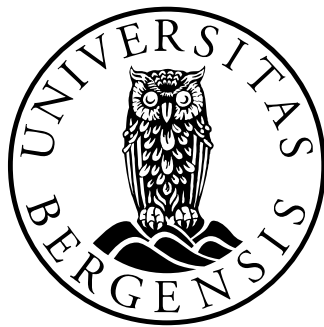# HOW DO NORWEGIAN EFL LEARNERS IN THEIR FIRST YEAR OF UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL EXPERIENCE ENCOUNTERS WITH ENGLISH LITERATURE? A CASE STUDY

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Firstly, I am grateful for the skillful guidance from my thesis supervisor at UiB, Hild Elisabeth Hoff, whose advice has been of inestimable help and which has given me new and deeper insight. Furthermore, I need to show my gratitude to my peer students and my lecturers at the master's program for useful input, support and encouragement.

Last, but not least, my greatest gratitude goes to my wonderful family. I could not have done this without their love and support.

Ørsta, August 2015

Merete Gretland Steinnes

PREFACE

The aim of my research is to investigate and discuss how upper secondary EFL pupils experience encounters with English literature. My research intends to find answers to the questions of how they approach English literature within and beyond the EFL classroom, and what they consider to be challenging, but also what they find meaningful in this respect.

During the research process, I interviewed seven EFL learners in their first year of upper secondary school at the general studies program in-depth. They have provided me with valuable information concerning their experiences with reading literature in English. The aim is to understand more about how pupils at this stage approach and respond to the literary texts they encounter, and to discuss which implications such insight may have for the teaching of English literature.

ABSTRACT IN NORWEGIAN

Å arbeide med litteratur i engelskfaget er spennende og utfordrende. Å tilrettelegge for gode og meningsfulle møter mellom tekst og elev er ikke alltid enkelt for lærere med tanke på tekstutvalg, oppgaver og tilnærmingsmåter som skal vurderes og velges, samt at elevenes forutsetninger skal tas omsyn til. Fokuset på lesing av litteratur i norsk skole er stort, og det inngår som en sentral og omfattende del av engelskfaget. Hvordan oppleves dette fra elevenes ståsted?

Målet med denne studien er å se nærmere på hvordan en gruppe vg1-elever på studiespesialiserende program opplever møter med litterære tekster på engelsk både i og utenfor klasserommet.

Denne studien tar utgangspunkt i lesing av, og arbeid med, litteratur som en kreativ prosess der eleven betraktes som en viktig bidragsyter til meningen av lesingen. Videre er det et mål med denne studien å belyse et viktig område innenfor engelskundervisningen i norsk skole, noe som elevers erfaringer med engelsk litteratur er, og videre hvordan tekstutvalg, tilnærmingsmåter og arbeidsmåter har innvirkning på disse erfaringene. Studien belyser hva elevene opplever som meningsfullt og hva som er utfordrende i dette henseende, og diskuterer didaktiske implikasjoner på grunnlag av funnene i studien.

Oppgaven tar for seg dybdeintervjuer med 7 elever fra videregående skole, vg1. Metoden som er brukt er kvalitativt forskningsintervju, og hovedmaterialet som er grunnlaget for denne studien er intervjuene med elevene. To intervjuer har blitt utført med hver elev; ett som fokuserer på lesing av engelsk litteratur i et generelt perspektiv, og ett som mer spesifikt dreier seg om møter med engelsk litteratur i klasserommet, og om lesing av spesifikke tekster.

Resultatene viser at elevene opplever det som meningsfullt å lese litteratur på engelsk og å arbeide med litteratur i engelskfaget, men at motivasjonen på ulike vis varierer i gruppen av informanter. De fleste informantene leser og møter de litterære tekstene ut ifra sitt eget erfaringsperspektiv, og dette gjelder så vel i, som utenfor, klasserommet. Å takle en mer analytisk inngang til litteratur på engelsk er det flere av informantene som har utfordringer med, og studien indikerer derfor at det er behov for å skape broer mellom de ulike tilnærmingsmåtene til litterære tekster i engelskfaget slik at elevene kan utvikle seg som lesere av litteratur, og at de kan få fremgang i sin generelle tekstkompetanse.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS:

CEFR Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

EFL   English as a Foreign Language

FL   Foreign Language

L1   First Language / Mother tongue

L2   Second Language

LK06   National Curriculum for Knowledge Promotion of 2006

PZD   Proximal Zone of Development

1. INTRODUCTION

> The teacher of literature will be the first to admit that he inevitably deals with the experiences of human beings in their diverse personal and social relations. The very nature of literature, he will point out enforces this. Is not the substance of literature everything that human beings have thought or felt or created? (Rosenblatt 2005: 26).

Many of us can relate to reading literature as something of value, something *meaningful.* But how does meaning occur when we read a literary text, poem, or a short story for example? In many ways a literary text is larger than itself; it is more than just signs following each other on a piece of paper. Literature can amaze us and move us. It can make us angry or make us laugh. Besides, through involvement with literature we can get the sensation of understanding or realizing something new, something we have not thought about before. Presumably, the reading of literature can also be a tiresome and seemingly meaningless experience. In these cases, the signs in a row on a paper do not manage to either move or amaze us, nor make us sad or happy.

As a young girl, I used to love to escape into the fictional universes of great adventures and their brave heroes. *Detective Nancy Drew, Anne of Green Gables* and *The Little House on the Prairie* were all enjoyed with great enthusiasm and I could identify with the main characters because they resembled me or they perhaps represented someone I wanted to be. As a teenager I read *The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole* by Sue Townsend eagerly, overwhelmed by the sensation of finding a book reflecting so many of my own thoughts, feelings and ideas. In the early years of adulthood, I read both literary classics and mainstream books with great eagerness. In school, however, reading literature was something completely different. In upper secondary school, we read *The Death of a Salesman* in the English subject, just like "everybody else" at the time. For some reason, I guess it must have been because of our English teacher, I ended up liking the play by Arthur Miller a lot! Who could have guessed? I do not think I liked it much at first, but when we were encouraged to study the different characters and explore the relationship between Willy Loman and his sons, a new dimension unveiled and I can still remember this happening to me. The gloomy atmosphere of the setting, the failing sales man, the tragic hero, my teacher's lecture on "the American Dream" and the WASP cultural heritage… I could not have fully understood all of it, really, but still: this gave me a thought provoking insight to an unknown world and to unknown settings and

characters, and the story touched me. The tragic story appealed to me, a seventeen-year-old Norwegian girl, with a life so different from the one of Willy Loman and the 1940's New York suburbs as you can imagine. Why do I remember this text so well, but not any of the other texts we read in class?

I was taught how to close read and how to do literary analysis in upper secondary school and I do remember liking it, but what I did not like was the fact that there always seemed to be one 'correct' way of interpreting a literary text in class, a short story for example. The fear of not having the correct answers to the text stopped me from participating in the classroom conversation about it. The fear of embarrassment kept my mouth shut, but still I enjoyed reading, mostly in my spare time but sometimes also in school.

Reading literature in a school context was not always fun or meaningful, but I think it had some sort of elevated status, because good literature was supposed to be difficult and "over our heads". The reading of *Death of a Salesman*, however, became a personal reading experience for me because the teacher helped us enter the text by providing us with information concerning background and context, and by asking questions and giving cues. I think we even dramatized parts of the play in groups. When I some years later watched the film version of this work with Dustin Hoffman in the leading role, I realized how much this literary text had meant to me and how much I appreciated this very fine experience. I ask myself how my peers experienced reading this book. I do not know for sure, but we probably mocked it "because it was school" and we had to read it. I do not think my English teacher ever knew that I liked working on this literary text as much as I did, and why.

As I, several years later, embarked on my Master's studies and started planning my thesis, such experiences contributed to the investigative focus on my research project. How do the learners experience what is going on in the classroom when literature is on the agenda? Can readings of literary texts open up for new processes and experiences or do they represent just another task to be finished? This is something I have wanted to investigate further for some time now.

Before moving on to describing the aim and purpose of the present research project, I would like to make account for my background in brief. By teaching English in upper secondary school since 2001, I have witnessed and experienced how employment of literary texts in the classroom can lead to fruitful and inspiring encounters where different views and reading experiences can meet, and where pupils and teacher can discuss, compare and learn from each other. Encounters with literature in the EFL classroom can open up for various learning

situations, as a unique quality of literary texts is the openness they represent by inviting their readers to become involved in the creation of meaning. Unfortunately, it is not always possible to know how the process of reading literary texts, and working with them, is experienced by the learners. In this Master's thesis I investigate how pupils in upper secondary school experience encounters with literary texts both beyond and within the English classroom, how approaches and reading practices influence their meetings with these texts, and the extent to and manner in which they find the reading of literature to be meaningful[1]. A central part of this thesis is to find out how learners experience literary work in the EFL classroom and which role tasks and activities, peers and the teacher play in this respect. Is the reading of English literary texts meaningful to the learners, and what might be challenging to them in this respect? Which didactic implications concerning the role of literary texts in the EFL classroom can this investigation suggest?

This thesis has its base in qualitative research as it aims to investigate learners' perspectives on themselves and their experiences with reading English literature. Consequently, it is the learners who are the most important contributors to information and material in this project.

1.1 A brief historical overview of the role of literature in EFL education

The reading of literature has always played an important part in the teaching of foreign languages at higher levels. The main purpose has been that the students were acquainted with the classic works of literature in such a way that they could analyze it and take learning from it. In earlier times, the historical-biographical method where looking into the life and actions of the author in search for clues to the meaning of a text, was the most common approach in encounters with literature for educational purposes (Fenner 2005). Later, this main approach to literature stepped aside for a text-oriented approach to literature, with its roots in New Criticism. Text-oriented theory introduced close reading as a technique, where the reader's close attention to the text and its contents could unveil the meaning of the text in a process of thorough analysis. This specific approach to reading literary texts influenced the teaching of literature in schools, including EFL (Fenner 2005). The New Critics' approach to literary criticism has provided us with technical terms such as *theme, symbol*, *metaphor* and *irony* (Scholes 2001). Consequently, this approach is most commonly task-based involving multiple

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[1] By *meaningful* in this context I mean that the reading of literary texts opens up for thinking, reflection, learning, new insight and new perspectives

sets of exercises, and it evolves around the texts' form and content. The latter has its primary focus on the reader and the process of reading, rather than on the author and the text. In reader-response criticism, the text possesses no fixed and final meaning or value. There can or will be many possible 'meanings' - depending on the reading, and the readers experiences. How does the literary reading experience of the learners reflect these perspectives?

1.2 The role of literature in LK06

The current National Curriculum, also referred to as The Knowledge Promotion (LK06), was introduced in 2006. This curriculum represents a shift in focus from *knowledge about* and *understanding of* in the former curricula in English to *competences* and *skills* in the new curriculum, LK06. In other words, the overarching focus in LK06 is on the learners' skills and competences; what they should be able to do. In this respect, strengthening so called *basic skills*, such as reading, writing, oral expression, mathematics and use of digital tools is vital in all subjects. LK06 considers the learner as an active and creative participant in the learning situation and not a passive recipient of knowledge. The learner then, according to LK06 is an active producer of meaning who should acquire a number of different competences[2]. However, the curriculum's focus on competences and the testability of these accordingly, is not necessarily reconcilable with the creative and aesthetic processes desired for literary work in the EFL classroom (Fenner 2005). The joy of reading literature in order to provide a basis for creativity, personal growth, maturity and understanding of others, as the English subject curriculum (LK06, English subject curriculum, English version: 2) proclaims, is a central part of the English subject. Nevertheless, the curriculum gives little information about how the learners ought to approach and work with literature in order to reach the overarching aims. The curriculum will be further discussed in section 2.2.

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[2] The learner is in this respect viewed as what the Council of Europe (2001) describes as a 'social agent' – a member of society with tasks to accomplish in a given set of circumstances, in a specific environment and within a particular field of action. The approach (to learning) is primarily action-oriented (Council of Europe 2001: 9).

1.3 Previous research

There has not been carried out much research on the role of literature in EFL learning in a Norwegian or Scandinavian EFL context, and especially not regarding the learners' perspectives on this. Still, there are some significant contributions. Anna Thyberg's PhD thesis, *Ambiguity and Estrangement: Peer-Led Deliberative Dialogues on Literature in the EFL Classroom* (2012) focuses on the emotional and ideological dimensions of literature reading in the EFL classroom. Thyberg shows how representations of the literary texts employed in the classroom change by way of social interaction in the groups. Furthermore, Hild Hoff's forthcoming PhD thesis with the working title: *Fostering the intercultural Reader*, combines classroom observation and interviews with learners and teachers in the literary EFL classroom in a Norwegian context. Moreover, there are also some other important contributions into this field, and I will therefore give a brief overview of research from the Scandinavian first language (L1) classroom, and furthermore present findings from a few Master's theses related to literature and EFL.

Kari Anne Rødnes (2014) gives an overview of recent Scandinavian research on the role of literature in L1 classrooms. Her conclusion is that there are primarily two approaches to literary texts which are used in the classrooms, one being experience based (reader-centered) and the other analysis based (text-centered). The studies she has looked into indicate that reader-centered approaches seem to motivate the learners more than the text-centered approaches, but that they also can be problematic by becoming too vague in a learning context and that maintaining curricular aims is difficult. Besides, when such approaches are employed, her findings show that text-centered approaches in many cases seem to weaken learners' motivation for reading because they demand that the learners distance themselves from the text, and consequently the reading becomes uninteresting (Rødnes 2014). Penne (2010) investigates the L1 subject in three Norwegian lower secondary classrooms. She finds that the pupils in general, but the pupils who read little in their spare time in particular, remember little from what they have read in school. In an interview-based study (PhD) from 2013, Dag Skarstein investigates, amongst other things, learners' use of meta-language in the literary L1 classroom in Norwegian upper secondary schools. He points out that learners with no or very limited meta-language describe their comprehension of literary texts with words like "feel" and "think", and that the only contextual reference is their own personal experience. The learners who are able to employ meta-language, more likely use phrases like

"it can mean that…" and "if we interpret" (Skarstein, 2013). Being able to analyze literary texts, Skarstein points out, requires meta-language.

In her EFL didactics Master's thesis dissertation from the University of Oslo, Anne Therese Løvstuhagen (2012) indicates that the teaching of literature in the 9th grade alternates between a text-centered and a reader-centered approach, while the literary tasks in the four textbooks investigated in her thesis tended to be text-oriented. Løvstuhagen further discovered that the teachers she interviewed in her project were not always aware of their shifting between the two approaches. Løvstuhagen therefore argues that teachers should make the transitions from one approach to another much clearer for the learners.

Popova (2010), in her Master's thesis from the University of Oslo, examined how English language literature is taught in Norwegian upper secondary school by selecting material from interviews with six teachers of English. She concludes that English language literature most is commonly employed for practical reasons, where the aim itself really is either linguistic or cultural competence. An implication in this respect is that the unique qualities of literature may remain ignored, or at least not fully explored. Fjellestad (2011) has looked into how four different English textbooks used in upper secondary school (Vg1) treat literary texts. Fjellestad found that the textbooks contained aspects of both reader-oriented approaches as well as text-oriented approaches. Even though most textbooks tended to favor one approach over the other, none of the textbooks tended to be completely in accordance with *one* of them. As an English teacher, with experience from the English department of my own work place, I know that we do not always 'go by the book' when teaching literature in the EFL classroom. Many teachers prepare their own material, and even though literary texts in the textbooks are used, the tasks given may be different from what the textbook suggests.

The learners bring previous knowledge, experiences and ideas into the learning situation and into the process of reading literature. Being able to create meaning in encounters with literature is a communicative process between two main participants: the reader and the text (Fenner 2001, Hellesnes 1986). In order to find out how pupils experience encounters with literature in this respect, the learners themselves must speak. Previous research does not seem to have filled this research gap sufficiently. Consequently, thesis may provide new insight into an important aspect of EFL teaching and learning.

1.4 Research questions

The title of this Master's thesis, which also is the main research question, is:

"How do Norwegian EFL learners in the first year of upper secondary school experience encounters with English literature?"

In this thesis, I aim to investigate the learners' experiences with reading English literature, and the following sub-questions emerge in the light of the particular focus of my project:

- How do the informants approach English literature within and beyond the EFL classroom?
- Which aspects of reading English literature do they find challenging?
- Which aspects of reading English literature do they find to be meaningful, and to what extent do they find their encounters with literature in the EFL classroom to contribute to such meaningful experiences?
- Which didactic implications may the learners' experiences have for the teaching of English literature?

1.5 The structure of this thesis

This thesis holds five chapters, including theory, methodology, analysis and discussion. Chapter 2 presents and discusses relevant theory and theoretical perspectives. These serve to support the analysis and discussion in chapter four. The third chapter gives an overview of the material and it aims to explain all parts of my research process, including a discussion of choice of method in addition to implications and limitations. Chapter 4 presents the analysis and discussion of the material, and finally, in chapter 5, the reader of this thesis will find the concluding remarks including suggestions for future research. The list of references and the appendices with the transcribed interviews succeed the final chapter.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter presents the theoretical framework central for this thesis and case study, and it forms the theoretical foundation for the analysis of data in chapter 4.

2.1 Why literature?

Literature is an essential part of the English subject as it both can delight and motivate the learner of EFL. The literary texts, well chosen, clue learners into other cultures and help them to make meaning from language (Lazar 2005). By entering the world and the life of the fictional character, we might be able to take on perspectives of the other that are different from our own. Literature presents the reader with the problems or the difficult choices of another. Identification and involvement are two central aspects of the literary reading experience. The protagonist of a literary text might inhabit other values than the ones of the reader, and she[3] might even make choices the reader neither can understand nor accept. In this way, the reader's own experiences, feelings and emotions face those of the protagonist or other characters. Rosenblatt (1978) states that the new experience, gained through the reading experience, now is challenging the reader's pre-assumptions. "[The reader] may be stimulated to clarify his own values, his own prior sense of the world and its possibilities." (Rosenblatt 1978: 145). Personal involvement with 'the other' can strengthen the identity of the reader; through understanding others, self-understanding can be strengthened (Hellesnes 1988). On the other hand, literary texts may also be investigated by a close examination of the connections between idea and form, such as meter and rhyme in poetry, for example. The sections 2.4 and 2.5 explains he different approaches to literature in more detail.

Why is literature important in foreign language learning? First, the literary text is authentic. Fenner (2001) refers to Little, Dewitt & Singleton (1989) who explicate this authenticity in the following way: "An authentic text is created to fulfil some purpose in the language community in which it was produced" (Fenner 2001: 23). Literary texts - when of good quality - employ a rich and metaphorical language enhancing learners' involvement with the texts, allowing them to experience the multiplicity of meaning. Furthermore, literature is open. One of the positive consequences of this openness is that there are no correct or

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[3] In this thesis I will refer to the reader by the pronoun 'she', but this is not to say that the reader necessarily is female – this is done mainly for convenience reasons.

incorrect answers to how to fill these open spaces, allowing for a wide range of possibilities. According to Iser (1978), the literary text challenges the reader by "not telling it all", and in that way open up for the reader's interpretation. The outcome of this challenge will then form the basis of the reader's understanding of the text and the reading.

Another important aspect of reading literature has implications for identity making and self-awareness. Young learners are in a phase of great development both physically and mentally, and in the centre of this development is establishment of identity. Hoff (2013: 28-32) shows how the reading of literature and involvement with fictional texts can "play a significant role in the development of an individual's identity" and furthermore that it can "have a profound impact on the learners' own perception of themselves and how they view the world around them (Hoff 2013: 28). Hoff uses the terms 'Self' and 'Other' to describe the relationship between the learners' identities and the target language users' identities, and the personal growth which might be the outcome of this relationship (Hoff, 2013: 28).

The adolescent reader is most certainly interested in identifying with the characters and their problems (Appleyard 1991) and when she is interpreting a literary text, the reader is interpreting herself (Ricoeur 1992). Through encounters with literary texts, the young reader can find meaning in her own existence as well. The literary text as an 'artefact' of the foreign culture provides the mirror in which they can see themselves reflected; it provides an outside to their inside (Fenner 2000: 149).

An important aspect of adolescents' relationship to reading and involvement with a story is realism; a story will most likely be praised for being realistic or "true". Appleyard (1991: 107) reminds us that: "the most common critical yardstick that a group of ninth and tenth graders applied to stories they read was whether or not they were 'true to life'". A story can also be realistic for a teenager if she easily can imagine similar situations as the ones narrated in the text.

2.2 Literature and the National Curriculum

2.2.1 Literature in the Core Curriculum of LK06

The Core Curriculum[4] of LK06 presents literature as a catalyst for creative aspects of human nature. More specifically, it is regarded as an essential part of our "cultural tradition" which is "mediated by body and mind, embedded in arts and crafts, in language and literature, in theatre, song, music, dance and athletics" (LK06, Core Curriculum, English version: 13). Literature is, as expressed here, a highly central value in our national curriculum. Moreover, it is stated that:

> Pupils must develop an appreciation for beauty both in meeting artistic expression and by exploring and unfolding their own creative powers. […] Even more, a confrontation with creative art can wrench us out of our habitual modes of thought, challenge our opinions and provide experiences that spur us to re-examine prevailing conceptions and break with conventional wisdom and customary modes. (LK06, Core Curriculum, English version: 13)

Not only must the learners develop an appreciation for the great work of others, but also be able to explore own creative powers, for example through literature, a creative art supposed to provide the learners with new ideas and thoughts that challenges their current conceptions. This relates to our development as human beings and *Bildung*[5], the lifelong process of developing abilities to reflect upon own actions and behaviour in an interplay with others. The summary of the Core Curriculum underscores that education does in fact have a number of seemingly contradictory aims, and that it shall "provide powerful exposure to the greatest achievements in literature and art, in work, adventure and research, and give each individual the opportunity to discover and develop the germs that lie in his or her own powers." (LK06, Core Curriculum, English version: 40).

2.2.2 Literature in the English subject curriculum

The English subject curriculum of LK06 says the following about literature in the account of the subject's main objectives:

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[4] This part of the current national curriculum, LK06, has been carried over from the former curriculum, *The Norwegian Curriculum for the 10-year compulsory school*, L97.

[5] *Bildung* (Ger.) is what school can offer, a combination of knowledge, ways of thinking, ways of understanding and relating to other people and ways of understanding oneself. Thus, *Bildung* provides the key to master and understand the culture. The cultural codes in society are based upon social values, which will be part of context for any situation where language is used (Pieper, Aase, Fleming, Sâmihăian, 2007)

Literary texts in English can instil a lifelong joy of reading and a deeper understanding of others and of oneself. Oral, written and digital texts, films, music and other cultural forms of expression can further inspire personal expressions and creativity. (LK06, English subject curriculum, English version: 2)

Literature is explicitly connected to the following two main subject areas:

➢ "Written communication":

The main subject area includes reading a variety of different texts in English to stimulate the joy of reading, to experience greater understanding and to acquire knowledge. This involves reading a large quantity of literature to promote language understanding and competence in the use of text. Reading different types of texts can lay the foundation for personal growth, maturation and creativity and provide the inspiration necessary to create texts. (LK06, English subject curriculum, English version: 3)

➢ "Culture, society and literature":

The main subject area Culture, society and literature focuses on cultural understanding in a broad sense. It is based on the English-speaking countries and covers key topics connected to social issues, literature and other cultural expressions. The main subject area involves working with and discussing expository texts, literary texts and cultural forms of expression from different media. This is essential to develop knowledge about, understanding of and respect for the lives and cultures of other people. (LK06, English subject curriculum, English version: 3).

Thus, the subject curriculum enhances the aspects of joy, understanding and acquirement of knowledge as important in relation to reading literature. Furthermore, literature has a specific purpose when it comes to cultural understanding "in a broad sense"; development of understanding and respect for other people and their cultures. This is the core of intercultural competence, which is important in order to communicate about literary topics. Like the Core Curriculum (2.2.1), the English subject curriculum also emphasizes personal development objectives, such as personal growth, maturation and creativity. Still, it may be difficult for teachers to determine how literature should be worked with in accordance with the curriculum. The focus is mainly on what the reading of literature comprises in this learning context, and what this can lead to for the learners, but without saying *how*. The choices of how to approach literature in the EFL classroom seemingly rely heavily on the teachers and the textbooks. However, the list of basic skills on page 5 in the English subject curriculum describes what reading in English is and what this comprises:

"Being able to read" in English means the ability to create meaning by reading different types of texts. It means […] to understand, reflect on and acquire insight and knowledge across cultural borders and within specific fields of study. This further involves preparing and working with reading English texts for different reasons and of varying lengths and complexities. […] Furthermore, it involves reading English texts fluently and to understand, explore, discuss, learn from and to reflect upon different types of information. (LK06, English subject curriculum, English version: 5).

As stated here, reading, and the reading of literature in particular, is more than decoding and conveyance of word and text meaning. The ways in which reading is described here do not leave much for the reading of literature with focus on enjoyment and exploration of meaning,

but quite on the contrary it can be argued that the curriculum describes reading of texts in English as an efferent[6] activity. It is noteworthy that the phrase "create meaning" is used rather than "find meaning". Since meaning is described as something to be created, this might open up for an understanding where reading also can be a creative process, but this is not further elaborated on in this part of the curriculum or in any other place in the subject curriculum. Quite clearly there is a difference in how to read a factual text versus a literary text, and it can be a challenging task to interpret how the literary texts should be worked with in the English subject. The next section will discuss this aspect further.

The specific subject curriculum for pupils in their first year of upper secondary school (vg1, general studies' programme) states that pupils are supposed to: "discuss and elaborate on different types of English language literary texts from different parts of the world". This phrase must be taken into consideration and placed into the bigger picture of literature as it is described in the English subject curriculum and the Core Curriculum, and as aimed described in the sections above.

2.3 Literacy perspectives on literature in EFL education

Literature is an inseparable part of the English subject at all levels in LK06, and the main focus is not always first and foremost on the *teaching* of literature itself, such as literary analysis for example, but rather on language learning and intercultural learning. As reflected in LK06, reading includes much more than just decoding words, and the focus on literacy skills and competences is now considerable in most areas in the Norwegian educational system, including the English subject and the reading of literature.

2.3.1 Literacy and "literary literacy"

> Literacy is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate, compute and use printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning to enable an individual to achieve his or her goals, to develop his or her knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in the wider society. (Unesco 2004).

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[6] Efferent reading – to take knowledge out from text, see section 2.5

According to Unesco's definition, literacy goes beyond just being able to read and write; it is adapted to the new and increased demands of a society continuously developing in pace with new types of information, communication and technology. Robert Scholes uses the metaphor "textual power" about the "power" (skills or competence) which modern society requires of us in terms of reading skills in its broadest sense. In this way, textual power becomes an aim for each individual on his or her way through school and the education system (Scholes 1998). The focus on literacy is, as aimed shown in the previous sections, emphasized in the national curriculum of LK06 and in the *Common European Framework for Languages*: CEFR. Scholes himself defines "textual power" in the following way:

> Reading, in this sense of the word, means being able to place or situate a text, to understand it from the inside, sympathetically, and to step away from it and see it from the outside, critically. It means being able to see a text for what it is and to ask also how it connects – or fails to connect – to the life and the times of the reader. This is textual power. (Scholes 1998: 130)

However, what do the definitions of literacy above leave to the reading of literature? Several educational researchers as well as others have argued that there is a need for a redefinition or an expansion of the term "literacy" in order to also cover the reading of literature. The way we read a literary text is different from the way we read other types of texts, and that which lies in this difference is really a very good argument for reading literature and for employing it in the language-learning classroom. Lütge (2013: 192) claims: "In spite of this important role that literature has played in TEFL it is all the more astonishing that the concept of 'literary competences' has been rather neglected" . Lütge takes a critical stand against an alleged pragmatic-utilitarian scope of concepts and testability in the current competence orientated mode of education. By pointing in direction of the German language-learning classroom, Lütge calls out for a need for progression concerning the literary competences in the curriculum. I do not think it would be unreasonable to claim the same on behalf of Norwegian classrooms and the Norwegian National Curriculum.

Burwitz-Meltzer (in Lütge 2013) shows how literary texts are almost neglected in the CEFR, and that the processes related to reading literature, and the elaboration on these, are not systematically accessed at all within the framework. Various researchers have intended to describe different aspects and facets of literary competences, or more broadly, literary literacy, by suggesting categories and sub-categories aiming to describe different dimensions of literariness. Lütge elaborates on the model of Hallet (2007), who suggests the following sub-categories of "literary literacy", a set of categories or dimensions described as a

convincing starting-point for future discussions on the topic. (It must be reminded here that Lütge has made some modifications on Hallet's model):

a) Literary reading competence

This first dimension comprises three sets of skills related to the reading process:

-   general reading skills

-   the ability of close reading

-   the ability of emotionally responsive reading

b) Literary cultural competence

The reciprocal connection between literature and culture is shown according to:

-   the ability of recognizing intercultural and historical knowledge in literature,

-   the ability of using literary texts as templates for individual and personal narrative responses,

-   the readiness and ability of entering into a dialogue with the literary text, accepting differences and perceiving otherness as an enrichment.

c) Competence of reflection

This dimension addresses the ability of reflecting actions, attitudes and values

-   as presented in the literary work

-   with reference to the narrative discourse and its representation

-   on a meta-level, namely the reading process and the emotions involved with it.

d) Competence of foreign language discourse

Lastly, the fourth dimension refers to the aspect of foreign language learning through literature, i.e:

-   The ability of developing foreign language learning, recognizing and making use of foreign language discourse in literature for the learner's communication and interaction,

-   The ability of relating perspectives and world views in literary works to one's own life

(Lütge 2013: 198-199/ Hallet, 2007)

Lütge suggests that the model can serve as a starting point for a stage model of literary literacy (elementary, medium and advanced). Although all dimensions must be considered

simultaneously, they are not meant to be achieved fully on every individual level. By pursuing this rationale, the reading of literature should not be post phoned in education, leaving it for the advanced level only – because if so, valuable learning opportunities will go missing. Additionally, the awareness of the many facets of literature, and how these are relevant for language learning, may be promoted by splitting up the dimensions of literary competences. Lastly, focus on literary literacy and literary competences can ensure a steady progression in the reading of literature for each learner, enabling them to appreciate literature in the future, something that the English subject curriculum promotes as well (see section 2.2.2). Literacy skills and 'textual power' must also include the reading of literature.

2.4 Literary theories

The following section presents and discusses two main branches of literary theory. These are text-oriented theory and reader-oriented theory, with their basis in New Critical theory and Reader-response theory, respectively; they both have implications for the work on literary texts in the EFL classroom even though and maybe *because* they have different characteristics.

2.4.1 Text-oriented theory: New Criticism

A central idea in text-oriented theory or New Criticism is that the text is autonomous, that it has a value in itself and is independent. As tried shown in the following section, all elements that can take the focus away from the text itself and its signs must be left out of the reading. This could for example be information about the author or the personal feelings and opinions of the reader.

New Criticism as a literary theory focuses on the internal characteristics of the text itself. This theory describes a specific way of approaching and interpreting a text by performing a close reading revolving around the formal aspects of the text, directly contributed to its *meaning*. Traditionally, American and British[7] literary studies have had this focus, and furthermore, literature is in the Anglo-American tradition thought to be of great importance because in poems, plays and novels one can find 'the best that has been thought and said' (Matthew

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[7] In the United Kingdom this literary theory and its movement is referred to as 'Practical criticism' (Bertens 2001: 15, 27)

Arnold, cited in Bertens 2001: 27). Moreover, this form of literary criticism sees the individual (the reader, the pupil) as fundamentally free in technical terms, and not determined and defined by social and economic circumstances. "We create ourselves, and our destiny, through the choices we make" (Bertens 2001: 27) and in a close study of a text, we must choose to set external and emotional influences aside in order to detect the text's true meaning, according to this theory or literary criticism. The close examination of the connections between idea and form is of uttermost importance in a New Critical or text oriented approach to a given text. The process of such an exhaustive textual scrutiny, as implied here, is most common applied to poetry, but also to other genres such as the short story and (excerpts of) novels, in order to investigate the text's themes, motifs, composition and other characteristics. When applying this theory to a poem for example, a method can be to investigate the structures such as meter and rhyme, but also themes, imagery, allegory and metaphor. The outcome of the close reading will serve to support the structure of meaning within the poem. The aim of the New Critical close analysis is to dismantle an accurate hierarchical structure of significance or meaning, and to guide the reader towards a certain reading of the text.

2.4.2 Reader-response theory

In reader-response theory or 'reception theory' the *reader* and his or her *response* is the focus of attention, in contrast to New Criticism and its text-oriented focus. Two important names in reader-response theory are Louise Rosenblatt (1978), Wolfgang Iser (1978) and Stanley Fish (1980a). Iser represents the idea that meaning occurs in an inter-play between the reader and the text, while Fish maintains the idea that the reader is the one who brings meaning into the text. There is no text without a reader; it is non-existing until the reader encounters it (Fish 1980a).

Iser represents a branch in reader response theory called reception theory (1978). He made a division between *effect* and *reception*. From the viewpoint of the text, it is the text's potential which is released through the reading (effect), but from the side of the reader it is *the text* being realized through the reading (reception) (Iser 1978: 8). According to Iser, the process of reading is a dynamic process – an interaction between reader and text. Continuing, he found that *as readers*, we have an urge to find connections in order to understand and seek meaning.

Even in a meaningless construction of words,[8] we will try to find meaning, and even end up finding some.

Texts will likewise challenge the reader by not explicitly giving all information, Iser claims. The uncertainties of the text and the degree to which they occur will have impact on the process of reading and interpretation. The way the text challenges the reader will then form the basis of the reader's understanding and conception of it.

If everything in the text is explained in detail, the reading will most probably become boring to most readers, as the reading of literature is much more than just decoding words. The act of reading literature is additionally both relaxation and de-connection from reality, where the active contribution of the reader in terms of interpretation and search for cues and answers is an important ingredient. The journey into the text is for many readers the whole point of reading it. Additionally Iser focuses on the reader's sociocultural background, personality, interests and other important factors, with impact on the reading. Owing to this, no reading of any given text will ever be identical with any other, not even the ones carried out by the same reader (Iser 1978).

Louise Michelle Rosenblatt[9] quite early launched the idea that the act of reading consisted of an inter-play between reader and text. In 1938, she published her book *Literature as Exploration* (Rosenblatt 2005) where she presented this idea, and where she launched the term "transactional theory", exploring the personal, cultural and social contexts of reading. She later elaborates on this theory in *The Reader, the Text, the Poem* (1978), where she also explains "efferent" and "aesthetic" reading. These terms will be returned to in section 2.5.2 and 2.5.3.

> The teacher of literature will be the first to admit that he inevitably deals with the experiences of human beings in their diverse personal and social relations. The very nature of literature, he will point out enforces this. Is not the substance of literature everything that human beings have thought or felt or created? […] No one else can read a literary work for us. The benefits of literature can emerge only from creative activity on the part of the reader himself (Rosenblatt 2005: 25-30).

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[8] In the preface to *The act of reading* Iser employs an example from Noam Chomsky: "Colorless green ideas sleep furiously" as an example of such a 'meaningless phrase' which still has been interpreted in meaningful ways

[9] Both Iser and Rosenblatt acknowledge the active role of the reader in the reading event. Rosenblatt adopted Dewey's term "transaction" to explain the reciprocal relationship between reader and text (Pantaleo, S. (1995) in *Reading Horizons*, volume 36, #1)

Rosenblatt underlines the value of reading as a means to stimulate the reader's feelings and involvement, furthermore to achieve insight, to strengthen values and to change perspectives.

Rosenblatt employs the term "transaction" in an attempt to describe the act of reading as a dynamic process – a play between reader and text. All readers – she says – are different due to previous reading experience, socio-cultural background and personal experience. The reader must be 'touched' by the text to be able to understand a literary work. With this scope in mind, Rosenblatt was sceptical towards the idea of reading literature as "transmitting knowledge" (Rosenblatt 2005). The understanding, she claims, will be something else if the pupil can encounter the text and express her experiences with the text.

The other branch of reader response theory is constructivism – where the reader plays the most prominent part and is the one in focus. Stanley Fish is a leading figure in this group of reader response theorists. *Is there a text in this class?* (1980a) is considered as his major work and contribution to reader-response theory. What Fish says is that the reader should ask herself not what the text means, but *what it does.* Different readers will come up with different experiences, - even though some aspects of every text may be interpreted similarly. Fish employs the term "informed reader", which is not a real reader in the sense of a pupil of flesh and blood, but rather an idealized or 'imagined' reader with knowledge about language, genres, culture etc. The informed reader is similar to an experienced reader, but even the most experienced readers, Fish claims, can interpret a given text differently because of personal taste, personality and/or different expectations (Fish 1980a). Two readings of the same text carried out by the very same reader can never be identical, this is impossible according to Fish. In contrast to Iser, Fish does not want the reader to search for meaning in the text, but rather to slow down the pace and ask herself: What does the text and the words do (with me)?

2.4.3 Implications for the EFL classroom: text-oriented and reader-oriented approaches

With the classroom in mind, there can be many advantages of employing text-oriented approaches when reading and working with literary texts. Learners may encounter unfamiliar texts that are distant in terms of time, place and situation, and without having any specific knowledge about the author. The pupils can investigate the text, and this can be of interest and have a value in itself. A close examination of the text can bring forth "hidden" meanings for the inexperienced reader, revealing the beauty and value of the literary work. Furthermore, it can provide learners with insight into useful techniques by following a given recipe,

something that can be very useful for the inexperienced learner. Additionally, it can become a part of an awareness rising process, as it can open up for a more objective perspective on the text.

Nevertheless, with focus solely on the formal aspects of the literary text, such as describing its structure, its meter and rhyme and/or conveying meaning of imagery, the study of these can become an end in itself, denying the learner to discover and explore the text on a personal level. Many sets of textbook tasks and activities related to the interpretation of literary texts therefore include some activities with a text-oriented approach (describing the setting, the plot, the characters, the imagery) that are often followed by more open and reader-oriented tasks (relating the text to the pupil's experiences, being one of the characters). The research of EFL textbooks conducted by Fjellestad (2012) supports this stance. The reason why both teachers and textbook authors of EFL often take on a text-oriented approach may be due to assessment and control ("checking answers"), and as a way of preparing the pupils for tests and exams. Rosenblatt takes a critical stand against this approach to literature because it does not help the pupil to reflect critically on her own response, she claims. In the worst case it can make the pupils learn to ignore or distrust their own responses to literature (Rosenblatt 1978, 2005). In accordance with the principles of this approach, the teacher can guide the pupils to familiarize themselves with the skills related to close reading in combination with activities and instruction related to imagery, symbols, composition et cetera. A relevant aspect that must not be ignored, is the value of learning about literature as a genre and being able to call the different devices by name. This is a positive side effect of working with literature in accordance with the text-oriented approach, which also can support and enrich this type of work in accordance with other approaches as well. However, one can argue that according to this approach the production of language is the goal and the end of the exercise of the literary text, that the process stops with 'the answers found'.

Since the reader-oriented approach supports activities that encourage the pupils to become involved with the text and to draw on their personal experience, it can open up for communication in a broad sense and on many levels in the EFL classroom. On the background of the pupil's former experiences and her emotions and feelings, she can enter the text and investigate it. Through a 'personalization' of the learning experience, the learner is encouraged to communicate a message, to ask questions and it will allow the pupils to read the literary texts aesthetically (2.6.2.). Furthermore, this approach consequently focuses on the

individual learner's response to the literary text; the reader is the most important contributor to the meaning that emerges from the reading process.

Rosenblatt (1978) took a critical stand against a type of teaching literature where the pupils become a passive audience with the teacher interpreting it all for or *to* them. Rosenblatt states: "As long as an artificial and pedantic notion of literary culture persists, students will continue in their indifference to the great work of the past and present" (Rosenblatt 1978: 65). In short: Rosenblatt strives for a teaching of literature with space for the personal experiences of the readers. This requires communication between reader and text. She is also concerned with the literary dialogue, talking about the experiences with the reading of the literary text with others. Her ideas concerning the literary dialogue are still highly relevant and are both shared by and elaborated on by many, such as Laila Aase (2005), and in the context of English didactics, Fenner (2001). The latter argues that when we have a conversation about a (literary) text we are presented with the possibility to stop up and have a second look at our own interpretation of it. She further explains how new conditions occur which allow us to reconsider or take a closer look at our own reading/interpreting processes, as well as the ones of others.

