The Foreign and the Familiar
The Representation of Refugees in Karen Campbell’s This Is Where I Am and Chris Cleave’s The Other Hand

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I want to thank those who were foreign to me, for widening my horizon and for being my inspiration.

I want to thank those who are familiar to me, for believing in me and for being my safe haven.
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1. Introduction

Numerous civil wars resulting from religious and economic conflicts all over the world keep forcing people to leave their homes and look for refuge and shelter in safer countries. The on-going discourse about dealing with floods of refugees immigrating to Europe is an explosive topic among politicians, as well as within the population. The willingness to help the foreign and the fear of the unknown coexist in a society that is becoming more and more hybrid and complex. This discourse is not absent from literary discussions either.

According to Pourjafari and Vahidpour,

[...] literature has a power to reflect complex and ambiguous realities that make it a far more plausible representation of human feelings and understandings than many of the branches of scientific researches. (Pourjafari / Vahidpour 2014: 679)

In this thesis, I will discuss the ways in which contemporary British fiction deals with the topic of illegal immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees by analysing two novels: *This Is Where I Am*, by Karen Campbell, and *The Other Hand*, by Chris Cleave. Both novels narrate the stories of people who had experienced traumatic events in their native country, Somalia and Nigeria respectively, with both protagonists finally settling in Great Britain after their escape. I will demonstrate that the ‘refugee novel’ is developing as a subgenre of migration literature, which in turn belongs to the genre of post-colonialism and has its own specific characteristics within this category. I will also locate the novels within their socio-political context and literary criticism as a backdrop to the analysis of the thematic and formal characteristics in both works. In my analysis, I will show that the concept of duality is the predominant feature in both novels and it is this concept that will serve as the guiding thread leading through the chapters to follow. The first part of this thesis will outline the social circumstances the novels are set in. In chapter 2 I will then explore what refugee narratives are characterized by, which will include definitions of hybrid identity and intercultural community. In the next step I will analyse the two novels successively by examining two points: Identity and Community. This will be followed by a comparison of the two novels. Finally, I will point out how these two novels can be incorporated in the EFL classroom.
The choice of the two novels at issue is mainly based on the main characters’ origin: both come from an African country affected by the consequences of Britain’s colonial presence. Little Bee, *The Other Hand’s* main character, originates from Nigeria, while Abdi, *This Is Where I Am’s* protagonist, comes from Somalia. This common experience of British colonialism in Africa shared by both main characters makes the two novels more comparable and examinable through a postcolonial lens. Besides, Karen Campbell as well as Chris Cleave both reached a broad audience respectively. *The Other Hand* was shortlisted for the Costa Novel Award in 2008 (Cleave 2008: book cover) and *This Is Where I Am* was adapted for the *Book at Bedtime* programme on BBC Radio 4 in 2013 (cf. BBC Radio 4).

2. Asylum seekers in Great Britain in the early 21\(^{st}\) Century

Uncertainty about immigration in Europe has lead to increasing xenophobia among its population and an extreme growth of right wing parties in many European countries. In the United Kingdom this has become obvious once more with the outcome of the referendum on remaining in the European Union or leaving it. This took place on the 23\(^{rd}\) of June 2016, with a 52% outcome in favour of the latter (cf. Wheeler and Hunt 2016). A great deal of the so called ‘Brexit’ campaign was based on fear mongering and on the promise that the United Kingdom would control immigration better and make its borders safer if out of the EU. Immigration became a key issue for both sides and instead of confronting figures and facts, many voters relied on statements and promises that were inflamed by xenophobia and that resulted to be untrue or unobtainable. Intolerance towards the ‘other’ and fear of the unknown is, of course, not only a consequence of the ‘Brexit’ campaign, but has been an ever-present side effect of immigration.

Evan Smith gives an outline of the asylum seeker and refugee discourse in the UK in his article *Defining and demonising asylum: a brief history of UK refugee discourses*. He observes that “from the late 1980s onwards, the number of refugees seeking asylum in Britain rose dramatically” (Smith 2009/2010) and criticises the tabloid press, the *Daily Mail* and *The Sun* in particular, for portraying refugees as “bogus” and “illegal economic migrants” (cf. ibid.). Furthermore, he sheds light on the role the British government took on the issue around the turn of the century. The Conservative’s Asylum and Immigration Appeals Act (1993) and the Asylum and Immigration Act (1996) were designed to “reduce the numbers arriving in Britain” and
distinguished harshly between the “bogus” asylum seekers and the “deserving” refugees (Bloch qtd. in Smith 2009/2010). This situation did not change when Tony Blair’s Labour government came to power in 1997. Over the following decade, little was done to actually solve the problem. Instead, the government’s anti-immigration legislation in combination with the press’ demonization of asylum seekers, helped to stereotype the asylum seekers as “undesirable, undeserving and deceitful” (Smith 2009/2010). Articles claiming that asylum seekers are “swamping” Britain (Kushner qtd. in Smith 2009/2010) can be dismantled instantaneously by comparing the statement to the following statistics.

For 2008, the year of publication of The Other Hand, the Home Office published the following statistics for asylum applications and removals in the UK: 25,930 people applied for asylum at ports or in the country, 10,270 of whom were African (Home Office). In the same year, 35,615 people were either removed enforcedly or departed voluntarily, 9,210 of which were African (cf. UK government).

For the year This Is Where I Am was published, the Institute of Race Relations states the following on asylum applications:

In 2014, there were 31,300 new applications for asylum in the UK. 59 per cent of asylum applications were initially refused in 2014. Of those refused around 75 per cent lodged appeals. Subsequently 28 per cent of appeals in 2014 were successful. (Institute of Race Relations)

As these statistics show, for the years Cleave and Campbell published their novels, the number of people who had to leave the UK or left voluntarily exceeded the number of people who applied for asylum. This fact does not correspond to what far right parties, like the British National Party, the English Defence League, the UK Independence Party or Britain First, to name but a few, have been contributing to the immigration debate in the first two decades of the 21st century. For example, an election leaflet by the British National Party published in 2010 asks British voters to “put a stop to Immigration”, since “we are being swamped and being made foreigners in our own country” (cf. British National Party).

One reason for the rapid growth of parties opposing immigration and the unquestioned belief of their statements concerning immigrants might be the confusion over labels such as asylum seeker, refugee, or illegal immigrant. In the public debate these terms are often used interchangeably. In This is Where I Am, Deborah admits that she “wasn’t even clear on the distinctions: asylum seeker, refugee [...] illegal
immigrant [...]” and wonders whether they were “all one and the same” (Campbell 2014: 13). Just like Deborah, the layperson may not be fully aware of such distinctions. For this thesis, the difference between asylum seeker, refugee and illegal immigrant is of major interest.

Article 1 of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees defines a refugee as a person who,

[...] owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country. (UNHCR 1951: 6)

On the contrary, an asylum seeker is a person who has applied for refugee status and is in the state of waiting for the governmental decision as to whether they are guaranteed asylum or are deported back to their country of origin (cf. UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency²). They are in other words potential refugees.

In both novels, the reader finds several passages that attempt to clarify ambiguity in the use of terms as well as paragraphs explaining the process asylum seekers have to go through once they have arrived in the UK. Abdi, in *This Is Where I Am*, is a refugee since the day he has been guaranteed asylum. Little Bee, in *The Other Hand*, is an asylum seeker and later when she is being released from the detention centre without papers, an illegal immigrant. Yvette, a Jamaican girl who had been detained in the same centre as Little Bee and with whose help the main character and two other girls manage to escape, defines an illegal immigrant as follows:

‘Dere’s freedom as in, *yu girls is free to go*, and den dere’s freedom as in, *yu girls is free to go till we catches yu*. Sorry, but it’s dat second kind of freedom we got right now, Lil Bee. Truth. Dey call it bein a illegal immigrant. (Cleave 2008: 73)

The four girls are released without documents because Yvette engages in sexual activities with an officer in the detention centre, who sets them free in exchange. They are illegal immigrants and will be sent back home as soon as the police checks their documents and ‘catches them’. Yvette’s speech is expressive of her Jamaican descent and will be further analysed in chapter 5.1 (cf. 51).
According to the Office for National Statistics, there were 41,563 asylum applications in the UK in 2015 placing the country as the 9th of the 28 EU member states with the most asylum applications. 86% of refugees worldwide “live in developing countries, not in wealthy industrialised countries” (cf. Office for National Statistics), since most of them “stay in the region of displacement” (UNHCR The Refugee Agency: 2015 Mid-Year Trends Report). The Institute of Race Relations estimates that 2% of the world’s refugee population have found shelter in the UK (cf. Institute of Race Relations). This is a fact that Campbell makes reference to when she has Deborah explain to her brother-in-law that “we only take about two per cent of refugees worldwide, so we’re not exactly Mother Teresa” (Campbell 2014: 185). The Institute of Race relations further states that “by the end of 2014 there were 117,161 refugees, 36,383 pending asylum cases and 16 stateless persons in the UK: amounting to 0.24 per cent of the [British] population” (Institute of Race Relations). Asylum seekers are legally not allowed to work in the UK. The government provides housing and £35.39 a week per person for “food, clothing and toiletry” (Home Office1). Asylum seekers have no choice or influence on the time they are being transferred to another ‘home’, nor on the place they are being sent to. The financial support normally terminates as soon as the asylum seeker has gained refugee status (cf. ibid.).

Campbell picks up on this situation and raises the question of what it would feel like to come to a foreign country and have no idea where one might be sent to next. For instance, Abdi, in a conversation with Deborah, admits: “Before I come here, I do not know there was place called Glasgow. I knew place called Yookie [UK].”, (Campbell 2014: 50-51). Deborah tries to “think how [she] would feel, dumped on the rim of a city in a country [she]’d never heard of” (ibid.: 51). Here, Campbell has Deborah ask herself this question with the purpose being to make the readers put themselves into Deborah’s place and reflect upon how they would feel. Also, the reader gets to know the frustrating situation many asylum seekers face by not being able to work despite having skills and qualifications. Once Abdi has gained refugee status he can “apply to go to college” and “learn more English and [take] exams in mathematics and science” – things he “already know[s], but ha[s] no paper to say that” (ibid.: 157).

Many asylum seekers are locked up in so-called detention centres or in immigration removal centres on their arrival to the United Kingdom and stay there while their asylum application is being processed. Cleave raises the subject of these detention centres, which are run by private organisations – a Dutch firm in the case of
The Other Hand (cf. Cleave 2008: 349). The author himself worked as a casual labourer in one of these centres and refers to them as “a prison […] full of people who haven’t committed a crime” (Cleave²). In The Other Hand he repeatedly makes reference to the detention centre where Little Bee was being held for two years and lets his characters report on the situation there. To give an illustration, Yvette explains to Little Bee that they were only released because she told one of the officers there “if he arrange to get [her] release from dat place, he can do what he want wid [her]” (Cleave 2008: 102). By accusing the officer of abuse of power, Cleave makes the reader aware of the deficiencies of such centres. Later on, Cleave comments on the absurdity and danger of locking up innocent people. Little Bee reveals that “When will I be let out?” is all one can think about, but “they tell you nothing” (ibid.: 209). This makes the reader understand that this state of limbo can result in frustration, desperation and suicide:

> The detention officers sent the [dead] bodies away in the night, because it was not good for the local people to see the slow ambulances leaving that place. (Cleave 2008: 69)

Through Little Bee’s conversation with Sarah the reader learns further how the asylum application process gets started. The applicants are asked to write down their stories “onto one sheet of paper” giving them just “enough space to write down the very saddest things” (ibid.: 315). Abdi in This Is Where I Am describes what it feels like being ‘upgraded’ from an asylum seeker to a refugee, saying that:

> From keeping you in a war-zone prison block they call homes in an area they cannot make their own people live, from giving you vouchers and prescribing how and from where you will feed your family, […] the country turns, once more, benign. (Campbell 2014: 32)

Both authors sharply criticise the British system of dealing with asylum seekers. For Abdi the system is a “rigid and inhumane structure” (ibid.: 131). Little Bee remarks that “in a civilised country, they kill you with a click […] in a building full of computers and coffee cups” (Cleave 2008: 336), referring to the fact that it takes only one click to deport an asylum seeker back to a country where death is awaiting them.
3. Refugee Narratives

In this chapter I am going to define the term ‘refugee narratives’ by locating it within literary criticism and by discussing the characteristics which are inherent to this relatively new genre. I will argue that refugee narratives belong to the umbrella genre of post-colonialism, since the fictitious lives depicted in the novels are the real consequences of Britain’s colonial past. I will further argue that hybrid identity and language and the characters’ pursuit of a transcultural community are essential components of the refugee narrative. In contrast to other postcolonial or migratory works, these features have a special overtone in refugee narratives: they are characterized by the fact that one of the main characters is an asylum seeker or a refugee, that is a person who was forced to leave their country in order to survive. The consequences this involves for both the refugee and the host society cannot be found in any ordinary fiction of migration because the social circumstances the refugee novel’s plot is set in is very specific.

In the following I will discuss definitions of the abovementioned terms and underline them with examples taken from *This Is Where I Am* and *The Other Hand*. In chapters 4 and 5 I will analyse both novels by working with these definitions.

In order to find the refugee narratives a place in literary criticism, it is necessary to investigate concepts such as post-colonialism and migration literature. *The Foreign and the Familiar* is not only a title descriptive of the themes in the novels that are going to be analysed, it also refers to the place the novels take in literary criticism: they include typical elements of post-colonialism, as well as new aspects exclusively characteristic of refugee narratives. Elements typical of postcolonial works which are also present in the refugee novels are the (power) relations between the colonizer and the colonized, economic, political and emotional effects rooted in the process of colonization, as well as the critical lens through which the ‘us’ / ‘other’ mentality is observed. The features of postcolonial literature alone are not sufficient to describe refugee narratives, yet the refugee novel can be considered a part of post-colonialism. In line with Lock’s suggestion of taking postcolonial literature as a point of reference that has the “ability to challenge our assumptions about [...] literature itself” (Lock 2010: 23), I am going to take post-colonialism as a theory from which migration literature and eventually refugee narratives evolve.
Migration literature is a term coined, among others, by Merolla and Ponzanesi. According to them, migration literature refers to works written by writers “who are at home in the world” and who “address issues of home and abroad, identity and language” by discussing “questions of cultural affiliation” and how it affects “integration and belonging in the country of [...] new belonging” (Merolla / Ponzanesi 2005: 4). Frank’s definition of migration literature is broader, for it includes “all literary works that are written in an age of migration or that can be said to reflect on migration” (Frank 2010: 52). Thereby he acknowledges also works produced by ‘non-migrants’ (ibid.: 52) and criticises a delineation of migration literature that refers explicitly to the author’s migratory background. To him, ‘migration’ in literature should refer to “thematic and formal aspects” of a work rather than to “the person behind the work” (ibid.: 44). He further defines works of migration literature as a “cosmopolitan, transnational and hybrid vision of social reality” (ibid.: 53). Ernst reminds us of Europe’s “long history of migration and fusion of culture” (Ernst 2010: 246). This is very true for the United Kingdom as well and Ernst finds that, surprisingly, “many analyses of contemporary literature still try to reconstruct a difference between a ‘national literature’ and a ‘postcolonial (im)migrant literature’” (ibid.: 246). It seems like the focus of postcolonial migrant literature up to date has primarily been on authors with migratory background. A great deal in theorising British literature of migration has been done by those who themselves migrated, like Salman Rushdie in his essay *Imaginary Homelands*, or Hanif Kureishi in *The Rainbow Sign* (cf. McLeod 245-247). Their migratory experience becomes evident in their literary works as well as in their philosophical essays. In addition to this, Sommer laments the ratio between the study of commonwealth literature and of minority literature and points out that up until now little research has been done to properly depict recurrent topics and dominant manifestations of minority literature (cf. Sommer 2001: 2). This is another point where the refugee novel differs from other works of migration literature. Unlike many other works by, for example, Kureishi, Rushdie, Achebe or Adichie, the refugee novel falls into the research gap of minority literature.

The analysis of *This Is Where I Am* and *The Other Hand* will break with the tradition of focusing explicitly on authors with migratory backgrounds, since both Cleave and Campbell are born British. Authors who were born in Britain, who have not gone through a forced migratory process and who nevertheless produce literature of migration can be considered a minority in literary criticism. Therefore, in this thesis
the focus will shift away from the immigrant writer towards fiction produced by British authors who capture the tensions within their native society and transform them into a moral suasion for charity, empathy and humanity. It may be assumed that authors without a migratory background are not capable of giving a diverse or accurate point view on the topic of migration, since they have not experienced forced migration themselves. Through the analysis of Campbell’s and Cleave’s novels, I am going to prove that personal exchange with those who experienced diaspora in combination with well-researched facts can make up for the lack of first hand migratory experience by the authors. Cleave and Campbell both have had face-to-face contact with refugees in the United Kingdom and in their novels they show their capability of empathising with and drawing a realistic picture of the refugee as an individual. They familiarise their readers with the lives of two refugees by narrating their stories from two different points of view; a white British narrator, Deborah in the first case and Sarah in the latter, who narrates the story alongside a black character of the diaspora, Abdi and Little Bee respectively.

A further important concept for placing refugee narratives under the umbrella of postcolonial literature is the solution Sommer offers. He pleads for a widening of the post-colonialism model to include literature of the diaspora and rejects the distinction between postcolonial and intercultural texts as two distinct genres, believing the two to be intrinsically related. For him, it is crucial to put the issue of multi-cultural and transcultural identity into the centre of attention in this process (cf. ibid.: 16). The two novels that will be examined tie in with Sommer’s plead for the characters’ transcultural identities, as the latter is a major topic in both works. The protagonists’ spirits are ‘broken’ (cf. 27; expression adopted from Wilson 2004: 110) ever since their experience of some kind of loss; be it the loss of their family members, the loss of their homeland, or the loss of a finger due to an encounter with soldiers at a Nigerian beach. The development of these dynamic and hybrid identities throughout the story is essential for the effect the novels have on their reader, who will find out whether or not the characters were able to pick up the pieces of their broken lives to create a new, mosaic-like identity. McLeod, in the same way as Sommer, sees ‘diaspora’ as belonging to post-colonialism and adds that “diaspora also names a new way of being, an emergent mode of perception and engagement with the world” (McLeod 2010: 237). The ways in which Campbell and Cleave’s characters cope or fail to cope with this new way of being will be explored in chapters 4 and 5. It will further be examined whether the novels truly reflect the conditions asylum seekers and refugees face in the UK and
whether or not they offer alternative viewpoints to the set of problems this discourse involves.

Turning to the refugee narrative’s components, the characters’ hybrid identities can be seen as the integral component of a refugee novel. In contrast to other postcolonial works, their hybridity evolves out of the escape from an immediate threat at home and an involuntary settling in a country they are not familiar with and where they are not welcomed with open arms. These situations force the characters to reinvent themselves by shaping their identities in a way that allows their past self to find its bearings in a completely new, often hostile surrounding. As Bhabha would put it, they find themselves

\[\ldots\] in the moment of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion. (Bhabha 1994)

In this moment of transit, Frank criticises the Western myth that “we [still] imagine ourselves equipped with roots instead of feet” (Frank 2010: 41). To him, migration is no longer an anomalous occurrence and the migrant is the “protagonist of the twentieth [and a fortiori the twenty-first] century” (ibid.: 41). In the case of the novels at issue, the migratory characters are being forced to migrate: if they want to survive they have no choice other than to flee their homes. The novels’ four protagonists can be considered highly complex characters. Campbell’s Deborah has gone through the loss of her son and husband and does not know what to do with herself. She is torn between her own life and the one of her mentee Abdi. Cleave’s Sarah is just about to bury her husband who committed suicide and is well over-challenged when Little Bee knocks on her door. The complexity of the two diasporic characters Abdi and Little Bee lies in the constant negotiation of their identities: who they were in the past they are no longer, who they are at present they do not know yet. In several occasions they struggle to define themselves both on the inside (e.g. by questioning what their personal values and beliefs are, given the changing surroundings) and on the outside (e.g. by trying to find out which role in this new society they could take on). There are moments of inclusion (for example, in every single one of Deborah’s attempts to make Abdi feel at home) as well as moments of exclusion (most drastically when Little Bee is finally deported back to Nigeria).
Based on Bhabha’s definition of hybridity, Pourjafari and Vahidpour regard the major themes of migration literature as the way the migrant characters handle their “new live places, the uncertainties and insecurities they suffer from” and the “communication problems” they come across when interacting in a place where they are a minority. They point out that the migrant protagonist “endlessly recreates itself”:

Through its encounters with cultural complexities and discriminating experience of being among the minorities, its identity goes beyond the memories of past and reaches a sort of maturity. (Pourjafari / Vahidpour 2014: 680).

In Campbell and Cleave’s novels, cultural and societal circumstances the refugees encounter in their host country serve as a frame within which issues of belonging and fitting in are negotiated. In my analysis I will outline how encounters with tradition, customs, and religion influence the reformation of the characters’ identities and how they influence the process of assimilation into a foreign culture. Interestingly, Campbell and Cleave have this process go two ways. On the one hand, it is the refugees who are facing problems in the UK; on the other hand, the British characters see themselves confronted with similar problems as the diasporic ones at home and when travelling to the protagonists’ home countries. This allows the authors to portray the British society as well as the Nigerian or Somali and to line out difficulties the characters come across in their everyday lives, which incorporate experiences of inclusion as well as exclusion.

