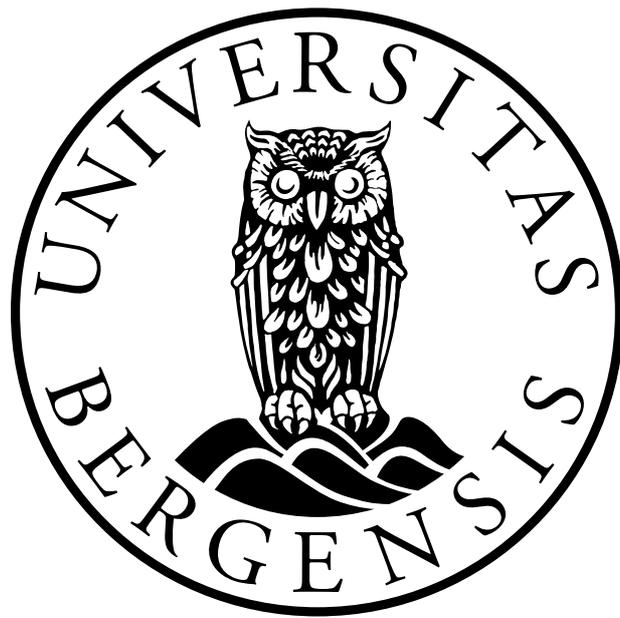


Exploring traces of worldviews in literary texts in an EFL textbook

Helge Johan Stautland



Master's Thesis
ENGMAU 650

Department of Foreign Languages
University of Bergen

Spring 2020

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to thank my supervisor, Hild Elisabeth Hoff, for constructive feedback and valuable advice, and for keeping an eye on both details and the greater picture as the thesis has taken form.

This thesis could not have been written without help and support from my wonderful family! A million thanks to my wife, Anne Karine, for always motivating and encouraging me, and for helping me see ways out of doubts and frustration. I also appreciate that you set aside time proofreading my text. Thank you, Klara Aisha for coming into my life during the work with the thesis! I have loved all the times you have come knocking on the home office door with drawings and hinting that Daddy should take a break. The joy, laughter and energy you have brought into my life are invaluable.

Learning to know my fellow students at this master program has been inspiring and fun. Thank you all for valuable advice and feedback, coffees and dinners in Bergen, and discussions and experience sharing in the chat group!

My employer, Lundeneset vgs, must not be forgotten. Thank you for organising and providing necessary space for me to concentrate on the studies. I would also like to thank my colleague Rolf Hauge for proofreading parts of the thesis.

Abstract in Norwegian

Hovudmålet med denne masteroppgåva er å undersøkje livssyn i dei skjønnlitterære tekstane i *Global Visions* – ei lærebok for programfaget *Internasjonal engelsk*. Oppgåva byggjer på eit teoretisk rammeverk for livssynsanalyse og interkulturell kommunikasjon, og diskuterer analysefunna opp mot elevane si utvikling av interkulturell kompetanse. Oppgåva gjer seg nytte av kvalitativ metode, der tekstane er analyserte tematisk.

Å forstå ‘den andre’ er mellom anna å reflektera over kva livssyn og verdiar han byggjer si oppfatning av verda og livet på. Det handlar også om å få større forståing for eige livssyn og identitet, individuelt og kulturelt. Slike perspektiv kjem til uttrykk i ulike rammeverk og læreplanar. Gjennom skjønnlitteraturen får eleven unike leseopplevingar, og ofte nære møte med andre karakterar i kjende og ukjende samanhengar.

Analysane viser at fleire livssystema blir direkte eller indirekte belyste av tekstane. Verkelegheitsoppfatning, mennesket sin ibuande verdi, det autonome mennesket og trua på framsteget er nokre viktige tema. Eit sentralt funn er at vestlege livssynsperspektiv og verdiar i ei viss grad blir tekne for gitt. Mange tekstar har karakterar som representerer moderne og sekulære kontekstar. Når andre livssynsperspektiv blir gitt plass i tekstane, er det med nokre få viktige unnatak gjerne gjennom dei noko eksotiske og annleistenkjande ‘andre’ karakterane i tekstane. Oppgåva drøftar også korleis medvit om dette er viktig når det gjeld undervisning og utvikling av interkulturell kompetanse.

Oppgåva ser også særskilt på korleis livssynskonflikt pregar tekstane, då mykje teori om både livssyn og interkulturell kommunikasjon byggjer på premissen om at konflikt og ueinigheit ofte er uunngåeleg. Analysane viser at konflikt er eit gjennomgangstema i fleirtalet av tekstane. Ofte har slike konfliktsituasjonar uvisse og tvitydige avslutningar, noko som kan seiast å spegla den verkelege verda. Ein sentral didaktisk implikasjon av dette er at elevane sjølve må gjera seg opp vurderingar om meining, og at det blir lagt til rette for refleksjon rundt ulike livssyn og ståstader.

I tekstane ser ein også at det finst noko som sameinar menneskeslekta: Den ibuande verdien til kvart menneske, og kva konsekvensar dette har for mellommenneskelege relasjonar.

Table of contents

Acknowledgements	iii
Abstract in Norwegian	iv
List of figures and tables:.....	viii
Chapter 1. Introduction	1
1.1. Aim and scope	1
1.2. Background.....	2
1.2.1 Textbooks	3
1.2.2 Literary texts	4
1.2.3 Curricular issues	5
1.3. Previous research	6
1.3.1 Textbooks, literature and cultural issues.....	6
1.3.2 Worldviews, learning and understanding	8
1.4. Research questions	8
1.5. Research methods and material.....	9
1.6. Outline of the thesis	9
Chapter 2. Theoretical background	10
2.0. Introduction.....	10
2.1. Worldviews	10
2.2. IC	14
2.2.1 IC and the European context	15
2.3. Byram and ‘the intercultural speaker’	16
2.3.1 Individuality and critical awareness	18
2.4. Alternative perspectives	19
2.4.1 Living with disagreement and conflict	19
2.4.2 Identity and diversity.....	21
2.4.3 Critical interculturality.....	23
2.5. Worldviews and IC.....	25
2.6. The role of literature.....	26

2.6.1 Literary texts, 'Bildung' and new understanding.....	28
2.6.2 Challenges of the literary text.....	30
Chapter 3. Material and research methods	32
3.0. Introduction.....	32
3.1. Research design	32
3.1.1 Rationale for the qualitative approach: Understanding a phenomenon	33
3.1.2 Inductive and deductive approaches.....	33
3.1.3 Rationale for the thematic analysis approach	34
3.2. Data material.....	35
3.2.1 Aschehoug's Global Visions.....	35
3.2.2 Textbook structure and content.....	35
3.2.3 Rationale for text selection	36
3.3. Analytical categories and procedures.....	39
3.3.1 Developing the analytical categories and coding structure	39
3.3.2 Example on how the coding scheme has been employed	42
3.3.3 Challenges	42
3.4. Reliability and validity	43
3.4.1 Reliability.....	43
3.4.2 Validity	44
3.5. Ethical considerations	45
3.6. Possible limitation of the materials and methods	46
Chapter 4. Findings and discussion	48
4.0. Introduction.....	48
4.1. Perception of reality	49
4.1.1 The spiritual 'other' and the secularised, Western 'self'	50
4.1.2 Matters regarding life and death.....	56
4.2. View of humanity	59
4.2.1 Human value, relations and human rights.....	60
4.2.2 Identity, alienation and stereotypes.....	63
4.3. Perception of values and morality.....	69
4.3.1 The autonomous decision maker	70
4.3.2 Reconciliation and forgiveness – or vengeance?.....	73
4.3.3 The loyal citizen.....	76

4.4. Beliefs, trust and meaning	77
4.4.1 <i>Happiness, possibilities and progress</i>	79
4.4.2 <i>Family, culture and tradition</i>	82
4.4.3 <i>Hospitality and the good in humanity</i>	84
 Chapter 5. Conclusion	 88
5.0. Introduction.....	88
5.1. Summary of findings and didactic implications	88
5.1.1 <i>Conflict, disagreement and ambiguity</i>	90
5.1.2 <i>United through humanity and value</i>	91
5.2. Common values and the new national core curriculum	92
5.3. Possible limitations of the thesis.....	93
5.4. Further research	94
5.5. Concluding remarks	94
 References.....	 96
 Appendices.....	 102
Appendix 1: A presentation of the literary texts in <i>Global Visions</i> (Burner, et al., 2017)	102
Appendix 2: Coding scheme.....	108

List of figures and tables:

List of figures:

Figure 2.1 Factors in intercultural communication 17

List of tables:

Table 3.1 Literary texts in *Global Visions* 38
Table 3.2 Example from the coding scheme 42

“I thought of Erica. It occurred to me that my attempts to communicate with her might have failed in part because I did not know where I stood on so many issues of consequence; I lacked a stable *core*.”

(The Reluctant Fundamentalist, Mohsin Hamid, 2007)

Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1. Aim and scope

The present thesis investigates literary texts in a foreign language (FL) textbook, Aschehoug's *Global Visions* (Burner et al., 2017). More specifically, it explores how worldviews are reflected in the literary texts, and which implications this may have for the intercultural learning processes of EFL learners. The textbook under scrutiny is written for the elective programme subject *International English* in Norwegian upper secondary schools (level Vg2/Vg3), a subject which was introduced in 2007.

Generally, worldviews are significant in all school subjects and levels of education; reflection on such aspects is therefore important. More specifically, these concepts are also explicitly and indirectly referred to in various curricula and frameworks, often in relation to intercultural learning and literary reading in such respect (e.g. *International English*, Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2006, see more below).

Neutrality in questions of worldviews and values is impossible, and this is a central premise for the investigation. A consequence of this, is that texts also inherently carry certain worldviews and perspectives (Dahle, 2013). The purpose of the thesis is not to assess the selection of texts in this book against selections in other books, nor to speculate upon the intentions of the textbook authors or publisher in any respect. However, since the textbook, with its selection of literary texts, often seems to lay the premises for teaching in the English language classroom (Lund, 2007), both pedagogical leaders and teachers are intrinsically compelled to critically assess its content on a regular basis, first and foremost to promote learning and reflection.

My own experiences as an English teacher have shown me that to analyse and reflect upon worldviews is a fruitful approach in intercultural learning. Often, questions of interculturality appear vague and unclear for the students, and the learning outcome is thus in danger of being superficial. It is for this reason often necessary to concretise the concept of intercultural communication in order to promote intercultural competence (IC), and one beneficial approach in this respect is to analyse and discuss how worldviews come to expression in literary texts. The aim of the present thesis is to get an overview of traces of worldviews inherent in literary texts in a textbook, and discuss the didactic implications this may have for intercultural learning.

The analyses will provide insights into how literary texts reflect worldviews, and to what extent the worldviews as such are in conflict with each other. In intercultural learning, this latter perspective is of particular significance, since interculturality more often than not involves coexistence and cooperation despite disagreement and conflict as regards worldviews and reality perceptions (Hoff, 2014; Iversen, 2014; Kramsch, 2011; Sire, 2015).

1.2. Background

IC has been an important concept in the English language classroom in Norway for several years. In a globalised world where encounters between people from different cultural backgrounds and with different worldviews gradually have become a common occurrence in everyday life, knowledge about and competence in how to engage with the fellow human being, ‘the other,’ are of crucial importance. This is also reflected in the national core curriculum, in addition to subject curricula (see 1.2.3 below).

However, although most of us can agree on the importance of dealing with these issues in educational contexts, it is not naturally given what such competence is and consists of (Fenner, 2000). Certain attitudes and skills, such as awareness and tolerance, are ascribed an interculturally competent person (Byram, 1997, 2008; Council of Europe, 2001), but how are these to be converted into the currency of daily living? Some would argue that IC and the concept of interculturality are politicised concepts, and how one understands the terms will shift from person to person. A significant challenge with IC is that it does not always seem to mean the same to different people; it is a *polysemic* term which at the same time often is empty of meaning (Dervin, 2016, 2017). Approaches to developing IC and dealing with interculturality in classrooms will therefore vary. The last decades have seen that the concepts have been both debated and embraced, and much research is done on this subject (see chapter 2).

Inherent in cultures and cultural expressions are traces of worldviews. Every aspect of what human beings think, say and do emanates from a worldview, either it is consciously acknowledged by the individual or not. Therefore, to be able to understand others’ perspectives and perceptions of reality is crucial, not primarily because individuals by this can avoid conflicts and colliding values, but for the reason that it can facilitate a fundament for communication and co-existence (Sire, 2015). In the encounter with ‘the other’, for instance in a literary text, worldviews become visible. Central with regards to this, is the ability for human beings to reflect on their own worldview: What are a person’s beliefs based upon, what values does he embrace? In questions of life and death, does he search for spiritual

answers, or is everything dominated by a secular mindset? Everybody possesses an urge to grasp the basics of life and the world, to be at peace with “some understanding of the alpha and omega of the human condition” (Naugle, 2002, p. 345).

A recent qualitative study of teenagers in Oslo confirms that an understanding of worldviews and beliefs is of great importance in today’s diverse classrooms (Hovdenak & Leganger-Krogstad, 2018). In this longitudinal study 10th to 13th graders were interviewed about worldviews, values and understanding, and asked to consider in which subjects and contexts such reflection and learning took place. The study concludes that except for the school subjects RLE and religion¹, there is a scarcity of such contexts. Further, it suggests that contexts that can help the learners navigate between a diversity in e.g. values and ethics, are valuable. The study illustrates the importance of having an emphasis on the worldview and value dimensions in school, perhaps particularly in foreign language teaching (FLT) where developing IC is a central concern.

1.2.1 Textbooks

Why should a textbook be subject for investigation, when there is so much else to choose from in the digital landscape? First and foremost, I landed upon this decision based on how I turn to the textbook for help in the classroom. Further, my experience is that Norwegian EFL textbooks often are of a high quality. This may be a reason why the usage of textbooks is encouraged at many schools.

Although textbooks today are considered to be less authoritative than earlier, they still have a high status in Norwegian schools (Fenner & Ørevik, 2018; Juuhl et al., 2010). When time is in short supply for teachers, it is easy to more or less unconsciously rely on the traditional textbook. Publishers frequently put new books and editions in print, in accordance with curricular changes and educational reforms. Owing to such reasons, Juuhl et al. (2010) conclude that teaching materials must always be subject to evaluation and scrutiny, as this can contribute to continuous didactic development. Textbooks of good quality are suited to facilitating learning and competence development as expressed in the curriculum, for instance specific aims related to critical thinking (p. 10).

The content of the textbook also has implications for how for instance IC is promoted in the English classroom. Because of the fact that the English subject is multifaceted,

¹ ‘RLE’ – Religion, worldviews and ethics, was an obligatory subject taught at primary and lower secondary level. ‘Religion’ is an obligatory subject taught in VG3, upper secondary level.

covering aspects ranging from language learning and grammar to cultural issues, there is automatically great diversity in priorities and focus in the learning materials. Historically, linguistic and communicative aspects have been given much attention in EFL textbooks in Norway, while viewing language as both communication and culture is a more recent development. The students' experience and reflection have also been given more priority over the last decades (Fenner & Ørevik, 2018).

Although the curriculum is a governing document when a textbook is made, the various content will always be influenced by the textbook writers' background, such as their worldviews, values and ideology (Andersen & Dahle, 2018). Owing to such reasons, the authority of the textbook should not be left unnoticed. This view is also shared by Thomas (2017), who regards English textbooks as “cultural intermediaries”, representations of a discourse with the rulers, stakeholders and politicians in society. Which views and values find their ways into the textbook is a salient question, he argues, as prejudices and stereotypes unconsciously might get the status as ‘valid’ knowledge in educational settings. For this reason, textbook writers have a special responsibility, and must be aware of unintended usage and interpretation.

Schools and textbooks are accordingly significant as regards worldview reflection and the development of learners' IC. The English classroom is in a special position, since encounters with ‘the other’ is inherent in language learning (see chapter 2.2. below).

1.2.2 Literary texts

Since the present thesis relies specifically on an investigation of literary texts, a few words on the centrality of literature is needed. In the teaching of English as a foreign language (EFL), much space has been given to literary texts over the decades, for various reasons. One is the linguistic; in the encounter with texts, the learner acquires an understanding for a language and develops vocabulary. Another reason for working with literary texts, is to learn facts or acquire knowledge about a topic. However, texts must not be limited to such learning objectives. An alternative approach is to let the text speak for itself, and focus on analysis, interpretation and reflection. Such aspects are important to recognise for both learners and teachers (Fenner, 2018). This is also why I found it interesting to look at literary texts in the present thesis, although other parts of a textbook also could have contributed with valuable insights.

Generally, the reading of literary texts involve both emotions and cognition, claim Ibsen and Wiland (2000). This type of texts often represents reality, and when we read, bits

and pieces from the literary text and the reader's background are assembled into a meaningful totality (p. 145). Moreover, in the literary text, the reader usually encounters characters from other cultural contexts, but that does not necessarily mean that the reader learns how he can relate to and empathise with 'the other'. Competence in identifying worldviews in texts can therefore accommodate understanding of others' lives, values and beliefs (Sire, 2015). Furthermore, since literary texts are often ambiguous and carry multiple meanings, the readers interpret texts in different ways and are thus given unique opportunities to see issues and situations from various angles (Hoff, 2016).

1.2.3 Curricular issues

The rationale for focusing on worldviews, IC and literary texts also gains support from various curricula for education in Norway. In this introduction, I will highlight two central documents.

The Norwegian core curriculum (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 1994) highlights the importance of knowing one's own culture, as well as being aware of alternative and diverging values and ways of living. Christianity and humanism are fundamentals for everything that happens in the classroom, and a central reason for this, according to curriculum, is that these traditions facilitate democratic thinking, participation and debate. Furthermore, Christian and humanistic values "emphasize charity, brotherhood and hope, promote progress through criticism, reason and research" (p. 7). The sub-chapter 'Cultural heritage and identity' states that "...contact between different ways of life opens the door to unexpected combinations as well as conflicts between beliefs. A meeting between diverse cultures and traditions can generate new impulses as well as stimulate critical reflections" (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 1994, p. 9). A goal in this document is to foster tolerance and respect between groups, and to counteract discriminatory and prejudiced attitudes. Learners also need to become aware of their own identities and standpoints, and that this sometimes implies recognising that they stand alone on some issues. Following this, schools should encourage such self-reflection, and help learners develop courage and dignity to act and live according to their individual convictions (p. 10).

The elective programme subject *International English* (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2006) for upper secondary students is central for this master's thesis, as it is for this subject *Global Visions* (Burner et al., 2017), the textbook under scrutiny, is tailored. Intercultural learning is a central concern in the curriculum, as well as how learners can better understand the values and worldviews of 'the other'. The introduction of the

curriculum also stresses how language learning is naturally related to the development of IC, as it points out how studying English can facilitate deeper understanding of worldviews, cultural expressions and living conditions (p. 1).

Furthermore, the curriculum declares that it deals with “key themes related to international cooperation, cultural understanding, literature, different kinds of media and cultural expressions drawn from the English-speaking world” (p. 3). The subject should not only enable learners to “elaborate on and discuss various aspects of multicultural societies in the English-speaking world” (p. 7), but also take into account how diverging values often pose challenges for interaction and cooperation. In terms of specific competence aims, the subject should provide the learners with a fundament to “reflect on how cultural differences and dissimilar value systems can affect communication” (p. 7).

The subject curriculum for *International English* also comments on the potential of literary texts: They can promote reflection and analysis, and are sources for experience and personal development. Literary texts are also given priority in the concrete competence aims, which state that the learners should read and analyse both shorter and lengthier texts. The term ‘text’ in this context is understood widely (see ch. 3.2.3), the curriculum therefore specifies that the students shall watch and work with at least one film (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2006, p. 7).

1.3. Previous research

Over the years, much research has been conducted on EFL textbooks, literary texts, tasks and reading. Implications and potential for intercultural communication and the development of IC have also been discussed in relation to this. Moreover, worldviews and values have been explored in relation to literacy and *Bildung*, and worldviews have been sought identified in popular culture. In the following I will comment on some previous studies which I regard relevant, and which also serve to illustrate why the investigative focus in the present thesis is imperative.

1.3.1 Textbooks, literature and cultural issues

A critical stance towards the textbook should always be a concern for teachers and researchers (Fenner & Ørevik, 2018). The present study belongs in the category of textbook analysis, yet narrowed down to the study of literary texts. The review in this sub-chapter will concentrate on a selection of studies with a similar investigative focus.

Thomas (2017) has an intercultural focus in his recent study of short stories in a selection of Norwegian EFL textbooks. His interest in particular was to see how people from non-Western backgrounds were portrayed. His findings suggest that stories are often cherry-picked for a Western audience, based on the writers' pre-knowledge of other cultures. Furthermore, he found that the characters of the short stories are often straightjacketed into predefined categories and stereotypes.

Cultural issues and textbooks have also been Lund's (2007) point of departure. In her investigation of texts and exercises in English language textbooks for lower secondary school, she looked particularly on how issues of culture and context are integrated in FL learning, which in the next turn can promote cultural understanding. Her findings suggest that the materials in the textbooks generally downplay the development of cultural awareness. Factual information and education *about* foreign cultures seem to have priority, and it is highly unclear what purpose the cultural material in the books are supposed to serve.

The primary focus in the MA studies conducted by Knudsen (2016), Helgesen (2017) and Nygaard (2014) has been to look more closely on the tasks that follow the literary text in EFL textbooks. Knudsen's study of VG1 EFL textbooks concludes that some tasks facilitate IC, while there is room for improvement in others. She found that while many of the tasks had the potential to promote general cultural knowledge, there were fewer tasks that could also facilitate engagement in terms of reflection and evaluation of attitudes. Helgesen (2017) investigated task potential in relation to IC and *Bildung* and to what extent tasks can promote personal engagement. Her findings indicate that the textbooks for general studies have predominantly more tasks which encourage engagement and facilitate categorial *Bildung*. She also found that textbooks are diverse in terms of how much attention which is given to the literary texts. Nygaard's (2014) study of multicultural texts is of particular relevance for the present study, as her investigation also had textbooks for the programme subject *International English* as point of departure. More specifically, she investigated tasks related to both factual and fictional texts to see which aspects of intercultural communicative competence they had the potential to promote. Amongst other, her findings suggest that tasks following fictional texts in particular have potential to facilitate cultural understanding. Moreover, she concludes that although textbooks seem to emphasise understanding of the 'other', reflection on own 'self' is given little attention. In her thesis she discusses the significance of an understanding of 'self' when it comes to how one understands the foreign.

1.3.2 Worldviews, learning and understanding

Based on her experiences as a Norwegian teacher, Langeland (2019) discusses how the learners' insufficient worldview awareness can pose challenges for the development of *Bildung* and literacy. She also discusses how secularism as a "default" worldview in the classroom might hinder the development of empathy and understanding. Further, she stresses the importance of acquiring insight into others' worldviews, and the significance and potential of the literary text in such respect. This is of particular relevance for the present thesis, which in a similar manner will discuss the potential worldview analysis of literary texts has for cultural understanding.

Some studies have been concerned with popular culture, understood as mainstream and commercial music, television and films, and its role as carrier of worldviews and values. The analyses of Bø (2014) and Dahle (2003) are of relevance in this context, since both of them also consider some didactic implications, and encourage schools to actively use popular culture and worldview analysis as resources in teaching. Both have analysed TV-series (Bø *Modern Family* and Dahle *Dawson's Creek*), and their findings suggest among other things that values such as self-realisation and individualism, hedonism and situational ethics are prominent. According to them, the classroom is an arena that can help young people learn about and reflect on similarities and differences in worldviews and values. Although these studies are neither explicitly concerned with textbooks, nor IC, they are considered to be relevant for the present thesis, as they shed light on the understanding of others, with a focus on worldviews and beliefs that are often hidden or camouflaged. The present study is concerned with literary texts included in a textbook with a didactic purpose, based on a subject curriculum, and is in this respect different from popular culture. Nevertheless, both literary texts and popular culture are aesthetic forms of expressions, and therefore also carriers of meaning and worldviews.

1.4. Research questions

The present study belongs in the landscape of all the above-mentioned studies, but my approach takes a somewhat different path as it will more exclusively investigate the literary texts in a textbook for the programme subject *International English*, particularly considering worldviews and values in relation to IC. There are no studies known to the researcher which have this particular investigative focus. Further, the thesis aims at discussing some didactic implications of the findings. Following, this, the primary research question of the present thesis is:

Which traces of worldviews are reflected by the literary texts in the EFL textbook Global Visions?

Recognising that handling disagreement and conflicts are inevitable aspects of interculturality as of today (see chapter 2.4.1), a subordinate question will also be central to the investigation:

How, and to what extent, are the worldviews conflicting?

Finally, as a part of the investigation is to consider how such aspects of the texts may affect learning, a second research question has been formulated:

Which implications may this have for intercultural learning processes in the EFL classroom?

1.5. Research methods and material

At the centre of the present thesis is an analysis of the literary texts in Aschehoug's *Global Visions* (Burner et al., 2017). A qualitative research design has been used for the analytical work; this was considered purposeful when the goal of the investigation was to ensure depth and to acquire a detailed understanding (see chapter 3.1). Altogether, 21 literary texts have been subject to a thematic analysis. The text material comprises short stories, novel excerpts, poems, one novel and two films.

1.6. Outline of the thesis

This thesis is structured according to five chapters. Chapter one has introduced the topic and focus of the thesis, in addition to clarifying the relevance it has for the English language classroom as of today. Chapter two provides the theoretical framework of the study. Central concepts, such as worldview and IC are explained, defined and discussed. This chapter also elaborates on the potential of the literary text in relation to intercultural learning. In chapter three, data material and methodological issues are presented. The findings of the analyses are presented and discussed in chapter four. Lastly, chapter five concludes the thesis and presents suggestions for further research. Didactic implications are integrated in the discussion in chapter four, and summarised in chapter five.

Chapter 2. Theoretical background

2.0. Introduction

What are worldviews and IC, and how is literature significant in this respect? The present chapter will present the theoretical framework the present study relies on, and clarify the link between the different parts. Moreover, the chapter presents relevant background theory for the analytical categories that are central for the thesis and the way the coding scheme has been developed and employed (presented in detail in chapter 3.3.1). All of the theory presented in this chapter is relevant for the analysis and the discussion of findings in chapter 4.

In chapter 2.1., relevant worldview theory is presented and discussed. The concept is also sought concretised. What are worldviews, and how are they significant? Central here is Sire's (2015) understanding of the concept, where he stresses how fundamental a worldview is for human thinking and practices.

IC, as an aspect of FL education, is introduced and described in chapter 2.2. Further, in chapter 2.3 follows a presentation of how Byram (1997) understands the concept, and his views on what characterises an interculturally competent foreign language learner. Chapter 2.4. presents alternative perspectives on both intercultural issues and worldviews. The relevance the worldview perspective has for intercultural learning and dialogue will be given an own attention in sub-chapter 2.5.

The data material in the present thesis are literary texts. Owing to this, chapter 2.6. will discuss and comment on what role literary texts can play in relation to the development of IC.