Rødnes (2014) presents an overview of research on the use of literature based in the Scandinavian L1 classroom. The studies referred to show that learners often appreciate reader-oriented approaches to literary texts because they relate closely to their development of identity. By employing this approach, the learners can use the texts to understand something about themselves and others. In this respect, classroom conversations about literature can become personal and have a foundation in the learners' own experiences. A drawback with such conversations is that they can become quite limited, because they to a very small extent reach beyond the comfort zone of the participants (Rødnes 2014: 7). However, the same studies indicate that the learners find this approach to literature motivating. Finding ways to link a personal and experience-based reading with more analytical and text-oriented approaches might be necessary to help the learners to develop their textual competence, and this is one of her concluding remarks. This study aims to provide insight into approaches employed in FL classrooms, and in that matter, it may be possible to shed some light on whether this confirms or contradicts Rødnes' findings from a L1 setting.

2.5 Ways of reading literature

I will in the following segment turn to the implications of reading literature based on the approaches described in the previous section. In the recent years, new approaches to literature have accentuated the importance of a participating and involved reader (Fish 1980a, Iser 1978, Ibsen and Wiland 2000, Fenner 2001, Aase 2005) and that it is the interaction between the reader and the text that matters. To read, Ibsen (2000) explains, "…is to select bits and pieces and put them together to a meaningful whole. The meaning of a text, then, will be determined by the personality of the reader" (Ibsen 2000: 145). What the reader looks for in a text, what she expects to find, depends on experiences, emotions and interests. It can also depend on age and stage of development (Appleyard 1991).

2.5.1. Appleyard's descriptions of readers

Joseph Appleyard (1991) interviewed sixty readers from the age of 13-82. He investigated their backgrounds, what they liked, and how their reading habits developed and changed as they grew older. Appleyard argues that in spite of individual differences of background and personality there is a pattern of attitudes which the reader go through as she matures and which affect how she experiences fiction and literature. He detected two apparent patterns: one common cultural pattern and one pattern related to age and development, mentally and physically. Based on his findings, he constructed five categories or phases (Appleyard 1991: 14):

1. The Reader as Player (the young child)

2. The Reader as Hero and Heroine (the reader in the age of 8-12)

3. The Reader as Thinker (the adolescent reader)

4. The Reader as Interpreter (the analytical reader)

5. The Pragmatic reader (the adult reader)

The informants in this study are 16-17 year-old teenagers, and therefore I have chosen to focus the most on the third and fourth phase of Appleyard's descriptions of readers. However, the boarders here are undefined, and the transitions from one phase to the next will vary. Consequently, the reader of phase two needs a presentation in this respect. The reader in the age of 8-12 is in a phase where her self-awareness increases, and where hopes and dreams become steadily more important (Appleyard 1991: 59). The need for literature is also increasing, as it can be the gate into an inner world where hopes and dreams may be fulfilled.

The typical romance novel with adventures, dangerous quests, mysteries and excitement is perfect for the reader of this phase, because it always turns out well in the end (Appleyard 1991: 63). The Harry Potter books are just right for the reader as a Heroine. Another trait with the reader of this phase is the urge for knowledge and information.

The reader of the third phase in Appleyard's schema is "the adolescent reader", "the thinker". She is between the reader as a Heroine in phase two, who is "spellbound" in the universe of the romantic hero or heroine, and the interpreting reader in phase four. The adolescent reader has become a 'thinker' in search of meaning. This reader searches for books that match her mental development (stage), and although she probably likes much of the same material as earlier, she wants less predictable plots. This reader can be both self-conceited and/or self-effacing. Appleyard (1991: 97) claims that she learns how to "play roles".

The adolescent reader of phase three likes books that:

- make her 'lose herself' and solicit involvement
- resemble reality (are 'realistic')
- give her something to think about

It is Appleyard's claim that the truly involved reader is the younger child of 8-12, "the reader as a heroine", who is totally spellbound by the story. The young reader who is able to describe this state of "loosing oneself" or "being spellbound" is no longer doing that. She has distanced herself, and is now simultaneously both a spectator and a player. "That an adolescent thinks a good story is realistic and that it 'makes me think' are the most immediate of reactions that evidence this split" (Appleyard 1991: 107). Furthermore, the adolescent reader has full access to the fictional character's thoughts and feelings. The inner life of the characters starts to unfold and represents something exciting and new for the reader. The plot becomes increasingly more subordinate to the characters and the way they develop. The reader becomes involved in the fictional character and identifies with him or her (Appleyard 1991: 106). As the reader enters the role of the spectator, she is consequently able to assess the reading process. The adolescent readers can compare the fictional character to themselves and their own situation. They are additionally able to retell the plot, interpret and react to what they read. They are becoming more aware of their roles as readers.

"The analytical reader" of phase four is able to involve herself with more advanced and complicated interpretations of literary texts. The notion that the readers' interpretation affects the meaning of what she reads is essential here, and this is a significant characteristic for the

reader in this phase. "The analytical reader" is able to discuss different interpretations of, and views on, the literary text. In this role, the reader "studies literature as an organized body of knowledge with its own principles of inquiry and rules of evidence […] learns to talk ly about it, acquires a sense of its history, and perhaps even a critical theory of how it works" (Appleyard 1991: 15). In the final phase, after having had some experience from each of these phases, the adult reader is at a stage where she is allowed to predict her reading experience in encounters with literature and furthermore to choose how to act upon the power that the reading provides her with. In this way, the adult reader is in a position where she can choose from among these roles in such a way that it can suit her situation and her interests (Appleyard 1991).

Although Appleyard's definition of the different phases of readers can serve as a useful frame for categorization of readers, there are countless individual differences and much depends on taste, personal development and sociocultural factors. Nevertheless, Appleyard's descriptions of readers can be a relevant contribution to understanding *the reader.* According to Appleyard, the different phases of readers indicate that the readers are looking or searching for different things in the texts they encounter.

Appleyard (1991) appears to argue that the reader's development is mainly a matter of age and maturity. In a didactic perspective, however, it is highly relevant to investigate how selected literary texts, different approaches, tasks and activities also may influence the learners as readers of literature. Appleyard's categories are therefore relevant for this project, not only to describe the informants as readers of literature, but also to get insight into the processes which can help them further in their development as readers.

2.5.2 Efferent reading

Rosenblatt (1978: 23-24) categorizes the reader's focus of attention as either *aesthetic* or *efferent.* "In efferent reading, the reader's attention is focused primarily on what will remain as the residence after the reading – the information to be acquired". "The more she [the reader] makes herself impersonal and transparent, the more efficiently she reads".The term *efferent* is rooted in the Latin word *effere,* meaning "to carry away" (Rosenblatt 1978: 15) and it is the information "carried out" of the reading which is essential. Efferent reading is a way of looking at the text in a scientific way, Rosenblatt explains. Kramsch (1993: 123) describes the efferent reading response as "...an essential skill if you need to know your way in a

foreign city, how to bake a cake, how to be informed about daily news...or how to answer comprehension questions on a reading test.".

Skimming and scanning a text can serve as examples of this kind of reading and response, allowing the reader to search for desired information, get clues and "…recognize authorial intention and act upon it" (Kramsch 1993: 177). The implications which this type of reading have for teaching and language learning are that they can serve the purpose as warm-up/tuning-in tasks, since they are suitable for the building of a 'scaffold' to help them with further exploration of the text. The outcome of the efferent reading is the basic information, or the clues, you will need to start an exciting exploration or investigation. If the investigation of a literary text stops with the efferent tasks, then the learners will not be able to take part in the exploration. On the other hand, if the learners miss out on the efferent stage they might not be ready to embark the process of further exploration accordingly. Rosenblatt (1978: 15) compares the efferent aspect of a text with a public experience, where the efferent dimension is the text's "front page", the information apparent and available to everyone. Efferent reading and response is a central part of literary analysis, allowing the learner to investigate the text in order to detect structures and patterns, themes and cues. An example of this can be to search for metaphors related to death in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. This activity requires an efferent reading. As shown here, the efferent response can have a very important purpose.

2.5.3 Aesthetic response

Literature is ambiguous, and thereby it offers potential for valuable aesthetic learning experiences and it can become a meeting place for diversified cultures, in terms of norms, values and traditions. Ibsen (2000) explains how aesthetics is about *meaning* and communication of meaning. Aesthetics is about the satisfaction of being able to receive and transmit concepts, ideas and opinions. In aesthetic reading the focus shifts to the reader's actual experience of reading the text, and furthermore on how the multitude of responses and ideas generated by the text enters into the awareness-centre of the reader (Rosenblatt, 1978: 24-25). This type of reading opens up for exploration of the work and of oneself. "In aesthetic reading, the reader's attention is centered directly on what he is living through during his relationship with that particular text." With reference to the example of Shakespeare's work in the previous section, an an aesthetic reading of *Hamlet* can invite the reader to explore the various meanings hidden in the references to death. According to Ibsen (2000: 147), 'the

developing tasks' are in the aesthetic dimension and should therefore succeed the efferent tasks.

When reading aesthetically, according to Rosenblatt (1978: 22-46), a certain distancing from reality happens because the focus is on what the words in the text do with the reader; what they ignite in her in terms of thinking, imagining, feeling and sensing. In contrast, efferent reading is more concerned with seeking information, concepts and definitions, like what a given symbol in the text designates and what it can bring and add to the context. In this way, the two dimensions of reading work simultaneously, and one is preferred to the other depending on genre, text type, purpose, personal preferences and skills. Ibsen (2000) states that:

> Meeting a literary text in the right way will give the reader an emotional and personal experience, as well as give room for reflection; the reader can discover important things about himself or herself through the text. This emotional appeal will involve the students in a learning process. (Ibsen 2000: 144).

Literature is a representation of reality in condensed form; an imitation of life situations; chunks and glimpses of lived life. These 'glimpses' or imitated life situations are selected and structured for the receiver, narrated by the author. The way a given text interprets reality may challenge the reader as far as her fixed and settled opinions about others and their societies are concerned, Ibsen claims. For a long time, there has been a critical analytical way of dealing with literature, mainly based on the text-oriented approach with its origins in New Criticism (see section 2.4.1). According to the text-oriented tradition the reader is supposed to find the 'message or the 'right' solution. Classroom teaching of a literary text according to this approach would normally include the teacher, as an 'expert' of the author and text, having the 'right' answers and effectively the correct way of reading the text. By use of literary devices, the class goes 'message hunting' in order to find the answers that correspond with the solution held by the teacher. The pupils would have to be explained how the text was to be experienced (Ibsen 2000). So what then *are* exactly aesthetic approaches to language learning? They are the *creative* use of written or spoken language combined with elements of imagination.

> The aesthetic experience is related to the form of a language and its symbolic expressions, but also to aesthetic elements in the language itself, with its rhythm and its tonality. Aesthetics is also about communicating meaning; the fundamental satisfaction of being able to receive and transmit concepts, ideas and opinions (Ibsen 2000: 142-143).

The literary text can open up a universe with its own settings, conflicts and characters. The learner can enter this universe, Ibsen says, disguised in a role – driven by fiction as the

motivating force (Ibsen 2000:146). The challenging meeting between the reader's experiences and pre-assumptions and the different representations in the text create a genuinely new experience that may enhance learning. As aimed investigated in this section, literature can be greatly useful in order to help create meaningful learning situations, as the pupils become involved with the text and be able to communicate with it in their own diversified ways. There is a need for more research into this field of EFL learning and teaching for various reasons. Firstly, in order to strengthen the position which literature has in the subject, but also to get more knowledge about how to motivate the learners for literary work in ways which can be meaningful to them, and which can help them to develop as readers.

2.5.4 Reading as a sociocultural process

The classroom can function as an arena for textual interpretation and learning in a socio-cultural process, constantly leading to richer and more meaningful interpretations because the text's 'many voices' meet the many voices (of learners and teacher) of the classroom (Vygotsky 1986). This is what Fish (1980a) and Ibsen and Wiland (2000) call 'the classroom text'. The learners or readers bring their 'cultural capital', as Bordieu (1991) calls it, into active dialogue with the text. What do the pupils learn about themselves and their own roles in relation to others? To what extent are the learners able or enabled to take initiative and start something new in the classroom context? According to Dysthe (1995), all pupils may become a part of, and in this way contribute to new meaning in the language-learning classroom. She refers to this as the "the multi-vocal classroom[10]". An important premise for this to happen is that the teacher is prepared for, and willing to let go of some of her control of the situation, by focusing more on 'learning' and 'creation' and less on 'teaching' and 'control'. Furthermore, the answers to the questions asked in class must not always be determined or set in advance. Neither must the course of the classroom discussions be preconceived by the teacher or the learners, as the "multi-vocal classroom" needs to rely on the questions of the pupils as much as the ones of the teacher, Dysthe says.

When the learner reads a text aesthetically, her own experiences and expectations determine what she will look for. This is based on what is important to her (Appleyard 1991), and this will form her understanding of the text. Ibsen (2000) calls the learner's understanding the "student text". In the language-learning classroom, the student texts meet the "teacher text"

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[10] *Det flerstemmige klasserommet*, Dysthe 1995, in English: *The multi-voiced classroom*

and through interaction, they form a "class text". This new "class text" carries elements of both student texts and teacher text, of and what arises in the interaction between these. Based on this new and collective interpretation, a new student text and a new teacher text occurs. The following model is based on Ibsen (2000: 145):

| text | → | teacher text
student text | → | class text | → | new teacher text
new student text |

Ibsen argues that activities in the classroom should be structured in such a way that they start off the students' creativity. The literary text is the holding of the reader, who consequently becomes a 'co-writer' of the text. The text must be carefully picked out, or chosen with regards to its need for 'input', hence it must require a teacher's guidance (Ibsen 2000: 147-148). The teacher must provide for class activities that can create a class encounter where the different texts can meet. The result of this meeting will be a class text. Based on the experiences from processing this collective or common text, new texts can come about in an open-ended process.

Involvement in the fictional characters can enhance learners' emotional and personal engagement with the text, as described in the aesthetic dimension of literature (Ibsen 2000). The cultural aspect of reading FL literature is discussed by Fenner (2000, 2001), who focuses on the reader's personal involvement with the literary text – and how this can result in adjustment of attitudes, between both individuals and cultures. Wiland (2000) supports the view of Fenner by pointing at the fact that encountering literary texts in a foreign language can expand horizons and that it can both challenge prejudices and stereotypical views as well as it can conform beliefs (Wiland 2000: 213). The literary FL text can become a cultural meeting point. Furthermore, the dialectical relationship between the text, the reader and their interaction is open-ended, and consequently the possibilities for textual exploration and language production in the target language are many. The goal is for the learner to reach beyond her personal limits, and by the help of others or the right type of input, the reading of literature can become a sociocultural process (Vygotsky 1986)

2.6 Chapter summary

So, what can we take out from the perspectives, ideas and approaches these theories suggest to us concerning our work with literary texts in the EFL classroom? Firstly, there are many reasons for employing literary texts in the classroom and the reading of literature can open up for fruitful learning experiences. The reader can take on the perspectives of the 'other', represented in the literary text and develop a deeper understanding for the situations and lives of others. Secondly, the literary reading helps the learner to develop self-awareness and identity, and the exploration of the literary universe can become a mirror in which the reader can see herself (Fenner 2001). Through identification, the reader can develop sympathy and empathy for the situation of others and the culture it represents, as well as for oneself and one's own culture. Conclusively, the reading of literature can also become a sociocultural process, by sharing and further developing ideas and thoughts from the literary experience. As expressed in the national curriculum, LK06, literature is a central part of our cultural heritage and tradition, and is therefore important in the context of *Bildung,* as it can enhance personal growth and maturation as well as a lifelong joy for the reading of literature.

LK06's focus on competences reminds us that reading, and the reading of literature, is a complex process, and that several skills are required in order to become competent readers and develop what Scholes (1998) calls "textual power". In a literacy perspective, we have to look at what we read and be able to connect it to our world and our times and try to see what it represents and in which ways it is significant. The lack of focus on "literary literacy" in LK06 is problematic, since the unique qualities of literature not are reflected on the competence level; they remain undescribed, and this can favour efferent reading practices of literature for aesthetic response in the EFL classroom.

The combination of different approaches to literary texts, such as the text-oriented approach and the reader-oriented approach can, when employed in the work with literature in the EFL classroom, ensure a broad foundation for the exploration of literature and thereby lead us closer to meeting the aims and demands of LK06. Furthermore, it can help the learners to develop their competences in the span between the *known* and the *unknown* (Penne 2010, Rødnes 2014), because the differences and/or the distance between the two approaches to literature may create such a 'span'. In other words, the learner must shift between opposing perspectives on the literary text, the one of the reader and the one of the text.

In spite of differences between the two main branches of literary theory discussed in this chapter, there are obviously a few similarities and possible links between them. In

Rosenblatt's transactional reading-theory, we can find a tendency of unifying the perspectives of New Critic[11] and Reader-response theory, as she suggests how the patterns (form) of symbols (signs) in the text take meaning from the intellectual and emotional situation of the reader and her (cultural) context:

> For the reader, the literary work is a particular and personal event: the electric current of his mind and personality lighting up the pattern of symbols on the printed page. Or perhaps we should say that the symbols take meaning from the intellectual and emotional context the reader provides. The current of his thoughts and feelings has for the time of his reading been channeled by the printed symbols. (Rosenblatt 2005: 63).

The attention to close reading which lies implicitly in a text-oriented approach and analysis in terms of investigating the text's signs and their meanings, as shown in this chapter, still has implications for the encounters with literature in the Norwegian EFL classroom. Additionally the ideas of a reader-oriented approach to literature are important in the 'literary' classroom, with reference to Rosenblatt, Iser, Fish and reader-response/reception theory are equally important.

The majority of the theories selected for this thesis support the idea of the reader of literature as a creative and active participant, with reference to reader-oriented approaches to literature, e.g. aesthetic response. Still, in order to assist learners with developing their textual competence and to help them develop as readers of literature in a learning context or community, a set of tools in terms of terminology and meta-language is required to enable us to explore, share and discuss meanings and thoughts with basis in the literary text. The theoretical perspectives presented in this chapter aim to support and furthermore create a basis for analysis and discussion of the data material in chapter 4. All sections of this chapter are relevant in terms of investigating how the learners in this case study experiences encounters with English literature within and beyond the EFL classroom.

The ways in which I will apply the theory presented in this chapter are:

- to describe and place the informants according to Appleyard's (1991) descriptions of readers
- to analyse and discuss the informants' experiences with English literature according to the curriculum and curricular aims (LK06)

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[11] Here: especially the perspectives of I.A. Richards

- to analyse and discuss the approaches they seem to employ and the implications of these (text-oriented and reader-oriented approaches/efferent and aesthetic response)
- to analyse and discuss how the texts and tasks they meet in the EFL classroom influence the way they read literature in this respect

3. MATERIAL AND METHOD

This study aims to investigate and describe how a group of upper secondary school learners experience encounters with English literature in a Norwegian EFL context. This chapter presents and discusses the chosen methodical approach for the current study.

3.1 Research methods in general and for this project in particular

The method (or methods) to be employed in a given research project is determined by the aims of the project, as expressed in the research questions. There are many methods to choose from, but the two dominant categories are quantitative and qualitative research methods. Sometimes both methods can be applied in order to find answers to the research questions. This is often referred to as "mixed methods".

In research projects where the focus is on testing theoretical pre-assumptions or hypotheses, quantitative methods might be the best choice, likewise as in projects where statistics, numbers and measurable units are to be investigated (Brekke and Tiller, 2013: 138). In general, quantitative methods are less flexible than qualitative methods, "something which allows the researcher to compare and correlate answers across groups (of participants) and settings" (Christoffersen and Johannesen, 2012: 17, my translation). Qualitative methods are more flexible and they allow for a larger degree of adjustment and spontaneous conduct in the interaction between researcher and participants.

In qualitative studies, as opposed to quantitative studies or research, the researcher analyses words and utterances rather than numbers and statistics. In qualitative research the aim and purpose is usually to explore a specific field, such as a phenomenon or *problem*, and in this way collect information. Creswell (2014) underscores the need for a thorough exploration of problems if deep understanding is desired, something which is the case of this project.

This research project is carried out with a qualitative method, hence the aim is to acquire insight into a phenomenon; "How do Norwegian EFL learners in the first year of upper secondary school experience encounters with English literature?" This project aims to investigate the learners' perspectives on and their *experiences* with the phenomenon described above.

3.1.1 A case study approach

The design of this thesis is a case study (Christoffersen and Johannesen 2012). Case studies are frequently used in the field of educational research, and they can be described as a method allowing the researcher to collect information from one or more units (e.g. a group of learners) through a detailed and comprehensive assembly of data. In social science research there are in particular two important features as far as a *case* is concerned: a bound attention to the case and a thorough description of it (Yin 2003). The current case study is based in theoretical assumptions[12]. According to Yin, here are five particularly important components in a case study, which are:

- a problem from the actual practice field followed by some hypotheses or specific questions
- a set of theoretical assumptions
- a further demarcation of the unit which is to be investigated
- a logical connection between the data and the researcher's theoretical assumptions
- a set of criteria to interpret and analyse the findings

(Yin 2003)

The case as a research design is all about investigating the specific within a unit or a few units, and in the context of the current project, this comprises the group of informants and their experiences expressed in the interviews.

3.2 Material

Material:

- 14 semi-structured interviews with 7 informants. Nearly 75 transcribed pages.
- 3 literary texts and relevant textbook tasks.

This study has been approved by NSD[13], the Norwegian Social Science Data Services. NSD is the data protection official for research for all the Norwegian universities, university colleges and several research institutes, owned by the Ministry of Education and Research. The

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[12] Yin (2007) operates with two sets of case study strategies: analysis based on theoretical assumptions (theory based), and descriptive case studies. According to Yin, the latter should only be employed when there are no theoretically based assumptions to start from.
[13] NSD. Norwegian Social Science Data Services.

function of NSD, is to act as a Privacy Ombudsmann for Research, to provide for a standardized framework for registration of data, and further to administrate a common database for Norwegian research projects. The letter of approval for this project is included in the Appendix (1).

3.2.1 The data material

This project aims to investigate pupils' encounters with literary texts within and beyond the Norwegian EFL classroom, first year of upper secondary education on the programme for general studies (Vg1). The data material consists of in-depth interviews and the informants in this study are pupils in a medium sized upper secondary school on the West coast of Norway. The subject under scrutiny is English, which is a five hours per week-subject at Vg1-level, and it qualifies for further studies at college- and university level.

The interviews were all recorded on a digital recorder, and all recorded material was transcribed in its entirety (Appendix 5). The utterances given by the informants during interviews are expressions of *experiences* related to the reading of English literature, which they have obtained on a general basis, during English lessons or in other encounters with literature beyond the EFL classroom.

The data gathered relates to how pupils of upper secondary school experience encounters with English literature within and beyond the EFL classroom. In other words, it provides insight into how pupils describe their experiences with literary texts, working methods, approaches and most importantly, their personal experiences with the text and their conflicts, characters and cultures. Through interviewing seven pupils from a secondary school in Norway in their last semester of Vg1, I was presented with nearly 75 pages of transcribed interviews, and this is the main data of this project. In addition, a selection of literary texts and tasks have been included here as they are relevant in the context of the present study.

3.2.2 The pupils, the teacher, the groups and the school

In order to find answers to the research question, I needed to get access to pupils and classes in the first year of upper secondary school, on the programme for general studies. The school chosen for this research project is an upper secondary school with approximately 560 pupils and 70 teachers. The majority of the pupils attend the general studies' programme, but the

school additionally offers a few programmes of vocational studies. The English department consisted of eight teachers, with three of them teaching first year groups. Since I teach my own classes due to a schedule, I needed to find teachers who were both willing to let me have access to his/her group(s), and who had a teaching schedule which matched with my project time schedule and my own teaching schedule. Two teachers were willing to help me and give me access to their groups of (Vg1) English learners. Finally, the choice landed on a female teacher in her late thirties with ten years of teaching experience from upper secondary school. The most important reason for this choice was that this teacher actually taught two groups of first year pupils, something that made it possible for me to collect informants from two different classrooms, although the teacher and the teaching material were the same. Based on the descriptions above, the method of selecting participants to this research project is an example of 'convenience sampling', meaning that easy access has been the most important criterion (Christoffersen and Johannesen, 2012). Although this type of sampling is random to a certain extent, it is based on voluntariness and it allows for a selection within the group of volunteers. This sample is therefore not a representative sample of "all pupils" at this level and study programme.

The two groups were introduced to the research project in December 2013/ January 2014. It was made clear to them that participation and being interviewed was highly voluntary, and that no one should feel forced or pressured to take part. On forehand the teacher had provided me with information about the two groups. I first entered the classrooms in February, after the winter break or vacation. The project was then presented to the learners orally, and a letter with the same information was handed out (see Appendix 2). The purpose of this classroom observation was to get an overview of the classroom practice and the learners and furthermore to let the future informants familiarize themselves with me and my project. In this study, the groups will be referred to as 'group A' and 'group B'. Group A consisted of 18 girls and 11 boys, and it very soon became clear that this was a quite 'chatty' and sociable group, and that they liked talking in English. Nevertheless, only three pupils wanted to be interviewed, but since they all had been observed during classroom-lessons the ideas concerning whom I wanted to interview were clear. An important principle was to provide for a certain amount of variety among the informants as far as skills, interests and experiences were concerned. Two more pupils were asked to join the project after class, and I eventually landed on three girls and one boy from the A-group: Tova, Tina, Emma and Kenneth[14].

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[14] The names have been changed to ensure anonymity.

Group B also consisted of 18 girls and 11 boys, and based on observation and information given, they were all part of what could best be described as a 'mixed' group concerning background and interests. Nevertheless, they seemed to like the subject and I know that many of them had achieved a good grade in the subject in lower secondary school. Nine pupils from this group were willing to be interviewed, whereas four of them were picked out based on preliminary observations and the desire for variation in the group of informants/interviewees. In this study, the four pupils will be referred to by the pseudonyms Kia, Nella, Jon and Adan, two girls and two boys. Unfortunately, Nella changed her mind about being interviewed late in the spring, so it was no longer a possibility to carry out an interview with her. Consequently the research project was left with seven interviewees instead of eight. Because of the written exam period coming up in May, it was difficult to find a substitute and therefore the conclusion was drawn that seven informants would be sufficient.

3.2.3 The informants

The informants knew that their names would be changed, and that the name of the school would be kept anonymous. They also knew that the information given during interviews would not be given to the teacher or anyone else. The interviews were conducted in a meeting room in the office wing of the school building, far away from the classrooms and the canteen area, - in other words, a suitable location with little disturbance from fellow pupils etc.

The informants:

Group A: Tova, Tina, Emma and Kenneth

Group B: Kia, Jon and Adan

Tina comes from another European country, but has been living in Norway for the past four years. Both parents are foreign, and their own mother tongue is spoken at home. All other participants have Norwegian as their mother tongue and English is a foreign language to all of the informants in this study.

I spent enough time in the two classrooms on forehand to get an impression of who had an interest for literature and reading and those who did not have this interest. Adan, Jon and Tina read quite a lot in their spare time. The case with the two boys, Adan and Jon, was that they preferred reading fiction – in terms of fantasy novels – in English, as for Tina, she read novels

in Norwegian, her own mother tongue[15] and English, and she did not have a specific favourite genre, she simply liked reading many different types of literary texts. The other informants did not specifically enjoy reading literature, but they had all read at least one book in English.

3.2.4 The textbook, texts and tasks

This section serves the purpose of supporting the in-depth analysis in chapter four, section 4.7, and it needs to be seen as background information in this respect. It presents the informants' textbook, the texts and the tasks, which are relevant in this context.

During my time as a researcher in this study, the pupils/informants worked on, or had been working on, three literary texts, two short stories and one novel excerpt. During interviews, the informants also refer to a few other texts they have read, primarily in their previous semester. It is indicated by the informants that the teaching in the two groups mainly is based on the texts and the tasks in the textbook. The textbook used by the learners is *New Experience* from 2009, which is a second edition of *Experience* from 2006. The publisher is Gyldendal Norsk Forlag, and the authors and contributors are Bente Heian, Gro Lokøy, Brynjulf Ankerheim and Ian Drew. The textbook, described in more detail in the section below, contains a relatively large number of literary texts; to be specific, 35 out of a total number of 67 texts assort to literature. There were not used other texts from other sources, except films. The textbook tasks employed in relation to each one of the literary texts mentioned above, and described below, will also be presented here.

The Textbook is an all-in-one textbook for VG1 on the programme for general studies, with a web site as a supplement, both for pupils and teachers. There are totally 35 literary texts in the book, comprising ten short stories, six excerpts from novels, four excerpts from plays and fifteen poems.

All literary texts in *New eXperience* are followed by activities or tasks, further categorized into "Reading", "Speaking" and/or "Writing". The "Reading" tasks (the ones most frequently employed in class according to the teacher and my own observations) were further divided into the two types "Reading for understanding" and "Close Reading". The typical "Reading for understanding" task is a set of questions or "true or false" statements aiming to help the pupils to grasp the content of the text. The "Close reading" tasks ask the learners to describe

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[15] Tina's mother tongue is not named in order to ensure anonymity.

one or more characters, the plot and the setting or to reflect upon different aspects of the text and its themes. Approximately half of the literary texts in the book are introduced with a pre-reading activity. All literary texts have photos or illustrations of some kind attached to them. *New eXperience* is divided into five main chapters; "English eXperience", "Personal eXperience", "Intercultural eXperience", "Social eXperience" and "eXperience Art and Literature". The textbook comprises 351 pages.

The three literary texts which are most commonly referred to by the informants during the interviews, and which are discussed in chapter 4 are "A Great Day" (short story), "Thou Shalt Not Kill" (short story), and "The Curious Incident with the Dog in the Night-Time" (novel excerpt).

3.3 Method

3.3.1 The interviews

"If you want to find out how people experience the world and their life, why not ask them?"

(Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009: 20, my translation)

In order to seek answers to the main question and sub-questions of this research project, I chose interviewing according to the qualitative research interview as a standard as method.

Kvale and Brinkmann (2009: 20) see the interview as method as an endeavour which relies heavily on the skills and knowledge of the researcher/interviewer. Furthermore, the ability to place the project's questions in a larger social and/or political context, as well as being considerate and concerned with the project's ethical aspects, are emphasized. Research is a process of several stages, and Christoffersen and Asbjørnsen (2012) stake out four fundamental steps:

1. preparations
2. collecting data
3. data analysis
4. reporting data

(Christoffersen and Asbjørnsen, 2012: 18)

The research interview as method builds on the outline of everyday conversations and is a *professional conversation.* "It is an interview where knowledge is produced in interplay or interaction between interviewer and interviewee." (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009: 22, my translation) It is therefore not correct to state that knowledge is 'gathered' according to this method, but rather *produced.*

In accordance with Kvale and Brinkmann's (2009) guidelines for qualitative interviews, each interview was initiated with a short briefing session. In this phase, the informants were informed about the study once more, and they were also encouraged to address me with any questions they might have regarding the project and their participation in it. They were explicitly informed that they were free to stop the interview at any time, and that they should only respond to the questions according to their own free will. I asked the informants for permission to record the interviews, and then they were given some brief information about the structure and topics of the interview session. The interviews were based on the semi-structured interview guides provided in Appendices 3 and 4. During the interviews, probes and pauses were used with the aim and purpose to obtain detailed information where necessary.

Throughout all interviews, I consequently reminded myself *not* to interrupt the informants during speech. When they were pausing and when I interpreted the situation in such a way that they were thinking or just needed time to complete or continue the utterance, I aimed to give them this time. According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), adapting to the setting and the situation is one of the most important virtues for the researcher in a qualitative interview. By adapting the language and vocabulary to the informant's, and by paraphrasing difficult parts, I could get access to more information even when the dialogue "crumbled". Moreover, I tried to encourage reflection by asking follow-up questions and by giving feedback in form of nodding eagerly, smiling, shrugging shoulders and so on. Additionally, in the act of interviewing, *listening* became one of the most useful tools.

3.3.2 The interview guides

Two interviews were carried out with each informant, interview 1 and interview 2. Two interview guides were used, interview guide 1 for interview 1 and interview guide 2 for interview 2 (Appendices 3 and 4). The two interviews carried out with Tina, for example, are called 'Tina 1' and 'Tina 2'.

Interview guide 1 aims to investigate the informants' background, how they identify themselves, their attitude towards school and the English subject, what they do in English class and what their attitudes to reading literature is like (pre-assumptions). Following from this, interview guide 1 tries to create a picture of who the informant is through a narrative. The main idea in this respect was to let the informants tell their own story based on their experiences and thoughts related to the topic in question.

According to Mishler (1986), answers to questions in everyday conversations can take form as narratives, or that they at least have certain narrative features. Humans try to organize and express meaning through storytelling. This is the case in interviews as well (Mishler 1986: 68). The interviews in this study are not strictly narrative, but questions in both guides aim to make the interviewees "freely tell [the interviewer] about a variety of issues" Through nodding, silence and attentive listening, the interviewer becomes "a co-creator of the narrative" (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009:166, my translation). Narrative interviews can serve multiple purposes, but my experience was that by encouraging the informants to "tell me about…" they tended to share their experiences more freely, because of what I interpreted as consent or admittance to an invitation they were pleased to receive. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) underscore that the most important role of the interviewer is to listen and avoid interference, but instead occasionally – when needed – assist and support the interviewee by asking clarifying questions and help him/her in the continuance (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009: 166).

Interview guide 2 goes more in depth in terms of exploring the informants' experiences with reading literary texts in the English subject and how they approach these texts within the confines of the classroom. Furthermore, it aims to seek information about what they perceive as the positive aspects, challenges and limitations of classroom practice and the reading of English literature.

Both interview guides have been 'open', allowing me to pick up on interesting information given by the informants and investigate it further. The second interview, the one based on interview guide 2, seemed to be more challenging for the informants and it therefore puts a heavy responsibility on the researcher when it comes to awareness and respect for the informants, their situation and the process they are in. On several occasions I had the notion that the conversation, and what the informants actually uttered in this conversation, made

them realize or think about something for the very first time – a statement released through an uttered experience. Moreover, interview guide 2 aimed to unveil complexities and nuances, although I doubt that this was very successful in all cases. It takes a lot of practice and experience with qualitative research interviews to get access to valuable information and to earn the confidence of the interviewees.

3.3.4 Evaluation of interview quality

The researcher's role in qualitative research is a hard one because of the many pitfalls related to continuous interpretation and, as in the cases of interviewing, the degree of influence on informants. All qualitative research must be carried out with carefulness and concern at all stages of the process, and it is important to be aware of one's role and the influence one has on the other party (the informant/interviewee).

Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) present six vital qualitative criteria for an interview, six criteria which were kept and served as basic guide lines for this research during the entire process of interviewing the informants. These criteria are:

1. The extent of spontaneous, rich, specific and relevant answers from the interviewee.
2. The shorter the interviewer's questions and the longer the interviewee's answer the better.
3. The degree to which the interviewer follows up and clarifies the meanings of the relevant aspects of the answers.
4. The ideal interview is to a large extent interpreted throughout the interview.
5. The interviewer attempts to verify his or her interpretations of the subject's answers in the course of the interview.
6. The interview is 'self-communicating' – it hardly requires much extra descriptions and explanations.

(Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009:175)

In the following section I will elaborate on a few of the criteria listed above. With regard to the first criterion, I think that answers elicited here were both spontaneous and at the same time specific enough. The informants had not been preparing for these interviews, at least not that I know of, because they had simply been asked to show up with an open mind, and that

this was something they participated in based on their free will. The fact that the questions in the interview guide were open-ended, contributed to a production of more or less comprehensive answers from the participants. To elaborate a bit further on this aspect, it must be underscored that the degree of specification varied greatly between the informants. Employment of probes and pauses from the researcher's side, might have given more detailed answers. As far as relevance is concerned, this also diverged throughout the interviews and although the answers and utterances from the interviewees were relevant most of the time, it occasionally happened that the informants' responses deviated from the main clue, but it was possible to pose the question once more, politely. In retrospect I realize that I ought to have asked follow-up questions more frequently in order to obtain more nuanced and clear answers, this is something that must be subscribed to own inexperience in the role as the interviewer. What I think was carried out with more success, however, was the way the meaning of the informants' responses were clarified. The continuous interpretation and evaluation of the interviewees' responses throughout the interviews, allowed me to focus on meaning conveyance. Whenever there was doubt concerning the interpretation, I repeated my understanding of the informant's statements. In this way, she could either confirm or disprove the actual interpretation. I was highly aware of this aspect, something that also enabled me to recall the interview situations later when I transcribed the interviews. According to the fourth criterion in Kvale's list, the interviewer should ideally be able to interpret the interview *in progress.* Consequently, that the interviewer herself carries out the transcribing of the interviews may be an advantage. However, the quality of the interviews might improve with more experience from the researcher's part, and many interesting and relevant utterances from the informants surely might have been investigated further, and in more detail.

In the qualitative research interview, the researcher herself is the research tool. This is a highly demanding role to maneuver, both being the doer and the instrument. Consequently, carrying out the interviews at the end of a long day of work or study was avoided, with the desired level of mindfulness and well-being of both interviewer and interviewee in mind. I planned the interviews in the best way I could, and clear arrangements were made with the informants on forehand. It was uttermost important to avoid situations where the informants would feel stressed or at unease because this was not what they had planned or that they felt like being somewhere else, because they had other arrangements planned.

The focus in the process of interviewing has been the research questions of this thesis, all along from the commencement. The research questions have been a guide during the planning

and projection of the interview guides, as well as in the act of interviewing/collection of material. The purpose and the benefit of a clear scope is that the communication can become clear and transparent. I did not feel that my agenda was unclear, and I did not sense that the informants did so either.

Investigating and exploring the informants' experiences with encounters with English literature is the core of this project. However, there were many challenges, and surely other means might have been employed in an attempt to find better solutions or to avoid fall pits and 'mistakes', such as asking leading questions or interrupting interviewees. Language came to be the biggest challenge, and not because of communicative problems directly, but because *concepts*, such as 'meaning' or 'meaningfulness' in some cases turned out to be very hard to communicate and/or explain directly. It was therefore not always easy to get access to the information that the interviewee possessed, and that was desired. Indirect questions[16], I realize, should perhaps have been employed to a greater extent, but all in all I consider the quality of the interviews as satisfactory.

3.3.3 Transcribing the interviews

Of respect to anonymity, all names, including names of places related to the informants' background, have been changed. The transcribed interviews can be found in Appendix 5.

There are many choices to be made when transcribing interviews. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) give examples of how two transcriptions of the same interview can express two different meanings, all because of where the transcriber chooses to place the commas and full stops. The following example is from Poland (2003), which demonstrates this. In the interview the following transcriptions are made from the same utterance (it is easy to spot the striking difference in meaning!):

"I hate it, you know. I do"

"I hate it. You know I do"

(Poland, 2003: 270)

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[16] Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) suggest the use of indirect questions as a means to access more information.

My idea of a transcription is that it is a translation from speech to script. Moreover, the meaning content of the speech act[17] is adapted from one medium to another, from vocalization or speech to written material.

The transcriptions have been attempted made as clear and simple as possible. It has been aimed to feature the relevant aspects of the utterances, and I have included significant details such as interruptions, pauses, non-lexical sounds (laughter and "hum-ing"). In the transcripts I used three full stops to signalize a pause and furthermore the onomatopoeia "Uh" as a sign for hesitation and "Uhum" for signalizing agreement, consent. Furthermore, "laughing" between parentheses was employed to signalize laughter.

The transcripts do not depict intonation, pitch of voice, facial expressions or gesticulations, but particularly stressed parts of speech and/or utterances in the transcriptions have been highlighted in the cases where this has been interpreted as important for the meaning content.

3.4 Analysing the data

For research with the aim to investigate a phenomenon, it is wise to go deeper into the interesting parts of each interview. The term *method* means "the way to the goal" (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009: 199) – so the aims and goals of the study should serve as guides on the way throughout the analysis. "What information is desired? What are the questions we seek answers to? "How can these interviews help expanding my knowledge concerning the phenomena investigated?" (Kvale and Brinkmann: 200, my translation).

Moreover, Kvale and Brinkmann advice the researcher to be careful about viewing the interviews as pure transcriptions, they should rather be considered as 'living conversations', that is – what they originally were in the first place: "The transcript is a bastard, - a hybrid." (Kvale and Brinkmann: 200).

3.4.1 Analysing the interview data

The importance of keeping in mind that data is authored/created in companionship with the interviewee, is stressed by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009). It has been an aim in this research

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[17] Mishler (1986) employ the term 'speech event' about "activities, or aspects of activities, that are directly governed by rules for the use of speech" (Mishler, 1986: 35)

project to recall the situation of the interviews, both during transcript and analysis. In light of this, the analysis becomes a natural continuation of the conversations carried out during the interview sessions. All transcribed interviews were thoroughly examined several times at this stage, and notes were taken in order to find patterns, see connections and differences and to get a thorough overview. The planning of themes and categories was also of importance at this stage. In the following section, I will present the standards and criteria for the data analysis of this project.