In accordance with the abovementioned definitions, I will argue that refugee narratives are a relatively new manifestation of migration literature and thus belong to post-colonialism. But how does the refugee novel differ from other works of postcolonial and migratory literature? There are three features that can be identified as quintessential for refugee narratives. First of all, one of the main characters must be a refugee or an asylum seeker. That means the protagonist is a character who flees persecution in his home country, applies for asylum in a host country and undergoes a complex process of redefining his or her identity. In the case of This Is Where I Am and The Other Hand the presence of a mentor who helps the refugees orientate themselves in the host society, be it a legal coach or a friend, is of major importance. The key factors which lead to the characters’ hybrid identities will be further explored in chapters 4.1 and 5.1. Secondly, prejudices towards refugees and asylum seekers and a xenophobic
society are ever-present in the refugee narrative. This complicates the process of inclusion in the host society, challenges the character’s development and exacerbates the creation of a pacific coexistence in a transcultural society. The demonstration of alternatives to an intolerant host community is equally important. Examples of these features will be examined in detail in chapters 4.2 and 5.2. Thirdly, whereas most of postcolonial and migratory literature has been produced by authors with a migratory background, the author’s country of origin is of little importance in the refugee novel: it does not matter whether the author originates from the host country or the country the refugee protagonist flees from. In Campbell’s and Cleave’s case, it is British authors who give voices to those refugees who cannot yet produce their own literature in English. In this thesis the focus is on refugees from African states. It can be assumed that in the following decades more narratives about refugees from the middle east, from states such as Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, or Iran, are likely to be published all over Europe, since it is these states where many asylum seekers in Europe are emigrating from at present. Furthermore, it is likely that refugees themselves who settle in Britain, once they have acquired the language to such an extent as to produce literature in English, will contribute to the canon of British minority literature.

The authors’ main challenge in *This Is Where I Am* and *The Other Hand* will be to have their characters find a balance between an old and a new world. This balance, however, is not a state that can be reached and remain the same from that moment onwards. As McLeod observes:

*Hybrid identities are never total and complete in themselves [...] Instead, they remain perpetually in motion, pursuing errant and unpredictable routes, open to change and reinscription.* (McLeod 2010: 254)

Again, the four protagonists fulfil all of these criteria. The two British women turn their lives inside out, they neglect or even quit their jobs and travel to the very dangerous places their mentees fled from. Abdi and Little Bee both explore ‘unpredictable routes’ when they decide to migrate to the UK. The key factors which lead to the characters’ hybrid identities will be further explored in chapters 4.1 and 5.1. In accordance with the statement that hybrid identities remain “open to change and reinscription”, the characters’ development does not stop on the novels’ last pages, since both works have an open end (cf. 70).
Not only identities are hybrid in Campbell and Cleave’s novels. The language they use shows a highly hybrid character as well. Together with the idea of “coherent cultures or subjects”, Hamann and Sieber condemn the idea of coherent languages (Hamann and Sieber 2002: 7 qtd. in Ernst 2010: 246). Both Campbell and Cleave create what Bakhtin calls a “novelistic hybrid”, which is “an artistically organized system for bringing different languages in contact with one another” (Bakhtin 1981: 361 qtd. in Ernst 2010: 245). For the analysis of Campbell and Cleave’s novels these language contacts will occur between English, Scottish, Somali, Nigerian English, Caribbean English, Igbo, and French. Incorporating hybrid language is an inherent element of the refugee novel, as it is necessary to bring speakers of different languages together. In This Is Where I Am this necessity is even stronger than in The Other Hand, since Abdi speaks only broken English when he arrives in the UK, whereas Little Bee uses the time in the detention centre to learn ‘the Queen’s English’. She even takes it so far to say that she is “only alive because [she] learned the Queen’s English” (Cleave 2008: 3). Rebecca, Abdi’s little daughter, does not speak at the beginning of the novel. However, when she starts talking, she reveals a fact that triggers the turning point in This Is Where I Am. She informs Deborah that Abdi’s wife Azira was carried away by men on horses when they fled from the refugee camp Dadaab, which makes Deborah travel there to prove that Azira is still alive. Therefore, I will argue that the characters’ use of language is one of the most important ingredients in both novels. It contributes massively to the recreation of the protagonists’ identities, a fact that Bammer would explain as follows:

*The protagonist’s sense of themselves and their relationships to others – the communities they come from, and those they encounter along the way – is defined through language: whom they speak to, in what language, or whether they choose instead to remain silent. It is in their struggles with language that they experience themselves as migrants and explore the meaning of this experience.* (Bammer 2005: 152)

Abdi chooses to be silent in some occasions; “urging [his] ears to focus, scooping up all these fast-flying words” (Campbell 2014: 19). He compares the words to insects and himself to a lizard trying to catch all of them (cf. ibid.: 19). The moments in which the characters use their mother tongue or a fusion between English and their mother tongue are restricted to the occasions when they remember home, when they are very emotional, and when they fail to communicate themselves in the host country’s language.
**Wan ku jecelahay. I no longer know what language I think in, but this is always the same.** (Campbell 2014: 375)

Here, Abdi remembers his beloved wife Azira and thinks ‘I love you’ in Somali. Using the language he would use to talk to her at home is only natural, especially for such an emotional statement. However, Abdi points out that he is confused about which language his thoughts are made up of. At the start he uses English only as an interlanguage to organise his new life in the UK. The more time he spends living there, the more English is taking over his thoughts. In this instance Abdi interprets this fact as something negative because he indulges in nostalgic memories about the time when he was still with his wife. The newly acquired language then is conceived as negative because it constitutes a part of the involuntary change in place he had to go through which resulted in being separated from his wife. Further examples of how the diasporic protagonists will perceive themselves as a minority because of their struggle with the newly acquired language and what devastating consequences the language’s misuse can have will be shown in chapters 4 and 5.

The second aspect I am going to analyse in chapters 4 and 5 is concerned with transcultural communities. A culture is made up of customs, traditions and values, amongst other things. These are socially acquired constructs which need to be renegotiated after experiencing diaspora and resettling within a foreign society. Schipper acknowledges that the “people’s search for cultural identity is related to their roots as well as their search for integration and assimilation” (Schipper 2005: 111). The people’s search for cultural identity will be dealt with in chapter 4.1 and 5.1, which concern the characters’ identity constructs. Their search for integration and assimilation however, belongs to the topic of transcultural communities and implies the characters’ process of integration or inclusion in the host society.

The diasporic characters in *This Is Where I Am* and *The Other Hand* are “positioned at the margins” of the Scottish and English society and are “subject to the hegemonial claims of the majority”, as Pourjafari and Vahidpour would call it (Pourjafari / Vahidpour 2014: 685). In countries with a high rate of immigration there seems to be a tendency towards welcoming a so-called multiculturalism, but only so far as the immigrants adapt to the local culture and let go of their own. A pre-requisite for a truly multicultural society is that “difference, ambiguity and ambivalence”
(Sommer 2003: 157) are being tolerated. Multiculturalism is only feigned unless a society learns “how to cope with diversity rather than how to get rid of it” (ibid.: 157). Lenzen’s moral suasion for an insincere society which pretends to be multicultural reads as follows:

[...] dann sollte man doch ehrlich bleiben und den Einwanderern die Wahrheit sagen, daß sie unter der Bewahrung ihrer kulturellen Eigenheit, die man auf Knoblauch, Bauchtanz und Kopftücher zu reduzieren gedenkt, assimiliert werden sollen, weil es in Wahrheit um eine Identität geht, die des Egozentrismus, die von der Imitatio Christi übriggeblieben ist, und man sollte die Bäume stehen lassen, auf deren zu Papier verarbeitetem Holz die Rechtfertigungsideologien für eine eben nur scheinbar multikulturelle Gesellschaft gedruckt werden. (Lenzen 1991: 154)

With these pre-millennial heroics Lenzen points his finger at the Western culture whose identity is based on egocentrism and who is not ready to accept any way of living other than their own. In contrast to this feigned multiculturalism, Cuccioletta defines the concept of transculturalism as “the recognition of oneself in the other” (Cuccioletta 2001/2002: 3). Cuccioletta points out that transculturalism is “based on the breaking down of boundaries”, rather than the reinforcement of boundaries “based on past cultural heritages” (ibid.: 8). In the following chapters I will analyse how Campbell and Cleave try to break down boundaries between one cultural community and the other.

For the analysis of transcultural aspects in This Is Where I Am and The Other Hand culture will be conceived in a contemporary, diasporic sense that is in accordance to Reichardt’s definition. Reichardt regards culture as “dynamic and performatively constructed”, rather than “statically conceived” (Reichardt 2003: 324). Such a view is more appropriate for describing “the cultural contact” and “multicentred [...] fusions” that are symptomatic of “our contemporary transnational, transcultural, and globalized world” (ibid.: 324), and that are sketched by Campbell and Cleave in their refugee novels. In contrast to multiculturalism, which is concerned with “constellations within national boundaries”, a diasporic concept of culture puts “constant movements, exchanges and hybrid cultural and social processes” in the centre (ibid.: 324) and thereby contains endless resources of recreation.

The third and last aspect of migratory and thus of refugee narratives I am going to comment briefly at this point is the tension between the colonizer and the colonized. Pourjafari and Vahidpour see literature of migration as a branch of post-colonialism
which is rooted in the “frustration of the colonized and the tensions […] between their culture and that of the dominant group”. Thus, it “investigates what happens when two cultures clash” (Pourjafari / Vahidpour 2014: 682-683). In their essay they name topics like “the oppressed group’s fears, hopes and desires for their future and their own identities” as typical for literature of migration (ibid.: 683). As will be argued, these topics are also present in Campbell and Cleave’s refugee novels.

In This Is Where I Am, the tensions between the colonizer and the colonized become obvious when Abdi tells the reader about his education and about how his grandfather forbade him to learn English:

French, Italian, poetry […]. Mathematics, science – everything useful except English, which my grandfather forbade me learn. The British were an occupying force in Somalia for many years, as were the Italians. I was never allowed to ask why, but he hated the British and loved pasta with tomato ragu. (Campbell 2014: 154)

This passage gives evidence of Britain’s and Italy’s colonial past in Somaliland and indicates that the tensions between the Somalis and the British colonizers were bigger than between the Somalis and the Italian colonizers. Cleave takes a step further and visualises the consequences of the exploitation of Nigeria for the Nigerian population’s future through an inner monologue by Little Bee:

The future is my country’s biggest export. It leaves so quickly through our sea ports […]. In my country the future exists in gold nuggets hidden in the rock, or it collects in dark reservoirs far underneath the earth. Our future hides itself from the light, but your people come along with a talent for dividing it. In this way, fraction by fraction, our future becomes your own. […] In my village, for example, it took us by surprise that the future could be pumped into 42-gallon barrels and shipped off to a refinery. (Cleave 2008: 255)

Cleave judges the Western exploitation of natural resources in Africa and knows how to accuse the greedy, wealthy and naïve consumer in a subtle yet striking way. What happens when the two cultures clash is shown in many occasions throughout the novels, very often in a humorous way. For instance, when Deborah waits for Abdi in the museum, she begins to reflect upon her choice of meeting point:

I’d said I’d meet Abdi by the elephant. Will he think I’m making fun of him, like saying I’ll meet you in the jungle? […] Standing here, by the elephant, I feel faintly colonial too. (Campbell 2014: 39)
Due to her native country’s colonial past on the African continent, Deborah is concerned that Abdi might be insulted by her choice of meeting point. She seems to be ashamed and regrets her choice until Abdi finally arrives and does not pay much attention to the elephant. Depicting this situation in a humorous way, Campbell makes the Western readers reflect upon their stereotypical view of Africa: the reader might imagine the whole African continent to be populated by wild animals and to be overgrown with exotic plants. Deborah’s assumption that there is a jungle and elephants in Somalia goes unquestioned.

To sum up, the thesis *The Foreign and the Familiar* is based on the assumption that in post-colonialist literary studies there is a new branch sprouting out of the genre of migration literature, namely the refugee novel. The key feature that distinguishes refugee narratives from other works of migration literature is that the refugee’s migration is a forced or unwanted rather than a voluntary one which may be characteristic of other migration literature. The main component of the refugee novel is the presence of a refugee or asylum seeker as protagonist and the inherent difficulties the character faces when trying to fit into the host community. Central topics and themes that characterize literature of migration and this new subgenre can be identified as hybrid identities, transcultural communities and the tensions between the colonizer and the colonized. As typical formal aspects duality and hybrid language can be named. After having given the two novels a place of belonging in the socio-political context as well as in literary criticism, I am now going to set out to analyse these works of refugee narrative. After introducing the novels briefly, I will focus on examining the aspects of hybrid identity and transcultural community, reveal which difficulties the characters face within themselves and within their host society and discuss to what extent both authors illustrate solutions for this serious humanitarian crisis.
4. Karen Campbell’s *This Is Where I Am*

Karen Campbell used to work as a police officer before she decided to change her career and start writing. Her first novels, published between 2008 and 2011, were crime stories (cf. Campbell 2014: front matter). With *This Is Where I Am* she turned away from crime literature and created an empathetic incitement for her readers to scrutinise the way in which asylum seekers and refugees are treated in her hometown Glasgow.

The novel is divided into three parts titled *Away*, *Lost* and *Home*. Each part has eight chapters, summing up to twenty-four chapters in total. This may be indicative for the passing of time, since the number of chapters corresponds to the number of hours per day. Every odd chapter is titled with a month (e.g. chapter I: January, chapter 3: February, etc.), so the reader understands that the story they are about to read reveals itself in the course of one year. Descriptions of the sightseeing places and settings the respective chapter takes place in serve as an introduction to the 12 titled chapters. These seem to be taken out of leaflets for tourists. Very often the language used in those passages is ambiguous and reflects themes and topics related to refugees. The opener to chapter 7 gives information about The Tenement House in Glasgow, “a treasure of social history” (ibid.: 113). The leaflet invites the visitors to “step inside and enter another world – you may find it’s not so different from your own” (ibid.: 114). Generally speaking, another world refers to a different place or situation in either space or time. Here, this ‘other world’ forms part of the local history and what causes its otherness from ‘this world’ is the time that has passed. In the context of the refugee novel, ‘entering another world’ recalls the concept of entering the refugee’s world and finding out that they are not so different from the (British or Western) reader. Another example of this ambiguity is the description of the Barras flea market that introduces chapter 17. The market flourished “even in the Depression years” (ibid.: 311). In this case the reader may find parallels to the depression Abdi is suffering from and the way he is coping with it. When Abdi leaves the mental health centre, he goes to the market to buy Deborah a vase at the flea market. Relating the introductory text to the situation described creates the picture of a character who, though mentally ill, is still convinced that his future will bloom. It can be assumed that Abdi is in his ‘depression years’, after having forcefully left his home, lost his wife, and struggling to integrate in the Glaswegian society. Him buying Deborah a vase, a container for colourful flowers, is a very positive image and transmits hope.
In *Away* the narrator shifts with every chapter, beginning with Deborah and closing with Abdi. This might indicate the leading position the white, female character takes in this first part. Not only does she master the language, she also has considerable more knowledge about the places she and Abdi are going to visit together. For Abdi *Away* is the place where he needs to follow his tutor. In part 2 the ‘leadership’ of narration suddenly changes, which is very surprising for the reader. In chapter 13 the narration switches to Deborah again even though, logically, it would be Abdi’s turn. The aim of this technique might be to illustrate chaos and confusion, since this part of the novel is called *Lost*. Whereas several passages in part 1 and 2 convey flashbacks to narrate the protagonists’ past, in part 3 the flashbacks become scarce. Those which do occur, are packed into conversation and no longer develop in the characters’ minds. The greatest part of their former lives has already been narrated and is now in the past. The protagonists are now leaving their past behind and from here onwards the action focuses on the present. *Home* is about what happens from now onwards. The choice of narration in the closing chapter at the very end of the novel is most important. Abdi narrates the moments before and the very instant in which he is being reunited with his wife Azira. When he learns from Deborah that Azira bore a child from another man in the refugee camp, he does not want to accept the baby. Even though he understands that she “could not leave it behind”. He calls it a “waste product” and expects that Azira wants “to be rid of it” (ibid.: 459). However, in the closing passage it becomes obvious that Abdi will welcome the fourth member in his family:

*I see my daughter’s face.  
And I see my wife’s face.  
Waan ku jecelahay. [I love you]  
And I see my wife’s face. Echoed in my son’s.* (Campbell 2014: 466)

The choice of narration for this chapter is based on the reader’s need to empathize with Abdi. They need to comprehend his inner experience in order to see the state of mind and heart he will enter his destiny with, being surrounded by a family that brings his past and his future together. Furthermore, by giving the refugee the final word Campbell emphasizes the fact that his voice needs to be heard. The ways in which the author leads her readers to this final scene characterizes her protagonists and paints pictures of Scottish society will be explored in the following.
4.1 “We must decide what new person we are going to be”: Hybrid Identities

As mentioned in chapter 3, hybridity is one of the main themes in refugee narratives. As will be shown with the help of the examples to follow, Campbell’s novel is characterized by numerous hybrid moments, which are the product of what Bhabha calls the “articulation of cultural differences” (Bhabha 1994). As he points out in his work *The Location of Culture*, such moments create ‘‘in-between’’ spaces” in which the negotiation of “selfhood – singular or communal”, can take place (ibid.). In *This Is Where I Am* Abdi finds himself in between his home country Somalia and his host country Scotland. He moves from being a teacher and fisherman to being a detainee in a refugee camp, an asylum seeker and an officially accepted refugee in Glasgow. Soon he realizes the necessity to recreate himself, which all refugees have in common:

*That is one commonality all us refugees possess. Cast off without family or culture, we must decide what new person we are going to be.* (Campbell 2014: 411-412)

This decision is one that needs to be renegotiated over and over again every time a character is confronted with cultural differences. Naming and labelling is one way via which Campbell has her characters reconstruct their identities. A reference to the nature of naming in *This Is Where I Am* can be found when Abdi explains why his daughter Rebecca has got a biblical name. In the refugee camp Dadaab, Abdi and his family spent some time living with priest Paolo and finally the family converted to Christianity. This is why they decided to baptise their recently born daughter and call her by a biblical name. One laconic example of the process of identification via labels is when Deborah visits the refugee camp Dadaab for the second time in order to find Azira. During a sleepless night she reflects about labels that would fit Azira, labels that would describe her dead husband Callum and labels she would assign to Abdi:

*Wife, mum, victim. Dhilo [prostitute]. Wife, mum, killer, widow. Victim. Victim. You could rearrange labels all night when you can’t sleep, you’ve nae pals, there’s no electricity and all your lovely magic medications are at home or in the bin. Economist, husband, disabled, dead. Fisherman, husband, father. Refugee.*

(Campbell 2014: 441)
The use of several labels for one and the same character is suggestive of the characters’ plurality; they can be one thing and another at the same time. Azira is Abdi’s wife and Rebecca’s mum; she falls victim to bandits in the refugee camp and is forced to become a prostitute. Deborah used to be a wife and mother, now she is a widow without children. She calls herself a killer because she failed to help the black boy her mother-in-law ran over in South Africa. At the same time, she defines herself as a victim because she feels impotent in view of her destiny. It is interesting to observe that the first terms used to label men relate to their profession, whereas the women seem to be defined by their roles as wives and mums from the start. The protagonists’ (self-)portraits as plural characters correspond to what McLeod defines as ‘border subjectivities’. This means the characters’ inner experience of themselves is “no longer reliant on fixed notions of home and identity” and does not “anchor them to a singular sense of self” (McLeod 2010: 254). McLeod points out the positive side effect of the loss of such “fixed ideas” about home and identity, namely “a hopeful new paradigm where motion, multiplicity, errancy, unpredictability, hybridity and impurity are gleefully welcomed” (ibid.: 254). He describes these new hybrid models of identity as “a site of excitement, new possibilities and even privilege” (ibid.: 248). Abdi is following McLeod’s schema when he reflects upon who he is:

Well. I am a father. I am a man who grieves his family, his wife. I am a man who has been given a new life, and opportunities to make it great. (Campbell 2014: 412)

Campbell combines two contradictory impressions of Abdi – one grieving his old life and another one seeing opportunities in his new life – into one reasoning. By doing so she characterizes Abdi as a part of what Fludernik describes as the ‘both/and’ phenomenon (cf. Fludernik 2003: xxiii). Based on Bhabha’s concept of hybridity, Fludernik argues that there are several frames of identity within the hybrid subject, and that the subject is capable of manipulating “features of one identity frame for the purpose of refunctionalization in another” (ibid: xxiii). Therefore, Abdi can be both a man who grieves his family and a man with opportunities to make his life great. It also becomes obvious that what he suffered in the past will not cease to be a part of him and it will continue to constitute a part of his identity, which coexists along with his new identities (e.g. Abdi as a father of a child who is biologically not his). This links back to the idea that all refugees must “decide what new person [they] are going to be” (Campbell 2014: 412). Assuming that their former selves are still a part of their identity.
supports the theory that the process of reinvention is more a process of adaptation rather than a complete, radical recreation.