2.1. Worldviews

The point of departure for the present study is the view that an awareness of worldviews can be helpful when navigating issues of interculturality in encounters with literature. The first research question calls for an attention to *traces of worldviews* (see 1.4.), indicating that the present investigation does not primarily aim at disclosing distinct worldview traditions or religions. In this respect, some clarifications as to how this concept is understood might therefore be helpful. Sire (2015) stresses that although the history of the theoretical concept of worldviews goes back centuries, it is important to be aware of which contexts the term worldview is being used in. In recent times, he claims, the term 'worldview' is used very generally, for instance by people who experience that their culture or identity clashes with

others'. What people actually think of when speaking of colliding worldviews, is not so often spoken of. This calls for a reflection on what a worldview is. Finding a clear definition has been a difficult undertaking, according to Sire, but he suggests the following:

A worldview is a commitment, a fundamental orientation of the heart, that can be expressed as a story or in a set of presuppositions (assumptions which may be true, partially true or entirely false) which we hold (consciously or subconsciously, consistently or inconsistently) about the basic constitution of reality, and that provides the foundation on which we live and move and have our being. (Sire, 2015, p. 141)

In Sire's definition, the terms *commitment* and *fundamental orientation* are significant. Worldview as 'commitment' does not mean that it is a result of a conscious decision; it is more about the motives behind behavioural or cultural patterns. Likewise, a 'fundamental orientation' points to beliefs, and implies first and foremost that "we think *with* our worldview and *because* of our worldview, not *about* our worldview" (p. 143, author's emphasis). He uses metaphors to explain what is meant by this: "...our worldview becomes our 'reading glasses', our 'telescope' our 'place to stand' to view reality, the hub of our world, the heart of our selves" (p. 125). To put it differently, a worldview lies as a foundation for everything human beings think, say and do. It is a premise for how we understand the world and our existence, of what is within the range of the physical world or beyond factual knowledge. Worldviews also entail values and ethical considerations, and reflections on human beings' roles and purposes.

One aspect of worldviews is the anthropological, according to Sire. Worldviews are embedded in a culture, as commitments and assumptions held by individuals and groups. In other words, in order to acquire a deeper awareness of a culture or behaviours, an understanding of worldviews can be helpful. Although it is sometimes purposeful to group and categorise worldviews when people seek to understand how others think (see e.g. Sire, 2009), worldviews are basically individual. At the bottom, each human being views reality in his own way. This also underlines the importance of identifying and evaluating one's own worldview, and consider its unique characteristics (Sire, 2015, pp. 155-156). A similar issue is addressed by Nygaard (2014) as she discusses the importance of knowing oneself in the encounter with the foreign.

Knowing one's own point of departure with respect to worldviews and beliefs is not so much about being right or wrong, as it is about becoming aware of standpoints. An important

aspect in Sire's worldview theory, is how worldviews are always rooted in practical life (2015, p. 51). A lack of worldview reflection might result in a discrepancy between who people think they are and what they believe in, and what they actually do in their daily lives. Inherent in worldviews, is also a sense of values for practical life. Human beings unconsciously ask themselves: How do I live my life the best way (p. 25)? Sire is aware, however, that the individual's worldview is always developing. Human beings tend to adjust their beliefs according to new information, and what works in practical life: "...for any one person's worldview is somewhat fluid. It is constantly under the pressure of being *worked*" (2015, p. 175, author's emphasis).

Naugle (2002) has a somewhat different approach to how a worldview can be defined, although he also has much in common with Sire. To Naugle, a worldview is primarily a semiotic system. He defines worldview as something assembled by 'narrative signs' that provide a framework for our daily life, as well as how outer reality is perceived. By 'narrative' Naugle explains that people are storytelling creatures who create and manage signs. A worldview is semiotic in the sense that it consists of "world-interpreting stories (...) upon or by which people think, interpret, and know" (p. 291).

From Naugle's point of view, worldview understanding is important for individuals, but should also be a concern for communities and cultures. He argues that a recent interest in worldviews has occurred because of how the "presence of a multitude of alternative worldviews is a defining characteristic of contemporary culture" (Naugle, 2002, p. xvi). Furthermore, he describes today's public squares as 'dissonant' and 'morally cacophonous', but also how improved understanding and coexistence still can be achieved: "... if we hope to understand the cultural maelstrom in which we presently live, then we must become better acquainted with (...) worldview, with its emphasis on the various ways in which human beings have sought to depict reality" (p. xvi). Given these points, Naugle calls for the social sciences in general, and cultural anthropology in particular, to renew their interest in worldview knowledge and analysis.

Although worldviews might have a religious foundation, it is evident for both Sire (2015) and Naugle (2002) that worldviews are something beyond religion. Our worldviews *might* be religious, but that is far from always the case. Nevertheless, some component parts of a worldview might fill religious functions (Dahle, 2003), for instance in secular, Western societies where Christian ideas gradually have reduced their impact, and beliefs in for instance individuality and self-autonomy have filled the place of religion.

Aadnanes (2012) thinks likewise; although the notion of worldview borders towards both collective ideologies and religions, and is sometimes used synonymously, worldviews are also highly individual. Moreover, he underlines that if ‘worldview’ is to be used in any form of research, both clarifications and limitations are needed (p. 21). In an effort to unravel the concept, he argues that a worldview asserts itself within three domains: Perception of reality, view of humanity, and perceptions of values and morality. The first domain, perception of reality, considers questions about outer reality and if there exists something beyond our physical world. View of humanity concerns reflection about what a human being is. A central element is human value, but also reflections on the human being’s role, purpose and meaning. Perceptions of values and morality is a category that concerns what is good, right and aesthetical in life. The cognitive content of any worldview consists of perspectives from all these three domains, according to Aadnanes. At the same time, he emphasises that they overlap; perceptions within one field will influence others. For example, thoughts about human value are linked to both view of humanity and perceptions of ethical values (pp. 22-23). Dahle (2003, 2013) finds it necessary to supply Aadnanes’ three categories with a fourth: *Beliefs*, understood as the search for meaning and trust in existence, and where this is anchored. To encompass the totality of a worldview, it is important to include this aspect, she claims. The notion of beliefs is fundamental in any worldview, consequently it needs to be carefully investigated in order to understand the totality of a worldview (Nome, 1970).

To some extent Aadnanes (2012) also seems to agree with Sire (2015) that worldviews take shape subconsciously, and through influence from surroundings. But more than Sire, Aadnanes emphasises that a worldview might also be a deliberate choice. Thus, a worldview will in practical life always be a result of both conscious reflection and external influence. Nobody exists in a cultural vacuum. The material from which the individual human being’s worldview is moulded, comes from the culture that surrounds us (2012, pp. 25-26).

The term ‘worldview’² appears in various curricula in Norway, including subject curricula for languages (e.g. *International English*, Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2006, which is central for the present thesis). It is usually used without being further defined, but often in relation to cultural or religious differences. The present thesis relies upon how the scholars presented above understand, define and break down the concept of worldview. Aadnanes (2012) and Dahle (2003, 2013) have in particular been central as

² ‘Worldview’ best translates to either ‘livssyn’ or ‘verdenssyn’ in Norwegian. The former is most frequently used in curricula.

regards how the analytical tool has been developed and employed. This tool, and more detail on how worldview analysis has been undertaken, will be presented in sub-section 3.3.1.

2.2. IC

Although the concept of IC is used much, it often appears blurry and multifaceted. Different people may provide different answers regarding what it entails, claim Dypedahl and Bøhn (2017). When they seek to define and decipher IC, however, it is an awareness and understanding of worldviews which is at the centre of attention. An interculturally competent person can communicate purposefully with other people. IC is also about developing an attitude and willingness to change perspective in the encounter with ‘the other’ and his worldviews, beliefs and values, in addition to insight into own thought processes (pp. 14, 22). However, a dynamic approach in how one understands culture, is important. Previously, culture was often defined as something static and unchangeable. Today, however, it is more common to view cultures as fluid and complex, and only loosely linked to nationality and language (Holliday, 2011).

The intercultural lies inherent in all FLT, and a central aspect is learning about how to interact with others. Language educators have in recent years become more aware of the link between language skills and intercultural communication, and how these two domains preferably must be considered together (Dasli & Díaz, 2017). Effective communication depends on the student’s volition to use language to relate to people from other contexts (Byram, 1997), learn about their worldviews, ways of life, cultural traditions and values. But to what extent does this mean that the student also acquires intercultural *competence* in the FL classroom? With reference to Dypedahl and Bøhn’s definition, what is the meaning of *purposeful communication*? What does a *change of perspective* entail? Moreover, are mutual understanding and constructive cooperation the only goals for such processes of communication, or to put it differently, is everything a failure if such measures cannot be achieved? As will become clear in the continuation of this chapter, harmonious relationships and conflict resolution are not always obtainable in intercultural learning.

In the English language classroom, many activities and teaching strategies can facilitate development of IC. Linguistic awareness is important to discover ambiguity and to understand how language serves different purposes in various contexts. Multilingualism can function as a stepping-stone when the goal is to see the world from different perspectives (Dypedahl & Bøhn, 2017, p. 152). However, when the student engages in reading literature, particularly under guidance from a teacher or instructor, she gets an exceptional opportunity

to see issues from different perspectives (Hoff, 2016). This particular aspect will be returned to in sub-section 2.6.

2.2.1 IC and the European context

In Europe, language teaching and intercultural training have received particular attention through the work done by the Council of Europe (CoE). The *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR) takes aim at providing a common fundament for e.g. curriculum development, assessment and examination, and textbook design across Europe. Further, it describes what is required of FL learners in order to communicate effectively, and the guidelines also take into account the various cultural contexts in which language learning takes place (Council of Europe, 2001).

CEFR claims that knowledge and understanding of differences and similarities between the learner's home context and the foreign culture, result in intercultural awareness. In the next turn, such an awareness helps the learner see the world from the other's perspective, and how individuals' perceptions of each other often are influenced by stereotypes. However, the framework underlines that differences and similarities are not only recognisable between broadly defined cultural groups. Diversity can also be found within a culture and a society. Features students need to be aware of are among others the values, beliefs and attitudes of 'the other' (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 103). Another aspect CEFR articulates, is what it means to possess IC when underlying and essential values, upon which a student has based his whole life, are profoundly challenged in the encounters with others. One central competence schools and teachers should promote, according to CEFR, is the ability to "deal effectively with intercultural misunderstanding and conflict situations" (p. 105). This aspect is elaborated more on in 2.4.1. The framework does not provide detailed directions as to what publishers of textbooks should include, or what schools and teachers should focus on when intercultural learning is on the schedule. However, the document brings to front the significance of a worldview focus in intercultural dialogue. This is particularly noticeable in how CEFR emphasises values and beliefs in this respect.

A more recent document from the CoE, is the *Reference Framework of Competence for Democratic Culture* (2018). As indicated by the title, this document underlines the significance of democracy, and that learners must be equipped with what is necessary to live and cooperate in modern societies. Key aspects in the document are democratic citizenship and critical understanding, which involve stimulating learners to participate in democratic processes, and making the students aware of challenges and consequences of decisions.

Intercultural knowledge and competence are central as regards this, and schools have a particular responsibility: “Our education systems and schools need to prepare young people to become active, participative and responsible individuals: the complex, multicultural and rapidly evolving societies we live in cannot do with less” (Council of Europe, 2018, vol. 1, p. 7). In addition, the advanced learners should be able to pinpoint whenever ethnocentrism marks the histories and information that are given about individuals and groups, according to the CoE.

For many years, Byram has been a central contributor in the work of the CoE. His ideas have also been significant for curriculum development in foreign language education in Norway (Hoff, 2018). How teachers and schools should understand intercultural communication, and how such competence can be tested and assessed, are questions he has sought to find an answer to. The following sub-chapter presents how he expounds this concept.

2.3. Byram and ‘the intercultural speaker’

As has been discussed so far, intercultural communication entails bringing the notion of worldview into the encounter with ‘the other’. In this section, the importance of temporarily suspending values and beliefs will be further elaborated on. Although aspects of worldviews and intercultural communication are prevalent in many types of curricula, for instance subjects within the social sciences, the FL classroom is in a position of its own. Byram (1997) stresses that the pure linguistic competencies in FLT are inseparable from IC, because FLT always entails different contexts with people with various backgrounds. Byram coined the theoretical concept ‘intercultural communicative competence’ (ICC) to underline that he broadens the concept of communicative competence. To develop the learners’ communicative competence has been significant in FLT since the 1970s (Skulstad, 2018). Language learning is communication, Byram underlines, but in this learning a central aspect is how we acquire *competence in interaction* with others (1997, p. 3). Further, he argues:

...the acquisition of a foreign language is the acquisition of the cultural practices and beliefs it embodies for particular social groups (...) It is also the relativisation of what seems to the learner to be the natural language of their own identities, and the realisation that these are cultural, and socially constructed. Teaching for linguistic competence cannot be separated from teaching for intercultural competence. (Byram, 1997, p. 22)

Thus, Byram’s contribution has been to bring the intercultural dimension of communication to the surface in FLT.

What, then, characterises the competent intercultural communicator? Byram has tried to be concrete about the skills and competencies in question, and labels the competent student ‘the intercultural speaker’. What is more, he argues that it is necessary to de-emphasise the unbalanced relationship between the native speaker and the non-native speaker (pretending to be native). Both parties have to acquire the role and competence of being in the intermediate position, being the ‘intercultural speaker’ (1997, p. 32). Our own cultural backgrounds must be put aside for a while. More about what this means will be explained below.

It seems clear that Byram’s point of departure is the language learner’s implicit willingness to associate himself with ‘the other’. Intercultural education should therefore equip students with what is necessary in order to reflect on “any cultural practice and meanings they encounter” (1997, p. 19), as well as to develop a “cognitive and evaluative orientation towards learners’ own society, a relativisation of the taken-for-granted, and consequently to an action orientation” (p. 44). It is fruitful to be open-minded and curious. Such an orientation should ideally lead to the learners temporarily putting aside their own beliefs and opinions, in order to interpret these from the others’ point of view, as well as to facilitate a better understanding of ‘the other’ (Byram, 1997, 2008). In other words, the intercultural speaker carries the skill to act interculturally: “This also includes ‘mediating’ between oneself and others, i.e. being able to take an ‘external’ perspective on oneself as one interacts with others and to analyse and, where desirable, adapt one’s behaviour and underlying values and beliefs” (Byram, 2008, p. 68). Byram has further tried to be specific about the skills and competencies in question in relation to IC. His model describes what characterises an intercultural competent speaker:

Figure 2.1 Factors in intercultural communication (Byram, 1997, p. 34)

	Skills interpret and relate (<i>savoir comprendre</i>)	
Knowledge of self and other; of interaction: individual and societal (<i>savoirs</i>)	Education political education critical cultural awareness (<i>savoir s’engager</i>)	Attitudes relativising self valuing other (<i>savoir être</i>)
	Skills discover and/or interact (<i>savoir apprendre/faire</i>)	

Knowledge (*savoirs*), focuses on the learner's knowledge of 'self' and 'other' which he brings into the interaction with the person from another culture. Further, the learner develops skills (*savoir comprendre* and *savoir apprendre/faire*) in how one interprets and relates to the foreign, as well as how he discovers and interacts with 'the other'. He develops a political education and a critical cultural awareness (*savoir s'engager*) which entail evaluating viewpoints and practices in one's own and other cultures, and finally he develops attitudes (*savoir être*) in relativising one's own worldviews and valuing 'the other's' beliefs and values. These objectives are also the components in his model for intercultural communicative competence (Byram, 1997, pp. 50-54).

2.3.1 *Individuality and critical awareness*

In intercultural encounters, the interlocutors meet as individuals. In a similar vein as CEFR (see 2.2.1), Byram stresses the individual aspect of intercultural communication, and warns of presenting a culture as homogenous and unchangeable, always of universal validity: "When individuals interact, they bring to the situation their own identities and cultures and if they are not members of a dominant group, subscribing to the dominant culture, their interlocutor's knowledge of that culture will be dysfunctional" (Byram, 1997, p. 39). This individual aspect illustrates the importance of developing the learner's IC in schools: Even members of the same national culture might need to learn to better co-exist. This is an important aspect to keep in mind in today's many diverse and pluralistic settings, educational and other. Hoff (2018) calls attention the same; it is of importance to regard all individuals within a culture as unique. She criticises Byram's model for IC for not taking this into account in an adequate manner.

As long as critical awareness is a goal in intercultural dialogue, FLT has a special responsibility in such respect. Among other aspects, foreign language students should learn to reflect upon what cultural practices mean, and develop a critical awareness of which values that are conspicuous in one's own and the other's culture. This process has to start with the learner's own identity and cultural background, by developing an interest in questioning worldviews in oneself and own cultural context. A central aim with regard to this is to develop attitudes in relativising self and home context (*savoir être*, see above), and learn to take others' perspective. Following this it should be possible to avoid a stereotyped and prejudiced perception of 'the other' (Byram, 1997). Underlying values and meanings are often difficult to discover, it is therefore of high importance that learners are trained in how to analyse and bring forward such aspects. The analysis of literary texts which is the focal point

in the present thesis can hopefully also facilitate deeper understanding for various, and sometimes conflicting worldviews.

2.4. Alternative perspectives

Individuals living together in harmony is something societies benefit from, and individuals themselves achieve a deeper understanding of both own viewpoints and those of others, according to Byram: "...the sojourner has the opportunity to learn and be educated, acquiring the capacity to critique and improve their own and others' conditions" (Byram, 1997, p. 2). However, it is an indisputable matter that worldviews often continue to be in conflict with each other, despite endeavours to overcome differences in intercultural dialogue. How is this aspect incorporated in Byram's theories? He acknowledges that the meeting with 'the other' does not always end with understanding. In intercultural dialogue, the experience is sometimes that we need to learn to live with our differences and very often incompatible worldviews (Byram, 1997).

2.4.1 Living with disagreement and conflict

Hoff's (2014) concern is that Byram's model largely has harmonious and positive meetings between individuals from different cultures as the ideal end result. She acknowledges, however, that improved understanding and mutual respect for each other's worldviews are always something to reach for in intercultural dialogue. This type of development is central for *Bildung*, which will be explained in 2.6.1 below. But to focus solely on such objectives may lead to superficial learning and communication, because a primary concern is often to please the other. On the contrary, she underlines the importance of acknowledging that "disagreement and conflict may often lead to meaningful communicative situations in which the participants are deeply engaged, thus contributing to a higher level of honesty and involvement" (2014, p. 514). She proposes that the concept of IC needs to be reconceptualised. More than previously, intercultural communication requires competence in looking for meanings beyond what is being said and done in concrete situations (Hoff, 2016).

For these reasons, it is important that intercultural dialogue takes into account that contemporary societies are complex. The perspective must be widened to also include aspects such as conflict, control and power (Kramsch, 2001, 2011). The objectives of intercultural communication must be more than empathising with and understanding the foreign with other worldviews and another cultural background. Handling divergent values and misunderstanding is also a part of this capacity: "Intercultural competence (...) is also a

matter of looking beyond words and actions and embracing multiple, changing and conflicting discourse worlds” (2011, p. 356). Following this, Kramsch calls attention to this perspective when she distinguishes IC from general communicative competence: The latter presupposes goals and interest that are common, the former has lack of understanding as point of departure (2011, p. 356). As long as such issues are inevitable in the world today, then this is something that needs to be emphasised when intercultural dialogue is on the schedule in the English classroom, and reflected in the textbooks. Further, it illustrates how the notion of worldviews as it is presented above can play a central role in intercultural learning (see also 2.5.).

In a similar vein, Iversen (2014) elucidates that contemporary societies are always characterised by disagreement. He criticises the common idea that whenever there exists a community of human beings, the conditions of existence rest on shared and unanimous values. People disagree on many things, he underlines, but may nevertheless feel that they belong in a fellowship with one another. Moreover, schools have a particular responsibility to teach learners that cooperation does not have to rely on common worldviews and beliefs. To interact with people one disagrees with is a competence, and is more useful and unifying for a society than the myth about common values (p. 22). Iversen claims that discussion and discord, which are normal in a community of disagreement, can provide deeper insight into the worldviews of others, and in the next turn make them less threatening and more understandable (p. 13). Further, humans are most often at discord with themselves, he claims, and that is the human being’s *modus operandi*. Iversen supports this argument with the unconscious processes of systematising and categorising that initially take place in the mind when individuals are exposed to new sense impressions. Stereotyping and racism in the encounters with others are examples of such first reactions. A second process makes the human recognise and challenge them, something which often results in a renewed understanding and a non-discriminatory behaviour. The point is, says Iversen, immediately after the individual sees another human being, the internal “community of disagreement” starts negotiating. Considering this, it is important to be critical towards people who claim that they never consider people’s ethnicity or race (pp. 43-44).

Iversen also emphasises schools as domains where disagreement needs to be acknowledged and handled. In addition, classrooms are practice arenas for later participation in the larger society. However, the rhetoric that claims such participation rests on shared values, as is often stressed in Norwegian curricula, needs to be challenged (pp. 63-66).

In any case, it is sometimes necessary to keep in mind that the emphasis on cultural dissimilarity can also be too prevalent when intercultural learning is on the lesson plan in the classroom. Dervin and Gross (2016) claim that the last decade's focus on IC in teaching has been too concerned with cultural difference. This emphasis can prove to be difficult in "a world like ours where boundaries are loose and ideas, thoughts, practices, discourses, beliefs and so on travel the world so quickly" (p. 4). Therefore, the authors propose not to forget similarities, arguing that a focus on commonalities can break down boundaries and should therefore be included in the teaching of IC. This illustrates that reflection on home culture, identity and worldviews in order to also see similarities, are important objectives in intercultural education: A basic, but inexplicit value in Western cultures might for instance have its equivalent in a foreign worldview or culture.

Moreover, not everything that is labelled cultural misunderstanding has anything to do with culture, according to Dervin (2016). We have things in common, at the same time as we are different, on an *individual* level. Cultures cannot "meet" cultures, only the individuals in the respective cultures can do that. As such, Dervin's argument is in accordance with Byram (1997), presented in 2.3. above. The presentation of worldview theory in 2.1 illustrates well the significance of including worldviews perspectives in the discussion and teaching of IC at a general and global level, as well as what concerns how each person understands and meets the individuality of 'the other' in person.

2.4.2 Identity and diversity

An understanding of identity is essential in intercultural communication. Issues about identity are relevant on both a national and an individual level. Citizens of a nation state are to some extent likely to subscribe to the country's cultural identity. At the same time, the individual can reflect on his own identity and particularity, which might diverge from that of a larger group (Byram, 1997). In any case, it is necessary to not oversimplify such matters.

Communication might break down if it is taken for granted that an individual belongs to a predefined and sometimes stereotyped national culture. Kramsch regards "stable and homogenous national cultures" (2001, p. 205) an illusion; intercultural communication must therefore consider such complexities. A similar concern is brought to the front by Bloemmert (2013). He argues that societies have to take into consideration that most cultural contexts today are 'superdiverse'. For an immigrant, this means that it is not sufficient only to master one standard version of a culture. For everyday living, superdiversity implies contrasting and

even conflicting messages and understandings, which in next turn makes it increasingly demanding to navigate and succeed (p. 195).

As stated above, it is always an individual human being behind the broad and sometimes vague concept of culture. But although a focus on identity is useful in intercultural communication, it is at the same time important not to forget that identities also are fluid and subject to change. We are often misled to think that identities and worldviews are constant and never exposed to external pressure and development (Dervin, 2016; Sire, 2015). Dervin criticises Byram for being too concerned with becoming aware of own identity in intercultural communication: "...if one starts looking for the stable in our identity, one will face many challenges: Our memory of the past can change and be different from others; we can acquire another national identity and get rid of ours" (2016, p. 15). Further, not always knowing who 'the other' is in terms of national or cultural identities, "can transform the way we work on interculturality, rebalance power relations, and lead to more authentic encounters" (p. 17).

When Dervin (2016) discusses interculturality, he also rejects a limited understanding of the concept diversity. This is related to the identity issue discussed above. Often when diversity is spoken of, it is all the others, the foreign, who are 'diverse' and stick out, while the rest appear transparent and 'normal'. The word most often points at someone who is different than the rest, and Dervin suggests that we instead should begin speaking of 'diverse diversities'. Background, skin colour, ethnicity and culture must not be sole indicators of diversity. Such a view of culture can be labelled non-essentialist; culture is regarded something fluid and blurred, it is likely to change and overpass national borders (Holliday, 2011). In a given society, everybody is diverse. This type of approach also challenges the notions of fixed and predefined cultural categories, "...issues of 'solid' origins which can conceal 'codes' leading to (hidden) discrimination, injustice, and hierarchies" (Dervin, 2016, p. 80). Dervin acknowledges, however, that also the idea of diverse diversities is challenging: To always think non-essential about cultures is an objective which in practical life is unreachable. Human beings contradict themselves, adapt too much to contexts and situations, appear with falsity to make others happy, and so on (p. 81).

Related to this issue, is how differences between Western cultures and non-Western cultures are understood. Are these groups also in danger of being presented in an essentialist, reductionist manner? This has been of particular interest for the present investigation, owing to the Western context of the textbook under scrutiny, and learners and teachers who make use of it. Aadnanes (2012) argues that the Western world for a long time has been characterised by values and worldviews others would regard problematic. Such values often

appear self-evident, and could for instance be the strong emphasis on individualism, progress and self-autonomy in Western cultures, values and ideas representatives from other cultures are reluctant to adopt (p. 57). A person often adopts such beliefs subconsciously, and it is therefore often difficult to regard other perspectives (Note et al., 2009). For this reason, such values and ideas are examples of what needs to be reflected upon and set temporarily aside in intercultural dialogue (Byram, 1997). If they really are self-evident, are they also likely to hinder purposeful communication between Westerners and non-Westerners? Furthermore, and following Dervin's argumentation above, is it not possible that also members of Western cultures are diverse? Similar concerns are articulated by the Council of Europe (2018). In a list of descriptors regarding what critical cultural understanding entails, diversity and fluidity in and between groups are emphasised. IC is more than comparing and contrasting groups. At an advanced level, learners can explain why the identities of cultural groups often vary and are subject to change, and that there often is internal diversity in different religious groups (pp. 49-50, vol. 2).

Individual diversity is also an aspect that is brought attention to by Sire (2015). In his presentation of worldview as a concept, he illuminates how worldviews often are connected to identity and have individual traits: "Everyone's worldview is a bit different from that of everyone else (...) Still, everyone has a worldview" (p. 113). Reflecting on own and others' worldviews might still be productive. What is more, human beings need tools to analyse and reflect on such issues.

2.4.3 Critical interculturality

Byram (1997) underlines that intercultural dialogue involves taking on the perspective of 'the other'. These are central skills with regard to the learners' development of empathy and respect. There are reasons, though, to be aware of a few pitfalls related to this. It is always necessary to reflect on how home culture and otherness are portrayed, for instance in literature and teaching materials. Are for instance 'self' and 'other' presented to correspond with oversimplified national cultures, and straitjacketed into fixed categories and stereotypes? Secondly, does the presentation of foreign cultures and unfamiliar worldviews implicitly hegemonise certain mindsets and ideals, for instance the European or Western? Such questions belong to the notion of critical interculturality, accentuated among others by Dervin (2017) and Dasli and Díaz (2017). Most often in intercultural interaction, it is necessary to look beyond generalisations and acknowledge that much of what human beings experience is unparalleled; it takes place here and now (Dervin, 2017). Moreover, intercultural dialogue

must be complemented in the sense that individual voices are “enabled to push back against inequalities and marginalisation and, in doing so, extend their moral responsibility and solidarity to communities beyond the local or the national” (Dasli & Díaz, 2017, p. 13).