Kvale and Brinkmann present six[18] stages of the analysis process, and I will here focus on the first four of them, which are:

1. The interviewee describes his or her experiences
2. The interviewees become aware of, or detect new meanings based on their experiences which they spontaneously describe
3. The interviewer interprets and abridges the meanings of the interviewee's words/descriptions, e.g. asks more questions to ensure capturing what the interviewee says about the topic investigated. Ideally, this approach of re-questioning continues until there is just one possible interpretation left, or until it becomes clear that the interviewee actually means something else, or even has two contradictory opinions. The aim and purpose of this approach is to unveil and detect the participant's exact meanings and understandings.
4. The interviewer interprets the contents of the transcribed interview, structuring the material and preparing for a thorough analysis.

(Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009: 203)

As previously mentioned, the analysis process starts long before the actual Analysis of interview data, and even long before conducting the interviews. The analysis process is a continuous process with implications for all stages of the interview research process.

To continue, in research interviews with focus on *meaning,* the data should be analysed according to:

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[18] Steps 5 and 6 include re-interviewing and acting upon the newfound insight/information (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009: 203)

- Coding[19] (of meaning)
- Condensation (of meaning)
- Interpretation (of meaning)

(Kvale and Brinkmann 2009: 205)

Qualitative research is challenging in many ways, and there is no "easy way" to the goal. Various data programmes/software can ease and aid the process of analysing data, but as far as this project is concerned, all data has been analysed 'manually'.

Coding is the process of attaching one or more key words to a transcript excerpt with the aim to identify an utterance later on. Quantification of central concepts concerned with in the interviews is an overall aim here. 'Content analysis' is a technique aiming to help describing an utterance's content. What is really being said? What is really meant here? The meaning of the content can now be further categorized, and the division into different categories will make it possible to quantify the number of themes mentioned in a text/transcript. (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009: 205).

The purpose of *meaning condensation* is to forward abridgements of the utterances given by the interviewee; long sentences are systematically abridged. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009: 213) underscore the importance of capturing the rich and nuanced descriptions (enunciations) for further investigation, especially in phenomenological research. Meaning condensation can be carried out by outscoring a unit and in this way detect central themes in the interview.

During the following stage of analysis, *interpretation of meaning,* one can carry out a deeper and more scrutinized investigation of the meaning content. The researcher here aims to detect the structures of meaning. The interpretation of meaning can often lead to an enlargement (of text), where the result might be contrived in more words than in the primary utterance.

3.4.2 Categorization

After a thorough review of the transcripts and additional notes, I started going through the material one interview at a time, in order to see how relevant information could be tagged, and linked to each question asked. Then I started to select the utterances that were most

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[19] The 'coding' is just a *part* of the analysis. Coding as a process includes several 'steps' such as discovering patterns, finding relevant key terms and, in terms of coding, tagging and labeling, and ultimately creating categories.

relevant in relation to the questions asked. I used different colours to mark utterances or parts of utterances due to the different categories made. Grouping the data into categories is a common way of organizing the transcribed interview material, as it will make it more comprehensible. It is of great importance that the researcher keeps an open mind during this process, as the material, the transcribed interviews, should be able to speak for itself. According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009: 202), one should aim to develop categories that "capture the fullness of the experiences and actions studied".

The categories I chose were based on the different themes in the interview guides, which in their turn were founded in the research questions. When all the central categories had been highlighted I could carry on with coding within each of these. "Text approach" is an example of a category and "reader-centred" could be an example of a 'tag' or label within this category. The most important aspect of this work was to elicit each informants experience with the phenomenon in each category. The tagging was primarily a help to see and detect as many facets and nuances as possible. See example of coding and categorization of this study's interview material in Appendix 7.

3.5 Objectivity and reliability

3.5.1 Objectivity

Objectivity as inter subjective knowledge has always been a common idea in social sciences. (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009: 247) Objectivity also comprises letting the object (interviewee) talk, something which means that one should always remain objective towards the object and his/her utterances. Furthermore, it is important to let the interviewee *object* (protest) and then for the researcher to act upon it by taking the protest into consideration. Rubin and Rubin (2005) give three vital criteria for ensuring objectiveness and validity in the interview process. These are:

- *Transparency*: others should be able to evaluate every step of the research process
- *Consistency*: opposing views in the material must be discussed
- *Communicativeness*: the participants and the readers must be enabled to understand the project and its' use of method. Other researchers should ideally be able to get the same result in a second round

Picking up on this last point, the focus of validation should be shifted from the findings and the product and over to the research process itself. A study's validity, Kvale and Brinkmann (2009: 253-254) argue, depends on its overall quality. Validity, they claim, should be thoroughly examined according to what they call "the seven stages of validation". These are:

- Thematic relevance
- Planning
- Interviewing
- Transcribing
- Analysing
- Validating
- Reporting

The validity of a study then, lies in the process as a whole, and therefore the selected theories which will be used in the analysis must stand in a sound and healthy relationship with the overall research design, and the discussion that follows as a result of this must also reflect the validity in light of the process as a whole. Since this project is limited to include interviews from only seven informants, it needs to be emphasized that no general conclusions can be drawn on the basis of this project alone. It can only suggest some possible tendencies. Still, an in-depth analysis might give more thorough insight than a qualitative approach.

3.5.2 Reliability

The issue of reliability is correlated to the consistency or truthfulness of the interviews, transcriptions and analysis, in the case of interview based studies (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009). As previously mentioned, the fact that the interviews were planned, conducted and transcribed by the same person may have enhanced the reliability of this project. In this respect it needs to be pointed out that this also can be a weakness in some cases, something which also regards this project. Continuing, the use of pre-structured interview guides may also have contributed to consistency as far as the interviews are concerned, because these guides were followed and used as leads in each single interview. Furthermore, the informants had been provided with the same information as well as predictions and instructions. The setting and the time of day for the realization of the interviews were also quite similar, because the same room, and the same hours, even weekdays were used. This was made possible because of the planning and the agreements made on forehand with the teacher of the

two groups. As far as the informants in this study are concerned, it must be pointed at that the interviews were carried out in English. This can have caused details and nuances to go missing, because of differences in language level and proficiency. To which extent the informants were providing me with honest answers, is also debatable. I encouraged them to speak freely and to be honest, since no information would be carried on to the teacher or others that could harm their reputation, or in any other way be disadvantageous or unfavourable to them. In the case of a few of the interviewees leading questions were asked in parts of the interviews, especially in the case of Emma. This has been reflected upon in posterity, and I have decided not to use possibly biased responses in the analysis. Lastly, the fact that the main material of this study consists of interviews only[20], and that the data not are triangulated with classroom observation or other data, must also be indicated in relation to reliability. A final limitation which needs to be added here is that there can be a possibility for that the analysis of the interviews may have been carried out with eyes searching for answers to the researcher's own hypotheses. Nevertheless, it has all the way been attempted and intended to understand and depict the informants' own experiences as they are expressed through their explanations.

3.6 Limitations of the methods and material

The group of informants in this study is limited to include only seven informants. As previously described, eight informants were selected but one was lost on the way. The informants were selected from two different groups, but they all had the same teacher, something which also must be considered as a limitation in the context of this project. If the informants have had different teachers, and if they were picked from different schools, there assumingly would have been a greater diversity due to classroom practices, choice of texts and tasks. Since the teaching and learning to a large extent were based in the textbook, this is also relevant in this matter. Assumingly the variety in texts and approaches might have been increased with two different teachers and textbooks/material.

In the process of going through the recorded interviews and transcribing the interviews I became aware that I occasionally interrupted the informants during speech in such a way that

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[20] The context material in terms of textbook, texts and tasks must also be included here, although it cannot be seen as the main material.

useful information may have gone missing. This was unfortunate since the interviewees might have brought up relevant aspects of the topic discussed, or elaborated further on an idea.

Since the interviews in this study were carried out in English, the conclusion can be drawn that only the pupils who felt confident enough with their level of English and/or ability to communicate in it wanted to participate, something which in fact must have excluded a significant number of possible informants. Additionally one can presume that very shy pupils also might have felt reluctant to participate, and the study may thus to some extent have omitted the voices of learners who rarely speak up in the classroom.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

How do Norwegian EFL learners in the first year of upper secondary school experience encounters with English literature?

- How do the informants approach English literature within and beyond the EFL classroom?
- Which aspects of reading English literature do they find challenging?
- Which aspects of reading English literature do they find to be meaningful, and to what extent do they find their encounters with literature in the EFL classroom to contribute to such meaningful experiences?
- Which didactic implications may the learners' experiences have for the teaching of English literature?

4.1 How do the informants approach English literature within and beyond the EFL classroom?

In this section I will present the informants' experiences with reading literary texts within and beyond the EFL classroom and examine the extent to which they describe learning processes and reading practices which can be linked to curricular aims. Furthermore, this section aims to examine whether their approaches are text-centered or reader-centered. As described in chapter two, a text-centered approach to literature places the text in the focus of attention and meaning is perceived to reside in the text itself. On the contrary, a reader-oriented approach places the reader's response or reaction to the text in the center; meaning occurs through interaction between text and reader. Accordingly, what the text does (Fish 1980a) with the reader is the focus. It is of course not possible to determine with accuracy whether the informants read in accordance with the one approach or the other, but it is possible to detect some tendencies in this respect. Whether the informants seem to focus on meaning and the aesthetic experience (aesthetic approaches) or the information which can be taken out of the literary texts (efferent approaches) is also important in this respect.

The informants' experiences with reading practices in the EFL classroom is the focus here, but additionally, differences as far as interests and attitudes to school are concerned will also briefly be drawn upon. Moreover, I will aim to place the informants within Appleyard's

(1991) categories of readers, most importantly to provide the reader of this thesis with basic information regarding the informants' literary reading experience in English and in their L1. At the end of section 4.1, I will give a brief summary of the main findings of the analysis so far.

In order to go more profoundly into the matter discussed in this section, an in-depth analysis of how the learners work with specific literary texts in the English subject will be presented at the end of this analysis and discussion chapter (4.7). This is done in order to examine the informants' experiences more specifically, and in more detail, in light of how they approach and process concrete material. Some didactic implications will be discussed in this regard. In order to facilitate the reading of this part, a description of three literary texts and their tasks are added in order to provide the reader of this thesis with the information necessary concerning text selection and reading procedures in the informants' classrooms.

4.1.1 The informants as readers of literature

Firstly, as far as the informants as readers according to Appleyard's (1991) descriptions are concerned, I will at this point emphasize that the different phases can only serve as indications and nothing more. Appleyard underscores that all readers are unique, so forth that a complete categorization is impossible and that a mechanical usage of the frames and phases which he presents us with through his outline of readers, should be avoided (Appleyard 1991). Personality, taste, social background and school experience for example, are all relevant factors influencing the person as a reader. Secondly, some readers might not even fit into the categories described by Appleyard, as they may not have much experience with the reading of literature. The main concern in this context is how the informants' encounters with literature in the English classroom may have influenced them as readers, and how the learners experience this. Moreover, the learners in this study are teenagers in the age of 16 -17; they are consequently in the middle of a turbulent phase characterized by great development mentally, emotionally and physically. In conclusion, the descriptions of readers according to Appleyard cannot say anything specific about the learners as readers of English language literature, as they can only give an impression of the learners as readers of literature in general. The intention of categorizing the informants as readers in this thesis is to describe and discuss how they can develop and move forward as readers of literature in an EFL context

<u>The informants from Group A</u>

The first informant from this group, Tova, likes being active in her spare time; she spends a lot of time on football and other types of sports, and she prefers to spend much time with her boyfriend and her friends. Tova has always liked school, and still does. She likes talking and communicating in English and this is what she prefers doing in the English classroom as well. She has never read an entire book in English from cover to cover, although she has been encouraged to start reading a few, especially in school. Tova prefers reading books in her mother tongue since she, according to her statements, struggles with reading literature in English:

> I can understand a whole text, such as what happens and all, but all the small words – they make me unfocused and, yeah, so… (Tova1).

When asked about the genres she prefers, she replies "fantasy novels and realistic stories". According to Appleyard's categories of readers, Tova fits in to stage three: "the adolescent reader", owing to her like for realistic literature that can touch her. The fact that this aspect is important to her, will be shown and elaborated on later in this chapter. Moreover, she is also still intrigued and fascinated by fantasy novels that can capture her and make her 'lose herself' in the story, with reference to Appleyard's stage two-reader: "the reader as a heroine". Tova also describes the sensation of understanding something new about herself and life through literary reading:

> Tova: Uh, yeah... it makes you think not only about the symbols in the book, or in the text, but also about what happened and maybe you get a whole other way of thinking about things, not only what happened there, but in <u>your life</u> as well...
> […]
> Tova: Well, it is kind of like learning about something you haven't known before, and it kind of puts pressure on what you have thought and believed, I think… And it makes you have new opinions about stuff (Tova1, my emphasis).

Tova's new experiences gained through the process of reading a literary text "puts pressure on" what she so far has thought and believed, leading her to change her opinion about something or make her reconsider ideas and understandings about something which she has had until this point. This is the essence of *Bildung*, and Tova's approach to literature connects to the overarching aims of literary reading described in the introduction to the subject curriculum of English in LK06. Tova does not read much literature beyond the English classroom. However, she is presented with literary texts in the EFL classroom that challenge her and make her reconsider her previous beliefs and opinions. This gives evidence to the stance that literature can "open up for a deeper understanding of others and of oneself" (LK06, English subject curriculum, English version: 2). Her statements above indicate that

she is able to approach literary texts both analytically as well as in an efferent manner; she focuses on "symbols", as well as on meaning and how the literary reading experience affects her own life ("puts pressure on what you have thought and believed…"). Tova's main approach to literature is reader-oriented, but she is able to shift between this approach and a text-oriented approach with regard to purpose, as indicated by her statements above. Moreover, Tova seems inclined to the view that a literary text can give certain answers:

> Int: Uhum. I see. So, do you sometimes talk about the texts in class?
> Tova: Uhm... Yes, sometimes. We sometimes talk about the texts after doing the exercises. She asks us whether we have any questions or not and then she gives us the answers, so I guess we talk about the text then…
> Int: Right...
> Tova: Sometimes we have a discussion about it… if we have understood it… (Tova2).

The interview passage above seems to indicate that Tova expects the teacher to have "the [correct] answers", and that the classroom discussion, which sometimes takes place after the reading of a text, either confirms or disproves the learners' interpretation of it. Tova, as a reader of literature, appears to be influenced by the approaches to literary texts she is confronted with in the classroom. In the case of Tova there seems to be a link between the classroom and her text-related approach to literature, indicating that the work on literature within the EFL classroom has impact on the learners, and that it can shape their way of approaching texts also beyond the classroom. It needs to be added here that Tova does not directly talk about reading outside the classroom in ways that align to a text-oriented approach.

The second informant in this group, Tina, originally comes from another European country and has been living permanently in Norway for six years. She describes herself as a bit quiet and shy around new people, but she can also become more open and fun to be around with people whom she has made a good connection. Tina is a very curious person and she can easily express her feelings and emotions. Tina likes the English language very much, and in the interviews, she expresses this in a passionate manner: "I love English, I love different languages". Owing to her background, she speaks several languages; her level of English is advanced since she has used it as a lingua franca[21] before she learnt to master Norwegian

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[21] Lingua Franca: A language used for communication between people with different mother tongues. Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc. www.global.britannica.com

fully. She is able to read books in four different languages, including her mother tongue and Norwegian. Tina is very passionate about reading and she reads books in many different genres. Her family is also supportive as far as reading literature is concerned, and especially her mother supports this interest. Tina says:

> I like reading books, fiction – and all kinds, really. My whole family does. Everyone is walking around the house with a book in front of their face, making food and doing all sorts of stuff... So I think that reading is a hobby to me in a way. (Tina1).

Tina is an experienced reader of English literature and she is able to reflect upon own thoughts and ideas concerning what she reads, moreover she seeks involvement with the literary universe and identification with the characters in literary texts. "If I can escape into the text and become a part of that world, then it is meaningful to me. Because then I feel it. I understand it, - like really..." (Tina2). Finally, she wants to read books that make her think. Tina is in the phase of "the adolescent reader", with reference to Appleyard's stage three. She has more reading experience than Tova, hence she has come a bit further, but she is not yet in the phase of "the analytical reader". She might be placed somewhere in between stages three and four, as she describes the sensation of being present in the fictional universe and simultaneously being able to evaluate what is going on in it" (Appleyard 1991: 108). Tina says: "...like it's all fictional. It's not real. I know it's not true, but I like to think about that it can *be* true... "(Tina1). Another resemblance with Appleyard's "adolescent reader" of phase three is that she loves books "about death and severe illness", like the novel *The Fault in Our Stars* by John Greene, a novel that "swept her off her feet".

Tina: (…) This book is not depressing, like many other books on the subject. This book made me feel it and be both happy and sad and the main character, Hazel Grace became really close to me, so… She says to her boyfriend that "You have given me a feeling of eternity" or something, in just a short period of time, - and it really is so...It is about cancer, but it is very much about other things too... and that makes sense...

Int: So a novel about cancer can be about other things as well?
Tina: Yeah! And that's good… a good combination. That is good literature! (Tina2)

Tina praises this book for its *realism*, and not only for being a book "about cancer". Tina is well aware that life is complicated, and that hardship and joy can occur concurrently. "The adolescent reader" appreciates this reflected in the literary text (Appleyard 1991). By involving herself personally in the fictional characters Tina has made some valuable experiences, for example that experiencing severe sickness can help create new possibilities and new attitudes to life. The interaction with the fictional characters makes self-reflection possible (Ricoeur 1992). That reading literature "can promote language understanding and

improve linguistic skills" (LK06, English subject curriculum, English version: 3), for example in terms of acquiring and learning new vocabulary, is also stressed by Tina: "I like reading in English because I can expand my vocabulary." (Tina1). Tina, as shown here, has a mainly reader-oriented approach to literature, and text-oriented approaches do not seem to affect her to the same extent as Tova. Tina's focus on learning new vocabulary, however, is a sign of her also taking an efferent approach when she reads literature in English.

Tina would prefer more discussion about the texts they read in class, and she states that the participation and involvement from the learners are often limited:

> Int: Do you think it is important that the reading, in this way, becomes a common project? Like for the whole class?
> Tina: Yeah.. Because very often when we listen to a CD the teacher is just sitting there and the half of the class is sitting there with their cellphones and not paying any attention at all… and...then when she asks them about the text afterwards they say: "Oh, I don't know".... and I hate it. I hate the answer "I don't know"…
> Int: Yeah…
> Tina: It is so… What are they doing in class if they are not interested? It's so irritating...
> Int: Do you think it is more engaging when you read in turns or when you read in pairs? That you get more involved?
> Tina: Yes. Definitely... (Tina1).

It seems like the reading of literature might have become far more interesting and meaningful for Tina if the class could have worked with the texts together, so that reading would become a sociocultural process (cf. Ibsen 2000, Fenner 2001, Hoff 2013).

Emma, the third informant from Group A, enjoys reading literature and preferably in Norwegian. She describes having read a novel in English in the previous semester as a part of an EFL classroom-reading project. This was a good experience for her as she could feel the joy of being able to read an entire novel in English.

> Int: Can you mention a book that you have read in English?
>
> Emma: Yes, I read this book called *The Lovely Bones*…
> […] It's not a book I would have read in Norwegian, but I liked it very much! I don't think I would have had the same feeling about it if it was in Norwegian, so…
> Int: What did you like about that book?
> Emma: It was just something about it that I… it's hard to explain, because it wasn't exactly a typical "me" book...
> Int: No, because it wasn't a fantasy novel or so...?
> Emma: No, it wasn't (laughing)
> Int: It is about a young girl… can that be why? And that it's quite touching,..?
> Emma: Yeah. That can be….

Even though the selected novel was an 'untypical' choice for her and not a type of book she would have chosen to read herself in Norwegian, she ended up liking both the book and the project because it was a "real" novel written in English. Evidently, Emma has had a very

rewarding reading experience by encountering this novel. Due to the fact that she was challenged to read a book that she would not have chosen to read beyond an EFL classroom context, her self-confidence as a reader of literature, not solely in her native language but now also in English, seems to have been promoted. Emma likes books with plots and settings that resemble life itself, additionally she wants to become involved and learn something about life and about the lives of others. This can be linked to *Bildung* and the overarching aims of literature expressed in the English subject curriculum: "the reading of literature can lead to a deeper understanding of others and oneself" (LK06, English subject curriculum, English version: 3). Emma has her own horse at home, and her favorite book is a young-readers book called *Clan of the Horses:*

> Int: What is a good book… a fictional story to you?
> Emma: Umm... it will make me wanting to read more, even when the story is over. A story that makes me learn something… and that catches me…
> Int: What do you mean by "learn something"? Can you elaborate? (…)
> Emma: That it can open my eyes so that I can see things in a new way…
> Int: Can you give an example of such a text, such a story?
> Emma: A book?
> Int: Yes, for example
> Emma: I read one called *Hestenes klan...* I hadn't thought about horses in that way before, so it made me think of them in a new way. It really touched me. (laughing) It opened up my eyes to the fact that you should just listen to your horse… and how you are around horses…
> Int: Uhum. So it was about how horses and people can communicate, in a way?
> Emma: Yes... It is hard to explain it, though… (laughing)
> Int: I see!
> Emma: I could really relate to the girl…
> Int: Was the story realistic, would you say? Could this have happened in the real world?
> Emma: Yeah... I would say so...

Based on what kind of books and genres she prefers, she is still in phase three according to Appleyard's categorization of readers. Emma is seemingly not yet fully aware of the complexity of meanings and interpretations, something which is characteristic for the succeeding phase. Moreover, she finds it difficult to express her experiences of the reading process. What is noteworthy here is that something of great value has generated inside her through the experience of reading a "real" English novel in EFL class. The emphasis in her descriptions of experiences with reading literature, both within and beyond the classroom, is on the level of personal involvement with the text, its characters and their lives, something that the readings of *The Lovely Bones* and *Clan of the Horses* illustrate.

Moreover, Emma has experienced that reading literature can help her take a different perspective and change her way of thinking, an experience she had when reading the excerpt from the novel *The Curious Incident with the Dog in the Night-Time*, "It made me think about

how I too behave around other people" (Emma2). Ostensibly, the encounter with the narrator and protagonist of this story made her become aware of and consider her behavior towards others. Her involvement with the fictional characters has made her take a closer look at herself. Wiland (2000: 213) calls attention to a prominent trait with literature and fiction: "it stages encounters within the personality of the reader, expanding horizons, challenging prejudices as well as confirming beliefs". This is also the core of reception theory (Iser 1978). Moreover, Hoff (2013: 32) has found that "The act of reading can thus play a significant role in the development of an individual's identity". Emotional involvement with the literary text seems to have led Emma towards a highly positive attitude to reading, which may provide the foundation for a lifelong enjoyment of - and appreciation for – literature, as expressed in the descriptions of the purposes of the English subject in LK06. Emma primarily approaches literature in a reader-oriented way, but with resemblance to Tova, she is also able to shift between a reader-oriented and efferent/analytical approach.

The fourth informant in Group A, Kenneth, does not enjoy reading books at all. He says:

> If I am going to be completely honest I have only read one book in English, it's … I just don't like reading books… I do not find any book that interests me. (…)The first book I read in English was actually this year, at school, and because I had to, and it was… the book was a philosophical book written by an English kind of philosopher. I enjoyed reading it actually, because it made me realize new things… That was quite an interesting read (Kenneth1).

Kenneth states that he does not like the English subject that much. "It does not help me to develop my English skills any further" (Kenneth 1) he says, and it is only through the mock exams that he can show what he can do and where he faces a challenge. He has enjoyed the English reading project carried out in class in the previous semester, though, and he does remember at least one of the literary texts the group has been working on during this school year quite well. As will be shown, Kenneth prefers reading non-literary texts, and that his main approach to texts is efferent seems clear, both in light of this and through his statements in the quote above.

> Int: Why did this specific text have impact on you? Why do you think you remember it ["Thou Shalt not Kill"] so well?
> Ken: Why? … Uh… We went through it quite well uh… and just because the subject was important to me. I think it is important to always look at a subject in a way that makes you see that it has more than one side… (Kenneth1)
>
> Int: What is a good fictional story to you? A good piece of literature?
> Ken: I like to be surprised… Uh... Something that I haven't seen before or read before… […] I don't read books because I know how it is going to end from the beginning and there are not many surprises… So little variation… People say that there are endless possible variations… but

> there are not...the way I see it... […]… and that is why I prefer reading articles for instance, because they can have interesting perspectives on society and things that I am interested in... (Kenneth2)

Kenneth is not interested in reading literature for entertainment, and he is not very keen on reading literary texts in the English subject. He wants to be surprised and discover something new, something he has not experienced before, but he has not been able to locate books and texts like this, he claims. This appears contradictory considering that he has not read many books at all. There is a discrepancy between what he expresses to be his attitude towards literature on the one hand, with reference to the last three lines in the quotation above: "So little variation…", and what comes forth when he is asked to describe literary reading experiences from the EFL classroom on the other. On account of the fact that he does not primarily relate to the situations and lives of the characters, or take their perspectives to identify with them, as the majority of the informants in this study do, it is the plot and surface of texts he is referring to. This may be the reason why the stories appear similar to Kenneth, thence the plots of fictional texts have many resemblances. Stories are often similar in the ways in which they narrate. Fairytales can serve as an example of this and the number of films and books with 'Cinderella plots' for example, is significant. The problem of approaching literary texts in an efferent manner (Rosenblatt 1978, Kramsch, 1993) exclusively is that the reading never becomes a personal experience, as it can be in aesthetic response (Rosenblatt 1978). Nor will he be able to explore the meaning level of the text to such an extent that the single text becomes unique, and not just like any other text. As a reader Kenneth seems to maintain a distance to the literary works he is encounters, a distance that is essential when it comes to analyzing texts. Nevertheless, this distance seems to stand in the way of exploration, enjoyment and identification, and the reading of literature may become a tedious experience.

In the citation from the interview above, Kenneth refers to the reading of the short story "Thou Shalt Not Kill" from one of the EFL lessons. Kenneth is apparently most concerned with what there is to learn from this short story, what the message is. His approach in this case primarily appears to be similar to the one already described, efferent and content related, but simultaneously he is concerned with the fact that the literary text helps him to see more than one side to the question of gun use, and whether to kill can be defended from an ethical point of view. Seemingly, this interpretation requires Kenneth to be taking on the perspectives of the two main characters in the short story to some extent. This proves that he is in fact capable of involving himself with literature also beneath the surface. Kenneth's reason for liking this

text is: "[…] the subject was important to me", ostensibly he is more concerned with what he can take out of the text in terms of knowledge (efferent reading), and with focus on what can be carried out of the text in form of information (Rosenblatt 1978, Kramsch 1993). Being able to imagine and 'experience' his own or other's lives and situations through the literary reading is "still to come" (Appleyard 1991: 90). There will be a more thorough discussion of Kenneth's encounter with this specific text in section 4.7.

Kenneth is not a devoted reader of literature and he might therefore not have the same literary reading experience as several other informants. Nonetheless, he is not "literary incompetent". Still, he stands out from the rest of the group of informants, and it can be challenging to place him within the frames of Appleyard's descriptions of readers. According to his statements concerning why he does not read much literature one might suggest here that he perhaps not is aware of the possible multitudes of meanings beneath the surface of the literary texts and their plots. Clearly, Kenneth realizes that he can learn something from reading literature, with reference to "take knowledge from", but he is apparently convinced that factual texts can offer him new perspectives on different topics in a way that literary texts cannot do.

Based on the discussion above, there is a need for an alternative phase in order to categorize Kenneth more adequately as a reader of literature. Since Kenneth reads literary texts more in accordance with what Rosenblatt (1978) and Kramsch (1993) call "efferent" reading, he does not fulfill the 'requirements' of a reader according to the five phases of Appleyard's descriptions. Therefore, in order to develop his literary reading skills in such a way that it could help him with involvement, identification and negotiation of meaning, he needs to be presented with input and tasks which help him to explore why the texts make him respond the way he does. What does the text do to cause this effect? What are the 'narrative techniques that the author uses to make you see that there are more than two sides to a specific dilemma? Furthermore, Kenneth would benefit from, and assumingly develop as a reader by working with tasks of aesthetic response. This might presumably challenge him to search beyond the surface of the literary texts exploring aspects of ambiguity. His interest with the moral dilemma presented in "Thou Shalt Not Kill" indicates that he might be ready for such a challenge.

<u>The informants from Group B</u>

 Jon is to some extent discontent in school. However, he enjoys reading in his spare time and he seemingly finds this activity more meaningful than the school activities. When he starts talking about reading, and books, he becomes very enthusiastic:

> I like reading fantasy novels and science fiction and stuff… I remember reading lots of fantasy- and adventure series… […] It's really exciting and you also learn a lot about mythology and stuff, although it is just fiction, of course… […] It's a great adventure! (Jon1).

Jon states that next to the sensation of experiencing the adventure or the entertainment aspect of it all, he appreciates the possibility of emotional involvement that literary texts offer. He still enjoys "the tales of the heroes" (Appleyard 1991), but he wants to become emotionally involved, and he identifies with the characters to such an extent that he has "cried over several books". "I guess I sympathize with the characters… They're interesting..." (Jon1). He underscores the fact that what he reads is "just fiction", implying with this his awareness of his own role as a reader.

Jon is also aware of how the overarching plots of the great fictional adventures that he likes resemble life itself, represented through real historical events and political conflicts:

Int: Why do you think stories like the ones we are currently talking about [Fantasy book series] fascinate us?
Jon: I don't know… It's just entertaining!
Int: Entertainment and an escape from reality… Is that all it is?
Jon: Well, if you look at the world… and history for example, you could say that it has happened many times… Take the Cold War for example…

Int: Uhum. I see, exactly...
Jon: They had like a certain time limit. If the US had attacked Cuba we probably would have seen a nuclear war...

Int: Are there any impending dangers in the world as we speak, you think?
Jon: I'm not that into the media, but just recently… I think Russia invaded the Ukraine or something...
Int: Right! They did.
        What do you think? Can stories like these, fictional texts, help us understand the world we live in?
Jon: I think they can, but I don't think about what I can learn from the books… I just read them… (Jon1).

Jon emphasizes that *learning* something from the books is not the most important aspect for him, as he just wants "to read them". Albeit, it is noteworthy that he recognizes that literature can help us to understand the world we live in, and maybe this contributes to an extra dimension of importance and meaningfulness to the reading experience in Jon's case.

Learning about the Cold War in terms of historical facts links with an efferent approach, but experiencing the emotional depths of fictional characters who live through the Cold War is an example of an aesthetic approach. The latter approach seems to be preferred by Jon. Furthermore, he shows "textual power" (Scholes 1998), as he is able to draw parallels between the fictional universe of the literary text and the real world in this way. Jon seems able to "understand it [the text] from the inside, sympathetically", as well as "to see a text for what it is and to ask also how it connects – or fails to connect - to the life and the times of the reader." (Scholes 1998: 130). According to the categories describing different dimensions of literariness ("literary literacy"), Jon's reading of this book series reveals a broad range of literary competences "in action", including "Literary cultural competence" and "Competence of reflection" (Hallet 2007/Lütge 2013). Moreover, Jon has noticed that reading a lot of literature in English helps him with his own writing: "I learn how to write better, I think. More creative..." (Jon1). This is expressed in the English subject curriculum as "Reading different types of texts can lay the foundation for personal growth, maturation and creativity and provide the inspiration necessary to create texts" (LK06, English subject curriculum, English version: 3). It also relates to "Competence of foreign language discourse" (Hallet 2007/Lütge 2013), which is described through "The ability of developing foreign language learning, recognizing and making use of foreign language discourse in literature for the learner's communication and interaction", and "The ability of relating perspectives and world views in literary works to one's own life" (Lütge 2013: 2013). As shown, Jon seems to have a solid foundation for literary work, nevertheless, he does not experience to be challenged to approach literature in meaningful ways in the EFL classroom. A greater awareness concerning different dimensions of literariness and literary competences may contribute to also challenge unmotivated learners for literary reading.

Consequently, Jon appears to be in phase three of Appleyard's description of readers, but he might be in an early stage of the process of approaching the succeeding phase, "the analytical reader". In order to further promote this process he should be presented with tasks involving close reading and analysis, something which may open up his scope and allow him to explore the texts and his emotional response further and in a larger context. Jon's main approach to literature is reader-oriented but he is able to take a step aside and look at it from a distance, even though he does not like to do this, as he says.

Kia states that she has experienced a great leap from lower secondary school to upper secondary school in terms of level and curricular demands. Kia is not very familiar with literary analysis and she struggles with coping with ambiguity and metaphorical language, something that has caused her trouble with the work on some of the literary texts in the EFL subject this year. "I remember this one text we read in English class ["Thou Shalt Not Kill"]… I could not understand any of it. Not anything..." (Kia2). She has read a Harry Potter book in English as a part of the optional reading project in the first semester, and this was a great achievement to her; it obviously meant a lot to her personally and boosted her confidence as a reader. Kia likes reading literature in Norwegian, as she earlier has read many Harry Potter books, but recently she has started reading romance novels. Kia has become interested in involvement with the fictional characters and their problems, and even though she has not yet arrived at the point where she can describe her role as a reader of literature, she is aware of what she is looking for in a literary text. She emphasizes her involvement with the fictional characters and their lives. Moreover, she is aware of what she personally can learn from these experiences. She likes reading texts with "a lot of descriptions" (Kia2) as she puts it, about how the characters feel, think and behave"… I can learn from other people's thoughts… and what they have experienced…" (Kia2). This relates to *Bildung* and the overarching aims of reading literature in the curriculum (LK06).

According to Appleyard's categories of readers, Kia has moved from phase two over to the third phase. She is a reader in search of meaning and "something to think about", and she shows an incipient awareness concerning her role as a reader. Kia shows signs of a growing understanding for the impact that the reading process has on her. It seems like there is a reading awareness process that has started inside her, and talking about her reading experiences seemingly makes her think and reflect, which indicates that she would benefit from such conversations about literature. Kia points out that reading literature raises text competence in terms of genre awareness: "[reading literature] gives us more experience with different types of texts…" (Kia1). This is emphasized in the subject curriculum under the main subject area "Written communication" (LK06, English subject curriculum, English version: 3). To sum up here, based on what has been discussed in the case of Kia above, she apparently has a reader-oriented approach to literary texts.

Adan, the last informant from Group B, is an experienced reader, and he actually prefers reading novels in English rather than in Norwegian. He has read the entire *Game of Thrones* series with a total amount of more than five thousand pages in English, as well as many other books.

> Int: Uhm, when you read a book, do you think you read it – or experience it – differently than other people? … people at your own age, for example… Like the books you read for entertainment, for example...?
>
> Adan: Well, I think so, but not that there would be any extreme differences. But yeah, I think I would read it a bit differently, simply because of my experiences.
>
> Int: Yes (…) And the way you get involved with the different characters? That would be different too?
>
> Adan: Yeah, I believe so… and … like in *Game of Thrones* everything is so incredibly complicated, I believe it is more realistic, because in most stories there are the bad guys and the good guys, but in *Game of Thrones* there are no bad or good, it is just that we have different interests… […]
>
> Adan: Yes, but after a while, because I have read all of the books, you kind of feel sympathy for most of them, even those that go around and kill everyone… I kind of understand because everything is complicated, and I in a way more understand why people do the things they do and I think that it has made me more tolerant to other people and that even though they did *that,* it does not necessarily mean that they *meant* that or are that, but that they had their own reasons for doing what they did… So, in that way reading a lot of these books can give perspectives and learning, and not only be entertainment and for fun. (Adan 2)

As shown in the quote above, Adan is aware of the differences in experiences from one reader to the next and that this affects the interpretation of the literary work. He states that his reading is unique, but that the differences among different readings of a given text would probably not be "extreme" (Adan2). According to reader-reception theory, this is a recognized stance or view (Fish 1980a, Iser 1978). Secondly, a prominent feature with Adan in this respect is his ability to see the text or the literary work from a distance and place it in a larger context, including himself as a reader, with reference to his statements on how reading fiction can give "perspectives and learning" and that literary texts have "a message". He underlines that "…many of them [literary texts] have quite simplified messages" (Adan2), but that he believes "some give more than others" (Adan2). This is described in the English subject curriculum, "Written communication" in the following way: "The main subject area includes reading a variety of different texts in English to stimulate the joy of reading, to experience greater understanding and to acquire knowledge." (LK06, English subject curriculum, English version: 3).

Furthermore, he is able to consider his own role as a reader and to see what the text represents in a larger context. From this perspective, he has more "textual power" (Scholes 1998) than the other informants.

> Reading, in this sense of the word, means being able to place or situate a text, to understand it from the inside, sympathetically, and to step away from it and see it from the outside, critically. It means being

able to see a text for what it is and to ask also how it connects – or fails to connect – to the life and the times of the reader. This is textual power (Scholes 1998: 130).

On the basis of his statements Adan might be placed within, or at least is very close to, the category of "the analyzing reader" ("the reader as an interpreter") in phase four of Appleyard's (1991) description of readers. The reader in this phase is a reader who analyzes what she is reading, and furthermore who has learnt how to employ meta-language in order to describe own responses to texts. That which characterizes this phase is rapid intellectual development and the discovery of authors (Appleyard 1991: 14). Adan *has* reached a point where he obviously is able to take a critical stand towards what he is reading, as well as reflecting upon his own role in the process. By moving forward from the phase of "the adolescent reader", he has developed a noticeable more critical and analytical stance in his way of reading. In this manner, Adan approaches literature both a reader-oriented and a text-oriented manner, depending on purpose, context and interest.

4.1.2 Section summary

In summation, the majority of the informants fit into phase three of "the adolescent reader" in accordance with Appleyard's description of readers, which means that they focus on the personal and experiential aspect of reading. Kia still has some resemblances with the reader of phase two, however, but she is in the process of becoming aware of her role as a reader, something which is expressed in the interviews. Emma, Tina and Jon have seemingly been in phase three for quite some time, and they all enjoy and appreciate reading as a hobby. These three informants fit very well into the category of the young reader in search for meaning and new experiences. Tina and Jon are slightly more experienced with reading literature than Emma, especially in English, but Emma on the other hand does not appear to be quite as seduced by the literary universe as the other two. Lastly, Adan fits into Appleyard's fourth phase of "the analytical reader", or at least he is very close to this phase. In this project, the case of Kenneth proves that an exact categorization of readers is impossible, and that all readers of literature are unique. Kenneth is in a phase where he is looking for messages, interesting perspectives on specific topics, knowledge and new insight. He is an "efferent reader" who could benefit from more experience with approaching texts aesthetically in order to develop further as a reader. All readers are unique. Some will stay within the frames of a given phase for a long time before they move on to the subsequent phase while others spirt or take a leap. As far as approaches to literature are concerned within the group of informants,

the majority of them - and the phase three readers exclusively - enter the texts based on their experiences, in a reader-oriented manner. Tova seems to swap between the two approaches, but this is seemingly not a conscious choice in Tova's case. Emma, and to some extent Jon, also occasionally have a text-oriented or analytical approach, at least some of their statements reveal this inference.

In addition, all informants, as shown in this section, describe learning processes and/or outcomes that link to curricular aims. Emma however, links her reading practices to several aims when referring to the reading of literary texts in English, both within and beyond the EFL-classroom. She is one of the informants who are clearly motivated for literary text work in the EFL-classroom, and perhaps her awareness concerning the benefits of reading literature in a learning perspective can serve as an explanation for this. Working processes and tasks that allow the learners to discover the central 'connections' might therefore promote their motivation for reading. Furthermore, tasks that enable the learners to reflect upon own learning will assumingly also serve this purpose. However, it is not possible to state with any certainty whether the reading of literature in an EFL context influence the informants' reading outside the classroom, even though several informants indicate that they tend to focus on learning new vocabulary, improving writing skills and acquiring knowledge when they read English literature on a general basis. In this respect, it is important to state that the categorization of informants according to the descriptions of Appleyard (1991) cannot say anything about them as readers of *English* literature, only literature in general. In this way, the learning practices in the L1 classroom may influence their work in the EFL classroom.