The negotiation of selfhood that follows an escape is not restricted to the diasporic characters, though. The British characters in the novels, even though they are not fleeing persecution, are escaping their shallow lives and looking for refuge too – refuge from themselves. In the case of This Is Where I Am, Deborah has failed to come to terms with her son’s and her husband’s death and flees from the identity gap their loss left her with. She is looking for new insignia that could replace the ones of ‘wife’ and ‘mother’ and will find badges such as ‘tutor’ and, eventually, ‘friend’ in the course of the novel. In addition to the loss of two beloved people, Deborah is struggling with an experience she had in South Africa when visiting her family-in-law: she did not make her mother-in-law stop the car when the latter hit a little black boy on their way home from a party. Deborah’s wish to help Abdi can be interpreted as somewhat selfish, considering that she is trying to soothe her feeling of guilt for what happened in South Africa. She imagines how brave it would be of her if she returned to Africa and “find a life [Azira’s life] to save” (ibid.: 361). Even though she has a very specific spot in mind, namely the refugee camp in Kenya, she treats Africa as one homogeneous place. She asks herself what it would be like to “sit on the edge of the bush again” like she did in South Africa and then doubts if there even is bush in Kenya (ibid.: 361). The reader might get the impression that Deborah is quite superficial, for she compares South Africa with Kenya and saving a life there with making up for a live she did not save in South Africa. Deborah’s attitude may reflect a societal attitude as seeing all refugees as the same. It is more commodious to treat ‘the refugees’ as one homogenous minority by putting the ‘other’ into one box with all the other ‘others’, than to face up to the refugee as an individual, as a person that is different from oneself but has equal status as a human being. Abdi confronts Deborah harshly with her egotistical behaviour when he tells her:

‘Stop trying to control me. I am not your pet, Deborah. Nor your puppet. And I’m not some poor black boy you are trying to bring back to life.’ (Campbell 2014: 369)

Here, Abdi’s concept of Deborah differs noticeably from her self-perception, which results in her attacking him physically and cutting off contact for weeks. She pictures herself as the brave heroine who travels to a dangerous refugee camp to bring
Abdi’s family back together. He, unaware of Deborah’s intentions, feels absorbed by her interference in his life. On the one hand, Deborah can be described as ignorant for not considering that Abdi wishes to be independent from her help. On the other hand, her behaviour can be interpreted as courageous because she follows her gut instinct without being sure of Abdi’s reaction when meeting his assumedly dead wife again. Torn between the wish to help and the uncertainty about her mentee’s desires, she finally succeeds in finding her place in Abdi’s life by doing what she thinks is right.

The characters in *This Is Where I Am* are dynamic. This implies that they change and develop over time. Thus, comparing the past with the future is a further technique used to model identities in this refugee narrative. The change of temperament Abdi undergoes when Campbell’s novel switches from part 1 to part 2, is one of the manifestations of him being torn between the future and the past. This is transmitted also by the chaotic narrative structure of the second part of the novel, as mentioned above (cf. 23). Abdi’s change of temperament continues this feeling of instability, already created by the confusing switches of narrators. In this second part of the novel, *Lost*, Campbell describes how the traumas Abdi suffered interfere with what he has to face in the present and to what extent they will have an impact on his further development.

*This month I am grumpy, last month I was grateful. As a boy I was bright, as a youth I was brave. Tomorrow that shopkeeper may be rude to me again and I may laugh it off or the sight of a golden-scarved woman may remind me of my wife and I will go home to curl up and weep.* (Campbell 2014: 155)

It is passages like these that remind us of Abdi’s fragile character. Wilson refers to the “fracturing of the soul, self, and identity” as “the broken spirit” (Wilson 2004: 110). To him, every time a human being gets injured very violently by “malevolent forces” the spirit of a person breaks, metaphorically (cf. ibid.: 110). Abdi must have suffered innumerable incidents of violence and his spirit must have been broken at the latest when he was forced to leave his wife behind in Dadaab.

Impotence and insecurities about his future in the host society is an ever-present topic in Abdi’s mind. He states that the refugees’ “future is bleak and to be managed”, and that their “past is a multi-authored file” (Campbell 2014: 155). The refugees themselves have very little influence upon their present living conditions; their destinies were in the hands of those who dispersed them in the past and will lie in the hands of the authorities of the country they chose to come to or were sent to.
This situation is likely to result in a feeling of numbness, weakness and frustration. Abdi tells the reader how he wishes people in the UK could see him perform in a familiar environment, his past environment, where he feels confident, where he speaks his own language and where he could do the things he excels in. There, his personality could unfold without the interference of linguistic or administrative borders:

*I wish I could tell him [the man who gave him the library card] a joke. I wish he could see me at home, teaching my class. Drinking shah with my friends or hauling my nets. If he could see the expert way I twist and heave, so that only the tiniest fish escape.* (Campbell 2014: 30)

On the contrary, in Glasgow, his present domicile, Abdi feels impotent, foreign and like a mere nobody. He is frustrated because he “cannot do the simplest of things”, like fastening his seatbelt in Deborah’s car (cf. ibid.: 92). He is unsure how to interact with his mentor on “this imbalanced journey” (ibid.: 92) when she takes him to Loch Lomond. The ‘imbalanced journey’ is metaphorical for the entire period of mentoring. Abdi feels that the relationship between him and his mentor is unequal because she, being local, enjoys sovereignty in every moment they spend together in public spaces in and around Glasgow. On numerous occasions throughout the novel he calls himself a ‘stupid refugee’. This self-designated label is used when Deborah hesitates to accept his invitation to come to his shabby house (cf. ibid.: 140) and his plead to teach Rebecca (cf. ibid.: 153), or when, in an argument he makes Deborah and Rebecca cry: “Stupid, ugly refugee” (ibid.: 371). Abdi is constantly worried about the impression he makes on Deborah, so too when some teenagers steal his hat and he does not make an effort to get it back:

*I could have stopped them [...]. Easily. They were pallid youths who have no conception of what a human will do to survive. I hope Debs knows it was strength that held me in. Not fear.* (Campbell 2014: 141)

Out of this feeling of impotence his wish to be independent is growing stronger and stronger throughout the novel. Bash and Zezlina-Phillips draw that feeling (experienced by refugees in general) down to the fact that they, “without either home or job, often stripped of national identity”, have “only inner legacies as resources for survival” (Bash / Zezlina-Phillips 2006: 114). In this sense it is crucial for diasporic individuals to strengthen these inner legacies in order to survive in a world that is new to them. Also Abdi, deprived of so many things the local community would take for granted, expresses the wish to be independent and to sort his life out himself:
I want to build my home, not beg for it. A roof and roots and work. I have not been allowed to work for so long. (Campbell 2014: 107)

Opposing his past and his present life provides a basis for Abdi’s renegotiation of selfhood. He clings to a past where he was able to build his home, to provide for himself and derive fulfilment from his work. Now, he has to resign himself to a life that depends on others’ charity.

The discrepancy between past and present becomes obvious once more in the conversation Deborah has with Abdi’s caseworker Simon. He calls her a ‘people person’. The reader learns that she “was a people person, once. Before Callum’s illness took hold […], [she] was quite good fun” (ibid.: 80-81). Throughout the novel she reveals what made her change throughout time: the loss of several stillborn children and of a son who lived for one day, her husband’s illness and death, her own illness, and the feeling of guilt for what happened in South Africa. Now she defines herself as “shapeless, pointless […], foolish, ugly, cowardly” (ibid.: 180) and as “a person in small pieces” (ibid.: 195). This, again, corresponds to what Wilson defines as a ‘broken spirit’ (cf. 27)

You were a mum; now you’re not. You were a child; now you’re not. You were a wife; and that’s gone too, and, like the driven pounding of the tide, there’s not a damn thing you can do. (Campbell 2014: 329)

Campbell makes Deborah appear reasonably self-doubting. Even though Deborah is a wealthy woman whose existence is secure and she has everything her mentee could wish for, she is not leading a fulfilled life. There are moments when she seems to be disorientated, she does not to know where she belongs or what her purpose is. She realizes that certain concepts, like being a child, a wife or a mum, were taken from her without her consent. Deborah is trying to escape from her cruel destiny and thereby looking for refuge, too. The final refuge Campbell offers is to have her think about suicide. This is why Deborah keeps all the “Co-dydramol, Tramadol [and] morphine […] in case one day [she] really need[s] them all, at once, down in one […]” (Campbell 2014: 5). Despite – or maybe because of – her bitter fate and her negative self-image Deborah is a very likeable character. The reader will learn that she feels the need to change something in her life, thus that she still has drive and that she believes in herself. Being confronted with Abdi’s destiny, which is even more bitter than her own, helps her to put her sorrows into perspective. Some of her comments, though
fairly ironic at times, show her process of self-reflection and development. She has come to learn that many of her presumptions about others have proved wrong in the past and she is becoming more and more careful about what she thinks:

‘So are you an asylum seeker too?’
‘Tch, no. I’m a nurse.’
Another of my presumptions. [...] all the volunteers, I assumed, would be white-middle-class and all the clients would be ... not. (Campbell 2014: 82)

Deborah seems surprised that Gamu, a black woman, could volunteer for the Scottish Refugee Council. At the same time, she realizes how foolish her presumptions are. In some occasions Deborah approaches Abdi unwarily. For example, when witnessing his poor painting skills: “For goodness sake, man. Have you never painted a wall before?”, she “wished it back” the moment she said it (Campbell 2014: 242). Also, she blames herself for not being more conscious about Abdi’s culture. When she does research on Azira, she wonders why ‘Hassan’, Abdi’s surname, is written in brackets after her first name and realizes that she does not even know whether Somali wives take their husbands’ name. Then she admits that, as his mentor, she “should know these things” (ibid.: 339). By becoming more aware of her own ignorance Deborah will undergo a process of recreation throughout the novel, which will result in the most beautiful Christmas surprise she could possibly prepare for her mentee, namely reuniting his family.

Besides the characterization techniques described so far (putting the characters in between spaces and comparing their past self to their present self), the characters’ use of language is another feature that Campbell uses to illustrate their pluralistic identities. As Jaspal argues in his article *Language and social identity: A psychosocial approach*, language “constitutes a means of asserting one’s identity or one’s distinctiveness from others” (Jaspal 2009: 17). Abdi’s mother tongue Somali constitutes a part of his original identity, which was shaped at home. In Glasgow, Somali distinguishes him from the majority group of English speakers, which is why he wants and needs to learn his host community’s language in order to be accepted as a part of it.

‘Why’ is a good word to learn in many languages. ‘Why’ and ‘where’ and ‘how’ and ‘when’. [...] I can recite them in English, Swahili, German, French and Italian. [...] I learned them all; it made me useful. (Campbell 2014: 20)
Ever since he was forced to leave his home, Abdi realized quickly that language is a means that makes you ‘useful’ and heard. Naming the languages he learned those words in so quickly might be a hint on the countries he passed through on his way to Scotland. There are several references to Italian and French, when Abdi cannot think of a word in English, for example: “It’s one o’clock. Une heure, una ora.” (ibid.: 21). At first, Abdi’s way of expressing himself in English is characterized by repetitions, run-on sentences and pictorial language. His speeches and interior monologues are somewhat staccato, like spoken (foreign) language, including many auto-corrections and rephrasing. For example: “If I had someone to if I was at home and talking to my mother or Az – if you were if you were talking to a friend […]” (ibid.: 21). He pictures the spelling of names differently to what they are actually spelled like, e.g. “Day-bo-ra [Deborah]” (ibid.: 19) or “Mah-gret [Margaret]” (ibid.: 26). When communication through words fails, he makes recourse to drawing. To give an example, in a grocery store Abdi draws the kind of food he is looking for until the shopkeeper understands: “You are wanting fish.” (ibid.: 24). Here, it is interesting to observe that the use of Glaswegian dialect and slang is used to distinguish the Scottish characters from each other: The lower their social status, the more dialectal their speech.

‘Away tae fuck, yi cheeky cunt. I’d my way, yous’d aw be put doon like fucking dugs. You no take a fucking hint? Stealing our money, our fucking jobs –‘ (Campbell 2014: 99)

This highly offensive statement is made by Abdi’s jobless neighbour who constantly tyrannises him and his daughter because of their skin colour and migratory background. The use of heavy dialect suggests that he belongs to the lower class and is poorly educated. Abdi, on the contrary, chooses his words very carefully and reflects a lot upon language itself. One sign of this is the cumulative use of metalanguage and metaphors. The word ‘safe’ sounds “solid and flat” to him, it “opens softly and closes definitively”, like the heavy door to his apartment (ibid.: 99). However, he associates something dangerous with this word as well, as the ‘s’ to him sounds like the “sibilant hiss of snakes” (ibid.: 99). This might suggest that Abdi finds it difficult to trust. Due to the cruelty he has experienced, he can never feel completely safe. Moreover, this statement is a manifestation of duality and ambiguity typical of refugee narratives. As the novel unfolds, Abdi masters his host community’s language more and more. This is partly due to Deborah’s help, who corrects him for example when he tells her that in
a month’s time he will be an “apprentice fishmonger” (ibid.: 221), but also due to his wit. After explaining what a ‘foyer’ is, Deborah says that “Sometimes we use foreign words like everyday words”, at which point Abdi responds “I do that all the time” (ibid.: 63). As McGraw points out, humour has social benefits since “funny people receive positive attention and admiration” (McGraw 2011). Campbell, by incorporating humour in her diasporic character’s speech, suggests that Abdi will successfully manage to carve out his way towards being accepted in his host community.

Deborah takes on the role of a language facilitator not only for Abdi, but also for his little daughter. The reader learns that Rebecca could speak when leaving Dadaab because she screamed “hooyo” (ibid.: 268), the Somali word for ‘mother’. Ever since then she has not said another word. This is why Deborah takes her to an educational psychologist, who makes her paint her family. Due to this painting, which shows her mother on a horse rather than in heaven, the two women start to suspect that Azira might still be alive. The little child’s hybrid language skills surface when Deborah takes her to a garden shop and promises her they would “buy basically everything she could name” and she says some names in Somali and others in English (ibid.: 281). Later on, Abdi observes that “she sounds all Scottish” (ibid.: 286), causing Deborah to apologize. Here, the reader assumes that Abdi accuses her of taking part of Rebecca’s Somali identity away from her. But by countering: “No, it is ... good. It is her voice.” (ibid.: 286), Abdi underlines that her ability to speak is a more important feature of her identity than the language she expresses herself in.

Furthermore, by interacting with a non-native speaker Deborah is confronted with her mother tongue and so is the English native reader. Abdi is confused that people in the UK say something ‘is not far’ when they mean that something is close, or ‘not bad’ when they mean that something is good (cf. ibid.: 48). The reader then may question why they tend to express things in such an indirect way and overthink their verbal behaviour. Also, Deborah is irritated about Abdi’s direct question whether she is alone (cf. ibid.: 49). This shows the difficulty of intercultural communication when people from different backgrounds with different moral values interact with each other.

Schipper acknowledges that the “people’s search for cultural identity” is “related to their roots as well as their search for integration and assimilation” (Schipper 2005: 111). In *This Is Where I Am*, manifestations of a group’s cultural identity relate to values
transmitted by tradition and religion, inter alia. These can be said to represent the characters’ roots and need to be reconsidered when in contact with another cultural community. This contact then triggers a recreational process that will, in the best case, enrich the characters’ identities. In the following examples, such cultural manifestations will be examined before moving on to the next chapter which will deal with how these values are reshaped when in contact with another culture.

Religious and traditional customs both shape cultural identity and represent an explosive factor when people of different cultures interact. When they coexist next to each other rather than intermingling, the fear of otherness is more likely to persist. Abdi reveals that the few Christian families in Dadaab lived in “relative freedom” and that their “daughters were schooled along with their sons” (Campbell 2014: 167). By having Abdi convert to Christianity after having lived with Father Paolo in the refugee camp, Campbell partially counteracts the problem of religious otherness in the host country. Nevertheless, there are several passages in the novel concerned with customs and faith which present a potential conflict. When looking at Dali’s *Christ of Saint John of the Cross*, Abdi asks Deborah whether people pray here. According to him “They should.”, and Deborah responds: “‘Maybe,’ I agree. But I don’t. Not really.” (ibid.: 47). Campbell makes the reader understand that Abdi, despite all the cruelty he has experienced, has a strong belief and that Deborah seems to have lost hers. Thereby she makes the reader challenge his or her own attitude towards faith and reflect upon religion’s value in coping with difficult situations. Furthermore, Campbell underlines the importance Abdi attributes to his faith when she makes him state explicitly that he finds refuge in faith: “It is my refuge and I its refugee.” (ibid.: 143).

Campbell uncovers the hybrid nature of Abdi’s belief. As Deborah correctly observes, “his name is Abdi, he’s from Somalia. How could he not be a Muslim?” (ibid.: 123). Abdi’s name and origin are reason enough for Deborah to draw conclusions about his confession. She does not know enough about Abdi’s past yet as to make sense of his religious convictions. Because of the aforementioned advantages of Christians families in Dadaab (ibid.: 167) Abdi tries to convince his wife to convert to Christianity too. He wants her to read the bible so she “can form [her] own opinion” (ibid.: 166). From Azira’s answer, “[...] you are such a sweet man. I am allowed to have an opinion?” (ibid.: 166), the reader finds out that even though equality between men and women is a foreign concept in Abdi’s culture he is capable of living by his own principles. The friendship to father Paolo is crucial for Abdi’s development as a character. It is a thoroughly positive relationship based on mutual tolerance. When Abdi and Azira’s
little son dies after a short but serious disease in Dadaab, father Paolo understands the need of the (still Muslim) family to mourn death their own way, which Abdi is very thankful for.

*He understood our need to celebrate death the same way we celebrate birth, even though it was not his way. It was a hollow festivity. Neither Azira nor I could thank Allah for very much.* (Campbell 2014: 135)

In other instances, however, religion brings Abdi into conflict in his interpersonal relationships. His appreciation for the priest becomes somewhat less honourable when he decides not to tell Paolo that it is Kenyan policemen who constantly follow him and beat him up. Abdi assumes that the priest would not believe him: “It was so important to me that he believed I was a good man. So I lied.” (ibid.: 165). This contradicting statement makes reference to religious hypocrisy and human weakness, since the impression Abdi makes on Father Paolo is more important to him than obeying the commandment ‘You shall not lie’.

Abdi’s conversion to Christianity and Rebecca’s baptism leads to discrepancies with his wife. His enlightened idea about the freedom of choice differs from Azira’s strongly anchored loyalty to tradition. He tries to convince her by saying that all he and she know is “what our parents and our grandparents instil in us” and questions when they actually choose for themselves what to believe in. To him, being Christian is “simply another path to God” (ibid.: 166). Still, Azira refuses to be baptised until the day when Paolo’s friend appears and tells the Hassan family about a UN initiative to fly 40 Christian refugees out into the UK. Here, religion, or rather an official document that supposedly testifies someone’s faith, has the power to save lives. Campbell uncovers the brittleness of principles when in a life-threatening situation, that is how the wish to survive and being with one’s family are stronger than one’s ethics.

A religious conflict on a larger scale occurs in the refugee camp in Sudan, where the Hassan family was moved after Abdi’s conflicts with the police in Dadaab became more and more menacing. Through a flashback Abdi explains how he and his family stayed in the camp in Sudan only for ten months because of anti-Christian sentiments and how they were moved back to Dadaab again after a Christian school was burnt down. The comment “Those bloody Muslims...” (ibid.: 204) Abdi makes on the incendiary is evocative because the reader realizes that Abdi, as a former Muslim, takes words in his mouth which the reader would normally expect an Islamophobic person to pronounce.
Campbell takes a fairly ironic stance on the superficiality of religion when she has Abdi explain:

_Ham is pork, of course, but I am no longer a Muslim. My Christmas tree is testament to that._ (Campbell 2014: 451)

Through Abdi, Campbell criticizes the fact that banal objects, traditions, and habits like a tree or eating pork, seem to represent what someone believes in. She underlines that such manifestations are somewhat arbitrary and makes the reader question the meaningfulness of distinguishing themselves from others by aforesaid mundane parameters. In contrast to this, Campbell justifies a religion’s spiritual relevance when she has Abdi describe that although there are many times when God does not hear him, his “need for Him to listen” never leaves him (ibid.: 301). Once more Campbell shows how important a strong belief is for her diasporic protagonist. In order to move on and to orient himself in a foreign world, he needs someone he can consign to and something that gives him hope. Abdi proves to be tolerant towards Deborah’s atheism, who thinks “the best thing’s to believe in nothing, expect nothing. Do nothing” because “that’s how you stay sane.” (ibid.: 427). Abdi makes her reconsider her conviction by saying that “maybe your faith does not have to be in God” (ibid.: 427). By that Campbell sketches Abdi as an open-minded, tolerant and progressive character and dismantles stereotypical prejudices the Western reader might have about Muslim men. In general, the role religion takes in This Is Where I Am is mainly to create points of contact between people of different faiths and to demonstrate the arbitrariness of the conflicts that may arise between them. Besides, the author shows the superficiality of the outer manifestations of a religion via ironic comments; but she also makes the reader reflect upon the vital need of faith – even outside the framework of a specific religion – to mend the human soul.

In conclusion, Campbell’s main characters are portrayed as physical entities in which a constant renegotiation of their identities is being carried out. This renegotiation is ascribable to a forced, involuntary necessity to reinvent themselves. It relates to features such as the role the characters take in between spaces and time, the language they use and the values they live by. The renegotiation of identities is one main feature that contributes to the novel’s hybrid character. The fact that this process is a forced one constitutes a key feature in refugee narrations that distinguishes it from other works of migration literature.
4.2 “That’s the key to blending in”: Transcultural Relationships

All of us are required to interact with others across a variety of discursive lines – lines of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, physical ability, religious belief, and other such culturally significant identity markers – and those interactions are inevitably affected, for good or ill, by those lines. (Beavers 1999: 129)

The introductory text to chapter 23 is taken from a leaflet about the Glasgow cathedral. It states that “for centuries, people of all faith – and none – have settled in Glasgow” and describes the city as a “cosmopolitan multi-faith community” (Campbell 2014: 423). Whether this description is applicable to the Glaswegian society Campbell pictures will be examined in this part of the thesis. Furthermore, I will analyse how the interaction across ‘discursive lines’ such as the ones Beavers mentions in the afore cited definition, will lead to what Reichardt calls “hybrid cultural and social processes” (cf. 15; Reichardt 2003: 324) in This Is Where I Am. First of all, this implies an analysis of how Abdi deals with the difficulties he comes across in an uncomprehending hostile society, where incidents of racism are the order of the day. Secondly, I will explore how Deborah manages to step out of her shallow existence after Abdi enters her life. Thirdly, I will analyse how the topic of integration, assimilation and tolerance is dealt with in This Is Where I Am. I will outline how the author pictures her own society and I will show that it is far from being truly multi- or transcultural.