Yet again it becomes significant to look more closely at how Western cultures and non-Western cultures are understood. Thomas’ (2017) findings after having scrutinised eight short stories featured in Norwegian EFL textbooks, revealed a pattern not unlike what is described above (see also chapter 1.3.1): Non-Westerners are often portrayed to fit stereotypes and orientalist tropes. He further claims that the short stories are seemingly intended for a Western audience. In such respect, there are reasons to be aware: “While every work is subject to misrepresentation, there rests a particular ethical responsibility on the shoulders of these writers to consider the unintended consequence of their work” (p. 10). Such literary misrepresentation can be mended if teachers are conscious regarding how texts are worked with, and Thomas recommends that alternative teaching methods are given priority in the English classroom. He suggests for instance making lists of positive and negative statements about the non-Western characters, or let the learners write alternative endings (p. 10). The present study does not concentrate on classroom practice. However, by providing insight into which traces of worldviews are represented in the text, and how they are represented, the study may uncover some potential challenges for intercultural teaching and learning.

Another challenge with intercultural dialogue, is that every person has a take on reality that is influenced by his or her background. We see with our ‘worldview spectacles’ (Sire, 2015). Such issues therefore need to be addressed before anything is taken for granted. Ethnocentrism, understood as automatically giving priority to one’s own people and contexts, is a challenge in every intercultural encounter. Problems arise when this leads to negative evaluation and even judgement (Dypedahl & Bøhn, 2017). The perspectives teachers, students and researchers hold when dealing with issues of interculturality, are therefore important aspects to reflect on. One problematic aspect concerning how intercultural communication and competence are understood, is the fact that much research and teaching are performed by scholars representing the Western world, thus implicitly putting Eurocentric or Western-centric standards to the front (Dervin, 2017; Li & Dervin, 2018). The notions of democracy and individualism are given as examples; it is both false and biased to believe that those concepts emerged from modern European thinking (2017, p. 9). It is because of such reasons Dervin is critical to some of the works and interests of the Council of Europe (see 2.2.1 above).

No approach to IC is free from ideology and political views (Dervin & Gross, 2016). Still, the issues that are described above need to be addressed both in schools and teacher education, as some people tend to believe that ideas that are associated with the Western hold a higher status than ideas and thinking from other contexts and parts of the world. To illustrate these matters, Li and Dervin (2018) refer to an utterance from a student teacher in Finland: “it’s an indisputable fact that Western countries have better values than the rest of the world” (p. 157). Understandably, they are worried of the long-view consequences if such attitudes gain foothold among a new generation of teachers. Textbooks can play an important role in this respect, to the extent that they manage to correct or adjust such misconceptions.

2.5. Worldviews and IC

In what ways can the worldview perspective contribute to the development of IC? Being conscious of worldviews, beliefs and values, for instance how they come to the surface through the literary text (see sub-chapter 2.6.), is part of the process of learning to relate to one another in real life. This regards both relations between individuals within more or less homogenous cultures, and between cultures. Worldviews are both individual and public, the individual influences the public, and vice versa. Because of this, any given culture or society has some common characteristics, claims Sire (2015). As such, an understanding of worldviews and different values is at the heart of IC. However, Sire continues to argue that people should not be concerned with worldviews because it gives us the tools we need to solve problems related to pluralism and diversity, for instance alienation and conflictual situations. It might not even bring human beings closer together. Yet worldview analysis is an important means in communication:

...it will help us understand why we are both so similar and different (...) Worldview analysis brings the large picture into focus. It illuminates the heart of the matter. And it can ferret out why we have such problems living with each other. (2015, p. 159)

In the encounter with ‘the other’, either in a text or the physical world, worldviews materialise and come to light. Basic presuppositions of the universe and our existence are “brought to mind only when we are challenged by a foreigner from another ideological universe” (Sire, 2015, p. 20). It does not mean that people always agree, as also Hoff (2014) points out. But it implies that to reflect on different worldviews is important if the goal is to maintain communication and constructive relationships.

The discussion above has brought forward the individual dimension of intercultural communication (see 2.3.1). It is when the focus is on individuality, that acquaintance with worldviews becomes particularly helpful, owing to the fact that IC is about understanding and respecting others' values, personal beliefs and commitments. Dervin (2016) also takes this aspect into consideration, when he speaks in favour of a non-essentialist focus in intercultural communication. Our attention must be turned to persons behind concepts that often are both broad and vague (p. 8). In other words, when worldviews are subject matters for conversations, it is important to always see the particularity of individual human beings. This may lead to an understanding of worldviews, interculturality and IC that is something more individual and subjective than an understanding of 'my culture' vs. 'the other culture' somewhere else, and in this way stereotyping and unnecessary categorising may be avoided. However, it also necessary to bring into the equation the extent to which human beings sometimes contradict themselves in terms of worldviews, or adjust values and perceptions to situations to avoid confrontation or to please others (Dervin, 2016, also see 2.4.2).

In diverse societies, discord on worldview matters might exist in one and the same classroom. Consequently, it is imperative that IC encompasses reflection on what view the fellow human being has on life, on his role and purpose in the world, and the values he consciously or unconsciously embraces and defends. When the focus is on the individual in intercultural encounters, there is hope that our understanding of interculturality can lead to an awareness of cultural identity as something both 'dynamic and multidimensional' (Hoff, 2016). Furthermore, since every encounter a student has with the cultural 'other' is unique, there will be variation in the classroom. This is something that can facilitate cultural awareness (Fenner, 2000).

2.6. The role of literature

There are, undeniably, several approaches to how IC can be promoted in the English classroom. In this sub-section, the role of literature in such respect will be illuminated.

The literary text is different from any other text. As well as presenting learners to e.g. relational and cultural issues, literary texts give the reader an emotional and subjective experience, unlike other types of texts they encounter (Ibsen & Wiland, 2000). Literature in the FL classroom is obviously clearly linked to the development of reading skills and language learning. Nonetheless, there is always the danger of approaching literature too narrowly. In second language teaching, literature must be considered to be more than mere language learning materials. Therefore, literary texts have over the last decades been closer

linked to cultural and intercultural learning. The literary medium has inherent qualities that can “prompt learners’ growing awareness of their own individual and cultural identities, beliefs and values” (Hall, 2015, p. 103). This is also in accordance with Lund’s (2007) findings in her textbook research: Literary texts are often included as powerful examples of intercultural encounters, and should therefore still be included in future textbooks (p. 290). Furthermore, literature is an important source related to the development of empathy and an understanding for other’s worldviews and feelings (Fenner, 2018; Hall, 2015). Thus, some issues that require reflection are whose perspectives are in focus in the literary works, and which worldviews and values that are implied or explicitly articulated.

Sire (2015) argues that the literary genre is of importance, as what regards worldview reflection. Both literature, films and television “...convey a take on life, some more obviously than others, but none with no worldview implications at all” (p. 176). In other words, stories are carriers of worldviews, and consequently significant when it comes to the understanding of what is communicated through the text, as well as how we understand the lives and values of others. This is also in accordance with Langeland’s (2019) conclusions in her study of worldviews, *Bildung* and literacy. She proposes that students need to develop a meta-language about worldviews in order to develop increased awareness and understanding for the literary text (see chapter 1.3.2). If students do not have this awareness, the literary text is in danger of appearing superficial or empty of deeper meaning.

Furthermore, literature can promote reflection on personal preferences and viewpoints. In the encounter with literary texts, the learners can examine who they are and who they want to identify with. This exploration is principally facilitated by the multiple voices that are present on different levels in a text. *Heteroglossia*, ‘other-speech’, is a term coined by Bakhtin, and refers to what happens when several, and often contradicting voices interact. For this reason, it is necessary to reflect on who is speaking in the text (Hall, 2015, pp. 140, 148). *Heteroglossia* implies that there are diverse interpretations of a text. The voices in the literary works might represent hidden ideologies and ideas which need to be challenged (Hoff, 2016).

Through the literary texts stereotyped and generalised perceptions of ‘the other’ can be adjusted, and empathy can be developed (Bredella, 2006). Although literary texts are fictional, they can still impact how individuals react upon each other and treat each other in real life: “Literary texts counteract such forms of (...) misunderstanding and strengthen the ability to individualize, because they describe the actions of individual characters” (2006, p. 74). What is more, Bredella underlines that the literary texts can provide a fundament for evaluating the actions of others. In other words, ethics and aesthetics cannot be separated. A

similar thought is expressed by the French philosopher Jacques Rancière (2004) who stresses that for human beings fiction is a necessity in their reflection on various aspects of reality. Aesthetics, for instance in the form of a literary text, is more than a figurative representation. There exists a close relationship between fiction and the real (p. 39).

A literary text has two facets, on the one hand the text is an expression of the unknown culture, on the other there is a reader who relates and interprets the text with basis in his own cultural context (Fenner, 2018). What is more, the literary text also contains empty ‘gaps’ the reader has to fill with meaning: “...one text is potentially capable of several different realizations, and no reading can ever exhaust the full potential, for each individual reader will fill in the gaps in his own way” (Iser, 1972, p. 285). To put it differently; not only are there traces of worldviews in the literary texts, worldviews also play a role in how the empty spaces of the texts are filled with meaning.

2.6.1 Literary texts, ‘Bildung’ and new understanding

Literature can help individuals develop skills of reflection and become less egocentric. Bredella claims that “...there is not only an inherent connection between ethics and literature but also between ethics and intercultural understanding” (2006, p. 77). But an encounter with, and possibly a better understanding of ‘the other’, is not the only benefit of the literary text, it can also facilitate reflection on the individual’s own reality, background and identity. This happens when he draws upon “prior experiences, values, emotions and beliefs” (p. 92). In other words, cognition and reflection take place on different levels. Reading literary texts is more than acquiring knowledge of ‘the other’, it is also about developing evaluative and cognitive competence.

Encountering literature can thus be viewed in light of *Bildung* theory, which emphasises how an individual’s identity is shaped within a society (Aase et al., 2007). As a general principle in school, *Bildung* goes beyond subject specific curricula and competencies. Furthermore, in order to fully comprehend and understand societies and cultures, this concept is essential: “*Bildung* is (...) a combination of knowledge, ways of thinking, ways of understanding and relating to other people and ways of understanding oneself (Aase et al., 2007, p. 7). Klafki (1996) argues in favour of *Bildung* being a twofold process: A new reality opens up for the human being through how he understands and encounters others, but also because the human being himself becomes open to this reality. This happens through “categorical” insights and experiences in the subject. It is this type of categorical *Bildung* that

must be given priority in education, Klafki claims, as this relates to the students' own reality and horizon of purpose and meaning (pp. 192-194).

Developing IC is something that cannot be separated from this, and literary texts are influential in the process of developing *Bildung*, according to Fenner (2012, 2018). First and foremost, the literary texts must be exemplary so that the students can learn and develop IC. In this way, the learners have to get opportunities to be acquainted with authentic literary texts that “engage in personal encounters with the target cultures” (2012, p. 377). ‘Exemplary learning’ is a didactic principle coined by Klafki (1996) which highlights the priority of the typical or representative in education (p. 187). In other words, communication, interaction and understanding potentially come to pass when the learner meets ‘the other’ in the literary texts. If the text is authentic, in the sense that it is not written explicitly *for* textbooks or other didactic purposes, the students are given a unique opportunity to engage in the lives, worldviews and values of the individual characters. This types of texts might also facilitate involvement in the foreign aspects of a culture (Fenner, 2011). However, there is a danger that an exaggerated emphasis on the exemplary or representative might be problematic in intercultural learning, if this leads to wrongful generalising and stereotyping of groups. For this reason, it is important that the principle of the exemplary in the literary texts also takes into account individual aspects in questions of culture and worldviews (Byram, 1997; Hoff, 2018; Sire, 2015).

The literary text has the potential to facilitate self-reflection in the readers (Bredella, 2006). My personal experiences as a teacher have indicated that using literature in the English classroom is a good method for challenging the learners' intercultural skills and developing IC. Working with literary texts also provides unique opportunities to reflect on worldviews, beliefs and values, and how such aspects form the basis on which both ‘self’ and ‘other’ perceive reality. This view is among others supported by Aase (2005) who accentuates that literature gives readers models as to how they can understand the world, and Hall (2015) who underlines that encounters with literature can make human beings more aware of cultural and individual identities, and prompt reflection on values and beliefs.

Viewing people and cultural beliefs from different perspectives can facilitate new forms of understandings in a world that is becoming gradually more complex. Delving into the literary text offers unparalleled opportunities to explore conflictual aspects of cultures, and to consider how intercultural communication often is a difficult and challenging matter (Bredella, 2006; Hoff, 2016; Lund, 2007). This is partly due to the nature of the literary text; it can be interpreted in many different, often conflicting ways. In fact, conflict and

misunderstanding are normal in “any encounter with literature, and should not be regarded as barriers hindering successful communication, but as *catalysts* for communication itself” (Hoff, 2016, p. 58). As such, this is in accordance with Iversen (2014) and his notion of ‘communities of disagreement’ (see 2.4.1). Hoff (2016) therefore suggests that the idea of an ‘intercultural reader’ can shed new light on Byram’s concept of the ‘intercultural speaker’ (Byram, 1997): Literary texts can facilitate intercultural communication in itself, particularly when the encounters with literature involve ‘divergent subjectivities’, the voices of those who view life and the world differently than the reader. In addition, the literary text allows the reader to visit the text multiple times, explore and engage in conflicting values and challenging worldviews.

Sire (2015) emphasises that being aware of worldviews is valuable in the study of literary texts, especially when an understanding of others is sought achieved in the next turn (p. 175). When Hoff addresses the necessity to view “subject positions and (...) cultural assumptions from different vantage points” (2016, p. 52), there are reasons to believe that worldview analysis can contribute with new and perhaps unexplored vantage points, which in the next stance might result in enhanced critical cultural awareness and *savoir être*: The competence in relativising one’s own worldview, and acknowledging and respecting the beliefs of others (Byram, 1997).

2.6.2 Challenges of the literary text

Despite all the benefits, however, literary texts can also be demanding when worldviews and intercultural learning are on the schedule in the FL classroom. In general, learners may experience literature challenging if they are not accustomed to the indeterminacy of the texts (Hall, 2015; Aase, 2005). Following this, if a literary text is used merely as an instrument to shed light on one particular topic, other aspects and interpretations of the text are easily ignored by the learners (Fenner, 2018). Moreover, when one goal is to uncover traces of worldviews in the text, the learners must take into consideration that the literary text has many voices, often contradictory as such (Hoff, 2016). This requires awareness and reflectional competence of the learners.

Related to this, is to what extent the reader actually manages to fill the “gaps” of the literary text with meaning (Iser, 1972, see 2.6. above). Literary texts contain much meaning, for instance traces of worldviews which may have implications for intercultural dialogue. However, much of this information is given implicitly, and requires skills in analysis and interpretation.

A third issue with literature in the FL classroom, are the linguistic aspects. Obviously, the language of the literary text must make sense for the reader, before worldviews and meanings of the text are explored. For some, however, this may be extra strenuous. Hall (2015) underlines that many FL learners spend much energy on linguistic forms of the texts, often on behalf of other potential benefits of the literary medium.

Chapter 3. Material and research methods

3.0. Introduction

As outlined in chapter 1, this thesis is concerned with examining traces of worldviews, and how these come to the surface, implicitly or quite explicitly, in the literary texts in the textbook. The qualitative methods and analytical tools used in the investigation have been singled out to best illuminate this aspect.

Subchapter 3.1. in this chapter gives an account of research design and methods, and explains the thematic analytical approach which has been taken in this study. Subchapter 3.2. provides information about the material that is investigated: Aschehoug's *Global Vision* (Burner et al., 2017), its structure and design, the literary genres and text selection. Subchapter 3.3. presents the analytical categories, as well as the coding structure which was developed to identify themes in the texts. In subchapter 3.4., issues regarding reliability and validity are illuminated. Ethical concerns are brought up in 3.5., and limitations of materials and methods are considered in subchapter 3.6.

3.1. Research design

In all research the researcher must decide upon the methods he or she will use. According to Creswell (2014), there are two main tracks: Quantitative or qualitative research. The former is used when there is a need to describe trends or an explanation of how variables might be related. Large numbers of data are collected. Often, a goal is to conduct a statistical analysis of the data and generalise by letting the samples in the research speak for a larger population (pp. 27-29). Qualitative approaches, on the other hand, are often favoured if a goal is to acquire detailed understanding of a phenomenon. Usually, individual qualitative researchers do not collect large numbers of data, due to an often detailed, time consuming and interpretive form of scrutiny. Data is often investigated by identifying themes, and analysis and interpretation conducted in order to find a superior significance in the findings (p. 30).

Creswell underlines that the research problem with subordinate questions, as well as previous research, help the researcher choose either a quantitative or qualitative approach in his study (p. 25). Sometimes, however, favouring one method over another has epistemological reasons. The quantitative approach has often been linked to the physical, measurable world, the qualitative to the personal and social. However, it might lead astray to regard one method as always better than the other. When it comes to embracing and

describing the real world, both traditions are valuable and needed. Putting a too sharp contrast between quantitative and qualitative methods can delude (Pring, 2015).

3.1.1 Rationale for the qualitative approach: Understanding a phenomenon

In the present thesis, a qualitative research design has been used in the analysis of texts, as it was considered to be the best tool to answer the research question. When the variables the researcher intends to explore are unknown, a qualitative approach is often a beneficial alternative when addressing a problem. In addition, a goal in the present investigation is to acquire in-depth understanding of a central phenomenon which might be a “key concept, idea, or a process” (Creswell, 2014, p. 30). The central phenomena under investigation are, as described in chapter 1.1., representations of worldviews in literary texts, and the implications this have for intercultural learning processes in the classroom. Furthermore, it is important to call attention to the fact that qualitative research is interpretive in nature. The researcher makes a personal evaluation of the material he is investigating. Creswell emphasises that one researcher’s findings and judgement might differ from what others find out, but this does not have to be a problem for the research: “This does not mean that your interpretation is better or more accurate; it simply means that you bring your own perspective to your interpretation” (2014, p. 262). Ethical considerations regarding the interpretative approach are discussed more in 3.5. below.

3.1.2 Inductive and deductive approaches

Most commonly, qualitative research is inductive in nature: We go to the data to find information and eventually develop theory, not the opposite way (Creswell, 2014, p. 262). However, sometimes qualitative research can also have a deductive approach, going from theory to data.

According to Braun and Clarke (2006), qualitative research can encompass both inductive and deductive approaches, and is actually empowered by using both. If the qualitative method used is purely inductive, no effort is done to fit the data in a theoretical frame that already exists. Thus, the keywords and themes that are identified in a thematic analysis (see sub-chapter 3.1.3) might have little or no relation to the study’s topic and the research questions (p. 83). Letting the themes and categories be substantiated in a theoretical framework can promote direction for the analyses and be helpful regarding the discussion of and answer to the research question(s). In fact, thematic analysis “...has limited interpretive

power beyond mere description if it is not used within an existing theoretical framework that anchors the analytic claims that are made”, conclude Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 97).

It is such a combination between inductive and deductive approaches that has been carried out in this thesis, for the same reasons as described above. In 3.3.1, the analytical procedures are described in more detail.

3.1.3 Rationale for the thematic analysis approach

The material in qualitative analysis is usually in a “text” format, either be it transcribed recorded interviews, or documents that need to be systematised. There are several ways to work with the material from this point on, but a common strategy is to code the material on the lookout for themes: A thematic analysis.

Braun and Clarke (2006) argue that thematic analysis approaches are often chosen because they offer “an accessible and theoretically flexible approach to analysing qualitative data” (p. 77). Another strength is that such a form of analysis helps the researcher get a better picture of the intricacy and richness of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Creswell, 2014). This has also been the case in the present thesis. A process of segmenting and coding has helped get an overview of traces of worldviews inherent in the literary texts. In the next turn, codes form broader themes (see subsection 3.3.1, and an example in table 3.2. below).

Furthermore, because of issues of transparency and reliability, thematic analysis should be regarded as a foundational research method in itself, not only an incidental approach the qualitative researcher has not spent time thinking through (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In thematic analyses, the researcher holds an active role. Too often readers of research never get to see how the researchers went forth when concluding on themes. Following this, themes never “emerge” out of nothing as many researchers describe the coding process in thematic analysis. The outcome if such a view prevails, is that the researcher is regarded passive in the process of identifying and selecting themes (p. 80). In the present thesis, such a passive researcher-role has been sought avoided by using the pre-established analytical categories (see 3.3.1) as points of departure.

An essential part of the investigation has been to identify tendencies or trends regarding traces of worldviews in the texts under investigation. Trends and patterns in research are most often associated with quantitative designs (Creswell, 2014, p. 27), but the aim has not been to use these findings in some sort of statistical analysis. For this purpose, the size of the material is too small. It was a goal, however, that the analyses could say something about this textbook as a whole. The thematic analysis approach had another important

function in addition to the identification of themes: To see if there were any (recurring) relations between different themes. The findings in the data material are presented and discussed in chapter 4.

3.2. Data material

3.2.1 Aschehoug's Global Visions

Aschehoug is a much-used publisher in Norwegian classrooms, and has a long tradition in publishing EFL textbooks. *Global Visions* (Burner et al., 2017) is their most recent textbook for *International English*, an elective programme subject for second and third year students (Vg2/3) in upper secondary school.

In the present thesis, it is this textbook that is investigated. One important reason for selecting *Global Visions* over other textbooks, is that the textbook authors at Aschehoug allow much room for the literary text in how the book engages in the different topics and competencies articulated in the subject curriculum for *International English*. According to the publisher's mention of this specific textbook, literary texts are, among other reasons, included because they can be used as tools "for reflection and discussion of controversial themes" (*Global Visions – programfaget internasjonal engelsk Vg2/3*, n.d.). Furthermore, another feature is that every literary text in *Global Visions* is authentic, meaning that it is not specifically written for use in the language learning classroom (see table 3.1. below). Fenner (2000) underlines that asserting authenticity as a generally principle in FL teaching has potentially positive effects on the students' language learning and cognitive skills.

3.2.2 Textbook structure and content

Most of the content in *Global Visions* is organised thematically. The textbook has six primary chapters with major headlines that correspond with competence aims related to culture and society in the curriculum for *International English*. The chapters are: 1. *Going international*, 2. *World Englishes*, 3. *Across cultures*, 4. *Multicultural societies*, 5. *The media world*, and 6. *Global issues*. Each of these chapters contains a diverse selection of reading material and illustrations, followed by written and oral tasks. A wide range of factual and literary texts are represented in the chapters, all of which are intended to illuminate the questions and topics in focus. In addition, the textbook under scrutiny here has different resource pages, for instance

about writing different types of texts, analysing and working with texts, reading literature, as well as a separate reference and grammar section.

Although every chapter in the book has its share of literary texts, it is worth noting that the majority of literary texts (10 of 21) are found in the chapters *Across cultures* and *Multicultural societies* (pp. 102-239). More explicitly than the other parts of the textbook, these chapters examine and debate aspects such as cross-cultural communication and interculturality, with reference to corresponding competence aims about developing students' IC (see chapter about the subject curriculum for *International English* in 1.2.3. above). This illustrates the didactic purpose literary texts seem to have in *Global Visions* when it comes to the development of learners' IC.

Nevertheless, every engagement with a literary text involves an encounter with 'the other' (see chapter 2.6). This understanding is also the reason why the present study is not restricted to the literary texts included in the abovementioned chapters in the textbook dealing specifically with competence aims related to intercultural communication and multiculturalism.

3.2.3 Rationale for text selection

In sum, 21 literary texts have been selected for analysis in my investigation. I decided to use all the literary texts that are reproduced in *Global Visions* as data material, although they consist of different genres and modalities (see table 3.1. below). The texts comprise short stories (7), novel excerpts (2), and poems and song lyrics (9). In addition, one novel and two films are included in the material, as the textbook also has comprehensive study guides to these. The curriculum for *International English* clearly states that the students shall be capable of analysing texts of different genres, novels and films included (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2006, p. 7).

Fiction films are different from traditional literary texts in the sense that they are multimodal. Rogne (2008) argues that it has been gradually more common in Norwegian educational contexts to extend the traditional understanding of what a text is, to also include multimodal productions such as films and theatrical performances. What is more, he argues that any references to a text should encompass both traditional and multimodal texts (p. 240). Fenner (2018) argues similarly; fictional texts need to be understood widely, and must also include both films and TV-programmes. This is also in accordance with how the English curriculum makes use of the term "text" (p. 216).

It is on this I base my understanding of literary text in this thesis. Moreover, it is my impression that the authors of *Global Visions* rely on this understanding of a literary text as well, when they regard the films as parts of the book's anthology (see list of contents in Burner, et al., 2017, n.p). The films *Outsourced* (Jeffcoat, 2006) and *Gran Torino* (Eastwood, 2008), as well as the novel *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (Hamid, 2007) are presented and treated together with the rest of the literary texts in the textbook, despite the fact that they stand out in terms of scope and modality (see more about this below), and the fact that they are not reproduced in the textbook, for obvious reasons. I therefore decided to include these texts in my data for analysis.

The graphic novel excerpt *Snowden* deserves a comment since it is the only text that is largely based on historical events. It has been included as data material and regarded a literary text because of the author's artistic and partly fictionalised treatment of Edward Snowden's life.

Material consisting of different genres and semiotic modes of representation raises questions about how they are to be analysed. Poetry convey meaning differently than narrative texts do (Skaftun, 2009). In multimodal texts, such as films, much is said through for instance scenography, music and cinematography (Mørk, 2007). The "reading" of a film therefore involves other possibilities and challenges compared to the reading of a printed text. However, the different characteristics of the genres and modalities have not been given attention in the thematic analyses and following discussion, unless such aspects were significant as to how themes are expressed in the stories.

A goal when encompassing all these texts in the general analysis (see example in table 3.2 in 3.3.2) was to gain an overall impression of the content and themes in the literary texts, in addition to providing an opportunity to discover and discuss trends, connections and possibly patterns in the material. Also, I have found it valuable to include various genres and text types in my material, since this thesis to some extent resembles Thomas (2017) study which looked specifically on short stories in EFL textbooks (see chapter 1.3.1).

In table 3.1 below the literary texts are listed in the order of appearance in *Global Visions*. Owing to the fact that every text here is authentic, author and original year of publication are indicated in parentheses. When subsequently mentioning and citing the literary texts in this thesis, I refer back to this table (text 1, text 2, text 3, etcetera). More details on plot and content in each of the texts are given in appendix 1.