4.2 Reading procedures in the informants' classrooms

According to the learners in this study, there seems to be a focus on using literary texts to teach and learn vocabulary learning in the EFL classroom. This comes forth in the following statement made by Kenneth: "We usually are told to remember the words and to come up with some answers..." and "We sometimes practice on "Quizlet" - to remember the words" (Kenneth 2). Kia also focuses on vocabulary learning as important when reading literary texts in the classroom: "if there are things about the text that I do not understand, I read it more closely, and I search for unknown words" (Kia2). Tina too seems inclined to the view that understanding vocabulary is a key to getting a grip of the FL texts: "I sometimes mix the

words, - you know, so I sometimes ask for help [from the teacher]" (Tina1). An implication in this context could be that the ways in which they work with literature in class might give the learners the impression that understanding every word and every detail of the plot is the sole way to create meaning in the reading of texts. This perception or view could lead to less focus on the general meaning of the literary text, and thereby stand in the way of text comprehension. According to Lazar (2005: 76), the tendency to focus on every word rather than the overall meaning is an inadequate reading strategy when encountering a short story in a foreign language. A consequence of this could be lack of confidence, something that can weaken the motivation for reading.

Several informants comment the classroom reading procedures related to literary texts, and according to their statements, they prefer reading them silently by themselves so that they can stay focused and process the content. An exception is Emma who likes reading in pairs with a classmate she has confidence in, and knows well. Tina also likes reading the text aloud in class, in turns, like a common project, in addition to reading on her own. Reading longer texts, like literary texts such as novel excerpts and short stories, in pairs is not preferred by the informants (Emma is an exception here), as it makes it hard to concentrate. Some of the skilled readers, Jon, Kenneth and Adan express that they usually follow their own procedure when they read in pairs. They usually just read ahead of their partner, or block his or her voice out as they keep on reading in their heads. Kenneth says:

> Sometimes we read them [the literary texts] in pairs, uh m… something which I don't like because I don't really get to interpret the text, because I cannot focus and follow the text when another person is reading the text, and not myself… When I myself read out loud (when in pairs) I just read and focus on that… […] So, what I do when we read in pairs is that I read through the text for myself when the other person is reading out loud… so that I can get the meaning and the content… I do this just to make sure that I get through it and that I will remember all the details... Sometimes we do this too, - we read them for ourselves, like quietly... (Kenneth2).

Based on the informants' comments concerning tasks and exercises, there appears to be much focus on comprehension questions. Adan thinks that the exercises can help him in those cases when he is not interested in the text (Adan2). Furthermore, these exercises or tasks can be very useful to some learners in order to help them with comprehending what happens in the literary text. On the contrary, these kinds of tasks might also limit rather than expand the learners' involvement with, and exploration of, the text. Adan says:

> … and then I read the text, and *read* it… And in most cases I think I understand it like it's meant to… like I'm meant to… and that's not always fun when I will have to do thirty exercises afterwards… (Adan2)

66

Tova shares this view on literary classroom reading, as she explains how they tend to wait for the teacher "to give them the answers" (Tova2) after working with a short story for example. An implication in this respect is that there seems to be little focus on common processes of interpreting literary texts in the informants' classrooms, cf. reading as a sociocultural process (Vygotsky 1978, Ibsen 2000, Fenner 2001, Hoff 2013).

4.3 Which aspects of reading English literature do the informants find challenging?

Tova is very clear concerning why she avoids reading literature in English in her spare time. To her, unfamiliar vocabulary puts an end to her efforts of trying. There are "too many words to look up", something which obstructs the reading progress, and that she has not read a whole book in English due to this (Tova1). Since Tova's oral skills are quite good, as she feels confident about talking in English, the language she encounters in literary texts is different from her active vocabulary as a foreign language speaker.

Another problem with reading literary texts conveyed in this study is coping with ambiguity. Kia states that the literary texts they read in English class often are "difficult" as shown in the example with her troublesome encounter with "A Great Day" – a text she could not comprehend ("I could not understand any of it. Not anything..." Kia2). Problems with interpreting the underlying meanings or the *subtext*, recognizing ambiguity and irony, as well as relating the symbolic meanings represented by the weather and the sea with the psychological drama unfolding in the text, prevent Kia from having a meaningful encounter with this short story. As shown here, many skills are required in order to perform a literary analysis of the story in this manner. According to Hallet (2007) in Lütge (2013:199), literary reading competence includes "the ability of close reading" as well as "general reading skills" and "the ability of emotionally responsive reading". Kia needs useful input enabling her to carry out a purposeful close reading and analysis of this difficult text. Thus, the literary EFL texts that Kia cannot choose herself evidently represent a challenge to her, and she states how some of them are very difficult to cope with. The form and content of the literary texts she meets in the EFL classroom do not resemble the literature she reads beyond this context, and consequently she struggles. Penne (2010: 38) calls this a "discourse problem" – not a general reading problem. What is familiar and safe, e.g. the typical romance novel plot, fails to assist the learner with the form and content of the chosen short story from the textbook, for

example. The in-depth analysis in section 4.7, which deals with the informants' experiences with the reading of three literary texts in the EFL classroom, discusses Kia's meeting with "A Great Day".

Tina struggles when she confronts literary texts where she cannot easily relate to and identify with the characters, in other words where the literary style or the narrative may be unfamiliar. An example of this is her encounter with the excerpt of *The Curious Incident with the Dog in the Night-Time*, which will be discussed more in-depth in section 4.7. Moreover, Tina finds it frustrating that many of her peers in class are not interested in active participation through discussions about the texts they work with in the EFL classroom. Tina states: "What are they doing in class if they are not interested? It's so irritating..." (Tina1). She seems to think that she could have learnt and understood more if she could talk about the reading experience as well.

Jon states that the literary texts he is presented with in the EFL classroom are "not challenging at all" (Jon1), and that they are "easily comprehended by most readers" (Jon1). He is bored with these texts, and he does not pay them any attention. The result in this respect seems to be that he struggles with the motivation for encountering literature in the EFL classroom. This also seems to regard Kenneth, "the efferent reader", who prefers reading factual texts. According to Kenneth, literary texts represent "so little variation" (Kenneth1) since he focuses on the plots, and does not seem to be able to explore the meanings beneath their surface. This leads to a situation where Kenneth struggles with the motivation for literary reading, just like in the case of Jon.

Fenner (2001) asserts that even young learners can apprehend and cope with advanced texts, both in terms of vocabulary and structure, if they just take an interest in the topic of the story. Another argument for employing advanced texts with young EFL-learners promoted by Fenner is that they must have the chance "to discover that unfamiliar vocabulary" (Fenner 2001: 27). Not understanding every word is not synonymous with 'not understanding anything'. Hoff (2013) also brings forth a valuable contribution to this debate, as she elaborates on the ideas of Iser (1978). According to Hoff, the asymmetry between the text and its reader causes communication or the need for communication. She emphasizes however, that the role of the teacher is crucial in "sensitizing the learners as how to approach a given text in the most effective way" (Hoff 2013: 33). Learners' lack of motivation for reading

literature can according to Lazar (2005) relate to lack of confidence, uninteresting content of texts and the perception that being able to read analyze literary texts is not relevant for passing exams. Furthermore, Adan states that "reading English is fun, but reading English in textbooks: incredibly boring" (Adan1).

Kenneth explains how he does not see the point in reading literature and why "he knows how it is going to end from the beginning" and that narrative literary texts, in Kenneth's words, "all are just small variations of a limited set of plots". When Kenneth compares reading fictional texts with factual texts he prefers the latter: "… and that is why I prefer reading articles for instance, because they can have interesting perspectives on society and things that I am interested in..." (Kenenth2). Clearly, Kenneth realizes that he can learn something from reading literature, with reference to "take knowledge from", but he is apparently convinced that factual texts offer more in terms of new perspectives on different topics. One might say that Kenneth struggles with his motivation for reading literary texts, even though he does not explicitly state this as a difficulty or challenge. As a reader of literature, he still needs to overcome some obstructions in this respect. This also concerns Jon who needs to overcome his 'boredom' with literary EFL-texts.

Ultimately, some didactic implications in this regard rise from the arguments made by Fenner (2001) and Hoff (2013) about using "difficult" texts that challenge the learners. As already described, many pupils find the literary texts they meet in an EFL-context boring and uninteresting, or that they lack the "motivating challenge" represented through 'new' language and challenging plots and contexts, as described by some informants in this study. Finding texts that are suitable for the majority of the pupils in the class is undoubtedly important, but as indicated in this chapter, letting students choose their own texts from time to time could play a significant role in terms of strengthening the motivation for reading as well as the motivation for learning English. Still, the learners may not necessarily choose "challenging" texts if they are invited to pick out these texts freely, so the teacher is important in terms of presenting the learners with texts that may challenge them.

4.4 Which aspects of reading English literature do the informants find to be meaningful?

In this section, the discussion will revolve around the informants' views on what they consider as meaningful in the context of reading literary texts. The findings that I aim to

impart and elaborate on here, originate from the discussion in section 4.1.1, "The informants as readers of literature". As previously discussed, literary texts can engage learners at both a cognitive and an emotional level (Ibsen 2000), and with the 'openness' which literary texts offer the readers, meaning can be explored. So what do the informants consider as meaningful in this respect?

4.4.1 Group A

Tova states that experiencing "something new" is a meaningful aspect of reading. New understanding arises when the literary encounter challenges her former opinions, conceptions and beliefs. "Something new", as Tova calls it, is something she has not yet experienced before, something which "puts pressure on" what she has thought until now" and makes her grow as a person. In other words, she emphasizes processes of *Bildung*. The new experiences gained through the reading of the text are now challenging the reader's pre-assumptions (Rosenblatt 1978: 145). Furthermore, Tova describes how a literary text can "continue inside" her for a long time, something that can be shown in the following citation:

> Int: I see, that lead us to my next question: What about the endings? How do you feel about 'open' and 'closed' endings?
> Tova: Well, I like reading both, but maybe I really prefer the open endings, because then maybe I will be thinking about it later. Yeah. I think so...that it will continue inside me for a long time… (Tova2).

As expressed above, the meaning can come forth through an on-going process even long after the actual reading has taken place. Tova describes this as a meaningful experience.

Tina wants to read books and literary texts that make her think; she enjoys the moments when she can reflect upon own ideas and conceptions, and when moments like these occur, the reading becomes meaningful. Furthermore, she emphasizes that personal involvement with the fictional universe and identification with the characters are important factors in this respect. Like Appleyard's (1991) "adolescent reader", she prefers realistic stories like *The Fault in our Stars*. When she can come so close to the characters and so involved in their problems that she can "feel it" and "understand it, - like really..." (Tina2), then it is meaningful to Tina. A third aspect of meaningfulness in this equation relates to language: "I like [that] I can disappear from the real world for a while and... at the same time I am enjoying that I really can understand the text, - that is if it's in English... it's a nice experience.

I love it. I can get the whole story, like *in* me…" Personal involvement with the text combined with the enjoyment of coping with difficult language, are also high up on Emma's list of meaningful effects of reading literature. Ibsen & Wiland (2000) point at how the dialectical relationship between reader and text can enhance fruitful language learning experiences in the foreign language. Just like Tina, Emma also finds it meaningful when the literary text is realistic in such a way that it might have happened: "Well, if it is a real story, some things that actually can happen… I get more touched by the story then… […] If it is something I can take with me... into my own life... then I think it is meaningful to me…" (Emma2).

According to Kenneth, learning about a topic and getting new experiences are important contributors to meaningful reading experiences. Especially the fact that reading literature can help the reader to see more than one side of a problem, and that the text can provide the reader with explanations and give examples of how to deal with a moral dilemma, for instance, is indicated as meaningful by Kenneth: ". I think it is important to always look at a subject in a way that makes you see that it has more than one side…" (Kenneth1). He also finds it meaningful to experience something new, to experience something for the first time, to become aware of a new aspect of something already known: "I like to be surprised [and find] something that I haven't seen before or read before…" (Kenneth2). With resemblance to Tina and Emma, language learning also plays an important part to him in this respect.

4.4.2 Group B
Jon from Group B likes the fact that he can become emotionally involved in the characters and their situations: "I sympathize with the characters… They're interesting..." (Jon1). Another important aspect for Jon is that he is learning how to express himself better in English, both in writing and in speech. He uses the word "creative" about the positive effects of literary reading and consequently he emphasizes the creative forces put into action when he interacts with the literary universe. Identifying with the fictional characters and their problems is important and feels meaningful to "the adolescent reader" (Appleyard 1991). By meeting the literary text the young reader can find meaning in her own existence as well, it can provide "the mirror in which they can see themselves reflected; it provides an outside to their inside" (Fenner 2000: 149). In this way, the involvement with the characters and the devotion to the literary universe resemble the involvement with 'real' friends and the devotion to a 'real' community (wanted) in the reader's life. About the literary texts that he reads in the

EFL subject, he says, "These texts are boring and not challenging at all… I don't pay attention." (Jon1). The reading of literature within an EFL context is not meaningful to Jon.

When the literary text can give Kia "something to think about" (Kia1) and when it affects her in such a way that it makes her see things in a new way, reading becomes meaningful according to her experience. Furthermore, she emphasizes the same aspect of meaningfulness as Kenneth from Group A, by learning from the experiences of others. Personal involvement is also a requirement for Kia in this respect, with reference to her connection with Appleyard's (1991) "adolescent reader".

Adan, "the analytical reader", finds reading in a foreign language meaningful. He finds that reading literature in English opens up for new understanding, different perspectives and a different world-view. That literature can "open up his eyes", that it can give him something in terms of "perspectives and learning" is directly related to meaningfulness: "why should I spend my time on something that doesn't give me anything at all? That isn't meaningful?" (Adan2). In the EFL classroom, Adan prefers the literary texts to the factual texts because they are "a lot more interesting to read…" (Adan1).

Reading in English also makes it more "authentic" he thinks: "I believe that reading it in English makes it less boring… if it was in Norwegian then I would think 'Well, this is just little Norway, - why should I take this seriously?' For some reason this is how I feel about it." (Adan1). Like several other informants, Adan also wants to experience something new, and he finds reading literary texts more interesting than factual texts because there is a "greater room for interpretation" (Adan1). Thus, he is aware of that just as every other individual reader, he can meet the text on his premises "simply because of [his] experiences"; anyhow, he underscores that his interpretation not would be "*that* different" from the others'.

In light of this, one might assume that Adan is capable of linking meaningful encounters with literature more directly to learning on a general basis, as *learning* is a conscious process or act. Penne (2010: 38) states that having learnt something is to reach a new form of understanding that always requires more language and terminology. In other words it requires meta-thinking and meta-language.

4.5 To what extent do the informants find their encounters with literature in the EFL classroom to be meaningful?

This section discusses the informants' experiences with reading literature in the EFL classroom. Moreover, it debates whether they find reading within a pedagogical context more or less meaningful than outside the classroom. Lastly, the section also examines the informants' various stages of development as readers of literature, as well as the role of the teacher, the text selection, the tasks, and the roles of other learners.

The reading that takes place within the EFL classroom is by some informants described as quite different from the reading they carry out beyond the classroom. The main purpose of spare time reading for the pupils in this study, and assumingly for readers in this age group in general, is enjoyment and having "new experiences". Reading for enjoyment does not regard Kenneth, however. Subsequently, the informants stake out other aspects of reading literature, such as language learning, cultural awareness, personal development and literary competence as important, though primarily in relation to their spare time reading, as in the cases of Jon and Adan. Jon wants to distance himself and the ways in which he reads literature from what is going on in the classroom. Adan however, does not emphasize such a distinction with regard to reading within and beyond the EFL classroom. Anyway, there often is a specific purpose with the reading in the classroom, with reference to the competence aims in the curriculum. Even though reading for enjoyment is important in this respect as well, the order seems reversed; enjoyment becomes a side effect and not the main objective for the reading. As previously discussed, Jon enjoys reading plenty of books in English in his spare time, but in the EFL classroom, he is not at all interested in the literary texts he meets. In consequence, the classroom reading becomes far less meaningful to Jon when compared to the reading he carries out at home.

Tova, who does not read much literature in her spare time, is one of the informants who describe reading practices and processes related to literature in the classroom to a significant extent. She obviously finds the personal exploration of literary texts to be meaningful, and as already mentioned, she tends to select tasks and activities that suit her. On the other hand, she is capable of taking an analytical stance, seemingly wanting to accept that texts can have inherent messages or 'truths'. She seems to maneuver between two poles, represented by her experience-based approach on the one side and the analytical approach on the other, even

though she is not fully aware of doing so. Tova seems to like the possibilities that the work on literature in the EFL classroom provide.

Emma however seems to have grown in terms of encountering literary texts in the EFL classroom this school year, something which partly might have been caused by a successful encounter with a novel in English in her first semester-reading project. As shown in 4.1.1 Emma is in the middle of a phase characterized by great development as far as the reading of literature is concerned, something which also might boost her motivation for exploration of the literary texts in the subject. The search for meaning which is representative for the teenager and adolescent reader might also be a reason for her interest in the texts in question. The reading of the novel excerpt of "The Curious Incident with the Dog in the Night-Time" had such an impact on Emma that it made her reconsider her own behavior. Her self-understanding increases through personal involvement with an 'other' (LK06). Literature, to Emma, is "feelings", and it is important in terms of personal development and growth, but the connection between heart and mind is clear to Emma, because good literature "makes us think", she claims. Furthermore, she understands the reasons behind the text selection the EFL classroom:

> I think it is because the authors think that there is something they can tell us about
> something, like the theme. There is a meaning behind it… Something we can learn... Make us think…
> And maybe because in fiction you can learn about it in a different way than in fact texts... (Emma2).

In summation, Emma appears to find the reading of literary texts in the EFL classroom meaningful. She seems to have several personal aims for her work that coincide with curricular aims. In comparison, this is not the case with Kia. Even though they both can be described as readers of literature in phase three according to Appleyard (1991), and despite of the resemblances of their literary preferences (what they like to read), their expressed experiences from encounters with literary texts in the classroom are very different.

Kia likes reading popular literature and romance novels, she also has read several Harry Potter books, so a very meaningful subject related reading experience to Kia was the reading project where she read a Harry Potter book in English. When asked to describe a memorable experience from the English subject, she replies, "I guess it must be reading a Harry Potter book in English" (Kia1). Moreover, the tasks in the textbook sometimes help Kia with the understanding and the comprehension, however, leading her to establishment of meaning.

> Int: What do you do *after* the reading of the text?

Kia: Well, I go through the glossary and do the tasks...
Int: Uhum, I see. Do the tasks help you to understand the text? Make it more meaningful?
Kia: Yes they do (Kia2)

The teaching of and the work on the three literary texts which are discussed in this case study (see section 4.7) rely on the textbook employed by the learners, *New eXperience*. The teacher has clearly played an important role in this respect as well, and she has provided the informants with vocabulary drills on forehand, and otherwise assisted the learners by answering questions and by helping them to focus on the tasks and activities in the textbook. Several informants describe a typical pattern in the text related work carried out in class: "But classes are usually just read the text, do the exercises and then we're done…" (Adan2). The way Adan states this here, the work with literary texts in the EFL classroom is not very meaningful. Carrying it out and completing it has greater focus than the learning process/experience. In this way, the reading of literature becomes less meaningful than the reading that Adan does beyond the classroom. The organization of literary work in the classroom seems to contribute to this. "Afterwards we sometimes talk a little bit about the text, and then we do the tasks..." (Emma2). Even though the textbook is quite good when it comes to presenting literary texts to the learners, and that the tasks and activities are varied, some informants express that they are bored with the same procedure repeating itself, and that their motivation becomes weakened. This is clearly a weak spot with many school subjects relying heavily on the textbook. The research of Popova (2010) shows that upper secondary school teachers of EFL tend to base their teaching on the textbook. According to both the teacher and the informants in my study, they go "by the book". Subsequently the way in which the textbook presents texts and tasks plays a significant role.

Another aspect of the informants' perception of reading in class versus reading at home is the view on how to deal with literary texts within the classroom. The previous discussion about extensive use of comprehension questions which are to be checked against a 'key' provided by the teacher and/or the textbook, has implications for how the learners relate to literary work in the EFL classroom. Rosenblatt expressed a concern on behalf of the "passive" position the students seemed to have to autonomous texts (Rosenblatt 1994: 12). Similarly, this can turn out to be the result if Norwegian pupils "told" how they are to interpret and experience the literary texts in the EFL classroom.

Few teachers of English today would deny that the individual's ability to read and enjoy literature is the primary aim for literary study. In practice, however, this tends to be overshadowed by preoccupation with whatever can be systematically taught and tested (Rosenblatt 1995: 62)

Testability juxtaposes with efferent approaches to literary texts to a larger extent than aesthetic approaches, and this may be a reason why the informants experience efferent tasks to be used frequently in the classroom, with reference to the teacher "giving them the answers" (Tova1) in the end. An important reason for employment of aesthetic reading responses is due to the motivational benefits in the reading process. The aesthetic reading response distances itself from efferent response in this respect. The aesthetic response is exploration (Rosenblatt 2005), and it is a personal and emotional experience, while the efferent reading response can be described as the reading tool that a person uses to do everyday activities such as finding information or knowing how to use a recipe in order to bake a cake (Kramsch: 123). In order to succeed with literature in the EFL classroom, many skills or competences need to be developed (Lütge 2012), and the idea that experiences with literature can be 'measured' or deemed as right or wrong seems to take away the learners' motivation for further exploration of meaning. Asking for the teacher's help is perhaps not always that easy for the learner who lacks the vocabulary to express or address the problem, or who fears for having the 'wrong conceptions' or ideas about the text. This may be the reason why some learners feel reluctant in this respect. Experiences with talking about, discussing and exploring literature seems to be very important for the learners, something the interview conversations about the reading of literary texts in this project seem to indicate. In other words, they express a need or desire for more reading of literature as a sociocultural process (Vygotsky 1978, Ibsen 2000, Fenner 2001).

It is not possible to find evidence or any clear tendencies to whether the work with literary texts in the EFL classroom has influenced the way the informants read literature in other settings, or whether they find it to be more or less meaningful. What seems clear is that Jon experiences his spare time reading to be much more meaningful than the one he carries out in class, and that the reading in the EFL classroom in his opinion not is meaningful at all. All the other informants express that they have experienced meaningful encounters with literature in the English subject. Nonetheless, Kenneth stands out from this group of informants, as it was only the work with one literary text, "Thou Shalt Not Kill", which seemed to bring him close to a meaningful literary encounter.

4.6 Summary of general findings

The findings analyzed and discussed so far in this chapter, show that the majority of the informants enter the texts with basis in their own experiences and emotions (reader-oriented), but one informant approaches literary texts exclusively in a text-oriented manner. The informant who has reached a phase where he is able to analyze and interpret seems to base his approach on the aims and purposes of the literary reading; he combines reader-oriented and text-oriented approaches. As far as challenges with literary reading is concerned, unfamiliar vocabulary and content, genre, literary style, ambiguous language and literary analysis seem to be problematic within the group of informants, according to their experiences. The lack of motivation for literary reading in the EFL classroom is also a challenge for some informants. Moreover, the informants link meaningful literary encounters to experiencing something "new" and personal involvement. Personal development, understanding of others, broadening of perspectives and increasing language skills also seem to lead the informants towards meaningful experiences with literature. Some informants consider the reading of literature within the EFL classroom as less meaningful than their spare time reading. Focus on efferent tasks and checkable comprehension questions related to literary reading in the classroom may partly be a reason for this. On the contrary, aesthetic exploration of texts represented through open-ended tasks and discussions seems to motivate several informants for literary encounters in the classroom.

My findings so far suggest that suitable texts and tasks for these learners are those that allow them to take a new perspective. Kenneth's work with "Thou Shalt Not Kill" exemplifies this, as he here is being challenged to take new perspectives through involvement with the tasks. This specific literary text is the only one he remembers well from the English classroom this year. In order to give a more profound insight into the "problem areas" of the informants' encounters with literature, as summarized here, there is a need for a closer examination of how the learners work with specific literary texts in the EFL classroom. The next section is therefore an in-depth analysis of the informants work with three literary texts.

4.7 The informants' experiences with three literary texts and their tasks: an in-depth analysis

The third main subject area in the subject curriculum after Vg1, "Culture, society and literature" focuses on "cultural understanding in a broad sense". Moreover, the main subject

area explicitly states that the learners shall be able to "analyze and discuss literary texts of different genres, from different times and eras, and from different parts of the English speaking world" (LK06, English subject curriculum, English version: 3).

To develop knowledge about, and respect and understanding for the cultures and the situations of other people, is an important or even superior aim in this context. Being able to employ analysis as a means to (investigate and) discuss literature is also an aim introduced here. An overarching aim as far as all types of literary work in the classroom are concerned must be that the learners develop "a broad and complex text competence that can comprise both experience and analysis" (Rødnes 2014: 13). In addition to the English subject competence aims, the general purposes of the English subject related to *Bildung* and intercultural competence and reading as a basic skill are equally important in this respect.

This section aims to present and discuss the ways in which the informants describe their experiences with three specific texts and their tasks. This is done in order to provide the reader of this thesis with more insight to *how* the informants were invited to approach and work with specific literary texts in the English classroom, as well as in which ways they *responded* to the texts and tasks. The following literary texts, with their respective tasks, focus and informants[22], will be discussed in this section.

- "A Great Day": Literary analysis, coping with literary style, ambiguous language and subtext (Kia and Adan)
- "The curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time": Narrative point of view and exploration of meaning (Tina and Emma)
- "Thou Shalt Not Kill": plot, shifting between efferent and aesthetic approaches (Kenneth and Tova)

4.7.1 "A Great Day": Kia and Adan

"A Great Day" is written by the New Zealand author, Frank Sargeson. This text is presented in the second chapter of the textbook, "Personal eXperience".

The short story is about two men, Ken and Fred who are preparing for a fishing trip out on the sea. It is a warm and sunny summer's day, and the two friends enter the small dinghy. The

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[22] The informant «Jon» did not talk about any specific literary EFL text during the interviews, as he not could remember any of them. Consequently, he is not referred to in the in-depth analysis.

two men are both out of work, but Ken is apparently financially better off than Fred. He is also lucky when it comes to women, so it becomes clear that Fred is envious of Ken in more than one way, and that he really has bad intentions. There is suddenly a change in weather, and the tension between the two men which is being expressed through the dialogue, increases in pace with the upcoming storm.

This text challenges the reader "read between the lines". The narrative technique is 3rd person omniscient, and the dialogue is the most essential part when it comes to exploring the deeper meanings and the themes of the story. The tone of the story is flat and even, so the shock at the end – when Fred's malicious plan is completed – makes a hard impact on the reader, if he or she has understood what is really going on both on the psychological as well as the physical level in the story. The fact that the Fred character is ironic and that he represses his true feelings is another factor that can make the reader misinterpret his intentions.

As far as the literary techniques are concerned, there is a lot of foreshadowing, mainly linked to the weather and the sea, hinting towards a possible disaster. The author is known for his use of colloquial language and the use of (N.Z) slang words. It is easy to understand why this short story is chosen by English textbook authors; it is quite short, nearly four pages, it's of good literary quality, and there are many levels, cues and hints - something which makes it exciting to read and interpret. In spite of that, it can be a challenge for some readers due to the same reasons.

The pupils in this study worked with this text by reflecting around the question "What is your idea of a great day?" Furthermore, they were asked to predict what the story was about based on the title and the picture (see Appendix 6: tasks) related to it. A didactic implication in this regard is that the task lets the learners use their previous experiences as an entrance to the text. There will clearly be many and very different responses to this first pre-reading question, even though the textbook picture (Appendix 6), with the two men pulling a dinghy from the shore with the clear blue sky and the wide horizon in the background, probably will lead their thoughts to summer. Nevertheless, this is a reader-oriented task. As far as the second pre-reading question is concerned, it may activate the learners' genre awareness or former experiences with the short story genre, inviting them to predict the topic of the story. In this respect, the task might prepare the readers for the following analysis. Another didactic implication of employing this type of pre-reading task is that it lets the learners use their imagination, form hypotheses and become motivated for the reading. In this way they can find out whether their assumptions are correct or not (Fish 1980b). Learners of this age tend to be

most concerned with what the text can mean to them, personally (Rosenblatt 1978, Appleyard 1991), and this seems to be the case within the groups of informants in this study as well.

A purpose for the reading in this context was to carry out an analysis of the text, and the learners were encouraged to consult a 'check list' in the back of their textbook on how to analyze short stories (see Appendix 6). The learners were in this regard asked to describe the setting, the characters, the plot and furthermore to reflect around the themes of the story. According to Rødnes (2014), a common objection or protest to this type of analytical approach is that it can easily turn into "methodical formalism" (Rødnes 2014: 2. My translation) where learners 'tick off' their answers or findings according to a list, most typically including plot, setting and descriptions of characters. Instead of serving as a means to promote learners' development as readers, such analytical approaches are often reduced to 'tick off'-lists as described above and thus limit the analysis. In this respect, the reading may be reduced to a merely superficial activity (Rosenblatt 1978). A procedure similar to this was described by Tova in 4.1.1: "…after doing the exercises she [the teacher] asks us whether we have any questions or not and then she gives us the answers" (Tova2). It needs to be underscored here that some of the informants, like Emma for example, find it very useful to work with these types of tasks too, and not only the activities that invite the learners to respond aesthetically, as they can help the learners with text comprehension and prepare them for aesthetic response.

Since the learners in this study worked in pairs, they could in this part help each other to interpret the text. In the second stage of the text analysis, the pupils are asked to close read "A Great Day" (after having consulted another list describing different reading strategies, such as skimming, scanning, close reading and reading for pleasure) and to discuss six comprehension questions in groups. In this phase the learners were encouraged to work on their understanding of the characters and as Adan puts it: "We talked about what we thought the different signs meant, and we talked about why they did what they did..." (Adan2).

In summation, the didactic implications for approaches to reading practices inherent in this set of tasks can be described as follows: The starting point (pre-reading tasks) here is the readers' experiences, but the focus gradually moves in direction of their experiences with, or knowledge about the genre (predicting the story). The learners with little experience with this genre might presumably miss out on this point, as is the case with Kia, and which might make the interpretation process more troublesome. The while reading/post reading task 1: analysis

(Appendix 6) has a text-oriented or analytical (efferent) stance. It encourages the pupils to read the text closely and to investigate its structure and themes. The second post-reading task combines reader-oriented and analytical/text-oriented perspectives, as the learners are encouraged to elaborate on their analysis and discuss the implications of their interpretation with their peers. One of the discussion questions in this set of tasks was:

> b. When do you think Fred gets the idea of leaving Ken on the reef Does he change his plan during the story or had he planned it from the start? (Heian & al. 2009: 122)

This is what Adan says about their work on this task: "We talked about what we thought the different signs meant, and we talked about why they did what they did... […] I remember that it was indicated that the small one was very envious at the bigger guy and some indications of that he actually had planned it all, and that he planned leaving him there to die" (Adan2). In this respect, the learners can let their own pupil text (interpretation) meet the texts of the others, and a new and perhaps richer understanding may be the result (Ibsen 2000, Vygotsky 1986. The fact that this task combines or blends the two approaches might increase the meaning potential for the readers, with reference to Vygotsky's (1986: 10) descriptions of the components of the meaning system "where the affective and intellectual unite". In this way, reader-oriented entrances to literary texts may engage the readers and make them commit to the reading. Simultaneously it seems evident that without analytical entrances to literature the learners' textual competence will come to a halt. Based on my research it seems evident that Kia lacks the skills which let her have a command of the terminology needed for analyzing this type of literary text, something which may explain why she "could not understand any of it." (Kia1).

Adan, on the other hand, does not face the same problems as Kia as he is able to detect the subtext and understand what may be implied through the dialogue between the two literary characters. The meta-language or the tools which enable the learners to talk about the texts and how they work is important to give substance to the literary work. The set of tasks that the learners face in relation to "A Great Day" combines the two approaches, although the main focus is on the text-centered approach. The didactic implications in this respect or context may be that the learning situations must be designed in such a way that they can challenge the learners' understanding of literature in ways that enable development in the span between reader-

oriented and an analytical or text-oriented approaches. The keys in this respect are dialogue and interaction (Fenner 2001). The implications based on my findings here indicate that a larger amount of reader-oriented tasks should be given at an earlier stage in the process in order to enable the learners to become involved with the text at a personal level before they start off with the literary analysis. In this way their experiences with the text can be the starting point for further exploration and analysis.

Kia and Adan express two very different experiences from the work on this specific text. Adan, as an experienced reader of literature, liked working with this story because it offered "lots of open space for thinking" and "There weren't a lot of details… It was telling what was happening, and you couldn't know what anyone was thinking, it was just describing what you would see in a movie..." (Adan1). Adan is aware of that the point of view lies with one of the two characters in the text, and of the implications of this.

Int: Uhm… Did you talk about the story… in class… after the reading of it?
Adan: Well, yes. We were supposed to… Uhm… So we did! We had these tasks first, it was kind of an analysis…
Int: In the book?
Adan: Yes, it's normally all in the book…
Int: I see, so you analyzed it and then you talked about it… What did you talk about, then?
Adan: We talked about what we thought the different signs meant, and we talked about why they did what they did...
Int: Uhum. I see. Do you remember any of these signs?
Adan: I don't remember quite clearly, but I remember that it was indicated that the small one was very envious at the bigger guy and some indications of that he actually had planned it all, and that he planned leaving him there to die.
Int: Did all this have anything to do with the weather?
Adan: Well, yeah (sighing)... the weather was… it showed the, I don't know, the contrasts and also the feelings… Because it was at first sunny… and very clear and beautiful and everything, and when the conflict started it became all grey and then there was a storm, so...it was… the weather definitely played an important part. (Adan1).

Adan's perception of the text reflects that the narrative technique is 3rd person omniscient and that the dialogue is the most essential part when it comes to understanding the deeper meanings, and the themes of the story. It is here he has detected the "open spaces for thinking", and seemingly, the analysis has helped him with unveiling and exploring the underlying conflict and the themes. The task that challenged the learners to describe the change in weather might have helped them to detect the changes on the psychological level as well. This seems to have helped Adan in this respect: "the weather was… it showed the, I don't know, the contrasts and also the feelings…" (Adan1). Adan does not explicitly say something about how he experienced the group discussion at the end, but one might assume

here that these discussions might have contributed to new or nuanced perspectives through a sociocultural process.

Kia's experiences with this text differ from the ones of Adan. Kia says: "There were these two guys who went to an island... and one died, and I do not know if he was killed or… it was confusing…" (Kia1). This gives an example of how differently a text and its tasks can be perceived by two different learners within the same group. Kia's main challenge with this text is to interpret the subtext, due to the fact that she cannot fully understand what is going on the psychological level in the story. As the subtext is essential for the creation of meaning in this case, Kia expresses frustration and discontent concerning her encounter with this literary text. The input given in the initial phase does not seem to help her to approach the text in an appropriate manner:

Int:	Why do you think you did not "understand anything" as you said. What happened in class? What was difficult about it?
Kia:	Maybe it was that we had to "read between the lines" a lot..?
Int:	You find that challenging?
Kia:	Yeah
	[…]
Int:	Can you try to describe once more the difficult short story? "A Great Day"? Do you think you could have understood more if you read it more than just once?
Kia:	Yes, I think so...probably… it's not always easy to understand everything the first time…But I did read it again, or parts of it… when we did the questions or the… it was that we had to describe everything and… But I still did not understand it all…
Int:	So, you were supposed to carry out an analysis… the tasks or the questions you told me about… Is that right?
Kia:	Yes.
Int:	Do you remember what you thought was difficult? Uhm… or what you did?
Kia:	I know about how to describe the people and how to describe the… everything, how it is and…
Int:	Such as the setting and the plot?
Kia:	Yes, but I didn't understand the text that well, so… (Kia1)

There is an ironic distance between the fictional character Fred's intentions, and what he explicitly expresses, and consequently the text becomes ambiguous. It is difficult for Kia to notice this, and she seems to be unaware of what she actually has understood. She obviously has comprehended quite a lot; something is not *right*, something makes her uneasy, because there is something more going on in the story than what she can observe on the surface. A way in which the teacher can help students coping with ambiguity could be to explore with them how a concept, for example being jealous at somebody, may come out in various ways. By exploring different examples, the learners can become involved by suggesting new examples. Another way into this text could be to reflect upon how a jealous person might act in a given situation etc. Ibsen (2000) gives examples of how teachers can help learners to

bring out the subtext by employment of drama techniques. Since so much "appears" between the lines, the learners can familiarize themselves with the characters and try to act out scenes in the short story. The performance aspect is not the most important, Ibsen states; "it is the interpretation process, through concrete tasks, that leads to a critical analysis" (Ibsen 2000: 157). Hoff (2013: 11) states that an essential task for the teacher in this respect is to "open unknown doors for the students" in order to show them what they actually are capable of understanding. According to Hoff, the learners are often frustrated because they are not aware of this, especially when they are used to a very specific way of interacting with literary texts. Hoff (2013) argues that the learners need to develop an understanding that their comprehension of every word of the text is not the main goal, and that they are capable of reflecting upon other aspects of the text.

We see that in the case of Adan, he is already at stage four, but Kia on the other hand, gives up because she is not yet familiar with analysis and the terminology. Other questions might have helped her with text comprehension in this context. Perhaps would it be better if she were encouraged to accept her own confusion and helped to ask authentic questions about the way the story is narrated (because this seems to be Kia's main problem with comprehending the text) like the ones suggested by Wiland (2000:193): "Who tells the story? Does it matter in any way?" The tasks the learners worked with in relation to this text are varied both due to type of approach and response, but it can be argued here that they do not assist the learners who struggle with comprehending the subtext in the first place. This is not a problem for Adan, but it surely is for Kia. The pre-reading task does not seem to provide Kia with the most purposeful tools she might need to approach this text. Furthermore, it can be argued that the group discussion questions (post-reading task 2, see Appendix 6) might have been more useful to Kia if they were presented at an earlier stage, or that she had been given some cues or information in the pre-reading phase.

This specific literary text may be difficult for many EFL learners at this level, because of its narrative technique and style. A didactical implication in this context is to let the learners explore the narrative aspect of the text in such a way that the subtext can be interpreted. By selecting essential parts of the dialogue for exploration, interpretation and discussion, the learners may be assisted in this way. It seems evident that understanding *how* and *by whom/* from which angle the story is told is essential in this respect.

4.7.2 "The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time": Tina and Emma

"The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time" is an excerpt of a novel by the same title from 2003, written by the British author Mark Haddon. The excerpt referred to comprises the ninth and tenth chapter of the book, 5 pages in all. The novel is about a fifteen year-old boy named Christopher Boone, who is also the narrator of the story. He most likely has Asperger's Syndrome[23] and he is very clever at math and has a like for numbers and details. He struggles with social relations, and does not like to be touched, for instance. When he discovers his neighbor's dog murdered, he starts an investigation on his own. The investigation process forces Christopher to challenge his boundaries and he sets off on a journey, both enjoyable and terrifying.

The part selected for the textbook is set at the police station, where Christopher has been brought after hitting a police officer who touched his arm. The reader gets a detailed description of the police cell, but more importantly, the reader gets to know the protagonist through the way he observes his surroundings and processes the information this gives him.

There is a large gap between what the narrator understands and what the reader becomes aware of, as far as the social relations between the people in Christopher's surroundings are concerned. The naïve style of the narrator creates a special atmosphere, inviting the reader to take part in the investigation led by the narrator and main character, Christopher. Since the text in the textbook is an excerpt, but not the opening of the novel, it can be challenging to both grasp Christopher's character as well as the text genre, if not explained on forehand. This text appears in the second chapter of the textbook: "Personal eXperience".

The excerpt from the novel, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time,* is also set within the frames of the textbook chapter "Personal eXperience". The learners are briefly informed about the author, and they are provided with some details concerning the main character of the text, a 15-year-old with Asperger's syndrome, as well as the information that the author himself worked with autistic individuals as a young man, an experience that he draws on in the novel (Heian et al. 2009: 88). The learners were given a pre-reading task (see below) where they were invited to predict the events and the themes of the story based on their impressions from the opening paragraph of the novel. The questions they were asked to reflect upon were as follows:

> What kind of story do you think this is?

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[23] The textbook suggests this in one of the post-reading tasks, but this is not stated directly in Haddon's novel

Does the beginning make you want to read the rest of the story? Why/ why not?

(Heian et al. 2009: 88).