The wish to be part of and to feel belonging to the host society is a natural side effect of the process of renegotiating identity when interacting in a new social environment. Abdi admits that he would like to “read a book that tells [him] what it is to be Scottish” (Campbell 2014: 160). He has little understanding for his fellow Somali men in Glasgow who stick to their own culture, language, and values. He asks them why they do not learn English or let their wives go to college, because he says after all, “This is where we are; we are here to stay” (ibid.: 161). Campbell deals with the topic of integration by giving the diasporic character a mentor, whose task is to share “knowledge and experience” to help Abdi “understand the ways of this fresh-opening world” (ibid.: 32). When he meets his mentor for the first time he reveals that he was “hoping for a man” his age “that he could observe” because to his mind “the key to blending in” is observation (ibid.: 34). Abdi is suspicious of the kind of help he is offered for free and wonders:
What will be the barter? The bribe? Even the minister and his wife seek to secure something of me. I sense their watchful eagerness, their slight thrill of panic that, if not tethered firmly into the flock, I may revert to my heathen ways. (Campbell 2014: 32)

To Abdi, there must be a reason why people help him. He senses that even though the help he receives is for free at least in a financial way, those who help him must have an intention: the intention of reshaping his identity to make him fit into ‘the flock’. This does not correspond to a multicultural society as described by Beavers or Sommer, nor a transcultural society as defined by Cuccioletta (cf. 19). Merely, it mirrors a would-be multicultural society whose majority wants to shape the minority until they fit in neatly. Shortly after this statement, Abdi continues: “I am an ungrateful bastard. [...] I am cynical, ungrateful, and almost spent.” (Campbell 2014: 33). Here, Campbell ensures that the reader is aware of the irony of the previous statement. The host society seems to be willing to help, but only as long as the refugee fully adapts to its values, rules, and habits. While Abdi realizes that people’s charity does not come unconditionally, he also acknowledges the good intentions held by those who help him. For example, he appreciates that Mrs Coutts wants him to fit in because she knows that it would make life easier for him.

God bless Mrs Coutts. I will never fit snugly here, but she insists on trying. Just as she insisted that the knitted sweater which goes with my hat will ‘loosen up’ with wear. The sleeves reach my elbows. (Campbell 2014: 143)

The sweater Mrs Coutts knitted for Abdi can be interpreted as a metaphor: Abdi does not fit into his new sweater yet just as he does not fit into the new cultural community. Abdi knows that he will probably never fit in properly since the sleeves only reach his elbow but he is thankful for Mrs Coutts’ hope that things will develop for the better and ‘loosen up’ as time goes by. In addition to this, Campbell sheds a positive light on the subject when she makes Abdi realize that “in certain situations, my height plus my blackness may become an asset in a city which is pinched and pale” (ibid.: 318). Through Abdi’s reasoning the reader realizes the potential advantages of a multifaceted society, which would make their city more colourful.

In This Is Where I Am, cultural differences which require a barrier to be passed relate among other things, to the modi vivendi (objective culture) and moral concepts (subjective culture). There are moments when the protagonists talk about their childhood memories and tell the reader about the traditions and values of their home
country. These moments are outnumbered by interactions where the cultures of the two worlds fuse. The memories represent a static concept of culture which not only shape the characters’ identity but also influence the way they will interact within the new cultural community. For instance, Abdi reports that as a child he lived by the Karkars, a region in Somalia.

Rain means grass, grass means grazing, grazing means food and trade. When the rains begin, for two, maybe three months, the desert becomes a garden. [...] We meet, make poetry, make friends, make love. Our ages are calculated by how many gu [rain seasons] we have lived through. (Campbell 2014: 101-102)

The protagonist makes the reader understand that he comes from a rural area where people live in harmony with nature. Only when he is confronted with the Scottish way of life does he begin to reflect upon his past back home. The reader understands that to move to a city like Glasgow implies a huge challenge in adaptation for Abdi. The fact that people calculate their age by how many rain seasons they have lived through explains why Abdi is never sure about Rebecca’s age as counted in Western cultures: “Abdi is very vague with ages – it is a Somali trait!” (ibid.: 351). Also, he does not celebrate his birthday the way a member of any Western society would:

‘It was your birthday? When?’
‘Last week. On Wednesday. I did not know my real birthday, so Mrs Coutts decided that would be the day.’ (Campbell 2014: 122)

This represents a moment of cultural confusion. It may be surprising for the Western reader that in some parts of the world people give no importance to birthday celebrations. Another conflict of this kind appears when it comes to the topic of Rebecca’s education. Deborah keeps trying to persuade Abdi to send Rebecca to school, thus imposing Western values on Abdi’s daughter. According to Deborah school should begin at a certain age but Abdi wonders: “What is this preoccupation with age? She will learn when she is ready” (ibid.: 313). This, again, makes the Western reader reflect upon their own mores and question whether their unquestioned way of living is the only right one. Confusion prevails as well when the reader, through Deborah’s visit in Dadaab, learns about the rules of living in tribes. Deborah finds out that Azira is alive and that she is now “the property of a tribal chief” (ibid.: 445). When Deborah tells Inge, a social worker for the UN, about her plan to reunite Azira with her family in the UK, Inge responds that Azira might be happy in the tribe because she is
safe and well-protected” (ibid.: 445). Being a victim of sex crime, she might be “rejected by [her own] community” (ibid.: 445). This piece of information is incomprehensible to the Western reader since it goes beyond their imagination and against their moral values. Similarly surprising is Abdi’s report about how his folk sometimes “drink from camels” (ibid.: 287). He describes how the camels “struggle and go crazy” when “you cut them”, but how they calm down when “it flows” (ibid.: 287). In a metaphorical way Campbell compares the refugee’s situation to that of the bleeding camel, who can do nothing but calm down and wait to be told what to do next.

Beverages and food constitute another prominent cultural feature that results in daily trouble in This Is Where I Am. As Grinberg and Grinberg mention, food symbolises the individual’s earliest connection with the mother. Therefore, the immigrant may search for refuge in familiar food and rites related to food which remind him of home (cf. Grinberg und Grinberg 1989: 79 qtd. in Akhatar 2007: 42). Abdi refuses to have food at lunchtime because he is not used to eating at that time. His most common dish is fish with beans. To make friends with members of a society where friends “always, always, always” meet for coffee or for lunch, he will have to change his habits.

I’d said in my text I’d take Debs for lunch. That is what friends do. I hear them on the television, there is even a programme called Friends, and always, always, always, they are meeting for coffee or lunch. Problem is, I don’t eat lunch. (Campbell 2014: 214)

For Abdi, the Western routine makes no sense but he comes to the conclusion that “the fact exists and, daily, [he] negotiate[s] it” (ibid.: 89). To prevent his daughter from problems like these he cooks her “reconstituted chicken threads, dipped in powdered bread and fried until hard and greasy” (ibid.: 22) at lunchtime, so the children at school would not laugh at her. He facilitates her fitting into this foreign culture by making her familiar to its habits rather than to his own. Abdi does not usually drink alcohol because he has been a Muslim for most of his lifetime. At lunch with Deborah however he drinks wine, another proof of him adapting to the culture of his host country. Abdi is surprised that “women drink here too” (ibid.: 26), which suggests that this would be considered abnormal in his country of origin. Also, he practices societal criticism when he observes consumerism around Christmas time. He deplores the fact that “for a two-week splurge you may drink alcohol with fruit juice at breakfast time, then eat chocolate for lunch” and then asks himself: “All this plenty.
Does it not make people sick?” (ibid.: 454). Later on he mentions that the coffee “tastes different here. They make it different. Is all different here” (ibid.: 462), which implies that even towards the end of the novel his new surroundings still feel strange to him. This proves that Abdi’s need for ‘food for his soul’ (cf. ibid.: 32) has not been satisfied by services that provide him with ‘food to help his body’ (cf. ibid.: 32), like the employment advice service or the support service to assist with schools and housing. The message Campbell implies is that giving refugees shelter and food is not enough. Their mental health is equally important.

In addition to these daily problems based on cultural differences, acts of racism make the process of integration or inclusion even more difficult for Abdi. The first time the reader is confronted with a racist act is the conflict between Abdi and the man behind the counter in a shop where Abdi buys groceries. When Abdi asks him for a newspaper and insists that he had given the man enough money for it, the shopkeeper gets angry and remarks: “Away and piss off afore I call the polis [...]” Abdi explains that the shopkeeper “sees a black-skinned, lying thief. I see an ignorant stupid man” (ibid.: 25-26). Campbell lets racism speak mostly through one secondary character: Abdi’s neighbour. Not only does he offend Abdi by calling him a “cunt” (ibid.: 99), and a “big black bastard” (ibid.: 28), by accusing him of “stealing our money, our fucking jobs” (ibid.: 99) and by telling him to go “away tae fucking niggerland” (ibid.: 29). He also takes actions to menace the Hassan family. For example, he puts a leaflet by the Scottish Defence League through the letter slot to Abdi’s flat which reads as follows:

*Refuges, asylum seekers, migrants.*

* [...] They live in houses you could have, they take your benifits but pay nothing themselves. We pay for them to live in lugxury, while we loose out. Ask yourself how they got here? If things are so bad, how did they get out? Can you afford to fly abroad?* (Campbell 2014: 97-98)

By having the leaflet contain so many spelling mistakes (refuges, assylum, benifits, lugxury, loose), Campbell suggests that people who propagate such ideas and blindly believe exaggerated, incorrect information lack a decent education. On the other hand, she also makes clear that education alone is no remedy against ignorance when she has Abdi’s English lecturer deliver a speech against asylum seekers whose costs for travel, living, health and education “our” taxes pay for (cf. ibid.: 417). Abdi also reveals that he is afraid to shake someone’s hand when he meets them for the first time because “once a man refused to shake it because “Nae offence, pal, but yous wipe
your erses with your hands, don’t you?” (ibid.: 256-257). The reader can assume how many obstacles the diasporic individual will have to overcome in a hostile society as the one pictured above. For example, when Abdi does the shopping for the first time in Glasgow, he admits that he had “forgotten how to provide” (ibid.: 23). In the refugee camps in Kenya and Sudan, Abdi had been given food at certain times. Now he is given vouchers that allow him to buy his own food and cook for himself. With this new sort of freedom comes a new kind of responsibility and more difficulties to face. It is both a burden and a challenge, negative and positive at the same time. The first burden comes along with the conflict he has with the man behind the counter, who treats him with little respect. Abdi draws attention to the difficulties of making sense of a new world, learning about its values and rules:

He has no conception of the effort it took to learn his numbers, learn all the differentials between copper and silver, between their weights and how the smaller circles can be of more value. (Campbell 2014: 24-25)

In another setting Campbell lets us glimpse into a racist situation in South Africa, where Deborah observes:

Our cars had been brought round, of course. It gave the black boys the chance to drive a big car, and the white folks the excuse to clean up the steering wheel. (Campbell 2014: 230)

It is interesting to observe that when travelling to South Africa and Kenya neither Deborah nor any of the other white characters ever fall victims of racist acts. Those acts go exclusively against characters of black skin colour and are committed by Western, white characters of all social classes (e.g. Abdi’s neighbour and members of high society in South Africa). By implicitly accusing the society Campbell herself stems from, she illustrates that the boundary based on racism against skin colour has not yet been broken down.

Besides denunciating members of Western societies of racism, Campbell criticizes the shallowness of interpersonal relationships. For example, she gives her character Naomi, Deborah’s neighbour, several opportunities to show her hypocritical personality. Naomi’s au pair Rula turns out to be an illegal immigrant and she runs away in order not to be discovered by the authorities. When Rula keeps asking Naomi for financial help to solve an unnamed problem, Naomi orders Deborah to hand her
over an envelope with the money she asked for. Naomi does not want to know what kind of trouble Rula is in, she just “want[s] her to stop annoying” the family: “I’m prepared to help her out – on the proviso she leaves us alone. I mean, Duncan’s in a very delicate position.” (ibid.: 175). All Naomi cares about is her family’s reputation and position. She has no sincere interest in helping Rula. Naomi also shows no sincere interest in her friends. When “Her Majesty the Queen” appoints her husband Duncan as ‘Queen’s Counsel’, she sends an invitation out inviting her friends for “drinks and canapés”. The invitation opens with: “Dear friend” (ibid.: 429). The anonymity of this letter is typical of all of Naomi’s relationships and Deborah wonders why she is being invited at all:

_I doubt Duncan [Naomi’s husband] and I had exchanged more than Merry Christmas or Nice day, isn’t it? in fifteen years._ (Campbell 2014: 117)

Such a behaviour can be interpreted as symptomatic of what Shavitt, Johnson and Zhang define as a vertical individualist society, in which people are focused on “improving their individual status” and on “distinguishing themselves from others via competition” (Shavitt et al. 2011). In This Is Where I Am this distinction represents another border Campbell laments. It shows that cultural differences based on social class are prevalent and want to be preserved even within one cultural community.

Furthermore, Campbell criticizes her white characters’ and consequently the Western societies’ materialism and consumerism. Abdi reveals how unfair it is that self-realization depends on one’s place of birth and residence. He points out – in a rather provocative manner – that the youth ‘here’ do not appreciate the chances they get and that they only consume without creating anything:

_Who knows how many great leaders, artist, mathematicians there could be in the world – the whole world, Debs, I mean my world also – and yet they never will be – because of where they live. Here, you have much wealth and excess, but your youth are indolent. Fat. They consume but what they create? Do they create?_ (Campbell 2014: 155)

The contrast between the white female characters’ materialism and the black diasporic characters’ poverty is starkest when Deborah visits Dadaab. Surrounded by refugees who are fighting for their survival on a daily basis, Deborah admires Rose’s outfit. She tells Rose that she likes her gold pumps (cf. ibid.: 384) and Rose responds
that they weren’t cheap (cf. ibid.: 389). Deborah is wearing two rings: her engagement ring – “a modest twist of diamonds” and her wedding ring “of sapphire and diamonds” (ibid.: 389), which her husband Callum used to call her maternity ring. The reader can assume that Callum gave this second ring to Deborah as a present when she got pregnant. However, Deborah’s son dies one day after he was born. Even though it might seem inappropriate of her to travel to a place of misery wearing two rings of such large materialistic value, it can be understood that they are of sentimental value to her too. The reader will learn what a positive effect the ring has on children in Dadaab at the latest when Deborah visits for the second time. There she finds out that Mariam, the woman whom she gave her maternity ring to as a present on her first visit, converted it into cash and used the money to build a school in the refugee camp. In this way Deborah’s maternity ring fulfils its purpose and she manages to overcome a boundary created by financial discrepancy.

Boundaries between the individual and the people they are surrounded by are created (and broken down) according to how they interact with each other. This interaction depends on the values a society stands for, but also on the values the individual represents. In This Is Where I Am, Campbell seizes on this point by illustrating and contrasting her two protagonists’ family relationships. For example, she sketches a beautiful love scene between Abdi and Azira in the refugee camp who, despite all the misery around them still find the time and space to be affectionate.

"My modest, shy Azira, who loved me so much she couldn’t help it, and we were inside one another’s minds as well as flesh. Skin and bone and muscle and brain, we were all one creature and our son slept his beautiful sleep and I loved my beautiful wife." (Campbell 2014: 96)

From this passage it can be concluded that Abdi’s love for his wife is pure and genuine. Abdi and Azira appreciate each other’s presence, they are connected through love and deeply grasp the moment. Even though Abdi’s memories are painful, the passages where he reminisces and talks about his family are characterized by admiration and respect. Abdi respects his family’s decision to stay in their village, “although everything is taken from them” (ibid.: 192) and although they know that staying could mean that they get killed eventually.

"I am a guardian of this place, my grandfather told me. He didn’t think any man could own the land, only walk on it." (Campbell 2014: 192)
In contrast to this fierce family loyalty, Deborah seems to forget about the rest of her clan because she feels too miserable after having lost her son and her husband. She conceives her little sister Gill as a rival and is jealous of her because she has a better job, has still a family and a nicer house (cf. ibid.: 174). However, at one point she acknowledges that her sister’s family is always there for her and that her nieces visit her regularly (cf. ibid.: 183). Also Deborah’s relationship to her mother-in-law Myra is highly complicated. Myra tries to hold onto her son and blames Deborah that Callum did not join his parents to live in South Africa. Both Deborah and Callum lack a confidential relationship with their parents since they never told them about Deborah’s miscarriages. Deborah admits that she does not know why:

*Because it was better than letting them know [...] that my womb was as inhospitable as an Afrikaner mother-in-law?* (Campbell 2014: 227)

The conflict between Deborah and Myra culminates when Deborah advises her not to drive because she has had too much wine. Myra aggressively responds: “Who are you to lecture me in front of my husband and my son?” (Campbell 2014: 230).

Family relations seem to be very tense and complex in the cultural community Deborah was born into. Abdi’s family values, on the other hand, are characterized by love, tolerance, and acceptance. The way the two protagonists interact with those of ‘their own kind’ obviously influences the way the two communicate with each other. Whereas Abdi approaches Deborah relatively openly from the very beginning and asks her very direct personal questions, Deborah seems to be more restrained at first. Soon the reader witnesses how Deborah and Abdi’s relationship develops throughout the course of a year from distant mentoring to deep friendship. Their confidence grows mutually, marbled by moments of cultural misunderstandings. This can be shown by contrasting the following two passages:

*We’ve only texted twice since Kelvingrove [...]. His answer had been instant – and very vague: R school sorted. No need. Do not worry. A.* (Campbell 2014: 79)

This first passage occurs after their third meeting and shows an instance of failed communication. Deborah does not understand why her help is not needed any more and thinks she might have gone too far by offering her help to get Rebecca started with school and fears that she might have interfered with things which do not concern her. Abdi, for his part, despite being in need of Deborah’s help does not want to bother
her too much. Throughout their following meetings they are getting more and more attuned to each other and become a good team. In this second passage Abdi states:

*There was a confidence in having Debs there. When you are hunting and there are two of you, or fishing with your friend, and the weight of the planning and the circling, the hauling and the trapping is shared, you become bolder in your attack. You can measure your performance by your companion’s actions. Judging, observing. Sharing the lead. The thing I like most is that you do not feel alone.* (Campbell 2014: 139)

The moment that marks the stepping over the boundary of confidence is when Abdi starts to call Deborah ‘Debs’ (ibid.: 104), or when she, “without realizing what [she’s] doing” pats his cheek: “My skin on his, another boundary blurred.” (ibid.: 130). Towards the end of the novel Deborah seems more distant again, but as the reader will find out, this is only due to the big surprise she is planning for Abdi, namely, bringing the Hassan family back together. Abdi assumes that it “must be love [for another man] that drives [Deborah] to long quietnesses and sudden absence” (ibid.: 453). He comforts himself in thinking so because he is “extremely aware that the mentoring period is done” and fears that Deborah might have “grown tired of [him and Rebecca]” (ibid.: 453). Deborah, in a conversation with Rose in Dadaab, admits that she is doing this – taking the burdens of travelling to Dadaab and trying to find Azira amongst hundreds of thousands of people – because “Abdi and Rebecca make [her] less empty” (ibid.: 396). On the one hand, it may be argued that Deborah is helping Abdi and his family for selfish reasons. On the other hand, the satisfaction the volunteer experiences for doing good is something that charity work brings with it and is inevitable.

Abdi unconsciously reveals his deep admiration for Deborah when he talks to Sandrine, a girl who attends the same English course. She confronts him with his feelings when she assumes that he is in love with Deborah:

‘[…] did you mean that I also must love Debs?’
‘Oh, no. I’m sorry. […] You talk of her with such pride and affection.’
‘Sandrine, she is my friend. Only my friend.’ (Campbell 2014: 413)

From this moment onwards it is clear that their friendship will not develop into a romance even though the reader might have been misled into believing otherwise – due to comments by Deborah’s sister (cf. ibid.: 178) or Deborah’s comments on Abdi’s physical appearance (cf. ibid.: 41, 221). At the same time Campbell makes the reader suspect that Abdi is ready to move on, maybe into a romantic relationship with Sandrine.
Lastly, Campbell sheds light on the relationship Abdi and refugees in general enjoy in their host society. The author stresses the need for the host society to empathise with her refugee’s destiny in order to surpass such boundaries and to work towards living alongside each other in an intercultural community. She appeals to the reader’s compassion when she explains that “many of these people have fled traumatic situations involving persecution, torture and violence” (ibid.: 212), when she has Abdi wonder whether “these people know who we are? What we come from?” (ibid.: 213), or when she has Abdi explain that the benefits refugees receive

\[\text{[...] is not your money you give to us. It is the money society, in its kindness and wisdom, has decreed we may have. It is called ‘humanity’. [...] When ‘humanity’ is a concept, it is fine, but when it is one human being deciding on another’s right to be human, then it’s pretty unkind. (Campbell 2014: 254)}\]

With the help of this statement, Campbell dismantles an utterance often made by people who oppose immigration. They tend to use the cost of their social system’s charity as a reason to protest against the settling of foreign people in their country – the country where they pay taxes and show little understanding when people who have recently settled here receive money from the government. This stands in stark contrast to Abdi’s grandfather’s belief that men cannot own the land, ‘only walk on it’ (cf. ibid.: 192). Abdi criticizes the focus on materialistic rather than humanitarian values. He points out that his host society fails to be human when they take the liberty to judge over the amount benefits a refugee should get in order to lead a decent life.

