in defining identity. Instead of going back to India, where Sumitra's parents originally came from, they, like several Asians with British citizenship, choose to migrate to Britain. Because of the amount of people entering in such a short time, the British authorities struggled to provide proper housings, proper jobs, proper living standards and "a life of dignity". Thus the immigrants changed from being middle class citizens in Africa into become lower class unemployed in Britain. Following this, Sumitra and her family are subjected to Orientalism, both in Uganda as well as in Britain: They are considered the Orient *other* regardless of setting.

Orientalism and othering form a fundamental focus in *Sumitra's Story*. The protagonist demonstrates the experiences of an immigrant girl, who settles in Britain, where her immature and innocent observations visualize how xenophobia and prejudice intrude her and her family's lives. During her adolescence in Britain, this develops into an awareness and a wish to change her possibilities and make a more promising future for herself. We follow her through her adolescence, growing up, sensing the tension between her parents, their host society and herself. One of the main issues in the story is the ambiguity of her existence and

her conflict of personal identity; how she experiences a fluidity of existence, where her *self* lingers about in an open space in-between her Indian tradition and the British society, which forces her to lead a double life. As the story unfolds, we observe Sumitra's discontent, being caught in the middle of cultures and expectations. Through Sumitra's frustration, the author presents the contradictory expectations between the Indian community's accepted behaviour and British customs. This polarization conflicts with Sumitra's personal wish and desire to adapt and belong, both culturally and socially. There appears to be no acceptance for involving both cultures, for deconstructing the opposites, and living a life and forming an identity in-between, in an open hybrid space. To her family there is just one accepted place to belong: The Indian society. The Orientalist concept of *us vs them*, accepted vs not accepted conflicts with Sumitra's personal wish: She wants to explore the joys of both cultures. Hence, her family's resentment towards everything British really confuses Sumitra: Why are they there? Why did her parents not move back to India when they were expelled, since they appear to dislike or even fear the British society? Who am I, and what am I to become: Educated and independent vs traditionally married and dependent on a husband? (Smith: 86).

The opening scene of the novel launches the underlying question that continuously re-appears throughout the story: Sumitra's questioning of racial differences. The scene describes the life they live in Uganda and presents all the ethnicities living together. Sumitra is unaware of racial segregation and class differences, yet still, through her naive descriptions, she displays the unequal living conditions to the reader:

They passed through villages where Indian women crouched outside houses, making chapattis in the sun. They went by African townships where naked children shouted and played outside the huts. Occasionally, high on the hills, they caught a glimpse of the white homes of the British (6).

As a young girl, Sumitra only describes what she observes, without much consideration however, the observant reader will notice the class and racial differences: The Africans live in huts, the Indians in houses, and the British reside in homes. Gradually the huge important question unfolds: Why does racial differences exist? This question re-appears, always left unanswered, serving as an overall theme, a leitmotif (and a critic of society itself) that focuses on the issue of ethnocentrism and xenophobia. Sumitra's innocence and immaturity regarding such a serious issue, is expressed while she, as children often appreciate, enjoy her candy:

She popped a jelly baby into her mouth. Sucking helped her to think. She wondered why black people spoke Swahili and Indians spoke Gujarati or Hindi. She wondered why some people were black, some brown, some white. She couldn't ask her father - he didn't like discussing things like that (7).

The complexity of the question and why it is (almost) impossible to answer is revealed through her personal reflections:

She (Sumitra) vaguely felt that if she could find the answer to the question of why people were different, she would have discovered the secret of the world (6-7).

This establishes the importance of the question and how unreachable the answer to racial difference and injustice is: It is actually the answer to the secret of the world, almost attainable, however, inaccessible:

All the jelly babies had been different colours: orange, black, yellow, white, green. Yet they had all come from the same bag. Somewhere in the back of her stomach she felt that this thought had great significance, but she could not be sure (8).

Rukshana Smith hints to the obvious idea, yet so difficult to pursue; that we are all equal, no matter race, colour or ethnicity. We all originate from the same "bag". Through Sumitra's pondering over her neighbourhood and its inhabitants, we experience the ethnic division, which appears to be constantly present. This racial separation reappears later when Sumitra and her family migrate and establish a life in Britain. Sumitra is puzzled by the way the various ethnicities keep to their own in Britain, not socializing with each other. Due to her young age, we are offered her innocent and naïve, but also reasonable way of picturing her world; including ethnicity, class and race. Her bag of candies becomes the illustration of the world as it should be, the ideal world - in a perfect setting. It offers a picture of a society where every inhabitant comes with different colour and flavour, yet still originates from the same "bag", without categorizing, comparing or contrasting people, ethnicities, and *others*.

Sumitra's question of racial division, and the injustice of racial inequality re-appears shortly after she arrives in Britain. She is puzzled by how the segregation seems to differ from country to country. The reader is provided with another naive perception of the racial policies going on in Britain, Europe and the world during the 70's:

She was still trying to understand the new balance of her life. In Uganda they had been brown, therefore beneath the British but above the natives. They had lived a privileged life compared to the majority of Africans. But now, they were no longer

high up in the pecking order, but low down. Once again it seemed to be the old question: different colours, different languages, different cultures, different rewards. But why, why, why? (27).

Her racial bewilderment continues even though her experience and knowledge increase. As she matures, she still keeps returning to question racial superiority and inferiority, orientalism, and the idea of *self* vs *other*:

What puzzled her was why one colour thought they were better than another. And now, when successive migrations had brought people of one colour to live with people of another colour, why didn't they just assimilate and forget about the shade of their skin? (91).

Sumitra's questions are still relevant today. The issues she raises could be taken from any present multicultural society. This makes this novel still applicable and valuable even decades after its publishing.

In her search for an answer to the question of ethnicity and race, Sumitra realizes that she has no one to talk to. Thus, she approaches a fellow adolescent Indian girl, who lives a traditional Indian life in her neighbourhood:

*"Why are some people black, and others brown and others white?
- One day, Lord Krishna was bored. So he threw some ghee and sugar and water into a pan and poured it out. The ghee was white and it came out first. The sugar was brown and it came out next. The pan was burnt and black and dirty, so he left it for this woman to wash!..... That is why whites are best, Indians are second best, and blacks are the lowest. And that is why women always have to do the washing-up!" (10).*

Talika, the young Indian woman, offers a fable explanation to the establishing of class and superiority. Additionally, she includes her frustration to gender inequality, and utters her annoyance regarding the females' position in the kitchen, always serving the men and the elders. Through her frustration, she reveals the injustice and inferiority of both race and gender.

Like in the novel *We Need New Names*, *Sumitra's Story* continues to offer small hints to the innocence of children trying to comprehend the adult world: How they attempt to apprehend the political and social situation as they pick up words and phrases from the adult conversations. Sumitra is still trying to comprehend the racial differences and wants to learn

the meaning of the word “free-canisation”. The misspelling of the word is another naive way of illustrating the innocence of not understanding racial difference – the word is unfamiliar and incomprehensible to Sumitra. Her African friend certainly knows what it is all about, since it is her freedom fight, and thus explains to her:

Africanisation, stupid! Africanisation means that we Africans want to run our country. My father has told me about it. At present the British run the schools and the law courts, Indians own businesses and shops, and the African labours. In future we want to run the schools and shops as well as working (16).

The existence of racial difference finally dawns on Sumitra, and that she, as an Indian, is actually part of maintaining this segregation:

She had never noticed the clear divisions that Birungi (her friend) had just mentioned. It had certainly never crossed her mind that the way things were they added up to one huge injustice. And she was part of that injustice (18).

Sumitra and Birungi’s childish innocence makes them puzzle over the seriousness of the issue, however, as most children, and just like Darling and her friends in *We Need New Names*, they are able to turn their backs on the whole issue and continue their playing. When they are not able to answer the complex and severe question of racial inequality, they just continue practicing cartwheels. They engage in children’s way of dealing with controversial issues; discussing at one point, then shrug their shoulders as if they understand (or not) and continue their child’s play as if nothing happened or matters.

Subsequently, Sumitra and her friends demonstrate the ideal world beyond ethnocentrism and xenophobia; they illustrate how innocent friendship joins ethnicities. During a naïve discussion over lunch in school Sumitra and her friends bring hints to their ethnicities with the discovery of each other’s lunch meals. The three girls have no idea of which class, ethnicity or political injustice they represent. They just like each other and share lunch like normal friends. By this, the author illustrates that ethnicities are able to live peacefully, side by side with no reference to racial injustice or *othering*. The children are so young that they are not indoctrinated with the traditional controversy of racial mixing and nationalist policy:

As usual, the three girls divided up their lunch packets and shared them round. Mary had brought egg sandwiches, Rungi had a pot of mealie and beans, and Sumitra unwrapped chapattis and potato with mustard seed (18).

Mixing food represents mixing races, all flavours are appreciated no matter origin and appearance. Mary is British, Rungi is Ugandan and Sumitra Indian, but all the girls see themselves as Ugandan, not knowing any other home country. Both Mary and Sumitra are not familiar with the home countries of their parents, which for instance is illustrated as Mary is upset about being forced to move to England. She demonstrates her unfamiliarity to her ethnicity and country of origin:

We are going to Manchester. That's in the north of England where my parents come from. I've never been there - I don't think I like it. I like it here. She looked very sad, and as they watched her they saw she was crying (19).

The girls represent a world and an idea that recognizes the person and the individual regardless of race, class and colour. The author suggests that the grown up world should appreciate and duplicate the children's approach to severe political and racial issues: Acknowledge the individual and deconstruct the binary oppositions.

The degradation of class and living standards are made clear to the reader as Sumitra describes their living conditions and general first impressions of life in England. Her father had a respectable job and owned a shop back in Uganda, however, in Britain he is degraded to an assembly work job:

In Uganda Bap had owned a shop selling electrical goods and specializing in repairs. But in this cold new land he was dumb - he could not speak English (30).

The lack of language is compared to intelligence, which diminishes her father's hierarchal position in society. This description of class degrading continues with certifying that their new life without servants made everyday life much harder. Especially because they withhold their meal and food traditions. Without their servants, the female part of the family had to spend a significant amount of time in the kitchen preparing meals for the male visitors:

Space was a convention that could be tampered with, but food most definitely was not. Convenience foods were an unknown, unwelcome concept (ibid.).

These examples are relevant in order to facilitate the portrayal and understanding of Sumitra's family, their persistence of traditional culture, and maintaining their *otherness*: How they are not making any attempt to approach, understand or adapt to the host culture and language. This demonstrates the importance of traditional culture to her parents, and how their resentment causes trouble and confusion for Sumitra and her personal identity. The British culture is as unfamiliar to Sumitra's family as if it was extra-terrestrial:

The Patels set off on Monday morning to their new worlds, like space travellers setting off for a new planet which had existed before their arrival but which they had never seen (31).