The first lines of Haddon's novel are as follows:

> It was 7 minutes after midnight. The dog was lying on the grass in the middle of the lawn in front of Mrs Shears' house. Its eyes were closed. It looked as if it was running on its side, the way dogs run when they are chasing a cat in a dream. But the dog was not running or asleep. The dog was dead. (Haddon 2003: 1)

This type of task relates to constructivism (Fish 1980b), as the reader here is invited to build up expectations and form pre-assumptions to the text based on the first words or lines. Furthermore, by taking the focus away from unknown vocabulary and understanding every detail, the learners can familiarize themselves with the content by using their imagination and creativity. Just as the pre-reading tasks presented with "A Great Day", the main focus in this task is on activating the learners' knowledge about genre. Furthermore, since this text is a novel excerpt, the pre-reading task might be useful in terms of providing the learners with a context. Emma enjoyed working with this text. "I really liked the one about the boy with Asperger's..." she says (Emma1). Emma states that she grew as a person by encountering this text; it made her realize how she behaves around other people as well. She also liked to have a look into the world of a person with Asperger's syndrome, and to get a deeper understanding for how it is to be a part of this person's life. Tina also mentions this novel excerpt in the interviews, but contrary to Emma, she did not enjoy the reading of it, as she felt she "could not understand it" (Tina1). The text made Tina react with confusion, and it may be assumed here that this reaction can be related to the text's narrative aspect, its narrative point of view. A distinctive feature with the novel, from which this excerpt is taken, is that the narrator is a fifteen-year-old boy with Asperger's syndrome, and this creates a very special atmosphere in the story. Emma does not specifically state that this is the reason to her confusion, so this is an assumption on my behalf. Another reason may be that the text (the novel excerpt) consists of three different sequences from the novel, and that Emma's lack of understanding may relate to this fact as well.

For continuation, the pupils were asked to skim through the text, and later scan it in order to answer a set of comprehension questions, such as "What happens when Christopher arrives at the police station?" and "What do we get to know about his family?"
The focus of attention according to the reading strategy suggested here is to find information. This is what Rosenblatt (1978: 23) calls "efferent", and the reader's attention is "…focused

primarily on what will remain as the residence after the reading – the information to be acquired". In order to read efficiently, the reader needs to make herself "transparent" and "impersonal" (Rosenblatt 1978: 24). It is of course easy for the teacher to check whether the pupils have found the basic information in the text or not, but the focus is merely superficial and it does not invite the readers to explore the meanings beneath the surface of the text. Nevertheless, this type of tasks can help the learners to familiarize with the content, preparing them for further exploration beneath the surface of the text.

In the next phase the pupils were asked to close read a column with information about Asperger's syndrome (see Appendix 6), and then use this information to investigate the text once more, this time with focus on the main character's reactions to what happens to him. The purpose of this task is to find evidence in the text "to prove that Christopher suffers from Asperger's syndrome" (Heian et al. 2009: 96). This task opens up for more interpretation and reflection than the former, but it must be stated here that the focus is to "find evidence" which correspond with the facts about Asperger's syndrome. This is therefore a mainly efferent task, as the learner is asked to use the text to find information. Moreover, this task invites the reader to explore the narrative technique used in the text. Nevertheless, the pupils must here try to interpret the reactions of the protagonist and match their findings with their factual knowledge about Asperger's, something that requires an aesthetic approach. Both Tina and Emma focus on this aspect of the story and the text work. Emma in particular focuses on her new understanding for people with Asperger's.

> Int: Can this literary, fictional text tell us anything about the society and the world we live in... today?
> Emma: Yeah. I think so, especially if you know someone with Asperger's...
> Int: Is it important, would you say, even though you do not know anyone with Asperger's? Can it tell us something about ordinary people, so to speak?
> Emma: Yeah… I think it is a book everyone should read... (Emma2)

For Emma, this text is a story about "a boy with a syndrome", and this is in fact what the tasks focus on as well. What is important to keep in mind here is that the time in the classroom is limited, and that answering an extensive set of comprehension questions might be very time consuming. Consequently many learners rarely experience getting to the part of the text work where they can explore the text beneath the surface (aesthetic response). The fact that so many literary textbook texts seem are followed by comprehension tasks[24] can make learners believe that exploring the surface of the text, in order to find answers which later can be checked, is the only purpose of the reading. An example of this appears in Tova's statements

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[24] According to several informants' statements

concerning the teacher giving them the answers at the end: "and then she gives us the answers" (Tova2) and "Sometimes we have a discussion about it… if we have understood it…" (Tova2). Moreover, the impression that 'coming up with the correct answers' is important, can lead to a situation where the learners see this as equivalent to a good grade (reading as something 'instrumental'). Nevertheless, encouraging the learner to investigate the main character's "reactions to what happens to him" invites the learner to take *his* perspective. This seems to be the outcome of Emma's carrying-out of it. There seems to be a clear connection between Emma's statements concerning her experience with this text and the tasks. Reading the text made her reconsider her own behavior around others: "I became aware of how I too behave or can behave around other people..." (Emma2). In this way the task opens up for aesthetic response too, as it allows for exploration of the characters, the relationship between them and the relationship between the fictional characters and the reader. In other words, the task entails an exploration of meaning.

4.7.3 "Thou Shalt Not Kill": Kenneth and Tova

"Thou Shalt Not Kill" is written by the American author Channing Pollock. This text is presented in chapter four in the textbook, "Social eXperience".

The story has an omniscient narrator who tells the story of Ms. Quinner, a former archeologist asked to sign a petition against the use of guns. Through Ms. Quinner (Miss Q) we are told the story about an incident on a trip to Mexico ten years earlier. Miss Q and her younger sister, Florence are assisted by their friend, Reverend Very and the local guide, Raymundo, on a field trip in the desert-like wilderness of Mexico. The local guide has a penchant for killing pigeons with his shotgun, something that is quite disturbing to Ms. Q, and she therefore removes the bullets from the gun without anyone noticing it. When a wildcat suddenly attacks the company of four, Raymundo fails in his attempt to kill the attacking beast with the gun because of the missing bullets. Miss Q's sister dies from the injuries caused by the attack of the wild animal.

We understand that Miss Q has kept this secret to herself for all these years before finally revealing it to Reverend Very. This is the reason why she refuses to sign the petition for "disarming the nation".

The narrative technique used in the short story is the retrospective technique, and the text appears in the chapter "Social eXperience" in the textbook, where the topic of war and armed conflicts, gun use and gun control is central.

"Thou Shalt Not Kill" is in the pupils' textbook placed in the chapter "Social eXperience", a chapter which deals with social and political issues in the English-speaking world. The pupils were asked to work with text-related vocabulary (a 'Quizlet' drill, according to Tova) as a starter activity, and furthermore to read a paragraph presenting the author of this story, Channing Pollock. The learners were asked to read the story individually by focusing on finding answers to the following questions:

a) Which words does the author use to describe Miss Quinner? What is the impression he wants the reader to have of her?

b) In your own words, retell Miss Quinner's story from the bush in Yucatán.

c) How do you think Mr. Very feels at the end of the story? Find at least four words that describe what you would have felt like if you were in his shoes?

d) What is the message of the story?

e) What effect did the story have on you? What was your reaction to the ending- were you for instance surprised, moved, annoyed or amused?

(Heian et al. 2009: 235)

The different questions place the focus on different aspects related to the reading of the story, which to some extent requires disparate approaches from the learners. These foci could be described as follows: understanding the author's intentions with this text and what it is meant to convey (a. and d.), retelling the plot (b.), identification and involvement with the characters (c.) and personal/affective reactions to the text (e.). The tasks require that the learner here is able to shift between different types of response: 'getting the gist of the story' (plot), efferent response and aesthetic response. There is also a division in terms of approaches represented here, as a. and d. are more text-oriented than for example c. and e. which are more in accordance with a reader-oriented approach. Kenneth seems to have benefited from working with the text according to these tasks as they allowed him to "go through it [the text] quite well", something he liked since this was a topic he was "interested in". The purpose with the literary text work is according to Kenneth "to come up with some answers", and it seems evident that his approach to this literary text is mainly efferent. Working with this text and these tasks seems to confirm his conception of what he finds important in this respect as he

"usually doesn't have any problems with understanding anything…" when it comes to text related work (Kenneth1).

Since the tasks as described above are so different in terms of approach and response, and since some of them are in accordance with Kenneth's stance towards literature and others not, his view is both confirmed and challenged.

Int: Why did this specific text have impact on you? Why do you think you remember it so well?
Ken: Why? … Uh… We went through it quite well uh… and just because the subject was important to me. I think it is important to always look at a subject in a way that makes you see that it has more than one side… […]
Int: So… Would you say that reading texts like this one in class can lead to fruitful discussions, or at least: thinking...reflection?
Ken: Yes. I believe so… yes.

The text "Thou Shalt Not Kill" is narrated in a way that leaves out descriptions of the characters thoughts and feelings, and presumably it appeals to the more experienced students because the reader needs to stay focused and get all the details before the turning point at the end. It seems like Kenneth here enjoyed discussing this text in class, and reading literary texts as a sociocultural process would presumably help him with broadening his own perspectives as his 'voice' could meet the other voices of the classroom (Ibsen & Wiland 2000, Vygotsky 2012). The conversation about the text can provide the learners with the possibility to stop and have a second look at their own interpretation (Aase 2005), with reference to Kenneth's quote "I think it is important to always look at a subject in a way that makes you see that it has more than one side" from above. The set of questions described above seems to have helped Kenneth with broadening his perspectives. Moreover, the fact that the questions required different types of response might actually have made him take an unfamiliar approach (unconsciously), because he was allowed to start off with something familiar and in line with his main reading approach, two efferent and analytical tasks.

Tova also enjoyed this text where the narrator, the old lady, made her curious:

I want to find out for myself what is going to happen… and in this text I was… uhm... I knew something was not right, that the old woman was going to tell something important...because she was just an old woman, - so the story had to be special... (Tova1).

This gives evidence to how Tova uses her experiences with the short story genre to predict what is to come, what to expect.

Int: Normally, how do you start reading a literary text in class? You in particular. Describe it.

> Tova: Ehm, well I don't know, I for sure do not do the exercises properly, especially not the short ones, the fill-in-ones because I don't think I learn anything from them… But maybe the questions that I find important I can give an answer of half a page or so…
>
> Int: Questions which allows you to respond to the text?
>
> Tova: Yes. I just choose what is the most important to me, I guess (short laughter)
>
> Int: Ok? What are these exercises like, the ones that allow you to write half a page or so? Can you describe them? Can...
>
> Tova: I...like… there are some exercises that ask us to write about the story, or it can be to talk about, but I like to write… For example it can be what I think about the ending, or why I think someone said so and so... often I understand everything better then...
>
> Int: I see... These tasks help you with understanding the text? Is that what you're saying? (Tova2)

According to her statements in this passage, Tova prefers to work with the texts by herself and respond to them in writing. The tasks preferred by Tova are more open-ended, and assumingly more in line with a reader response approach than the checkable comprehension questions of a more text-centered kind. Tova refers to these types of tasks as "the short ones" and "the fill-in ones" (Tova2). According to her statements, the open-ended tasks, which require an aesthetic response, can better help her with her understanding of the text. The checkable comprehensions or "the fill-in ones" as she calls them, might have just one or perhaps a few possible answers according to Tova's view. This is not quite clear here, however, since her statements do not openly clarify this. A possible reason for why she prefers the open-ended questions could be that Tova already has a clear opinion concerning the plot of the story, such as what the main events are, and that what is interesting for her is to explore the meanings beneath the surface of the text. An implication in this respect is that her preferred approach to the tasks she works with with is purposeful, and that she is aware of what might help her further. A reading journal (Wiland 2000) might be useful in this respect, and the learners would probably benefit from this type of assignment, as they could systematically elaborate on their experiences with, and responses to literary texts.

The learners were also encouraged to engage with some speaking-activities after finishing the work with the reading comprehension questions. These oral activities included telling a similar story to a peer and discussing how to deal with a set of moral dilemmas. The informants did not discuss this activity in any detail, but it seems evident that it has been important to Kenneth at least, whose experience with this text has been influenced by it. The activity allowed him to relate to the story in a personal manner, something that may have been useful in order to challenge his overarching efferent approach to literary texts. If discussions like these are well organized, and if they relate to the content of the text being read, they can serve as arenas of (fruitful) sociocultural interaction (Vygotsky 1986, Ibsen & Wiland 2000, Aase 2005).

Again, there is a clear connection between the tasks and their foci and the responses of the informants. The textbook tasks seem to have a significant impact on the informants; it can therefore be argued that only the most suitable and developing tasks in each case are to be chosen, to ensure that the learners develop as readers. Both efferent and aesthetic tasks may therefore be selected, and the transitions between the approaches made natural and aim to challenge the learner to take a different or new perspective. The post-reading tasks given with "Thou Shalt Not Kill" (Appendix 6) combine efferent and analytical approaches with aesthetic approaches in such a way that the learners are challenged to respond to the text in both a reader-centred and a text-centred way. The questions from this set of tasks which go in direction of literary analysis focus on one aspect in particular, for example characterization (how the characters are described): "Which words does the author use to describe Miss Quinner? What is the impression he wants the reader to have of her?" (Heian & al: 235). Combining questions that require different approaches in the same set of tasks seems to have worked well for the informants who discussed this specific literary text, Tova and Kenneth. Penne (2010) states that it is in the span between the known and the unknown that insight and understanding can occur. Transitions between approaches seem to be vital in this respect.

4.7.4 In-depth analysis summary

In summation, the tasks that the informants are presented with in the classroom seem to have significant impact on their experiences of the literary texts they read. However, there are differences between "the phase-three-readers" discussed in this section. Tova and Emma tend to combine efferent approaches with aesthetic approaches when encountering texts and tasks in the EFL classroom. They therefore seem to be better prepared for literary work in the classroom than Tina and Kia, who struggle with shifting between approaches according to the different tasks (with different approaches suggested). The mixed-approach tasks (post-reading task 1) related to "Thou Shalt Not Kill" seem to assist and help Kenneth, "the efferent reader", to take new perspectives on the text.

Moreover, it seems to be very important that the pre-reading tasks aim to *help* the learners to enter the literary texts they are presented with in the EFL classroom. However, the pre-reading tasks given to "A Great Day", "What is your idea of a great day?" and "What do you think the story is about?" did not seem to help Kia with comprehending and interpreting the text. Based on Kia' experiences with encountering this text, I argue that a pre-reading task

which could help her to focus on narrative aspects of literary texts in general, and of this text in particular, might better prepare her for entering into dialogue with the text. Alternatively, a task that focused on how language can contain hidden meanings, and that an utterance can be ambiguous, might have been purposeful in this respect. Adan, "the analytical reader" seemed to respond well to the set of tasks he was presented with through the reading of "A Great Day", as the analysis seemed to help him to interpret the hidden meanings beneath the surface of the text (subplot). This text, in combination with this set of reading tasks, seems to be too demanding for learners who approach the text based on their experiences and emotions, as the pre-reading task invites them to do.

4.8 Chapter summary

What can there be to learn from the way the informants in this study have described themselves as readers of literature, and the way they have been placed according to the phases of Appleyard's description of readers (1991)? Moreover, what are the implications of this knowledge as far as employing literary texts in the EFL-classroom is concerned? This chapter has described and discussed the learners' approaches to literature within and beyond the EFL classroom. The majority of the informants have been placed within phase three of "the adolescent reader" (Appleyard 1991). These learners want to read texts that make them think, and in which they can recognize themselves. The important aspects of literary reading for the phase three readers in this study are identification, involvement and the urge for "something new", as many of them enhance through their statements. These informants tend to approach the literary text with basis in their experiences and emotions, and they want to identify themselves with the fictional characters. A drawback with approaching literary texts based on emotions and experiences solely is that the reader may become too involved with the text, and not be able "to take a step aside" and comment on and/or discuss it (Appleyard 1991, Scholes 1998, Skarstein 2013). This seems to be the case with some of the phase three readers amongst the group of informants (Tina and Kia). The informant who does not read literature at all beyond an educational context, and who reads literary texts the same way he reads factual texts, differs from the others in this respect. He communicates the view that the literary texts are "all the same" and that there is little variation from one story to the next. He reads texts in an efferent manner rather than aesthetically. His analytical approach makes him distance himself from the literary text in such a way that personal involvement becomes

impossible. Consequently, the literary reading may become uninteresting or boring. The only informant who was placed in the fourth phase of Appleyard's descriptions ("the analytical reader"), Adan, approaches texts adapted to aim and purpose to a much larger extent than the others, and he is able to talk about literary experiences on a meta-level.

To summarize, some informants in this study (Jon and Adan) indicate that the reading of literary texts within the EFL classroom is less meaningful than the reading taking place beyond these limits. Furthermore, Tina indicates that she is not able to explore and discuss the literary EFL texts the way she could have wanted, because peers are often reluctant or uninterested in this regard, something she points at in her statements[25].

However, all informants to some extent describe meaningful encounters with literature in English. The spare time reading is primarily experience-based and emotionally motivated, although most informants emphasize that they learn a lot from the reading beyond the classroom as well, such as expanding vocabulary, getting new perspectives and learning how to express themselves better and more creatively in English. Additionally, it can be argued that the informants that express feelings of insecurity and deficiency when encountering literary texts in the EFL-classroom do so because they have difficulties coping with unfamiliar content and literary style and form. In the EFL context these informants seem to struggle when they encounter literary texts which are different from the literature they are familiar with, and when they are deprived of the confidence which they have in their mother tongue (Ibsen 2000: 137). Readers of phase three, where most of the informants can be placed, lack the critical and analytical skills of the phase four readers, according to Appleyard's descriptions. Consequently, they are incapable of coping with some of these texts on their own, with support from the tasks in the textbook solely.

As shown in the in-depth analysis, literary analysis is perhaps the biggest challenge, not as far as following the plot is concerned but rather to understand the role of the narrator, the text's literary style, cultural setting and background. Examples of this are Tina's encounter with "The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time" where the narrator is a boy with Asperger's syndrome, and Kia's meeting with "A Great Day" where a third person omniscient narrator 'prevents' her from having free access to the thoughts and feelings of the two characters in the story. The cultural settings represented in the two texts are also, at least to

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[25] "What are they doing in class if they are not interested? It's so irritating..." (Tina1)

some extent, unfamiliar. The literary style might also have been a challenge for the two informants, as both texts are 'unusual' in this respect. However, the two learners do not explicitly comment on this, so it is difficult to assess. Since there is little focus on reading literature as a sociocultural process in the informants' classrooms, valuable learning situations may go missing. In conclusion, there seems to be a need for more variation, challenging texts, more exploration of meaning and perhaps less checkable comprehension tasks.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

In the present chapter, I will sum up what has been presented and discussed in the previous chapters. In addition to curiosity and interest on my own part, the topic chosen for this thesis has risen out from a need for more knowledge and insight concerning literary work in the English classroom.

The purpose of this study has been to get insight into how a group of pupils describe their experiences with reading in English, what type of books they prefer to read, reading experiences which have had a special impact on them, difficulties and challenges and last, but not least, how they describe their encounters with literature. The readers have been attempted placed according to the five phases of Joseph Appleyard's (1991) description of readers. In this respect, most informants fit into phase three: "the reader as a thinker", also referred to as "the adolescent reader". Two informants stood out from the others in this regard, one who had reached the phase of "the analytical reader" ("the reader as interpreter") and one who did not fit directly into any of the phases, in my terms called an "efferent reader of literature". A pattern which was identified in this respect, was that the way in which the informants described themselves as readers had implications for how they approached literary texts in the EFL classroom. Continuing, the learners have shared their experiences on whether they find the reading of literature to be meaningful, and if so: *what* they find to be meaningful in this respect.

5.1 The research questions

The research questions have been my most important guide in the writing of this thesis, and I will in the subsequent sum up the most important findings according to each of these.

5.1.1 How do they approach English literature within and beyond the EFL classroom?
It has been shown in this thesis that the informants approach literary texts in various ways, nevertheless the majority have a mainly reader-oriented approach as they enter the texts, with basis in their own experiences and emotions. One informant approaches literary texts exclusively in a text-oriented manner, where the focus is on what he can take out of the reading in terms of information. I chose to call him "an efferent reader of literature".

Moreover, the informant who has reached a phase where he is able to analyze and interpret seems to combine reader-oriented and text-oriented approaches according to the aim and the purpose of the reading.

5.1.2 Which aspects of reading English literature do they find challenging?

Coping with unfamiliar vocabulary and content seem represent a challenge for some of the informants, while other informants struggle with the specific genre characteristics of literary texts. Some informants directly as well as indirectly, point at great challenges represented through literary style, narrative aspect and ambiguous language. In those cases where the informants are challenged to perform literary analysis of text, at least one of the informants faces a big problem with the result that her reading ends in "failure". At last, but not least, lack of motivation for reading literature in the EFL classroom seems to be a big challenge for at least two of the informants. That the texts are not hallenging enough and/or that the tasks not motivate the informants for meaningful exploration are plausible reasons for this.

5.1.3 Which aspects of reading English literature do they find to be meaningful?

The findings of this thesis seem to indicate that all the informants, with the exception of one, Kenneth, find the reading of English literature to be meaningful. Moreover, the experience of meaningfulness relates to experiencing something new, something they have not thought about before, by most informants. One of the informants, Tova, states that involvement with a literary text can "put pressure on" what she has thought and believed until this point. Consequently new thoughts and ideas can be formed. That involvement with the literary universe and its characters can affect the way the reader sees herself and how she behaves around others is also expressed amongst the informants. This is the core of *Bildung,* and this is something the informants seem to find meaningful. Learning about different topics and experiencing the feeling of mastering the English language are also important factors reported by the informants.

5.1.4 To what extent do they find their encounters with literature in the EFL classroom to be meaningful?

Some informants state that they find the reading of literature within the EFL classroom to be less meaningful than the reading they carry out in their spare time. Focus on efferent tasks and

checkable comprehension questions in the literary classroom seem to decrease their chances for meaningful encounters with literature. On the contrary, aesthetic exploration of texts represented through open-ended tasks and discussions seems to increase the informants' chances for experiencing the literary texts in a meaningful manner.

5.2 Didactic implications

LK06's focus on competences reminds us that reading, and the reading of literature, is a complex process, and that several skills are required in order to become competent readers and develop what Scholes (1998) calls "textual power". In a literacy perspective, we have to look at what we read and be able to connect it to our world and our times and try to see what it represents and in which ways it is significant. The lack of focus on "literary literacy" in LK06 is problematic, since the unique qualities of literature and processes of literary reading are not reflected on the competence level; they remain undescribed, and this can favour efferent reading practices of literature at the expense of aesthetic response in the EFL classroom.

The combination of different approaches to literary texts, such as text-oriented approaches and reader-oriented approaches can, when employed in the work with literature in the EFL classroom, ensure a broad foundation for the exploration of literature and thereby lead the learners closer to meeting the aims and demands of LK06. Additionally, it can help the learners to develop their competences in the span between the *known* and the *unknown,* as the distance between the two approaches to literature may create such a span.

The literary text-related tasks, which the informants encounter in the EFL classroom, seem to have a significant impact on the outcome of their reading. As many of these tasks focus on analysis, it would be beneficial if the transitions between a reader-centered approach and an analytical/text-centered approach were made clearer to the learners. This seems important in order to enable the learners to become acquainted with, and have a command of, the terminology needed for analyzing, but also discussing, works of literature. The didactic implications of my findings are that exploration of literary texts can be carried out by combining approaches and that to move from what is known and familiar to what is unknown or unexplored may be the most successful starting point. The focus should be to strive for *learning,* and regarding the majority of the informants in this study, "the adolescent readers"

(Appleyard 1991), they need to enter the gap between the reader-centered perspective and the analytical perspective.

My research also suggests that with help from the teacher or more experienced peers, the learners may improve their chances to succeed in reaching beyond their personal limits (Vygotsky 2012). By discussing challenges and pitfalls related to the reading of literary texts on a general basis, and by predicting possible learner problems with specific literary texts, the teacher might assist the learners to reach further and "beyond their personal limits".

Furthermore, there seems to be a need for challenging the more advanced readers with further exploration of meanings in literary texts in the EFL lassroom. A limited view of how a literary text can be dealt with and 'understood' in a school setting can come in the way of rich and useful learning situations, as well as development on a personal and a sociocultural level. An extensive use of verifiable comprehension questions which are to be proven 'right' or 'wrong' might limit the reading experience and weaken motivation, as it has been stated by some informants in this study. The informants also express a need for more variation in their interaction with literature in the classroom, as they consider the procedures around the work with literature in class to be too repetitive, and that the EFL textbook is the only, or at least predominant source, of texts and tasks. Class discussions about the reading of literary texts can be the beginning of a process where a broader understanding for what literature is, and what it can offer us and mean to us, can be established (Rosenblatt 1978; Fish 1980a; Vygotsky 1986; Scholes 1998; Ibsen & Wiland 2000). The readers who read literary texts in an efferent manner might particularly benefit from such classroom interaction, as it could assist them towards a more aesthetic approach to literature, encouraging them to develop as readers and reach curricular and personal aims.

5.3 Limitations of the study

Firstly, the interviews were carried out with a broad scope in mind. In retrospect, I see that more detailed and in-depth information (interview data), and a clearer focus into specific themes, may have strengthened some parts of the analysis and discussion chapter. Secondly, my choice fell on focusing on the learner's perspective. In this respect, by interviewing the learners exclusively, this might have limited the scope due to some parts of the study. That the number of informants was limited to seven, and that I did not interview the teacher, or carry out classroom observation, are also significant must therefore be mentioned in light of

"limitations". Finally, the fact that I chose to carry out the interviews with the informants in English, may be a limiting factor. An implication here may be that only the pupils who felt confident enough with their level of English wanted to participate. Thus, the study may have omitted the voices of learners who rarely speak up in the classroom to some extent.

5.4 Recommendations for future research

This thesis has shown that the tasks the learners are presented with when they read literary texts in the EFL classroom have a considerable impact on the outcome of the reading. In light of this, there seems to be a need for further exploration of how pupils can develop their literary competence through task related work in the EFL classroom. Case studies that on close hold can investigate how the learners respond to specific tasks, may contribute to more insight in this respect.

To take another perspective, there seems to be a need for more research on aesthetic literary response in EFL learning and teaching for various reasons. Firstly, in order to strengthen the position which literature has in the subject, but also to get more knowledge about how to motivate the learners for literary work in ways which can be meaningful to them, and which can help them to develop as readers of literature.

Concerning reading literature in a sociocultural setting, there seems to be a great potential not fully exploited in the Norwegian EFL classroom. Studies that follow learners and teachers through dialogues about literature may provide more insight into an important field of TEFL.

Finally, it also appears relevant for future research to explore how different approaches to literary texts can be combined in the EFL classroom, and how the learners and teachers' understanding of different approaches to literature affect their learning and development as readers.

5.4 Concluding remarks

Working with this thesis has provided me with new perspectives, both personally and professionally. I have found answers to many questions with implications for my own role as a teacher of English, and I am highly motivated for exploring this field further in the future. Moreover, I am greatly thankful for the insight I have been given through the conversations with these seven informants. It has been highly meaningful to me, as they have shared their

personal experiences about something that I find to be very important: *reading literature in the language-learning classroom!*

The ways in which the learners experience encounters with literature, both within and beyond the classroom can be as many, and as complex, as there are learners in our classrooms. I am convinced – and even more so now than before – that the literary reading experience is unique. By sharing one's reading experience with others, it can grow and become even more facetted, and even more meaningful. It can be like opening up a treasure chest of wisdom. Through involvement with literature, we can get the sensation of understanding or realizing something new, something we have not thought about before, something that can change us and "put pressure on" what we have "thought and believed up till this point" (Tova1).

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – NSD Approval

Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS
NORWEGIAN SOCIAL SCIENCE DATA SERVICES

NSD

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Vår dato: 16.01.2014   Vår ref: 36971 / 2 / KH   Deres dato: Deres ref:

TILBAKEMELDING PÅ MELDING OM BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 09.01.2014. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

36971	*Meningful encounters with literature in EFL - Meningsfulle møter med litteratur i engelskundervisningen.*
Behandlingsansvarlig	*Universitetet i Bergen, ved institusjonens øverste leder*
Daglig ansvarlig	*Hild Elisabeth Hoff*
Student	*Merete Steinnes*

Personvernombudet har vurdert prosjektet og finner at behandlingen av personopplysninger er meldepliktig i henhold til personopplysningsloven § 31. Behandlingen tilfredsstiller kravene i personopplysningsloven.

Personvernombudets vurdering forutsetter at prosjektet gjennomføres i tråd med opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet, korrespondanse med ombudet, ombudets kommentarer samt personopplysningsloven og helseregisterloven med forskrifter. Behandlingen av personopplysninger kan settes i gang.

Det gjøres oppmerksom på at det skal gis ny melding dersom behandlingen endres i forhold til de opplysninger som ligger til grunn for personvernombudets vurdering. Endringsmeldinger gis via et eget skjema, http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/meldeplikt/skjema.html. Det skal også gis melding etter tre år dersom prosjektet fortsatt pågår. Meldinger skal skje skriftlig til ombudet.

Personvernombudet har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet i en offentlig database,
http://pvo.nsd.no/prosjekt.

Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, 30.06.2015, rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Vennlig hilsen

Vigdis Namtvedt Kvalheim

Kjersti Haugstvedt

Merete Gretland Steinnes

Øvremovegen 19

6154 Ørsta

Telefon: 99 37 58 77   Sted og dato: - - - - -

Til elever på Vg1 studiespesialiserende program ved - - - vgs.

FORESPØRSEL OM DELTAKELSE I FORSINGSPROSJEKTET «MENINGSFULLE MØTER MED LITTERATUR I ENGELSKFAGET»

<u>Bakgrunn og formål:</u> Den aktuelle undersøkelsen inngår som en del av masteroppgaven min i engelsk ved Universitetet i Bergen. Målet med undersøkelsen er å få bedre kjennskap til og innsikt i hvordan elever på vg1 opplever å lese litteratur på engelsk. Utvalget av deltakere/intervjuobjekter vil være 8-10 elever fra dette årstrinnet og programfaget.

<u>Hva innebærer deltagelse i prosjektet?</u> De som ønsker å delta i dette prosjektet vil bli intervjuet på engelsk, og tidsramma er ca. en skoletime (45 minutter). Spørsmålene vil dreie seg om deltagernes erfaringer med lesing av engelskspråklig litteratur i engelskfaget og ellers. Intervjuene vil bli tatt opp på en digital opptaker. Å bli intervjuet er helt frivillig, og de som ønsker å delta kan selv bestemme om de vil svare på spørsmålene de får eller ikke. Det er også mulig å avbryte intervjuet hvis deltakeren ønsker det.

<u>Kva skjer med opplysningene?</u> Alle opplysninger vil bli behandlet konfidensielt, og det er kun den ansvarlige studenten og ansvarlig veileder som vil ha tilgang til informasjonen. Navn og personopplysninger vil bli anonymiserte på en slik måte at ingen deltagere vil kunne gjenkjennes i materialet.

Prosjektet avsluttes i mai 2015. Ved prosjektets slutt vil de innspilte intervjuene bli destruerte.

Med vennlig hilsen

Merete Gretland Steinnes

Background:

- How would you describe yourself to a person who has never met you before?
- What is the most important thing in your life right now?
- Where do you live?
    - Where did you go to school before?
    - Why did you choose this specific programme of study?
- How do you like school?
    - now?
    - earlier?

The English subject:

- How do you like English (in general)?
    - What comes to your mind when I say "English class"?
    - Is there something in particular you like about it?
    - Describe a memorable experience related to the English subject (nice experience?)
- Do you get help and guidance when you need it?
    - Do you want help?

Literature and reading fiction:

- Tell me a little bit about books and reading (what type of books do you like, the first book you read in English etc.)
- What kind of texts do you read in the English subject? What are they like?
- How do you understand the terms 'fact' and 'fiction'?
- What types of literary texts do you read in English class, would you say?
    - Who selects the texts? Why do you think these texts are picked out?
    - A text you remember well
    - title and/or author?
    - tell me about it
    - why did this specific text have impact on you? What did you like about it?

- What about films you have watched and worked with in class? Tell me about one in particular. What did you like about it?
    - how were the films selected, you think? why?

Approaches to literature:

- What is a good fictional story to you? Tell me.
    - what is important to keep you interested?
    - how do you understand the terms 'open' and 'closed' texts and/or endings? (everything explained or searching for/creating meaning?)
    - how would you like a good story to end? Can you give an example of a good ending?
    - What happens in class before, during and after reading a fictional text? Give examples from this school year

Strategies:

- Reading fiction in general: what do you do?
    - how do you select the texts/books?
    - do you talk to others about the texts?
    - do you do some kind of "research"?
    - do you use dictionaries or encyclopedias?
    - Think both before and while (and after) reading.
- In English class: what do you do when you work with a literary text?
    - how do you normally start the reading of a literary text in class? What do you do with it? (earlier? now?)
    - do you do something differently than the others?
- Have you been taught *how* to read a fictional text, e.g. a short story in class? Tell me a little bit about it.

Meaning:

- What are the challenges and difficulties with the reading of an English language text?
- Can it be difficult to grasp (get) the meaning? How?

- Tell me about the text …… (a literary text they have been reading recently).
    - What do you think of/about this text?
    - What can this text tell us about the society at the time it was written?
    - Is the theme relevant for us today?
    - What can it tell us about human relations and values in general?
- How did it make you feel?

Interview no. 1: Tova

Tova1

Int: Hello

T: Hi

Int: Mmh.. I want to ask you a little bit about your background

T: Ok

Int: Well, how would you describe yourself to a person who has never met you before?

T: Uhm... I like to talk to people, and I believe I am very kind and that I care for other people, but I am also a person who stands for my own opinions and... And I play football. That's a pretty big part of my life, so… yeah.

Int: Yeah, so… you mentioned football, but if I asked you: What is the most important thing in your life right now? ...

T: Uh...that would be school and my boyfriend, probably.

Int: So, school and boyfriend, the most important things in your life.

T: Yes

Int: Where do you live?

T: I live in ---, it is a small town...

Int: Uhum. What was the name of the school you went to before you came here?

T: Ehh, I went to --- lower secondary school

Int: Yes, and why did you choose this specific programme of study?

T: Basically because I didn't know what I wanted to work with… So, yeah, and now I have every possibility open. But I also like school...

Int: You like school?

T: Yeah. I do.

Int: That's what I wanted to ask you about... (laughter)

T: (laughter)

Int: So, how do you like school now?

T: Well, uh… It's harder. It's more detailed in every subject, but also it's funny and interesting to learn more about every subject.

Int: Mmm. What, so how did you like school earlier?

T: Uhm, it was good because I got to spend time with my friends, and also I liked learning new stuff. Almost the same as now.

Int: Well, so you have always liked school?

T: Yes.

Int: I would now like us to talk about the English subject. Uhum?

T: Yes

Int: And my first question is: How do you like English in general, as a subject?

T: Uhm, oh. I think it's ok, I think it's fun to talk English and to use the language, but it can be a bit boring, especially doing exercises over and over again and to read texts. It's a bit too much of the same...

Int: ...you mean "over and over again", like methods and activities?

T: Yes. That's… I do understand you've gotta do it to learn the language but I feel like I've done it in the same way in the school that I went to before, and now I do it, I do exactly the same, so I'm not learning any new… Well, so…

Int: Ok. I understand. So, what is the first thing that comes to your mind when I say 'English class'?

T: Uhm. Doing exercises and talking in English, and looking at the black board…uh… white board (short laughter). A lot of white board, so, a bit boring maybe…

Int: Uhum, I see. It's very important that you're honest. Ok? Be honest, that's very good.

T: Yeah (laughter)

Int: Yes, well. So, is there something in particular that you like about the subject?

T: I like to learn about different cultures, and I also like that we can do something else than just learn about difficult stuff, like for example just talk, and yes, to work with the subject that way. So, I guess I'm open to many ways to work with the subject.

Int: Uhum, yes I see. Can you tell me about a memorable experience related to the English subject? - a nice experience that you can think of?

T: Ehmm, (laughter) eh, maybe the exams... because my final exam last year was English and it went pretty great...

Int: ...an oral exam?

T: Yeah, an oral exam. Yes...And I was gonna talk about love and friendship, so that was

quite easy, and a really nice experience (laughter).

Int: A nice experience that was. Eh. Can you describe why, why this was such a nice experience for you?

T: Well, it was an easy subject to talk about. You don't need to learn a lot of specific things, eh, and it is also a subject where you can just talk and talk, and yeah…

Int: So, talking in English comes easy for you?

T: Yeah.

Int: Uhum. Okay. Do you get help and guidance when you need it?

T: Yes, I believe I do.

Int: Do you want help?

T: (laughter) you see, that's the problem. I am not that interested in the subject in that way, so if I have a problem of understanding I may not bother to ask...

Int: So… Let me get this right… You don't want help?

T: Well, sometimes I do, but eh… I ask a lot more for help in other subjects.

Int: okay, I see. Do you feel that asking for help or not, *not* is that important for the grade?

T: Yeah I think so, because well, - now you know how to spell that word, but it will not make you do any better in the next test, you know?

Int: I see.

T: And this makes it harder for you to realize that you need to work with it harder throughout the whole year. That about small steps all the way and all…

Int: Oh, yeah. I get it now. I understand what you say.

Int: I am now going to ask you some questions about reading fiction. Do you understand the term 'fiction'?

T: Yes. Not real?

Int: Yes. Stories, for example, which are made up, something you read for enjoyment or to get involved…

T: Yeah.

Int: ...but also to learn something. I am talking about literature in terms of stories and poems, yes?

T: Yes.

Int: Tell me a little bit about books and reading. For example, what kind of books do you like? What was the first book you read in English? etc.

T: Oh, well I haven't read a whole book in English, but I have read small pieces like in school, and I don't enjoy it, eh the reading that much because there are so many words that I don't know and, so I just.. I like to read them in Norwegian instead.

Int: So, you find it difficult? - reading books in English?

T: Yes. I understand the whole text, such as what happens and all, but the small words they make me unfocused and yeah, so..

Int: So, uhm... What kind of texts do you like reading? Eh, fictional texts that is.

T: That will have to be fantasy and uhh... real stories, in a way

Int: You mean realistic? Something which actually could have happened in real life? These two genres then?

T: Yes. That is what I like, I guess.

Int: So, what kind of texts do you read in the English subject? What are they like?

T: Eh, now I didn't really understand what you...

Int: No? Well, we are talking about fiction, right?

T: Yes…

Int: So, there are different kinds of fictional texts… like poems, short stories, excerpts from novels… All right?

T: Okay...

Int: How would you describe these kinds of texts that you read in English class?

T: Ehh.. I would describe them as a bit childish, actually. - Not all of them are, but some... Uhm... but they often have a message. That's good. And some of the texts are boring I would say, but there are some good ones as well.

Int: What types of texts do you read in English class this year?

T: Factual texts and also novel and poems, and also some normal stories about persons, uh, not a novel but just stories..

Int: Like short stories?

T: Yes. Short stories.

Int: And who selects the texts?

T: Oh, it's the book. We follow the book, so… but sometimes we read library books. That's...

so that we can choose our own..

Int: Is that optional? I mean to borrow and read library books?
T: Yes, or eh...

Int: I mean: can you choose to read these books or is it obligatory for all?
T: Yes and no. We have time in class to read library books and we have time to read the texts in the textbooks and to do the exercises. But the problem is that we get so little time to read the library books, that we just cannot finish them...

Int: What do you mean? Can you be more specific?
T: Eh, like I mean only five minutes here and ten minutes there. Not much. An hour every month maybe?

Int: Ok. You said "we go by the book" when I asked you about who selects the texts, right?

         Why do you think these texts are picked out?
T: Well, I'm not sure, but I think it is because they suit to what the teacher is supposed to teach us... and I think that the teacher thinks that these are good texts, but I think that there must be some better texts that we can read…

Int: ...like out there somewhere?
T: Yes (laughter)

Int: So, now. Tell me about a text you remember well...
T: Yes, it must be the last text we had… Uhm… It was a person who eh... liked animals, and she did not like guns, so she removed the bullets from the gun, - the man's gun and one day she and her sister was attacked by a tiger, but he, I don't remember his name, couldn't kill the tiger so...
Int: and…
T: … (thinking) so… she lost her arm and her sister… and that was the reason why she wouldn't sign up, or sign a list or something against the war...

Int: And that was the short story "Thou Shalt Not Kill"?
T: Yeah! (laughter)

Int: Do you think that was a good text?

T: Yes. I actually liked it. It had a surprising ending and all. Yeah…

Int: Since you just read it in class, do you remember how you actually read it in class? What you did… activities before you read it and such?

T: Well...yes, we had this "Quizlet" with words from the text…we often do that, you see, so that we can get to know difficult words...and… no...

Int: Yes? Something else?

T: No… just that we were in that part of the book where… about weapons and war...so we had worked with… Yes, and we were told to think about the title… Then we just read it alone.

Int: So, you enjoyed reading this text then? Why, you think?