Table 3.1 Literary texts in *Global Visions*

	Title	Author	Original year of publ.	Genre	Location in <i>Global Visions</i>
1	"I Am"	Lolnope99 (pseudonym)	2015	Poem	p. 36
2	"This Bridge"	Silverstein, S.	1981	Poem	p. 38
3	"Snow"	Alvarez, J.	1992	Short story	pp. 78-79
4	"Foreign"	Duffy, C. A.	2004	Poem	p. 88
5	"A parody 'No Racial Prejudice Intended'"	Duggan, F.	2008	Poem	p. 100
6	<i>Outsourced</i>	Jeffcoat, J. (director)	2006	Film	pp. 117-122 (film study)
7	"More American than the Americans"	Tyler, A.	2006	Novel (excerpt)	pp. 123-126
8	"The Right Word"	Dharker, I.	2006	Poem	p. 129
9	"The Fat Black Woman Goes Shopping"	Nichols, G.	1984	Poem	p. 132
10	"They Sold My Sister"	Ole Sunkuli, L.	1989	Short story	pp. 135-139
11	"Flag"	Agard, J.	2004	Poem	p. 178
12	"My Son the Fanatic"	Kureishi, H.	1994	Short story	pp. 181-190
13	<i>Gran Torino</i>	Eastwood, C. (director)	2008	Film	pp. 198-202 (film study)
14	"Free for All"	Ashraf, M.	1999	Short story	pp. 207-211
15	"One of My Best Friends"	Goldsworthy, P.	1994	Short story	pp. 218-222
16	<i>The Reluctant Fundamentalist</i>	Hamid, M.	2007	Novel	pp. 235-239 (novel study)
17	"Antisocial Media: Short Fiction Based on a True Story"	Dale, Kim Z.	2014	Short story	p. 243
18	"Snowden"	Rall, T.	2015	Graphic novel (excerpt)	p. 270-271
19	"The Veil"	Gabriel, P.	2016	Lyrics	p. 275
20	"A Real Lady"	Kulkarni, N. J.	2008	Short story	p. 308-309
21	"Cause and Effect"	Spiro, P.	1994	Poem	p. 313

3.3. Analytical categories and procedures

3.3.1 Developing the analytical categories and coding structure

In the following I will present the development of the coding structure that formed the basis for my analyses, and illustrate how codes were merged and collapsed to form subordinate themes. Table 3.2 below presents one of the analytical categories from the completed coding scheme, and serves as an example of this process.

The four major worldview categories I have used in the coding structure are based on a theoretical framework developed by Aadnanes (2012) and Dahle (2003) and which I have adopted for my analyses: *Perception of reality*, *view of humanity*, *perception of values and morality*, and *beliefs* (see chapter 2.1). These constitute major themes in my investigation (Creswell, 2014, p. 275), and consequently, the point of departure for my analyses is deductive. The subordinate themes, on the other hand, have inductively been formulated accordingly with what made appearance in the coding process of the text material. Neither of the abovementioned scholars have literary texts specifically in mind when they discuss worldviews. Aadnanes' account in particular (p. 22) is a general description of "life questions" inherent in every worldview. Nonetheless, the process of identifying subordinate themes in the literary texts is based on how I understand the scholars' descriptions and explanations of worldviews and the above-mentioned categories.

The literary texts have been returned to several times when working with *Global Visions*. First, a preliminary exploratory analysis was conducted in order to "obtain a general sense of the data" (Creswell, 2014, p. 267). This was also particularly helpful at this stage because it helped starting the process of organising the research material and deciding upon whether or not to include in my analyses all types of texts and genres as data. Next, I started the process of a more detailed reading, where coding the literary texts was a goal. Creswell argues that returning to the data material more than once contributes to deeper understanding each time, redundancy is avoided, and data that do not explicitly function as affirmation of themes are left out of account. He is also concerned with limiting the number of themes, owing to the fact that the aim is in-depth and detailed (qualitative) information that can answer my research question (2014, pp. 262, 267-271).

While reading more and more texts, identifying keywords and codes, a natural process was to collapse the codes into broader themes. An example from the analyses can illustrate this matter: Aspects coded in the texts, such as injustice, equal opportunities, rights of self-determination, were all collapsed to form the theme 'human rights and equality'.

In literary texts, much meaning will inevitably be implicit, and emerge through a process of interpretation. As discussed in chapter 2.6, it is also common that literary texts have gaps, or ‘empty spaces,’ which the reader needs to fill with her own meaning and understanding (Iser, 1972; Aase, 2005). The coding scheme (appendix 2) includes both themes explicitly dealt with in the text, and those that are more implicitly understood through context and the researcher’s interpretation. Some more comments on this can be found in 3.3.3 below.

The process from coding to the formation of themes is a result of the researcher’s subjective judgement. Others would perhaps have merged codes into fewer themes, or divided others. Furthermore, because of how the four worldview categories are interrelated, a theme might naturally belong in more than one category. The theme ‘human rights and equality’, arguably, fits both in the category ‘view of humanity’ and ‘perceptions of values and morality’. Similarly, Dahle (2003) explains that traces of beliefs come to expression, some way or another, in all areas of the observable life practice (p. 100). More challenges and considerations related to the coding process are described in chapter 3.3.3.

Below is an explanation of the four main categories, and a short mention of the sub-themes identified within each of them:

Perception of reality:

This category deals with what we think of the world around us, what we can see and what eventually is beyond sense impressions (Aadnanes, 2012, p. 22). Important here has been to determine whether the perception of outer reality in the text is seemingly spiritual or secular, and sub-themes have been formed accordingly. A text could for instance be devoid of any spiritual orientation or something divine that is part of the characters’ reality perception. Another sub-theme within this category are questions of life and death, and afterlife. Deciding upon such issues in the texts has been a slightly difficult undertaking. Spiritual perceptions of reality, for instance, might come to expression through descriptions of religious practices or thoughts. But is an opposite perception always the case if there are no explicit references? Sometimes, the “gaps” (Iser, 1972) which the reader has to fill with meaning have been helpful here. Interpreting context, characters and plot has been important in such respect. Sire’s (2015) understanding of a worldview has also been helpful with regard to this. He emphasises that a worldview is made real through what we do: “We live our worldview or it isn’t our worldview” (p. 153). In the coding scheme, secular and non-explicit views on outer reality are grouped.

View of humanity:

View of humanity concerns questions such as what being a human being entails, what our roles and responsibilities are, and if our lives have higher purposes. View of humanity is also connected to what we feel and think of ourselves and how we treat each other (Dahle, 2013, pp. 91-92). In the text material, this category is divided into the following sub-themes: Human value (human beings' inherent worth), interhuman relations (for instance how people treat each other, or are advised to treat each other), human rights and equality (discrimination, limitation of freedom, violation of integrity), identity and alienation (who are we, how do we understand ourselves), empathy and perspective-taking (seeing the world from someone else's point of view), responsibility and self-sacrifice (purposes in life, valuing others' well-being more than the individual's), stereotypes and prejudices (unmasking and confronting them), and racism (discriminating explicitly based on race).

Perception of values and morality:

This category considers questions related to what we regard as good and right, and what is the basis for moral considerations and values. The sub-themes identified in this category deal with whether or not values and morality are rooted in something outside the individual (heteronomous authority) (Aadnanes, 2012, pp. 22), or if moral perceptions more generally are based on what the individual deems to be good and right. Ethical considerations could also be based on what works in a particular context and situation (situational), for instance what brings the most positive outcome (utilitarianism). Reconciliation, forgiveness and vengeance are also themes that are identified in relation to values and morality. Finally, in some situations moral choices can be based on patriotism.

Beliefs, trust, meaning:

An element in Sire's (2015) definition of a worldview is that it is a "basic *commitment* of the heart" (p. 141, my italicisation). This category is more fundamental than the others, it is "what we come to when we can no longer explain why it is we are saying what we are saying" (p. 18). Further, it deals with what gives meaning to life, where we anchor trust and confidence (Dahle, 2013; Nome, 1970). This category entails eight sub-themes: Knowledge, progress and possibilities (being the ultimate solution to troubles and problems), happiness, career and wealth (what gives meaning is an individual's own well-being), God/religion, family, tradition and cultural background (on which a person places trust), hospitality and the good in

humanity (emphasising this gives life purpose and meaning), image, youth culture and fashion (being member of a group), nihilism or meaninglessness (there is no greater meaning); and fate (life is meaningful because it is predetermined to be the way it is).

3.3.2 Example on how the coding scheme has been employed

The analytical category “beliefs, trust, meaning” from the completed coding scheme is reproduced in table 3.2. below. The subordinate themes that were developed after having analysed and coded the texts are listed in the left column. To the right of this, each of the 21 texts has its separate column where boxes are shaded or left blank accordingly with the specific theme’s relevance for the text. The not-completed scheme itself is found in appendix 2.

Table 3.2 Example from the coding scheme

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
	Sub-theme																					
Belief(s), trust, meaning:	Knowledge, progress and possibilities																					
	Happiness, career, wealth																					
	God/religion																					
	Family, traditions, cult. background																					
	Hospitality, the good in humanity																					
	Image, youth culture and fashion																					
	Nihilism, meaninglessness																					
	Fate																					

Literary texts in order of appearance in Burner, et. al (2017):

Text 1	I Am (poem)	Text 8	The Right Word (poem)	Text 15	One of My Best Friends (short story)
Text 2	This Bridge (poem)	Text 9	The Fat Black Woman Goes... (poem)	Text 16	The Reluctant Fundamentalist (novel)
Text 3	Snow (short story)	Text 10	They Sold My Sister (short story)	Text 17	Antisocial Media (short story)
Text 4	Foreign (poem)	Text 11	Flag (poem)	Text 18	Snowden (graphic novel exc.)
Text 5	A Parody 'No Racial prejud..' (poem)	Text 12	My Son, the Fanatic (short story)	Text 19	The Veil (song lyrics)
Text 6	Outsourced (film)	Text 13	Gran Torino (film)	Text 20	A Real Lady (short story)
Text 7	More American than ... (novel exc)	Text 14	Free for All (short story)	Text 21	Cause and Effect (poem)

3.3.3 Challenges

Some comments about challenges in the coding process of the material are needed. First of all, and owing to the fact that my coding scheme has pre-established categories as points of departure, it was important to also let the texts speak for themselves. When the scholars describe traces of worldviews in general terms, they sometimes give much attention to aspects that I have discovered are not equally evident in the literary texts. Aadnanes (2012), for

example, leaves much room for different philosophical and theological reflections when explaining different views of humanity. Not all of such descriptors are reflected by the themes in the coding scheme. Nevertheless, the themes that actually have been identified in the texts all illuminate different views of being a human being and relating to others.

Secondly, after having coded more and more texts, and gradually discovering patterns and common themes, it was important to remind myself of coding the texts on their own premise, and not be over-concerned with merging themes already established at this preliminary stage. An example serves to illustrate this point: In one of the last texts that were analysed, racism was identified as a very clear theme. Although there were elements of racism in the coding of the other texts, they were nonetheless merged into the theme 'human rights and equality'. The identification of racism in one of the last texts, however, prompted a re-evaluation of all the other texts to see if racism was a more proper and adequate theme in these texts as well.

A final challenge in the analytical process that needs to be commented upon, is how prevailing or frequent an aspect of a text needs to be in order to be identified as a theme. This has been important in the present thesis. We saw that meaning is often implicit in literary texts, something which has been taken into account. Braun and Clarke (2006) underline that criteria for defining something as a theme "is not necessarily dependent on quantifiable measures – but rather on whether it captures something important in relation to the overall research question" (p. 82). Related to this is the length and scope of the different texts. Some might find it unjust to treat the novel and the two films similarly as brief short stories and poems, because of the fact that longer texts potentially have more themes. To a certain extent this is true, but since it has been a principle to find out what on a larger scale characterises the text, I cannot say this has created imbalance in the analytical process.

3.4. Reliability and validity

In all research, questions of reliability and validity need to be considered: If the investigation is reliable, the findings can be regarded as trustworthy. If it is valid, the research is accurate and provides an answer to research questions.

3.4.1 Reliability

Reliability can be challenging to accommodate in qualitative, interpretive research, but transparency in the process is essential. In qualitative, thematic analysis there are several reliability aspects of which the researcher has to be aware. One of them is the coding process

of a text, where information is given a code, later merged to form a broader theme. A consequence in this process might be the unintended loss of meaning and nuances in the merged theme. Related to this is ambiguity regarding how codes and themes are defined by the researcher, inconsistency when coding different types of texts, and the importance of avoiding inferences that do not have support in the data (Cohen et al., 2011). These issues have been relevant for the present thesis as well. More than once I have returned to the text material to double-check that codes, merged into themes, have the same meaning across the different texts. Sometimes this has resulted in revisions of the themes, or adjustments of the coding scheme as a whole. Similarly, quality in the research can be provided by ensuring intra-rater reliability. This means that the researcher to as large extent as possible ends up with the same findings when done over and over again (Stemler, 2001). Several readings of the literary texts have been conducted in order to strengthen intra-rater reliability.

Another aspect to consider, is that the literary texts presented in *Global Visions* (Burner et al., 2017) have not been written primarily for the purpose of research. When the researcher reads the texts for specific content information, in this case with worldview theory as a point of departure, he needs to be aware of this aspect (Cohen et al., 2011). An example from the text material in the textbook illustrates this: If a reference to “God” or “god” occurs, does that mean that it is right to apply the theme “religious outer reality” to this text? The use of the word could be an example of a term without content or a character’s profane language use. In such occurrences, situation would play a role, and the researcher has to look for the contextual meaning.

3.4.2 Validity

In qualitative research, validity is often related to the self-reflexivity and the awareness of the researcher. The researcher needs to be aware of the fact that he is part of the world being examined, and that he – in person – is a prominent instrument in the research. This requires of the researcher that he manages to detect intention and meaning in the research material (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 180).

How then, can validity be provided? To begin with, it is important to reflect upon whether the conducted investigation and analyses actually provide an answer to the research questions (Creswell, 2014, p. 271). If my findings in the analyses of literary texts do not comply with my research questions, the validity of my study will be questioned. To what extent do my findings relate to traces of worldviews? Important here, is to draw upon the theoretical framework as concerns worldviews and intercultural learning processes,

explaining theory's relevance and applicability for the reader. Again, transparency in the process from theory to analyses is crucial. Further, and related to this, auditing, or peer-debriefing, is a method that is sometimes used to test the authenticity and accuracy of the findings (Creswell, 2014, p. 284; Cohen et al., 2011, p. 185). This implies asking a person outside the study to review the findings. This person could for example be asked to read a selection of the literary texts, give his or her opinion on the themes the inquirer has identified, and if there eventually are other themes that have been neglected. During the work with this thesis, auditing and responses have been ensured by discussing methods and findings with my supervisor, as well as receiving comments and suggestions from an appointed opponent, other students and academic staff at a seminar arranged by the University of Bergen where I presented methods, themes and trends³.

Other aspects that might influence validity, are the researcher's honesty, and the scope, depth and richness of the data (Winter, 2000, cited in Cohen et al., 2011). Subjective interpretations, and the fact that I have been working alone with my analyses, requires transparency so that readers of research do not have to doubt the honesty of my examinations. Furthermore, I have considered scope when I have encompassed all literary texts in the textbook under scrutiny. Depth and richness are provided through the thematic analyses which resulted in the coding scheme (appendix 2) and the discussion of findings in chapter 4.

3.5. Ethical considerations

In qualitative research, interviews with individuals often constitute the data material. This requires that the researcher makes important ethical considerations and judgements in the whole process. For example, individuals in a study may be inquired about personal matters in their lives, something that requires a high level of trust between the participant and the researcher (Creswell, 2014, p. 52). On account of my material consisting of literary texts, not utterances from individuals, I have not needed to consider such ethical issues. Still, researchers have ethical obligations to conduct research and analyses that are of premium quality. This concerns both data collection and reporting: "Practicing ethics is a complex matter that involves much more than merely following a set of static guidelines" (Creswell, 2014, p. 37).

What regards qualitative research, interpretations often derive from inklings and intuition, says Creswell. A pitfall with regard to this, is that the research becomes biased. This

³ University of Bergen's «Work in progress»-seminar, April 25, 2019

is an aspect I have considered all along, working with the thesis. My interpretation might differ from somebody else's interpretation (see section 3.1.1 above). To what extent my background, interest and knowledge might influence the analytical processes, is an issue I need to address. Or to put it differently, and at the same time relate to the essence of this thesis: What role does *my worldview* play? Such aspects do not necessarily reduce the quality of research, rather the contrary, claims Creswell. Researchers seldomly describe their work as biased because of having interests and subjective perspectives. Rather, since the researcher has spent much time with the material or individuals, he has the benefit of contemplating the general significance of the data. But, since qualitative research is interpretive in nature, openness regarding personal reflections and perspectives that accompany the interpretations is important (2014, pp. 282-283). How one reports and discusses findings is important in such respect. If there for example are particular instances in the texts where meaning can be unclear or equivocal, I have attempted to reflect upon and discuss this. Furthermore, bias can be avoided by using a language and a tone that avoid "demeaning attitudes, biased assumptions, and awkward constructions" (Creswell, 2014, p. 315). Ethical considerations also concern the relationship between researcher and those who read and make use of results and conclusions: "Data should be reported honestly, without changing or altering the findings to satisfy certain predictions or interest groups" (p. 38).

3.6. Possible limitation of the materials and methods

The data material in the present thesis is made up of texts representing different genres. Included in my material are for instance both poetry and narrative texts. As already commented, different types of texts may carry meaning in different ways, and to include all such texts in a thematic analysis might constitute a limitation for meaning potential. Some would perhaps argue that poetry ought to be analysed and reflected upon differently than short stories and films.

Another limitation is related to the subjective and interpretative form of analysis, which also has been discussed above. The fact that one researcher's judgement might differ from that of another, does not have to be problematic, underlines Creswell (2014). Nonetheless, it could possibly be a limitation if for instance readers or other researchers strongly disagree with findings and conclusions, and for this reason dismiss the research. Related to this, is how the coding scheme has been developed and employed. Something to consider is whether or not other analytical categories should have been added in order to fully

employ the meaning potential of each text. For instance, an own category called *the purpose of life* could perhaps have given slightly different insights.

Chapter 4. Findings and discussion

4.0. Introduction

The thematic analysis of the literary texts in *Global Visions* (Burner et al., 2017) has resulted in an overview of different themes and recurrent issues, as described above. With this as the point of departure, the present chapter presents and discusses how traces of worldviews are reflected in the literary texts, and considers some implications this may have for intercultural learning processes in the English classroom.

It can sometimes be challenging to discuss a literary text without first presenting plot and topics it brings up. In this chapter, such aspects are only described when they are relevant for the discussion of findings. However, a complete presentation of all the texts in the data material and some of the topics they bring up can be found in appendix 1. The texts have also been listed chronologically in table 3.1. in the previous chapter, with title, author, original year of publication and page numbers in the textbook. For reasons of orderliness and convenience, I will in the following chapters refer back to this table, with title and text number, when the literary works are brought up in the discussion.

In sub-chapters 4.1.– 4.4., findings will be presented and discussed according to the main analytical categories: *Perception of reality*, *view of humanity*, *perception of values and morality*, and *beliefs, trust and meaning* (see chapter 3.3). When considered together, these categories allowed for insight into a broad range of themes related to the worldviews that are reflected in the literary texts in *Global Visions*. I will first present an overview of the findings in the texts. A focal point here will be to describe patterns and trends in the text material in *Global Visions*. After presenting the overall findings within each category, I will elaborate on significant findings through the discussion of illustrative examples taken from the data material. The following discussion aims to illuminate both trends and deviant cases in the text material. The discussion will also point to some didactic implications.

All literary texts in my material have obtained codes and themes according to every analytical category, and could theoretically have been brought up in several sub-chapters. Some texts do in fact appear more than once in the discussion below. However, I have in general tried to select the texts that best highlight the aspects which are central for the discussion in each sub-chapter.

Chapter 3 discussed how analysing literary texts in research can be a challenging undertaking, for reasons such as researcher bias, and the fact that other researchers and

readers might arrive at conclusions and themes that are different from mine. A related issue to bear in mind is what was discussed in chapter 2.6: The fact that in all reading of literature, meaning is created in the interaction between text and reader. The reader needs to make up his mind about how empty spaces in the texts are to be filled with meaning (Iser, 1972).

Worldview analysis of literary texts is the focus of this thesis, and chapter 2 discussed how each human being is influenced by worldviews which shape how the world is interpreted, literature included. This is also highly relevant regarding how findings are presented and discussed in a master's thesis, and the following sub-chapters call for a continued attention and self-reflection to these matters.

4.1. Perception of reality

The analytical category *perception of reality* deals with how the literary texts build upon certain perspectives on what outer reality is. Is outer reality restricted to what we can see and physically experience, or does it also entail something beyond sense impressions (Aadnanes, 2012)? A worldview can be expressed through a set of presuppositions about reality, which human beings hold to be true. Consciously or subconsciously, these presuppositions constitute the basis on which “we live and move and have our being” (Sire, 2015, p. 141). In the data material, such presuppositions are sometimes expressed explicitly, other times they are subtly the premises for for example cultural traditions and rites. Spiritual perceptions are essential aspects with regard to this.

The reader will notice that what concerns the religious in the texts, findings that are discussed in 4.1. and 4.4. to some extent overlap, as was also reflected upon in 3.3.1. For example, a person's reality perception might be related to a religious belief, to the extent that this is where he finds support for this specific understanding of reality (Dahle, 2013, p. 94). When the present sub-chapter touches on the issue of religion, it is in relation to the implications a spiritual or secular perception of reality eventually have for the conduct of life and intercultural dialogue. Sub-chapter 4.4. concentrates on findings related to the fourth analytical category *beliefs, trust and meaning*. In the extent the religious is brought up here, it is in connection with how the individual creates meaning and anchors trust in life.

A palpable trend in *Global Visions*, is that almost all the literary texts have characters with a seemingly secular view on reality, although some of them also include characters who represent spiritual alternatives. This is based on what directly comes to the surface through descriptions of characters in the stories, but also to some extent on the fact that religion and spiritual issues seem to be marginalised in the texts. In itself, however, this is not evidence

that characters do not believe in an existence after life on earth. But the topics that are brought up in the texts, what the characters do, and so on, often lack references to what reality is beyond our physical existence on earth, as well as spiritual thinking and practices in general.

Yet, a few works stand out in this respect. Religious practices such as Catholicism, Islam, African tribal spirituality and Eastern spirituality are in some texts significant for reality perception, and when it comes to understanding characters and gaining a deeper awareness of themes and issues the texts bring up. The analyses reveal that when such views are represented among the characters, it is usually contested by other characters holding secular views on reality (text number 3 “Snow” being a clear exception as regards this, see below). Furthermore, the analytical category *perception of reality* is one of the categories in which conflicting worldviews are most noticeable. Approximately one third of the literary works that were investigated present contrasting views of reality, with regard to spiritual or secular understandings and practices. To a large extent this is done by the way for instance protagonist and antagonist represent alternative perceptions of reality. What is more, in several of these texts, capitalist, secular worldviews are often associated with the Western, and contrasted with devout representations of Islam or Eastern spirituality. In many instances, the conflict between the Western and the religious ‘other’ is what propels the plot forwards. As will be further discussed in 4.1.1 below, this is slightly problematic from an intercultural education perspective. There are exceptions to this pattern, however. The film *Gran Torino* (text 13) sticks out in the way the protagonist, a white, male American, gradually explores and approves of Catholicism and thus finds a deeper meaning in life. Still, this finding confirms a well-known pattern; to the extent the Western character has spiritual longings, these are directed at Christianity. A similar adoption of for instance Islam by a Western character is not found in the text material.

Most of the texts that contrast spiritual understandings of reality with secular or inexplicit views, are found in the chapters *Across cultures* and *Multicultural societies* in *Global Visions* (pp. 102-239). In addition, a large majority of texts that deal with questions regarding life and death and afterlife are found in these chapters. See 4.1.2 for a more in-depth discussion of this issue.

4.1.1 The spiritual ‘other’ and the secularised, Western ‘self’

As briefly presented above, the Western ‘self’ in the literary texts is predominantly secular and modern as concerns reality perception and ways of thinking. In some texts this view is challenged, however, by characters representing the foreign or ‘other’, and who generally

have a more spiritual perception of outer reality. The representation of the ‘other’ as generally more spiritual than Westerners, is a finding which to some extent is in accordance with the pattern Thomas (2017) disclosed in his study of short stories in EFL textbooks in Norway: Characters from non-Western backgrounds are often associated with the exotic and oriental, those who think and believe alternatively, also cementing the idea that these groups are homogenous in such respect. Li and Dervin (2018) warn that such an understanding indirectly may favour Eurocentric ideas; and claim that such views are noticeable in education (see ch. 2.4.3). In my data material, such a superiority of Western perspectives is visible in for instance the film *Outsourced* (text 6), the short stories “They Sold My Sister” (text 10) and “My Son the Fanatic” (text 12), and the novel *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (text 16). Yet, in the latter two texts, the often exalted status of the Western is also nuanced and even challenged (see below). In the following I will discuss how conflicting perceptions of reality are presented and dealt with in three texts from my material.

In the short story “They Sold My Sister” by Leteipa Ole Sunkuli (text 10), the foreign culture is described as committed to tradition and spiritual rites. This view is contrasted with modern, secular ways of thinking. The text presents the worldviews of a traditional tribal Masai community in Kenya, and the consequences for everyday living when members of this society gradually receive influence from the Western world. The main theme in the story is forced marriage, an important custom according to how the tribe is presented in the text, contrasted with the supremacy of some ideals and values often associated with the Western, for instance education and human rights. Although there are few explicit references to any metaphysical understanding of outer reality (except for one instance where we learn that one of the characters in the story prays), setting and the way traditions are valued and exalted point to a spiritual understanding of outer reality. The reader observes that for example circumcision and forced marriage are highly important and matters of course in the tribal community, and not subject to discussion. Other examples of this are the binding wedding agreement, the significance of dowry and cattle, and the role the wedding night plays.

The conflicting worldview elements in the text are first and foremost put to front by what we see and experience through the eyes and ears of the narrator and protagonist in the story. She is the youngest of three brothers and sisters, and longs for the opportunity to attend school. We experience some of her aversion towards her tribe’s traditional worldview and rites when she is asked to accompany her sister after the wedding ceremony: “I could not stay the two weeks I had been asked. I could not stay because of what I saw and heard” (*Global Visions*, text 10, p. 137).

The Western in “They Sold My Sister” is represented as something solely positive and future oriented. An underlying theme is that the worldviews and reality perception of the elder generation in the Masai tribe are in a process of being replaced. This comes to expression through how knowledge, progress and right to self-determination are values that are accentuated by the children. The only thing that can save the girls in the story from being married off, is to get an education and in the next stance acquire knowledge to stand up for their rights. When the son in the family is instructed by his father to fetch his sister from school, he replies:

The world has changed (...) I am not going, papa, Nyamalo must be let to finish her schooling. She must not be married off at such a tender age. She must be allowed to choose her own man when the time comes. (*Global Visions*, text 10, p. 136)

Since the ideas of education, human rights and democracy often are related to Western ideologies and worldviews, there are reasons to reflect critically on how such views are given primacy in intercultural communication (Li & Derwin, 2018). A cultural relativist approach, evaluating rites and traditions on the culture’s own premises, can therefore be a constructive point of departure in the English classroom. This short story illustrates quite clearly, however, that to be confined in outdated and human belligerent traditions is much worse than adopting the modern and progressive of the Western. For FL learners, this can provide a fundament for a discussion of concrete Western values.