Thus, their sense of experiencing life “in space” generates frustration since they do not understand habits and society in Britain. Sumitra’s father is frustrated for not understanding insults and comments being thrown at him. When he finally is explained the meaning of being named a “Paki” he explodes and reveals his personal opinion regarding the British and racial belonging. Although he himself is subjected to *othering*, he confirms and sustains orientalism and the idea of a *self* vs an *other*. His reaction furthermore illustrates the trouble Sumitra faces at home when attempting to adapt to and integrate into British life and customs:

Back home I was better than them....Because they are white they think they are better than me. We are better than them....Look at them, letting their women run around half-clothed, irreligious, meat-eaters, drunken people, ignorant men, loose women!....we have a culture thousands of years old. We must be proud. Most of our greatest literature was written when the British were still living in caves! (37).

His ethnocentric ideas become a mantra to Sumitra’s father, and he never stops reiterating his opinion to his daughters. Both his perception and declaration of it appears to be his lifebuoy, a way for him to endure his feeling of inadequacy and ignorance. Since he is not able to understand or adapt to British life, he despises everything it represents, which furthermore builds the gap between Indian and British customs, *self* and *other*. This separation of societies causes trouble for the adolescent Sumitra, who is exploring and investigating an identity for herself: Raised in Hindi customs, however, grows up and tries to adapt to the British life. After her father’s outburst Sumitra’s question of racial existence returns: How the racial conflicts are inconsistent and confusing, how it reappears with other rules, in different places, but from the same people (i.e. her father):

First they had been told to hate black people in Uganda, now they had to hate white people in England. But back in Uganda, white people had been honoured and respected (37).

Stating this, Sumitra feels almost able to answer her crucial question. As her mind has churned this issue over and over again, she has now experienced various versions of racial opposites and conflicts. She is almost able to see the whole picture, still, the question is left unanswered and for the readers to explore by themselves:

Somewhere in the back of her mind, something stirred. It was the answer to her question. It was there, within her, but as yet beyond her understanding (37).

As time passes, Sumitra truly starts to investigate her personal identity. She becomes even more aware of the racial differences, especially the gender inequality within the different societies; between herself (and her family) and her English friends. She compares herself to her British friends, and it particularly frustrates her that they have absolutely no chores at home; they are able to study and prepare for tests and thus achieve as expected in school. For her, on the other hand, leaving school in the afternoon, means no studying at home, but instead being the good daughter and helping out at home. Her best friend “*went home to a clean house and a hot meal*” (40) while Sumitra had to “*clean and cook*” (ibid.) for her family. She compares herself to her best friend by stating:

Hilary’s mother bought bread from the baker, but chapattis and pooris had to be freshly prepared for each meal (in Sumitra’s home)(ibid.).

Now that she had seen some of her classmates’ homes, she found it even harder to reconcile the life she led with the lives she saw her friends leading. Her days were made up of school, homework, housework....The discrepancy between her own life and this image (of her friend’s life) made her bitter and angry (90-91).

Sumitra realizes that her day and her identity is split between cultures: Before 4.30 pm she belongs to the British society, studying and socializing with her friends at school, after school she has to come home to help her mother, and then is transformed into fully Indian. She confirms that she constantly changes identity on her way to/from school, and identifies the differences of lives. She realizes that she is part of both cultures, however, never fully accepted or belonging to either one or the other. To her friends she is partly Indian, not allowed to participate in their adolescent exploration of adult life. Her parents brought her to England to educate, however, do not want her to be anything else than Indian; never to lose her Indian customs or tradition. Suddenly she understands that she is someone in between. In her search for individuality, she sees herself “*as if she were a bridge between two countries, two banks that would never merge. She was like a bridge and everyone was walking over her, from one land to another, like tourists visiting a foreign country but not fully comprehending the strange customs they observed*” (40). Whatever she decides to do with her life, her separate societies will never understand her choices. She will always be the bridge in-between

two shores. Her wish to deconstruct the two opposites and rather unite the best of both parts, in an open hybrid, or even a third, space, appears to be futile.

Following this, the metaphor of herself as a bridge is additionally brought in when Sumitra, in her frustration over traditional Indian customs, is arguing with her mother. Since her parents seem to despise anything English, she questions why they even moved to England in the first place. Sumitra bursts with frustration over how the teachers at school emphasise the importance of education in order to get a decent job: A job, which will make you able to support yourself and become independent. On the other hand, Sumitra's parents present their purpose of bringing their girls to England and give them proper education:

You must study hard....that is why we came, to give you girls a good education. You must learn well and pass exams, then you can marry a fine man and be rich, have a good life (59).

Her mother declares that you need a good education in order to marry well, and they would never be able to give their children a proper education in India. These two different purposes of education contrast the two traditions: How their gender roles and how to live your life differ. Should she live her life individually or just as part of a larger family unit? Should she be English or Indian, constantly mirroring the *self vs the other*? Following this, Sumitra gradually understands the plausible reasons for the natives' reluctance to her family's arrival: They immigrate to take advantage of a system not found or not accessible in India. Sumitra suspects that her parents may be exploiting the English welfare system and in that way meet the stereotyping and the xenophobia they experience:

If they had come to England for its welfare state alone, no wonder people were telling them to go home....Once more she felt like a bridge, belonging nowhere, seeing both sides of the problem (86).

She can relate to both her parent's wish of educating their daughters, however, understands the idea of the exploiting, demanding migrant, who makes use of any benefit that can be provided. However, the image of herself as a bridge, which connects both sides yet does not make her able to unite the two of them, is reasonable. She is left totally in the middle of everything, everyone and every opinion – in-between. Her experience of the gap of difference is compared to two different languages or alphabets:

"It was as if everyone was using different alphabets, different sound systems.....Every single person was operating in their own alphabetical universe, but the letters existing

in one did not exist in another, so they could only get the general gist of the meaning, not the delicate nuances” (137).

The two opposites are vaguely perceiving each other and each other's cultures. They exist in parallel universes, with only occasional encounters. Thus they never fully accept or understand each other, and never gain any knowledge of who and what they are.

The real change of heart considering Sumitra's Indian identity happens as they move from the guest-house, where their father was unable to perform his position as head of family. Once they live in a house on their own the father attempts to regain his patriarchal position as head of the family, and reinforces Indian culture to his daughters:

They were now back in a world of prescribed formalities. The conventions demanded that they obey parents unquestionably, were partners in arranged marriages...carrying on these traditions so that their own children would be preserved in the same mould (82).

In the guest house the sisters had had a glimpse of western life and tradition, the freedom of an adolescent western girl. They mourned the flash of independence, which was now closed by the prison of tradition. The living conditions were harsh at the guest house, however, they were able to mingle and speak with other guests:

If only we'd stayed in Uganda...or if only we'd lived on our own all the time. But we've seen what freedom is (82)

Her sister compares their experience to the tale of Moses:

He was allowed a glimpse of the Promised Land, but he could not enter it. That's what happened to us (ibid.)

The Promised Land was given by God to Abraham, his son and grandson, and was later connected to Moses, as he freed the slaves from the pharaoh in Egypt and led them to the Promised Land - a place of well-being, comfort, opportunity and prosperity (Promised Land: Bibel.no). Additionally, the imagery of the Promised Land has been connected to the escape to freedom for African American slaves, which when transferred to Sumitra and her sister's situation, means that they feel imprisoned in a circle of tradition and life that restrains their personal prosperity and development:

Had she never come to England, the problem would not have existed. She would have grown up in an Indian community and learnt to perpetuate its culture. But now she was being educated in one way, surrounded by boys and girls who appeared to be free

to choose their friends, their careers, their future partners, to make what they could of their lives, while she was restricted. She was daily allowed a glimpse of the Promised Land, had even lived in it for a while, but could no longer enjoy its advantages (92).

This sums up Sumitra's feelings and how she mourns being denied further prosperity and exploration of personal identity. The reader is given an evidence of the juxtaposition and border between the two cultures, and how the adolescent youth feels trying to follow personal wishes and interest, yet experiencing the pressure and demands of cultural traditions. She endures controversy of interest, floating in an open space where determining personal identity is both difficult and disputed.

During a conversation between Sumitra and Martin, a teacher living in the guest house, we are offered a discussion on how to form identity, how to come to terms with yourself and personal progress, which illustrates Sumitra's pursuit for individuality. This discussion adds fuel to Sumitra's growing attempt to break away from tradition and be able to stand on her own feet. Through Martin's advice we discover the author's criticism of tradition and the suppression of individuality:

Thinking is uncomfortable. It's much easier to be a sheep than to be a lone wolf. Sheep just follow the leader and say baa. But if you're not a sheep you have to think about things and weigh them up for yourself. The trouble is that there's no such thing as TRUTH (83).

He continues his reasoning, planting thoughts of individual thinking and choice into Sumitra:

Most people don't have time to think. They accept the views of their families, or their school, then marry someone else who agrees with them and carry the business of working, living and teaching their own children the principles which they themselves have accepted unthinkingly.....I try to free my pupils from their parents' mistakes, not force them into a mould (84).

The author alludes to the ignorant and narrow minded migrant elders, who promote their traditions and do not allow the younger generations to explore culture for themselves. They deny them the ability to make personal choices of which traditions to live by. Thus, the author fronts the option of making individual adjustments and decisions opposing traditional pressure.

With her growing opinion and knowledge, Sumitra realizes that her wish for ethnicity to be insignificant, might never come true. She compares her personal wish for individuality and how ethnicity should not be the signifier of who you are, to dog breeds:

Watching the dogs playing with each other. An Alsatian had raced across the grass to sniff a little poodle, then a spaniel had joined in, until seven or eight dogs, all different colours and breeds, were rolling and playing on the field. They had been united by their dogness. But people were not united by their humanity (91-92).

Through this, we learn that Sumitra observes, compares, and reasons for herself based upon experience and knowledge. She makes her own conclusions, tries to answer her question of racial existence and presents a growing individuality. Thus, she is becoming a young intelligent and rational individual:

She was brown in a white world, restricted in a free society, old in a young body. Nothing she could do was right (93).

Following this, she sums up her life, her personal situation, her agony and controversial mind by confirming:

In the street she felt Indian, at home she felt English. Nowhere, nowhere did she feel like Sumitra. But who was Sumitra, and what should she feel like? (99).

Her personality, behaviour, identity, and opinions are split in three. During the day and the week she plays three different roles and pretends to be three different persons. She is not able or allowed to mix these three into one whole "Sumitra-person". To grow up and explore who you are is difficult enough, if not being forced to relate to the demands of three different traditions:

Mai and Bap did not know what she did at school, her teachers did not know what she did at home. It was as if she had three personalities: the workmate at Hanbury's, the schoolgirl, and the daughter....So Sumitra played the three threads of her life....while each strand made its own demand upon her. School, work, home - another identity, another ethic, another personality (105).

Sumitra is frustrated by her urge to deconstruct the binary oppositions defining her existence. She acknowledges her in-betweenness and matures into accepting that she hovers in Bhabha's open hybrid space, where she constantly searches for determining her identity in a Third Space, however, struggles to define the means of such characteristics.

The power the elder migrant generation has upon the younger generation is clearly criticised in this novel: How they pressure their adolescents and how this appears to occur in every traditional society, regardless of ethnicity:

“All around her she saw other cultures passing on their various truths to their own children and carefully isolating them from the British tradition in which they lived....there were many ways of perpetuating tradition. There was emotional, social and financial pressure. Thus the little dictatorship of family life flourished in the British democracy. Children were unhappy, rejected their parents’ demands temporarily, made their heroic gestures, but were usually defeated by the sanctions imposed” (118).