As shown with the help of the examples analysed above, relationships in *This Is Where I Am* are not truly transcultural since the members of different cultural communities fail to recognize themselves in the other, as proposed by Cuccioletta. Rather, relationships are depicted as multicultural. Tolerance towards ‘otherness’ is present in most relationships, but it rarely goes without the expectation that the ‘other’ entity should adapt to the local customs. In this case it would be more appropriate to speak of integration of the ‘other’ into the host community, rather than inclusion, which would involve acceptance towards ‘otherness’. Abdi’s ‘otherness’ is not welcomed and he will have to change in order to fit in. However, most of the interactions between the two protagonists hint that there is hope for change and that boundaries can be overcome. Frontiers in the novel are built up by having the characters focus on differences related to objective and subjective culture and by supporting ignorance and
racism. They are successfully dismantled especially through Abdi and Deborah’s friendship. Transferred to the real circumstances refugees have to face in the UK, this suggests that there is still a lot of room for improvement in the British host society. Following the example of scattered intercultural friendships this very society could grow into a more welcoming community.
5. Chris Cleave’s *The Other Hand*

Chris Cleave was born in London but spent his childhood living in Douala, Cameroon. As Cleave reports on his official homepage, “there was a lot of life in the streets – a lot of food and music. It was a very happy place” (Cleave¹). When his family moved back to England he “felt like an outsider”, endured a “sense of dislocation” and perceived himself as an “observer rather than a full participant” (ibid.). Cleave never felt belonging to either one place or the other. Therefore, he has never experienced the feeling of possessing or being attached to a specific nationality or country, which he perceives as positive. On the negative side he mentions that he will never fully understand “where people are coming from” (ibid.). Looking at his second novel, *The Other Hand*, it can be said that his “inner conflict about identity and belonging is reflected in the dual narrative structure of the book” (Cleave²). By virtue of his own experience of dislocation, Cleave seems to be able to empathize with Little Bee, who is struggling to recreate herself and to find herself a place of belonging.

Duality is the ever-present theme encountered throughout the novel. First of all, the novel has two different titles: *The Other Hand*, under which it was published in the UK, and *Little Bee*, its American and Canadian title. Secondly, the novel is thematically split into two halves, the first part working towards revealing the past, the second part working towards the future. However, the two parts are not clearly divided into ‘past’ and ‘future’. There are always elements of the future in the past and elements of the past in the future, totally in line with the hybrid character of the novel. Thirdly, there are two narrators. The narration of the 11 chapters alternates between Little Bee and Sarah, opening and closing with Little Bee’s point of view. This choice of narration is an important one because Cleave gives his diasporic character the first and the last word. The reader will understand Little Bee’s wish and necessity to be heard, not only from this structure but also from her explicit statement “I am here to tell you a real story” (Cleave 2008: 12).

Another manifestation of duality is the naming of the characters. Many of them have two names in some sense. For example, Little Bee and her sister’s original names are Udo and Nkiruka respectively. When they flee their village and are being persecuted by soldiers who try to kill their tribe, they call each other ‘Little Bee’ and ‘Kindness’ because their real names are testament to their tribe. Sarah Summers, by taking on her husband’s surname ‘O’Rourke’, loses “the habit of happiness” (ibid.: 177).
This indicates that she perceives her maiden name as part of her identity and losing it means a loss of happiness. It is also indicative of her leading an unhappy marriage. Sarah’s little son Charlie has a second name as well. He dresses up as and wants to be called ‘Batman’ (cf. ibid.: 31).

The final duality of the novel consists in that it contrasts two worlds. The plot is set in upper middle class Kingston-upon-Thames as well as on a beach in a civil war-torn part of Nigeria. The conflicts the characters have to face in each world are very different from each other. While Sarah seeks refuge from her unhappy life by conducting an extramarital affair, Little Bee flees from being murdered and struggles to survive, which leads her to escape to the UK on a tea cargo ship.

The introductory quote to the novel is taken from *Life in the United Kingdom. A Journey to Citizenship* and reads as follows:

*Britain is proud of its tradition of providing a safe haven for people fleeing [sic] persecution and conflict.* (UK Home Office 2005 qtd. in Cleave 2008: front matter)

The misspelling of the word ‘fleeing’ in this official document for refugees attests the little attention the Home Office attributes to the topic. This quote is rather ironic considering the tragic end Little Bee will have to face. She will be deported back to Nigeria, which is officially considered a safe country of origin in the UK (cf. European Commission). Moving between these two worlds she can never be sure where she belongs. How Cleave deals with this question of belonging, or rather non-belonging, will be explored in the following by examining the two protagonists’ hybrid identities as well as the place they take in a foreign society. For Little Bee, this society is foreign because she finds herself in a completely new surrounding; for Sarah her familiar surrounding becomes alien because she feels estranged from it. Therefore, it can be argued that belonging and identity are not necessarily synonymous with one’s homeland or country of origin. In Cleave’s refugee novel the diasporic character makes a new life and home in a new country (even just for a few years), while the native resident Sarah feels alien to her home environment.
5.1 “A new breed of human”: Hybrid Identities

The protagonists in *The Other Hand* find themselves in “in-between” spaces, as defined by Bhabha (Bhabha 1994). Little Bee needs to renegotiate who she is because she is being forced to leave her home and is therefore deracinated. Physically she is in between her home and her host country, psychologically she is in between her former self and herself at present. Sarah is forced into a similar kind of renegotiation when she is confronted with Little Bee’s appearance in London. She moves from being a loving wife and mother to being a wife who commits adultery, to being a widow. She also moves from being a heroine who cuts off her finger to save Little Bee’s life, to being a poltroon who fails to fight for her family, and back to being a heroine who accompanies Little Bee to Nigeria after the latter is being deported. This renegotiation of identities in *The Other Hand* becomes obvious in the juxtaposition of the characters’ former and present selves, in their naming and in the language they use, amongst other things. It originates from the development they undergo in the course of time and from being exposed to different habits and values in a culture other than their own.

As mentioned above, naming is one feature that gives the novel its dual character. Little Bee renames herself when she and her elder sister Nkiruka have to leave their village and run away from the soldiers who were ordered to kill all inhabitants by an unnamed oil company. For their true names “spoke so loudly of their tribe and of their region” (Cleave 2008: 144), Nkiruka, which means ‘the future is bright’ (cf. ibid.: 304) names herself ‘Kindness’. Her sister Udo, signifying ‘peace’ (cf. ibid.: 372) names herself ‘Little Bee’. Udo discovers a flower’s beauty only after a little bee resides on it for a while. Little Bee herself will eventually turn into that bee she named herself after. Only when Little Bee enters Sarah’s home in London, will Sarah be able to confront her problems and find some beauty in life again. In a way the flower stands metaphorically for Sarah’s life and the bee that lands on it, ergo, for Little Bee. The two Nigerian sisters’ original names are rather ironic. Firstly, the future is not at all bright for Nkiruka who gets brutally raped, killed and eaten up by dogs (cf. ibid.: 186-189) and secondly, Little Bee’s life is not peaceful as the girls flee from a murderous regime. On the other hand, their names mirror the hope and the strong belief they, especially Nkiruka, cling onto (cf. ibid.: 160). Sarah makes the strong connection between names and identities even clearer by stating:
That summer [...] we all had identities we were loath to let go of. My son had his Batman costume, I still used my husband’s surname, and Little Bee [...] still clung to the name she had taken in a time of terror. We were exiles from reality, that summer. We were refugees from ourselves. (Cleave 2008: 31)

Here, Cleave stresses that identities are constantly shifting, developing and fleeing. ‘That summer’ pins this static state of being down to a very specific point in time. Thereby the reader understands that a change is likely to occur when that summer is over.

Little Bee’s appearance at Sarah and Andrew O’Rourke’s house is the final cause for the latter’s suicide. Sarah’s son Charlie would not take off his Batman costume all summer long because that one time he did, the ‘baddies’ got his daddy. The names they still cling onto, ‘Batman’, ‘Sarah O’Rourke’ and ‘Little Bee’ are indicative of a moment in which their worlds stand still and none of the characters are capable of change. As the novel unfolds, the reader will come across more and more incidents that initiate the characters’ development, as will be shown in the examples to follow. Towards the end Batman is willing to take off his costume and Little Bee reveals her real name to him in exchange (cf. ibid.: 372). When she tells him that ‘Udo’ means ‘peace’, she explains that “peace is a time when people can tell each other their real names” (ibid.: 372). Cleave may suggest that when people can be themselves, they are at peace with themselves and the world. Little Bee pretends to be someone who she is not. She disguises herself, first in order to make herself unattractive to ‘the men’ and later, when living with Sarah, neatly in order to appear belonging to a metropolitan society. She also disguises herself linguistically – a plan which fails, as will be discussed later on (cf. 57). It can be concluded that her hiding her authentic self at all times in the UK finally leads to her being discovered and deported.

The development Little Bee undergoes as a character starts off with the moment when she is released from the detention centre. She refers to herself as “a new breed of human”:

*There is nothing natural about me. I was born – no, I was reborn – in captivity. I learned my language from your newspapers, my clothes are your cast-offs, and it is your pound that makes my pockets ache with its absence.* (Cleave 2008: 11)
The fact that there is ‘nothing natural’ about Little Bee seems confusing to the reader and they begin to reflect upon what it is that could make a human being unnatural. The reader will soon realize that aspects which constitute the ‘normal’ person’s identity developed through processes they may take for granted, like acquiring one’s mother tongue from the people one is surrounded by, dressing oneself the way one likes or being financially able to lead the lifestyle one chooses to. In contrast, Little Bee’s new self emerges out of a detention centre where she learns her host country’s language from newspapers. She clothes herself in a way to make herself unattractive to men, with apparels members of her host society did no longer want. Also, she feels dependent on her host society’s money in order to survive. Later on in the novel, in a conversation with Sarah’s lover Lawrence, she tells him that she is more like him than herself now (cf. ibid.: 269). In this way Cleave shows the problematic nature of a person who “had forgotten her language and learned yours, whose past had crumbled to dust” (ibid.: 28), and who consequently has to reinvent herself in a completely strange environment.

One of the in-between spaces the renegotiation of identities occurs in is related to time. The characters feel torn between the past and the present. The puzzlement about being one thing and then another is present, for example, in the following statement Sarah makes:

_A week ago I had been a successful working mother. Now I was sitting at my husband’s funeral, flanked by a superhero and a Nigerian refugee._ (Cleave 2008: 35)

Sarah realizes the absurdity of the situation she is in when she contemplates herself at her husband’s funeral. The part of her identity which constituted being a wife has unwillingly been taken away from her. Even though Sarah leads an unhappy marriage, it can be assumed that she did not want it to end this way. Charlie refuses to take off his batman costume for the funeral and Little Bee accompanies Sarah because she is devastated and would not be able to look after her son. It is Little Bee who calms Charlie down when he falls into his father’s grave and does not want to let go of his coffin (cf. ibid.: 62-63). All this contributes to make the reader understand Sarah’s feeling of emptiness and impuissance in this very moment. However, Cleave reveals that these feelings have been present for a long time. Sarah works for a fashion magazine even though she is not “a woman who [cares] deeply about shoes and
concealer” (ibid.: 146). This suggests that she considers herself a person whose concerns go deeper and her true self is not in harmony with the career she has chosen. On other occasions however, Cleave makes her seem fairly superficial. For example, she feels “the thrill of realising [she] was attractive, of knowing [her]self irresistible” (ibid.: 231), once she starts an affair with Lawrence. Sarah’s affair is the result of her running away from her marital difficulties with Andrew. Sarah continues the affair even when (or because) Andrew falls into a deep depression after their holiday in Nigeria. From an early point in the novel it becomes clear that the white characters are looking for some sort of refuge, just as the diasporic characters do. Sarah discovers refuge from her problems in her affair with Lawrence and Andrew finds his last refuge in suicide.

Sarah is a character who may seem difficult to like until she reveals what happened at the beach in Nigeria. She captivates the reader at the last minute by deciding to protect Little Bee when the latter is being deported back to Nigeria. Sarah is a perfectionist who according to herself “expected too much of life” (ibid.: 168), and who according to Lawrence, never asks for advice but does ask her admirers “to prove they’re paying attention” (ibid.: 169). She admits that she knew from the start that her marriage with Andrew was a mistake and that the “only reason [they] were married in such a haste was that [her] mother begged [her] not to marry Andrew at all” (ibid.: 177-178). This gives the reader the impression that Sarah’s life has been too sheltered and that she therefore needs to rebel against and shake up this world that seems all too perfect. All the immoral things the reader may judge her for are weighed up against one substantial great deed: she cuts her finger off in order to save Little Bee’s life when a soldier threatens to kill the girl if she refuses to. However, the reader must not forget that it was Sarah herself who evoked the circumstances in which the incident on the beach took place. It was her idea to go on a holiday to Nigeria in order to save her marriage after Andrew had found out about her affair. Yet, being a very dynamic character, Sarah is able to develop as a person and stand up for her convictions. Accompanying Little Bee to Nigeria instead of continuing her comfortable life means that Sarah will eventually learn to face her problems rather than running away from them.

The moments when Little Bee finds herself in between the past and the present are the ones where she starts reflecting upon home. In several occasions she calls herself a ‘silly village girl’. In each of these moments Cleave’s protagonist feels inferior to the British person she interacts with. Little Bee tells the readers they will laugh at
her for staring at an ice-cube, something that she had never seen before: “You will laugh at me – silly village girl – for staring at an ice-cube like this” (ibid.: 185). She also thinks the reader will make fun of her for thinking that when calling someone on the phone, one has to find a sequence first, like searching for a radio station: “there she goes again, that silly little girl with the smell of tea in her skin and the stains of cassava tops still on her finger” (ibid.: 200). Between these two roles, the first being accustomed to a world where ice-cubes and telephones do not exist, the second getting used to a world where objects of everyday use are a novelty to her, Little Bee feels stupid, insecure, and ashamed.

For Little Bee the issue of identity is even more complex because she is only sixteen years old. Research in early childhood development has shown that

\[\text{[...]} \text{the construction of boundaries between the self and the “other” is fundamental in the formation of a stable [...]} \text{identity.} \] (Bash / Zezlina-Phillips 2006: 116)

In the later development these boundaries have to be crossed when interacting with other social beings, with whom the individual shares a “common, bounded social existence” (ibid.: 116). Further, Adam and van Essen state that any kind of uprooting during adolescence “seriously endangers the fulfilment of [the adolescent’s] developmental phase” (Adam / van Essen 2004: 523). Little Bee’s process of “building up self-identity” (ibid.: 523) occurs under extremely unnatural circumstances; she is being held captive in a detention centre for two years, where she has to learn how to process the terrors she experienced in Nigeria without any sort of professional help and, at the same time, she is asked to fit in into a society she is being locked away from. Keeping this state of fact in mind it is surprising how Little Bee grows into the mature, self-reflective and brave teenager she proves to be. This also implies that her identity is fluid and changeable and is in line with the novel’s overall character. It further implies that it is not only the circumstances that make Little Bee grow into who she is but also her own personal drive. Cleave might have characterized her that way in order to counteract prejudices. It is often believed that a person who has experienced terror will only carry problems into the host country. Instead, Cleave shows that Little Bee is an asset to her host community by having her help Sarah and Charlie. She is capable of selfless action, especially towards the very end of the novel when she gives herself away in order not to endanger Charlie. Whenever she fails to be selfless she is still thoroughly critical of herself. Little Bee tells Lawrence that instead of calling for help
when she saw Andrew commit suicide she decided not to do anything at all in order not to be discovered by the authorities.

_I cannot run away again. There is nowhere to go. I have discovered the person I am and I do not like her. [...] I tried to save myself. Tell me, please, where is the refuge from that?_’ (Cleave 2008: 277)

Little Bee deeply regrets not having tried to save Andrew and detests this selfish part of herself, just like she rejects parts of her past self. Yvette, the Jamaican girl who helps provide their release from the detention centre, condemns Little Bee’s wish not to talk about her past terrors because according to Little Bee they happened ‘in another life’:

_ Yu only be livin one life, darling. Don’t matter yu don’t uh-preshie-ate part of it, cos it don’t stop bein part of yu._ (Cleave 2008: 101)

Whereas Little Bee pursues the idea of leading two separate lives, one in the past and one in the future, Yvette rightly points out that her terrors do not cease to be a part of her. Cleave suggests that her former self and her present self intermingle, and thereby helps to build up the hybridity of her character. The language Cleave has Yvette use is onomatopoetic. He makes her talk in a typical Caribbean accent, which contributes to her authenticity. It is interesting to observe that, while Little Bee wants to copy the Queen’s English as well as possible, Yvette seems to be proud of her linguistic heritage and discounts how much time her friend is spending on “learnin yore fancy English” (ibid.: 101).

This leads to another characterization technique Cleave uses to show his characters’ hybrid identities, namely the language they use. Cleave has Little Bee narrate in standard language with no interferences of her mother tongue Ibo or her country’s official language (Nigerian) English, which shows her eager willingness to appear belonging in her host society. She states that she is “only alive at all because [she] learned the Queen’s English” (ibid.: 3). By speaking the Queen’s English, she pretends that she has always been a part of her host society. Thereby she prevents ‘the men’ she is frightened of (the ones who killed her family and men in general; cf. ibid.: 5, 67, 119, 172, 188) from finding her and sending her “straight back home” (ibid.: 5).
At the same time as hiding her real linguistic heritage in the UK, Little Bee commiserates that she has forgotten “all the best tricks” of her mother tongue and compares learning the Queen’s English to “scrubbing off the bright red varnish from your toenails, the morning after a dance” (ibid.: 4):

For example, the Queen could never say, **There was plenty wahala, that girl done use her bottom power to engage my number-one son and anyone could see she would end in the bad bush.** Instead the Queen must say, **My late daughter-in-law used her feminine charms to become engaged to my heir, and one might have foreseen that it wouldn’t end well.** (Cleave 2008: 4)

It becomes obvious that Little Bee cherishes her heritage but decides to suppress it in order to be more welcomed in the UK. Cleave cleverly uses Little Bee’s language acquisition process to compare two versions of the same utterance. Through Little Bee’s lens the British reader is confronted with a more colourful version of the posh translation that is considered desirable English.

From the very beginning Cleave shows that his protagonist is capable of expressing herself in a humorous way, which makes Little Bee a very likeable character. He shows that Nigerian English is present on her mind as well as the newly acquired Queen’s English. At the same time, he demonstrates that the two variations of English do not intermingle in the character’s utterances, but that she makes a clear cut between the language she or the people at home would use and the language she uses now. This suggests that she does not perceive herself as a hybrid being, but rather that she would like to be seen as a tabula rasa, ready to create an entirely new English identity. Cleave will soon move on to show that Little Bee overestimates herself when she thinks she could easily overact where she comes from. She is the only one whom a taxi driver agrees to pick up from the detention centre because of her fine British accent on the phone and because she tells him that she and the other three girls are not refugees but cleaners. Even though so he will drive away without them because Little Bee calls him a ‘cock’ (cf. ibid.: 82).

[...] I was just beginning to understand that one word can have two meanings. [...] I could see that cock referred to the musician’s hair. It was like a cockerel’s comb, you see. So a cock was a cockerel, and it was also a man with that kind of hair. I am telling you this because the taxi-driver had exactly that kind of hair. (Cleave 2008: 80)
While Little Bee understands that a word can have two meanings, she fails to understand that it can have more than two connotations. Addressing the reader directly makes them foreshadow how this anecdote is going to end. The reader knows exactly what is going to happen next and is longing to find out whether his or her presumptions prove to be true. Little Bee continues explaining that she wanted to show the taxi driver “that we were British and we spoke your language and understood all the subtle things about your culture” (ibid.: 82) and that this is why she said to him: “Hello, I see that you are a cock.” (ibid.: 82).

Furthermore, Cleave shows how intelligent Little Bee is by having her realize the importance of learning her host country’s language. Little Bee involves the reader in her narration and explains that she has learned the Queen’s English “so that you and I could speak like this without an interruption.” (ibid.: 8). Once again, Cleave makes the diasporic character’s need to be heard obvious. He further underlines the importance of mutual understanding when he has Little Bee explain that her “ideal man would speak many languages” (ibid.: 78):

*He would speak Ibo and Yoruba and English and French and all of the others. He could speak with any person, even the soldiers, and if there was violence in their heart he could change it.* (Cleave 2008: 78)

Here, Cleave suggests that many conflicts could be prevented or solved if communication worked better. Implicitly, he triggers a thought process in the reader upon how war and violence could be counteracted.

Finally, the language Cleave has Little Bee use, or rather misuse, is important because it will decide her destiny. Little Bee is spending a day at the park with Sarah, Charlie and Lawrence. While she is having a conversation with Lawrence and Sarah is speaking on the phone, Charlie suddenly disappears. In her desperation, Sarah asks Little Bee to call the police. Even though Little Bee hesitates to do so at first, her feeling of guilt about not having helped Andrew when he committed suicide makes her put herself in danger this time.

*The policemen looked carefully at me. On his vest, his radio was saying, ‘CHARLIE BRAVO, PROCEED.’ ‘He is not called Charlie Bravo,’ I said. ‘His name is Charlie O’Rourke.’* (Cleave 2008: 336)
Already alarmed by her physical appearance, the police officer eyes Little Bee suspiciously. The fact that she does not understand ‘Charlie Bravo’ as parts of the phonetic alphabet makes him even more doubtful. His distrust is reassured when Little Bee does not know what ‘Caucasian’ means (cf. ibid.: 336). Cleave applies the same concept of having Little Bee not understand what the police officer says twice. These two consequential moments of speech create high tension, as the reader can already suspect the fatal ending to this situation (cf. 65).

To sum up, Cleave transmits his protagonists’ hybridity by locating them in ‘in-between’ spaces, in time as well as in space. Their constant renegotiation of selfhood originates from a source they have no or little control over (e.g. the civil war in Nigeria; Andrew’s suicide). However, towards the end of the novel the protagonists are able to take charge of their own development and take actions to recreate themselves in a way they wish for. Hybridity is expressed in particular via pluralistic naming and the use of hybrid language. Cleave’s work falls in the category of refugee narratives because characterizing its protagonists as highly (involuntarily) hybrid and constantly moving and shifting twixt two worlds (mentally as well as physically) helps to promote the novel’s ‘in-betweennesses’.