In the short story “My Son the Fanatic” by Hanif Kureishi (text 12), the spiritual/non-spiritual dichotomy is concretised through the main characters Parvez and Ali, father and son, immigrants from Pakistan to Britain. Contrary to how the Western is portrayed in “They Sold My Sister”, however, many of the negative and problematic aspects of Western culture are given much space in “My Son the Fanatic”. The short story is told from a third person point of view (the father), and the plot revolves around the father as he gradually realises that Ali is developing into a more and more devout Muslim, yearning for the righteous’ reward in Paradise. Parvez, on the other hand, is well-acquainted with Western ways of thinking. He works as a taxi driver, and all he wants for Ali is for him to succeed in life; have friends, an education and safe income. Parvez’ disappointment is therefore great when Ali seemingly has none of these priorities. However, some of the problematic aspects of Western culture and thinking also come to expression through Parvez, exemplified by his alcohol drinking, gambling and association with prostitutes. As the story unfolds, the readers understand that

Ali feels more and more alienated in the British society, and in his desperate search for deeper meaning he turns to radical Islam and adopts a highly spiritual view on outer reality. This is illustrated by his rejection of material goods, buying a prayer rug and praying five times a day, and distancing himself totally from the worldview his father stands for:

[Ali] addressed his father fluently (...) The law of Islam would rule the world; the skin of the infidel would burn off again and again; the Jews and Christians would be routed. The West was a sink of hypocrites, adulterers, homosexuals, drug users and prostitutes. (*Global Visions*, text 12, p. 186)

Kureishi's short story was first published in 1994, and my experience is that it has been a much-used story in Norwegian EFL classrooms in the years after. Maybe this is related to the multifaceted learning potential regarding how characters and conflict are presented by the author. More than anything, however, the short story illustrates how the contrast between 'self' and 'other', between Western and foreign, manifests itself within one immigrant family. By choosing this twist, and pushing some situations to extremes, the story mirrors many unresolved issues in contemporary multicultural societies, all which can facilitate reflection in the classroom: To what extent should immigrants adopt the new, Western culture? Who defines the values, beliefs and worldviews of modern societies (Li & Dervin, 2018; Aadnanes, 2012)? And how is the identity crisis many teenagers with immigrant backgrounds experience handled, which in some cases leads to Muslim radicalisation?

The secularised Westerner in "My Son the Fanatic" is unexpectedly represented by the immigrant Parvez. This narrative choice amplifies many aspects of the modern Western worldview, aspects that perhaps would have been toned down if Western perceptions of reality were expressed through a more traditional Western character. In other words, the many aspects of the Western is embellished and nuanced by letting a non-Western character represent this worldview. For the FL learner in a Western educational context, it is thus potentially easier to reflect on what such a worldview might consist of, and why people with other cultural backgrounds often find it problematic. Furthermore, if Ali's choice of turning to a radical version of Islam is a way of finding meaning in existence, it is worth reflecting on why he could not find this in the age-old cultural and religious traditions of the society of which he now is part. What happened to the Judeo-Christian ideas that once were the foundation for modern, Western democracies? Such questions are discussed by Aadnanes (2012). He argues that Christianity as fundament for culture and society has almost

evaporated in Europe. Processes of secularisation have laid the premises for the contemporary era, and new worldview perspectives have replaced the role and function Christianity has had (p. 38).

The novel *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* by Mohsin Hamid (text 16) provides another example where spiritual and secular reality perceptions are contrasted, at the same time as it questions and criticises the Western. The protagonist, Changez, is an immigrant from Pakistan who wants to embrace everything that the West has to offer: Education, safe employment, upper-end income and success in the city of New York. The story is narrated from the first-person perspective of the main character. As the plot in the novel unfolds, Changez gradually becomes more reluctant towards the Western “fundamentals”. The story is set in the beginning of the 2000s, at the time when global tension sky-rocketed because of the events of 9/11, 2001. This is also an important part of the plot; the United States’ war on terror represents a turning point in Changez’ adoption of Western values and worldviews.

As with “My Son the Fanatic”, the Western secular worldview in the novel is put into relief by how ‘the other’ (Changez) tries to embrace it. What regards the spiritual perception of reality, the backdrop is the Muslim world. This is made clear in the novel by how the author Hamid portrays the Muslim world’s reactions and reasons for opposing the U.S. in the aftermath of 9/11. Changez reflects on his positioning between cultures and realities, and realises that he never stands on neutral ground as regards this. Thus, and with reference to Byram (2008), it is fascinating to see the way Changez, in his distress, holds the role as an intercultural mediator between reality perceptions and cultural beliefs. This role comes particularly to expression through his “monologic” dialogues with the American that constitute the novel.

The Reluctant Fundamentalist is crammed with symbolism and analogies, and empty gaps. A specific didactic implication with regard to this, is that the reader needs insight in how to fill these with meaning. Here, I want to comment on Hamid’s choice of names for his characters, and what some relationships might symbolise in the novel. In naming the protagonist of the novel, *Changez*, Hamid draws our attention towards change. Changez is involved in a somewhat challenging relationship with *Erica*, a name which can be read as an abbreviation of *America* (Burner et al., 2017, p. 237). In the novel, Erica passes away. Thus, Erica might symbolise Changez’ “relationship” with America which comes to an end. The protagonist’s relationship with his employer is also worthy a comment: Changez works for the valuation company *Underwood Samson*, possibly a reference to Uncle Sam or the U.S. This company’s focus on profitability and money, and consequently representing a Western

capitalist view on reality, is likely the reason for Changez' growing reluctance to work for them. From the perspective of intercultural learning, the readers are challenged to think through who defines both Western and Muslim values, particularly when conflicting situations arise.

Power relations is another aspect of particular interest in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, regarding cultural differences and what views we have on reality. Kramsch (2001) emphasises that "cultural differences are often of political importance and are linked to issues of power and control" (p. 204). The novel is an example of how differences, tensions and conflict between cultures cannot merely be regarded an isolated issue of different reality perceptions or values; it is related to power structures in the world. A tendency in interculturality today, according to Dervin (2016), is that those with power in the world too often speak on behalf of and over the powerless. In the novel, it is the role of the powerful West that is questioned. By the way Hamid views the events of 9/11 2001 from several perspectives, he compels the readers to reflect on how a more nuanced understanding for 'the other' can be achieved (Stautland, 2017).

My analysis reveals that *Global Visions* reflects global, contemporary issues through its selection of literary texts and how plots unfold, even though the texts to a certain extent cement a pattern regarding who gives voice to spiritual and secular perceptions of reality respectively. Disunity on such worldview matters could inevitable be a source of conflict between ethnic, cultural or religious groups. My pilot study (Stautland, 2017) indicated that conflictual issues in general have not been a particular priority in Aschehoug's previous versions of the textbook for the programme subject *International English*. The ability to live and cope with conflicts and disagreement in a constructive manner, rather than always having unanimity as a goal, is in many respects what interculturality is about in contemporary multicultural societies (Hoff, 2018). Discussion and disagreement might in fact provide increased insight into other people's worldviews, and in the next stance make these less threatening and more understandable (Iversen, 2014, p. 13). These are issues that need to be addressed in intercultural education.

Moreover, a central point in interculturality is the fact that the characteristics of a cultural group are never fixed. In intercultural learning, students should therefore be made aware of this aspect, and be able to reflect on how both cultural and religious groups are constantly undergoing change (Council of Europe, 2018, vol. 2, p. 23), and consider who gives voice to various perspectives and worldviews. In such respect, it is worth noting that

some of the literary texts in the textbook that have been examined in the present study, open up for exploration of such issues.

4.1.2 Matters regarding life and death

Although questions regarding outer reality are treated in some of the analysed texts, very few explicitly illuminate existential issues of life, death and afterlife. Such perspectives are indirectly present in “My Son the Fanatic” (text 12) and *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (text 16); texts that portray conflicting views on how characters perceive reality. In the latter text, for instance, one feasible interpretation of the protagonist’s reflections and actions towards the end of the novel, is that death is something that should not be feared when important matters are at stake. In the vast majority of texts, however, notions of life and death are left untouched, despite the fact that other aspects regarding the human condition are prevalent (see for instance 4.2). As a result, a secular humanist worldview is often the practical outcome; focus is on life here and now, and how to fill the apportioned time on earth with meaning (Aadnanes, 2012). Examples of such perspectives can be found in the poems “I Am” (text 1) and “This Bridge” (text 2). Again, we see that ways of thinking which are often associated with the Western, dominate the texts.

Yet, a few texts counter this pattern. Below I will highlight four texts which all bring up the topics of life and death to various extent. In addition, I will elaborate on the significance of such a focus in the context of intercultural teaching and learning in the English classroom.

A funeral introduces the film *Gran Torino* (text 13). The protagonist Walt, a war veteran, has recently lost his wife after several years of marriage. The many practical arrangements that come with the loss of a family member are given much space in the first scenes of the film. An example of this is testamentary inheritance. This highly material concern is particularly apparent through the insensitivity of Walt’s sons, daughters in law and grandchildren. The priest who leads the funeral, and who also is responsible for the parish Walt is a member of, gradually tries to draw nearer to Walt. He encourages him to think through existential issues, and repeatedly invites him to confess his wrongdoings in life. Walt, on his side of the table, abruptly and callously declines every invitation. He argues that such concerns are none of the priest’s business. It soon becomes clear, however, that Walt is tormented by his mistakes and sins from a long-lived life, and in particular what happened during the Korean war. Because of his growing need for forgiveness and reconciliation, he gradually accepts the priest’s invitation.

Through this portrayal of Walt's change of attitude, the film reflects general existential issues. In one way or another, such issues are discernible in many worldviews. In atheistic existentialism, it is all about creating meaning here and now, while various religious worldviews usually view life and death in the light of afterlife (Sire, 2009). In intercultural communication, encounters with 'the other' have the potential to facilitate reflection on central life questions, particularly if there is a willingness in the human being to suspend own beliefs, at least for a while (Byram, 1997). This is also the case with Walt in the film. A gradual recognition of how death and its consequences are universal aspects of the human condition, is strengthened through his relationship with 'the other' who thinks differently, both in terms of spirituality and culture. Walt's conversations with the priest is an example of this. However, Walt's encounters with his Hmong neighbours, immigrants from South Asia, are also significant regarding this aspect. Walt observes the neighbours' culture, worldview and spirituality, and on one occasion he is invited in to join them in one of their celebrations. Gradually, he becomes susceptible to reflecting on some of life's major questions. Through the protagonist's personal development in the film, he is towards the end of the film more at peace with himself and everything that haunted him from his past.

In the short story "Snow" (text 3), the reader encounters Yolanda, an immigrant to the U.S. from the Dominican Republic. The setting of the story is a Catholic classroom in New York some time during the Cold War, and the story is told from Yolanda's point of view. The point in time in history is important in interpreting the short story: The cold war and the Cuban Missile Crisis was a period when people all over the world feared nuclear war and the destruction of humanity more than what probably has been the case before and after. Reflections on life and death are therefore palpable in the story, and Yolanda contemplates on the issue:

I heard new vocabulary: nuclear bomb, radioactive fallout, bomb shelter. Sister Zoe explained how it would happen. She drew a picture of a mushroom on the blackboard and dotted a flurry of chalkmarks for the dusty fallout that would kill us all. (*Global Visions*, text 3, p. 79)

It is interesting to see the way the author of the short story, Julia Alvarez, describes how Yolanda, her family, the other school children and the nuns deal with this constant fear of dying. The Catholic context and perception of reality is seemingly significant as regards this. Praying and saying rosaries provide comfort to the terrified children.

Other themes in the short story are foreign language learning and the meeting of cultures. For readers with other backgrounds than Catholicism, an important intercultural aspect is to notice what role spiritual reality perceptions play for other people in matters of life and death.

Two of the poems in the text material can also be read as comments on life and death. Sacrifice and martyrdom are implicitly treated in “The Right Word” (text 8), a poem which revolves around terrorism and fighting for a greater cause. The poem “Flag” (text 11) refers more directly to the fact that death is every human being’s destiny. The flag has enormous power in life and over life, it will “outlive the blood you bleed” and “make the guts of men grow bold” (*Global Visions*, text 11, p. 178). This text also highlights and questions what is worth dying for. As the title indicates, “Flag” deals with everything a flag might symbolise for people and nations. Is it something more than a piece of coloured fabric on a pole? National identity, patriotism and war are themes that the poem brings to the front in its five stanzas. Towards the end it poses the question whether a flag is always something that justifies human beings’ moral decisions.

The fact that the majority of the texts in the data material do not bring up existential topics such as life, death and afterlife, confirms to some extent a similar pattern as was discussed in 4.1.1: Western “home culture” is reflected through an emphasis on secular humanism. Characters who represent the Western are modern and stripped of metaphysical reflection. Langeland (2019) discusses how the presupposition of secularism may hinder learners in developing empathy and understanding. Teachers and learners should therefore be aware of this. However, the texts that to various extent do bring up existential issues contribute with important perspectives regarding how we understand ourselves, and also how representatives from various cultural contexts perceive reality. *Gran Torino*, for instance, is a brilliant example of how own identity is fluid and subject to change (Dervin, 2016). Learning to know oneself is of no less importance, however, and is made visible by how representatives from home culture and foreign culture ask questions and in the next turn elicit personal reflection. The notion that self-development occurs through encounters with otherness is also central in *Bildung* theories. A central aspect of intercultural learning processes will be covered if learners are prompted to reflect on such issues when working with the texts in the classroom.

4.2. View of humanity

The category *view of humanity* revolves around identity questions and what our roles and responsibilities towards fellow human beings are. A significant finding here is that a large majority of the texts shed light on and discuss what human value actually is, or in various manners focus on positive relationships between humans. The view that every human being has inherent value is predominant in many texts, and an implicit consequence of this view is the maintenance of constructive and positive relationships. Examples of texts that illuminate this aspect is “Snow” (text 3) and “The Right Word” (text 8). The latter theme is illustrated by both good and bad role models in the text material. Human relations also comprise aspects such as empathy, responsibility and self-sacrifice. These issues were significant in over half of my material. Texts which were coded according to these themes often encourage human beings to think of others than themselves, and in utter consequences give up one’s life or way of living for the purpose of others’ well-being. To empathise with others is “fundamental to imagining the cultural affiliations, world views, beliefs, interests, emotions, wishes and needs of other people” (Council of Europe, 2018, vol. 1, p. 48). It is also essential in Byram’s concept of ‘acting interculturally’ (2008), as discussed in chapter 2.3.

A little more than one third of the texts bring up controversial topics such as questions related to human rights, equality and racism, for instance “Foreign” (text 4) and “One of My Best Friends” (text 15). These topics pertain to the abovementioned theme of human value, but are more explicitly defined and addressed in the texts. Children’s and women’s rights, poverty, and discrimination are typical examples of topics in the texts which are associated with these themes. Human value, relations and human rights will be discussed more thoroughly in 4.2.1 below.

Another trend in the data material is that a majority of the texts bring up the themes identity and alienation. Many texts ponder questions such as who we are and what it means to be a human being, and how identity is formed and challenged in the encounters with people representing other contexts, cultures or ways of living. How human beings are viewed and perceived by others, how religious beliefs are closely linked to identity, and how society and culture influence how identity is shaped, and also contribute to processes of alienation, are examples of other questions the texts bring up. These findings are also in accordance with what is essential in *Bildung* theories (see chapter 2.6.1). Among other things, *Bildung* is associated with how identity and personality are developed and shaped in a society (Klafki, 1996; Aase et al., 2007). Reflection on identity is therefore an issue that must be given priority in the FL classroom.

Much literature about both worldviews and intercultural communication emphasises the importance of having a profound understanding of one's own identity and values if we want to make an effort to understand others (see chapter 2), and it is as such interesting to see how conspicuous this aspect is in the literary texts. Byram (1997), for instance, underlines how intercultural understanding and communication might be dysfunctional if one's own cultural belonging and identity for some reason are missing or downplayed (p. 39). Similarly, several worldview scholars seem to agree on how fundamental our identities and individual worldviews are when we think of ourselves and the world that we live in and which surrounds us. A worldview "establishes the horizons of an interpreter's point of view by which texts of all types are understood. It is the mental medium by which the world is known" (Naugle, 2002, p. 330). However, it is also necessary to consider the fact that in many situations and contexts, identity is changing and fluid. Regarding it stable and invariable, might lead astray. Others' worldviews and values will eventually influence what we think of ourselves (Dervin, 2016; Sire, 2015). This is also reflected in several texts in the material. Regardless of the fluidity of this worldview aspect, however, a reflective approach to what concerns own identity is important in every intercultural encounter. This is an aspect that must be given priority in the FL classroom.

Stereotypes and prejudices are brought up and challenged in approximately one third of the texts. A central objective in intercultural communication, is to reflect upon how 'the other' is often defined by stereotypes. Moreover, an intercultural skill is to rise above stereotyped relations (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 105). In the data material, stereotypes are in some instances treated in a serious manner, like in the poem "The Fat Black Woman Goes Shopping" (text 9). In other instances, the issue is brought up with a more humorous undertone, such as in the film *Outsourced* (text 6). In 4.2.2, these texts and other findings related to identity, alienation and stereotypes are discussed more in detail.

4.2.1 Human value, relations and human rights

The compelling emphasis on different aspects of human value and relations in the literary texts is interesting, as such notions are of significance in various worldview traditions. Inherent in different forms of humanism, for instance, is the general understanding that individuals are of special worth. Everything human beings think, strive for, say and do is consequently of general significance and value. Moreover, a central view in monotheistic worldviews like Christianity and Islam is that the human being is the pinnacle of everything that is created, consequently of high value, although the implications of such a status is

understood somewhat differently in the respective religions (Sire, 2009). What is more, the recognition of every human being's value is fundamental for how human rights are defended, a premise that is also evident in the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" (United Nations, 1948). In the following I will comment upon three texts where perspectives regarding human value, relations and human rights are salient.

The poem "The Right Word" by Imtiaz Dharker (text 8) illuminates the role the fellow man might play when he tries to describe and define others. Words used to describe others are both related to human value, they have implications for human relations, and for how both 'self' and 'other' understand their own worth and identity. The first-person speaker in the poem tries to figure out the most appropriate word for the suspicious person outside, hiding in the shadows. Is he a terrorist? Or perhaps a martyr? In the first stanzas the speaker appears confused regarding this, but gradually he gets a clearer view on the matters. By help of the outsider perspective of the narrator and the naive, enquiring tone, the reader of the poem can gain understanding in how generalisations and one-sided descriptions often result in alienation and downgrading of human value. "Are words no more / than waving, wavering flags?" (*Global Visions*, text 8, p. 129) asks the speaker in the fourth stanza. A central message towards the end of the poem is that a welcoming, open attitude has the power to break down barriers between individuals and groups. In addition, such an attitude lays the fundament for the establishment of constructive human relations, in the poem exemplified by how the narrator invites the person outside in for a meal. The human value aspect is most evident when the speaker encourages us to see the terrorist as a vulnerable and scared boy who resembles the narrator's own son. "The Right Word" is direct in its tone, it deals with the tough and serious issue of terrorism, and can be read as a contribution to the ideological differences between the Muslim world and the West. Still, it calls attention to an important aspect of intercultural communication, the necessity to see the world from the perspectives of 'the other'. If we want to make progress in how we understand and empathise with others, we need a willingness to put on hold for a while our own values and understanding (Byram, 2008; Council of Europe, 2018). As such, the poem is a constructive point of departure when sensitive and often controversial topics are on the schedule in the English classroom.

Another text which illuminates various aspects of human value, relations and human rights, is "One of My Best Friends" (text 15). Set in Australia when the legislation that disfavoured the indigenous population was coming to its end, the short story sheds light on important facets of what it is like to belong in an ethnic minority in a modern society. By help of the lapse of time in the story, these issues are portrayed both from the perspectives of

children and grown-ups. As a little boy, the narrator of the short story befriends Willy, an aboriginal Australian of the same age as him. The narrator is ignorant of the discriminatory and racist attitudes in the society at this point of time, but he gradually adopts more of such a mindset. Character descriptions such as Willy being an unreliable “boong”, an untouchable, illustrate that the narrator regards his friend as a person with lower status and value. However, he is in addition conscious of his own low status in the schoolyard hierarchy. Owing to the fact that the narrator also is trying to climb the social ladder, their friendship continues. Meeting again unexpectedly as grown-ups several years later, it becomes unmistakably clear for the narrator that Willy indeed was affected by his and the society’s discriminating demeanour several years ago.

Through the actions and considerations made by the narrator, the text challenges the reader to reflect on what human value entails in intercultural relationships. The two children are fully equal according to their boyhood’s worldview, but gradually the narrator becomes impacted by the environment’s informal rule of law and thinking. In this way the text demonstrates the difficulties in putting others’ opinions aside, and let human value be the cornerstone for human relations. However, the author has managed to illustrate how the narrator also to some extent is divided regarding this. He maintains the friendship, after all: “Somehow though, I couldn’t bring myself to jettison Willy (...) He could almost make me weep with stories about his life...” (*Global Visions*, text 15, p. 219). The example above illustrates that the narrator is capable of reflecting on both human value and his volition to choose the good, although there are no indications that this aspect is rooted in any religious worldview tradition. As such, the narrator can be said to be a plausible representative for humanism, with its emphasis on the infinite worth of the human being and innate human rights (Aadnanes, 2012).

The short story can be of great help in the English classroom when discrimination is discussed. Further, it provides the reader with insight into some of the miseries that have followed in the wake of racism. It also illustrates the difficulties in putting an end to decades of ethnical discrimination in modern, egalitarian societies. Towards the end of the story, for instance, the reader learns that up until then, the aboriginal population was not permitted in local football leagues. The narrator’s reflections on Willy’s actions in the dramatic conclusion of the story, give insight into the complexity of the matter: “I know what they say. That violence begets violence, that a punch in the face is nothing compared to a hundred years of genocide. (...) That his options were nil in a world dedicated more to charity than equality” (*Global Visions*, text 15, p. 222). The attention given to racism and discrimination in the short

story, might give the reader an opportunity to recognise and respond to such feelings, which often appear as pre-conscious thoughts in our minds. They are a natural part of our personalities, however, and when such attitudes are temporarily accepted, the individual can start the process of changing and rejecting them (Iversen, 2014, p. 46).

The text “Antisocial Media: Short Fiction Based on a True Story” (text 17) sheds light on important aspects related to human relations. This is a short text which in a thought-provoking way illuminates how real-life human relations often are in short supply in contemporary societies, where much network building takes place on the internet. The plot revolves around a person who is reluctant regarding joining social media networks, but ultimately is coerced into setting up an account. The antagonist of the story argues that it is something everyone does and that it is an entertaining way to stay in touch with friends. Some of the implications of the protagonist capitulating are described, for instance the absorbing and often meaningless hours spent on this social media platform. The author describes this as a rabbit hole the protagonist has fallen into. A paradox is embedded in the sentence that concludes the text, “...the overwhelming loneliness of having too many ‘friends’” (*Global Visions*, text 17, p. 243). In the first place, this line illustrates that relating to others, establishing friendships, are universal longings among human beings. Secondly, the line highlights how social media activities many times deprive the users of real human relations.

Although it is crucial in today’s societies to learn to live with ambiguity and communicate across differences, intercultural teaching should not overemphasise differences between people. Literature about intercultural communication has often neglected this aspect, maybe due to a fear of being too all-embracing and even ethnocentric as regards how intercultural matters are dealt with, claims Dervin (2016). The attention given to human value, relations and human rights in the data material reflects the view that there is common ground between people representing different cultures and worldviews. This view is also advocated by Sire (2015, pp. 128-129). As such, this finding serves as a counterweight to aspects of disharmony and conflictual issues that were also found in the texts. The discussion of these findings illustrates why such aspects must also be given attention when interculturality is on the schedule in the English classroom.

4.2.2 Identity, alienation and stereotypes

Half of the texts where the themes identity and alienation are discernible, are poems. In fact, nearly every poem reproduced in *Global Visions* circles around these topics in one way or another. One reason for the prominence of these themes in the material, could be the potential

poetry has to express fundamental human experiences, and the close relationship between the speaker and what is spoken of, which is typical of this genre (Janss & Refsum, 2003). In the following, I will elaborate on this finding and give examples from two poems and a film. Identity issues are in many situations closely related to stereotyping, as the discussion towards the end of this sub-section will illustrate.

In the first half of the poem “I Am” (text 1), the issue of identity comes to expression by how background, negative conditions in a human being’s surroundings and previous experiences often govern how a person defines himself. However, the poem has an encouraging undertone, and in the first stanza this comes to expression by help of each line starting with the negation “I am not”. For instance, the poet articulates “I am **not** my nightmares / I am **not** my wounds” (*Global Visions*, text 1, p. 36, author’s emphasis). This view is juxtaposed in the second stanza, in which each line ends with an antonym of the descriptors in the first stanza: “I am my *dreams* / I am my *healed scars*” (author’s emphasis). By using this technique, the writer potentially adds to the reader’s self-esteem and reflection on own identity. The last stanza has only one line. The message to the reader here is that everyone has their individual particularities, and we should rest in the fact that nobody can change this.

Identity is not explicitly linked to an intercultural context in the poem. In other words, it does not describe and compare representatives from different cultural backgrounds, for instance to facilitate a more profound understanding for one another. As such, the poem can be read as an edifying text by promoting a positive and future-oriented view on own identity. However, the poem illustrates how background and history can sometimes play a too significant role in how the individual ruminates on both himself and other humans. In the first stanza, the poet proclaims: “I am **not** my last name / I am **not** my past” (text 1, p. 36, author’s emphasis). To reset oneself to point zero by putting such aspects temporarily or permanently away is of significance, as it may lay the fundament for constructive interaction between people. Undoubtedly, these are important concerns in contemporary classrooms. Moreover, training learners in being reflective of their own selves and identities is an important prerequisite in intercultural communication, although identity is also unstable and ephemeral (Dervin, 2016). Our individual identities and particularities are of significance in communication with others, largely because the usage of the term ‘culture’ might generalise or oversimplify. Although people in many intercultural situations define themselves as belonging to a specific culture, they first and foremost bring with them their individual identities (Byram, 1997, p. 40).

A poem that more explicitly speaks of identity and alienation in a multicultural context, is “The Fat Black Woman Goes Shopping” (text 9). This poem portrays the experiences of an immigrant woman in a busy and beauty-obsessed Western world. Set in London during winter, the woman is on the streets looking for suitable clothes that can keep her warm in the cold weather. The first stanza makes the reader aware that this is a heartfelt challenge for the woman. She is repeatedly described as a “fat black woman”, and this is key when trying to understand her difficulties. She observes the slim mannequins in the display windows, whom she imagines make fun of her, and the poorly camouflaged glares from the saleswomen: “The fat black woman could only conclude / that when it come [sic] to fashion / the choice is lean / Nothing much beyond size 14” (*Global Visions*, text 9, p. 132). Yet, the problem of finding the right size is not her only challenge. British fashion is slim and unpersonal; bright colours and soft, billowing fabric are in short supply.

The first parts of the poem hint at the woman’s background as a foreigner in London. Her feeling of alienation regarding fashion illustrates this, but the broken English in the poem, and the woman’s strong dislike of the cold weather are other indicators. In the fifth stanza, however, it is disclosed that this woman is an immigrant from Africa: “The fat black woman curses in Swahili/Yoruba / and nation language under her breathing / all this journeying and journeying” (text 9, p. 132).

Among other things, the poem illustrates a specific aspect of being an immigrant to a Western society. How does one relate to shopping and the fashion industry when these are estranging elements? However, this facet can also be interpreted as a symbol of the general challenges related to identity issues and feelings of alienation immigrants and members from other minority cultures may face in modern, Western societies. The line “all this journeying and journeying” (text 9, p. 132) is multifaceted. An apparent interpretation of this line is that the woman walks from store to store, and she has travelled from country to country. However, the line may also summarise what feelings of alienation and pondering back and forth on own identity may feel like.

In order to function in both local and global societies, the subject needs to be aware of issues about identity, and the acquisition of an integrated identity is essential. This provides an ability for the individual to operate effectively both in home and foreign culture (Garrett, 1996, in Byram, 2008, p. 64). Although the poem can be said to illustrate how a Western society contributes to the alienation of immigrants, it also brings up the importance of acquiring an integrated identity. An aspect the woman and others who identify with her need to consider, is whom and what they compare themselves with. Furthermore, it is essential to

find means to live fully integrated in a new culture, at the same time as there are spaces in everyday life where the native part of one's identity can be nurtured.