The author compares the invisible, yet pervading pressure enforced on the young migrant by their elders to dictatorship; cultivating their *otherness*. Even though they live in a democracy, which is one of the main reasons for them to move there in the first place, this is not valid to them. The emotional pressure and the dictation of rules confuse and frustrate the adolescent migrant, and add fuel to a growing rebellion. This is portrayed as Sumitra and her Indian friends start exploring their growing resentment towards their narrow minded community “laws”. She points at the traditional gender inequality and the society’s constantly present acrimony towards British customs:

This division of labour annoyed the girls, who at school were encouraged to be independent, thoughtful, integrated, and at home to be docile, submissive and dutiful. Sumitra had to listen to the adults decrying the British way of life, while being educated into it herself.....So Sumitra acted one part at home and another at school, and was never sure which role was really hers (119).

This is the part where Sumitra finally addresses her conflict of identity, which makes her able to realize her problem. She identifies where the pressure originates, and is able to start taking individual decisions, forming her personal identity in a third space, and marking out a course for her future. She starts to socialize with her British friends after work, opposing her parents’ prohibition:

“I think he’d kill me(her father if he knew), but I’ve just got to the stage where I feel I’ve got to go where I want to sometimes, with people I want to go out with” (129).

And her friend Maria’s answer is left hanging there for both Sumitra and the reader to consider:

“You’re seventeen, aren’t you? If you can’t enjoy yourself at your age, then there’s not much point, is there?” (ibid.).

Finally, every contradiction, every concern, every frustration of not being either fully Indian or English, triggers Sumitra’s action. She transforms into Sue every Saturday when she goes to her part time job. She socializes with both male and female colleagues in pubs after work, and she wears English clothes, experiments with makeup, smokes cigarettes and drinks alcohol:

“From nine to five Sue was liberated, smart and cheeky, like the other girls at work. Sue was part of the adult world” (130).

Sumitra is slowly and secretly turning more British, blending her Indian reference with modern British customs. She is at the outset of exploring and defining a personal identity in the open space, taking measures to define her personal *third culture* identity. By saving parts of her salary, although never fully revealed, we understand that this is money for her future independence. She is slowly, perhaps unconsciously, breaking with her family tradition, which appears to be necessary for her to pursue her future dreams and become who she wants to be.

The final turning point for Sumitra to make the drastic decision of breaking with her parents and the traditional demands, comes with one last conversation with her English friend Maria. She confirms that if Sumitra does not do anything about her situation and her frustration, but gives in to her parents’ demands, her parents will be pleased, however, she will be sentenced to eternal unhappiness and restriction:

“You call it the sausage machine. I call it Banquo line. But it is the same thing. It means doing something because it’s always been done, even if you don’t want to do it, even if you think it’s wrong, because not continuing the tradition will cause too much trouble. So you get a long line of conformists doing what is expected of them. That’s fair enough when the expectations are reasonable and rational, but when they lead to fear and isolation and hatred and... (169).

This confirms that following the demands of others solely out of conformity or fright, will cause agony and pain. You will be tormented by the unfulfilled capacity of life and repression of personal wish and progress. Smith uses the imagery of the metamorphosis of the caterpillar almost bursting into a wonderful, blooming, colourful butterfly to illustrate Sumitra’s

liberation. Sumitra knows that she is almost there, it appears to be inevitable, however, she still struggles to come to terms with what appears to be the obvious decision:

“Sumitra felt like a caterpillar whose skin had grown too tight but was not yet ready to take a step into the unknown” (172).

The image of the caterpillar visualizes the YA immigrant’s experience of an identity in-between identities, where the caterpillar represents Bhabha’s hybrid space; in-between egg and fully developed butterfly. The egg represents her origin and tradition - her *otherness*, and as she grows into a caterpillar, she adds experience, reference and knowledge of her personal identity. Her traditional “skin”; her customs, restrains her personal development, where she can deconstruct the binary oppositions that obstruct her investigation of exciting, foreign customs, and a recently acquired, blooming identity. The metamorphosis of the caterpillar becomes a metaphor for the way in which she is withheld in a hybrid space, fighting for the ability to fly into the unknown, where she can determine her personal *Self*.

Turning 18 in Britain means that you are fully grown up, entitled to make personal choices for yourself, and that no one can control your life anymore. As Sumitra is almost there, she realizes that her Indian society and tradition will continue to maintain its controlling pressure:

“She did not want to choose, she wanted to bridge the best from both, the tradition and discipline of the one and the freedom and choice of the other. But they would not let her do this” (135).

Sumitra reveals her true wish for her life: She wants to join both cultures and form a personal identity, where she is allowed to combine and incorporate elements from both traditions, and where she does not have to choose. Thus she will be able to form her own uniqueness, uniting her Indian tradition and her growing “Britishness”. She realizes that she represents a new pattern, which is unfamiliar to her parents. They are stranded in a pattern of traditional customs, and are not able to apprehend or understand the younger generation’s wish to explore and enjoy the life and society in which they grow up. They feel intimidated by everything unfamiliar to them. Sumitra eventually reaches the crucial point where she has to decide for herself. She has to choose her way in life and who she is going to be: Should she follow the consent of her parents, or be cut off from any contact with her family? All through the story the reader is led up to this point, where she finally has to make a decision. Her inner struggle, vigilant observation, and her discussions both at home, in school and with English friends, foreshadow the outcome of her decision. Through the entire story we experience how

Sumitra is pulled in different directions, how she alters her opinion, depended on different advice and her personal courage. The reader is led to expect a rebellion:

“If I stay at home I’ll have to accept my parent’s laws, their customs, their traditions. I don’t think I can do that. I don’t only want to mix with Indian people....If I like someone I want to be their friend, no matter what culture they come from, and if I don’t like them I just want to ignore them, even if they are Indian. I can’t get married to someone I don’t really know – I’ve become too English to that” (167).

This concludes the entire conflict and story, and repeats the simplicity of world opinion and how the ideal world should be: Sensible, simple, and easily accessible to anyone trying to understand life and personal identity. With her conclusion, Sumitra returns to her 9 year old philosophy of the jelly bean bag: Everyone originates from the same bag, and we socialize with whom we like, regardless of culture and race. The joy of exploring cultures and ethnicities without barriers, without categorizing binary oppositions and demonstrating difference facilitates the forming of a personal *Self* and tolerance of otherness, and thus becomes a supplement to a richer, more tolerant and sympathetic world.

4.3 Little Bee/ The Other Hand

While the protagonists in *We Ned New Names* and *Sumitra’s Story* remain in their host countries, the 14 years old main character in *Little Bee* eventually returns to her home country. *Little Bee* is written by Chris Cleave, and is the story of an orphaned girl from Nigeria, who immigrates to Britain. This novel evolves from the juxtaposed descriptions of the lives of a Nigerian illegal immigrant adolescent girl, Little Bee, and a grown up British businesswoman, Sarah. Through the dual descriptions of both their lives, we learn how their difficulties and challenges interconnect, and how their paths cross at several points through the unfolding of the story.

Little Bee and her sister’s first encounter with Sarah and her husband takes place on a beach in Nigeria. The British couple are there with the purpose of fixing their marriage. Little Bee and her older sister happen to stumble into the British couple on the beach as they are being chased by soldiers. These soldiers have erased their entire village with the purpose of leaving no witnesses. Not until years later, Little Bee finally understands what really happened, what caused the pursuit of the sisters and the death of her older sister:

“Finally I made sense of what has happened to me back home.....the oil companies had discovered a huge reserve of the future underneath my village....what they discovered was crude oil, which is the future before it has been refined. It is like a dream of the future, and like any dream it ends with a rude awakening (180).

In an attempt survive, the sisters turn to the couple for help. Sarah O’Rourke sacrifices her middle finger in order to save the girls, however, the loss of her finger only saves one of the girls: The soldiers molest and kill Little Bee’s older sister, which leaves Little Bee completely alone in the world. Later Little Bee manages to migrate to England, and as she escapes the detention centre where she awaits the answer to her application for asylum, she is left with no other choice but to contact Sarah O’Rourke. Since Sarah still mourns her husband, who has killed himself, she is reserved and hesitates. However, the sacrifice and loss of her finger connects her to this innocent, vulnerable, and unprotected orphan. As the story and their relationship evolves, we are given flashbacks to what has happened to them both since their first encounter, and we take part in both their inner struggle of identity and coping with present life from both perspectives. Additionally, we experience how they slowly approach each other and become involved in and part of each other’s lives.

As an immigrant, Little Bee is puzzled by and explores the huge differences between her hometown in Nigeria and modern Britain. She constantly observes British customs from a Nigerian point of view, and thus sustains the polarization of *self* and *other*. Her attempt to adapt to modern life causes severe mental effort in order to understand and be able to adjust to her new everyday life. She is bewildered by the ignorance of her friends and people back home of what is going on in the western world, therefore she attempts to explain to herself why no one has enlightened them:

“This is the reason why no one tells us Africans anything. It is not because anyone wants to keep my continent in ignorance. It is because no one has the time to sit down and explain the first world from first principles” (128).

She is puzzled by this and her explanation is that *“your culture has become sophisticated, like a computer.....you can use it, but you cannot explain how it works. Certainly not to girls who stack up their firewood against the side of their house” (ibid.)*. The contrast between herself, her hometown and the modern British life confirms Said’s Orientalism and demonstrates the western idea of the orient *other*, and how the gap of difference between the *self* and the *other* is preserved: The normality of the western world’s means of life contrasts her village life back

in Nigeria. She ends her figment of mind with stating that *“this is a story for sophisticated people, like you”* (ibid.), where she points at the distance between the western, British, modern life and herself: *We* and *them, us* versus *others*, sophisticated versus inexperienced. Her statement only serves as an observation, Little Bee never reveals any sign of envy or sense of inferiority; just difference. Throughout the story Little Bee continuously compares and determines the differences of culture and society, and an example of this is how she is bemused by how the societies perceive death. In Nigeria death would come from the outside, as an enemy, attack-like (like a predator or a villain), opposed to the western death, which emerges from the inside, like an enemy within the *Self*:

“In my world death will come chasing. In your world it will start whispering in your ear to destroy yourself. I know this because it started whispering to me when I was in the detention center. Death is death, all of us are scared of it” (187).

She points at the fact that the only enemy you will encounter in a safe, western society is the enemy within the *self*. This enemy is your own psyche that plays with your mind, as opposed to back home, where the enemy would be something specific; like soldiers, dangerous animals, starvation, illnesses etc. The Nigerian enemy is something physical and nameable. She unconsciously distances her familiar world from “your world”, and places herself outside of the host society in which she lives – she confirms her *otherness*.