T: I don't know exactly… I like to just read, if it is a good text… I want to find out for myself what is going to happen… and in this text I was… uhm...I knew something was not right, that the old woman was going to tell something important...because she was just an old woman, - so the story had to be special...

Int: I understand… You mean since everything was so "ordinary" you knew that something had to change that?

T: Yes!

Int: Do you remember the name of the author?

T: No, I don't.

Int: Ok. It is Channing Pollock. He was an American author. Do you usually remember names of authors and texts and details like that?

T: No, I don't. Honestly, I do not care about that.

Int: So, it is what the stories are about and what they mean to you that matters?

T: Yes. That's right. I remember them if they are good... uhm.. If they mean something to me.

Int: Ok. What about films that you have watched in class? Can you tell me about one in particular?

T: Yes, it was one about the conflict in Northern Ireland… uhm... and there was this person that lived there, and he went to, or moved to London, and a bomb went off and he and his friends were suspects and therefore they were caught and put to jail for it, but they were innocent and... that was what the film was about...

Int: It was In the *Name of the Father*?

T: Yeah (laughter)

Int: And uhm… so you liked that film?

T: Yes, I liked it even though it was a bit long because it showed us the conflict in a good way, and it was also interesting to see..

Int: Good, so: how are these films selected, do you think?

T: Well, I think it has to do with the topics that we have to learn about. What we are about to learn.

Int: You mean like the competence aims in the Curriculum?

T: Yes, I think so. And we also had just had about Northern Ireland so... I think it is because it is what we are learning about at the time..

Tova2

Int: Ok, very good. I want to ask you about fictional texts in particular, because I want to know what makes YOU interested in a text, and about how you work with a text. That is what you do, in particular. Ok?

T: Ok.

Int: So, what is a good fictional story to you?

T: Well, (...) first of all there has to be some kind of a relationship between the persons in the text, it doesn't have to be a romantic relationship, but a relationship in some way. The persons have to have an interesting personality, and also I like that there is a meaning behind it. Behind the text…

Int: That's what makes it interesting for you?

T: Yes.

Int: By relationship you mean some kind of connection, relation? Between the different characters?

T: Yes.

Int: And also that the characters are interesting and the fact that you can find a meaning with it, - the text?

T: Yes. That's it.

Int: Ehm. And as you read? What is important to keep you interested?

T: Well, it doesn't have to be exciting all the time, but it has to build up to something, something that might happen.

Int: Do you mean that you like to be challenged by the text?

T: Uhh, yeah…

Int: …that you have to think and to find out what it all means?

T: Yes. I cannot read a book if I am not challenged.

Int: How do you understand the terms "open" and "closed" texts?

T: Uhm, well it is what I just said, I guess you have to read between the lines if it's an open text… So you have to really consider what the different situations and the symbols mean. And a closed text is when there is a, uh, I mean like for example "crimes"…and action where you get to know all that happens in the end.

Int: I see, that lead us to my next question: What about the endings? How do you feel about 'open' and 'closed' endings?

T: Well, I like reading both, but maybe I really prefer the open endings, because then maybe I will be thinking about it later. Yeah. I think so...that it will continue inside me for a long time… (laughing)

(...)

Int: Can you give an example of a good ending?

T: I would like the story to end in a good way, but it does not have to be that the hero survives, but if he dies it has to be that he died for a reason.. It was a book that I read, or it was a series of three books, and in the last book it was like that some of the people died, but the ones that did survive they created a new system of, or for, the society. I liked that it was a bit open, but also not since they created a solution to the problem. It was a very good ending.

Int: So, what these people did in the end was to give hope to a new generation of people?

T: Yeah. Yes.

Int: Eh, very good.

           Now try to explain as thoroughly as you can: What happens in class before, while and after reading a fictional text?

T: Uhm...before reading it she (the teacher) tells us to open our books (short laughter), uh… it's not that much going on before we start reading. So, then we read it, maybe to each other or to ourselves.

Int: Ok? Those are the two ways to do it, to actually read the texts?

T: Yes, eh

Int: Is this how you are used to doing it, I mean like earlier too? To yourself or in pairs of two?

T: Yeah, that is sometimes earlier the teacher read it to us, too, and even listen to a CD…

Int: Ok, and after reading the text?

T: Yes, well then she asks us to do the exercises. Not all of them, but she has picked out a few…

Int: Uhum. I see. So, do you sometimes talk about the texts in class?

T: Uhm... Yes, sometimes. We sometimes talk about the texts after doing the exercises. She

asks us whether we have any questions or not and then she gives us the answers, so I guess we talk about the text then..

Int: Right...

T: Sometimes we have a discussion about it… if we have understood it…

Int: Right. I also wonder about strategies too, that is, what do you do to focus, and what do *you* do to remember?

(…)

Ehm. When you read fiction: What do you do? What do you actually do with the text?

T: Well, I sit down where it is quiet, hopefully. Uhm… and it has to be challenging, though, - and then I just read it and I try to be focused so that I can imagine it all in my head.

Int: By that, do you mean like seeing? Having images in your head?

T: No, it's not like that I don't see pictures or seeing what a person looks like, I am just focusing on remembering, and so (laughter) I don't know.

Int: So you think about it, really focused?

T: Uhum. Yes.

Int: Do you talk to others about the texts?

T: Yes, sometimes if they are interesting and if others have read the same text that I have, but often I just read it and keep it for myself.

Int: I see. Do you sometimes do some kind of research? You know do you look up something on the internet for example if there are things you wonder about?

T: No, not exactly... it could happen but usually not…

Int: Do you use dictionaries and stuff while reading?

T: No, I don't do that. If I had a computer there I might, but I don't look up words in a dictionary.

Int: So if there is a word in the text that you do not know the meaning of you just go on reading because you get the essence of it?

T: Yes. Because if I were to look up every word I did not know it would be difficult to keep the… flow?

Int: Yes, I see... Just to get this right I would like to repeat parts of this. OK?

T: Ok.

Int: Normally, how do you start reading a literary text in class? You in particular. Describe it.

T: Ehm, well I don't know, I for sure do not do the exercises properly, especially not the short ones, the fill-in-ones because I don't think I learn anything from them… But maybe the questions that I find important I can give an answer of half a page or so

Int: Questions which allows you to respond to the text?

T: Yes. I just choose what is the most important to me, I guess (short laughter)

Int: Ok? What are these exercises like, the ones that allow you to write half a page or so? Can you describe them? Can...

T: I...like… there are some exercises that ask us to write about the story, or it can be to talk about, but I like to write… For example it can be what I think about the ending, or why I think someone said so and so…. often I understand everything better then...

Int: I see... These tasks help you with understanding the text? Is that what you're saying? Ok. Good. Have you ever been taught HOW to read a fictional text?

T: Ehm, no… no, I don't think so, but maybe I have been taught how to look for symbols and so, but not how to read it…

Int: You mentioned symbols, - is that something you find interesting? In texts?

T: Uh, yeah... it makes you think not only about the symbols in the book, or in the text, but also about what happened and maybe you get a whole other way of thinking about things, not only what happened there, but in your life as well...

Int: So, you say that it can create a connection, or that there is a connection, to life itself?

T: Yeah, that's what I mean.

Int: It can make you understand something about life and about yourself?

T: Yes.

Int: I would like us to talk about meaning. How do you feel when you read a text or watch a film and suddenly realize that you just understand something which you haven't understood before?

T: Well, sometimes when I know there is an event coming up and I don't understand why and then later I get a small hint or just something that make me get it.. That's really nice, ehh… it makes you happy in a way…

Int: Can it be that you also get a feeling that you also have understood something about life? …or something new?

T: Yes, I have. It is rarer but that has happened when I have read books or watched movies, yes. And that makes you think of course

Int: And... can you describe that feeling?

T: Well, it is kind of like learning about something you haven't known before, and it kind of puts pressure on what you have thought and believed, I think.. uptil this point…And it makes you have new opinions about stuff.

Int: Uhum, yes. So it is meaningful? Would you say that you read meaningful texts in English class?

T: In English class?

Int: Yes, in the English subject, related to the subject and school.

T: Yes, some of them I would say, but I do not remember many of them I'm afraid, hardly

any... but a few, yes.

Int: How do you feel about books versus movies/film?

T: Well, I actually think that the movies are the best, uhm… because we get to know the whole story, where in books you often get small pieces and it's just to read English and practice understanding English, but in the movies it's more like you learn and you get to see the whole text and the whole story, so it's different..

Int: You mean that you can get the whole story presented to you in short time, just two hours or so. Is that what you mean? A book takes much time to read?

T: Yes.

Int: So would you say that many movies have touched you? More than books?

T: Yes, I think so. I have seen more movies, so... and read few books...so yeah.

Int: Well. I guess that's it. I would like to thank you for the interview. It has really helped me, and you have really done your best at answering my questions, I believe...

T: (laughter) Yes, you're welcome…

Int: I am going to stop the recorder now. Thank you very much!

End of interview 1 (38 mins.)

Interview no. 2: Tina

Tina1

Int: Hello, welcome. Nice to meet you

Tina: Hello, nice to meet you too!

Int: Tell me about your background

Tina: Ok, I'm from ----. I have been moving back and forth between ---- and Norway. I like to use my whole name, my name is --- and people call me that, but I also have two middle names, and I like my whole name.

Int: Hmm. Lovely name! … How would you describe yourself to a person who has never met
         you before?

Tina: I'm actually quite shy to new people. Uhm… and I am quite quiet, but if one get to know me,
         and if I like hanging with that new person, I can get all crazy and I cannot act, but
         behave all well and all... when I meet you, but I can also be that.. "crazy" (emphasizing the
         word)... it depends. I guess I can choose…

Int: I see (short laughter). What is the most important thing in your life right now?

Tina: Right now? Eh, it is many different things, because my life has been quite challenging
         because of all the moving and stuff, and I have been bullied a lot because I came from
         abroad, because I was different and because I could not speak Norwegian. So I think I
         have a different view on things than what's normal... and I have been, in a way, -
         wounded by some people, because I trusted them but they let me down. So my family is
         very important to me, because I really can trust them, like my mother, for example - who
         is the person I trust the most in this world, and my friends. ..I don't have very many friends. I
         talk to a lot of people, but I have very few friends. I pick people whom I can trust, and who I
         can be with, - or to have fun with.

         And also music is very important to me. I love music, and I listen to music when possible.
         It is very important to me, and I cannot live without it. These are the things that are close
         to my heart.

Int: So, family, friends and music…?

Tina: Yes. Absolutely: family, friends and music.

Int: Good. Where do you live?

Tina: I live here in ---. As I said: I have been living in very many different places because I
         was born in ----, so my mother tongue is ---. I moved to Norway when I was five,
         so I learned Norwegian in kindergarten.. Then we lived here for two years before we moved to
         the north of Norway, to ---, because my father wanted to be an orthopedic doctor - who works
         with bones and all, and he got his practice there, and then we moved back to ---- again and I
         went to grade school there for three years, and then we moved back to Norway because my
         father now was finished as a doctor and he got work here, at the hospital in ---. My mother is a
         nurse so… they both could have solid jobs here.

Int: So you have been living here for the past five to six years?

Tina: Yes. Six years now.

Int: Where did you go to school before you came here?

Tina: I went to lower secondary school here in ---. --- Junior High School.

Int: Okay, fine. Why did you choose this specific programme of study?

Tina: Well, because I want to have a good education, because I want to have good grades, and I want every possibility open - I have always had good grades, and I want a good education.

Int: So, how do you like school?

Tina: Uhm... I don't like school (short laughter) eh, I am lazy, I don't like to work, - but I like learning new things, that is learn things I am interested in.

Int: And the same goes for earlier? Have you always had the same feelings about school?

Tina: More or less. I both like it and not like it...

Int: I am now going to ask you about the English subject.
        How do you like English in general?

Tina: I love English, I love different languages. I speak Norwegian at school, I speak English at school and I speak [her mother language, Red.] at home, and I love the idea that you can communicate by different languages... And I have German at school as well...

Int: What comes to your mind when I say "English class"?

Tina: Uhm... speaking English, Ii… it's very hard to describe... you see English class is a bit boring right now, because of reading in the textbooks and doing exercises, but I like reading… but I would like to speak more in English in class, not only to each other because, you know everybody is just "Oh, I don't want to speak English in class, it's horrible" and all... but just be able to talk to someone in English. I am actually going to England this summer, to Bournemouth with my friend… It's a summer course. Then I will be able to talk in English and use the language.

Int: How nice! Something to look forward to..?

Tina: Yes. Very nice.

Int: Ehm. Yes, to continue…We were talking about English class… Are there some things in particular that you like about the English subject?

Tina: Well, I like reading. I like reading in English. And... when I get to choose what to read, - like a novel or a short story or something like that, I like that a lot.

Int: Can you tell me about a memorable experience related to the English subject? A nice experience or so…?

Tina: Uh... When I was little, when I lived in Finland we got nicknames in English class, - because we were so small so they gave us these nicknames in English, to use, and so

that we could pronounce them… I was Hermine or something like that, I cannot remember what... but that was fun because you could be someone else. I liked that a lot. - A good childhood memory...

Int: That's really nice...

Tina: Yes… (short laughter)

Int: Next question. Do you get help and guidance when you need it? In English class?

Tina: Yeah.. When I need it… You know... because I speak so many languages I easily get confused, and I sometimes mix the words, - you know, so I sometimes ask for help. Yes. If I am having this presentation in class, like an oral… Then I ask for help.

Int: Do you want help?

Tina: Yes... I do.

Int: Uhum.

        And, we are going to talk a bit about literature and reading fiction. So then I want to ask you: How do you understand the term "fiction"?

Tina: Eh.. fiction, eh..

Int: Well... there is "fact" and there is "fiction"..?

Tina: Yes... I like reading fiction...

Int: How do you understand the word. Can you try to explain?

Tina: Something that isn't real, maybe...

Int: …it's made-up?

Tina: Yes… that is made-up, really… stories...

Int: Ok. Fiction. Tell me more about reading fiction. What kind of books and texts you perfer...like, not like, the first book you read and so on..

Tina: Uh... I like reading books, fiction… all kinds, really. My whole family does. Everyone is walking around the house with a book in front of their face making food and doing all sorts of stuff… (laughter) and I like reading in English because I can expand my vocabulary. I read books in Norwegian, in [her mother language. Red] because I like reading in different languages too... You see, I am starting to forget certain words in my own language, so reading helps me remember.

        And now that I am starting to get better at reading German I also like reading books in German. So I think that reading is a hobby to me in a way. I like doing it because I can disappear from the real world for a while and... at the same time I am enjoying that I really

can understand the text, - that is if it's in English... it's a nice experience. I love it. I can get the whole story, like *in* me.. You see, my parents are really supportive. Like, for example if I've heard about this book and I ask: Can you borrow it for me?...at the library, or maybe buy it..? Then it's "of course"!, you know, and every year - for my birthday or whatever, I get books... books from [her mother country. Red.] and… also for Christmas, so - our house is full of books..

Int: (laughter) ...good to hear

Tina: ...yeah..

Int: ...and more… what kind of literature? Genres?

Tina: Well, I'm more into fantasy. I like fantasy… like it's all fictional. It's not real. I know it's not true, but I like to think about that it can *be* true… and just make your own stories and "scenarioes" in your head.. I love it… (quick laughter)

Int: Uhum..

Tina: I also can read fact books. ...If it's a subject that's ok… It can be interesting, but usually it is boring to me, so I prefer reading fiction and fantasy in particular… I like books where the feelings comes… where…

Int: ...like to the surface? You mean you like literature you can relate to, - that touches you in a way?

Tina: Yeah. I do. So that I can feel them...

Int: I see.

Tina: You know, I was sick one day, and I was at home, in my house, and I found John Greene's book "The fault in our stars", it was in Norwegian and all, and I read it. And I was like "Oh, I have to read it!" because it was, you know.. So, I just read and read. Then I got hungry, so I just read the book while eating, and I couldn't stop, it was so… (laughter). At the end of the day when I finished it I just sat there and cried because it was so sad and I forgot that I was sick because it was so good...

Int: You're a book lover!...

Tina: Yes. I'm a book lover. I love books…

Int: (laughter)

Tina: ..it's in the family!

Int: And… I will ask you more about this later...

Tina: Ok..

Int: So what kinds of texts do you read in the English subject? What are these texts like?

Tina: They are very different, because some of them are short stories, some of them are pure facts, - like we have these "fact-files" in or books. Some of the texts are about movies,

or... poems and… very many things..

Int: ... a little bit of everything? Like all genres, really?

Tina: Yes…

Int: Uhum. And how…? Uhm. Well. I am going to ask you some more questions about the texts you read in English class, ok? You mentioned some types, - some genres, and I would like to ask you: Who selects the texts?

Tina: The teacher, --- (teacher's name)... we go through the book. We follow the book, so we all the time, - all the time we can see what comes up next... That is if you care to look...

Int: So, you go by the book, and the teacher decides?

Tina: Yeah...

Int: Ok. Fine. And why do you think these texts are picked out?

Tina: Yeah, we need to… We need to read different texts, genres in English... just in the same way as in Norwegian.. We need it?

Int: Can you tell me about a text from the English book that you remember well?

Tina: Uhm... uh... they are very… uh... some of the texts are just pieces of a… eh... of... ro…?

Int: Novels? Parts of a novel? "roman" in Norwegian?

Tina: Yes! (laughter) Novel, I mean. There was one that was very confusing to me… It was The odd…? The...

Int: "The Curious Incident with the Dog…? at... in the Night time?

Tina: Yes! And... it was very confusing. It was interesting, but at the same time it gave me the creeps in a way.. That was...

Int: ...ok. Was that because you saw something, - like a potential in that text?

Tina: I don't know, I think it was the theme - it was like unpleasant to read, in a way...

Int: Ok.. Was that in a good way or a bad way?

Tina: ...eh... I'm not sure. It was a good text. It was well written, but I didn't enjoy it.. It was about this … uh.. disease...

Int: A syndrome? The boy had Asperger's syndrome?

Tina: Yes.. it was confusing to me. And I can understand it, but at the same time I couldn't, so… it was disturbing… I guess I couldn't understand it... the text…

Int: Do you think you would have understood it if you had read the whole book, because it is a novel…?

Tina: Maybe….?

Int: Uhum...

Tina: I… you see, my mother is a psychiatric nurse, and she tells me about different "mental situations" so, I think I know a lot about it.. but this text was...and it helps to understand

different persons' feelings and all… so I don't know why I didn't like reading about him.. It's all a bit creepy to me.

Int: I see what you mean. That text is very different from many other texts… Do you think that the main persons, - or the text's lack of feelings, or showing feelings makes it different?

Tina: Yeah! I think so...

Int: Do you think that this could have been the reason for why you remember this text? It disturbed you? It was different?

Tina: Yeah. Uh... yes…

Int: Very good so far… Do you remember titles and names of authors?

Tina: Well, my memory is like a gold fish's… I easily forget, but if I get interested I often write it down, just to remember it.. (laughter)

Int: What about films? Can you tell me about films you have watched in English class?

Tina: Yes. I love watching films… too… This year we have watched two films in class...and the one was "In the name of the Father"... and there was… or the was one "Dances with Wolves"… I have seen *Dances with Wolves* before, and I liked it…. Uh…and... *In the Name of the Father* - it is a very good film. I liked the film, but… the subject was… like sad in a way. So I liked the film because my emotions went up and down all the time… (laughter)

Int: ... (laughter) I see…

Tina: And we also watched "Crash". That was in "samfunnsfag" [social science class. Red.], but it's in the book, - so… and I liked that one too. It was a good one too. And I just sat there and I wanted to say to them: "Oh, no. Don't do that!" and… (laughing)

Int: So you really wanted to go into dialogue with some of them..?

Tina: Yeah! Like "Why are you doing that?" It's frustrating because you see it all, but they don't...

Int: Yes. It is like destiny… and they cannot escape, in away?

Tina: Yeah... (laughing)

Int: Why were these films picked out, do you think?

Tina: Well, firstly they all were in English, - so we get to listen to it in English, and learn...and maybe learn some new words.. The subjects... or the themes were in the book, so instead of just reading about it - we could see it, or uh... like experience it...

Int: Yes. Right. What would you say is the main difference between a film you like and a book you like?

Tina: In the book I get to… I can picture the person in my head and imagine it all, but in the movie the.. someone has picked it all out for you…

Int: Uhum..

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Tina: And you have to like hang on to the story, and as with the book or the novel you have to imagine and think and make your own version of it… Of the story

Int: Can we compare the two media? Or is it impossible to compare, would you say?

Tina: Uhm.. it's not impossible, but it is difficult and maybe not right to compare them. Take *Forrest Gump* for example. I love it. But it is difficult to see it as a book, it is impossible… After having seen Tom Hanks as Forrest Gump, - it would be impossible to think of any other being him… or that… yes… And for example in the film made on "The fault in our Stars"…I have seen the trailer and I know who some of the people are… but I saw them differently… In another way... and I thought that it was the wrong people… Like it wasn't bad but...

Int: Yes, I understand what you mean..

Tina2

Int: Now I am going to ask you about what I call approaches to literature, that is *how* you enter the text, how you "meet" the text, so to speak… OK?

Tina: Yes.

Int: What is a good fictional story to you?

Tina: Good fictional story… Uhm.. Maybe something new, not only that you get to meet new kinds of people and new places, - or animals… like vampires for example, - but that it is something that you get to see in a new way, there is something else about it... is something you haven't read about or experienced before.. Yeah... It can be two groups of creatures, or humans, that normally is fighting each other… that they now are together. Not fighting each other… that is just an example… There must be something new. Different…

Int: Uhum.. yes..

Tina: It is surprising and...

Int: Something challenging?

Tina: Yes... uhum…

Int: What does it take to keep you interested? When you start reading a book?

Tina: It's always like… The first two chapters or so are always a bit boring, it's because it takes time to get into it, but.. uh.. not always but.. I usually read on the back of the book first, and then I think, eh.. "What is it about"? and then I think about what is going to happen? Like some things I expect...And if it seems interesting I start reading it, and if it is disappointing… then I stop..

Int: So you like to have some theories about what is going to happen in the book?

Tina: Yes, that's what I say… yeah...

Int: Uhmm.. So… where am I…(short laughter)…

| Okay, how do you understand the terms "open" and "closed" texts?

Tina: Oh.. an open text...

Int: Or an open or closed *ending*?

Tina: Uh.. an open ending to me is that I can decide.. like it stops there, and you can decide
what happens.. It's sometimes frustrating, but it's… also an important part of the story…
A closed text is when it, the action, stops - or something happens and then something
new comes in - like giving you the answer… A closed ending is for example a
complicated ending, which you maybe have to read a couple of times to really understanding.
But it gives you the answer… Closed stories… I guess everything is in the book..

Int: or the text...

Tina: Yes, and that there are not so many options...

Int: I see.. Can you think of a good ending that you remember?

Tina: Oh..mmm… good ending...

Int: Would that be a closed ending or a closed one?

Tina: Well, I often dislike open endings...it's all so irritating to me, it's like it all stops in the middle
of a sentence and I go like "That's it?" It's like that cliff hanger...
In "The fault in our stars" I thought that it was the main character that was going to die,
because she had cancer… But it actually was her lover who died in the end, because he
also had cancer… It was very sad, but it was a good ending… They were in
Amsterdam.. and the ….. (cannot hear what is being said here)..and he asks them about
a good novel they have read, and... and they want to ask him questions, but he is really a
bad person because it is his secretary that is the good one, and who cares… and then
the book ends with her words, the secretary's words… and she says that it is like this,
and that is very cute… It's sad in a way, too...

Int: Something else… How do you prefer to read the texts in English class. In what way do
you like to do the actual *reading*?

Tina: I don't like to listen to a CD if that's what you mean… Sometimes we read in pairs, but I
Don't like that as much either… It can be good if the other one is interested…

Int: What do you prefer?

Tina: I prefer reading it myself, or that we read it together, like someone is reading out loud to
the whole class, in turns… it may be irritating and there are some who does not like to
do it like that, but I think it is a good way to learn the pronunciation..

Int: Do you think it is important that the reading, in this way, becomes a common project? Like
for the whole class?

Tina: Yeah.. Because very often when we listen to a CD the teacher is just sitting there and

the half of the class is sitting there with their cellphones and not paying any attention at all… and...then when she asks them about the text afterwards they say: "Oh, I don't know".... and I hate it. I hate the answer "I don't know"…

Int: Yeah…

Tina: It is so… What are they doing in class if they are not interested? It's so irritating...

Int: Do you think it is more engaging when you read in turns or when you read in pairs? That you get more involved?

Tina: Yes. Definitely...

Int: And what do you do *during* and *after*?

Tina: Yes, oh.. I forgot to say that before we start reading the text we look through the words...

Int: ...the glossary?

Tina: Yeah.. The glossary...and then after the reading we sometimes talk a little bit about the text, and then do exercises… It can be about the text, or it can be grammar exercises which are related to the text...or chapter..

Int: What would you say that you do? *You* in particular? Do you do anything specific when you approach the text?

Tina: In the classroom…? No, I don't think so.. But since I get distracted very easily I often put my headphones on - so that I can think...

Int: Do you talk to others about the texts?

Tina: If it was somehow "catching", then I talk about it with my friends... but normally: no. We normally have a lot of factual texts… and then we don't talk much. We sometimes have discussions. In class.

Int: Do you think a lot while reading? Do you try to establish meaning while reading?

Tina: Yeah... If it is a factual text… If I do not agree with the text, then maybe

Int: Have you ever been taught *how* to read a fictional text? How to read a short story? Like in class?

Tina: Yes… we have learnt about skimming and close-reading and so on… But...

Int: What about reading a, let's say: a story?

Tina: Uh...

Int: There can be many levels in the story, for example… It can be a challenging text and …have you ever been taught how to focus on different aspects of the story, for example how it is told…?

Tina: No, I don't think so… No…

Int: No.

I want to finish this interview by talking a little bit about meaning, because when we read

we try to establish some kind of *meaning*. Reading is, or can be, meaningful to us, - and that is often why we like it… What is a meaningful reading experience to you?

Tina: Ehm… Fictional?

Int: It can be both...

Tina: Maybe if I relate to the story in a way… If someone has been thinking and made this story and I can relate to it, not only me, - I'm not alone, but if I can feel the same….? If I can escape into the text and become a part of that world, then it is meaningful to me. Because then I feel it. I understand it, - like really... I can be tired of bullying. It is not that much now, but before... and then I can escape and get some rest, and it is a way to get away for a while..

Int: Would you say that when you read a good book, and that you are really into it as you just described... Does it ever happen that you get this sense of really understanding something? Like something you haven't understood or realized before?

Tina: Yeah...

Int: Like it makes you "open up the scope" - widening your horizon?

Tina: Yeah.. like with *The Fault in our Stars* again, - I do not know anyone with cancer. I know it must be hard... but I have never known anyone having cancer, so this book made me see it. This book is not depressing, like many other books on the subject. This book made me feel it and be both happy and sad and the main character, Hazel Grace became really close to me, so… She says to her boyfriend that "You have given me a feeling of eternity" or something, in just a short period of time, - and it really is so...It is about cancer, but it is very much about other things too... and that makes sense...

Int: So a novel about cancer can be about other things as well?

Tina: Yeah! And that's good… a good combination. That is good literature. As I said earlier that I used to be bullied, so I know what it is like to feel, or to be wounded by some people… and that's hard... Often these kinds of feelings, not always the same but… they are in the books as well... and it's comforting in a way...

Int: And is it meaningful then?

Tina: Yes. Definitely!

Int: Thank you for the interview!

Tina: Thank you too…

End of interview 2 (49,5 mins.)

Emma1

Int: Hello, and welcome to this interview!

Emma: Hello

Int: How would you describe yourself to a person who has never met you before?

Emma: Uhm.. I would describe myself as a positive person, friendly and easy to get known
        to...and maybe a bit stubborn.. (laughter)

Int: Very good... Can you tell me a little bit about your interests?

Emma: Well, I like horses. I have three horses, Icelandic horses...uh... and yes the most of my spare
        times goes to them. I also play in a ... "korps"…? ehh... brass band…?

Int: Oh, yes, brass band!

Emma: Yes, and yeah… I've been playing in it for nine years. I play the trumpet.

Int: What is the most important thing in your life right now?

Emma: Oh.. It would have to be… (laughing) it's hard… there are so many things...
        School maybe. To get a good education is important to me now... Yeah (laughter)

Int: What would you say is an important value for you?

Emma: Mmm. to be friendly and stay positive I think… Yeah.

Int: Okay. Where do you live?

Emma: I live in ---. It is a small place in ---...

Int: Where did you go to school before you came here?

Emma: Uhm…" --- skule".

Int: Uhum. And why did you choose this specific programme of study?

Emma: ..eh.. It was because that would be good for my...For when I am going to study more
        later. Yeah, I think that is… yes.

Int: ...so that you have many options later?

Emma: Yes.

Int: How do you like school?

Emma: I like it, actually. I like it here. I've always liked school..

Int: So are there any differences, would you say? If you compare now with earlier?

Emma: Yeah.. This is a much bigger school. Many more people...and many new... uhm... "fag"...

Int: Subjects?

Emma: Yeah... (laughing)

Int: Is it better here, or?

Emma: Yes. I think so... There are many interesting subjects and I have made some new friends
          in my class and… yeah.

Int: I want to talk a little bit about the English subject now, okay?

Emma: Yeah...

Int: First of all: What do you think about the English subject in general?

Emma: Eh... Yeah, I like it. I think it is useful, but I am glad that I don't have to have the subject next
          year...

Int: Okay, good. I would just like to add that it is very good and very important that you're
          honest… You don't have to worry about anything here… (small laughter).. Okay?

 Emma: Yes, I see. I understand (laughing)

Int: Very good. What comes to your mind when I say *English class*?

Emma: Eh... writing and also being nervous about if I have to talk in class… Talking in English in
          class...in front of everybody…(laughing).. I'm always a bit nervous about that... so…

Int: Yes, I see. So you are always a bit nervous then? In class?

Emma: Yes (laughing)

Int: but… This is not dangerous, is it?

Emma: What?

Int: I mean sitting here, talking to me?

Emma: No... (laughing) This is okay (laughing)

Int: Are there some things in particular that you like about it?

Emma: Uh... I like that it makes it easier to talk to others...

Int: Uhum... Like in English?

Emma: Yeah, I also think it is an easy language now... so you don't have to work as much as in
          other subjects...

Int: Oh... Why is that?

Emma: It feels more natural to me now... and it's easier, and I don't have to work that hard… as in other subjects like for example science… maths...

Int: I understand. Uhm.. Can you describe a memorable experience related to the English subject? A good experience?

Emma: Uhh. .. a good experience (...) okay...

Int: It can be this school year or it can be from earlier...

Emma: I think it would have to be my book presentation, because it was the first time I could really speak, or, uhm... present something without having to read… the script..

Int: And that was this year?

Emma: Yeah.. and I also got a good grade, so.. (laughing)

Int: How nice! (laughing)

Emma: Yeah (laughing)

Int: Do you get help and guidance when you need it?

Emma: Yeah. Maybe not at home, because I am better at it than my parents, but yeah… at school…

Int: And do you want help?

Emma: Well, no... just sometimes... I ask for a word... for words I don't know...

Int: ...and then you get help?

Emma: Yes (laughing)

Int: Uhum. Okay.

          Now a little bit about reading and books... What kind of books do you like reading?

Emma: Uh... I like crime novels and Fantasy… That's what I read... Yeah…

Int: Okay, crime novels and fantasy?

Emma: Yeah.

Int: In Norwegian or English?

Emma: In Norwegian... I have read some English books, though, but mostly in Norwegian

Int: Do you read a lot?

Emma: Yeah. I do...

Int: How many books, would you say… that you read during a year or so?

Emma: A year…? Oh... maybe ten or twenty?

Int: Okay, so quite a lot?

Emma: Yes. I take the ferry, you see, so… I have a lot of time to...

Int: Okay! I see. Plenty of time to read…

Emma: Yes... (laughing)

Int: Can you mention a book that you have read in English?

Emma: Yes, I read this book called "The lovely bones"...

Int: Oh, yes! ...about this girl who dies?

Emma: Yeah! It's not a book I would have read in Norwegian, but I liked it very much! I don't think I would have had the same feeling about it if it was in Norwegian, so..

Int: No? no..

Emma: I think it was good..

Int: What did you like about that book?

Emma: It was just something about it that I… it's hard to explain, because it wasn't exactly a typical "me" book...

Int: No, because it wasn't a fantasy novel or so..?

Emma: No, it wasn't (laughing)

Int: It is about a young girl… can that be why? And that it's quite touching,..?

Emma: Yeah. That can be….

Int: Uhm.. What kind of texts do you read in the English subject, would you say?

Emma: There are very many facts in them… and this year it's very much facts... but last year we read many stories… so… Now it is like we have to learn *about* something in English, it's not only to read English so that we can learn English..

Int: That's right. So it's not only for the purpose of learning English, the language, anymore. Is that what you're saying?

Emma: Yeah.

Int: How do you understand the terms *fact* and *fiction*?

Emma: Facts are something real. Fiction is something made-up.

Int: Okay, can you mention a fictional book? An example of fiction?

Emma: Okay, the book I am reading now is called "Solstorm".

Int: Oh!

Emma: By Åsa Larson…

Int: Yes, the Swedish author?

Emma: Yes…

Int: Good. What kinds of fictional texts do you read in English class, would you say?

Emma: Uhm... like what they're about?

Int: Yes, what genres and so on?

Emma: Well, they're connected to a theme… like now we are learning about the court system...in the USA, and we have also had something about the school system... so they [the texts. Red.] are about that...

Int: So, all the fictional texts in the course book would be about that, in a way? Related to the various themes?

Emma: Yes. I would say so...

Int: But what kind of genres have you been presented to this year? ...Any poems?

Emma: Yeah. I think we have read some... poems… in the beginning of the year we read a text by Roald Dahl. "The Ant-eater".

Int: Yes?

Emma: Yes, because we learned about pronunciation...

Int: Yes, that is a quite long poem or a text on rhyme…

Emma: Yes

Int: What about short stories? Have you read any? That is "noveller" in Norwegian…

Emma: Yeah... There was one about a boy who had Asperger's…

Int: Oh, yes! "The Curious Incident…"

Emma: Yes, but oh... that wasn't a short story, that was just a...

Int: yes, it was a short excerpt of a novel, right?

Emma: Yes.

Int: Who selects the texts that you read?

Emma: The teacher. We actually don't read that much, because we just do tasks… Or it feels like It... (laughing)

Int: I see… But these texts. Why do you think they are picked out?

Emma: I think it is because the authors think that there is something they can tell us about something, like the theme. There is a meaning behind it… Something we can learn... Make us think… And maybe because in fiction you can learn about it in a different way than in fact texts...

Int: Right. That's good…

Do you know what the *competence aims* are? In the subject?

Emma: (laughing) ... uh... I know we have gone through them... But I don't remember any of them…

Int: Okay, so when I ask you *why* you think you read these texts, you say it is the book, or he ones behind the text book, who decides this..? Is that right?

Emma: Yeah. It is... But I don't know... I haven't thought about it, to be honest… (laughing) I just do what I am told to do... (laughing)

Int: I see (laughing)

So, uhm… Can you tell me a little bit about a text you remember well from the English course this year? It can be a text you have already mentioned, or another one...

Emma: Yeah, I really liked the one about the boy with Asperger's...

Int: Asperger's syndrome ("The Curious Incident with the Dog in the Night-time" by Mark Haddon. Red.)

Emma: Yeah. I liked reading about the way he… experienced everything and how he reacted… because he was different and… It was interesting.

Int: Yes, It is a very good story. I recommend you to read the whole novel, because it is one of those books that I remember very well having read… It is a remarkable novel. I think you would have liked it. It is quite unique.

Emma: Yeah. I want that...

(…)

Int: Why do you think that you remember this specific text?

Emma: The fact that he had Asperger's. And I think it was a very interesting disease, and that you could understand how he was like, because… because of how people were… eh..

Int: ...behaved … around him?

Emma: Yes, how people behaved around him and talked to him... I became aware of how I too behave or can behave around other people... doesn't have to be someone with Asperger's … and...

Int: Yes.The main character, the boy in this book - he is called Christopher…

Emma: Yes…

Int: How would you describe him? How do you think he "sees" the world around him?

Emma: Well, he misunderstands a lot…

Int: What is it that he misunderstands? Things or people?

Emma: Yeah, things *and* people I think... I would say. He didn't see the consequences of what he did. What other people did… and…

Int: and maybe not the reasons?

Emma: Yeah... I liked it... It was good...and a little… I got upset too, in a way.

Int: Can you explain that… say what you mean about that…

Emma: It was like I wanted to say to the others, or explain why he did what he did… (laughing)... so that they could understand. I wanted them to understand...

Int: You mean to the other characters, like Christopher's father and the police officer and so on…?

Emma: Yes… (laughing)

(...)

Int: What about films you have watched and worked with in English class? Can you tell me about one of these?

Emma: We saw this film about a teacher who came, who was new… and her class - they were bullies, and she did a good job with them and made them good… It was in America…so he black people.. I don't remember the title...

Int: Was it "Freedom writers"?

Emma: Yeah!

Int: What was it with this particular film that you liked? What made an impression on you?

Emma: They had it really though… I think what the teacher did was really good...

Int: What did she do?

Emma: Eh... she basically did everything for them. She gave them a whole new view… She changed their...

Int: attitude?

Emma: Yes... She helped them believe in themselves...

Emma2

Int: So. This is part two of the interview...

Emma: Uhum…

Int: This is where we are going to talk about literature... Okay?

Emma: Yes.

Int: What is a good book… a fictional story to you?

Emma: Umm... it will make me wanting to read more, even when the story is over. A story that makes me learn something… and that catches me…

Int: What do you mean by "learn something"? Can you elaborate?

Emma: ...

Int: Can you explain that?

Emma: That it can open my eyes so that I can see things in a new way…

Int: Can you give an example of such a text, such a story?

Emma: A book?

Int: Yes, for example

Emma: I read one called *Hestenes klan*[26]... I hadn't thought about horses in that way before, so it
       made me think of them in a new way. It really touched me. (laughing) It opened up my
       eyes to the fact that you should just listen to your horse… and how you are around
       horses…

Int: Uhum. So it was about how horses and people can communicate, in a way?

Emma: Yes... It is hard to explain it, though… (laughing)

Int: I see!

Emma: I could really relate to the girl…

Int: Was the story realistic, would you say? Could this have happened in the real world?

Emma: Yeah... I would say so...

Int: What are essential ingredients in a fictional text to keep you interested?

Emma: That it gives me some clues and hints... That I can find the answer, and that it has a good
       plot. That's important ingredients I think...

Int: By "good plot", - do you mean that it is filled with action? Or could it be something else?

Emma: I like action… I like that (... I cannot hear this part clearly) that's why I like crime fiction…
       (laughing) It keeps me going… You want to find out everything at the end...

Int: I understand. How would you like a good story to end? Can you give an example of a
       good ending?

Emma: I like typical "happy endings" of course. If the book ends well, I am happy too... I like when it
       ends well. You get an ending. … Maybe not when… Okay, when …if there is a plot twist at
       the end that changes everything, then I'm not such a fan of that... it's not… Yeah...

Int: So…?

Emma: I like to know what is going to happen at the end.

Int: So, as you read, do you like to *guess* what is going to happen?

Emma: Yeah! I love to guess, yeah... To guess who the murderer is, for example... (laughing)

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[26] This is a "young readers book" by Norwegian author Live Bonnevie

Int: How would you feel if the book or the story doesn't give you the answer at the end that you are looking for?

Emma: Hmm... Then I would probably go and read another book... It's very irritating... (laughing)

Int: (laughter)

Emma: Yeah...

Int: What happens in class before the reading of a literary text? A short story or a poem, it can be a poem too… What do you do?

Emma: We read a short summary or something, - before we start to read, so that we know a little.. Eh... we read a little bit about the author. We might speak a little...

(…)

Int: What do *you* do? You in particular? Before reading the text? Or a book, on your own..?

Emma: I just read, actually... (laughing) I don't have any procedures (laughing)...

Int: If you are going to read a book in English, for example..? Do you talk to anyone about it?

Emma: Okay, I read on the back of the book, of course... and look at the cover. Maybe if someone I know has read it, then I listen to them... but… (laughing)

Int: Do you look up words in the dictionary? Do you do some kind of research?

Emma: Uhum… Yeah, I like to "google" stuff... and for example if there are unknown places, - then I google them...

Int: Oh, really? That's good! (laughing)

Emma: (laughter) and I talk to my friends about good books I have read... It is nice...