Lastly, there are a few stereotypes in the poem that need to be commented upon. In the poem, both the African woman and the English society are to some extent stereotyped: The woman is concerned with traditional clothing, she is overweight, and is distasteful of the chilly climate. The English, on the other hand, are presented as cold and little accommodating, and the fashion industry promotes a stereotyped perception of Western beauty ideals. Training students in identifying and evaluating stereotypes is of great significance in intercultural dialogue, as they strongly influence how we perceive each other and the societies we live in. A stereotype does not have to be harmful, but it becomes a problem when it is being used to “deny individuality and diversity to human beings and to undermine human rights” (Council of Europe, 2018, vol.1, p. 56) .

Stereotypes in intercultural encounters are also noticeable in the film comedy *Outsourced* (text 6). In various manners, the film portrays challenges related to intercultural dialogue. The film also brings up the issue of identity and how this is related to perceptions of reality, and the importance of establishing positive human relationships in order to function in a foreign and unfamiliar environment. The protagonist Todd is employed in a Seattle merchandise company, specialising in selling promotional material. The call centre, of which Todd is in charge, has recently been outsourced to India. Todd is given the responsibility to train new call centre staff in India. Highly reluctantly he leaves his co-workers in Seattle and moves to a remote village outside Mumbai. In this diverse society, Todd is in for many unexpected experiences and challenges. Two much-used narrative devices in the plot in *Outsourced* are humour and exaggerations, through which the film sheds light on topics such as misunderstanding and intercultural development.

Both Americans and Indians are stereotyped in the film comedy. The Americans, when represented by Todd and his company, are capitalist; their values are money making and effectivity. It does not matter what you do, as long as this can be achieved. A consequence of such facets is a very superfluous and instrumental attitude towards the Indian culture and unknown people. This stereotyping of the American comes to expression many times in the film, for instance in one of the dialogues between Todd and the Indian call-centre director Puro:

(Puro:) Some things I don't understand about American life. You do not live with your parents? Strange. Another thing: You hate your boss, and you don't like this company, hm? Why not choose something else?

(Todd:) I don't know how to explain it. In my world it makes sense to work your ass off and go into a credit card debt just so you can have that 50-inch plasma. (Jeffcoat, 2006, text 6)

The example also illustrates how the average American is described and stereotyped: A consumer, always on the lookout for the most recent fashion. The function of these particular stereotyped views of the Americans, is that they establish a palpable contrast to the perspective of the Indians and their priorities in the film: Family relations, religion and traditions (see also 4.4.2). These are priorities which are not first and foremost associated with effectiveness and time saving. Such perspectives are highlighted on several occasions in the film, for example when Puro urges Todd to stay at a family-run guesthouse, because he will be better taken care of there than at a hotel, or when Todd diligently tries to convince the Indians at the call-centre that answering phone calls and serving customers are all about achieving the lowest "MPI": Minutes per incident. The latter perspective is to some extent stereotyped and presented in an exaggerated manner: One of the workers has a hard time understanding that speaking with American women on the phone is not an opportunity to establish a romantic relationship.

However, the stereotyping of the Indians in the film has essentially other traits as point of departure. One feature is their English accent, which is a prevailing element throughout the whole film. Sometimes this is used as a humorous element in the film, for instance when Puro pronounces Todd's name wrong ("Toad"). Another aspect is when Todd and other Americans in the film are considered to be tourists in India. The Indians on the streets are presented as cunning and obsessed with earning a rupee, quick and easy. This is exemplified by how Todd is tricked into buying a local made soft drink from a stall outside the airport. This incident also leads to Todd spending the first days in bed due to stomach problems, an example pointing at a stereotyped perception of the Indian's lower hygienical standards (or, alternatively, the hypersensitivity of the Americans). Furthermore, Indian traditions and rites are in some scenes presented in a humorous or stereotyped way: The Indian's indifference and Todd's confusion when a cow all of a sudden stands in the middle of the call-centre, is one example. In one of the dialogues between Todd and the hostess of the guesthouse, the hostess

is puzzled when she learns that Todd is unmarried at an age at which he is “old enough to be a grandfather”.

A question one needs to consider when working with *Outsourced* in the English language classroom, is whether or not the film with its many parodies only confirms stereotyped views the students have, or if it also challenges them. Byram (1997) warns that intercultural learning must not be reduced to generalisations and stereotypes. Do the students understand what is being stereotyped, or does this go under the radar and thus cementing a certain understanding of the foreign? A benefit with reading literature, is that the text carry potential to influence the reader in the sense that stereotyped perceptions of a foreign culture are reassessed. However, the English teacher needs to consider the fact that perspectives and stereotyped perceptions are not necessarily changed or widened due to an exposure to the foreign alone. For the teacher, it is important to facilitate reflection, in order to look deeper into stereotypes and eventually counter them (Fenner, 2011; Hoff, 2018). What is more, *Outsourced* is a comedy, and the many humorous situations have the effect that not every stereotyped trait is taken seriously. For this reason, the film offers teachers and students an opportunity to discover stereotypes. However, the film plays to a large extent with *national* stereotypes, and is as such based on a very traditional view of what a culture is. The question remains whether the film provides insight into ‘diverse diversities’ within cultures (Dervin, 2016, p. 28).

Our minds are constructed to systemise and think in terms of categories, argues Iversen (2014). This happens automatically all the time, as it is important for human beings to quickly interpret the world around us. However, as this might result in stereotypes and wrongful generalisations, we are dependent on a continued process of interpretation that challenges the first impressions (p. 42). This is a process that can be further developed when working with films such as *Outsourced* in the classroom.

It is striking to see how the identity and alienation perspective is conspicuous in such a large amount of the texts that have been subject to analysis. What view humans have on humanity can be challenging, but is nonetheless essential. Moreover, view of humanity is inextricably linked to how humans experience their identities, and it influences how we think and feel about ourselves and others (Dahle, 2013). In chapter 3, we saw how Aschehoug relies on the literary texts when it comes to reflection and discussion (*Global Visions – programfaget internasjonal engelsk Vg2/3*, n.d.). The texts can potentially stimulate learner’s reflection about these issues, both when it comes to learning more about themselves, as well as how they perceive and understand others, their worldviews and their ways of living.

4.3. Perception of values and morality

The third analytical category, *perception of values and morality*, sought to figure out what views of morality were presented in the texts, and what the values and moral actions of the characters as such might be based on. The modern, secular contexts that predominantly characterise the literary texts seem to have implications also on this area (see 4.1). A noteworthy finding is that in over two thirds of the texts, what the individual deems to be good and right is often the fundamental and sole reason behind decisions and judgements. In most situations, nothing or nobody is involved in the decision making, except the characters who are in the position to choose. In other words, the subject is an autonomous decision maker with regard to this. The ethical fundament can be said to be either teleological or situational (Aadnanes, 2012). This perspective is palpable in “This Bridge” (text 2), in which the speaker strongly encourages the autonomy of the individual, and in *Outsourced* (text 6) where the protagonist appears puzzled when he learns that people from foreign cultures have dissimilar reasons for ethical choices. To a large extent, this view is not contested much in the texts. This could be said to promote Western secularism uncritically, and poses a particular responsibility on the teacher when such texts are being worked with in the classroom. In “They Sold My Sister” (text 10), however, the Western and modern are portrayed more as ethical necessities by the author. In the short story, the children have been exposed to Western values at school. Their ethical reflection, exemplified by their opposition to forced marriage, is an evident outcome of education.

A little more than half of the texts present a utilitarian view on morality; what *works* in moral choices is valued. Utilitarianism is the belief that moral actions are instrumental, it is the effect of the action that is important (Aadnanes, 2012, p. 147). Here as well we see how a Western perspective seems to dominate the scenery. In the texts, such utilitarianism is exemplified by characters who seek different forms of success or self-realisation, sometimes by trampling on others in the process, or by characters who unrightfully take matters into their own hands. Examples of some of these aspects are found in the novel excerpt “More American than the Americans” (text 7) where members of an immigrant family discuss to what extent they have jettisoned cultural values in order to succeed in America.

In some texts, ethical alternatives to some of the perspectives described above are presented, and thus establish an ethical dichotomy. Such standards are authoritative figures, religious practices and rules, or a firm recognition of traditional moral principles and values. This type of ethical dichotomy is particularly noticeable in totally five texts in the material, for example “They Sold My Sister” (text 10) and “My Son, the Fanatic” (text 12). Some of

these literary texts were discussed when contrasts and conflicts in the category *perception of reality* were examined above, and as such this finding illustrates that reality perceptions have implications for morality perceptions. The finding also seems to confirm the Western-centric pattern which was discussed in 4.1; those who rely on for instance traditional moral values and guidelines, are most often ‘the others’ in the texts. Consequently, the texts are in danger of promoting Western worldviews. There are nuances, though, “My Son, the Fanatic” (text 12) problematises the morality of Western worldviews on many areas, for instance the protagonist’s attitude to alcohol. In 4.3.1 the abovementioned issues related to individual autonomy are discussed.

In one work only (the film *Gran Torino*, text 13), decisions are clearly motivated by the protagonist’s wish for reconciliation and forgiveness, contrasted with the antagonists’ reluctance to forgive. In this film, forgiveness seems to be a crucial moral action that can provide quality of life for the protagonist. Vengeance is also an important element in this film and a few other texts. It is regarded as a guideline for moral choices, as something that provides balance if wrongs have been committed. These aspects will be discussed further in 4.3.2.

Patriotism as a value and guideline in decision-making seems to be a central aspect in five texts. Obedience to national authority in questions of national security, collaborating with fellow citizens in times of conflict, or the protection of personal privacy, are examples on issues brought up related to this theme. These issues are particularly conspicuous in text 18 and 19 which revolve around the life of Edward Snowden (see 4.3.3).

4.3.1 The autonomous decision maker

The autonomy of the individual is an ethical guideline that dominates the data material. This type of individualism grants the human being freedom by giving him authority in making moral decisions, compared to principles that are based on tradition and religion, and sometimes even regulated by law. Furthermore, it is a principle that above all characterises secular, Western democracies (Note et al., 2009; Aadnanes, 2012). Owing to this fact, it is important that intercultural learning does not subconsciously promote Western-centric ethical values, stripped of reflection and consideration (Li & Dervin, 2018). In this sub-chapter I will discuss two texts which both highlight this finding.

“This Bridge” (text 2) is a poem which in a distinctive way promotes how the individual is in charge of his own adventures and successes in life. The second person perspective emphasises the heavy personal appeal to the reader of the poem; *you* are your own

boss when decisions are to be made, and in the long run you are not dependent on anyone else. A central theme is: The individual has possibilities – seize them! The first and the second line in the poem illuminate these matters: “This bridge will only take you halfway there / The last few steps you’ll have to take alone” (*Global Visions*, text 2, p. 38). A bridge is a central element in the poem, and the title and the lines of the poem emphasise *this* bridge. *This* bridge is not a regular one. Undeniably, it gives you a push in one direction or another, but it takes you only half of the way you are headed. This feature of the poem strongly underlines personal responsibility and autonomy. Moreover, the poem is packed with symbols that are meant to bolster positive connotations, all which speak of the good and right each individual should strive for. It is up to the reader to link the symbols to elements in real life. For instance, the poem speaks of “mysterious lands you long to see”, “wondrous worlds” and “moonlit woods” (p. 38). What most of these metaphors have in common, is that they speak of something not yet achieved, and which the individual is entitled to realise in his own life. Further, the fact that the majority of these symbols represent fairy tales and fantasy underlines the notion that as long as the individual is given freedom to choose and decide, anything is achievable and possible.

“This Bridge” strongly relies on a Western worldview as regards individualism and decision making. The poem itself does not problematise this perspective; as long as there is a bridge in front of you, enter it. Few would dismiss the significance of personal initiative in life, but in the process of realising oneself and finding happiness, are there other considerations to be made? What about taking into account the needs of fellow human beings, for instance? Such questions can with advantage be asked in the English classroom. Chapter 2.4.2 discussed how the individual-oriented perspective is symptomatic of present day thinking in the Western world, and how this can pose a challenge on intercultural communication: It is a presumption human beings rarely question what concerns how decisions are made. The elevated status of the individual is regarded challenging by representatives from collectivistic cultures, and are thus reluctant in adopting this Western idea. In secular humanism, the individual human being is a purpose in itself, not collective measures (Aadnanes, 2012).

Outsourced (text 6) is another text that draws attention to the individual’s authority in moral reflection. The discussion concerning this film in 4.2.2 pointed out how intercultural reflection relies on how stereotypes are understood. However, the film is also a telling example of how individual moral autonomy is an implicit guideline for people living in the West. In fact, this is the reason behind many of the paradoxes and comic scenes in the film.

In the film, the protagonist Todd initiates a secret, romantic relationship with Asha, one of the employees at the call-centre in India. To begin with, they both seem to be governed by secular, Western thinking: As long as the feelings are mutual, there is no need to think of consequences. But after a while, Todd is made aware that Asha is already engaged to another man. However, Todd and Asha continue behaving as people who have fallen in love do, the differences between cultures and worldviews largely come to surface on other areas than their views on commitment in relationships. But gradually we understand that Asha does not like to be seen publicly with Todd. One scene from the film illustrates this:

(Todd:) Hey, come in for some tea.

(Asha:) No I can't, not in the place where you are staying. People might talk, you know.

(Todd:) So what if they talk?

(Asha:) I should be more careful. I can't be seen with you speaking like this.

(Todd:) (...) Why not? You are a free woman! (...) Why worry so much what people think?

(Jeffcoat, 2006, text 6)

What regards the moral dilemmas from this point on, it is interesting to notice that while Asha's engagement constrains them from making their relationship public, it is seemingly unproblematic to continue their affair short-term and secretly.

Todd, and also Asha in Todd's company, can be said to be typical representatives of a Western, secular worldview as what regards questions of morality (Aadnanes, 2012). Nevertheless, the film also portrays some important differences in terms of this aspect of life. The Hindu moral tradition, as presented in the film, emphasises commitment, loyalty and honesty as core moral values. In this manner, the learners are given opportunities to reflect on both individual and cultural differences in perceptions of morality. However, it is Asha and her cultural and religious background who represents the divergent, old-fashioned worldview. In the film it is seemingly clear that this view is trumped by secular Western sexual moral. Todd's ringing telephone in the very last scene of the film, hinting at Asha still wanting to continue the relationship, indicates this. The film might also be a point of departure for the teacher when discussing representations of various ethical alternatives.

Outsourced can also potentially stimulate ethical reflection on what concerns the rich-poor-gap, and the challenge this represents globally. Todd is repeatedly confronted with the poor in the slum right next to where he is lodged, and after a while he discovers that there is a system of sharing the excess food from the guesthouse. What is more, many scenes portray

him astonished when he peeks over the fence to observe the daily routines and troubles of the poor. The new insight encourages him to contribute in the sharing of food. The example illustrates that individual autonomy as a guideline for moral decisions does not have to be self-centred. These scenes also demonstrate that to encounter ‘the other’ is to empathise with him (Byram, 1997), which in the next turn has implications for moral thinking and decision making.

The view that the individual is autonomous when ethical choices are to be made, is to some extent a result of a postmodern perception of morality. In every culture there exists ways of thinking that are perceived as self-evident, in the sense that they are seldom subject to discussion. An example of this is the strong emphasis on individualism in Western societies (Aadnanes, 2012, p. 62). The analysis indicates that this view is predominant in the literary texts in my data material, although contesting alternatives are presented in some texts. To be thoughtful of moral actions is significant in intercultural dialogue, and all parties carry a responsibility in this respect. Such an attitude involves “the identification of one’s duties and obligations and how one ought to act in relation to a particular situation, based on a value or set of values” (Council of Europe, 2018, vol. 1, p. 44) . The examples discussed above demonstrate such aspects, as well as the significance of critically assessing one’s own actions.

4.3.2 Reconciliation and forgiveness – or vengeance?

Reconciliation and forgiveness are two other aspects that are emphasised in intercultural dialogue. These ethical values may restore relations between individuals and groups, but require empathic attitudes of individuals involved, and very often a willingness to break out of cycles of retaliation (Council of Europe, 2018, vol. 1, p. 35) . Reconciliation and forgiveness are also central elements in for instance Christian worldview traditions (Aadnanes, 2012).

In spite of the significance of these aspects in intercultural communication, these issues are rather inconspicuous in my data material. In fact, there are more texts speaking of vengeance and retaliation than of forgiveness. The film *Gran Torino* (text 13) is the only work in my data material which clearly speaks of reconciliation and forgiveness as ethical principles for maintaining constructive inter-human and intercultural relations, although it also strongly addresses the issue of retaliation. In spite of the protagonist Walt’s relentless and bitter appearance in large parts of the film (see also 4.1.2), it is clear from the very beginning that he is tormented by events in his past, and the difficulty to settle and forgive. Repeated conversations with the local priest, however, convince him of going to confession, an act his

deceased wife also strongly encouraged him to do. Moreover, to settle on disagreement and injustice is something that has been made relevant in Walt's life after gradually having learned to know his Hmong neighbours better, and his hostile demeanour towards them softens. The first sign of such a changing attitude in Walt occurs when Tao and his sister Sue remorsefully show up at Walt's house the day after Tao attempted to steal Walt's price car, the 1972 Gran Torino. In spite of Walt's initial relentlessness, this confessional scene gives birth to the special relationship between Walt and Tao which characterises the rest of the film.

Towards the end of the film, the protagonist has acquired a more conciliatory spirit towards his closest family. By now, Walt is also made aware of the very serious character of his illness. In one of the last scenes of the film, he calls his oldest son. At his desk is a recent medical report. Walt's errand is clearly an attempt to reconcile before he passes away, but he bails out when he senses that his son is busy:

(Walt:) Hello? It's me... Dad

(Mitch:) I know. What's up?

(Walt:) Um... not much, how about you?

(Mitch:) I'm fine, fine

(Walt:) (...) How about the kids and Karen?

(Mitch:) Everyone is fine (...)

(Walt:) Well, that's good (...)

(Mitch:) Okay. Yeah, so it's not a good time right now. Why don't you call me over the weekend? (Eastwood, 2008, text 13)

The viewers are not given much explicit information about how family relations develop after this, but the final scene of the film hints at the family not being completely reconciled. When Walt's last will is announced after his funeral, his closest family is left with barely anything. The scene illuminates the notion of retribution and restoration of justice which can be said to be a moral contrast in the film. This aspect is even more palpable in the episodes where Walt takes matters into his own hands when dealing with the violent Hmong gang which constantly harasses Tao and Sue.

The short stories "Free for All" (text 14) and "One of My Best Friends" (text 15) also shed light on the issue of retribution, and how civilised human beings are trying to restrain from turning to violence. "Free for All" tells the story of Pakistani Sayyid Ali Naqvi, a successful physician in the U.S. Naqvi is disappointed with his son whom is seemingly

uninterested in education and career. Naqvi talks this over with his son several times, but fails in making him understand. This results in Naqvi beating his son, and as a consequence is charged with child abuse. Nevertheless, Naqvi feels that it is his right to discipline and punish his son, and since this is reacted upon in the U.S., he brings his family to Karachi where he can beat his son without the authorities reacting.

Most of the plot in “Free for All” is caricatured and exaggerated. This might be a technique used by the author to emphasise contrasts, particularly what concerns differences on values and views on morality. The caricatured main characters also serve to shed light on cultural differences, for instance Pakistani parents’ freedom to discipline children whenever they find this is needed, and Western youths’ irresponsibility and oppositional attitudes. As such, the short story provides ample examples on conflicting views on morality which may be addressed by teachers and students.

Retribution in the short story “One of My Best Friends” comes first and foremost to expression in the last scene, which has already been presented in 4.2.1. The violent scene in the soccer match where Willy punches the narrator of the story, illustrates how the wish for vengeance sometimes overrides the deed of forgiveness, and thus becomes human beings’ moral guideline.

The fact that there are more texts in my material shedding light on vengeance and retaliation than there are texts about forgiveness, strengthens the notion of individuality and autonomy in moral decision making which has characterised moral reflection in modern, secular societies (see 4.3.1). To a certain degree, recognising that one’s actions have brought about suffering and pain on others, contradicts the individual’s autonomy, because to plead forgiveness is inherently about devaluating a previous moral choice. Note et al. (2009) argue that the Western belief in human being’s autonomy manifests in the conduct of life, for instance in the way rules and norms become the fundament for decisions. On account of this, such issues need to be addressed in intercultural learning. The texts discussed above are good examples which can stimulate reflection on perception of values and morality. The characters’ forgiving or unforgiving qualities are elements the readers both can relate to, but also eventually distance themselves from. Discoveries of this kind can take place when the learner “enters into a dialogue with the text and the foreign culture” (Fenner, 2000, p. 146). From an intercultural perspective, this is an important competence to elicit in the learners, as it can contribute to an enhanced understanding of why situations are as they are, and why people behave as they do.

4.3.3 *The loyal citizen*

A third pronounced aspect regarding perceptions of values and morality in the literary texts, is the notion of patriotism and national loyalty. Are the individual's actions based on self-interest, or is it the interests of a nation that have priority? In slightly different manners, such issues were identified in altogether five texts of my material, and in what follows I will comment upon three of these.

Both the graphic novel excerpt "Snowden" (text 18) and the song lyrics "The Veil" (text 19) revolve around the life of Edward Snowden, the American who copied and leaked to the press highly classified material about the U.S. government's surveillance activities. Both texts present this as an act of heroism and patriotism.

The short excerpt from "Snowden" describes what happened when Edward Snowden gradually became suspicious of the government, and how he exploited his privileges as a computer specialist in the NSA. Through text and graphic the reader learns how his sense of responsibility awakens. The excerpt also illuminates the scope and consequences of the government's surveillance system: "The government's snooping was growing more expansive, peering into more and more of our private lives. Unless someone spoke up, Edward concluded American society was at risk of becoming a dystopian nightmare" (*Global Visions*, text 18, p. 271). Snowden's moral obligations are based on restoring citizens privacy. The excerpt describes the information he found as unconstitutional; his acts are therefore patriotic in the eyes of fellow Americans. In a similar vein, "The Veil"⁴ underlines Snowden's duty towards fellow men, but the poem also contemplates more explicitly how this is a moral dilemma. The fourth stanza underlines this: "Some say you're a patriot / Some call you a spy / An American hero / Or a traitor that deserves to die" (*Global Visions*, text 19, p. 275). The tone, however, is to go forth with leaking the secret documents. An additional perspective is also visible in the poem: It is Snowden's duty to do this, although he is alone, and it comes with a cost. Considering this, it is natural to conclude that his ethics to a large extent are based on his experienced responsibility towards others. A counterargument could of course be that he is disloyal towards fellow citizens, as his actions could also put the lives of Americans at risk. This perspective is not evident in the two texts, however; Snowden's actions are meant to benefit others.

⁴ The song lyrics alone does not explicitly say that it is about Edward Snowden. However, «The Veil» was written for the film *Snowden*, and this context is presented as background information to the song in the textbook.

The poem “Flag” (text 11), which also was presented in 4.1.2 above, problematises the concept of patriotism in a slightly different manner. Does it always work as guideline for making ethical choices? The flag is a symbol of patriotism in the poem, and the poet illustrates how it is often used in wars and conflicts to remind the individual of his motherland, and in the next turn plot the moral course. The flag stands for a heteronomous authority, and relenting too much on it is problematic: “How can I possess such a cloth? / Just ask for a flag my friend / Then blind your conscience to the end” (*Global Visions*, text 11, p. 178).

The three texts discussed here illuminate an ethics which to a large extent is based on duty. Such a view is common in various worldviews, although they have different fundamentals (Aadnanes, 2012, p. 147). The fundament in the texts, however, lies clearly within the individual, and as such they portray an autonomous, duty-based morality. A component of intercultural competence is “the willingness to question the values and presuppositions in cultural practices and products in one’s own environment” (Byram, 1997, p. 92). To the extent patriotism is a common view in the learner’s home culture, the texts open up for reflection on such moral values.

4.4. Beliefs, trust and meaning

Beliefs, trust and meaning is the fourth analytical category that has been employed when investigating the texts. The understanding of a belief in the present thesis, is that it might be an explicit or concealed element in a worldview, but which nevertheless says much about where the human being directs his search for meaning. Such pursuits often serve to fill religious functions (Dahle, 2003, p. 99). Furthermore, relying on one or another belief reflects a universal aspect of the human condition: The need for something to anchor trust in. Consequently, a belief in this context does not necessarily have anything to do with the religious. It is simply a fundamental orientation that gives meaning to existence (Dahle, 2013; Sire, 2015). This is also in accordance with what the coding of the texts has revealed: A place to return to, for instance when life appears meaningless or strenuous, is a central facet of many texts.

Chapter 3.3.1 discussed how beliefs have implications for many aspects of the conduct of life. A person’s beliefs will for instance influence the perception of reality, morality, and how one views fellow human beings. Yet, to get an overview of where beliefs and meaning are anchored, it was necessary to include it as a separate category in my analyses.

In more than a third of the texts, knowledge, progress and possibilities are issues which are significant regarding what the characters in the texts believe in. “I Am” (text 1) and “This Bridge” (text 2) are two poems which exemplify this. In some other texts, it is noticeable that gaining access to possibilities in life can provide hope when daily life is characterised by poverty or injustice. Such a view is palpable in for example “They Sold My Sister” (text 10) and “Cause and Effect” (text 21). Related to this theme, is what concerns personal happiness, career and wealth. These are conspicuous issues in just under half of the texts. What establishes meaning for many characters, is to have a financially secure future and safe employment, and to enjoy the pleasures and material benefits life offers. “A Parody ‘No Racial Prejudice Intended’” (text 5), “More American than the Americans” (text 7) and *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (text 16) are examples of texts which portray such *hedonist* attitudes. To some extent the findings presented in this category share a similar pattern with *perception of reality* (4.1). In some instances, perspectives that are regarded typically Western, such as knowledge and progress, are contrasted with for instance religious beliefs and tradition. According to Aadnanes (2012), hedonism as a belief system is typical for people in modern Western societies. Search for pleasure, welfare, increased consumption and technology are all important to understand the foothold hedonism has gained in the Western world, but is seldom thematised in the public debate (p. 58). An elaboration of some of these aspects and examples in the literary texts can be found in 4.4.1 below.

Family, traditions and cultural background as constituent parts of trust and meaning, are important in half of the texts. Family is for instance portrayed as something stable and consistent when life or circumstances are turbulent otherwise. Examples of this notion are the protagonist’s reflections in “Foreign” (text 4) and the ruminations about belonging which are conspicuous in “More American than the Americans” (text 7). In some texts, for instance “Free for All” (text 14), traditions and background are presented as alternatives to materialistic beliefs. In texts where ethnic and cultural encounters are significant themes, a person’s cultural background often plays a central role. To rely on traditions is also important for some characters when important decisions or priorities are to be made. Such aspects are subject to discussion in 4.4.2.