The story and Little Bee’s understanding develop, as does her life in England. She constantly points out observations and recognitions of the differences between life and conditions in England and Nigeria. She realizes that total, mutual understanding always will be a challenge, since both their origin and background for understanding will be fundamentally different. In order for Little Bee to both comprehend herself, in addition to making Sarah understand, Little Bee uses images to explain her points. An example of this is the different females’ interpretation of an adventure. Sarah want them to travel from the suburbs into London in order to experience adventure, while Little Bee is more comfortable with the lack of it. She is quite content with life in the quiet suburbs, since her life so far has contained enough adventure and nightmare:

Little girls in your country, they hide in the gap between the washing machine and the refrigerator and they make believe they are in the jungle, with green snakes and monkeys all around them. Me and my sister, we used to hide in a gap in the jungle, with green snakes and monkeys all around us, and make believe that we had a washing machine and a refrigerator. You live in a world of machines and you dream

of things with beating hearts. We dream of machines, because we see where beating heart have left us (211).

Little Bee states what she finds obvious and which has become one of the main sub plots: The gap between the western and the African world, an obvious polarization of *self* and *other*. Her comparison of cultures turns into envy of a safe and comfortable life. Like Sumitra in *Sumitra's Story*, Little Bee is offered glimpses of a "Promised Land" where she, as an illegal immigrant, never is admitted. Both her mental images of difference as well as her lack of legal papers constitute the border between her *Self* and the western *Others*.

Little Bee is totally aware of the distance of perception and understanding concerning Britain and Nigeria. She is puzzled by her observation of mixed coloured or race couples, and their mixed-race children, which is quite unrealistic and incomprehensible to her friends back home. She just sighs and states that attempting to explain the beauty of this to those back home, would only make them distance themselves from her. Little Bee and her friends would be even more separated by knowledge or understanding, which demonstrates that she is no longer part of the Nigerian world and perception of life. She has escaped into the west and adapted the western lifestyle. She would be "*Little miss been-to making up her tales again*" (218). She realizes that she slowly distances herself from her heritage, and gradually approaches an open space, where she is in a state of in-between her origin and the British way of life. Thus, in her engagement of establishing herself in the British society, her focus has always been concentrated on the difference: How she is *the Other*; the British vs her. Just like Darling in *We Need New Names* and Sumitra in *Sumitra's Story*, Little Bee suddenly realizes that she is no longer fully part of either societies. Home is not home anymore, and she is regarded the *other* both from a Nigerian and a British point of view. However, during the story most of the statements regarding difference appear to originate from Little Bee's personal observations and interpretations, not external accusations. Because she believes herself to be utterly different, she is convinced that she will be recognized and deported. However, her "adventurous" trip to London with Sara makes her realize the opposite. In London she experiences the multiculturalism of the city:

"I looked around the crowd. I saw that there was more of it. There were people in that crowd, and strolling along the walkway, from all of the different colours and nationalities of the earth. There were more races even than I recognized from the detention centre....And then I realized it. I said to myself, Little Bee, there is no

'them'. This endless procession of people, walking along beside this great river, these people are you...Now I understood that at last I could disappear into the human race, as simply as a bee vanishes into the hive" (219.)

She finally comes to terms with her identity, in England, and is happy to accomplish anonymity and thus safety. She can hide from the villains in Nigeria and from the immigration authorities in the multicultural masses of London. She eventually recognizes her *Self* as part of something greater than herself. Little Bee is able to vanish into her colony of difference yet similarities, all united in one safe crowd:

"Even for a girl like me, then, there comes a day when she can stop surviving and start living" (220).

Finally she sees a future where she can stop escaping, start making a life for herself, and subsequently decide who she is and who she wants to be. Eventually she will be allowed on the inside, not standing on the outside and looking in at something she can only dream of being a part. She has managed to deconstruct her ideas of the binary oppositions of *self* and *other*, and rather interprets her identity to be something in-between the antitheses, floating within an open hybrid space:

"I let myself be taken along by this river of human souls that flowed beside the water" (ibid.)

The glimpse of the Promised Land has now finally become something for her to behold. She can be embraced by the population and the society, and there will no longer be her versus *the others*. She has been given a chance to become a part of *us*.

As the story unfolds, we understand that the name *Little Bee* is just an image, a nickname and an alternative identity. Like Darling and her friends in *We Need New Names*, Little Bee's nickname is made up in order to protect herself from what is difficult and dangerous, and from the traumas of the past. When she is Little Bee, the ordeals Little Bee experiences has nothing to do with her inner *Self*. At one point in the story she realizes that the effort and hardships she has gone through are exhausting. She starts to question whether it is worth it:

"It was hard to become Little Bee. I had to go through a lot of things. They kept me in prison and I had to train myself to think in a certain way, and to be strong, and to speak your language the way you people speak it. It is even an effort now just to keep it going. Because inside, you know, I am only a village girl.....I would like to be a

village girl again and do the things that village girls do...and most of all, you know, I would like to use my real name...Little Bee is only my superhero name” (225).

When Little Bee eventually is caught and deported to Nigeria, it surprises her that Sarah and Charlie have followed her in an attempt to protect her. Accepting that the soldiers will find and capture her sooner or later, Little Bee reveals herself to them, in an attempt to save Charlie from being shot. In the moment of rescuing Charlie, even though she is finally caught by her pursuers, she comes to terms with everything in life. She stops questioning identity and attempting to escape everything:

“I understood that he would be free now even if I would not. In that way the life that was in me would find its home in him now.....this is it, something has survived in me, something that does not need to run anymore, because it is worth more than all the money in the world and its currency, its true home, is the living. And not just the living in this particular country or in that particular country, but the secret, irresistible heart of the living” (264).

In this moment of acceptance, she reveals her real name to Charlie:

“Peace is a time when people can tell each other their real names” (265).

This scene illustrates the idea of an alternative identity that protects you from horrific experiences. When she has accepted her fate, she finally finds the courage and peace of mind to reveal her true identity. For her, the safe haven was not the western British life, but to return to Nigeria and accept her destiny. She repeatedly expressed her wish to go back home, to what is familiar to her, and to be who she used to be, and this is constantly revealed to the reader through her statements of *othering*. In her attempt to adapt the western life in London, she finally understood who she was. Opposed to Sumitra and Darling, Little Bee does not settle in the western world. She accepts her fate and confirms that she does not fully belong in Britain. Her comprehension of the British life confused and bewildered her, and as much as she wanted to stay and be safe, her difficulties and experiences made her both realize and maintain her mental borders and a distance between herself and the British society. The polarization of *us* and *them*, within her *Self*, would always be present.

In the final scene where Little Bee rescues Charlie, he runs back into the sea: A white western boy, who plays unaffectedly with dark Nigerian children. None of the children pay any attention to the colour of their skin:

“I cried with joy when the children all began to play together in the sparkling foam of the waves that broke between worlds at the point. It was beautiful, and that is a world I would not need to explain to the girls from back home, and I do not need to explain to you, because now we are all speaking the same language” (266).

Of all the remarkable, distanced and contrasting experiences Little Bee has encountered, of all her difficulties explaining her experiences and contrasts of life, this is something that brings global understanding: Innocent children, unbiased, no prejudice, fearless and safe. This is the ideal world. We are all the same, joint together in Sumitra’s bag of coloured jellybeans. Since we all originate from the same bag, there should not be any *us* or *them*, it is all a united *we*. Little Bee’s comprehension has changed from juxtaposing herself, her friends, you, *self* and *others*, into becoming an understanding of a merged *unity*. Whether the end is considered to be happy or not, at least the story suggests an ideal united world, which does not segregate by race or colour.

4.4 What is the What

“I grew up in refugee camps. I lived in Pinyudo for almost three years, Golkur for almost one year, and Kakuma for ten. It is not the worst place on the continent of Africa, but it is among them” (Eggers 2008: 370-71)

In the novel *What is the What* we meet Valentino Achak Deng in the predominantly autobiographical story of his adolescent life and experiences, written in the pen of Dave Eggers. However, the book is referred to as and appears to be a novel. This is because of Valentino’s young age, 6 years old, as his story begins. Thus, some of the earliest memories had to be constructed out of pieces of memory. Nevertheless, Valentino asserts that he has kept his story as close to the truth as possible, since he wants the world to know of his experiences during the civil war in Sudan: A war, which forces him to face the African wilderness alone:

“I could not, for example, recount some conversations that took place seventeen years ago. However it should be noted that all of the major events in the book are true. The book is historically accurate, and the world I have known is not different from the one depicted within these pages” (xiv).

Valentino additionally focuses parts of his story on demonstrating his struggles, difficulties and feeling of alienation facing the new and significantly diverse culture when he migrated to the US. We understand his dream of escaping the challenging conditions in Africa: A dream which only occasionally turns out to live up to his imagination.

Like the narration in *Little Bee*, Valentino's story is juxtaposed: Divided between his younger years when he tries to survive, separated from his family, and his adolescent years when he attempts to adapt a life in the US. Valentino alternates his narrative back and forth, from narrating his present life in the US to contemplating his experiences wandering the border areas of Sudan, Ethiopia and Kenya. His wandering was centred around finding refuge in some of the refugee camps that emerged on both the Ethiopian and Kenyan side of the Sudanese borders. During the years of his wanderings he encounters several of his like; young boys without family, who have escaped village attacks and ambushes. These wandering groups of boys, of all ages, increase as more boys accompany them on their way. They are named "The Lost Boys", which reflects upon the orphaned boys in the story of Peter Pan: Innocent sufferers of political conflict, always in transition, displaced and never entirely finding stable resettlement. They all attempt to survive and reach one of the refugee camps, and then transfer to the US, which to them appears to be Soria Moria or the Promised Land: America has become their "Neverland", which sadly, often turns out to become an unfulfilled dream.

Valentino starts his story in the present, where he is dealing with a housebreaking. As he is tied up for several hours he has enough time to relive the ordeals of his experiences in Africa. However, the events of his past appears easier to deal with than those he faces in the US:

"I have been starved, I have been beaten with sticks, with rods, with brooms and stones and spears. I have ridden five miles on a truckbed loaded with corpses. I have watched too many young boys die in the desert....I have seen three boys taken by lions, eaten haphazardly....I have watched a close friend die next to me in an overturned truck.....And yet at this moment, as I am strewn across the couch and my hand is wet with blood, I find myself missing all of Africa. I miss Sudan, I miss the howling grey desert of northwest Kenya. I miss the yellow nothing of Ethiopia" (7).

He expresses his agony of not comprehending the host culture, and not understanding the American people, customs or systems:

“I am tired of this country. I am thankful for it, yes, I have cherished many aspects of it for the three years I have been here, but I am tired of the promises” (ibid.).

He expresses what often appears to be the problem among the resettled Lost Boys in the US: They suffer from post-traumatic stress, alienation, dislocation, isolation and racism, which combined cause difficulties in becoming part of the new society. At one point in the story, Valentino explains that since the burglar demanded that he should keep the door open as she borrows his phone, he obeys:

“Since it is her country and not yet mine” (3).