Int: So, you do that? Share your reading experiences?

Emma: Yeah!

Int: Good...

Emma: To get other views... maybe they have a different meaning... I can think about it… (laughter)

Int: Meaning. We are going to talk a bit about meaning now…
Do you think about *why* you are reading and about *what* you read?

Emma: I think I think (laughing)...and...

Int: (laughing)

Emma: I sometimes stop and think… I sometimes have to stop and look up something...

Int: Uhum..?

Emma: I think while I read...yeah...

Int: Do you see pictures in your head? Do you imagine?

Emma: Yeah… That's why I like reading, I think. I like reading more than movies actually…

Int: Yes! So... you create images in your head... you visualize then…?

Emma: Yes... (laughing)

Int: What if you have read a book, and then you watch the movie based on it…?

Emma: Yeah! ... (laughing) it is always different.. It's "wrong" in a way...

Int: I agree… It can be like that sometimes... That's why I am not such a fan of good books
         Being made into films, anyhow they can be good too, - and you don't have to watch the film,
         of course... (laughing)...

Emma: Yes! And sometimes they take away parts that you liked in the book, or they change
         everything...!

Int: Okay. Let's return to English class once more: What exactly do you do when you read a text?
         Before, while and after?

Emma: At first we read it…

Int: How?

Emma: Sometimes we just read it for ourselves... sometimes the teacher reads it, and sometimes we
         read it in pairs... Afterwards we sometimes talk a little bit about the text, and then we do the
         tasks...

Int: How do *you* like to do the actual reading?

Emma: Uhm... I like to read in pairs…

Int: Why is that?

Emma: I like that because then both of you can speak and you do not have to read out loud in front of
         the whole class… I like it the most when I can read it with one of my friends, because I feel
         more comfortable then... and I sort of relax more... and... (laughing) ... speak more natural.

Int: More freely?

Emma: Yes. And it's easier for me to learn when I can work with someone… If the other one really
         is interested…

Int: I see… The tasks you are talking about... The tasks that you do after the reading is done, what
         are they like?

Emma: Uhm... They are like... maybe you're asked to describe one of the characters in the text and…
         and that you have to write why she did so and said so… and maybe why the author has chosen
         to do so and so... and things like that..

Int: Do the questions help you to *grasp* the text, - to *understand* it? …to get more out of it?

Emma: Yes, definitely! You can get some... another view... different views... very helpful.

Int: Okay... What makes a story *meaningful* to you?

Emma: Well, if it is a real story, some things that actually can happen… I get more touched by the story then..

Int: So, you say "touched by"…does that mean that it is meaningful to you then? The impact it has on you..?

Emma: If it is something I can take with me... into my own life... then I think it is meaningful to me…

Int: So… If you can relate to the story and the characters… then? Then you learn?

Emma: Yes. I believe so. If I can learn something... and… if I cannot take anything out of the text. …then... I don't…

Int: ...find it meaningful?

Emma: No..

Int: Have you at any time experienced that "Eureka" feeling when you read? - That you suddenly realize something or understand something you haven't understood before?

Emma: Yeah! I think that has happened a few times… It happened when I read *Hestenes klan*...

Int: You told me about *Hestenes klan* and you have told me about *The Curious Incident…* and if you think about the last one there, "The Curious.." and so on... Can this literary, fictional text tell us anything about the society and the world we live in, ... today?

Emma: Yeah. I think so, especially if you know someone with Asberger's...

Int: Is it important, would you say, even though you do not know anyone with Asberger's? Can it tell us something about ordinary people, so to speak?

Emma: Yeah… I think it is a book everyone should read... (laughing)

(...)

Int: I am going to give you an example of a metaphor. Do you know what a metaphor is?

Emma: Yeah…?

Int: And symbols? In our language and in all sorts of texts there are symbols and metaphors, or can be anyway... An example of a symbol is a crucifix... a religious symbol... You understand?

Emma: Yes!

Int: Well, texts can be filled with symbols and metaphors… What about Christopher in *The Curious Incident…?* How does he relate to these? If I say "Life is a journey". That is a metaphor, right? ...

Emma: ...Uhum..?

Int: Or what do you say when I say: "Life is a journey"?

Emma: Eh... I feel that it means that you have to try to find your own way, and that you should not be afraid of… to choose your way… (laughing)

Int: Yes, nice... The books that you read, and the different texts you read in English class... Many of them evolve around the big questions in life like love, life and death, right?

Emma: Yeah!...

Int: Can reading literature make us more philosophical, you think?

Emma: Yeah. Definitely... It makes us think…

Int: We are going to stop there... The time is up (laughing)…

Emma: Yes! (laughing)

Int: Thank you for the interview!

Emma: Yes

End of interview 3 (39 mins.)

Interview no. 4: Kenneth

Kenneth 1

Int: Hello! Welcome to this interview and thank you for the cooperation so far...

Ken: Yes, hello

Int: Are you ready?

Ken: Yes I am

Int: Firstly, I would like you to tell me about yourself... How would you describe yourself to a person who has never met you before?

Ken: Eh... (laughing) I think of myself as a pretty special person.. I can be very sociable and kind   of the center of the class, but I also like being by myself and I often withdraw myself from people. You can say that I am a kind of an introvert, - I like being alone a lot. I get energy from it, but I also need a place where I can use that energy, and that is in class - with class mates…

Int: Very good…

         What is the most important thing in your life right now?

Ken: Ehm… Actually it is knowledge. Over the years I have been thinking about that question..
         Knowledge is always important to me.

Int: Where do you live right now?

Ken: Right now I live in ---, in a place called ---. It is in --- county.

Int: Where did you go to school before?

Ken: --- skule… I went there for ten years. Actually the school was rebuilt a few years ago,
         so I went to school in the old building for six years, then a temporary school building at
         ---, and then the newly built school for the last two years there…

Int: Uhum. I see. Why did you choose this specific programme of study? Why this school?

Ken: Because at first I wanted to become an engineer or something like that, but over the time I
         Have not had that wish, so now I actually don't know what I want to do… So, the advice I got
         from people around me was that I should go here…

Int: How do you like school?

Ken: Actually I enjoy myself very much here, I am not a very sporty or good at sports, - but I came
         in a class which is partly for athletes, all of the male students except me are into some kind of
         sports…
         But… I like it, because I like having new experiences… I like meeting people with other
         interests and such…

Int: Has something changed over the years? Do you like school more or less now than earlier?
         Ken: (laughing) Eh… I don't know… because sometimes when I notice my grades going
         down, I feel… It's bad, but then when they rise again, or if there is something really
         interesting, then… It is kind of being on a rollercoaster… It goes up and down…

Int: It's not the same all the time…?

Ken: No, it's not the same all the time. I sometimes think I could continue, or go on for the rest of
         my life (laughing)…

Int: (laughing)

Ken: Because... sometimes it's boring, sometimes it's horrible, and sometimes it's actually fun! So -
         for me school is actually a representation of life.

Int: Hm...(surprised) Very good!

         I want to focus a little bit on the English subject now... How do you like English in general?
         As a subject?

Ken: As a subject? Uhm… As a subject in school… uhm... I really don't enjoy it much… I developed most of my English skills through computer games, actually. I hated English before, you see,

- and my mom said to me that I should try to focus more on the subject, and that I should try harder… Uhm… but then I discovered computer games, and that really helped! Because I could actually use the language because I needed it… They were in English...so I gained some friends on the internet who I communicated with in English… The work we do in class at school now… it doesn't help me to develop any English skills, actually… it is only through the mock-exams that I really get to use my skills… uhm... It is only then I can show what I can do and what I know… so, what I didn't know before, which I learn in class is mainly words… I knew all the grammar when I came here… so…

Int: So, what does that mean? You have learnt all the grammar already? Like you write and speak fluently?

Ken: Yeah. I know how, I just know how to write everything in English...it comes naturally… like in Norwegian, or no - I actually write better in English than in Norwegian… Of course I make minor mistakes, but very often they occur as a result of lack of time… so… in many ways...I don't think I can learn more here...

Int: Okay. I see.
         What comes to your mind when I say English class?

Ken: English class? Boring? (laughing)... sometimes it is enjoyable and fun. I often joke about the questions that the teacher asks us with my friends… uhm... it's a lot like other classes, really.

Int: Is there something in particular that you like about it? Can you pinpoint anything in particular?

Ken: I like the topic "globalization". The global language... - that's an interesting aspect, - or topic.

Int: Can you describe a nice experience related to English?

Ken: At school or in general?

Int: In general

Ken: I have a lot of experiences, actually… (laughing) My most memorable experience was when I became friends online with someone from Britain… uhm... like three or four years ago, - I still talk to them...to hear about their life, school and… yeah. Yes, that was quite an experience for me!

Int: Do you get help and guidance when you need it?

Ken: I don't really ask for help… I don't need...

Int: Yes, - that's my next question: Do you want help?

Ken: No, actually I don't. I don't see myself in need of it… I get corrected by the teacher sometimes… I even have a brother living in Germany who used to live in London, but I feel like I even know a lot more English than he does...

Int: I see.

       We are now going to focus on reading. Especially the reading of literature, okay?

Ken: Yes!

Int: So, tell me about books and reading! What kind of books you like, the first book you read in English, etc.

Ken: Uhm… If I am going to be completely honest, I have only read one book in English, - and it isn't because I haven't had the opportunity to read books in English, it's… I just don't like reading books… I do not find any book that interests me.

Int: Uhum...

Ken: The first book I read in English I actually read this year, at school… It was...the book was called "The Ego Trick". I don't think you have heard about it before... It's a philosophical book written by an English kind of philosopher… It is about what "the self" is… "the you"...like what the core of "you" is and… He talks about for example: "What if you were a beetle and if you still had *your* mind and you still were *you,* what would that be like? Do you associate yourself or do others define you with your body, or something else... It's a very interesting subject… and book. I enjoyed reading it 'cause it made me realize new things... That was quite an interesting read.

Int: Is that a topic you're interested in? Philosophy?

Ken: (short laughter) Uh... actually… (laughing) ... I use the word "actually" a lot… (laughing) ...when I think about it… Uhm… but I discussed the topic with my mother… She's quite well educated and… sometimes she oversteps her boundaries and...but it's okay… I sort of hate philosophy, because it makes everything like "too much", like it can even make things more complicated, - but I also enjoy it… It is a love - hate relationship. Philosophy to me is more about growing as a person… it's more about asking questions that doesn't necessarily have any answers... You will not find the answers...

Int: Yes. You know, there was one great philosopher once who said that: "If you go through life searching for 'the meaning of life', - then you will never be happy or satisfied"...Is that

what you mean by hating it and loving it at the same time?...Because it is kind of inevitable that we ask the big questions… but if we keep on trying to find this meaning… then…?

Ken: I just don't like the idea that someone with a PhD in philosophy, which in my mind is silly…, can tell us about what the meaning of life is or nor or whatever… It's just thinking, and everyone can think about these things… So… where was I? (laughing)
(…)

Int: (laughing) … Okay, let us return to literature and the reading of texts…

What kind of texts do you read in the English subject? What are they like?

Ken: Uh… We read about English history, American history… different subjects… We also read about people who define themselves as English... uhm... even though they're from another country. Some of them are from South Africa, Australia… We read different poems, like we just read a poem written by a president of the United States, - Donald or Ronald Reagan or something… It's quite varied… We are presented with lots of different matters concerning the English speaking world today...

Int: Uhum… Yes, good!

Let's see… (...) How do you understand the terms "fact" and "fiction"?

Ken: Fact and fiction?

Int: Yes.

Ken: *Fact* is something that is true, I believe, and *fiction* is something that is open for interpretation...

Int: Okay. Yes. That is it?

Ken: Well, there can be a lot of facts in fiction though... They can easily be interpreted in the same way… They can have a lot of sim... similarities? Yes… (laughing) It can actually be hard to tell the difference sometimes...

Int: Uhm. What kind of fictional texts do you read in English class?

Ken: Uh… We read different texts by authors from all around the world… Even from African countries… uhm…they are written in English…. so we read about how texts are written and so on… that's about fiction..

Int: You mean you read about how to analyze texts?

Ken: Yeah. Especially on the Mock exam… We have to analyze some texts there…

Int: Okay. And who selects the texts? Why do you think these texts are picked out?

Ken: Ehh... I believe these texts are picked out by the people who wrote the book, the authors...

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Int: You are now referring to the texts in your textbook only, right? Do you sometimes go "outside the book"?

Ken: Ehm... - No, we don't, actually. We go by the book… mostly… We have been to the library to borrow books also… once… It is difficult to answer why these texts (in the textbook) are chosen… I think...

Int: Do you think there are some criteria?

Ken: Yes, definitely… We as students… Uhm... Our time is very valuable, so they have to make sure they put in as much of what we need to learn… and read as much as possible… We spend one year on this specific book, so what they put in there is important.

Int: Yes, I see what you mean.

Can you mention a text you remember well from this school year. This course?

Ken: Well, to be completely honest I haven't paid much attention to the texts...

Int: What about the poem you mentioned earlier? The one written by Ronald Reagan?

Ken: Yes, I remember having read the poem… but I do not remember the title or what it was all about…(small laughter) I do remember a text we have read, but it was not a fictional text...

Int: Can you think of a fictional text?

Ken: Ehm…

Int: A short story?

Ken: Yeah…but I cannot remember any titles...

Int: That is okay… Just tell me...

Ken: Yes, we read this fictional text about… uhm... that you should not think that you know the Answer… or know the truth before you have heard the whole story… And the story was about a man who came to have the signature from this old woman… She was known in the village as a wise woman. He was there to collect signatures for an appeal or a declaration against guns and gun use... Then she told the man this story from when she used to be a rebel. She and her sister went on a trip to the Amazonas, I think, and this guy they went with was a kind of a schmuck who killed innocent birds in the trees just for fun. She did not like this so she decided to remove the bullets from his gun. When her sister was attacked by a panther ...or a tiger… the man tried to kill it (the beast), but since the bullets were removed he couldn't shoot it down, and because of that her sister died. You could say that if she had not removed the bullets, her sister would still be alive...

Int: Uhum…

Ken: ...and therefore we could see why guns can be very useful… and...

Int: You seem to remember the plot quite well… (sounds like asking a question)

Ken: Yeah, I (...unclear… tend to?) remember the plots and what we have gone through quite well when I start talking about it… but I cannot remember the titles...

Int: Well, that's not the most important thing about it either, really… is it?

Ken: No… Yes, I think of it as more an experience I should have rather than like: "Oh, I read a text with the title so and so yesterday…" I look at it as something I can take knowledge from, something I can remember and maybe think about… something that I can learn from and maybe remember when I maybe approach the same situation at some point… a time in my life...

Int: Yeah. Just for the record, that text you speak of is "Thou Shalt not Kill" in your textbook, right?

Ken: Yeah.

Int: Why did this specific text have impact on you? Why do you think you remember it so well?

Ken: Why? … Uh… We went through it quite well uh… and just because the subject was important to me. I think it is important to always look at a subject in a way that makes you see that it has more than one side… Like a … that things have two sides or more… I don't think it is right to kill, but I can see why some people think so, at least… I can understand why some people hate other people, for example if someone has killed someone… it is easy to understand why someone will hate this killer… Why the family of the one that's killed want to kill the one who did it, even though they've never thought of killing someone before…
The society… uh... the society must still say… uh… that's it is wrong to kill people no matter what...

Int: So… Would you say that reading texts like this one in class can lead to fruitful discussions, or at least: thinking...reflection?

Ken: Yes. I believe so… yes.

Int: What about films you have watched?

Ken: Films?

Int: Yes.

Ken: We watched a film that was called "Crash" - and it was about a crash between different groups of people and different stereotypes, and it was about racism, really… because of that… It was about how people have stereotypical opinions about others, and that someone can become a stereotype because of other people's opinions… And they even start to think of themselves

according to these stereotypes, because the society looks at them this way anyways, - so… why even bother to try being another person...

Int: Would you say that this film was meaningful then?

Ken: Yes. It was meaningful… I really enjoyed the movie...

Int: Now: A little bit more about what you do when you watch a movie… uhm... Because a film… movie can be a fictional story as well… just like a written text.

Ken: Yes

Kenneth 2

Int: This is the second part of the interview, but we are going to continue with the reading of literature, and therefore I ask you: What is a good fictional story to you? A good piece of literature…

Ken: I like to be surprised… Uh... Something that I haven't seen before or read before… There are not a lot of fiction, movies that are like that because I find that they are all just small variations of the same, really… I don't read books because I know how it is going to end from the beginning and there are not many surprises… So little variation… People say that there are endless possible variations… but there are not...the way I see it...

Int: So, what you say is that there are some standard plots with a few variations…?

Ken: Yeah, and I … and that is why I prefer reading articles for instance, because they can have interesting perspectives on society and things that I am interested in...

Int: Uhum. I see.
        ...you said you said you liked to be surprised, so do you like open stories more than closed stories?

Ken: Eh... As I said, it depends… because I can really hate open stories, or open endings anyways… But it really depends. I like to interpret the action or the ending, but it can be enjoyable with a set ending… uhm… So, that is not the most important aspect...

Int: ..yes, I see. I understand what you mean.
        What happens in class before, while and after reading a literary text? What do you do?

Ken: Uhm… Sometimes we read them in pairs, uhm… something which I don't like because I don't really get to interpret the text, because I cannot focus and follow the text when another person is reading the text, and not myself… When I myself read out loud (when in pairs) I just read and focus on that…

Int: ...so you focus on the reading itself, trying to read well? Is that it?

Ken: Yes. I focus on the reading, and I focus on the words and such… So, what I do when we read in pairs is that I read through the text for myself when the other person is reading out loud… so that I can get the meaning and the content… I do this just to make sure that I get through it and that I will remember all the details... Sometimes we do this too, - we read them for ourselves, like quietly...

Int: And the teacher? Does she sometimes read the text for you?

Ken: Uhm... Yeah…

Int: and... or listen to a recording of the text? Like on a CD or so?

Ken: Yeah, we also do that...

Int: When you have read the text, what do you do then?

Ken: We usually are told to remember the words and to come up with some answers...

Int: Like to questions? Or tasks?

Ken: Yes… that… We sometimes practice on "Quizlet" - to remember the words, we sometimes write something or do group work. It all depends on the text and the tasks in the book…

Int: When you read a text at home... like for
         home work… when you are alone, do you do some kind of research or use dictionaries?

Ken: When I read a text? No… not really… I've come to the stage where I think of myself as an "educated" person and I don't usually have any problems with understanding anything… I can very often interpret the meaning of words that are unknown just by looking at the context, really… and so I can pretty much understand it… Of course if I read an article about an unfamiliar subject, I sometimes search it up... I "google" it.

Int: Good. I see.

Ken: I very often read other articles about the same subject (the unknown subject) just so that I can learn and understand it better.

Int: Have you been taught how to read a fictional text or even a factual text? Like in school?

Ken: No, not in the English subject, but in Norwegian...and we use what we learn there in English class. Like reading quickly through a text, reading the title, searching and so on...

Int: Reading strategies?

Ken: Yes...

Int: We do not have much time left…
         Finally: What is a meaningful story to you? When do you really feel you have learnt something or understood something...even realized something new?

Ken: When I haven't heard about it before… When it is something *new* to me

Int: Thank you so much for the interview!

Ken: You are welcome

Int: It was very interesting talking to you. Good luck with the exam!

Ken: Thank you!

End of interview 4 (33,2 mins.)

Interview no. 5: Kia

Kia1

Int: First of all I want to hear a little bit about you. How would you describe yourself to a person who has never met you before?

Kia: Ehm… (laughing) I'm shy… a little bit… mmm... I'm creative. I like to listen to music...

Int: Ehm… What is the most important thing in your life right now?

Kia: The most important thing right now...mmm… it must be my friends…? (sounding like a question)

Int: Something else?

Kia: Not anything specific.

Int: Okay. Friends is the most important thing in your life right now.

Kia: Yes

Int: Where do you live?

Kia: Eh… I live here in ---. In a dorm… But my family live in ---.

Int: I see! You live in a flat?

Kia: Uhum.

Int: Do you live with someone?

Kia: Uhm, well - I live with a girl two years older… than me… But I do not know her that well

Int: Where did you go to school before?

Kia: Ehh.. I went to school in ---… uhm… at --- --- ungdomsskule (lower secondary school)

Int: Uhum. Can you tell me a bit about that school?

Kia: It's a pretty big school… uhm...or not that very big but regular (laughing quietly)

Int: So, how many pupils were in your class?

Kia: Uh… around twenty, I think… (question like intonation)

Int: Why did you choose this programme of study?

Kia: Uhh I actually wanted to attend the music programme at first, but I was not sure about what I wanted to do afterwards, so then I changed my mind and chose this one

Int: Oh, yes

         How do you like school?

Kia: I like it very much

Int: Has it changed over the past years? ...from earlier? ...or?

Kia: Uhm... at junior high I liked it very well, but it has been difficult to start here… (sounding a bit insecure, doubtful)

Int: Oh, I see… Can you try to explain? Was it difficult to move here, - to a new place?

Kia: Uhm... No, that actually went fine... You see, I have small siblings at home, so now I do not get disturbed or anything… But the …. uhm...

Int: Subjects? Demands?

Kia: Yes, the demands are bigger here, uhm...

Int: So you think some of the subjects are more challenging and difficult now...here?

Kia: Uhum. Yes (sounding convinced, determined)

Int: Now we are going to talk about the English subject, so firstly: How do you like English as a subject?

Kia: I like it very much

Int: Okay. What comes to your mind when I say "English class"?

Kia: Uhm. Reading out loud in class… (laughing a little)

Int: I see, do you like that?

Kia: (laughing a very short laughter again) It is okay…

Int: Anything else you think about?

Kia: Uhm… Not anything specific, no…

Int: Are there something in particular you like about the English subject?

Kia: Uhm… (pause) ...Uhh... I like the fact that I can use the language to talk to other people in the world...

Int: So, you like the fact that it allows you to communicate with other people?

Kia: Yes

Int: Do not be afraid to tell me what comes to your mind, you can be totally honest here because nothing bad will happen or anything because I will not tell anyone...

Kia: Okay

Int: Describe a memorable experience from the English subject for me. It can be from this school year or earlier.

Kia: Uhmm… (thinking) uhmm, I guess it must be reading a Harry Potter book in English

Int: Good! Did you do that here? (sounding enthusiastic)

Kia: Yes! (proudly)

Int: Did you do that here? This year?

Kia: Yes

Int: Do you get help and guidance when you need it?

Kia: Yes

Int: Do you *want* help?

Kia: Uhm... yeah, if I need it.

Int: Tell me a bit about reading books, preferably in English. What books do you like and so on?

Kia: Ah, I like most books, actually. I've found out that I do not like crime novels though... but I like reading science fiction, and I like books like *The secret daughter* and stuff like that…
        Uhm.. the first book I read in English must have been a book by Roald Dahl...

Int: Oh? Do you remember the title?

Kia: *...Charlie and the chocolate factory.*

Int: You liked that?

Kia: Uhum! (with enthusiasm)

Int: Have you read other books by Dahl?

Kia: Yes, but in Norwegian

Int: So, reading *Charlie and the chocolate factory* was that a good experience for you?

Kia: Uh. Yes it was!

Int: And have you continued reading books in English?

Kia: Not very much, no

Int: If you were to read a book...if you went to the library and had to choose a book, what would it be then?

Kia: Oh, it would have been… oh, what's it called? Uhm... *The Island* or something?

Int: Okay? *The Island* by… uhm.. Victoria Hislop?

Kia:	Yeah, I think so.
Int:	Would you prefer reading it in English or Norwegian?
Kia:	I would manage reading it in English, but I prefer reading in Norwegian... It's easier.

Int:	What kinds of texts do you read in English class? What are they like?
Kia:	Uhm, mostly fact-texts… about countries and stuff… and I like that, it is interesting!
Int:	Are they easy to read and understand these texts, would you say?
Kia:	Yes. We have the glossary lists available, so...
Int:	Do you like the textbook, "Experience"?
Kia:	Yes I do.
	(…)
Int:	Can you define the terms "fact" and "fiction" for me?
Kia:	Yes… uhm... "fact" is real and "fiction" is unreal (laughing), if you know what I mean?
Int:	Uhum… something made-up?
Kia:	Yes!
Int:	Can you give an example of a fictional text?
Kia:	Harry Potter
Int:	Yes, okay! What kind of fictional texts do you read in English class? Can you tell me about them? Or one of them?
Kia:	They are often difficult… I remember this one text we read in English class… I could not understand any of it. Not anything...
Int:	Can you say something about it at all?
Kia:	Okay… There were these two guys who went to an island... and one died, and I do not know if he was killed or… it was confusing… (laughing an insecure laughter)
Int:	The text was "A Great Day", wasn't it? The text?
Kia:	Yes!
Int:	Why do you think you did not "understand anything" as you said. What happened in class? What was difficult about it?
Kia:	Maybe it was that we had to "read between the lines" a lot..?
Int:	You find that challenging?
Kia:	Yeah
Int:	So you prefer texts which are more straight forward?
Kia:	Yes
Int:	Do you like it when texts end without giving you the answer?
Kia:	Uhm, yeah sometimes
Int:	Uhum!
Kia:	Sometimes it can be irritating and...

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Int:	annoying?
Kia:	Yes
Int:	We say that texts then have open endings…

Int: Can you try to describe once more the difficult short story? "A Great Day"? Do you think you could have understood more if you read it more than just once?

Kia:	Yes, I think so...probably… it's not always easy to understand everything the first time…But I did read it again, or parts of it… when we did the questions or the… it was that we had to describe everything and… But I still did not understand it all…
Int:	So, you were supposed to carry out an analysis… the tasks or the questions you told me about… Is that right?
Kia:	Yes.
Int:	Do you remember what you thought was difficult? Uhm… or what you did?
Kia:	I know about how to describe the people and how to describe the… everything, how it is and…
Int:	Such as the setting and the plot?
Kia:	Yes, but I didn't understand the text that well, so…
Int:	Okay. Uhm… Who selects the texts you read in English class?
Kia:	The teacher… (sounding like asking a question)
Int:	Why do you think these texts are picked out, and not any other texts?
Kia:	Uhm... because they are very ...uhm… various?
Int:	Okay, varied?
Kia:	Yes, many different kinds of texts… and that give us more experience with different types of texts…
Int:	Do you think that is important?
Kia:	Yes
Int:	And who or what decide what texts the teacher picks out, besides of the variation, you think?
Kia:	Uh... the government…?
Int:	Do you know what "competence aims" are?
Kia:	Uhm. (thinking) uhm... no, I don't remember… I have heard of it… But...
Int:	I guess the teacher has showed them to you…?
Kia:	Yes, I think so, actually (sounding like she is asking a question)
Int:	Uhm… So, let's move on…
	Can you tell me about another text you remember well?
Kia:	Uhm… no… I don't remember...

Int: Well, that's okay… What about films?

Kia: Yeah, we are watching one right now, actually… so...

Int: Yeah?

Kia: Yeah! I have seen it before, so...

Int: And did you like that film?

Kia: Yeah! It is called "The maid"... it is about the situation in the US in the fifties or the sixties, or maybe it's later, I don't know...

Int: No, I think you are right! Fifties, sixties… Go on!

Kia: It is all about this maid, I mean she is the main person and it is about how the blacks are treated in a segregated… society...

Int: Can you give me a detail from the movie, a scene you remember, that you noticed well?

Kia: Uhm… The one where they are building a separate toilet for her… the family… because she cannot use the same as them...

Int: And that had an impact on you?

Kia: Yeah, it did

Int: Do you think it is useful or beneful to watch films like this in English class? How?

Kia: We get to learn about groups of people, like other people and their … How their lives are and stuff...and it can help us understand others...

Int: If you could choose between reading a book and watching a film, what would you choose?

Kia: Uhm… book?

Int: Why is that?

Kia: It is because I have already experienced that books are better than the movies, or that I prefer them… Uhm… Maybe because the movies come out differently than in the books, because you already have the images in your head and you can imagine everything...

Int: You are talking about the two versions of the same story, so to speak? Book and film? Film based on a book, right?

Kia: Yes, and you may get disappointed when you watch the movie because it's not the same at all!

Int: "The Maid", is that a book, a novel too?

Kia: Yes

Int: Have you read it?

Kia: No

Int: Do you think the book would have been different then? How?

Kia: Uhm… Hm… Maybe it would be a lot more information in the book, maybe about the persons' feelings and all that...

Int: Yes, I agree with what you say. Book and film are different media, right? They tell the story very differenly… they use different techniques?

Kia: Yeah..

Kia2

Int: I now want to focus on what a good story is to you and what you do exactly, when you read a story.. Okay?

Kia: Uhum. Okay

Int: What is a good fictional story to you?

Kia: A story with a lot of … uhm… *describing*? (nervous laughter)

Int: Description?

Kia: Yes. (laughing) Descriptions! And with a constant … uhm… action?

Int: Yes? Does it have to be a lot of action, like in a dramatic sense of the word?

Kia: No… maybe in a way that something is going on between the people in the story, and that there is a problem or many problems and stuff like that...

Int: What about the ending? Are you a fan of the "happy endings" or what?

Kia: There can be a sad ending, of course… But I am a fan of the happy endings, yes! (laughing out loudly)

Int: (laughing) Yes, who does'nt? (laughing)

Kia: (still laughing)

Int: How do you understand the terms 'open' and 'closed' texts?

Kia: Uhm.. in the closed texts… you have to really get all the details and… to understand it and follow it… In the open texts you must make up your own mind, maybe...

Int: Interpret more?

Kia: Yes...

Int: Okay. I see.
        What happens in class before you read a text?

Kia: Before? Uhm... We talk about, for example if there is some basic information about the text, then the teacher read that… Uhm...

Int: Okay. *How* do you read it?

Kia: Uhm… Sometimes we read it in small groups, for each other… Sometimes we read it in pairs or alone...

Int:	So, in which way do you prefer reading a text in class?
Kia:	I… uhm… prefer reading silently by myself.
Int:	Why?
Kia:	Because then I am, I can stay focused and… yeah...
Int:	So, when you read by yourself, in your head, then you can focus more easily?
Kia:	Yes (determined)
Int:	But what do you do most of the time? In class?
Kia:	It is varied… It varies...
Int:	So, when you read the text "A Great Day", do you remember *how* exactly you read that text?
Kia:	We read it in pairs.
Int:	Do you think you would have understood more of it if you read it silently by yourself?
Kia:	Yes, probably (...) It would have been easier to focus then…uhm... You don't get disturbed and focus more on the … uhm...
Int:	*The content?*
Kia:	Yes
Int:	What do you do *after* the reading of the text?
Kia:	Well, I go through the glossary and do the tasks...
Int:	Uhum, I see. Do the tasks help you to understand the text? Make it more meaningful?
Kia:	Yes they do
Int:	Do you do some kind of research? Do you look up words that you cannot find in the glossary list or "google" unknown things? Details?
Kia:	Uhm... no
Int:	No?
Kia:	No
Int:	Do you talk to others about the texts you read in class?
Kia:	Yes, if they are interesting I do...
Int:	If they caught your attention?
Kia:	Yes. If they… if the text made me think so that I wanted to talk… about it...
Int:	I see! Even after class?
Kia:	Uhm… I'm not sure, but it might have happened.
Int:	Oh… I'm not sure if you said you use a dictionary or not… Do you?
Kia:	Oh... Uhmm... Sometimes
Int:	Okay. Do you think that… uhm... when you read a text, a short story for example, - and you read and you look at the words and… Do you think that you do something differently from the others, than the other pupils?

Kia: No. I do not think I do… But if there are things about the text that I do not understand, I read it more closely, and I search for unknown words, and of course, I think about it, but this is what many others do too.

Int: Do you sometimes think about what the texts can mean in a deeper sense? That there can be even symbolic meanings, if you understand what I mean?

Kia: Yes, I think so… This is what is difficult too, when you uhm… when there is something more, and something that you do not understand… or see...But, yes.

Int: Can you give an example of a text with a deeper meaning?

Kia: Yes… It was this… the one we talked...

Int: "A Great Day"

Kia: Yes. I got the feeling that there was a deeper meaning to that text… There were so many hints...

Int: Yes, clues… Yes, in that story there were two men and the one actually ended up killing the other man because of jealousy...

Kia: Yes...

Int: So, you understood that there was a deeper meaning, but you couldn't get it because you had not been able to read the text well enough. Is that right?

Kia: Yes, that's right

Int: Do you like the fact that a text can have a deeper meaning? That it can tell us something? That we can learn from it?

Kia: Yes, I do

Int: Is that why you like books with "a lot of descriptions" as you put it?

Kia: Yes, maybe that is true… Uhm… maybe that is because I can learn from other people's thoughts… and what they have experienced… Yes, I think so…

Int: Uhm… (pause)... Let's see… Can you tell me about a film that you have seen that really interested you? Tell me about the best film you have ever seen!

Kia: Okay! (laughing)... (thinking) Yes. I really like *Anna Karenina.*

Int: Why?

Kia: It is passionate, but it has got this sad ending though… That was a film I liked.

Int: Yes? I have not seen this movie, but I have read the book… It is a really good story! And *Anna Karenina* is really… It's a classic!

Kia: Yes, I actually started reading the novel, but it was too… heavy!

Int: Yes, it is. What do you like about the character, Anna Karenina?

Kia: She really fights! She fights for her love, but it really got into me that she left her child though… That was sad… or… I was a bit angry too… I felt a lot of things, really… But a love that strong that it can make you leave your child. … (pause) That's strong.

Int: What makes "Anna Karenina" such a good movie?

Kia: It was so well made with so many details and good actors… It was beautiful!

Int: Okay… I think we have come to an end here (lauging).

Kia: Okay! (laughing)

Int: Thank you so much for the interview!

Kia: Uhum… (laughing) Bye!

End of interview 5 (37 mins.)

Interview no. 6: Jon

Jon1

Int: Welcome to this interview!

Jon: Thank you!

Int: How would you describe yourself to a person who has never met you before?

Jon: I would first of all tell him that I have a terrible need for attention. I am also a big fan of music…

Those are the most important things to know about me…

Int: (laughing) What is the most important things in your life right now?

Jon: To me it is currently to play music and that I can perform… Like I performed last night at "---" (the name of a youth club/center) ...

Int:	What do you play?
Jon:	I play the guitar.
Int:	So, music is the most important thing in your life as we speak…?
Jon:	Yeah, more or less…?
Int:	That includes listening to music as well, I guess…?
Jon:	Yeah.
Int:	Where do you live?
Jon:	I live in ---.
Int:	What is the name of your old school?
Jon:	I used to go to --- --- (lower secondary school) and before that: --- primary school.
Int:	Why did you choose this specific programme of study?
Jon:	Well, I actually started the music programme here, but I did not fit in with the class and I did not want to sing in the choir. I just didn't like it. (...) So I changed programme. ...but now I regret it, because the people there are so funny and it is too quiet in this class… (laughing a short ironic laughter)
Int:	So you actually regret it now then?
Jon:	Yeah
Int:	Uhm, so my next question is: How do you like school?
Jon:	It's boring.
Int:	That's it?
Jon:	Yeah
Int:	Has your attitude to school changed? ...from earlier?
Jon:	Well, I have noticed that the math has become a lot harder...
Int:	So you find school boring right now?
Jon:	Yeah. That sums it up.
Int:	And now I want to ask you about the English classes. How do you like English?
Jon:	As a class it is actually the most boring right now because there is absolutely no new to learn… (...) maybe a new word now and then...
Int:	Uhum
Jon:	But usually it's just things I've known for several years… It is basically just repetition. Who and which, is and are… Those sorts of things...
Int:	Is there nothing new at all?
Jon:	No
Int:	Are there something in particular that you like about it?
Jon:	No, not actually.
Int:	So once again: What comes to your mind when I say "English class"?

Jon: Sleeping

Int: Sleeping? Do you sleep during class?

Jon: No, but I'm very tempted to (laughing a bit)

Int: I see. Uhm… Can you tell me about a memorable experience related to the English subject? It can be a good one or a bad one, from now or earlier…?

Jon: Well, I haven't been so fortunate to have many positive experiences… I do not remember much… But when I was with the music class… Uhm, we had this presentation about South-Africa… That's the only thing I can think of...

Int: What was it with that that you liked?

Jon: I don't… remember. I honestly don't remember (laughing)

Int: But you do remember it? As something good? A positive experience?

Jon: Yeah. Kind of.

Int: Do you think you remember it because it was a new school and new environment?

Jon: Most likely, yes.

Int: Have you got another memorable experience? From earlier, - when you first started learning English?

Jon: I remember that I mainly learned English by playing 'Pokemon' on my 'GameBoy' (laughing)

Int: (laughing) I see! That is how you learnt the basics?

Jon: Yeah.

Int: Do you get help and guidance when you need it?

Jon: No, I don't really ask.

Int: You do not want help?

Jon: No, I don't think I need it.

Int: No. Okay.

         Now over to reading literature and fiction. Is that okay?

Jon: Okay!

Int: Can you tell me a little bit about books and reading. What kind of books do you like? What was the first fictional text, or book, you read in English and so on…?

Jon: I like reading fantasy novels and science fiction and stuff… I remember reading lots of fantasy and adventure series… I currently read "Percy Jackson and the Olympians" which is a fantasy novel in a series of four… (sounding very enthusiastic) It is about children who are half gods, like one of their parents is like a Greek god and the other one is a human being, and these children are spending their time fighting monsters. It is really exciting and you also learn a lot about mythology and stuff, although it is just fiction of course... (laughing)

Int: Oh! I see! You really like these books? Reading them?

Jon: Oh, yes.

Int: What is the author called? Do you remember?

Jon: Uhm… Rick Riordan...

Int: An American author?

Jon: I think he is American...

Int: Why do you think you fancy these books?

Jon: I ,like mythology and the real world meets the fantastic… In a way… It is a great adventure.

Int: What else do you read?

Jon: I read a lot of comics on the internet.

Int: What kind of comics?

Jon: It is kind of varied… It is much in the sci-fi genre… Angels and demons and humans and all kinds of fantastic creatures… It is very varied, actually

Int: Would you say that you seek to another universe or existence in literature, for excitement?

Jon: Yeah.

Int: Do you learn something as well?

Jon: Yeah. I learn how to write better, I think. More creative...

Int: Uhum! Does this reading involve you emotionally? Can you describe how you feel when you read something you like?

Jon: Yeah, I have cried over several books… (laughing) So, yeah! I get very involved.

Int: What about the texts you read in English class? What are they like?

Jon: Oh… They're just "plain"...

Int: What do you mean?

Jon: Uhm. Like, I don't know… They're just not interesting at all!

Int: Can you try to describe one then? A typical "English class text"?

Jon: It starts off usually about someone, like last time we read this text about Obama… and how earlier presidents had… Oh. I don't know… It's just… I cannot focus on them...

Int: So, the texts you read in class are most likely factual texts?

Jon: Yes.

Int: So… This is kind of an obvious question, but: Can you tell me the difference between 'fact' and 'fiction'?

Jon: Well, 'fact' is real in a sense… They describe reality, while 'fiction' is fantasy or made-up, although there can be traces of reality in them, of course… It could have happened, of course… Like we have the dragons, for example, as they are described in different cultures, but there's no evidence of them...

Int: What about the literary texts you read in English class? What are they like?

Jon: Uhm...

Int: The fictional texts

Jon: Uhm… in the school books?

Int:	Yes, the ones you read in class. In the textbook.
Jon:	I think the most of them, although we do not read that many… But they are written in a way so that they are easily read by most people...
Int:	So… are these texts short stories? Poems?
Jon:	I don't think we have read any poems, but usually stories, yes… I don't pay attention. These texts are boring and not challenging at all.
Int:	What about poems? Do you like poems?
Jon:	I like some… Like funny poems… which are comic… that I find on the Internet.
Int:	Who selects the texts that you read at school, and why do you think these texts are selected?
Jon:	Well, the teacher selects the texts and I have no idea why?
Int:	You have no idea?
Jon:	It's just to get through the curriculum, I guess...
Int:	Okay. Uhm… (...) Can you tell me about a text you remember well? Even though you do not pay much attention to the texts you are supposed to read in English class, … can you still try to remember?
Jon:	Well, we had to re-enact a text or dramatize a story we read in primary school or lower secondary school once… It was about a princess and a prince and a troll… And the princess wasn't allowed to marry the prince, because her parents would not allow her to, so they hired the troll to protect her, and the princess starved herself to death, I think...
Int:	Okay, so you remember that one? Because you were allowed to re-enact it?
Jon:	Yeah! I like acting.
Int:	So, if you were to do more of that… Activities in class involving drama and role plays…?
Jon:	Yes, it depends. If people are willing to commit themselves to the acting…!
Int:	Yes! I see what you mean. It's not fun at all if people are reluctant in these kinds of activities...
Jon:	No
Int:	What about films? Do you like watching films?
Jon:	Well, I watch a lot of series… I just finished watching "Sherlock"
Int:	Oh! I like that series...
Jon:	Yeah. It's good.
Jon:	I just started one called "Supernatural"
Int:	So, you prefer TV-series instead of films?
Jon:	Yeah… I like watching episodes of fifty minutes or an hour… It is easier too…
Int:	Why do you think many people nowadays prefer the TV-series, especially now when they can

be streamed online, and you can watch as many episodes after one another as you like?