Hospitality and the good in humanity are closely related to the view of humanity (see also 4.2). However, when hospitality was identified as a separate theme under the analytical category *beliefs, trust and meaning*, it was because some texts present it as something more fundamental; it lies at the core of what establishes meaning for some characters. Doing good, searching beyond cruelty for the good in human beings, and a belief that humanity is

something genuinely good and positive one can trust in, are central aspects in a little less than one third of the texts. This aspect is prevalent in the texts about Edward Snowden, and is related to patriotism as a moral guideline (see 4.3.3). Hospitality and the good in humanity are also central themes in “Snow” (text 3), “The Right Word” (text 8) and “A Real Lady” (text 20), which all in different manners shed light on hospitality and compassion. These aspects will be discussed further in 4.4.3.

A few texts portray image, youth culture and fashion as important ingredients in a system of beliefs. In some texts, this is presented as an alluring trail out of misery and loneliness (for example “Antisocial Media: Short Fiction Based on a True Story”, text 17), but in others as something that cannot fulfil the need for meaning in life (for example “The Fat Black Woman Goes Shopping”, text 9). Two texts feature nihilist worldviews, and are as a result more explicitly negative towards whether or not there is any meaning in life at all; since there is nothing greater to believe in, it does not matter what one does in life. Nihilism is the belief that “matter is all there is (...) the cosmos operates with a uniformity of cause and effect in a closed system” (Sire, 2009, p. 97). The texts “Antisocial Media: Short Fiction Based on a True Story” (text 17) and “Cause and Effect” (text 21), both throw light on the meaninglessness of existence.

Religious beliefs are noticeable in five of the analysed texts, although a spiritual perception of reality is an underlying premise in a few more texts (see 4.1 above). *Gran Torino* (text 13) and “Free for All” (text 14) both feature characters who believe in God, an aspect made distinct through acts of praying or the recognition of God as the benefactor in the worldly life. In other texts, such as “My Son, the Fanatic” (text 12), information about religious beliefs is given through how characters justify actions or live their lives. Such aspects are to some extent brought into the discussion in 4.4.1 below.

Lastly, the two texts “A Real Lady” (text 20) and “Cause and Effect” (text 21) portray fate as an important element regarding what one believes in. In general, the characters in these texts view their situations and places in life as something they cannot control, and therefore put up with it.

4.4.1 Happiness, possibilities and progress

In many texts, an important fundament for the good life is to experience happiness, wealth and to pursue a career. Moreover, knowledge and progress are seemingly central parts when it comes to creating meaning; such aspects are for instance important in order to break out of poverty, end injustice or in general to achieve something in life. All of these aspects are

common in secular, modern societies, where religious beliefs are diminishing among people (Aadnanes, 2012). In the text material, such beliefs are most often carried by characters from different backgrounds who all embrace the Western, and again we see how “Western-centrism” characterises the texts. The discussion that follows aims at illustrating how these aspects play the role of beliefs.

A text which explicitly illuminates how possibilities and achievements are central ingredients in a good life, is the short story “Free for All” (text 14). The short story was also discussed in 4.3.2 where ethical values and cultural background were considered. The protagonist Sayyid Ali Naqvi is the successful Pakistani-American, who has everything he needs in life. His dedication and willingness to work in order reach and maintain a successful lifestyle, come particularly to expression already in the introduction:

Dr Sayyid Ali Naqvi had achieved great success in the USA as a physician. He earns thousands of dollars every month, working about sixteen hours a day. After putting in a long, hard day, almost totally exhausted, he entered, at well past midnight, his grand and ultra-modern kitchen. (*Global Visions*, text 14, p. 207)

Naqvi’s obsession with, and reliance on wealth and success, is a recurring theme in the short story. To him, this is the fundament on which he places trust and finds meaning. Although he in one of the dialogues with his son refers to God as the benefactor of wealth, religious faith does not seem to influence his life in any particular way. Naqvi is not satisfied with the current situation, though. His son does not have any of the father’s priorities; for him music is life, not getting an education. Because of this, Naqvi does not have peace of mind, despite his material success in life. He persistently tries to transfer his priorities to his son, but completely fails.

The short story shows how such a fundament for trust and meaning fails in the long run. Naqvi has to turn to tranquilisers because of not being able to sleep. This unsettling situation is also recognised by the protagonist, but it is something he is unable to find a solution to. In other words; there is an inner ambiguity as what concerns the main character’s beliefs. As it turns out, however, there is an alternative to relying on material goods and success. When Naqvi fails in connecting with his son, he decides to turn to culture and tradition for assistance. Naqvi’s brother presents this as an alternative, but warns that it is in direct conflict with success and wealth: “My dear brother, your son has to visit the family back home to see how elders are respected there. Go back to Karachi and forget about making

millions here” (*Global Visions*, text 14, p. 207). Tradition and cultural beliefs as places to anchor trust are alternatives the narrator has given up years ago, but he nevertheless decides upon giving this a try. After having disciplined his son at the airport in Karachi, however, he is soon at back-peddalling home to his life in the U.S.: “Let’s go back to America by the evening flight. The water and food here can make the children sick, and besides we left the air-conditioning on and there is an energy crisis” (p. 211). In this way, the author draws attention to the meaninglessness of relying too much on wealth and money.

To experience success and gain possibilities can also be a path out of misery and injustice. We saw how having access to education was principal in text 10, “They Sold My Sister” (see the discussion in 4.1.1). However, this is also a central theme in “Cause and Effect” (text 21). The basis for trust and meaning in this poem is to have so much wealth in life that you can afford a proper school. If this asset for some reason is missing, the human being is deemed to a gloomy life, all which ultimately will destroy the individual. The title and the structure of the poem point to a negative chain of reactions, every prospect of a good life has evaporated because of the shortage of material goods. “Cause you are poor / you go to public school / Cause public school is free / you get a lousy education” (*Global Visions*, text 21, p. 313). Further, the poem illuminates how the lack of education leads to others treating the narrator with contempt, which in the next stance gives rise to anger, crime, punishment and destruction.

The poem illustrates how possibilities and wealth are important ingredients for a good life. By presenting life’s events as a vicious spiral when money is missing, the poem emphasises the importance of this benefit, and that wealth in next turn is a guarantee for the good life. In other words, it functions as something which the individual can anchor trust upon, and which establishes meaning. However, by virtue of not presenting alternatives to this belief, the poem is in danger of promoting wealth as the sole meaning of life and the solution to everything. Other beliefs, such as the individual human being’s inherent value, the strength to break out of the vicious circle, or religious perspectives, are not regarded. Consequently, when materialism fails, the individual becomes subject to the existence’ incalculable fate and left with the intense feeling of meaninglessness.

In Western societies, materialism is often unintentionally and implicitly presented as something that more than anything can provide meaning in life (Aadnanes, 2012, p. 59). The pursue of money and success is seldom questioned or challenged. To what extent do riches and success give meaning and shelter, when for instances family relations crumble? The above analyses call for an attention to these matters when cultural issues, worldviews and

values are contrasted and compared in the classroom. A central aspect of intercultural competence is for the learner to relativise what is taken-for-granted in order to facilitate understanding for people who think differently (Byram, 1997). By help of the short story “Free for All” and the poem “Cause and Effect”, learners get a rare opportunity to reflect upon the durability and stability of materialism, success and similar beliefs that have been unveiled. They are also challenged to consider what the alternatives are, which is an important quality in the process of understanding oneself and others.

4.4.2 Family, culture and tradition

In half of the texts, aspects such as family, culture and tradition are of significance when it comes to where the individual finds meaning in life. Many of these texts portray characters in a foreign environment, for instance the immigrant trying to fit in in a new country. Family and cultural background function as a safe harbour when storms rage in the oceans of strangeness. To a large extent, this particular finding is in line with the dividing lines between the Western and ‘the other’ which have been brought forward above. Now we see that also a belief in family and traditions applies to how others, the foreigners, are characterised. Representatives of the Western are seemingly not so occupied with such matters. The American character Todd in *Outsourced* (text 6) is a telling example. The film was also discussed in 4.2.2 above. In a dialogue between him and his Indian colleague Puro about cultural differences, the latter appears puzzled when he learns that Todd hardly sees his parents, even if they live only two hours away. Contrasted with Indian cultural traditions, this is a rather uncommon arrangement: To live nearby family and close relatives is an important component in how the individual establishes meaning and trust.

Family and cultural belonging come particularly to expression in “Foreign” (text 4). The narrator in this poem is in a hopeless and desperate situation. She (or he) is a foreigner who has lived in an unnamed city for twenty years, never having managed to get integrated. The poem presents many reasons for this; language barriers, racism and longing being some of them. Everything the protagonist experiences leaves her with a feeling of alienation. In the first stanza she reflects: “...you hear / your foreign accent echo down the stairs. You think / in a language of your own and talk in theirs” (*Global Visions*, text 4, p. 88). The poem starts and ends with the word *imagine*. This demonstrates the protagonist’s appeal of empathy to the reader of the poem: Try to understand what this hopelessness entails.

Three of the poem’s four stanzas refer to the main character’s background or family in one or the other way. When communication for various reasons breaks down in the new city,

she lays the blame on not being in a homelike, comfortable environment. She also hears the voices of her family and loved ones in her mind. Thinking of her family arouses positive emotions and comforts her. The second stanza illustrates this matter:

Then you are writing home. The voice in your head
recites the letter in a local dialect; behind that
is the sound of your mother singing to you,
all that time ago, and now you do not know
why your eyes are watering and what's the word for this (*Global Visions*, text 4, p. 88)

Further, the protagonist of the poem describes how the feeling of alienation is strengthened by the fact that she occasionally experiences acts of racism and hate. Such episodes contribute to the feeling of everything falling apart. To survive at all in this unknown city, the main character is in need of anchoring trust somewhere, a basis on which she can find meaning in an environment she experiences as hostile. She finds this by keeping alive memories and language, and by maintaining communication with her family. This is her belief, the foundations on which she lives and moves and have her being (Sire, 2015).

The novel excerpt “More American than the Americans” (text 7) also describes the immigrant experience in a Western society. In the excerpt, the Americans are viewed from an outsider perspective by the Iranians. The family reflects on their experiences in the U.S., and to what extent their background and cultural heritage should still play a role. Sami, in particular, pokes fun at stereotypes and what he regards ridiculous American habits. In spite of this, he appears well established and integrated in the American society. He refuses to speak Farsi when the family is gathered and has according to his mother swallowed every aspect of American culture since childhood. Sami, in other words, is divided as what regards culture and background. In the end of the novel excerpt, his mother confronts him with this paradox:

“You with your Baltimore accent,” she said, “American born, American raised, never been anywhere else: how can you say these things? (...) Oh, I never thought you would talk this way! When you were growing up, you were more American than the Americans.” (*Global Visions*, text 7, p. 126)

To this accusation, Sami briefly replies: “Well, there you have it (...) Didn’t you think to wonder why?” (p. 126). Sami’s mother stresses all the positive things America has contributed with for the Iranians, and that this is not something one should rant of. This dialogue illustrates the ambiguity Sami has towards his own Iranian background. He has chosen to disregard much of his culture, because his childhood experiences revealed that it was not something he could trust. More than anyone else, he was therefore forced to embrace every aspect of American culture.

The story illustrates how cultural background plays a crucial role regarding how meaning is created in life. When the Iranian background failed Sami, the solution was to adopt and find meaning in an American identity. The excerpt also sheds light on how family relations are important for the extended Iranian-American family. The gathering, which is at the centre of events in the story, is not a one-time happening, they come together on a regular basis.

The texts brought forward in the discussion above serve to illuminate how family, culture and tradition can play the role as a belief. This notion predominantly applies to characters representing foreign cultures, and as such the finding follows the same pattern as Thomas (2017) identified about “the racialised Other” in his study of short stories in Norwegian textbooks (see 1.3.1 and 4.1.1). One of his findings is that all the time something is ascribed to non-Westerners, “the only available template appears to be one which straightjackets them into predetermined Orientalist tropes” (p. 10). An aspect that should be subject to reflection in the English classroom, is to what extent this pattern in the literary texts reflects life in general. Are family and traditional belonging components of meaning that pertain more to non-Westerners than Westerners, and do such beliefs appear to be in conflict with each other? The stories brought forward in this sub-chapter are well suited to discuss what individuals and cultural groups believe in, and what establishes meaning and trust in life.

4.4.3 Hospitality and the good in humanity

Although many issues regarding view of humanity were elaborated on in 4.2., my findings indicate that a reliance on human beings’ inherent qualities of hospitality and compassion in many situations fill the role of a *belief*, according to how this concept is understood in the present thesis (see 2.1. and 4.4.). For characters in some of these texts, it is seemingly clear that such notions are constituent parts of what establishes meaning in existence.

This perspective comes particularly to expression in the short story “A Real Lady” (text 20). The plot in this text circles around a poor, young girl living in one of the slums of Mumbai, India. The girl, named Chanda, is to begin with portrayed from a third-person perspective, and the readers get insight in everything she does to survive during the day; prepare food for the household, clean and look after a baby. Throughout the story the reader is misled to think that Chanda is a young woman, something which also is emphasised by the title of the short story. Towards the end of the text, however, it is revealed that Chanda is only seven years old. Owing to the fact that she is the only female of the household, she is assigned many chores, as well as caring for her baby sister or brother.

There are several indications in the short story that point to Chanda having yielded to this situation: “Never would she complain or show any distress at the hard works she had to do all day. She accepted this as her fate” (*Global Visions*, text 20, p. 308). However, although she sees no way out of poverty, she manages to find happiness and peace in her current situation, even though some of the duties are strenuous for her. One passage of the text illustrates this matter. Chanda has allowed herself a short rest, and sits on the threshold:

This was the best part of her day. She could rest, and look at the people on the streets. She looked with simple curiosity, not resentment (...) she felt she was lucky too. She had a family, a roof over her head, and one good meal a day. And the baby to play with. She couldn't ask for more. (*Global Visions*, text 20, p. 308).

The story also illuminates how time-consuming the household duties are, and the reader gradually discovers how little time there is left for the young girl to play and just be a child. However, it is Chanda's compliance with, and gratitude for her role as caretaker for the other family members which predominantly establish meaning in her life. This attitude towards life seems to be an important theme in the short story, although the main character's belief also comprises a passive reliance on fate.

Towards the end of the story, there is a shift to first-person perspective; the omniscient narrator who up until now has only observed Chanda from an outsider perspective, meets her in person. The narrator talks to the girl, and experiences a happy and laughing seven-year-old: “As she spoke about the baby, the tiredness seemed to lift from her eyes. I was glad that she couldn't fathom the pity in mine” (p. 309). This personal encounter serves to illustrate how difficult it is for someone outside to understand how this poor girl's life and living conditions in any way is perceived meaningful. At the same time, the new insider-perspective lays the

foundation for a renewed understanding for the life of the poor girl, and how meaning and trust are realised in her life.

Hospitality is also a significant theme in the short story “Snow” (text 3). This text was also discussed in 4.1.2, regarding how questions of life and death was prevalent in the story. The main character Yolanda is an immigrant to the U.S. from the Dominican Republic, and is trying to adapt to her new life in New York. The story is told from her perspective, and from the very beginning of the text, the reader learns how well she is taken care of by the “Sisters of Charity” at a Catholic school. The sisters are compassionate and show understanding for Yolanda’s situation. Sister Zoe in particular has the ability to see the world from Yolanda’s point of view. She teaches vocabulary and concepts that appear incomprehensible for the newcomer in the class. Yolanda’s vulnerability comes to expression on different areas of life: Loneliness, cross-cultural challenges and language barriers. She reflects on the sympathy she experiences at school:

I liked them a lot (...) As the only immigrant in my class, I was put in a special seat in the first row by the window, apart from the other children so that Sister Zoe could tutor me without disturbing them. (*Global Visions*, text 3, p. 78)

To see the good in humanity is related to the belief in the individual’s inherent value and liberty. This view comes particularly to expression in the final lines of the short story. Realising it has started to snow, the nuns seize the opportunity to call attention to every human being’s uniqueness: “Each [snow] flake was different, Sister Zoe had said, like a person, irreplaceable and beautiful” (p. 79).

“Snow” is set during the cold war, a period with tension and conflict between peoples and individuals. The sisters in the story represent a contrast to this; they possess a clear belief in human value and the good in humanity. These aspects are probably related to their Christian worldview. The nuns’ daily life and routines become meaningful by practicing charity, and the strength of this perspective becomes concrete in how it affects the sensitive and insecure Yolanda.

The short stories discussed in this sub-chapter illustrate how solidarity, hospitality and the good in humanity constitute beliefs. They are also powerful examples of a central aspect of intercultural communication: The willingness to relate to others by building and sustaining relationships. When this is in place, learners can acquire a deeper understanding for beliefs and meanings which might seem incomprehensible or even incompatible at first glance

(Byram, 1997). The narrator's initiative in learning to know Chanda in "A Real Lady" (text 20) provides insight into the poor girl's daily life, and the readers may thus reflect upon what establishes meaning for 'the other'. The shift to first-person perspective is also a rare opportunity for the learners to put words on their own feelings and reactions towards the character's life. In "Snow" (text 3), personal relationships and charity go hand in hand. This literary text illustrates how such a view of humanity and human value might provide meaning in turbulent contexts otherwise, and the significance such concerns have for intercultural relations and understanding. This is an aspect that must be given attention in the English classroom.

Chapter 5. Conclusion

5.0. Introduction

This final chapter of the thesis sums up the main findings of the study and considers didactic implications of these. Moreover, the chapter elaborates on possible limitations of the findings, in addition to providing suggestions for further research.

The aim of the investigation has been to find traces of worldviews in the literary texts in *Global Visions* (Burner et al., 2017), and to reflect upon which implications this may have for the development of IC. The research questions of the thesis were:

Which traces of worldviews are reflected by the literary texts in the EFL textbook Global Visions?

How, and to what extent, are the worldviews conflicting?

Which implications may this have for intercultural learning processes in the EFL classroom?

These issues have been investigated through qualitative, thematic analysis of the literary texts. The four main analytical categories were: *Perception of reality, view of humanity, perceptions of values and morality, and beliefs, trust and meaning.*

5.1. Summary of findings and didactic implications

The findings have been presented and discussed at length in chapter four above. In this sub-chapter, I will summarise general tendencies and trends in the material.

First of all, it is interesting to notice that the analyses of the literary texts point to a wide range of worldview themes. As a whole, the text material illuminates various aspects related to the four predefined categories; for example whether or not perception of reality is secular or spiritual, the significance of human value and relations, what forms the basis for values and ethical decisions, and whether or not trust and beliefs are rooted in e.g. possibilities and success, or religion or tradition. Some of the themes are more conspicuous than others, and the material also comprises texts which deviate from general tendencies. In almost every text in the investigated material, the reader is acquainted with other characters

from foreign contexts. Close readings have provided insight into the worldviews which describe both ‘self’ and ‘other’. The theory section of this thesis discussed how worldviews are embedded in both cultures and individuals as assumptions and commitments (Sire, 2015). Thus, in order to acquire deeper awareness and understanding, worldview aspects are of significance in intercultural communication, and relevant for the students’ development of IC. I would therefore argue that such aspects must be given priority when literature and intercultural learning are on the agenda in the classroom.

An example is how the various themes identified in the category *beliefs, trust and meaning* (see 4.4.) are central with respect to how humans understand ‘self’ and ‘other’. Although the literary texts to some extent seem to cement a stereotyped pattern as regards who believes in what, being able to identify such aspects can facilitate reflection in the learners. In the next turn, such an awareness can provide a fundament for empathy and tolerance. Such notions of beliefs might have remained veiled unless sought analysed from the worldview perspective modelled in this thesis.

In general, a clear tendency in the texts is the dominance of modern Western worldview perspectives, such as for instance secular reality perceptions, individual autonomy, and beliefs relying on progress and success in contrast to religion or tradition. This particular finding manifests itself in all of the four analytical worldview categories, and thus underlines the extent of this tendency. Furthermore, the general impression in the texts is that the Western world is often regarded in a homogenous and essentialist manner; apart from a few texts there is little space for nuances in this respect. Which implications does this finding have for how Norwegian FL learners, the target audience for *Global Visions*, understand their own identities? The concept of ‘diverse diversities’, which emphasises non-essentialism in cultural descriptions, advocates that Westerners are also diverse and different from each other (Dervin, 2016). Such concerns are only to a small extent reflected in the texts. What is more, the characters who in fact do identify with alternative worldviews, are predominantly ‘the others’, representing the foreign and unknown. More than the traditional Westerners, they seem to rely e.g. tradition, spirituality and family values. As such, this finding is in accordance with Thomas’ (2017) conclusion after having scrutinised eight short stories in Norwegian FL textbooks: ‘The other’ is different, racialised and often subject to generalisations. All of these are concerns that need to be addressed critically in intercultural learning. The individual voices must be heard and regarded on their own account (Dasli & Díaz, 2017; Dervin, 2017), one cannot take for granted that all are homogenous in such

respect. For this reason, it is imperative that reflection on one's own self in terms of identity, worldviews and values is facilitated in the classroom.

There are, however, a couple of welcome exceptions to this tendency described above. In the short story "My Son, the Fanatic" (text 12), the reader recognises how many typically Western worldviews and values are advocated by one of the main characters, the Pakistani immigrant Parvez. This narrative choice contributes with new vantage points and critical reflection of Western values; perspectives which perhaps would have been more concealed if carried by a more traditional Western character. In a similar vein the Pakistani narrator of *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (text 16) can be said to shed light on the capitalist values of the Western world, at the same time as he is ambiguous towards traditional Muslim values and worldviews. As with any worldview, religion or ideology, the Western needs to be challenged and criticised. An unconscious adoption of such worldviews might hinder purposeful communication (Note et al., 2009; Aadnanes, 2012), and the learners must therefore be trained to view their own identities and home culture from an outsider perspective exemplified by the abovementioned characters. Moreover, to uncover which values the learners embrace or distance themselves from might lead to an "evaluative understanding" (Byram, 1997, p. 44) and a new understanding of both 'self' and 'other'. In this respect, these texts are helpful examples to be used in intercultural teaching and learning. Investing time on reading, analysis and discussion, guided by the teacher, may provide the learners with new insights and facilitate a further development of IC. In more specific terms, a question for discussion in the English classroom could be whether or not the students identify with how the Western is represented in the texts. They could also be challenged to describe in their own words how their home culture is also diverse.

5.1.1 Conflict, disagreement and ambiguity

The subordinate research question of the present thesis was how, and to what extent, worldviews identified in the texts conflicted. This turned out to be an interesting aspect of the text analyses. Conflictual issues proved to be a recurring theme in the majority of texts, and were found in all the four aforementioned analytical categories, and in every chapter of *Global Visions*. A notable finding is that very often when conflicting worldviews and values are presented in the literary texts, it is done so without resolving the conflict or offering a solution to problems presented. As a result, many texts have endings which are ambiguous and indeterminate. This means that the reader has to make his own decisions and judgements in order to establish meaning (Iser, 1972). Not to offer a solution to unsettled issues when

working with literary texts from an intercultural perspective in the EFL classroom, might at a first glance seem a little contradictory and imprudent, as resolving the unsettled is often what people seek in intercultural communication. Another way to look at it, however, is to consider if living with disagreement and conflict in fact is what each and one of us do in our daily lives, and that the texts as such offer a more realistic approach to multiculturalism and intercultural communication (see chapter 2.4.1). Iversen (2014) argues that this might be a beneficial approach in today's diverse societies. Discussion and disagreement might provide a deeper insight into others' worldviews, which in next turn hopefully might seem less threatening and more understandable (p. 13). Similarly, Hoff (2016) argues that agreement is not always achievable in intercultural communication, and that education therefore must play a role in teaching students how to live with and handle conflict (p. 57).

A majority of the literary texts that have been examined in this study are suited to promote such perspectives. For this reason, reading and working with *Global Vision's* literary texts in the English classroom, and particularly observing how worldviews set the premises for the characters' thinking and doing, will most certainly promote valuable IC in today's diverse and often disharmonious societies. In more concrete terms, this can be facilitated by challenging students to identify aspects of their own worldviews and values which may be in conflict with those of others, and encouraging them to reflect on how cooperation and coexistence still can be achieved.

5.1.2 United through humanity and value

Even though there are contrasts and even conflicts between individuals and cultures, it is important not to forget what unites human beings in intercultural learning, as this can break down boundaries. An over-emphasis on difference can be unproductive in a globalised world where the exchange of ideas and beliefs has become common (Dervin & Gross, 2016). Interculturality is much more than outlining what makes human beings different (Dervin, 2016, p. 35).

My analysis of texts reveals such a pattern of common ground: The significance of human beings' inherent value. A majority of the texts underline that every human being is valuable, something which is an important fundament for establishing and maintaining constructive human relations. Human value as a universal aspect of the human condition comes to expression both directly and indirectly in the literary texts in *Global Visions*. This particular finding was to a large extent detected via the analytical category *view of humanity*

which revolves around identity questions, what it means to be a human being, and what our roles and responsibilities towards fellow human beings are.

In sum, these findings serve to illustrate the point that it is important not to forget what unites human beings. Worldview analysis is not only a means to unearth differences, it also helps us see similarities (Sire, 2015, p. 159). This must also be regarded when intercultural learning is on the agenda in the classroom. Prior to pointing out differences between ‘self’ and ‘other’ when studying literary texts, teacher and students should consider such elements of common ground. Potentially, this may reduce resentful attitudes, and promote empathy and a more thorough understanding of ‘the other’ and the foreign.

5.2. Common values and the new national core curriculum

The textbook under scrutiny and the present thesis are based on the core curriculum (“Core curriculum – for primary, secondary and adult education in Norway”, Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 1994). However, a few comments on the forthcoming core curriculum may also be relevant (“Core curriculum – values and principles for primary and secondary education”, Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2017)⁵, as it just now is on the threshold of taking effect in schools. Among other things, this document emphasises how common frameworks of reference are central when the aim is to promote belonging and identity in a society. By help of such common frames the students should gain insight into how they can live together with different views of life, attitudes and worldviews. However, the curriculum is seemingly relying on the prerequisite of certain common core values which are meant to unite learners as members of the Norwegian society: “School [sic] shall (...) make the pupils confident in who they are, and also present common values that are needed to participate in this diverse society and to open doors to the world and the future” (p. 6). Examples of such values are equality, democracy and citizenship, respect, individual autonomy, and forgiveness and solidarity: “These values, the foundation of our democracy, shall help us to live, learn and work together in a complex world and with an uncertain future” (p. 3).

Yet, the analysis of literary texts in the present thesis has shown that common values in many cases are unattainable in intercultural communication. Nonetheless has the discussion also brought forward how ambiguity and conflict in such matters can actually facilitate reflection and deeper learning (Hoff, 2014). The way worldview conflicts are portrayed and

⁵ The new national core curriculum will be implemented in August 2020.

handled in the literary texts illustrates in the first place that these texts aim at presenting a realistic view on interculturality and coexistence. Secondly, it shows that it is possible to approach various conflictual topics without always having unanimity or resolution as aims. For reflection and work in the classroom, however, it is imperative to explore and consider such worldviews and values. But to require subscription to certain values and views as a prerequisite for participation and cooperation, might be unproductive in modern societies. People belong in a society and may experience a fellowship nonetheless, despite the fact that shared worldviews and values are sometimes missing. Cooperation and dialogue can take place, and the schools have a special responsibility in this respect (Iversen, 2014). As such, it can be debated whether or not the new curriculum has a too optimistic point of departure.

The new core curriculum also makes mention of dignity, equality and identity as pillars in all education. In more specific terms it states that schools shall fight discrimination and promote human value. It also emphasises that every human being makes mistakes and is dependent on forgiveness (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2017). These are interesting aspects, as such issues were identified in many texts in the material (see 4.2. and 5.1.2).