He is resettled in the US, however, does not belong or feel welcome there: He is the orientalist *other*. He is an alien. He is, for instance, confused by the African-Americans in his town, who appear to be one of his kind, however, display their prejudice and a biased behaviour. He displays his sorrow and bewilderment regarding the lack of recognition as he encounters two African-American teenagers, where they distinguish the distance between them and him, *the other*: They, *the Self*, belong while Valentino is the alien *other*:

“Yo, freak, where are you from?...you are one of those Africans who sold us out’...It became clear that he thought I was responsible for the enslaving of his ancestors” (18-19).

“YOU sold US out” is a statement that clearly establishes the distance between him and them: A statement, which refers to the slave trade that brought the African-Americans to the US in the first place. You are the orient *other*, while we are the superior *Self*. Even with a genuine wish to adapt his host society, the African- American boys confirm Valentino’s conflict of identity; recognizing him as an alien who does not belong. This predisposition is additionally illustrated when Valentino contacts the young boy who accompanies the burglars. The boy’s reaction establishes how the inhabitants identify Valentino and other immigrants: The inferior, savage *Other*. His attempt to talk to this boy and maybe evoke some empathy, only scares the child:

“They told him I was African, and in his mind he did not think that classification entailed the ability to speak, much less English....This boy thinks I am not of his species, that I am some other kind of creature, one that can be crushed under the weight of a phonebook” (50).

The African American population only recognizes him as some bug or vermin that needs to be neutralized, and not as one of their kind. Thus, to be acknowledged as a person becomes quite some obsession to Valentino. Following this, his neighbours never lifts a finger when he

calls for attention and help during the burglary. His continuously banging in order to catch attention fails. They totally ignore him:

“Where are these people? I know that people are hearing me. It is not possible that they are not hearing me. But they see it as beyond their business.... Is the noise of the world so cacophonous that mine cannot be heard?” (162).

He is insignificant to them and experiences that no one in the US is interested in his trauma, no one wants to listen to his stories. However, he finds it difficult to accept his invisibility and worthlessness and thus has an inner urge to express his mental challenges to the people surrounding him. To reveal his ordeals becomes his conquest: He wants the society and the world to know of his background, and how he was deprived of a safe and innocent childhood. With this, he intends to deconstruct the barriers that separate him and them, the polarization of native vs immigrant – *us* and *them*.

“When I first came to this country, I would tell silent stories. I would tell them to people who had wronged me. If someone cut in front of me in line, bumped me or pushed me.....’You would not add to my suffering if you knew what I have seen...Do you have any idea?...Can you imagine this?...’ The stories emanate from me all the time I am awake and breathing, and I want everyone to hear them” (29).

He feels invisible, and that the American society does not acknowledge why he is there: America is not interested. The severity of what happens to his people and country does not engage the American people, and because of this he does not get any acknowledgement of his trauma. Valentino tells his story in order to make the audience bear witness of his experiences. He addresses “us” directly as he tells his story, with the purpose of mirroring himself to someone, and to establish his personal identity in their recognition of *the Other*:

“I speak to you because I cannot help it. It gives me strength, almost unbelievable strength, to know that you are there (535).

He longs for someone to acknowledge him and his experiences, and to find someone who can release him of his memories and share his trauma. He needs someone to confirm his trauma and the ordeals of the Lost Boys. The moment people recognize his traumas, he is granted identity and acknowledgement of who he is. Thus, he needs someone to listen to his story in order to identify himself as a person. His narrative and inner monologues are used in an attempt to bridge the gap between himself and the Americans. He believes his story will create mutual acceptance and understanding:

“How can I pretend that you do not exist? It would be almost as impossible as you pretending that I do not exist” (535).

The *Self* depends on the *Other* for acknowledgement of experience and identity. Valentino’s struggle for acceptance confirms Said’s Orientalism; that the *Other* has to be recognized and accepted in order for the *Self* to exist. Valentino pursues other people’s recognition of himself, his experiences and his personal identity, since, he, himself, experiences a vague and confusing identity:

“Dorsetta, I pretend that I know who I am but I simply don’t. I’m not an American and it seems difficult now to call myself Sudanese” (449).

He feels completely lost and dislocated, not accepted as an American and distanced from his Sudanese identity. He is left in-between identities, floating in the open space of an indefinable and confusing *Self*, and thus needs his society to help him confirm an identity and an individual *Self*.

Like Little Bee and Darling, Valentino experiences the difference in identity represented through different names. His disparity of names depends on where he is located, who he is accompanied by, and at which stage in life he is. Because of his wandering in Africa, his friends call him *Gone Far*, which refers to his distance from home and his long walk escaping war and violence. His birth name from the village where he grew up is Achak or Marialdit. In the refugee camp in Kakuma, Kenya, he was Valentino, a name, which a priest in Kakuma introduced to him. Valentino was a saint who spoke of God and performed the miracle of making his jailer’s blind daughter see, a miracle for which he was beheaded:

“-I think you will have the power to make people see, he said(the priest) – I think you will remember what it was like to be here, you will see the lessons here. And someday you will find your own jailer’s daughter, and to her you will bring light” (287).

The priest foreshadows Valentino’s destiny and purpose of his novel: To tell his and the Lost Boys’ story, to enlighten the ignorant world. Furthermore, Valentino, when he arrived in America, was given yet another name: Dominic Arou. However, he finally settles down for a mix of those names: Valentino Achak Deng, which refers to his combination of experiences and memories – a reflection of his personal identity. The Americans struggle to understand the Lost Boys’ variety of names, however, to him and the Lost Boys this is the normality:

“This is confusing to the Americans who know me but not to the boys who walked with me. Each of us has a half-dozen identities: there are the nicknames, there are the

catechism names, the names we adopted to survive or to leave Kakuma. Having many names has been necessary for many reasons that refugees know intimately (260).

Like Little Bee and Darling, Valentino projects experiences and trauma to his different identities. When life is a chaos, alternative identities and names are fabricated in order to survive. Thus, as Valentino comes to terms with his life and destiny, his situation has calmed down, and some sort of temporary harmony has been restored, his name is finally determined. This is a system of survival, as if the experienced trauma happens to another person. To project the stress and suffering onto an alternative identity makes it easier to endure and recover. One scene in the novel illustrates the specific idea and wish for an alternative identity to relieve him of the ordeals undergone. In an attempt to sneak out of a refugee camp and return to Sudan to meet his parents, he is given a mask. When putting on the mask, Valentino compares it to attiring a new identity, fresh and unmarked without any memories and experiences of trauma:

“I didn’t want to remove the new face...Perhaps the mask would make it possible to run – undetected. I luxuriated in the thought of presenting this new face to all the world, a new face, without marks, blemishes, a face that told no tales” (403).

He expresses a wish to start all over again with a clean slate, and with no traumatic experiences that influence his personality and identity. Even after he has settled in the US, Valentino still admits to this bewilderment of identity. Because of his constant childhood wandering and escaping from camp to camp, and then later never fully comprehending life and customs in the US, he continuously struggles to establish any personal identity:

“I pretend that I know who I am now but I simply don’t. I’m not American and it seems difficult now to call myself Sudanese. I have spent only six or seven years there, and I was so small when I left” (505).

Valentino admits to and confirms the migrant bewilderment of identity, how he is floating in the open Space, attempting to form a third culture identity. He is shaped by both cultures, distanced from his native society, however struggles to settle in his host society. His lack of adaption, understanding; comparing former and present life preserves his alienation and *otherness*. Unconsciously there is a growing distance between himself and what used to be familiar back home, in which he finds extremely difficult, since he is determined not to forget or let the world ignore the ordeals of his people. During the story, Valentino is not able to confirm an identity in Bhabha’s third space. He admits to his bewilderment of identity, which

becomes increasingly evident throughout his narrative. His fluidity of identity remains unsettled in an open hybrid space.

4.5 Conclusion

Bulawayo's *We Need New Names*, Smith's *Sumitra's Story*, Cleave's *Little Bee* and Egger's *What is the What* are all novels that represent the adolescent migrant's difficulty of defining personal identity. However the variety of experience and fate of the protagonists, the stories reveal the migrants' anguish and discomfort of leaving their home countries, in addition, the readers are presented their grief of feeling deprived of personal identity. Their identities float in-between their familiar social context and the "Promised Land" of their host countries. The protagonists are joint in the attempt to determine identities and find acceptance and inclusion. They all face expectations to understand and adapt to the new culture, which is very much expected and appreciated by the host culture. Confusion and stress occur as the main characters try to face the reshaping of their identity. Due to the host culture's influence and their gradually distancing from native culture, traditional customs do no longer feel quite appropriate. On the other hand, their native society feels abandoned, rejected and forsaken, which causes the protagonists to feel drawn between the expectations of maintaining their traditions and the adaption of the host society's culture. Thus, they pursue to create an identity out of one previous, familiar and one present, foreign identity: They bring their individuality and tradition, mix it with experiences and skills in a hybrid space and then make an effort to incorporate this into their host society, constructing a third culture identity. We experience how their past interferes with their present as they try to endure their traumas of the past in an ignorant host society. Additionally, they struggle with consciously or unconsciously deconstructing the binary opposites and the orientalist othering. Their observation and experiences of being the *other*, constantly compared to the native *Self*, complicates their idea of personal *Self*.

The apparent prevalent issue in the novels is the protagonists' subjection to orientalism, which causes confusion of identity. They are subjects of the contrasting of *self* vs *other*, either from personal observations or through the projection of their societies. The mirroring of *self* and *other*, where they are considered the *other* from both host and native society, bewilders their familiar characteristics of determining identity. As Bhabha (and partly Derrida) points

out, the subjection of constant uneven influences finally destructs the binary oppositions of *us* and *them*, turning their identity into a fluidity of confusion and determination in an open hybrid space, attempting to determine a personal identity in the third space. The migrant's contemplation of otherness illustrates his in-betweenness, and how he is in the process of reconstructing identity and remapping the idea of home. In some ways, the feeling of alienation and sense of being an outcast is replaced with possible inclusion and acceptance; like Little Bee, when she finally realizes she is part of a larger unit, and thus is able to disappear into the masses of multicultural London. The migrants' diasporic identity suggests that identity is not linked to simply one culture or location, rather it becomes multi-locational, like Sumitra experiences her contemplation regarding ethnicity and belonging, linked to three different cultures. Thus the migrant suggests an identity with numerous possibilities of home, beyond their native culture, as Valentino in *What is the What* experiences throughout his wanderings. However, the protagonists of the novels never manage to settle for a third culture in a third space. They, in different ways, like Derrida's theory of deconstruction, manage to deconstruct the binary system of which they are subjects, and define their bewilderment in-between two polarized parts, however, never manage to define any reconstructed identity. They remain floating in the open hybrid space, which eventually grows upon them. They identify their in-betweenness and settle with a personal identity that is constructed of a mix of both, a unification of all their former and present references, yet not determined into one unique, improved, reconstructed identity. They all manage to overcome their ordeals and continue their lives. Thus, the young adult migrant narrative is optimistic and promising. Regardless of experience and outcome of their stories, every novel ends with a sense of hope and settlement. The reader is able to close the book with contentment where the protagonists have come to terms with themselves and a suggested or possibility of identity and future.