5.2 “The point is, you don’t belong here”: Transcultural Relationships

The boundaries to be crossed in The Other Hand are defined, inter alia, by contrasting the differences between Little Bee’s home and host country. Little Bee refers to her country of origin almost exclusively in comparison to aspects of British customs. She does so by telling the reader what the girls back home would say if she told them about social rules and convictions in the UK. Thereby Cleave kills two birds with one stone as he makes the reader understand Little Bee’s culture, whilst allowing the reader to reflect upon his own. Little Bee admits that much of her life in the UK is lived in confusion. At one point she imagines what a conversation with the girls from her village would look like, should she try to explain them why in the UK topless women are likely to appear in the newspaper but not on the street:

‘So do all the girls over there show them off like that? Walk around with their bobbis bouncing? In the church and in the shop and in the street? ‘No, only in the newspaper.’ (Cleave 2008: 7)
At this point, Cleave alludes to the absurdity of a culture where nakedness is a desire and a taboo at once. The Western consumer is constantly surrounded by pictorial nudity but is ashamed of physical nakedness. It seems like the nude in public space is acceptable only as long as it is impersonal and objectified. By commenting on this issue through Little Bee’s lens, Cleave is able to shed a critical light on Western values. Since she is a stranger to her host society she can observe it from a certain distance, which makes it easier for her to unveil the illogicality of certain phenomena. Furthermore, the reader learns that in Little Bee’s home community it is equally uncommon for women to show their naked breasts in public, which represents a common feature of both cultures. Thereby Cleave unrolls differences and similarities at the same time and works towards crossing a cultural boundary.

Another contact point between cultures which Cleave creates to negotiate cultural difference, is the moment when his characters mourn over their deceased family members. For example, when Sarah explains to Little Bee that they are about to go to Andrew’s funeral and that a funeral is a religious ceremony and that this is “what we do in this country”, Little Bee replies: “I know what you do in this country” (ibid.: 131). Cleave raises the point that refugees know about their host culture, whereas members of Western society may know very little about the people who seek shelter in their countries. Therefore, it may be argued that in many occasions a so-called ‘exchange’ between members of the host society and the refugees goes only one-way. By criticizing this fact, Cleave encourages the reader to work more towards a fusion of cultures, that is towards an transcultural rather than a multicultural society.

‘What one does in a country’, the customs and ceremonies they celebrate in The Other Hand, is often drawn down to religious traditions. Whether actively practiced or not, religion constitutes an important component of any cultural community. In line with the novel’s dual structure, faith and religion are depicted ambiguously in Cleave’s narrative. Firstly, the strong belief of the diasporic characters is opposed to the superficial religious practice of the host society. Secondly, while religion gives the characters shelter, it does not leave space for hope. For instance, Little Bee tells the reader about the copy of the Bible that missionaries had given her village:

> In our village, our only Bible had all of its pages missing after the forty-sixth verse of the twenty-seventh chapter of Matthew, so that the end of our religion, as far as any of us knew, was My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? That is how we lived, happily and without hope. (Cleave 2008: 258-259)
Nevertheless, Nkiruka’s faith in God is very deep. Even when she is about to be killed she tells her sister not to be afraid because “if they kill us today we will eat bread tonight with Jesus” (ibid.: 163). She begins to pray Hail Mary in her tribal language, which is also another manifestation of the use of hybrid language in the novel:

‘Ekenem-i Maria,’ she said, ‘gratia ju-i obi Dinweni nonyel-I, I nwe ngozi kali ikporo nine na ngozi dili nwa afo-i bu Jesu.’ (Cleave 2008: 160)

Although Little Bee herself does not seem to be very religious in a traditional way, it becomes obvious that her sister’s faith will come to life again in Little Bee’s spirit. Little Bee keeps hoping and fighting for her own bright future even though she has undergone countless foils during her escape and after her settlement in the UK. This testifies that people who experience terror need to believe to keep themselves alive. People who are carefree often do not see the need of believing in anything, which is what has happened to Sarah in The Other Hand and to many members of Western societies in general. The enigmatic discourse of faith makes the reader meditate upon their own attitudes towards religion without offering a final answer to the question of which role it should take in one’s life. Rather, Cleave implies that faith can give security, strength, and hope and points out the importance of believing in something (cf. 53). It can be argued that this is a need shared by all human beings, no matter which culture they belong to or which religion they confess to. Thereby Cleave breaks down another barrier in intercultural relations: the one created by religious differences.

Social inclusion can be seen as the key to a transcultural society. According to the UN, an inclusive society

 [...] is a society that over-rides differences of race, gender, class, generation, and geography, and ensures inclusion, equality of opportunity as well as capability of all members of the society [...] (Expert Group Meeting on Promoting Social Integration, Helsinki, July 2008). (UN 2008: 8)

The social reality Cleave depicts in his narrative is far from overriding the differences of race and geography. Through Little Bee’s reasoning the reader will learn that being included in the host society is a rather selective process. According to Little Bee, it is especially “the pretty ones and the talkative ones” that are allowed to stay, because they make the country “more lively and more beautiful” (Cleave 2008: 4). After Little Bee witnessed what ‘the men’ did to her sister she chooses to be as
unattractive as possible, but compensates for the lack of a pleasant physical appearance by learning proper English. This feature facilitates her to move about relatively freely for some time, but in the end, when she is being deported, an officer tells her: “It doesn’t matter how you talk [...]. The point is, you don’t belong here” (ibid.: 344). This leads to the question of what it means to belong somewhere. In the officer’s mind someone has got to “have our values” (ibid.: 345) in order to belong to a place. Again, this goes against the concept of a transcultural society as promoted by Cuccioletta.

Furthermore, Cleave points out that Little Bee’s host society needs to work on their concept of the ‘other’. He does so for example when he has Little Bee observe children of black and white parents playing in the park. She is astonished because she had not seen ‘mixed’ people before and thinks to herself:

 [...] there is no them in this place. These happy people, these mixed-up people who are one thing and also another thing, these people are you. (Cleave 2008: 310)

This one moment in the park, when Little Bee comes to peace with the fact that she can be one thing as well as another, is in agreement with Fludernik’s definition of the ‘both/and’ phenomenon as discussed earlier (cf. 25). It stands out from several other occasions where Little Bee feels neither belonging to one group of people nor the other. According to her, people from ‘our’ country as well as people from her country both think “that refugee girl is not one of us. That girl does not belong here” (Cleave 2008: 11). In the following it will be shown that Cleave depicts the society Little Bee is trying to belong to in the UK as rather xenophobic.

Taras argues that the xenophobic attitude in European societies is growing. He refers to the European Pact on Immigration and Asylum, which summons the EU to “receive immigrants with dignity”, as well as to speeches by Angela Merkel and Pope Benedict XVI, who condemned “all forms of racism” (Taras 2009: 405). Despite the fact that he acknowledges the influence of people of public life on the common population, to him “it is writers who speak to us most directly about racism, xenophobia, hostility, and fear” (ibid.: 405). To confront xenophobic tendencies requires stopping to regard minorities as foreign bodies and to understand them as an integral element in a multicultural society, which participates in the social discourse from the inside (cf. Sommer 2001: 11). How Cleave speaks about the topics mentioned by Taras and how the author tries to integrate the ‘foreign body’ in a multicultural, or, better, transcultural society, will be explored in the following.
Cleave shows the lack of welcoming foreigners in the UK in his introductory sentence uttered by Little Bee: “Most days I wish I was a British pound coin instead of an African girl. Everyone would be pleased to see me coming” (Cleave 2008: 1). With this, Cleave suggests that immigrants are welcome as long as they are of some economical benefit. Asylum seekers with no permission to work, on the other hand, are a burden for the British taxpayer. Taras ascribes this xenophobic attitude towards the “foreigner originating from the Third World” to the “sheer numbers arriving in a short timespan” (Taras 2009: 393). Even though the host countries are normally able to provide “jobs, housing, schools, heath care”, the host societies appear “psychologically unprepared to adapt to large-scale in-migration” (ibid.: 393). The lack of preparation in the UK is also reflected in countless incidents of prejudice and racism in Cleave’s novel.

One of the moments in *The Other Hand* in which racism manifests itself is when the taxi driver, to whom Yvette speaks in broken English on the phone, refuses to pick them up from the detention centre (cf. Cleave 2008: 18). The next taxi driver, who gets offended after Little Bee calls him a ‘cock’ due to a linguistic misunderstanding, drives off asking: “Don’t they teach you monkeys any manners in the jungle?” (ibid.: 82). A comment made by one of the officers at the airport where Little Bee is waiting to be deported from is equally offensive: “SOON ONE OF THOSE AEROPLANES is going to set off for UM-BONGO LAND, where you come from […]” (ibid.: 346).

Furthermore, Cleave makes reference to the power of media. The headline on the detention officer’s newspaper states: “ASYLUM SEEKERS EATING OUR SWANS” (ibid.: 26), which might make reference to an article *The Sun* published in 2003, accusing asylum seekers from Eastern Europe to have barbequed the Queen’s swans. This notice based on a man’s phone call could not be proved by any firm evidence and created an urban myth (cf. Medic 2004). By including incidents of such kind in his novel, Cleave makes the reader understand how boundaries are being built between members of the host society and the refugee.

Cleave judges the British society not only in regard to racism and xenophobia, he also sketches the hypocrisy of its members and the shallowness of their relationships. This is mainly shown through Sarah’s colleague Clarissa. The reader observes Sarah’s intention to be different and to take actions that truly matter to her but realizes that she is somehow trapped in this superficial society. Sarah runs a popular magazine but does not succeed in publishing articles on topics she finds important. For example, in
a meeting with Clarissa, Sarah suggests including a story of a woman from Baghdad in that month’s issue. Clarissa, however, argues: “we can’t be serving up morality tales while the other majors are selling sex” (Cleave 2008: 51). So they end up substituting Sarah’s piece for “a piece on a new kind of orgasm you could apparently only get with the boss” (ibid.: 48). The situation is repeated when Sarah returns to work after Andrew’s funeral and proposes writing something about refugees. Again, this suggestion is turned down and Sarah disappointedly complains to Lawrence that “every time [they] put in something deep and meaningful, the circulation drops” (ibid.: 296). Lawrence believes this is due to the fact that “people’s lives are hard enough” and they “might not want to be reminded that everyone else’s lives are shit too” (ibid.: 296). What Cleave addresses here is the average Western citizen’s exorbitant concern with their own lives. They prefer to connive at all the trouble in the world, either out of ignorance, out of comfort, or as a form of self-protection.

The shallowness of relationships in The Other Hand is shown in public space as well as in the protagonist’s sphere of private life. Sarah and Andrew’s love scene is symptomatic of a hollow marriage. It involves their sleeping son, but rather than fitting him beautifully into the scene like Campbell did in This Is Where I Am, (cf. 43, or Campbell 2014: 96) Cleave uses Charlie being asleep more as justification for his parents to have sex:

And then, since we were both awake and Charlie was asleep, we made love. I used to do that with Andrew sometimes. More for him than for me, really. By that stage of our marriage it had become a maintenance thing, like bleeding the air out of the radiators – just another part of running a household. (Cleave 2008: 39)

These characters’ love relationship is unfulfilled, like so many other aspects of their lives. Her partner’s love is something Sarah takes for granted; it seems like it is of no value to her. The scene culminates when Charlie, having defecated his batman costume, suddenly stands in the bedroom door: “our unhappy sex interrupted, and this very thick stink of shit” (ibid.: 42). However, their relationship has not always been as unromantic and routine as it is at that point. Sarah remembers their honeymoon, when they “drank rum and lemonade and talked so much that [she] never even noticed what colour the sea was” (ibid.: 45). Later on in the novel the reader will learn that their relationship drastically changed when their son was born, which, paradoxically, was the only right important decision Sarah has made in her life according to herself (cf.
When Andrew finds out about Sarah’s affair, she lies that her connection to Lawrence was purely sexual. Andrew lectures Sarah that “sex has become one of those words you can put ‘just’ in front of” (ibid.: 238) and accuses her of minimising her infidelity. Sarah blinds out the fact that she is hurting another human being out of self interest to enjoy her own desires light-heartedly. This represents another point of criticism on Western values and contrasts starkly with the burden Little Bee has to carry. Furthermore, the superficiality of Sarah and Andrew’s marriage echoes the superficiality of the articles Sarah publishes in her magazine. Sarah is not supportive of her husband and her affair makes her family fall apart little by little. Lawrence, too, looks for refuge in the affair rather than sticking to his family. As he states, he wishes he loved his wife (cf. ibid.: 242) and lead a happy life with his family but he does not realize that he would have to work for it rather than escaping from his problems.

Cleave further criticizes the absurdity of so called first world problems by having Sarah wince “at the taste of the ersatz lemon”. She admits that “[i]t was a small problem to have: a lack of real lemons. It was almost a comfort” (ibid.: 175). Sarah herself realizes the triviality of her own life only after Little Bee enters her door and “life had finally broken through” (ibid.: 136). She acknowledges that she “can’t look at her without thinking how shallow [her] life is.” (ibid.: 296). Andrew seems to have realized something similar earlier on, even before their holiday in Nigeria. According to what he wrote for his Sunday column, our society is ‘self-interested’ and he wonders: “how will our children learn to put others before themselves, if we do not?” (ibid.: 161). Interestingly, he puts keeping his finger before saving Nkiruka’s life and thereby fails to live up to his own convictions. Cleave raises the issue of how far one should go to save someone else and the reader realizes that charity is a noble concept in theory but difficult when put into practice. Sarah cuts off her middle finger in order to save Little Bee’s life. As a consequence, Little Bee survives while her sister gets killed. Because of this Andrew falls into a deep depression which eventually leads to his suicide. Thereby the reader is inevitably confronted with the question of how much of one’s life one would sacrifice in order to save another’s. Furthermore, when Sarah and Little Bee meet again two years after their first encounter at the beach in Nigeria, Sarah cuts back on her private life to the disfavour of Lawrence who will now have to ‘share’ her with Little Bee. Lawrence proves to be rather selfish when he threatens Little Bee to report her to the authorities; after all he “can’t be responsible for all the trouble in the world” (ibid.: 267). Against her lover’s expectations, Sarah decides to accompany Little Bee to
Nigeria and to protect her from the authorities. This can be interpreted as a call Cleave makes on the reader to show moral courage rather than living one’s life in comfort. Despite all the above mentioned negative light that is projected upon Western society, there are still positive aspects about it. Sarah criticises Andrew for being too pessimistic when he only had eyes for all the circumstances that were going wrong in the country: “Crime was spreading, schools were failing, immigration was creeping and public morals were slipping.” (ibid.: 216). Instead, she suggests writing “about the people who are doing something about it” (ibid.: 216). Sarah points out that even though there are many evil things, there are still good aspects about the British. In a way, she communicates bad news and good news for the future at the same time: the bad news is that many things are going wrong and the future is uncertain; the good news is that people can do something about it. Ironically, it is the interview she leads with Lawrence, someone who ‘does something about it’, that will lead her into starting an affair and destroying her family life. This ambiguous situation, again, is in line with the novel’s dual character.

The process of including a foreign being into a xenophobic society will prove to be impossible in The Other Hand, since Little Bee is finally sent back home. This final solution demonstrates that the society portrayed by Cleave is psychologically not ready for the so-called third world refugee, just like Taras argued in his paper (cf. Taras 2009: 393). In his novel, Cleave sketches several differences between his diasporic character and her host society that lead to conflicts rather than to a mutual estimation of ‘otherness’. He shows that more often than not characters fail to break down the boundaries they themselves and the society they are surrounded by has created. There is the boundary between Sarah and Andrew, which Sarah slowly dismantles only after his death; the boundary between Lawrence and Little Bee, which leads him to wanting to report her to the authorities; the boundary between the collective of illegal immigrants and the xenophobic white characters, whose communication is restricted to insulting and racist comments. The friendship between Little Bee and Sarah and Little Bee and Charlie are the only real contact points in the novel. They let the reader hope for a more tolerant society that embraces otherness.

Lastly, it is interesting to take a closer look on the novel’s ending. It can be interpreted as ambiguous because there are negative as well as positive aspects to it. For one thing, Little Bee fails to become a part of the English society and eventually gets deported back to Nigeria, where a soldier captures her. Several passages hint to this definite
ending. For example, Little Bee states: “I realised that my story was only made of endings” (Cleave 2008: 213). Another example is the aforementioned ending of the bible Little Bee had in her village: “God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (ibid.: 259). Au contraire, *The Other Hand’s* ending can be interpreted by all means in a positive way. Towards the end of the novel both protagonists will have succeeded in actively working towards being the people they want to be. Constantly exposed to changing surroundings, both Little Bee and Sarah take control of their own destiny as far as possible and bravely face the situations they are not in control of. Sarah accompanies Little Bee to Nigeria for an indefinite period of time, leaving behind her secure life at home. Little Bee surrenders herself to the soldiers when they threaten Charlie, knowing that this could mean her death. The moment when Little Bee “felt the hard hand of a soldier on [her] arm”, she does not turn around but watches Charlie play with the local children on the beach instead (cf. ibid.: 373), laughs, and describes the situation as beautiful (cf. ibid.: 374).

To conclude, in *The Other Hand* Cleave sketches the English host society as xenophobic and shallow. Through characters who are racist or too concerned about their own lives, he demonstrates how difficult it is for Little Bee, and for refugees in general, to become a part of this community. By juxtaposing the protagonists’ culture of origin, Cleave makes the Western reader reflect upon their own manners and moral values. Moreover, he calls on the reader to work towards an understanding, transcultural society that appreciates ‘otherness’ and whose members recognize themselves in the ‘other’.
6. “Here today, gone tomorrow”: Comparing/Contrasting Campbell and Cleave’s refugee novels

A definition of the proverb ‘Here today, gone tomorrow’ by the Cambridge dictionary reads as follows: “said about something that lasts only a short time” (Cambridge Online Dictionary). This saying is laconic for both Campbell and Cleave’s novels. ‘Here today’ is representative of Campbell’s novel because Abdi is ‘here’ (in Glasgow, his new home) today; ‘gone tomorrow’, in the context of The Other Hand, is suggestive of Little Bee’s deportation. Contemplating the saying as a whole and the two novels in comparison to each other, renders tangible their fugitive, fleeting quintessence. In this last part of my analysis I am going to summarize similarities and differences in the way the two authors deal with the tension the refugee controversy has been creating in European societies in general, and in British society in particular.

As a primary similarity between the two novels, duality in structure deserves to be mentioned. Cleave divides his novel into two parts; Campbell opts for a division into three parts, whereby the first two conflict with one another (Away, Lost) and the third offers a solution (Home). Cleave’s title The Other Hand automatically calls for ‘the one hand’ as well. This ambidextrous notion predicts the novel’s dual character even before the reader opens the book. The one hand asks for help; the other offers help. Moreover, it is interesting to take a look at the phrase ‘on the one hand, on the other hand’, which is often used in reasoning or to bring two arguments together. Hence, it reflects all the different dualities throughout the novel, like the refugee’s experiences in one country and then in another, or the idea of the refugee as the ‘other’. This reciprocity entails another duality, namely, both Little Bee and Sarah are both the one hand and the other. Little Bee needs Sarah’s hand (or finger) when she is about to be killed by a soldier on their first encounter; Sarah needs Little Bee’s hand when her husband commits suicide and she is not prepared to raise Charlie as a single mother. The same can be said of Abdi and Deborah, who mutually support each other. By creating an interdependency between two protagonists/narrators, who are divided by social boundaries, the authors manage to surpass racial and linguistic bounds. Additionally, on a thematic level the two novels juxtapose two worlds respectively: one Western, white, middle class; the other African, black, war-torn. Not only does the Western reader get to know a world that is foreign to them (e.g. the beach in Nigeria, or the refugee camp in Kenya), they are also encouraged to scrutinize their own familiar surroundings. This triggers a
process of critical self-reflection and reconsideration about the attitude one takes towards the ‘other’.

Turning to the novels’ protagonists it can be observed that both authors characterize them by creating plurality and hybridity via contrasting the values they (used to) live by, naming/labelling, and through incorporating ‘crossbred’ language. The two diasporic protagonists both originate from an African country and flee persecution, having to leave their homes forcefully and involuntarily. Both suffer traumatic experiences, especially when they witness their family members being tortured and killed. They differ in that Abdi stems from a safe country of origin, while Little Bee is Nigerian and runs the risk of being sent back home. On a deeper, psychological level they differ in their way of dealing with their newly acquired identities. Little Bee tries to recreate herself completely and pretends to have always belonged to her host country. She is constantly trying to hide away a part of her former self in order not to be discovered by the authorities. On the contrary, Abdi has the freedom to accept his hybrid roles and to gradually grow into them because, having been granted asylum, he does not have to fear deportation. His self-conception is by far a more intermingled one than Little Bee’s, who tries to keep a clear cut divide between herself in the past and herself at present.

The two white characters are alike in the sense that their lives are shallow until their diasporic mentees appear in them. Deborah is a fallible, humane heroine from the start who, despite having lost her family, still has the drive to move on and change something about her situation. In comparison, Sarah is depicted as a weak character because she runs away from her problems. They both prove to be fairly superficial at times but manage to put their minor sorrows into perspective when confronted with their mentees’ fates and prove to be capable of great deeds. This may be seen as a wider commentary on Western society as a whole. The typically consumerist and often superficial, self-centred Western society is represented by the two characters and the authors call on their readers (who are likely to be members of Western society) to reconsider their ethics and moral principles just as these characters do.