Jon: (... mumbling) (impossible to hear the answer here)

        (...)

Int: Uhm… Can you tell me about a movie, or film… you have watched in English class, - that you liked?

Jon: I don't think we have seen one… Not that I can remember, anyway...

Int: What about in your spare time?

Jon: I remember a movie called "Death proof"...

Int: Why is that a good movie, you think?

Jon: I don't know… People died… (laughing) I don't know, I just liked it… I had to watch it one more time, because I wanted to get all the details that I had missed the first time… A lot of movies don't make sense the first time you watch them… The good ones… they… They make you want to understand…

Int: In your opinion, - does this go for reading books as well? Re-reading? Getting all the details in order to make meaning?

Jon: I am very focused when I read books, so it is impossible for me to read in class, because everyone is very "chatty"... When there is quiet I can focus, something which is very important to me...

Int: Reading is a completely different activity than watching a film, right? When you read you can adjust the pace and...

Jon: Yeah… I just focus really hard when I read. So, I get it all...

Int: When you read like you just described… Uhm… Quietly in you room, undisturbed… What is important to keep your attention? Why do you fancy these books you've described?

Jon: I guess I sympathize with the characters… They're interesting...

Int: Are these characters good or bad?

Jon: They're mainly good...

Int: And they try to do what is good?

Jon: Yes.

Int: Can you describe one of these characters? ... from "Percy Jackson" for instance?

Jon: Yes, one of them is called Leo Valdez, he's from Mexico… and he always try to see the best in everything, he's funny and keeps the mood up! (laughing)

Int: Is he one of the protagonists? One of the main persons? The good ones?

Jon:	Yes, he is.
Int:	Is there, or are there, any antagonists as well in this series?
Jon:	Uhm...
Int:	Like "a bad" person or a group of bad persons?
Jon:	Yes, we have the Roman and/or Greek gods or semi-gods, who are not always good, and there are the monsters…
Int:	(...)
Jon:	Like the children, the main characters… some of them cooperate with the gods, but no one does co-operate with the monsters...
Int:	Do you think that there is one "basic story" or a handful … a few "standard stories" or main stories that all other stories are based on, that they are versions of the same story?
Jon:	Well… I am thinking about it...
Int:	What are the main or basic ingredients in a story… (...) which we can find in so many stories?
Jon:	Well, there are always the characters… creatures… often groups of creatures… there is always an impending danger and a limited time limit… You very often have this group of "good" characters, or at least one good character… who tries to do good… To save the world. And you have some "bad" characters...
Int:	An antagonist… antagonists…
Jon:	Yeah… and the antagonists are trying to prevent the good ones from succeeding…
Int:	Yeah right! Interesting… Is this the case in the stories you refer to? The Percy Jackson books for instance?
Jon:	(laughing) Yes…It worked well with "The Lord of the Rings" and "Mortal Engines" too. So basically, yes… but it's very complicated at times, though (laughing).
Int:	Yes, of course… (laughing) Why do you think stories like the ones we are currently talking about fascinate us?
Jon:	I don't know… It's just entertaining!
Int:	Entertainment and an escape from reality… Is that all it is?
Jon:	Well, if you look at the world… and history for example, you could say that it has happened many times… Take the Cold War for example…
Int:	Uhum. I see, exactly...
Jon:	They had like a certain time limit. If the US had attacked Cuba we probably would have seen a nuclear war...
Int:	Are there any impending dangers in the world as we speak, you think?
Jon:	I'm not that into the media, but just recently… I think Russia invaded the Ukraine or something...

Int: Right! They did.

        What do you think? Can stories like these, fictional texts, help us understand the world we live in?

Jon: I think they can, but I don't think about what I can learn from the books… I just read them…

Jon2

Int: …Okay! Good.

        Back to the classroom! ...English class...What happens in class before reading a text? And while, and after?

Jon: It starts off with the teacher telling us what to do… Like she writes what we are about to do on the white board… What to read and a few exercises… And… sometimes I talk a little bit to the person sitting next to me...

Int: about the text or the suggested activities?

Jon: Yes, and sometimes we work in pairs and sometimes it is individual work...

Int: Let me ask you: How do you prefer to read texts in class? ...In pairs, the teacher reading it or individually?

Jon: I prefer reading in pairs, at least when we can, - because I like talking...

Int: Can you easily grasp the text when you read in pairs? You stay focused?

Jon: Yeah… I usually read a bit ahead of what I am about to read...and the same goes for the part my peer is reading… So, yeah...the texts are not that difficult...

Int: Do you like listening to other people reading?

Jon: Yeah, but mostly I like talking… So...

Int: You like to communicate then, don't you?

Jon: Not much, really...

Int: But reading? That you like?

Jon: Yeah.

Int: Uhm, what do you do after reading the text?

Jon: I finish the exercises and doodle around in the books...

Int: Okay… So, these exercises, what are they like?

Jon: They are usually just repetition of "is" and "are"...That's when you will have around twenty sentences and where you are supposed to just put in is and are...

Int: Do you learn something from doing these exercises? Do your writing improve?

Jon: I already know this, so no...

Int: Is there an alternative task or something? Something you can do instead?

Jon: No, when I'm done there is nothing more… (laughter)

Int: Could you have done something else instead...you think?

Jon: No… I asked my teacher once, and she just gave me a new set of similar exercises...

Int: Oh? Okay…

        Would you like to talk or write more about the text or the topic you've worked with instead of filling in these exercices?

Jon: Well, it hasn't worked well earlier...

Int: Why not?

Jon: Well if I ask a question about the text, then the other one doesn't remember much of the text and cannot answer… so...

Int: I see… You are at different levels...and that makes it difficult?

Jon: Uhum… Like in tenth grade my teacher literally said to me that she had no more she could teach me… (laughing) So I got to go out from the classroom and study on my own… together with a few others...

Int: So what did you do then?

Jon: We didn't do much at all, we just sat there and made jokes about ...

Int: So the teacher said that she had nothing more to teach you?

Jon: Yeah.

Int: Uhm… How did that make you feel?

Jon: I don't know...Flattered?

Int: Oh, really? (laughing) So you liked it, but do you think it is true?

Jon: Well, she certainly hadn't got anything more to teach me…! I can definitely learn much more, but I do not believe teachers have anything more to teach me… I learn more by talking to English speaking people, for example… By communicating on the internet and so on...

Int: In your opinion, is the English classes too much based on reading and doing exercises and things like that?

Jon: That's just about anything we really do in class… We did have these books we were supposed to read, but I finished reading it a long time ago… But classes are usually just read the text, do the exercises and then we're done… So… Did I just miss the question?

Int: No. No you didn't. So, what you say is that you are bored in English class, right?

Jon: Yes.

Int: Has it been like this for a long time?

Jon: For as long as I can remember.

Int: I see. But next year you do not have to have English...

Jon: No, but I did choose it anyway. Hopefully "International English" will be, at least a little bit, interesting… Hopefully I will actually use what I know...

Int: I hope so!

         Let's see… Have you ever been taught *how* to read a literary text at school?

Jon: You mean like analyzing a text?

Int: Well, yes...

Jon: We have talked about it, yes… But I do not use it. I don't like overcomplicating things. I just like reading the text.

Int: Don't you think it could help you to widen your perspectives on the text? Like, if you really went "under the surface" to a larger extent? That you could make more out of it?

Jon: Well… Uhm… It could… I guess so... at least some texts...

Int: I tend to think that some texts can be read in very many ways, and that they can mean many different things, and that there really are no obvious answers… These texts require time and thinking...in order to make sense… Do you understand what I mean? I, at least, need to really dig into it in order to find some deeper meaning...and sometimes you have to search in mythology or in the Bible even, to really understand it...

Jon: Yeah. I know… That can be really exciting, like especially if you can discuss it with somebody… (eagerly) You know that Shakespeare really had a lot of "Yo mama jokes" hidden in his dialogues… That kind of stuff interests me...

Int: Yes! Exactly!

Jon: Well, or you can find out that the most intelligent line is just another penis joke...

Int: Oh, really?

Jon: "Some are born with greatness, some achieve greatness and others have greatness within them…"

Int: (laughing) Yes, I get it. Great literary texts can have hidden messages then, or at least double meanings… (laughing) We are going to stop quite soon. It's been very interesting talking to you!

Jon: Thanks.

Int: Do you sometimes look for symbols in literary text? That some things can have a special meaning? Or meanings?

Jon: I really don't think much about things like that…

Int: Okay. That's all! Thank you for the interview!

End of interview 6 (44,5 mins.)

Interview no. 7: Adan

Adan1

Int: Hello! What is your name?

Adan: My name is ---.

Int: First of all, let me ask you: How would you describe yourself as a person to someone who has never met you before?

Adan: How would I describe myself… Uhm… like appearance?... I'm dark blond…. white skin… Uhm… I'm a couple of centimetres shorter than average… Uhm… That's me. I get a lot of comments about my eyebrows… That they are … Uhm… *apparent?*

Int: Like… characteristic or distinctive?

Adan: Yes, I'm sorry… My face is slim… Otherwise than that… I *am* slim… Otherwise….

Int: What about you as a *person*?

Adan: Myself as a person?

Int: Yes, how do you think people would describe you?

Adan: I think they would describe me as… unusual, - hopefully in a good way… Uhm… A bit weird at times, but mostly that I am fairly easy to amuse… uhm... as long as I do not see why I shouldn't laugh at things, unless it is something insulting. I guess many people would say that I am very good at school… that…(...) Well simply that I'm very lucky. I learn pretty easily...not that I really deserve it… Uh… because I… in many cases I do not really work - oh, sorry… that was almost "walk", work… That is also a characteristic that also the school has noticed… Obviously since this is school... Uhm… Other than that… I'm not really sure...

Int: Uhum. My next question is: What is the most important thing in your life right now?

Adan: The most important thing… (thinking)...

Int: Or *things*. It could be things as well!

Adan: Hum! Hard question… My friends, because friends are very important to me. Besides from that… Being a teenager - finding yourself - becoming what you want… I think that's mostly it!

Int: Uhum. Good!

Where do you live?

Adan: I live around a hundred meters from this room. Here in ---.

Int: (small laughter) I see. What is the name of your old school? Where did you go to school before?

Adan: Uhm.. --- Lower Secondary School.

Int: Uhum! Why did you choose this specific programme of study?

Adan: Well, I had two alternatives that tempted me...

Int: Yes…?

Adan: That was this one… which is general studies with lots of theory and stuff… The other one was music… Music is because I am a fairly "musical" (stressing the word) person… So that seemed very fun but I am thinking of a higher career… Like an architect or something… So...

Int: Uhm… How do you like school?

Adan: Well… (thinking) It's okay… like...the people are nice and such...Uhm… The courses are not necessarily that inspiring all the time… because it is a little bit boring, I have to admit... But otherwise it's nice!

Int: Aha!Uhm… Has it changed? The way you feel about school... If you can think or look back a few years?

Adan: Uh… It has definitely changed since elementary school...Uhm… I'm not sure if it has changed after that… I have always had to get good grades (...)...

Int: Are you happy at school?

Adan: Happy? … Well, I'm content, but I'm not ecstatic about school, - I am laughing a lot, but that's not because of school, - that's because of the people.. (laughing)

Int: (laughing) I understand. Now I want us to talk about the English subject...

Adan: Uhum!

Int: How do you like English in general? As a subject?

Adan: As a subject? Well I definitely prefer it, - you know… as one of the three main subjects Norwegian, Mathematics and English… Well, I don't know, it's just something about the … thing that it's the biggest language in the world… I don't know… It t inspires me a lot more than for example Norwegian, which is fairly boring… Uh… Not that I feel like dropping out of Norwegian, it's just that English inspires me a lot more!

Int: Uhum! I see. What comes to your mind when I say "English class"?

Adan: English class? What comes to my mind is sitting in the back of the classroom, reading a text, doing the exercises and talk a little English...

Int: Uhum! Are there some things in particular that you like about the subject?

Adan: Well, it's speaking English - writing it, instead of writing in other languages...or Norwegian… because I talk and write that all the time… That's mostly it, and of course learning new words…that's not always that exciting, but I like it anyway because I like to extend my vocabulary anyway, so...

Int: I see. And it makes you think of new things as well? When you learn new words?

Adan: Well, it... uhm... certainly makes more connections...in a way...between many of the words when I learn new words… But mostly it is e*xpanding.* That's mostly the way I think of it.

Int: Yes. I understand.
Uhm… It's just a… when we talk about words… and building up and expanding your vocabulary... Do you think of words as translations of Norwegian words or do you think of them as something unique, as unique signs in the new language (referring to English)?

Adan: I'd say that they are unique… Because many words … they don't have direct translations, and those that have… also have several meanings, so… therefore I would not say that they are direct translations.

Int: So, what are they then?

Adan: They are expressions of… whatever!

Int: Of something…?

Adan: Of something, someone… anything , really...

Int: Do you think that different languages have different world views? Do you understand what I mean?

Adan: I...think I do… Yes I think they do. Yes…. because there are differences...if you think about it… I cannot think of any right now but yes.

Int: Uhm... Okay. Can you describe a memorable experience related to the English subject? (caughing) Oh, sorry. Something you remember well for some reason...something extra-ordinary?

Adan: Extraordinary? Uhm…

Int: A nice experience?

Adan: (laughing a short laughter) There was… in one way I do not like to talk about it, because I feel like I'm braging… Uhm…

Int: It doesn't matter… You can 'brag' (humorously)
(…)

Adan: Well we had this student at our school. She was not a replacement, just a student… In our

class... She was there in the English classes to teach us English...and in her last class we had this competition between the boys and the girls, and we had this list of glossary that we practiced on… to learn… Afterwards she would say the words, one in English and one in Norwegian, and one girl and one boy were to go to the whiteboard to write the translation… Uhm...correctly...and we beat the girls, and I did really well. So… (laughing) I knew all the words, and in the end she...the teacher... student had to stop me… And… that was fun because they were all cheering and… That was a nice experience… Because they had me we did win…(embarrassed) Uhum… (laughing)

Int: This is something you remember well…?

Adan: Yes…

Int: Good!

Int: Do you get help and guidance when you need it?

Adan: Well, yeah...

Int: Do you want help?

Adan: It's not always that I asked for it… If I get back a text I always ask about it… But normally there are many small questions that I have or that just pop up in my head...that I don't normally ask because... Oh, it's not relevant!

Int: I see.

(…)

I now want to ask you a little bit about literature and about reading fiction… Okay? And… I just want you to tell me a little bit about books and reading in general… For example what kinds of books you like and … read… both in Norwegian and in English… or other languages… The first book you read in English and so on...

Adan: Well… About the first book I read I have no clue. I don't remember. But I like to read! Uhm… I have found out that the things I read, I LIKE to read… I enjoy it, somehow...

Int: Uhum… (in an encouraging tone)

Adan: Uhm, so that's probably a good thing. Otherwise…?

I do at times search up non-fictional texts, that is when I , for example, am preparing for a presentation… in whatever subject... then I look for information in English, simply because I find it more informative than Norwegian texts… Uhm... Fiction! (the pitch indicating a shift of topic) I have very often liked the fantasy books, - the great ones… Like "Harry Potter" and "Lord of the Rings", - I haven't read "Lord of the Rings" in English, though - but I'm going to do it sometime… "The Game of Thrones"...definitely!

Int: In English?

Adan: In English, yes. I once had "The Game of Thrones" in Norwegian in one hand and in English in the other and I was appalled by the Norwegian one, simply because it was not good to

read… I don't know… Maybe the translation wasn't that bad after all, but maybe because I was so used to read in English, - and just… the magnificence of the English one just wasn't there, so there was a big difference. The language was kind of "cheesy" in Norwegian, so...

Int: What you're saying is that it gives you a totally different reading experience? There is a great distinction and you prefer reading books in this genre in English?

Adan: Yes. When thinking about it, I believe that reading it in English makes it less boring… if it was in Norwegian then I would think "Well, this is just little Norway, - why should I take this seriously?" For some reason this is how I feel about it.

Int: Uhum. I think I understand. Okay.

        Can you think of having read an English speaking fictional text, - longer text, at school?

Adan: At school...like as I'm assigned to do it?

Int: Yes

Adan: Well we had this reading project, I but don't know it that counts… If it does then I have read a lot. Otherwise than that… There are simply texts that are in the textbooks...

Int: Okay… Uh… but you have been reading a book in English this year?

Adan: This year…? I...

Int: This *project* you were talking about?

Adan: I must admit that I haven't read that much this year… It's periodical… Uhm… periodically, sorry… Uhm, and for example when I got the "Game of Thrones"-books… of about five thousand pages… Uhm… then I read them out quite quickly...

Int: (laughing quietly)

Adan: ...apart from that I have (... cannot hear the word)...periods when I only read like "Facebook" and (... cannot hear)... This project… I haven't really been that into it...or that interested really…Because it is *class*. I have lots of people sitting there around me, and I don't feel like reading then...

Int: I understand. Mmm…(thinking) What types of texts do you read in English class this year? What are they like?

Adan: These texts? Like the texts in the textbook?

Int: Yes...Or other texts, - not from the textbook, that you have read!

Adan: No… I don't think I have read other texts than the ones...in the textbook… Uhm... They are often… like a factual text...or parts of a novel or something… and… I have found that often … they are not that inspiring… They are just English texts, that's all. It was more of that before, now some are a bit more interesting, but it was like: reading English is fun, but reading English in textbooks: incredibly boring.

Int: You mentioned that some of these texts were excerpts from a novel, for example...

Adan: Yes...

Int: How do you feel about that?

Adan: Well...They often are… or they are a lot more interesting to read than the factual texts… but somehow I do *not* like it, because when I want to read a book...or a text - I want to read the whole thing and not just a small excerpt

Int: Uhum (agreeing)

Adan: And I cannot possibly read every single book that is mentioned, so in a way it is all dissatisfying, but it's okay I guess...

Int: Do you read any short stories, - like complete texts?

Adan: Yeah...

Int: What about poems? Do you read any of them?

Adan: Poems? Yes, there are poems, - but I don't usually like them...they're...

Int: They're not your...cup of tea? (with a slightly laughing voice)

Adan: No, they are not...

Int: Okay… Well, this is perhaps a difficult question, - but if you were to choose between a short story and an excerpt from a novel… Which one would you prefer...to read?

Adan: I think, - like if it had been like in a normal case, I would have preferred to read the short story, I think. But maybe, if it was this one time, then maybe I would have preferred the excerpt, or just read the whole novel as well. But… I cannot read every novel in the world, so...Normally, I would go for the short story.

Int: Uhm… Who selects the texts that you read in English class and why do you think *these texts* are picked out?

Adan: Who selects them?... The authors of the textbooks… I don't know who they are. We do not read *all* the texts, so I guess the teacher is in it as well! Why they chose it? Well, I guess they are the texts most relevant to the subject… (saying it like it is a question)

Int: Can you tell me a little bit about a text that you remember well from the English subject this year? Or from lower secondary?

Adan: Well, there was this one text...I think...it didn't say, but… I think it was in New Zealand or Australia... These two guys they went fishing in a dinghy...Well, it was quite well written and it was interesting in that way because there were a lot of unclear things that you just had to think about… like figure out… And eventually you realized that the one guy just left the other in the middle of a storm … out on a reef, and indirectly killed him... And it was remarkable because of that and because of how it was written.

Int: Uhum! (agreeing) Could you try to *describe* how it was written?

Adan: Hm… Well… There weren't a lot of details… It was telling what was happening, and you couldn't know what anyone was thinking, it was just describing what you would see in a movie...

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Int: ...and what they were saying?

Adan: Yes, a bit of what they were saying and what they were doing, but not too much of that… Not that many descriptions… So it was… lots of open space for thinking… And I just...

Int: So, you liked that?

Adan: Yes… I liked that that time, I wouldn't like it if it was like that all the time… But… like… a couple of times… if it is unusual, like here… then I like it.

Int: Yes. Could you…? Because there were two main persons there, so to speak… Two male protagonists… Cause I remember, because it was *A Great Day*, wasn't it?

Adan: Yes

Int: One of them… Uh… One of them was a kind of a… small man, smaller than the other, - or described that way anyway… and he had a lot of envy for the other...

Adan: Yes...

Int: Who saw things and observed…? From which point of view was the story told or *narrated?*

Adan: I believe it was the little guy...

Int: Did that help make the story interesting to read?

Adan: Well, I think that made it more intriguing… Because if I read it from the big guy's point of view, then it would just… have been dramatic and that he died as a hero and all… Because of the way it was written, you got…- I don't know… more *insight…* and because so little was revealed... Yes, it all was more exciting because of this.

Int: Yeah. I think so too… It brings it down to a psychological level, right?

Adan: Yeah.

Int: Uhm… Did you talk about the story… in class… after the reading of it?

Adan: Well, yes. We were supposed to… Uhm… So we did! We had these tasks first, it was kind of an analysis…

Int: In the book?

Adan: Yes, it's normally all in the book…

Int: I see, so you analyzed it and then you talked about it… What did you talk about, then?

Adan: We talked about what we thought the different signs meant, and we talked about why they did what they did...

Int: Uhum. I see. Do you remember any of these signs?

Adan: I don't remember quite clearly, but I remember that it was indicated that the small one was very envious at the bigger guy and some indications of that he actually had planned it all, and that he planned leaving him there to die.

Int: Did all this have anything to do with the weather?

Adan: Well, yeah (sighing)... the weather was… it showed the, I don't know, the contrasts and also the feelings… Because it was at first sunny… and very clear and beautiful and everything, and when the conflict started it became all grey and then there was a storm, so...it was… the weather definitely played an important part.

Int: Uhum! … Would you say that the story had an open ending or a closed ending? How would you describe the way the story ended?

Adan: I'm not sure if I would have said either an open or closed, because it was obvious what *had* happened, so you could say that it was set… or closed, but on the other hand… (as if thinking) ...we do not know exactly what happened … so in a way it was open… You can… with some thinking you can understand it all, so it was not totally open for interpretation… It wasn't open but it wasn't closed either.

Int: Uhum. Good. I see.

        Now I want to talk about films that you have watched and worked with in class… Because I know that you have watched some… in English class...

Adan: Uhum… (agreeing)

Int: Uhm. Can you tell me about one of them?

Adan: Uhm... Yes… (thinking and talking to himself) was *Blood Diamond* in English? Uhm...

Int: "*Blood Diamond*"?

Adan: Yes, we watched that one, but I am not sure if it was in English class... It might have been in another subject...

Int: In social studies?

Adan: Yeah… Uhm… Do you know which films we've watched?

Int: Well, yes, you have seen *Crash*

Adan: Yes, *Crash* - we watched that one!

Int: And *In the Name of the Father*?

Adan: Yes!

Int: The one about the conflict in Northern Ireland, the IRA and so on...

Adan: Yes, right.

Int: You could tell me about one of these if you want…?

Adan: Well, *Crash* then, since that was the most recent...We had about stereotypes and "Crash" showed a lot of stereotypes and stereotyping, and it described a crash between these stereotypes and people that *believed* in stereotypes… and also the ones who seemingly were like "pictured" stereotypes, but not really. They just seemed like it and they...showed another side of themselves, and I think that *that* was what the film wanted to show us, that there *are* stereotypes, - and there are *not*... It made me realize that there may be these stereotypes, but maybe and alot of times these preconceptions… that we have... might be totally WRONG. And it also shows the conflicts, because we create them! So, it was a quite symbolic film.

Int: Uhum! Was it a good film? You think?

Adan: Uhm.. I think it was above average. It was not the best one I've seen, - it wasn't exciting enough to be that, but I have definitely seen worse (laughing).

Int: How would you compare watching films to reading books, - fiction… novels?

Adan: Well, it depends very much on the novel… I think, because "a film is a film" - kind of… and books can be so much more… so different, because you can choose to just read it straight forward… and you can go forth and back in time, like in "A Great Day" - because of the way it is written, you can fill in the missing information and think "what to see", and in a film you cannot cut out important details. You cannot do that, so… So in that way I would say that it depends, because movies can be a lot more interesting, because it appeals to a lot more of your senses, but it can also be… not… like that, because in a book you often will get more into the universe which it (the book) explains…like you can discover it yourself…in a way…

Int: Yes, would you say that in a book or in a novel there is a bigger room for interpretation?

Adan: I would say that in most cases, yes, - that is right.

Int: Uhum!

Adan: Because as I said: In a film you "see" everything, as for the novel you "read" it differently, - a bit more of a… We read it with our eyes, but we imagine different things.

Int: Unique experience?

Adan: Well, yes … perhaps

Int: Uhm, when you read a book, do you think you read it – or experience it – differently than other people? … people at your own age, for example… Like the books you read for entertainment, for example...?

Adan: Well, I think so, but not that there would be any extreme differences. But yeah, I think I would read it a bit differently, simply because of my experiences.

Int: Yes (…) And the way you get involved with the different characters? That would be different too?

Adan: Yeah, I believe so… and … like in "Game of Thrones" everything is so incredibly complicated, I believe it is more realistic, because in most stories there are the bad guys and the good guys, but in Game of Thrones there are no bad or good, it is just that we have different interests…

Int: So, they can be both…?

Adan: Yeah, I mean you can be both, you can go from one to the other… it just all depends, and we all have our reasons for what we do. And sometimes we do crazy things. What is so special for GT is that some characters you hate, like I think most people do…

Int: You mean the readers, right?

Adan: Yes, but after a while, because I have read all of the books, you kind of feel sympathy for most of them, even those that go around and kill everyone… I kind of understand because everything is complicated, and I in a way more understand why people do the things they do and I think that it has made me more tolerant to other people and that even though they did *that,* it does not necessarily mean that they *meant* that or are that, but that they had their own reasons for doing what they did…

Adan: So, in that way reading a lot of these books can give perspectives and learning, and not only be entertainment and for fun.

Int: Yes, good! So this is a good reason for reading books…?

Adan: Yes, I would say that most books and films and series…they have a message… many of them quite simplified, but I believe some give more than others…

Int: Uhum… And maybe you wouldn't like it that much if it didn't give you something to think about, or learn… about people, about society, yourself…

Adan: Well, sometimes I would just prefer to keep it simple, but mostly I would say that you are correct because why should I spend my time on something that doesn't give me anything at all? That isn't meaningful? Okay, that sounds a bit… (laughing)

Int: (laughing)

Adan2

Int: Okay. Now I want us to talk a little bit about how you approach a literary text. How you go into it, how you start reading it… How you do it, ok?

So, just to summarize what you already have said, because you have told me a lot about this already…

What is a good literary text to you? A good fictional text?

Adan: A good text like that would be a story that gave me an emotion, it can be that I get sad or angry or whatever… If it engages me, then it's good.

Int: I see. What is important to keep you interested as you start reading a story?

Adan: Well, it cannot be too repetitive, because then it gets boring. If it is, then it has to give something in a good way, and I kind of need to learn something. If it is just all the same all the time I don't think I would be bothered…

Int: Uhum. (…) If you think about English class… What happens in class before, while and after you read a literary textbook text?

Adan: Well, before we are told what to do, so I wait for the teacher to stop talking, so that I can start reading the text. During reading the text I read the text, and I … I guess I unconsciously am going back and forth, with some exceptions – I guess -I think back and forth. Uh… And then we, or at least I, do the exercises and…

Int: And … How are they like these exercises? Do they help you to understand the text, the process, the content?

Adan: Uh… Sometimes that might be right, but other times not, because if, or when I am not interested in the text, then doing the exercises is something I do because I'm forced…but it can be that they help me, because if I am really interested in the text, then the exercises are not needed at all. So, since I am not always that interested, then doing the task actually helps.

Int: So, they are helpful then?

Adan: In a way… (laughing)

Int: (laughing) uhm… How do you prefer to read the text? Which way…? Because there are different ways to do it, right? You can read in pairs, read alone, listen to a tape…

Adan: Uh… If it is very long, then I prefer to read it alone. Uh… I do not like to have it read up, like if it's on a CD or anything, because then he or she reads it in their own tempo, and that is often very slow… uh… and then I just sit there and…wait for them to come to the end, or that I have already read it and then I have to wait for them to stop. I would perhaps want to have a second look at things, but then I really can't because their voice is really bugging me…

Int: Uhum…

Adan: And, I guess texts can be read in class

Int: Like in turns… out loud…?

Adan: Yes, but then the text must be very short I think… because if that goes on forever, then that becomes incredibly boring… It is ok if the teacher just say like "can you read that", like just a paragraph or something…

Int: Uhum, I see. Does this way of reading allow you to really grasp the text? Or…

Adan: Well, I think that the teachers subconsciously think that by doing it that way we will remember more, but…sometimes… it's like the teenager in me wants to say that this doesn't really help at all, but I think it *can* sometimes work. But not overly much, really… If I read it myself, and then read parts of it over again, then that is perhaps more than enough…

Int: Uhum. What about the teacher commenting on things in the text… or… yeah… commenting while you read? Is that a good thing or a bad thing?

Adan: I don't like it, like you mean when we read quietly?

Int: No! I mean like when you read out loud, sorry I was a bit unclear…

Adan: That is not too bad… Of course if she, if it's a 'she', interrupts all the time, that's not good, but if it is to inform us about something important… then I think that is good, because we do not always understand, so if it can help us understand what this actually is… Then I believe that is good, as long as it is not too much.

Int: Uhum, yes I understand… (…) If you are going to read a text with your partner… uh… your side mate… uh…or if you are going to do the questions, like orally… with this side mate. What is your role like then?

Adan: Well, when we talk about it is either me talking or we are co-operating… But often when we are working with it [the literary text] it is mostly like someone asking… "What's the answer on 'B'…", so …and that's a bit annoying, and I'm not quite sure if I should do it because of their own learning, but I do it anyway…

Int: (laughing silently) …so to 'help them'…

Adan: Yeah…

Int: Uhmm… Have you ever been taught to read a textbook literary text, like a short story or… a poem or even a factual text…?

Adan: Well, I have been given hints…like "you maybe should do it like this, or you might think about that…" but I'm not sure if that has helped *me*… It might help some, but I think that I can do it quite fine by myself…

Int: Uhum. So… You are saying that you have been taught how to do this, but you haven't really…

Adan: Yes, I haven't really listened to it.

Int: Do you often go searching for symbols or metaphors… or do you become aware of these things as you read?

Adan: Well, I hardly ever – if I'm not told to – search for them, but mostly I find them either way… because usually they are easy to spot and usually I make the connections… I don't dwell on it, I just think and "oh", and then I continue…

Int: Okay, I think we are going to stop this interview quite soon, because you have answered very many of my questions… But, I want to ask you… When you work with a text in English class, as we have already talked about… Do you do something in a different way than the others,

you think? Do you have any ways of doing things… like looking up words, connecting the text thematically or something to other texts you have read or do you do some kind of research…? (laughing shortly)… I know this is difficult to answer, but try to describe…

Adan: Well, if there is any glossary, then I check them out and check if I know them or any of them already… and then I read the text, and *read* it… And in most cases I think I understand it like it's meant to… like I'm meant to… and that's not always fun when I will have to do thirty exercises afterwards… uhm… I don't know if I do something else differently… It can be that my mind is built up differently, of course… but…

Int: Well… Okay. Thank you. Thank you for this interview!

Adan: Oh, you're welcome.

End of interview 7 (48 mins.)

These are the tasks and activities which precede and follow the three literary texts referred to in the interviews:

"A Great Day":

Pre-reading task:

- What is your idea of a great day?
- Based on the title and the picture, what do you think this story is about?

PRE-READING
What is your idea of a great day?
Based on the title and the picture,
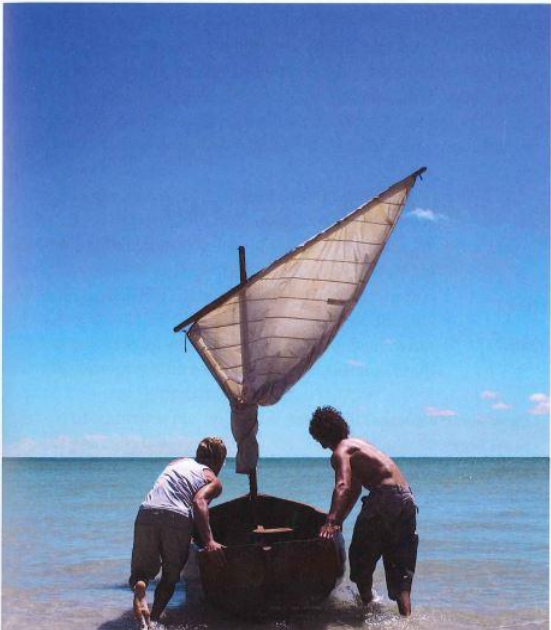what do you think this story is about?

A Great Day

It was beginning to get light when Ken knocked on the door of Fred's bach.
Are you up? he said
Fred called out that he was, and in a moment he opened the door
Just finished my breakfast, he said. We'd better get moving.
It didn't take long. The bach was right on the edge of the beach, and they got the dinghy on to Ken's back and he carried it down the beach, and Fred followed with the gear. Ken was big enough to make light work of the dinghy but it was all Fred could do to manage the gear. There wasn't much of him and he goddamned the gear every few yards he went.
The tide was well over half-way out, and the sea was absolutely flat without even a ripple breaking on the sand. Except for some seagulls that walked on the sand and made broad-arrow marks where they walked there wasn't a single thing moving. It was so still it wasn't na-

Ken hopped in and they were off.

(Heian & al.: 112-113)

Post-reading task 1: "Analyzing 'A Great Day'"

- Setting
  - Write some key words that describe the setting of "A Great Day" (place, weather, season and so on).
- Characters
  - Describe the two characters in "A Great Day".
  - How do they differ?
  - What does Fred feel about their differences and what does he feel about Ken?
  - Are any other characters mentioned in the text?

- Plot
    - Sum up the most important events in the story.
    - What is the importance of the weather in the story?
- Themes
    - What do you think the author wants us to think about or learn when we read this story?

<div align="right">(Heian & al. 2009: 120)</div>

Post-reading task 2: Close reading

Close read "A Great Day" and discuss the following questions in groups:

a) What does Fred feel for Mary? What hints do we get on this subject?

b) When do you think Fred gets the idea of leaving Ken on the reef? Does he change his plan during the story or had he planned it from the start?

c) Compare the following phrases from the text. Why did the author include this information? Do you think the change in weather symbolizes anything else?

"You couldn't hear a sound or see anything moving. It was another world. The houses on the shores didn't belong. Nor the people either."

"…with the movement the effect of another world was destroyed. You seemed a part of real world of houses and people once more."

d) When Ken caught the little snapper, what did Fred do to the fish? How did Ken react to this? Does this tell us anything about the characters?

e) How did Fred explain putting cotton-wool in his ears? Why did he really do this?

f) How do you feel about the ending of the story? Give reasons for both liking and disliking the end.

<div align="right">(Heian & al. 2009: 122)</div>

"Thou Shalt Not Kill"

There is no pre-reading task suggested by the textbook in relation to this text.

Post-reading task: Understanding a story

- Which words does the author use to describe Miss Quinner? What is the impression he wants the reader to have of her?

<div align="right">184</div>

- In your own words, retell Miss Quinner's story from the bush in Yucatán.

- How do you think Mr. Very feels at the end of the story? Find at least four words that describe what you would have felt like if you were in his shoes?

- What is the message of the story?

- What effect did the story have on you? What was your reaction to the ending- were you for instance surprised, moved, annoyed or amused?

An <u>extra task</u> ("speaking") was also given:

You may have read about or experienced a similar story where people meet with dangers while they are out in the wilderness. Tell this story to your classmates.

(Heian & al.: 235-236)

<u>"The Curious Incident with the Dog in the Night-Time"</u>

Pre-reading task: Predicting a story

"This is how the novel starts: 'It was 7 minutes after midnight. The dog was lying on the grass in the middle of the lawn in front of Mrs. Shear's house. Its eyes were closed. It looks as if it was running on its side, the way dogs run when they are chasing a cat in a dream. But the dog was not running or asleep. The dog was dead. There was a garden fork sticking out of the dog'.

- What kind of story do you think this is?

- Does the beginning make you want to read the rest of the story? Why/ why not?"

(Heian & al. 2009: 88)

Post-reading task 1:

When you have skimmed[27] the text, scan[28] the excerpt to answer the following questions:

- What happens when Christopher arrives at the police station?

- How does he react when he is placed in the police cell?

- Why does he find people confusing?

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[27] The definition given in the textbook's "toolbox" is: "Reading a text quickly and superficially to get a general idea of what the text is about" (Heian & al. 2009: 340)

[28] "Reading selectively to look for particular information" ("Toolbox", Heian & al. 2009 : 340)

- What do we get to know about Christopher's family?

- What happens when his father arrives at the police station?

- What is the result of the interview?

- Why does Christopher always tell the truth?

- How does he feel about literature?

Post-reading task 2:

Close read the factual information about Asperger's syndrome. Then go back to the excerpt of the novel again, this time focusing on Christopher's reactions to what happens to him. Find evidence in the text to prove that Christopher suffers from Asperger's syndrome.

2.23 Close read the factual information about Asperger's syndrome. Then go back to the excerpt from the novel again, this time focusing on Christopher's reactions to what happens to him. Find evidence in the text to prove that Christopher suffers from Asperger's syndrome.

Asperger's syndrome is a form of autism. Routines are important to people with this syndrome, and they often find it difficult to cope with new situations. They can get very absorbed in something and forget about everything else. People with this syndrome have strong interests and often notice details and patterns others miss out on, and are usually fascinated by dates, numbers and categories of things. They usually prefer facts to fiction. They often have a high intellectual capacity, but may have difficulties interpreting facial expressions and body language. People with Asperger's tend to avoid physical contact, and enjoy being alone.

(Heian & al. 2009: 96)

The following two excerpts show categorization of statements related to the informants' approaches to literary texts:

Reader-oriented   Text-oriented

A. Excerpt from interview no. 1 with informant Tina (Tina1)

Int: Can you tell me about a text from the English textbook that you remember well?

Tina: Uhm... uh... they are very… uh... some of the texts are just pieces of a… eh... of... ro…?

Int: Novels? Parts of a novel? "roman" in Norwegian?

Tina: Yes! (laughter) Novel, I mean. There was one that was very confusing to me… It was The odd…? The...

Int: "The Curious Incident with the Dog…? at... in the Night time?

Tina: Yes! And... it was very confusing. It was interesting, but at the same time it gave me the creeps in a way.. That was...

Int: ...ok. Was that because you saw something, - like a potential in that text?

Tina: I don't know, I think it was the theme - it was like unpleasant to read, in a way...

Int: Ok.. Was that in a good way or a bad way?

Tina: ...eh... I'm not sure. It was a good text. It was well written, but I didn't enjoy it.. It was about this … uh.. disease...

Int: A syndrome? The boy had Asperger's syndrome?

Tina: Yes.. it was confusing to me. And I can understand it, but at the same time I couldn't, so… it was disturbing… I guess I couldn't understand it... the text…

Int: Do you think you would have understood it if you had read the whole book, because it is a novel…?

Tina: Maybe….?

Int: Uhum...

B. Excerpt from interview no. 4 with informant Kenneth (Kenneth1)

Int: Can you think of a fictional text ?

Ken: Ehm…

Int: A short story?

Ken: Yeah…but I cannot remember any titles...

Int: That is okay… Just tell me...

Ken: Yes, we read this fictional text about… uhm... that you should not think that you know the Answer… or know the truth before you have heard the whole story… And the story was about a man who came to have the signature from this old woman…
          […]

Ken: Yeah, I (...unclear… tend to?) remember the plots and what we have gone through quite well when I start talking about it… but I cannot remember the titles...

Int: Well, that's not the most important thing about it either, really… is it?

Ken: No… Yes, I think of it as more an experience I should have rather than like: "Oh, I read a text with the title so and so yesterday…" I look at it as something I can take knowledge from, something I can remember and maybe think about… something that I can learn from and maybe remember when I maybe approach the same situation at some point… a time in my life...

Int: Yeah. Just for the record, that text you speak of is "Thou Shalt not Kill" in your textbook, right?