5 Teaching multiculturalism using novels in the language classroom:

“Literature is the record of experience interpreted by personality that behind every book which the race has preserved is a human being’s eager effort to give life meaning, to create beauty, to express vivid emotions and ideas, to make men aware of themselves and the life they lead” (Boas 1931: 3-4).

Literature serves the purpose of revelation, which encourages a critical and individual stand, since it embraces diverse problems, challenges, conflicts, or dilemmas. The reader is challenged into drawing on personal experiences and thus becomes personally involved in the story, the characters, and the novel. Because of its imaginative projection and emotive evocation, literature becomes relevant and motivates further learning. Reading engaging novels makes students able to interpret different situations and incidents, and to make their own conclusions in concerns that overlap or differ substantially from their own situation and experience. Several studies point to these imperative dimensions of literature, and to the importance of reading YA literature in education. Michael Byram (1997), Richard Kern (2000), Hilton and Nikolakeva (2012), Christiane Lütge (2014), Janice Bland (2014 + 2015), Violetta-Iren Koutsumpou(2015) have all studied the effect of extensive classroom reading. According to their studies, reading in the EFL classroom, for instance, helps adolescents through the challenges of becoming adults; how to transform from childhood into adulthood. Engaging literature speaks to the YA and confronts the issues of establishing personal identity and provides them with examples, ideas and solutions on how to endure the complex times of restructuring their identity. Robert Havigurst, for instance, states that *“the principal needs of adolescence are emotional and social development, rather than intellectual growth”* (Bushman 1997: 1). Novels that are offered in class readings ought to fill the needs of their readers in order to appear purposeful: Classroom literature that meets the interest, ability and the need of the YA reader. Thus, novels which present substantial issues in which the YA reader can relate will appear more significant. Young adolescents want to be presented with literature that appears logical to them and which is adjusted to their emotional and intellectual level of development. A connection between the reader and narrative can provide an understanding of challenges that to the YA appear difficult and

incomprehensible, in addition to giving examples of how to deal with personal decisions and possible consequences. *Sumitra's Story*, for instance, is a perfect example of how a novel can provide the reader with such familiarity, hope for the future, and how to handle personal controversy, since this novel portrays the protagonist's conflict of identity and final decision to pursue personal identity rather than obey her parents. Sumitra demonstrates the personal agony and unsettled YA mind, pushed and pulled by both traditional culture and personal wish, which provide the YA reader with both familiarity and recognition. The way she solves her personal dilemmas can help the YA in coming to terms with similar problems. Such imaginative narrative offers representations of encountering and experiencing both *the other*, *othering*, orientalism, and Bhabha's third space. Thus exploring and engaging in *We Need New Names*, *Sumitra's Story*, *Little Bee*, and *What is the What* might promote ideas of how to deconstruct entrenched binarism and counteract contemporary orientalism.

5.1 Literature in the EFL classroom

While literature in the EFL classroom was previously used to present proper language and grammatical rules and systems, this focus has changed over the last decade(s). Of course, literature still constitutes important examples of language and usage, in addition to introducing authentic language patterns. By using literature, students in the EFL classroom are presented with material that is read and used by the native speakers, and will experience the same inherent linguistic structures, grammars and vocabulary, language features, and various native narrative styles. Additionally, literature improves the students' communicative competence by introducing communicative styles and approaches. However, according to Violetta-Irene Koutsompou, there are three criteria which favour the use of literature in the EFL learning: The first is equipping the student with authentic examples of language and language use, styles and variations of texts. Secondly, literature can be interpreted in various ways, which evoke individual opinions in class. This furthermore motivates discussion, communication, and the use of English: With spontaneous use of language, the student actively takes part in personal language learning. Finally, and this is my point of research, literature provides the student with cultural knowledge (Koutsompou 2015: 75).

The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, which is responsible for the kindergarten, and primary and secondary education in Norway, is responsible for inspections and regulations, frameworks and curriculums, exams and tests, platform of knowledge and development in kindergartens and schools. One of the principal aims of the core curriculum in *Kunnskapsløftet 2006*, K06, concerns human values. The core curriculum promotes respect for human dignity, freedom of thought, charity, forgiveness, equality and solidarity; values that are expressed in the various religions and philosophies of life, and are rooted in the human rights. Norwegian education advocates knowledge and tolerance of the national cultural heritage and our common global cultural tradition, brings understanding for cultural diversity, respects the individual's conviction, and forwards democracy, equality and scientific thinking. Additionally, Norwegian education opposes all kinds of discrimination (Education Act § 1-1). The Norwegian school system is built on these fundamental values and they imbue all teaching and upbringing. Through the transmission of knowledge and competence, these values will develop and establish humanist attitudes and behaviour:.

“Upper secondary education shall contribute to increased awareness and understanding of basic Christian and humanist values, our national cultural heritage, democratic ideals and scientific thought and method. Upper secondary education shall promote human equality and equal rights, intellectual freedom and tolerance, ecological understanding and international co-responsibility” (K06, Core Curriculum: 2)

These days, The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training remodels the K06, *LK20 - Fagfornyelsen* - which will be implemented in 2020. In *LK20*, the human rights still play a significant role, especially the idea that everyone is equal and has equal value, regardless of who they are, where they are or where they come from:

“The human rights are based upon human dignity and is fundamental to the constitutional state. They represent universal values concerning everyone, regardless of who they are, where they come from, or where they are located (my translation) (LK20: 5).

Thus, Said's idea of *othering* and *orientalism*, which points at archaic ideas of polarisation and bias are concepts which the Norwegian school system strives to oppose and prevent: There are no subordinate idea of superiority and inferiority related to the idea of a *Self* and an *Other*. The *LK20* states that no one in the Norwegian school system should experience

discrimination, prejudice or xenophobia, instead an atmosphere of accepting and appreciating differences should be nurtured:

«All students should be treated equally, and no students should experience discrimination. Additionally, the students should be provided with equal opportunities in order to be able to make independent decisions. The school must consider the student diversity and arrange for equal belonging and affiliation for everyone in both school and society. We are all familiar with the sense of otherness and the feeling of difference. Thus, we depend on appreciation and acknowledgment of diversity (my translation)» (ibid.)

Forgiveness, compassion, and solidarity are appreciated values within human development and prosperity. Individual conviction and conscience are substantial to personal progress, in addition to every one's personal freedom of thinking, believing and expressing themselves. The K06 and LK20 maintain and preserve the students', and thus the populations', ability to continue such humanist values and reflect upon how to prevent violating them. Hence, extensive classroom reading that presents YA migration narrative where the challenges of identity, acceptance, binarism, and *othering* supports the teaching and nurturing of these desired behaviours, values, and attitudes.

Following this, novel reading supports the K06 and LK20 core curriculum's aims by improving the students' historical and cultural insight, and make each student able to maintain and develop her or his identity in a society of inclusion and diversity. During their school years, children and YA develop and mature, and a common frame of reference becomes important for personal and social affiliation. Literature's imagined communities, to use Benedict Anderson's term (Anderson 1983), support the development of individual identity connected to a larger community: Linking personal identity to a larger social context. Thus, YA migration narrative will be one of several means in which the YA can be provided with examples and ideas from a YA perspective. Novels exemplify common frames of reference, and illustrate the space where diversity, different perspectives, values, and philosophies can be taught and appreciated. Experiencing various cultures and traditions supports the forming of personal identity, of which both education and novel reading will contribute. The Norwegian school system encourages the individual's development of personal identity, and inspire students to trust personal conviction. Simultaneously the schools must convey

common, social values needed to participate in the society, and thus open the students' doors to the world and their future:

»To develop the pupils' cultural competence for participation in a multicultural society the education shall enable them to acquire knowledge on different cultures and experience of a wide range of forms of expression. The education shall promote cultural understanding and develop self-insight and identity, respect and tolerance. The pupils shall experience art and cultural expressions that express humankind's individuality and togetherness, and which stimulate their creativity and innovative abilities. They shall also have the opportunity to use their creative powers through varied activities and forms of expression. This can lay the basis for reflection, emotions and spontaneity» (K06: The Quality Framework: 3)

Therefore, narratives of cultural experiences and historical events is one of several ways in which students can increase their understanding and insight. Involving themselves in a novel of a specific social issue, historical period, cultural event or, which is my case, immigration and conflict of identity facilitates the acquisition of knowledge. By using literature as a cultural approach, novels provide their readers with cultural knowledge, and historical, political or social structures of the country(-ies) which are illustrated. Edward Said claims that literature and culture are neither culturally nor politically independent:

“Too often literature and culture are presumed to be politically, even historically innocent; it has regularly seemed otherwise to me, and certainly my study of Orientalism has convinced me that society and literary culture can only be understood together” (Said 1995: 27).

This interconnection is of considerable educational value to the EFL classroom and the teaching of global understanding and coexistence. Such knowledge encompasses the understanding of foreign cultures, systems and, in my case, the experience of young adolescent migrants' challenges in adapting, adjusting, and determining personal identity in specific settings. Additionally, engaging in literature, according to Koutsomou (2015: 76), increases personal growth and helps YA mature, which furthermore encourages development and establishes a relation to and an understanding of other people and cultures. Hence, YA literature involves the student and teaches tolerance and honesty. Contemporary issues and social justice engage and provide an understanding and/or an adaptation to social and cultural standards. Thus, the students' increase their ability to make personal assumptions based upon meaning and context:

“The point is not just to give students something to talk about for the sake of practicing language but also to engage them in the thoughtful and creative act of making connections between language and content; between language and culture; between another culture and their own” (Kern 2000: 24).

Literature in the EFL classroom encourages the students’ imagination, evokes empathy, and engages with other cultures, hence, their personal ethics are questioned and perhaps adjusted. While reading, the students enter a hybrid, open space of understanding, where former “truths” might alter or be restructured, and where the binary opposites of *Self* and *Other* can be deconstructed.

5.1.1 Engaging literature in the EFL classroom

The general agreement among researchers is that reading is social and people choose novels based upon recommendations. Thus, discussion and conversation related to a story engage the student in both general reading and in the specific issues raised (Rybakova et al 2013:38). Students are motivated by stories that are relevant and related to real life experiences. An interesting story often describes emotionally difficult issues, and makes the student identify the individual in a complex setting. Regarding the migrant experience, the student is presented an individual experience; he connects with the character and is able to reach behind the possible existing prejudice and stereotypes. Empathy and compassion are evoked as both the issue raised and narrated experience are presented through another character’s point of view. As a result, the student increases his understanding and knowledge, and extends his horizons. He is provoked into taking a stand, forming personal opinion and consider diverse points of views. Such YA literature contributes to the recognition of injustice and inequality, helps form and express personal convictions and/or conclusions, and expresses opinions, for instance, considering xenophobia, othering and conflict of identity. Hence, the students develop their critical competence through personal involvement: Engaging with the novel draws the reader into its world. The reader moves past the language and into experiencing the unfolding of the story. He sympathises with certain characters, responds to their emotions and is eager to discover the closure of the story or problem. The reader is absorbed into the fictional world of literature.