All four protagonists are located in ‘in-between’ spaces, be it locally, temporally, or socially (home/host country, past/present, inclusion/exclusion). They are dynamic, hybrid characters who develop over time and who constantly slip into or take on new roles. They are all forced to renegotiate their identities and to remain “open to change and reinscription” (McLeod 2010: 254) throughout the narrations. For instance, Sarah
needs to negotiate who she is after her husband’s suicide and needs to remain open to change when Little Bee enters her life. Thereby the authors illustrate the fleeting nature of human identity in general. They show that changes in identity which come along forcefully (e.g. by diaspora or the loss of a family member) are easier to accept if the human spirit remains open and flexible. Once the characters realize their impuissance towards strokes of fate and actively work towards bringing out the best of their situations, they are in conformity with themselves. What distinguishes the four protagonists the most is their attitude towards religion, a pioneering theme in both novels. It is the diasporic characters (Abdi in *This Is Where I Am* and Nkiruka in *The Other Hand*) who show that believing in *something* – be it God, Allah, or some kind of other spiritual source – is what keeps the spirit alive in times of terror and what has the power to mend the soul. This implies an invitation to the reader to think over their personal religious sentiment.

Looking at the difficulties the victims of diaspora have to face in the process of fitting into a host society, the feeling of impotence and powerlessness is an outstanding theme. In many instances this feeling is enunciated as ‘stupid refugee’ in *This Is Where I Am* and as ‘silly village girl’ in *The Other Hand*. This is symptomatic of all the indignities the refugee or the illegal immigrant has to go through in the search for a place of belonging. They come across innumerable racial, linguistic, or societal boundaries, which can be overcome only through friendship and humane relationships. Having a mentor who stands by them, who overlooks discrepancies, and who accepts their ‘otherness’ helps *all* the protagonists to flourish, not only the mentees.

Both authors shed critical light on the xenophobia that prevails in the English and Scottish societies. They both opt to do so by portraying secondary characters (e.g. Abdi’s neighbour, or the taxi driver who picks the four girls up from the detention centre) as negative reminders of a community that is biased in relation to immigrants. ‘Recognizing oneself in the other’ is something that transpires almost exclusively within the relationship the two protagonists foster in each novel. It can be argued that both authors plead for working towards transculturalism from the ‘inside’. This suggests that with every single interpersonal relationship that builds up empathy and understanding, a transcultural society can grow and develop.
Finally, the endings Campbell and Cleave confront their readers with are of major importance. In *This Is Where I Am* the reader may feel relieved when Abdi’s family is being reunited in Glasgow. However, the fact that he knows a lot more about the Glaswegian society than Azira, combined with his protective and caring character, makes it obvious that he will feel obliged to familiarize her and his family with the new surroundings. Thus, their struggles are not over yet. This task paired with the challenge of accepting Azira’s son as his own hints that Abdi will face further complex developments in the future.

In comparison, *The Other Hand* presents a more open ending. The final scene describes a happy, laughing Little Bee being captured by a soldier on a beach in Nigeria. It is an ambiguous end because her happiness contrasts with what the reader expects will happen to her. Despite being captured, Little Bee seems to be at peace with herself for the first time in the narration. The inner peace she feels when watching children of black skin colour play with the white Charlie on the beach equals a racial boundary that is crossed in this very moment. Her looking at the sea may suggest that she is looking forward to seeing her deceased sister again, whose remains ‘the men’ threw into the water after they killed her. A future growth of the character is implied either way. Her development could take place either in this life, meaning that Little Bee would have to face imprisonment and, in the best case, release; or in other characters’ lives, since she had a great impact on Sarah and Charlie.

The main difference between Campbell and Cleave’s narrations resides in the final solution they offer their diasporic protagonists. While Abdi is allowed to stay in Glasgow as an officially accepted refugee, Little Bee gets deported back to Nigeria. Cleave tickles the issue of menaced people fleeing countries which are considered safe countries of origin, while Campbell opts to put emphasis on the living situation of a refugee (which, in Abdi’s case, implies living in a refugee camp, undergoing the humiliating process of applying for asylum, or ‘begging’ for shelter and food). Cleave, on the other hand, sheds light on every day problems of an illegal immigrant, like constantly hiding and escaping in the country where they hoped to be safe.
7. Conclusion

In conclusion, with everything in mind that has been discussed so far, it becomes obvious that Campbell and Cleave’s novels faithfully mirror the ongoing dispute about (illegal) immigration in Great Britain. The controversy dealt with in the two novels is not limited to the political and geographical borders of the British Isles, but can be seen as representing a situation existent all over the continent.

The conflicts depicted in *This Is Where I Am* and *The Other Hand* that make the diasporic characters escape their homes are a consequence of Britain’s colonial past. Therefore, the novels can be said to belong to post-colonialism. Yet, they are considerably different from other postcolonial works or works of migration literature, for they portray the lives of victims of diaspora. To put it another way, the refugee novel tells the story of an individual who is subject to forced migration and whose process of integration in the host community is characterized by very specific social circumstances and difficulties (e.g. xenophobia, racial discrimination, or accusations of exploiting the benefits system). I have discussed the socio-political context the novels are set in and outlined that there are xenophobic tendencies in European societies. As shown in chapter 2, fear of the foreign is created by exaggerated, emotionalised discourse and can easily be dismantled by comparing bare facts. Tara’s statement that the host population is psychologically not prepared to welcome mass immigration (cf. Taras 2009: 393) is also echoed in the two refugee novels analysed in this thesis.

By analysing the two novels from a transcultural point of view, I have shown how Campbell and Cleave capture the tension around the so-called refugee crisis present in their place of residency, Glasgow and London respectively. Both authors sketch an antagonistic host population. They illustrate that the fear of the unknown derives from a lack of engagement with the foreign and show how approaching the ‘other’ helps in overcoming prejudice. In my analysis I have further revealed how the authors appeal to their readers’ empathy and humanity. For example, Little Bee involves her audience straightforwardly by addressing the reader directly and stating that she wants to tell them her story (cf. Cleave 2008: 12). In *This Is Where I Am*, both Abdi and Deborah lecture either secondary characters or society in general on the principles of humanity (cf. Campbell 2014: 185, 254). By criticizing Western values and cultures via the
restricted point of views of their diasporic characters, Campbell and Cleave manage to shed a critical light on their own communities from a foreign perspective. It can be argued that the ‘foreigner’ possesses the required distance to reveal trivialities of social conventions in a culture. By contrast, members of that very community tend to fail to realize the arbitrariness of their own culture’s manifestations because they may be too familiar with it. It can be argued that being confronted with one’s own (potential) weak spots may create instability and fear, hence the antagonistic attitude towards the strange ‘invader’ in one’s environment.

Using Campbell and Cleave’s novels as an example, I have demonstrated how British contemporary fiction deals with the refugee dispute. By revealing the difficulties this minority group faces and by showing deficiencies of the British as a host society, the refugee narrative attempts to tackle key issues involved in the debate. The authors’ answer to discrimination against refugees is a call for compassion and empathy, for appreciating diversity, and for humanizing the refugee as an individual.

Taking a look at the notes and acknowledgements the authors attach at the very end of their novels (cf. Campbell 2014: 467; Cleave 2008: 375-8) it transpires that the settings they describe in their fictitious worlds strongly correlate with the real conditions refugees and asylum seekers are confronted with inside and outside the UK, for example in detention centres, in refugee camps or when facing sudden deportation, refugee camps. By developing the initially distant relationship between the diasporic and the British protagonists into a profound friendship, Campbell and Cleave offer an alternative way of dealing with the ‘other’. These friendships are the most important way of breaking down boundaries between the ‘foreign’ and the ‘familiar’ individual. As exposed in the passages analysed in chapters 4.2 and 5.2, host societies in This Is Where I Am and The Other Hand cannot be considered as transcultural in a way Cuccioletta suggests. One example of this is the moment when Little Bee waits at the airport to be deported and an officer tells her that in order to belong here one has to “have our values” (Cleave 2008: 345). Nevertheless, the hope that a multicultural society focused on differences between its members may shift to transculturalism is present in both novels.

Aside from that, I have revealed how both authors illustrate “complex and ambiguous realities”, as defined by Pourjafari and Vahidpour (Pourjafari / Vahidpour 2014: 679),
through their works of fiction. Ambiguity and duality are concepts that permeate the novels from the beginning to the end. They are present in both the narrative structure and the treatise of complex topics, such as intercultural relationships, language, or religion. Especially noteworthy is the ‘both/and’ phenomena as proposed by Fludernik (cf. Fludernik 2003: xxiii) Campbell and Cleave apply in constructing their protagonists’ pluralistic identities. Cleave shows that they can be “mixed-up people” (cf. Cleave 2008: 310); Campbell acknowledges that they can be a person whose life is miserable and a person who looks forward to the new chances life has to offer (cf. Campbell 2014: 412). All four protagonists are balancing their lives in between space and time, trying to find a place of belonging (which is then again fleeting). The act of approaching an equilibrium involves numerous moments of recreation. Out of the broken spirits the authors present at the beginning, their protagonists evolve to be strong characters who are determined to face their destiny as well as new challenges. However, the attainment of this status does not imply that they completely overcome hybridity. Rather, the protagonists internally rearrange and consolidate the various pieces their identity is composed of and thereby constantly recreate a mosaic that is ever-changing and never complete.

The protagonists’ morals and worldviews are challenged every time they are confronted with ‘otherness’. For example, Abdi has to adapt to the mealtimes of the ‘others’; Little Bee has to accept that it is normal for women to exhibit their breasts in the newspaper but not in real life; Deborah learns that a woman can be property of a tribal chief and Sarah experiences life’s terrors on a Nigerian beach. In worlds which are foreign to them, all four protagonists have to reconsider the values they have held up to until these moments.

A difference can be observed in this process of reconsideration or recreation between Campbell and Cleave’s diasporic characters. For Abdi it is a gradual process of adaptation, rather than a radical reinvention of himself. This is illustrated, among other things, by his language acquisition process. At the beginning of the novel his speech is faulty, repetitive and auto corrective, but it improves in a natural way as the novel unfolds and as time goes by. On the contrary, Little Bee, who describes herself as unnatural, tries to recreate herself completely, also linguistically – a plan that is going to fail. The discrepancy between her real self and her pretended self makes her lack the requisite authenticity in the decisive moment when she talks to the police officer in the park. While Little Bee’s misuse of language will lead to her deportation, Rebecca’s use
of language in *This Is Where I Am* has a far more positive connotation: when she begins to speak about her mother, she makes Deborah suspect that Azira might still be alive, which will result in the reunification of the Hassan family.

To conclude, refugee narratives are an important contribution to the humanitarian crisis that has been existent for decades in many European welfare states. It can be argued that both Campbell and Cleave’s main matter of interest is to make their diasporic protagonists visible and audible. In this sense refugee literature tries to give voice to the fugitive individual and encourages readers to recognize that every human being is worthy and cannot be dismissed en masse. *This Is Where I Am* and *The Other Hand* are novels that humanize the refugee; they make the reader get in touch with Abdi and Little Bee as individuals and therefore facilitate empathizing with them. With the analysis of these two exemplary novels I have started a minor attempt towards closing the research gap of minority literature which Sommer laments (cf. Sommer 2001: 2) by examining two exemplary novels. Further investigation will be necessary in order to establish a wide and diverse spectrum of frequent topics and leading themes that characterize refugee narratives.
8. Teaching ideas and material for incorporating the refugee novel in the EFL classroom

8.1 Reasons for Teaching Literature in the EFL Classroom

Incorporating literary works in the foreign language classroom has been widely discussed among scholars. It has been subject to change depending on the prevalent subject-didactical approach at a certain time and on the educational policy then in force (cf. Surkamp 2010: 137). The shift from a text-centred grammar-translation method towards a communicative, output oriented language class put literature at the margins of the foreign language classroom. As will be argued anon, excluding literary works from foreign language teaching would deprive the classroom of a learning source of both cultural and linguistic value.

Based on Collie and Slater (1990), in his article “Teaching English Through Literature”, Hismanoğlu puts forward arguments in favour of using literature in the classroom. First, he names the authenticity of literary works (which are not designed for teaching purpose) as a motivational factor. Second, he draws attention to the cultural and linguistic enrichment a literary work brings into the classroom. Third, he stresses the personal involvement the students may experience when identifying with characters or relating to topics in the literary work (cf. Hismanoğlu 2005: 54-55), which again will result in increased motivation. In a similar way Savvidou attributes importance to literature in the classroom when she describes literary texts as a “powerful pedagogic tool”. To her, communicative competence “also involves acquiring the ability to interpret discourse in all its social and cultural contexts” (Savvidou 2004). Some may argue that that poetic language may distract learners more than the common practice of teaching “knowledge of language structure, functions and general communication”. However, Savvidou strongly recommends to include literature in the foreign language syllabus because literature is a part of language. She criticizes the “historic divergence between language and literature”, underlines that “literature is language and language can indeed be literary” and acknowledges that “integrating literature into the EFL syllabus is beneficial to the learners’ linguistic development” (ibid.) (EFL will be used henceforth as abbreviation for ‘English as a foreign language’).

Savvidou pleads for an integrated approach to teaching literature. Her approach is aimed at fusing the three main models to the teaching of literature formulated by Carter and Long: the cultural model, the language model and the personal growth
model (Carter and Long 1991 qtd. in Savvidou 2004). Whereas the first model focuses on the text as a “cultural artefact” (Savvidou 2004), the language model dismantles the text for purely linguistic exercises. In the personal growth model the text is used for activities that foster personal development, the forming of opinions, or the reconsideration of values. By integrating all of these elements, Savvidou calls for a way “that makes literature accessible to learners and beneficial for their linguistic [and personal] development” (ibid.). She summarizes the benefits of an integral approach as follows:

Apart from offering a distinct literary world which can widen learners’ understanding of their own and other cultures, it can create opportunities for personal expression as well as reinforce learners’ knowledge of lexical and grammatical structure. Moreover, an integrated approach to the use of literature offers learners strategies to analyse and interpret language in context in order to recognize not only how language is manipulated but also why. (Savvidou 2004)

Thus, it can be argued that reading literary works in the EFL classroom is beneficial for the students under three aspects: it creates cultural contact points; it exposes the readers to a wide range of vocabulary and grammatical structures; it encourages personal growth. In addition to this, Surkamp underlines the possibilities of literature to cover the intercultural aspect of teaching a foreign language:


This idea puts didactics of literature under the purpose of intercultural learning. Following Bredella, Surkamp argues that through discussing literature the students can get to know the otherness of foreign models of reality, take on foreign perspectives and, concomitant, reflect upon the limitations of their own worldview. To put it another way, Surkamp emphasizes the role of foreign language teaching as a transmitter of understanding the ‘other’.

According to the Austrian curriculum, the foreign language classroom should stimulate intercultural competence and integrate diverse topics and text types (cf. Bundesministerium für Unterricht, Kunst und Kultur: 1, 4). Incorporating a refugee novel in the EFL classroom tackles both of these principles. The main concern in
foreign language teaching should be to sensitize the pupils to cultural and linguistic variety throughout Europe and the world, and to foster open-mindedness and comprehensiveness towards other cultures and modi vivendi (cf. ibid.: 1).

Durch die Auswahl geeigneter fremdsprachlicher Themenstellungen ist die Weltoffenheit der Schülerinnen und Schüler sowie ihr Verständnis für gesellschaftliche Zusammenhänge zu fördern. Konfliktfähigkeit, Problemlösungskompetenz und Friedenserziehung sind auch im Fremdsprachenunterricht als zentrale Lehr- und Lernziele zu betrachten. (Bundesministerium für Unterricht, Kunst und Kultur: 1)

Therefore, the main goal of the following teaching module will be on creating empathy and fostering comprehension for the social linkage between members of the host society and members of the fugitive community. By incorporating a refugee novel in a European (or Austrian, in this context) EFL classroom, students will be confronted with problems asylum seekers, refugees and illegal immigrants face in a culture similar to their own. This is in accordance with the curriculum’s central teaching aim to provide an education for peace. In particular, the students should learn to approach cultural stereotypes and clichés in an unprejudiced way and to be aware of commonalities with and differences from their own culture (cf. ibid.: 1). Therefore, another main focus of the following teaching module will be on relating the novel’s contents to their own experiences and thereby encourage personal growth, as suggested by Savvidou. From a lexical point of view, the curriculum requires to cover a broad variety of topics in order to gain an ample lexical repertoire (cf. ibid.: 4). The subjects broached by working with a refugee novel fall within the scope of the following themes stated by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education: “attitude and values; cohabitation; current social, economic and political trends; globalization; cultural and intercultural interaction” (cf. ibid.: 4; tr. HM). For the EFL classroom this means that vocabulary related to the aforesaid themes needs to be introduced before reading, further elaborated while reading and consolidated after reading. Lexical items will need to be incorporated alongside grammatical components. The advantage of working with literature here is that the literary text presents lexico-grammatical features in context, which the student may find more meaningful than, for example, filling in gaps in disconnected sentences. Furthermore, there are parallels between the refugee’s experience encountering a new culture and learning a new language and the student’s experience being confronted with colloquial language and particularities of British
culture. Therefore, the refugee novel provides an easy starting point as the students are learning the language alongside the protagonists.

The following module is designed for students of a 12th grade AHS. Students attending this grade have been learning English for approximately eight years and should be working towards a B2 level in all of the four skills (cf. ibid.: 4). The self-assessment grid published in the the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (henceforth referred to as CEFR), says that a reader on B2 level “can understand literary prose” (Council of Europe: 27). It further acknowledges the importance of “imaginative and artistic uses of language” in education, which includes, inter alia, the reception of literary texts such as novels (cf. ibid.: 56). This, along with the aforementioned reasons for incorporating literature in the foreign language classroom, justifies the integration of a work of contemporary fiction in an upper intermediate EFL classroom.

Having outlined the benefits of incorporating literature in the EFL classroom in general and embedded the inclusion of a refugee novel in the framework of the Austrian curriculum and the CEFR, I am now going to present one possible way of reading Cleave’s *The Other Hand* in an upper intermediate EFL classroom. Based on Savvidou’s integrated approach, the activities I suggest will tackle cultural and linguistic features as well as foster personal growth. The pre-reading part aims at familiarizing the students with the novel thematically and at introducing vocabulary; the while-reading activities will guide them through the novel and encourage them to elaborate lexico-grammatical items; the post-reading assignment will help them to consolidate newly acquired knowledge, as well as to further discuss the topic in a creative way. The overall purpose of the didactic workup of *The Other Hand* is to appeal to the students’ intercultural understanding and ability to empathize with members of a minority group. The following teaching module is by no means the only way to deal with Cleave’s novel in the EFL classroom. Rather, it may be used as a source of inspiration for teachers interested in discussing a refugee novel in class and will need to be adjusted to each learner group’s level and needs.
8.2 An Approach to Incorporating *The Other Hand* in the EFL Classroom

Reading an entire work of fiction in class represents a great challenge for both the teacher and the student. Choosing the ‘right’ book for a heterogeneous group of young adults, all with their own individual interests, needs and foreign language skills is an aspiration almost impossible to realize. Rather, when opting to read a class novel, the teacher should try to awaken the students’ interest, consider that different students have different needs and design tasks in a way that suits the student as an individual (for example, by including options students can choose from, or have more advanced students work with students whose reading skills are less developed). In general, it can be argued that Cleave’s *The Other Hand* is a suitable class novel for upper intermediate learners of English, since the tasks designed for dealing with it in class meet the following descriptor as defined by the CEFR for a B2 level:

*Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, [...]. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction [...] quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.* (Council of Europe: 24)

Cleave’s novel is a work of fiction not explicitly written for learners of English and can be said to deal with complex topics. The students will be expected to interact fluently with each other when discussing the novel in class. They will further be expected to produce “clear, detailed text”, in written and oral form, and to “explain [their] viewpoint on a topical issue” (ibid.: 24), like the one of the so-called refugee crisis.

A vital motivational factor for the students’ attitude towards reading is the choice of a suitable text. How much students will enjoy and benefit from reading in general and from reading *The Other Hand* in particular, will depend on their overall stance towards reading, on their interest in the topic and on their ability to understand the literary work. The EFL teacher’s challenge will be to address all of these three aspects in order to keep students motivated. First of all, it is necessary to create familiarity with the topic of refugees and show the students in what way it is relevant for them. It can be assumed that a basic interest in the topic is present to a certain extent because the refugee crisis has been a ubiquitous topic both in the media and everyday life experiences (e.g. pass controls on the Austrian and German borders, or refugee camps...
on the outskirts of cities). Furthermore, it is likely for 18-year-old students (especially female ones) to be able to identify with or to feel compassion for Cleave’s diasporic protagonist, a young adult refugee girl. Second, a supported reading will help students to understand the aesthetic language used in Cleave’s work. Finally, the teacher needs to encourage students to draw their own conclusions and give their own interpretations of the text.

In addition to the abovementioned reasons of choice for discussing *The Other Hand* in class, Nünning and Surkamp have argued that the selection of a text should occur according to the principle of multiperspectivity (cf. Nünning and Surkamp 2009: 39-50 qtd. in Surkamp 2010: 140). Surkamp suggests that diverse perceptions of realities can be found most likely in a work that belongs to a subcultural, postcolonial literature of ethnic minorities, which is also true for Cleave’s novel. Moreover, multiperspectivity implies intertextuality. Working with one text alone does a complex, multifarious topic no justice. Therefore, it is necessary to include several complementary and contrastive texts in order to gain a gist of how a topic is commented on in a culture (cf. ibid.: 140). This will be tackled in the pre-reading activity (cf. 82-84).

In its traditional sense, reading a novel in class may be perceived as (ideally) improving the students’ reading skills only. Brownlie et al. strongly criticise the outdated communal reading in class, teachers reading out loud chapter by chapter to their students (cf. Brownlie et al. 2006: 71), as well as evaluating reading comprehension through questions on content (cf. ibid.: 75). The students’ interest in literature and love for reading can only be encouraged by creating a reader-friendly environment. This can be reached by including diverse methodology and by keeping the communicative approach in mind. As argued earlier, students of a 12th grade AHS should be aspiring to a B2 level in all four language skills. Moreover, including the four skills reading, writing, listening and speaking is vital for an encompassing teaching of a foreign language and helps to diversify the teaching and learning routine. Therefore, the following pre-, while- and post-activities for dealing with *The Other Hand* in the EFL classroom are designed in a way that fosters the young readers’ love for books and that keeps the readers interested by including varied methods and by addressing all four skills. It follows Savvidou’s integrated approach, for it explores the novel as an artefact of British and Nigerian culture in contact, as a source for linguistic input and as a trigger for personal growth in the context of peace education.
It can be anticipated that the controversial and heated debate about refugees present among European societies will be transferred to a micro cosmos when discussing the topic in class. This, of course, holds potential for dispute and conflict. The teacher’s conflict management and negotiation skills are likely to be challenged, especially if the students’ opinions are highly antithetical. In order to counteract proliferation of a debate in class, it is fundamental to create a discussion-friendly environment. This can imply the agreement on conversation rules in cooperation with the students, or the draft of a discussion guide.