5.3. Possible limitations of the thesis

The present thesis investigates literary texts, not reading or reading processes. This is something I have tried to be aware of in the discussion of implications of the findings. Neither does it examine classroom practice and activities with regard to how texts are worked with.

Owing to the qualitative nature of the study, and the fact that only one textbook for one specific level has been under scrutiny, the research does not give me any opportunities for generalisations. In other words, this means that the findings brought to light and discussed in this thesis cannot automatically be applied on other textbooks. In qualitative research, one often speaks of comparability and transferability instead of generalisability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, cited in Cohen et al., 2011). The former is perhaps most relevant for the present thesis, as future research may employ the same methods in the investigation of other textbooks.

Further, the thesis is an investigation of one particular feature of an EFL textbook: The literary texts and how they convey worldviews and values. This means that there are other parts of the book that have not been examined, but which still can provide insights regarding how traces of worldviews come to expression in a textbook, and the didactic implications this has for the development of the students' IC.

5.4. Further research

Although literary texts constitute the material of this thesis, the investigative focus might be applied on other parts of the textbook. Factual texts, images, illustrations and graphs are examples of elements which all carry meaning and traces of worldviews. Moreover, it is probable that the textbook material as a whole complement each other with regard to worldviews and intercultural learning. All these aspects call for a continued scrutiny of textbooks and content. Furthermore, it is necessary to be critical of the tasks that follow the texts of a textbook, since these often seem to strongly influence reading focus (Fenner & Ørevik, 2018). Do the tasks entail strong guidelines for example regarding which aspects of a text that are emphasised? Other studies might also consider comparing textbooks in terms of traces of worldviews and IC. Another approach is to research classroom practice related to the same topics.

Further studies might of course investigate worldviews in literary texts in other textbooks. Based on the central findings of the present thesis, it would for instance have been interesting to see how Western worldviews are portrayed in other books, how issues of conflict are brought up, and whether or not humanity and human value constitute a common ground for coexistence.

The thesis relies on the reader's capability of identifying often implicit themes in the texts, or filling the empty gaps of the texts with meaning (Iser, 1972). Whether or not the students manage similar reading strategies in their own work with texts is something future studies may focus on, in the context of intercultural learning and other.

Hopefully, this study can function as a system for analysis for others, both researchers and educators. It may potentially be adopted for use with other textbooks and texts, in the EFL classroom and other.

5.5. Concluding remarks

The present study illustrates the significance of facilitating worldview reflection and competence in education, in particular in relation to intercultural learning processes. Having insight into which views fellow human beings have on life and the world might provide a breeding ground for communication, and in the next stance understanding and empathy. If Hovdenak and Leganger-Krogstad's (2018) findings apply to Norwegian learners as a whole (see chapter 1.2.), schools and teachers are compelled to open doors to new spaces in which teenagers and young adults can reflect on worldviews, so that they can see similarities and

increase their awareness and understanding for others. At the present, school subjects are being renewed in Norway. It is possible that such concerns in the future are regarded in new and different ways.

This master's thesis has been concerned with worldview analysis of literary texts in an EFL textbook, and has discussed some didactic implications. However, in order to take seriously any worldview question of the young, as well as equipping them for the adult life after school, several subjects and topics should regard these issues.

References

- Andersen, H. J., & Dahle, M. S. (2018, Jan 22). *Oppgave og verktøy til læremiddelanalyse, med fokus på menneskesyn* [Conference session]. Kristne Friskolers Forbunds kurs i læremiddelanalyse, Oslo.
- Bloemert, J. (2013). Citizenship, language, and superdiversity: Towards complexity. *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education*, 12(3), 193-196.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15348458.2013.797276>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Bredella, L. (2006). The significance of multicultural literary texts for intercultural understanding. In L. Čok (Ed.), *The close otherness* (pp. 73-92). Založba Annales.
- Burner, T., Carlsen, E., Henry, J. S., Kagge, J., Lokuge, N. S., Raustøl, S. P., & Weston, D. (2017). *Global Visions. Programfaget internasjonal engelsk* (1st ed.). Aschehoug.
- Byram, M. (1997). *Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence*. Multilingual Matters.
- Byram, M. (2008). The intercultural speaker: Acting interculturally or being bicultural. In M. Byram (Ed.), *From foreign language education to education for intercultural citizenship. Essays and reflections* (pp. 57-73). Multilingual Matters.
<https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.pva.uib.no/lib/bergen-ebooks/detail.action?docID=370269>
- Bø, E. (2014). *Tv-serier og livssynsformidling - med serien «En moderne familie» som case-studium* [Master's thesis, Det Teologiske Menighetsfakultet].
<http://hdl.handle.net/11250/285643>
- Cohen, L., Morrison, K., & Manion, L. (2011). *Research methods in education* (Vol. 7th ed). Routledge.
<http://search.ebscohost.com.pva.uib.no/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=548475&site=ehost-live>
- Council of Europe. (2001). *Common European framework of reference for languages: Learning, teaching, assessment*
<http://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=0900001680459f97>

- Council of Europe. (2018). *Reference framework of competence for democratic culture* (Vol. 1-3) <https://www.coe.int/en/web/education/publications>
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Educational research: planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (4th ed., New international ed.). Pearson.
- Dahle, M. S. (2003). Spor av tru i ei tenåringssåpe? Om ungdomsmedia og religionspedagogen. *Prismet*, 54(3), 99-104.
- Dahle, M. S. (2013). Budskapet og brillene - om fag, formidling og forståelse. In M. S. Dahle (Ed.), *Våg å tenke* (pp. 81-102). Egill Danielsen stiftelse.
- Dasli, M., & Díaz, A. R. (2017). Tracing the 'critical' trajectory of language and intercultural communication pedagogy. In M. Dasli & A. R. Díaz (Eds.), *The critical turn in language and intercultural communication pedagogy. Theory, research and practice* (pp. 3-21). Routledge. <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.pva.uib.no/lib/bergen-ebooks/reader.action?docID=4684286&ppg=28>
- Dervin, F. (2016). *Interculturality in education: A theoretical and methodological toolbox*. Macmillan Publishers Ltd. <https://link-springer-com.pva.uib.no/content/pdf/10.1057%2F978-1-137-54544-2.pdf>
- Dervin, F. (2017). *Critical interculturality. Lectures and notes*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing. <https://www.cambridgescholars.com/download/sample/63995>
- Dervin, F., & Gross, Z. (2016). Introduction: Towards the simultaneity of intercultural competence. In F. Dervin & Z. Gross (Eds.), *Intercultural competence in education. Alternative approaches for different times* (1st ed., pp. 1-10). Palgrave. <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1057%2F978-1-137-58733-6>
- Dypedahl, M., & Bøhn, H. (2017). *Veien til interkulturell kompetanse* (2 ed.). Fagbokforlaget.
- Eastwood, C. (2008). *Gran Torino* [Film]. Double Nickel Entertainment.
- Fenner, A.-B. (2000). Cultural awareness. In D. Newby (Ed.), *Approaches to materials design in European textbooks: Implementing principles of authenticity, learner autonomy, cultural awareness*. Council of Europe Publication.
- Fenner, A.-B. (2011). Litteraturens rolle i utviklingen av interkulturell kompetanse. *Communicare*, 1(1), 41-43. <https://www.hiof.no/fss/om/publikasjoner/communicare/2011/communicare-2011.nr.1.pdf>
- Fenner, A.-B. (2012). Promoting intercultural competence and *Bildung* through foreign language textbooks. In M. Eisenmann & T. Summer (Eds.), *Basic issues in EFL teaching and learning* (pp. 371-384). Winter.

- Fenner, A.-B. (2018). Approaches to literature. In A.-B. Fenner & A. S. Skulstad (Eds.), *Teaching English in the twenty-first century* (pp. 215-236). Fagbokforlaget.
- Fenner, A.-B., & Ørevik, S. (2018). Analysis of learning materials. In A.-B. Fenner & A. S. Skulstad (Eds.), *Teaching English in the twenty-first century* (pp. 332-360). Fagbokforlaget.
- Global Visions – programfaget internasjonal engelsk Vg2/3*. (n.d.).
<https://nettbutikk.undervisning.aschehoug.no/laremiddel/global-visions>
- Hall, G. (2015). *Literature in language education* (2nd ed.). Palgrave MacMillan.
- Hamid, M. (2007). *The reluctant fundamentalist*. Penguin.
- Helgesen, M. V. (2017). *Learner involvement related to intercultural competence and Bildung: A comparative study of literary texts and tasks in textbooks for upper secondary school* [Master's thesis, University of Bergen].
<http://bora.uib.no/handle/1956/16334>
- Hoff, H. E. (2014). A critical discussion of Byram's model of intercultural communicative competence in the light of bildung theories. *Intercultural Education*, 25(6), 508-517.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14675986.2014.992112>
- Hoff, H. E. (2016). From 'intercultural speaker' to 'intercultural reader': A proposal to reconceptualize intercultural communicative competence through a focus on literary reading. In F. Dervin & Z. Gross (Eds.), *Intercultural competence in education. Alternative approaches for different times* (1st ed., pp. 51-71). Palgrave.
<https://link.springer.com/book/10.1057%2F978-1-137-58733-6>
- Hoff, H. E. (2018). Intercultural competence. In A.-B. Fenner & A. S. Skulstad (Eds.), *Teaching English in the twenty-first century* (pp. 67-89). Fagbokforlaget.
- Holliday, A. (2011). *Intercultural communication and ideology*. Sage.
- Hovdenak, S. S., & Leganger-Krogstad, H. (2018). Religion som fag – sett fra elevperspektiv. *Prismet*, 69(1), 27-50. <https://journals.uio.no/prismet/article/view/6152>
- Ibsen, E., & Wiland, S. M. (2000). *Encounters with literature: The didactics of English literature in the context of the foreign language classroom in Norway*. Høyskoleforlaget.
- Iser, W. (1972). The reading process: A phenomenological approach. *New Literary History*, 3(2), 279-299. <https://doi.org/10.2307/468316>
- Iversen, L. L. (2014). *Uenighetsfellesskap: Blikk på demokratisk samhandling*. Universitetsforlaget.
- Janss, C., & Refsum, C. (2003). *Lyrikkens liv: Innføring i diktlesning*. Universitetsforlaget.

- Jeffcoat, J. (2006). *Outsourced* [Film]. ShadowCatcher Entertainment.
- Juuhl, G. K., Hontvedt, M., & Skjelbred, D. (2010). *Læremiddelforskning etter LK06. Eit kunnskapsoversyn*. Kunnskapsdepartementet.
https://www.udir.no/globalassets/filer/tall-og-forskning/rapporter/2010/5/laremiddelforskning_lk06.pdf
- Klafki, W. (1996). Kategorial dannelse. In E. L. Dale (Ed.), *Skolens undervisning og barnets utvikling. Klassiske tekster*. (pp. 167-203). Ad Notam Gyldendal.
- Knudsen, B. M. (2016). *Textbook tasks and the development of ICC in the EFL-classroom. How do textbook tasks in the subject of English in VG1 potentially promote the development of intercultural communicative competence?* [Master's thesis, University of Bergen]. <http://bora.uib.no/handle/1956/12712>
- Kramsch, C. (2001). Intercultural communication. In D. Nunan & R. Carter (Eds.), *The Cambridge guide to teaching English to speakers of other languages* (pp. 201-206). Cambridge University Press.
- Kramsch, C. (2011). The symbolic dimensions of the intercultural. *Language Teaching*, 44(03), 354-367. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444810000431>
- Langeland, S. (2019). *Verdensbildeperspektiv på fortellinger. Didaktisk anvendelse av et metaspråk som legger til rette for dannelsesprosesser og utvikling av literacy*. [Master's thesis, University of Bergen]. <http://hdl.handle.net/1956/19945>
- Li, Y., & Dervin, F. (2018). *Continuing professional development of teachers in Finland* (1st ed.). Springer International Publishing: Imprint: Palgrave Macmillan.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-95795-1>
- Lund, R. (2007). *Questions of culture and context in English language textbooks. A study of textbooks for the teaching of English in Norway* [Doctoral thesis, University of Bergen]. <http://bora.uib.no/handle/1956/2421>
- Mørk, K. L. (2007). Bok og film. Med skriftlige og skjermbaserte tekster i skolesekken. In M. Lillesvangstu, E. S. Tønnesen, & H. Dahll-Larsson (Eds.), *Inn i teksten - ut i livet. Nøkler til leseglede og litterær kompetanse* (pp. 122-136). Fagbokforlaget.
- Naugle, D. K. (2002). *Worldview: the history of a concept*. W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.
- Nome, J. (1970). Tro og fornuft i livssynet. In J. Nome (Ed.), *Kunst og etikk. Essays*. Universitetsforlaget. https://urn.nb.no/URN:NBN:no-nb_digibok_2007072400044
- Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training. (1994). *Core curriculum. For primary, secondary and adult education in Norway*.

https://www.udir.no/globalassets/filer/lareplan/generell-del/core_curriculum_english.pdf

Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training. (2006). *English programme subject in programmes for specialisation in general studies (ENG 4-01)*.

<https://www.udir.no/k106/ENG4-01/Hele/Formaal?lplang=http://data.udir.no/k106/eng>

Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training. (2017). *Core curriculum – values and principles for primary and secondary education*. <https://www.udir.no/lk20/overordnet-del/?lang=eng>

Note, N., Fornet-Betancourt, R., Estermann, J., & Aerts, D. (2009). Worldview and cultures: Philosophical reflections from an intercultural perspective. An introduction. In N. Note, R. Fornet-Betancourt, J. Estermann, & D. Aerts (Eds.), *Worldviews and cultures. Philosophical reflections from an intercultural perspective* (pp. 1-9). https://link-springer-com.pva.uib.no/chapter/10.1007/978-1-4020-5754-0_1

Nygaard, A. H. B. (2014). *How do textbooks in International English invite students to expand their intercultural perspectives through tasks related to texts about multiculturalism?* [Master's thesis, University of Bergen].

<http://bora.uib.no/handle/1956/8943>

Pring, R. (2015). *Philosophy of educational research* (3rd ed. ed.). Bloomsbury.

Rancière, J. (2004). *The politics of aesthetics: The distribution of the sensible*. Continuum.

Rogne, M. (2008). Omgrepet tekst i skulen – ei tverrvitskapleg tilnærming. *Norsk pedagogisk tidsskrift*, 92(3), 234-247. https://www-idunn-no.pva.uib.no/npt/2008/03/omgrepet_tekst_i_skulen_-_ei_tverrvitskapleg_tilnærming

Sire, J. W. (2009). *The universe next door: A basic worldview catalog* (5th ed.). IVP Academic.

Sire, J. W. (2015). *Naming the elephant: Worldview as a concept*. InterVarsity Press.

Skaftun, A. (2009). *Litteraturens nytteverdi* (Vol. nr. 178). Fagbokforlaget.

Skulstad, A. S. (2018). Communicative competence. In A.-B. Fenner & A. S. Skulstad (Eds.), *Teaching English in the twenty-first century* (pp. 43-66). Fagbokforlaget.

Stautland, H. J. (2017). *Intercultural competence in literary texts in Aschehoug's textbooks for International English. Towards a shift in perspective?* [Exam paper, University of Bergen].

Stemler, S. (2001). An overview of content analysis. *Practical Assessment, Research and Evaluation*, 7(17). <https://doi.org/10.7275/z6fm-2e34>

- Thomas, P. (2017). The portrayal of non-westerners in EFL textbooks in Norway. *Cogent Education*, 4(1), 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2016.1275411>
- United Nations. (1948). *The universal declaration of human rights*.
<https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>
- Aadnanes, P. M. (2012). *Livssyn* (4th ed.). Universitetsforlaget.
- Aase, L. (2005). Litterære samtalar. In B. K. Nicolaysen & L. Aase (Eds.), *Kulturmøte i tekstar. Litteraturdidaktiske perspektiv* (pp. 106-124). Det norske samlaget.
- Aase, L., Fleming, M., Pieper, I., & Sâmihăian, F. (2007). Text, literature and “Bildung” – comparative perspectives. In I. Pieper (Ed.), *Text, literature and “Bildung”*. Council of Europe. <https://rm.coe.int/09000016805a31de>

Appendices

Appendix 1: A presentation of the literary texts in *Global Visions* (Burner, et al., 2017)

1 – “I Am” (in Burner, et al., 2017, p. 36)

Poem by Lolnope99 [pseudonym], 2015

To settle the important question of identity is what lies on the narrator’s shoulders in this poem, something we also understand from the title of the poem. He or she *is not* failures and a negative past, rather he or she *is* an optimistic future, goals and dreams. Every line in each stanza starts with the phrase “I am”, a device that draws attention to the identity question and understanding of purpose in life.

2 – “This Bridge” (in Burner, et al., 2017, p. 38)

Poem by Shel Silverstein, 1981

In this poem, the character referred to as “you” stands on the brink to something new, undefined, unexplored. The bridge metaphor is used both in the title and in the poem itself. A bridge will be of great help, but the most important initiative must be taken by each individual alone: “But this bridge will only take you halfway there – the last few steps you’ll have to take alone”.

3 – “Snow” (in Burner, et al., 2017, pp. 78-79)

Short story by Julia Alvarez, 1992

A positive immigrant experience is a central topic in this short story. The protagonist is new in New York, and is learning English at a Catholic school in the city. Empathic and patient nuns take good care of the newly arrived student. Linguistic and cultural training, as well as positive human relations, are topics that this short story sheds light on. The title refers to the protagonist’s vocabulary training, but could also be a symbolic reference to the setting: The Cold War and the Cuban Missile Crisis.

4 – “Foreign” (in Burner, et al., 2017, p. 88)

Poem by Carol Ann Duffy, 2004

This is a poem of four stanzas that brings up the topics of identity and alienation. The narrator is clearly an immigrant to an unnamed city, and the poem deals with the challenge of never getting a sense of belonging at the place of residence. As the title indicates, the poem deals

with the problematic immigrant experience, illuminating the outsider perspective. It brings up topics like language challenges, family and culture, discrimination and racism.

5 – “A Parody ‘No Racial Prejudice Intended’” (in Burner, et al., 2017, p. 100)

Poem by Francis Duggan, 2008

The plot in this poem circles around an immigrant living in an Australian city, unemployed, enriching himself on the society’s merit goods obtained by working Australian citizens.

Duggan uses irony and stereotypes throughout the whole poem, and appears by this to criticise Australian immigration and integration policies. An example of this can be found in the fourth stanza: “Thank you Aussie you are great // you put meat upon my plate”.

6 – *Outsourced* (film study in Burner, et al., 2017, pp. 117-122)

Film by John Jeffcoat (dir.), 2006

The film comedy portrays Todd Anderson, an employer in an American company which call centre has recently been outsourced to India. Being in charge of the training of new personnel in India, one of the most diverse and populated countries in the world, Anderson experiences many surprises. Through the use of humour and exaggerations, the film sheds light on topics such as stereotypes and misunderstandings as well as intercultural development, human value and empathy.

7 – “More American Than the Americans” (in Burner, et al., 2017, pp. 123-126)

Novel excerpt by Anne Tyler, 2006

This excerpt from the novel *Digging to America* by Anne Tyler, portrays an Iranian-American family gathering. In an impassioned discussion, Americans are viewed from an outsider perspective by the Iranians. The excerpt sheds light on stereotypes and generalisations, but also questions what it means to belong in the US, and to identify with the American way of living. The excerpt title, which is a quote from the text, refers to this.

8 – “The Right Word” (in Burner, et al., 2017, p. 129)

Poem by Imtiaz Dharker, 2006

Semantics and identity are treated in Imtiaz Dharker’s poem. As the title indicates, what is the most appropriate term for this person the narrator encounters outside, in the shadows, and ultimately at his doorstep? Is he a ‘terrorist’, a ‘martyr’ or a ‘child’? Words and names determine whether or not the narrator finds him worthy of being invited in for supper. The

poem might be a commentary on how language and expressions conceal or reveal the human behind descriptions.

9 – “The Fat Black Woman Goes Shopping” (in Burner, et al., 2017, p. 132)

Poem by Grace Nichols, 1984

This poem describes an immigrant woman observing the busy London streets. She is out shopping herself, but find few alternatives as she does not at all look like, or want to look like, the thin mannequins in the display windows. In this respect, the poem addresses questions of identity, background and belonging.

10 – “They Sold My Sister” (in Burner, et al., 2017, pp. 135-139)

Short story by Lateipa Ole Sunkuli, 1989)

As the title indicates, the text brings up the topic of forced marriage, told from a child’s point of view. An underaged girl is sold off to marriage. The setting is the countryside, some place in Kenya. Customs like dowry and wedding ceremonies are described. The parents’ wishes regarding following the tribe’s customs are contrasted with the children’s unwillingness to accept the traditions.

11 – “Flag” (in Burner, et al., 2017, p. 178)

Poem by John Agard, 2004

The poem describes a flag, hoisted and used in different situations. The narrator notices the flag at different places, and ingenuously questions what this item is, more than “just a piece of cloth”. Every time he gets an answer, each of them illustrating the power and symbolic meanings of a flag: The flag could for instance be a symbol of national superiority, or something that is used to motivate soldiers in war.

12 – “My Son the Fanatic” (in Burner, et al., 2017, pp. 181-190)

Short story by Hanif Kureishi, 1994

A father and a son are the main characters, first and second-generation immigrants from Pakistan. The father gradually discovers that his son has become a devoted Muslim. The father, on the other hand, is well-integrated in secular British way of life. The text portrays a family conflict, which also represents tensions and conflicting worldviews on society level. The title points to the son’s “fanaticism”, but the text seems to indicate that fanaticism concerns more than extreme religious beliefs.

13 – *Gran Torino* (film study in Burner, et al., 2017, pp. 198-202)

Film by Clint Eastwood (dir.), 2008

The film portrays an introvert widower, angry and alienated from his family, who unwillingly must deal with his new neighbours, a group of Hmong immigrants. One of the young immigrants tries to steal a Ford Gran Torino. This incident ignites a relationship between the main character and his new neighbours. Other issues the film sheds light on are forgiveness, revenge and views on theology and religion.

14 – “Free For All” (in Burner, et al., 2017, pp. 207-211)

Short story by Moin Ashraf, 1999

This text presents an immigrant from Pakistan to the USA. A father is frustrated by his son who does not want to obey by his rules. A situation ends with the father beating his son, and the police gets involved. Learning that physical disciplining of children is not allowed in the USA, the father brings his family to Karachi where no one reacts when he punishes his son. The title of the short story is ironic, Westerns societies are no ‘free-for-alls’ when it comes to physical disciplining.

15 – “One of My Best Friends” (in Burner, et al., 2017, pp. 218-222)

Short story by Peter Goldsworthy, 1994

An interethnic friendship is at stake in this text by Peter Goldsworthy. As a boy, the narrator befriends a native Australian, a relationship partly influenced by racist attitudes. As adults, they live at different places, but meet again when the narrator moves to his hometown. A football match, in which the narrator is hit by his childhood friend, concludes the short story. Some topics the short story brings up are human value and empathy.

16 – *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (novel study in Burner, et al., 2017, pp. 235-239)

Novel by Mohsin Hamid, 2007

The title of this novel might give expectations to religious fundamentalism, but refers more to how Westerners put their faith and trust in fundamentals such as money and success. The protagonist, Changez, reveals to a stranger at a Lahore café how he embraced everything America had to offer, but gradually became more reluctant towards Western values and capitalist beliefs. The main plot is retrospective, and concerns Changez life in the USA.

17 – “Antisocial Media: Short Fiction Based on a True Story” (in Burner, et al., 2017, p. 243)

Short story by Kim Z. Dale, 2014

Author Kim Z. Dale has portrayed what coercion into joining social media might look like for the persons involved. The protagonist finally yields, and the second half of the story revolves around the protagonist’s changed life, positive and negative consequences of having a social media-identity. Indicated by the title, the social aspects of social media are questioned. Are they in fact more antisocial than social?

18 – Snowden (in Burner, et al., 2017, pp. 270-271)

Graphic novel excerpt by Ted Rall, 2015

This is an excerpt from Ted Rall’s graphic novel about Edward Snowden, where he fictionalises real events in the whistle-blower’s life. The excerpt describes how Snowden first encounters American secrets, at the time when he was employed as a computer specialist in NSA. The final picture in the excerpt describes how Snowden considers telling the truth about USA’s surveillance programme. The graphic novel illuminates aspects such as moral commitments and patriotism.

19 – “The Veil” (in Burner, et al., 2017, p. 275)

Song lyrics by Peter Gabriel, 2016

This is a song from the film *Snowden*. It describes the turmoil going on inside a whistle-blower when he ponders whether or not to go public with the information he has gained access to. Will such a person be regarded a patriot or a traitor?

20 – “A Real Lady” (in Burner, et al., 2017, pp. 308-309)

Short story by Nita J. Kulkarni, 2008

The short story describes a young, motherless, seven-year-old girl taking care of her poor family in an Indian village. The story describes the young girl’s daily routine, as well as her view of life and moments of happiness and daydreaming. The use of the word “lady” in title reveals to the reader the adulthood of the girl, as well as how the narrator looks upon her with respect. Human value and poverty are two pertinent topics in the text.

21 – Cause and Effect (in Burner, et al., 2017, p. 313)

Poem by Peter Spiro, 1994

This poem illuminates the consequences by growing up in poverty. Starting by saying “cause you are poor”, the poem presents a chain of reactions, also indicated by the title of the poem. The state of poverty and not affording education, ultimately lead to crime, anger and destruction. The poem can be looked upon as a commentary on poverty and social inequality in the Western world.

Appendix 2: Coding scheme

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
	Sub-theme																					
Perception of reality	Outer reality: Spiritual																					
	Outer reality: Secular/inexplicit																					
	Life, death, afterlife																					
View of humanity	Human value																					
	Interhuman relations																					
	Human rights and equality																					
	Identity and alienation																					
	Empathy and perspective-taking																					
	Responsibility and self-sacrifice																					
	Stereotypes and prejudices																					
	Racism																					
Perception of values and morality	Obj. ethics/heteronomous authority																					
	What is good and right																					
	What works																					
	Reconciliation and forgiveness																					
	Vengeance																					
	Patriotism																					
Belief(s), trust, meaning:	Knowledge, progress and possibilities																					
	Happiness, career, wealth																					
	God/religion																					
	Family, traditions, cult. background																					
	Hospitality, the good in humanity																					
	Image, youth culture and fashion																					
	Nihilism, meaninglessness																					
	Fate																					

Literary texts in order of appearance in Burner, et. al (2017):

Text 1	I Am (poem)	Text 8	The Right Word (poem)	Text 15	One of My Best Friends (short story)
Text 2	This Bridge (poem)	Text 9	The Fat Black Woman Goes... (poem)	Text 16	The Reluctant Fundamentalist (novel)
Text 3	Snow (short story)	Text 10	They Sold My Sister (short story)	Text 17	Antisocial Media (short story)
Text 4	Foreign (poem)	Text 11	Flag (poem)	Text 18	Snowden (graphic novel exc.)
Text 5	A Parody 'No Racial prejud..' (poem)	Text 12	My Son, the Fanatic (short story)	Text 19	The Veil (song lyrics)
Text 6	Outsourced (film)	Text 13	Gran Torino (film)	Text 20	A Real Lady (short story)
Text 7	More American than ... (novel exc)	Text 14	Free for All (short story)	Text 21	Cause and Effect (poem)