The purpose of using *We Need New Names*, *Sumitra's Story*, *Little Bee*, *What is the What* and similar works in educating adolescent EFL learners is because of how they demonstrate historical and social issues within their narrative. Facts are presented through stories of fiction: The trouble and conflict between President Mugabe and the people of Zimbabwe in *We Need New Names*, the aftermath of British decolonisation in Uganda in *Sumitra's Story*, and the fate of the Lost Boys in Sudan in *What is the What* for instance are presented through the naïve ideas of the protagonists' narrative. The issues raised evoke the reader's feelings and ability to empathize with the experiences of the protagonists. Thus, the historical and social facts are more easily accessible to the students. The readers' reaction to the ordeals of the protagonist and her reaction to the stories of conflict, frustration, agony, and challenges of survival intentionally activates sympathy for the characters' ordeals. One immediate reaction to the traumas happening to the main character is an attempt to imagine being caught in his situation. Hence, the novels establish an extraordinary space where questions and challenges of identity and empathy can both interfere, differ and coincide. The reader experiences examples of how Orientalism and binary oppositions intrude with or influence personal conviction and identification. His reaction encourages personal engagement and supports the deconstruction of binary opposites, and, thus, obstructs xenophobia and ethnocentrism. The narratives demonstrate the possibility of dismissing fixed terms of identities, that a fluid identity is possible and additionally okay. Thus, motivation becomes a fundamental and important argument for using literature in the EFL classroom: With a captivating story, the student experiences personal connection to the novel and the protagonist. If the students are emotionally touched, challenged, engaged, or provoked, they are more likely to associate with the experiences of the characters, which furthermore motivates reading and language- and cultural learning. Janice Bland (Bland 2015: 211) for instance, argues that by choosing emotionally engaging, influential stories, preferably with personal, breath-taking descriptions in a story world to which it is easy for the YA reader to relate, a YA reader will find it both meaningful and significant since she experiences an era in life in which emotions and drama play a significant part. Since the YA herself is living and experiencing life in a third space, trying to establish a personal identity in-between childhood and adulthood, such narrative is both valid and substantial to her development. Related to this, Elisabeth Twitchell identifies the value of empathic imagination and that "*the memoirs of crisis might be capable of responsibly bridging representational divides*" (Twitchell 2011: 624). She emphasizes the "*value of imagining what cannot be known*" (ibid.), and offers an understanding and

awareness of the third space of interaction, where the possibility of reconstructing ideas and identities occurs. The representation of the *other*, and the open, empty space, which is significant in the wake of deconstructing binary oppositions, is a significant point in using these stories in the EFL classroom. The provoking and/or appalling stories evoke emotions and interest through the protagonist's experiences of trauma and stress. Interaction and conflict of identity, which happen in-between polarized parts, stimulate empathy for the characters. Furthermore, descriptions of trauma functions as means of bridging the gap between the *self* and the *other*. When students read the novels, they create an understanding even though they have not undergone the ordeals personally (Twitchell 2011: 629). Thus, reading can contribute to promoting more tolerance towards migrants' situation in general, and fellow adolescent migrant students' situation specifically, and their possible challenges in settling and adapting to the host society. As a result, literature such as *We Need New Names* by Noviolet Bulawayo, *Sumitra's Story* by Rukshana Smith, *Little Bee* by Chris Cleave, and *What is the What* by Dave Eggers, contribute to more acceptance and less xenophobia and prejudice.

5.2 Research focusing on the use of literature in the foreign language classroom

“When listening to stories, children identify with the main characters; they feel sad or worried for the protagonists when they are in difficult situations and feel relieved when a solution is found. This identification process allows children to better understand their own emotions and to get to know other people's feelings as well” (Traverso 2013: 193-4 as cited in Bland 2015: 25).

Christiane Lütge and Janice Bland (2014) present research studies, which support the idea that so-called free or extensive reading is highly effective when it comes to increasing knowledge, provide familiarity, diverse understanding and meaning. Bland argues that using classroom reading with the sole purpose of language learning is changing, rather the focus has turned into content-based EFL classrooms and Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) (Bland 2014: 1). She favours using children and YA literature in the language classroom because it provides multiple layers of both reading and understanding, since it then will be read by both adults (teacher/parents) and students of various backgrounds and reference. She

demonstrates that if a student should be able to progress beyond just everyday use of the language, he needs to make use of authentic literature in order to increase his language skills. Hence, children's- and YA literature are important academic and cultural devices in order to enhance learning. Bland suggests that students need the juxtaposition of both content and language, linked to their field of personal expertise, which in my thesis is represented through YA migrant literature, of, by and for adolescent readers, who, of course, are experts in the experience of adolescence. Their interpretation and understanding of issues raised is closely related to cultural understanding, observation, consideration, and self-reflection, which can provide the YA reader with a reasonable, balanced, and purposeful link between the EFL classroom and the outside world. As a result, Bland favours utilization of literature in the EFL classroom since currently cultural understanding in textbooks used to teach the EFL curriculum is reduced to plain factual texts, which ignores the nurture of personal imagination, imagery, fantasy, and inventiveness. Hence, textbooks do not emotionally engage the reader into for instance changing her mind set or values. The ability to read does not automatically make you able to interpret literature; such skills must be taught and trained:

Literature, not reading lessons, teaches children to read in ways that no basal reader can, because literature is read, if at all, with passion, with desire (Meek 1982: 290).

According to Janice Bland, YA literature in the EFL classroom will provide a significant stage in EFL learning, in which the student moves from functional language and vocabulary into interpreting and understanding literature at a level they can master and gain confidence in personal language ability. Interest and enthusiasm are two crucial ingredients, and literature provides the students with support and emotional development in a time of vulnerability and bewilderment of identity. The knowledge increases, which furthermore will develop into an increasing self-esteem. Thus, YA literature represents a natural developing stage within EFL learning, before students are presented with advanced, adult literature later.

Following her idea of personal interpretation skills, Bland promotes the idea that the term literacy is expanded from merely utilization into including both literary as well as cultural literacy, which evidences the importance of literature in EFL learning; teaching language combined with literature and cultural issues. Literary literacy recognizes the *“pleasure of constructing story worlds and dialogic understandings, with the help of the imagination and the detective work of uncovering the text's secrets”* (Bland 2015: 20). These are abilities that need to be trained: Visualisation, imagery, and inventiveness of the mind. Cultural literacy

refers to the knowledge of teaching intercultural communicative competence in the EFL classroom, whereas literature plays a significant role in encouraging such knowledge learning. Related to her idea of cultural literacy, Bland demonstrates the randomness and variety of culture(s) and how culture is interpreted and presented differently related to by whom or in which context it is described. Thus, Said's discussion regarding the *Self* and the *Other*, and that literature representing the *other* needs to be written by the *other* of the *other* is both relevant and significant. *We Need New Names*, *Sumitra's Story*, *Little Bee*, and *What is the What* are representative narratives, which exemplify stories of the *other* written by the *other*. The protagonists pursue an identity reconstructed from a former life and identity merged with the present one. Although Edward Said's idea of orientalism and the binary oppositions of *Self* and *Other* originates from the colonial times, *We Need New Names*, *Sumitra's Story*, *Little Bee* and *What is the What* demonstrate a contemporary presence of such binary oppositions. Darling in *We Need New Names* compares her home and her *Self* to its *unlike*: She lives in a "rag- country" dreaming of a prosperous life in a *country-country*, comparing her society to a believed truth abroad. Whereas she later, after years living in the USA, finds herself in-between her native home and identity and her host's, which brings in the perfect example of an identity floating in Bhabha's hybrid space of interaction. Sumitra finds herself in much the same situation in *Sumitra's Story*, and her pursuit for answering her question of racial difference illustrate the persisting binary opposition of *Self* and *Other*, its insignificance in a multicultural, modern society, and a veiled criticism of its maintenance. Her wish for deconstructing the polarized parts of how to determine her identity places her in a hybrid space where she questions and attempts to reconstruct her personal identity. When the students read these narratives of *the other*, distanced from a self-lived reality, their perspective is challenged. These novels exemplify the hybrid space of deconstructed opposites where the experienced binaries form a possibility of knowledge acquisition: Learning constituted from ambiguity, confusion and questioning. Each novel provide the reader with one specific voice, narrative or personal story, which speaks directly to the reader. This is highly relevant in order for the student to recognize the presence of numerous voices, stories, and ideas, and thus to be able to acknowledge a nuanced picture of the world. Knowledge and understanding will always be subjective and fluctuating, and, according to Susan Reichl, we can never be certain about the metacognition, values or understanding acquired reading these stories, however, merely acknowledge the potential and possibility of increased knowledge (Bland 2014: 115).

According to Bland, students need to be taught the ability to read critically and to interpret fiction. With today's enormous digital access and input, a sensible, personal, and critical mind is important in order to sort all the information: To be able to differentiate and interpret facts and fiction and critically evaluate the references. Bland claims that critical cultural literacy envisages a skill that not necessarily revolves around absolute knowledge, however, rather fronts a variety of perspectives. Using literature in the EFL classroom provides and enables the student with the ability of critical thinking, forming personal opinions, and identifying reasonable and various perspectives. Students explore combinations of emotions, affections, and critical abilities in order to form personal and just opinions. Imaginative literature, which narrates *otherness* and experiences of the hybrid or third space, facilitates the encounter of one's own *otherness*. Through examples and various perspectives, the challenging and undecidable, and sometimes unintelligible, aspects of literature become equally significant, since encounters with the surreal, metamorphic and incomprehensible challenge our understanding of ourselves and imagine a variety of singularities of what *the other* might be. As a result, cultural awareness and insight add up in the individual's personal point of view, ideas, and values, where intercultural communicative competence, ICC, represents the "*sociocultural knowledge, the willingness and ability to understand other people – for instance by a constant change of perspective, and it allows successful intercultural interaction...It combines knowledge, attitudes and abilities*" (Bland 2014: 121). Cultural awareness turns into both evaluating and comparing the *Self* to the *Other*, especially in determining personal beliefs and relating to others based upon those beliefs (ibid.). Hence, ICC becomes an important part of EFL education and extensive classroom reading in order for the students to engage in and understand social issues, i.e the migrant experience and questions of identity, which encompasses the ability to understand other cultures, values, and perspectives. The novel represents juxtaposed ideas; a heteroglossia of narratives and/or expressed viewpoints, and thus introduces the students to several ideas in which they can establish personal opinions.

Critical cultural reading encourages the rebellious YA mind, since they often experience life and adolescence to be conflicting with their surroundings. Hence, YA readers appear to approve of the narratives of the suppressed and the unfair in the world:

“YA literature can help teenagers to think about, and hopefully to transcend, the rigid systems and dysfunctional structures of popular culture, stereotyping, oppression and injustice” (Hilton and Nikolajeva 2012: 15).