In the following paragraphs I will outline a step-by-step procedure to deal with Cleave’s refugee novel as a class reading. I will further explore in which ways it can be exploited as a class read in the EFL classroom, reveal difficulties that may arise and discuss how they can be dealt with.

**Context**

As mentioned above, the following module is designed for a 12th grade of an Austrian AHS Matura class, that is for students that are working towards or have partially reached a B2 level in all four skills, as defined by the CEFR. With regards to planning the time spent on dealing with *The Other Hand* in class, it is interesting to take a look at the research that has been done on reading speed in EFL readers. Day and Bamford argue that suitably advanced students can read books written for native speakers at 150 words per minute (cf. Day / Bamford 1998: 85). They also state that the average book page contains 300 words. Assuming that the average upper-intermediate student is able to read at that speed, it would take approximately 13 hours (300 words x 374 pages / 150 words per minute) to read *The Other Hand*. Beside the sheer reading time, the time pressure the teacher is confronted with when preparing the students for the Matura examination must be taken into account. Thus, reading parts of the novel at home will be inevitable. The teacher can compromise with the students to do half of the reading in class and half as independent reading at home. Assuming that the students have four English lessons per week, this would mean that approximately two weeks would be spent on reading only and another two weeks on the preparatory and post-processing work to accompany the students’ reading. In sum, to deal with *The Other Hand* and its culture-historical background in a 12th grade AHS would take roughly four to five weeks.
**Procedure**

**Pre-reading activity**

Brownlie et al. suggest several activities for building background (or introducing the novel) and meaning (or processing its analysis). They then go on to describe methods for while- and post-reading (cf. Brownlie et al. 2006: 71-77). Following their suggestions, the subsequent module adapts some of their proposed methods for reading *The Other Hand* in the EFL classroom.

As a first step, students need to be familiarized with the socio-historical context the novel is set in. A gallery walk (cf. ibid.: 72) offers an interactive way for students to approach the topic. The teacher distributes various pictures in the classroom that reflect the novel's content. The pictures could be photos of the oil war in the Niger delta, of fleeing refugees, of a detention centre, or of pro- or anti-immigration protests. It would be helpful to include captions to the pictures that already introduce vocabulary. It would also be interesting to decorate the gallery with quotes from the novel. For instance, the Nigerian proverb Cleave attaches to his novel is very likely to capture their attention:

*If your face is swollen from the severe beatings of life, smile and pretend to be a fat man.* (Nigerian proverb qtd. in Cleave 2008: postscript)

The students are then asked to walk around the classroom and comment on the pictures and/or quotes with their peers. Afterwards, they can put their ideas to paper and reflect upon what they expect the novel to be about. As an alternative, the teacher might want to include up-to-date newspaper articles upon the topics reflected in the novel. In *The Other Hand*'s case these could include articles upon the oil war in Nigeria, current conflicts in a detention centre, or an achievement a refugee made in a host society. When choosing the articles and pictures for the gallery walk, special attention should be paid on Nünning and Surkamp’s plead for multiperspectivity (cf. Nünning and Surkamp 2009: 39-50 qtd. in Surkamp 2010: 140). The articles and pictures chosen should reflect different perspectives and views on the topic. Two suggestive articles are included in the attachment (cf. 85-86). They both are on the same current incident, namely activists protesting against mass deportation at Stansted airport. One article was published by the tabloid newspaper *The Sun*, the other one by *The
Guardian. They vary greatly in their use of language and the focus they put on the incident. For example, compared to The Guardian article, The Sun uses stronger emotional language (e.g. “mayhem”, “dramatically stormed”). The article in The Guardian opts to use more neutral language (e.g. “deportees” instead of “failed asylum seekers”) and to include statements by the deportees, whereas The Sun’s article makes reference to Trump’s Muslim ban (cf. Baker 2017; Johnson 2017). The teacher may choose to use only parts of the article and highlight relevant vocabulary in order not to overwhelm the students and to focus their reading.

In any case, the items in the gallery should be thought-provoking and prompt the students’ willingness to discuss. A difficulty inherent in this method, especially for the discussion to follow, implies a strong discrepancy between the teacher’s expectations and students’ argumentation. Taking the aforementioned example (e.g. contrasting an article by The Sun to one by The Guardian), the teacher’s intention would be to shed a critical light on the tabloid press article. However, some students might experience the very same article in a positive way. By no means should it be the teacher’s task to dictate their students what opinion they should have. However, the teacher needs to be prepared for this kind of conflict. In case the class discussion shows unilateral tendencies, the teacher must be able to counteract with good reasoning while appreciating all comments and opinions stated by the students. Furthermore, the choice of articles for the gallery walk should be based on their aptitude to introduce vocabulary that is helpful for the discussion and that relates to the predefined topics and themes.

As a second step and to further facilitate access to the novel, the teacher can resort to the clustering method (cf. Brownlie et al. 2006: 74). While the teacher reads out loud the first pages of the novel, students are asked to listen and note down words (or word groups) they think are important and to connect them with each other. The next step would be for all students to share parts of their clusters with the entire class. Consecutively, each student is asked to write down two or three key words on the blackboard. In order to deepen the students’ understanding of relations in the novel, the teacher can encourage the students to create further connections between the words. The opening words to The Other Hand are very powerful, which will facilitate conducting this activity because they capture the readers’ attention immediately. When listening to “Most days I wish I was a British coin instead of an African girl. Everyone would be pleased to see me coming.” (Cleave 2008: 1), students will instantly ask
themselves why it is that no one is pleased to see the narrator coming. They will understand that the protagonist is an African girl and, from the first pre-activity, guess that she is a refugee who is not welcomed at her current location.

As an alternative to the clustering, students could create quadrants-of-thought (cf. Brownlie et al. 2006: 73). For this, the students are asked to divide a piece of paper into four parts and name the parts with ‘image’, ‘language’, ‘physical senses’ and ‘emotions’. While the teacher reads out loud, students are recording what comes to their mind while listening and note their thoughts down in the respective quadrant. This is a very appropriate method when applied to The Other Hand, since numerous thoughts for each of the quadrants are evoked when taking a look at the first pages of the novel. For example, for the quadrant ‘image’ the image of the British pound coin would be suitable (cf. Cleave 2008: 1); for ‘language’ the students are likely to pay attention to the way Queen Elizabeth II of England speaks, or how the protagonist had to “forget all the best tricks of her mother tongue” (ibid.: 3) in order to talk like the Queen; for ‘physical senses’ they could note down what it feels like to drink a cold Coca Cola you exchanged the pound coin for (cf. ibid.: 1); and for ‘emotions’ they could express Little Bee’s feelings while being locked up in a detention centre in Essex for two years (cf. ibid.: 4). Since the students’ contributions to this activity are unpredictable, it might be challenging for the teacher to be well prepared and guide a plenary discussion. Nevertheless, it is important to include such open-ended tasks, for they render the class occurrences lively and generate valuable input. The social forms for both activities is individual first, then shared in plenary. Thereby the students have time to formulate their ideas and to prepare themselves before sharing their thoughts. The interaction that follows will give them a chance to be introduced to other point of views. This will help to raise their awareness for ideas they would not have considered if working only by themselves. Both activities (clustering and quadrants-of-thought) nurture the students’ listening skills, since they have to listen carefully to a coherent text and grasp important words as well as its overall meaning.

**While-reading activity**

After the gallery walk and the clustering or quadrants-of-thought activities, the students should be appropriately prepared in order to engage in reading the novel. Depending on the temporary circumstances, the reading can be started independently at home or as partner reading in class. Partner reading is a “scripted cooperative
learning strategy” that stimulates fluency and automaticity in reading skills (Meisinger et al. 2009: 111). The students take turns reading every other page out loud to each other. The partner’s task is to “listen, follow along, and provide needed words or assistance” (ibid.: 111). Its benefits have been examined in a study conducted by Meisinger et al. They have come to the conclusion that, if paired appropriately, partner reading “serves as an enjoyable and beneficial pedagogical tool for enhancing the development of fluent reading skills” (ibid.: 137). Brownlie et al. suggest reading partnerships be formed according to social circumstances and according to the learners’ skills. A harmonious relationship between the partners and a sensible balance between their reading skills is vital for the success of partner reading. The importance of partner choice for the learning success has been underlined also by Hoffmann (cf. Hoffmann 2010: 165). According to her, it is the teacher’s task to define objectives for the partner work and to make a decision based on these criteria. For example, there are students who simply do not consort with each other. Moreover, less skilled readers should be assisted by learners with more advanced reading skills. The challenge here is to form fruitful partnerships both learners profit from. During this phase it will be the teacher’s duty to monitor the students’ reading and to actively support the partnerships whenever they have comprehension problems. The teacher will also have to assure that both partners actively participate in the partner reading, or, in other words, that the one listening is paying attention and that the students actually take turns.

During the partner reading phase in class, ‘sticky notes’ can offer additional support to reading comprehension. Moreover, they will facilitate the discussion and analysis to follow in plenary. Brownlie et al. suggest sticking notes beside passages that are characterized by “exquisite language”, that induce strong emotions, that create a clear image, or that surprise them (cf. Brownlie et al. 2006: 75). Also, they can mark the passages where they need explanations, or copy down words and phrases that are new to them and that they want to use in the future. (cf. ibid.: 75). At the end of the lesson, the students should be given some room and time to have a conversation based on their sticky notes. Having discussed the items on their notes with their partner first will alleviate their participation in the plenary discussion. In this way, literary analysis as well as lexico-grammatical items can be elaborated by the students, processed in exchange with a partner and consolidated by discussing the items in class.

For the parts of the novel the students will have to read at home they are asked to keep a response journal (cf. 91). This should be done as individual work because
each student should reflect upon their own reading process by themselves. An exchange of ideas will take place at a later juncture and having formulated their own ideas by themselves first will help them to outline their arguments in a small group or in plenary. In order to meet the reading objectives determined by an integrated approach, the journal for *The Other Hand* will address cultural and linguistic aspects as well as stimulate the students’ own reflections upon the novel. The journal will be made of a booklet divided into three sections named as ‘culture’, ‘language’ and ‘reflections’. Every time the student comes across a passage that calls their attention, or a word or saying they do not know, they can note it down in the respective section of their journal. For example, by examining the novel as a cultural artefact the students could record the passages in which British culture differs from Nigerian culture (cf., e.g., Cleave 2008: 131, 191, 254-255), or the ones where Cleave criticises manifestations of British culture (cf., e.g., ibid 2008: 7, 192). In the section of linguistic aspects, they should note down all the lexico-grammatical items that cause understanding problems and explain their meaning with the help of a dictionary, or by asking their teacher or peer students. The last section should be devoted to their own reasoning about social hot spots in the novel (e.g. the situation in the detention centre, the question about one’s willingness to help, or the xenophobic attitudes towards the ‘other’). The students will draw the most profit out of this activity if they can relate such passages to their own experiences or experiences of people they know.

The outcome of this activity will differ greatly among students, depending on what each student is most interested in and on what they decide to focus on. The teacher can provide initial help by suggesting potential entries, especially if the students are not familiar with the technique of keeping a response journal. This method does the uniqueness of each student justice and helps them to develop their own critical thinking. Furthermore, it improves their own lexico-grammatical skills since they are asked to reflect upon lexical or grammatical items they have not come across so far. In this way the response journal meets each student’s individual needs.

**Post-reading activity**

The post-reading activity again, is in line with the concern for meeting the students’ individual needs and interests. They will be free to choose between two options: to create a short theatre play, or a book trailer for *The Other Hand*. Both activities meet the Austrian AHS curriculum’s requirement to offer students the possibility to work in
a creative way in the foreign language classroom. The Federal Ministry of Education names theatre, games, simulations or creative writing as examples for a creative teaching framework (cf. Bundesministerium für Unterricht, Kunst und Kultur: 2). Writing a short play aims at improving the students’ creative writing skills. To rehearse and perform the play will nurture the students’ listening and speaking skills in interaction. It will further increase their awareness for literary genres and the adaptation of prose to another text type. The creation of a book trailer has similar objectives as the theatrical adaptation, but involves a different media. Thereby, the students’ handling of certain software and multimedia skills will be trained. Furthermore, it is a good possibility for shy students to express their creativity in a way that does not involve them performing in front of the whole class. For both possible post-reading activities it is advisable to have students work in small groups. Hoffmann points out that working in small groups gives a wider base for negotiation processes (cf. Hoffmann 2010: 165). She adverts to the difficulty of forming the ‘right’ groups in order to achieve the predefined goals. According to her, learners should be given more freedom when choosing the group members in comparison to choosing a partner when working with only one peer student. However, roles in the class must be considered in order to avoid habitual behaviour (cf. ibid.: 165).

Generally speaking, learner centricity is in the fore in both activities. Giving the students freedom of choice can be a highly motivating factor, but it also implies great challenges. Giving students an opportunity to work creatively does not automatically mean that every student is enthusiastic about creating a play or book trailer. Some students might be overwhelmed by the task and will not know where to start. Therefore, it is important to define clear goals in cooperation with the students before they start their work. It is equally important for the teacher to monitor the allocation of responsibilities within the group to make sure every student knows that they fulfil a purpose. Also, the teacher must supervise the group’s work as they proceed in order to avoid slacks. Clear instructions and definitions of targets are absolutely essential for a constructive team play. An attempt to formulate such instructions is put into writing in the post-reading worksheet (cf. 92). Further oral explanations will be necessary when communicating the task’s objectives to the students.
8.3 Conclusion

In this last part of my thesis I have discussed in what way literature can be used as a “powerful pedagogical tool” (Savvidou 2004) and to what extent learners benefit from working with literary works in general. Authenticity, an enriched cultural and linguistic environment and personal growth, to name but a few, are reasons to embed literature in the foreign language classroom. Through literature pupils are exposed to ‘otherness’. Dealing with ‘realities’ other than their own can help young adults to shake up their own worldviews and to widen their horizon.

The didactical workup of Chris Cleave’s The Other Hand aims at evoking sympathy and at taking a step towards a peaceful coexistence with displaced people. It contains activities that address the four language skills; reading, writing, listening and speaking, and implies various social forms of working (individual work, partner work, group work). The activities are in line with the Austrian curriculum for foreign languages and correspond to the students’ level according to the CEFR. Furthermore, they meet Savvidou’s criteria for an integrated approach on teaching literature.

Beside the difficulties inherent to each method described above, the major difficulty in discussing a refugee novel in class is a potential hostile attitude towards ‘otherness’ in general, which might be prevalent in some students. Consequently, the major challenge for the teacher will be to face such tendencies by offering alternative point of views, without devaluing the students’ contribution to the debate.

8.4 Appendix

- Material for gallery walk
- Worksheet Response journal
- Worksheet Post-reading assignment
AIRPORT MAYHEM Stansted airport closed by protesters blocking flight from taking failed asylum seekers out of UK – as cops arrest 17 for trespassing

Flights diverted as activists storm runway in blatant security lapse

By Neil Baker
29th March 2017, 8:00 am | Updated: 29th March 2017, 8:30 am

STANSTED airport was brought to a halt by pro-migrant activists who dramatically stormed the runway.

Video posted online showed protesters blocking a flight taking failed asylum seekers to Nigeria and Ghana.

The group calling themselves Stop Charter Flights – End Deportations were filmed holding up a banner and chanting on a pyramid structure placed under the wing of a plane.

A number of flights were diverted including arrivals from Ibiza, Warsaw, Belfast, Bilbao, Murcia, Dublin and Berlin.

Emma Hughes, an activist with the group, told a website ahead of the action that those on board the flight were “in serious danger” by being deported.

“There’s been a lot of attention recently on Trump’s racist Muslim ban, but what’s happening in the UK is equally repellent”, she said.

The group, said to be numbering around a dozen, struck at 10pm and uploaded live footage of their protest.

It raises serious security concerns over how they managed to smuggle themselves through the major airport — a heavily guarded terror target.

Susan James from activist group Plane Stupid, who supported the protest, said: “Mass deportations like the one we stopped tonight are immoral, unfair and illegal.”

An airport spokesman said the demonstrators were contained in a remote non-commercial runway and that flights were being held or diverted while police carried out inspections.

It was reported that the Home Office chartered flight was cancelled as a result of the protest, although the airport spokesman could not confirm this.

By 11:15pm flights were landing again as normal.

Stansted officials said the protest was on a remote part of the airfield away from the main terminal, and had been contained by police.

A spokesman also said that although flights were suspended there had not been any affected as it was a “quiet period”.

The Sun has contacted Essex Police and the Home Office for comment.
Stansted runway closed after anti-deportation protesters block flight

Eight activists attempt to stop charter flight scheduled to carry eight deportees to Nigeria and Ghana

The runway at Stansted was closed on Tuesday night after protesters ran out to prevent a plane carrying eight deportees from taking off.

The campaign groups End Deportations, activists from Lesbians and Gays Support the Migrants and Plane Stupid said 14 activists had locked themselves to a tripod to stop a “mass deportation charter flight” from the Essex airport to Nigeria and Ghana. Campaigners said that deportees on the flight included people who feared for their lives and had claimed asylum.

One woman on the flight said: “My ex-husband said he knows I am being deported. He is waiting for me. He is planning to kill me.”

Another male deportee said: “I have been in this country for almost 18 years. My family and my life is here in the UK. If they take me back to Ghana I will kill myself.”

Susan James from Plane Stupid said: “Mass deportations like the one we stopped tonight are immoral, unfair and illegal. In the wake of the Brexit vote, this government is more keen than ever to be seen to be ‘tough’ on immigration. But its mass deportations have devastating human consequences. Everything about these deportations points to the fact that they are inhuman, and must be stopped.”

Campaigners said that last year more than 1,500 people were deported from the UK on mass deportation charter flights to Albania, Jamaica, Pakistan, Nigeria and Ghana.

A spokesman for Stansted confirmed the runway had been closed at about 10pm, resulting in several flights being cancelled or diverted to other airports in the London area.

The plane targeted by protesters was on a remote stand at the opposite side of the airport to the passenger terminal and was not a scheduled commercial flight, he said.

Commercial flights resumed late on Tuesday night after police had conducted checks of the compound.
Worksheet:

Response journal

Keep a response journal for the parts of *The Other Hand* you read at home. To do so, please follow the following steps:

- Divide your booklet into three sections and name the sections as *Culture*, *Language*, and *Reflections*.
- Fold each page. Copy interesting quotes from the book onto the left side of the page and write down your comments on the right side.
- For *Culture*, find passages in the book that represent a cultural contact point of British and Nigerian culture. What are particularities about Little Bee’s culture? What is criticised about Sarah’s culture? How do the two cultures make contact?
- For *Language*, record language used in the novel you do not understand. Note down words, word forms and word groups that are new to you. Which items would you like to use in the future? Check a dictionary or ask your teacher to find out their meaning.
- For *Reflections*, quote the passages in the book that made you thoughtful. Comment on the feelings these passages evoked. What message do they imply? How do they relate to your own experiences?

Your response journal is a unique testament of your own personal perspectives and development as you read. This task has to be carried out individually. The questions asked in the instructions can help you formulate your ideas. You don’t have to answer all of them and there are no wrong answers.

Happy hunting!
Worksheet:

Post-reading assignment

After you have finished reading *The Other Hand*, choose one of the following two options. The task will be completed in a small group. You can work on the task for three hours in class before you will have to present it.

**Option 1: Theatrical adaptation**

Choose a situation described in the book and transform it into a short, one act play. As a group, determine which conflict you are going to focus on (e.g. Little Bee insulting the taxi driver). The following guidelines will help you to develop a successful play.¹

1. Determine a conflict:

   - describe the situation that created the problem or that lead to the conflict
   - create a rising action (e.g., how do the characters try to solve the problem?)
   - sketch the climax (what is the turning point?)
   - portray how the action comes to an end.

2. Determine the setting:

   - where do the scenes take place?
   - how could you represent the places in the classroom?

3. Portray the characters:

   - describe each character (name, age, physical appearance, interests, fears, dreams, etc.)
   - explain how they are related to each other

4. Develop a dialogue that:

   - reveals the characters’ relationship to each other
   - reflects the characters’ moods and personalities
   - sounds real

Now agree on who out of your group will perform which roles.

Rehearse your play.

Take your play to the stage!

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Option 2: Book trailer

A book trailer is a short video that represents passages of a book. Its purpose is to promote the book by communicating the its message in an authentic and emotional way. Follow these steps to create your own book trailer:

- As a group, decide upon quotes and/or key moments in the novel that sum up the main message the book conveys.
- Create your own photo or film material to support the quotes or key moments you want to include in your trailer.
- Search for suitable background music that accompanies your visual material.
- Use Windows Movie Maker, iMovie or some other video editing software you are familiar with to edit your trailer.
- Your trailer should be approximately 3 minutes long.

Take your trailer to the screen!
9. Bibliography

Primary Literature


Secondary Literature


Fludernik, Monika (ed.). Diaspora and Multiculturalism: Common Traditions and New Developments. Amsterdam: Ropodi. 2003


Hallet, Wolfgang / Königs, Frank (eds.). Handbuch Fremdsprachendidaktik. Seelze-Velber: Klett / Kallmeyer. 2010