Like the novels *We Need New Names*, *Sumitra’s Story*, *Little Bee*, and *What is the What*, which more or less represent (semi-)authentic stories, each of them appears to be narrated and set in authentic cultural settings. Because of this, the novels’ protagonists and the stories’ relevance provide the YA reader with recognition; he can relate to and/or identify with the experiences of injustice, mourning and conflict, and thus identify with the oppressed’s struggle against superiority and conflict of identity, i.e. the migrant experience, othering, and question of *Self*. Following this, Martha Nussbaum claims that *“it is the political promise of literature that it can transport us, while remaining ourselves, into the life of another, revealing similarities but also profound differences between the life and thought of that other and myself and making them comprehensible”* (Nussbaum 1998: 111). The YA reader relates to the intriguing story, yet persists in his safe environment; however, his understanding and/or increased cultural knowledge will promote bridging the gap between the *Self* and *the Other*:

“When protagonists’ represent cultural entities that are different to the reader’s, literature serves as a source for the development of ICC. Literature, thus, provides insights into constructed secondary worlds, which may help readers develop empathy with and solidarity for the characters portrayed....and the portrayal thus also has a strong ethical dimension” (Bland 2014: 151).

Narratives of *the other* demonstrate a nuanced picture of foreign cultures, and readers are provided with an awareness of unfamiliar cultures. By experiencing difference and binary opposition in fiction and narrative, the principles for establishing and engaging in a balanced ICC is facilitated. Grit Alter claims that *“in order for intercultural learning to be beneficial for a student’s perception of self and otherness, a balanced representation of other cultures is essential* (Bland 2014: 157). Thus the YA readers are able to resist, neutralize, oppose, and become aware of biased ideas of *otherness* in which they grow up with. Likewise, *“language teaching is a vehicle for transmitting knowledge and understanding of human rights and a policy instrument for promoting intercultural communication in a spirit of human rights”* (Hugh Starkey 2004: 285). Knowledge and understanding of foreign cultures and languages contributes to establishing and/or developing mutual respect and relations between different nations and cultures:

“Another compelling reason for using literature in a language class is the potential power of good literature to transform, to change attitudes, and to help eradicate prejudice while fostering empathy, tolerance, and awareness of global problems” (Ghosn 2002: 176).

All these claims are asserted within and supported by the core curriculum in both K06 and LK20, which means that these values are promoted in the Norwegian school system. Thus, literature in the EFL classroom encourages and promotes the teaching and knowledge acquisition within the humanist ideas. Since children and YA possess an inner sense of fairness, such values and ideas need to be developed for the benefit of personal development and understanding of global diversity, hence the school system and its academic content play a major role. Classroom reading is one example thereof, which, for instance, stimulates discussion of topics revolving around a story, which to one person alone might appear incomprehensible. Sharing sensible ideas and various reasoning that appear legitimate might be accepted by several. Thus, ideas, prejudice, and preconceived notions can be avoided, changed, and even eradicated in company with others, which is one substantial reason why reading migration narratives in the EFL classroom might contribute to decreasing xenophobia, racism and prejudice:

“Immersion in literature that generates critical analysis of the status quo can open students to new perspectives, prepare students for current and coming challenges to traditional ways of being, and perhaps even stimulate them to launch their own challenges to the old order” (O’Neil 2010: 41).

Hence, there is a significant link between fiction and intercultural competence, in which facilitates bridging the invisible gap between *self* and *other*, and developing a personal understanding of the world.

6 Conclusion

Orientalism is no longer a one-way journey, a stream of visions frozen by European travellers and carted home for consumption, without reference to the responses of those objectified in the process (Benjamin 2003: 4).

Considering modern communication technologies, increased mobility of people, easier access to information, global capitalism, increased contact and interaction between cultures, my intention with this thesis has been to demonstrate how modern technology and development challenge the collective and individual ideas of identity: How people perceive themselves and how their customs are changing. Global movement and globalization of the world's population turns nationality, origin, settlement, roots, and birthplace into outdated and obsolete representations of identity. Thus, "*the figure of the migrant*" has become the modern representative of the global human being:

"We are fundamentally creatures of movement rather than settlement" (Moslund 2010: 2).

Edward Said's demonstration of Orientalism and the binary oppositions of *Self* and *Other* offered an awakening to the challenges and questions raised regarding the interaction of cultures. His illumination of the stigmatizations that were made in order to establish a *Self* opposed to an *Other*; an idea of foreigners; how ethnocentrism became a term as one hemisphere considered itself superior to other, is fundamental in order for contemporary understanding of the developing multicultural identity. Additionally, Said identified and demonstrated the world beyond Orientalism when he claimed that "*Muslim or American are no more than starting points, which if followed into actual experience for only a moment are quickly left behind. Imperialism consolidated the mixture of cultures and identities on a global scale. But its worst and most paradoxical gift was to allow people to believe that they were only, mainly, exclusively white, or black, or Western or Oriental*" (Said 1993: 408). Thus, Said's demonstration and designation of the binary oppositions, based upon racial difference has been of major importance in order to understand and acknowledge that culture is and will be ever changing: It alters, interconnects and its categorization should be based upon personal determination rather than fixed, biased traditions of Orientalism. Individuals communicate, interact and relate to each other, which support and add understanding to a mutual, collective cultural identity. Cultural identity aims at surpassing biased polarisations

and prejudice. Thus my demonstration of the migrant adolescents' turmoil of growing up – the coming of age - becomes a representation of deconstructing Orientalism. Young adolescents are constantly challenging the authorities. They appear rebellious, unhappy, mourning and reserved, with unstable emotions; at least to the grown up population. They regard themselves sufferers of injustice, and thus endure a state of unfulfilled longings and wishes. Through their enacting of adult life, they too experience cultural alienation; how the imperial legacy of *Self* and *Other* affects their life and prosperity. Political injustice, gender and racial stereotyping, and social critique are part of the YA migrant's social and cultural adjustments. YA often experience times of loneliness, turbulence, an urge to confirm personal independence, and seek social confirmation from their friends. Adolescence is a phase of inner chaos and stress, and the migrant YA additionally suffers from trauma, cultural memory, and emotional and mental consequences of war, loss, and grief. As a consequence, which additionally is my point in this thesis, YA migrant literature links society's turbulence to the YA's search for an identity. YA migrant narrative, exemplified through *We Need New Names*, *Sumitra's Story*, *Little Bee*, and *What is the What*, demonstrates the instability of the YA mind and identity: The adolescents' controversial and/or ordealistic travel towards adulthood in an unfamiliar host society where questions of belonging and identity are raised. Thus, readers of YA migrant literature are presented with voices of the numerous who have been silenced by censorship, governmental repression, and political suppression and pursue. The background stories of political instability illustrate the personal YA turmoil and thus serve as an image of the unstable YA's inner *Self*. While the protagonists physically emigrate political instability and unrest, simultaneously their identity conducts a personal inner journey from adolescence to adulthood. They demonstrate personal growth, prosperity formed in-between cultures and identities, in Bhabha's hybrid space:

“In constructing diasporic identity, the immigrant links herself not with one transnational community but with several, crossing national boundaries and accepting the possibility of home other than the originary one”(Nyman 2017: 32).

Even though the YA migrant is technically and physiologically free from suffering and oppression, he is continuously haunted by the experiences of the past, which keep him in the hybrid space in-between his past and his present *Self*: A liminal state of identity, not stably rooted anywhere, living on a threshold of identity. He is part of both cultures, however, not completely part of either, which resembles the state of adolescence; no longer a child, and not yet an adult. The duality of the immigrant experience, “living on the hyphen”, the clashing

and simultaneously joining of two or more cultures or identities serves as evidence of how the YA migrant attempts to deconstruct the binary opposition of *Self* and *Other* and rather pursue personal identity in Bhabha's hybrid space, in-between the polarised parts:

“The newness offered by migrant discourse is often expressed as the opening up of our minds and self-perceptions towards a new transnational world, which is a new society.... characterized by mass migrations where new hybrid and transitional identities are emerging” (Gomez-Peña, as quoted in Bhabha 1994: 313).

By reading YA migration stories, we experience their parallel narratives: The personal story of the YA migrant, however, simultaneously the experiences of his people back home is visualized. The agonies of the main character become representatives of the larger struggles of his people, and through engagement, the YA reader is able to establish a relationship to the protagonists. Thus, the YA migrant narrative supports an (subconsciously) increases students' awareness and knowledge regarding social and historical issues related to the experiences of the characters. Thus, as my point in earlier chapters demonstrate, extensive EFL classroom reading might replace archaic ideas with new improved perceptions:

“New perceptions or new cognitions of the world cause us to refurbish the world and our place in it....our re-cognition of the world is assumed to cause a material reshaping of the world” (Moslund 2010: 20).

The YA migrant's pursuit to accept the role of her past, and her wish to reconstruct her identity and *Self* in a relocated setting, exemplifies the YA's bewilderment of identity and thus evokes familiarity and recognition to the YA reader. The reader's ability to recognize, acknowledge and celebrate difference, to accept cultural uniqueness, and to confirm or recognize the YA migrant's attempt to confirm a hybrid identity supports YA migrant literature's educational purpose.

As a result, choosing literature for the EFL classroom constitutes a conscious act, bearing the responsibility of future generations, responsible teaching, and reflective learning. Janice Bland's support of Said's criticism that literature used for educational purposes merely focuses on the main English speaking nations (Britain, USA, Australia), which is more or less an (un)conscious continuation of imperialism, evidences Orientalism's sustained relevance. There are numerous of talented writers representing other parts of the English speaking world, who are equally important and interesting in the EFL classroom. As a result, we must be

conscious of the narratives' representation of point of view, possible biases, and ideas of *othering*, and be aware that ideas of race and ethnicities are represented in the discourse of the culture in which it is constructed. Thus, to teach critical awareness and inspire critical and individual reflection is highly relevant and important. Narratives of cultures both outside as well as within your personal culture raise critical cultural awareness:

“Nation as a concept resides in the hearts and minds of those who live in a particular place at a particular time” (Steward 2008: 98).

Critical awareness increases the ability to make personal interpretations, to read between the lines, and to decode what is not literally expressed. When children and YA read various versions of narratives, which they can relate to moral dilemmas, cultural encounters or real life events, they are able to identify the numerous variations of truths, and thus are able to evaluate critically their sources. Various sides to a story prevent one fixed truth, rather bring in an awareness and increased understanding regarding a complex issue: I.e. the migration experience brings in as many versions as there are people migrating, every story individually experienced and perceived. Thus, Derrida's deconstruction of the binary opposites facilitates Bhabha's hybrid space of interaction, which enables a reconstruction of future entities. This proposes a solution of how to move society beyond ethnocentrism and orientalism, where unification and deconstructed social antithesis will be welcomed and celebrated. Following this, Said's idea of Orientalism evidences the importance of teaching awareness regarding the construction of a *Self* and an *Other*. Being aware of predisposed notions of identifying the *Other* decreases prejudice, racism, and xenophobia through literary engagement and involvement. Thus, related to my discussion, extensive reading contributes to intercultural communicative competence, and taught through novel reading, this becomes of great relevance for the EFL classroom: Through literature the YA reader experiences the ambiguity of life and identity, and holds personal reference to similar narratives, thus, narratives of migration experience, cultural shocks and hybrid identities appear relevant and familiar. Literature provides people with examples and diversity of which we can make use in order to find just and sensible solutions. The story world of the novels produce knowledge connected to specific cultural understandings, which simultaneously contributes to the construction of a universal response.

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