

Encouraging empathy through *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*

How to encourage empathy with Indigenous peoples and cultures through working with *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* in the EFL classroom?

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Abstract

The background for this paper is an open assignment where I got the opportunity to concretize the content of the thesis and methodology. In this assignment I set out to create a paper that I could use in my later practice as a teacher. Also, I wanted the thesis to be relevant, not only for the competence aims, but for the current state of the world. That way I got to reflect on an important issue, but also educate myself and go in depth of this interesting case. During the work on the thesis, I deep dived in methods to teach empathy to EFL pupils. I searched for content to relate to these methods. I knew I wanted to work with Indigenous peoples, since it is amongst my curiosities and interests in the competence aims. I came across several books but landed on *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, which I found well suited for my thesis. Because it deals with relevant, important, and mature issues, but in a light way. I was hoping to be able to use the novel when I work as a teacher, so the book had to be suited for pupils. Through theory about learning and empathy, and an analysis of the novel I found possible implementations in the EFL classroom of the methodology I discovered. Therefore, I will present all my findings. Such as: theory, analysis, discoveries, and suggestions. Beginning with the following introduction.

Introduction

Literature gives new access and insights into other worlds, cultures, and people, and through its unfamiliarity it gains unique abilities. One of these abilities is that it can promote empathy in the reader, which is the focus of this study. Empathy is defined as: “the drive to identify another person’s emotions and thoughts, and to respond to them with an appropriate emotion” (Cohen, in Jurecic, 2011, p. 11). Literature and its effect on empathy is a complex, evolving and dynamic field within pedagogy and social studies. Forna (2017) argue that “societies venerate their storytellers almost as much as the stories. We talk about the wonders that stories can create, the ways they can change the world for the better.” (p. 33). Barack Obama, the ex-president of the United States also believes strongly in the power of literature. In a speech regarding empathy and literacy he stated: “The biggest deficit that we have in our society and in the world right now is an empathy deficit. We are in great need of people being able to stand in somebody else’s shoes and see the world through their eyes. And the great power of books is the capacity to take you out of yourself and put you somewhere else.” (quotefancy, 2022). Literature’s ability to affect empathy can therefore be central to use in school to learn about unfamiliar and important topics.

Working with promoting empathy among pupils is an important aim of reading literature. Literature chosen in schools should therefore represent diverse voices. In English classes, this means that, among others, indigenous voices should be heard. Indigenous peoples can be defined as: “inheritors and practitioners of unique cultures and ways of relating to people and the environment. They have retained social, cultural, economic and political characteristics” (UN, 2022). Native Americans are an indigenous group that has experienced tremendous amounts of suffering in the recent centuries due to colonization, racism, and prejudices. The aim of this paper is to present and argue for why English foreign language, EFL, teachers should develop pupils’ empathy towards indigenous groups such as Native Americans.

As mentioned, the importance of learning about Indigenous peoples and cultures can be seen throughout the new curriculum LK20 (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2022). For instance, two relevant competence aims after year 10 in English are: “explore and reflect on the situation of indigenous peoples in the English-speaking world and in Norway” and “explore and describe ways of living, ways of thinking, communication patterns and diversity in the English-speaking world” (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2022). Both of these competence aims go under the disciplinary topic’s health and life skills, and democracy and citizenship. Indigenous people also get directly referenced in the core elements, under working with texts in English, it states “Working with texts in English helps to develop the pupil’s diversity, as well as their insight into ways of living, ways of thinking and traditions of indigenous peoples.” (UDIR, 2022). Thus, working with literature and indigenous people is an important and integral part of the EFL classroom.

The relevance and importance of this topic, as stated above, is clear in the competence aims. So, I will analyze these various connections to the new curriculum more in depth later in the paper. Although this paper discusses indigenous voices it is transferable to other multicultural or suppressed voices like African Americans, feminist, and LGBTQ voices. It is worth mentioning that I am not an indigenous person, therefore my views will be from that of an outsider.

Structure and research question

The structure of this paper will be the following: Firstly, I will introduce theory within empathy, indigenous peoples, and literature. Secondly, I will present my choice of methodology and literary analysis of the book *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time*

Indian, by Sherman Alexie. The analysis' focus will be on genre, literary tools, and themes. After this I will discuss my findings and answer the following research question: *how to encourage empathy with indigenous peoples and cultures through working with The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian in the EFL classroom?* In my findings, I discovered several potential answers to the research question, including the importance of accessibility and engagement of multimodal texts like Alexie's and the role of humor in generating both empathy and cultural awareness in young readers.

Theory

Empathy and literature

Through literature, we can experience and see the world through other people's narratives. Writers from oppressed and colonized cultures, such as Native Americans, get a chance to take back the narrative from the oppressors and colonizers. Forna (2017) argues that "all of us who have been spoken for, instead of listened to, have had to seize our narratives" (p. 36). Seizing the narrative in literature can therefore be seen as a stand against the oppressors and colonizers. Research indicates that one of the ways literature can make you a better person is by prompting the readers to imagine the introspective dialogues of the characters. Literature invites the reader to let go of their own narratives, biases, and prejudices, and through this it can create a psychological awareness, which is where the benefits of bettering oneself can be transferred into real life. Additionally, research shows that literature can improve the reader's ability to understand others' feelings and thought processes (Forna, 2017, p.34). Many of literature's benefits like psychological awareness and the ability to understand others therefore comes by the narrative we witness.

When working with developing empathy pupils should be encouraged to focus on themes, concerns, perspectives, and problems of various multicultural groups. Through focusing on topics like these, literature can provide clear contrasts in perspectives and help them understand both their own and other cultures. Rasiniski & Padak (1990) highlights the importance of discussions and response activities when working with multiculturalism, the focus should be on thoughtfulness, criticalness, and with a sense of true empathy (p. 577). In addition, teachers must expose pupils to unfamiliar literature due to them naturally gravitating towards familiar and relatable stories. Thus, the teacher's responsibility for filling up the classroom with varied multicultural literature is highlighted. The chosen literature can provide "raw material" for various analyses in the classroom, which can become a part of the pupil's

call for action (p. 577-578). To develop empathy towards multicultural groups the focus and topics chosen must provide clear contrasts to pupils' perspectives, adding to this the teacher's role in using various activities and unfamiliar literature is important.

In her thesis Ghosn (2002) also discusses literature's power as a call for action, although she references it as a change agent, along with three points for why to use literature in the EFL classroom. Firstly, she argues that authentic literature can provide meaningful and motivating contexts for language learning due to children's natural interest in stories. Secondly, literature can contribute to language learning through its presentation of natural and varied language, which again can help expand pupils' vocabulary. Literature involves the reader with the text and can therefore stimulate oral language use. Thirdly, literature can promote literacy and thinking skills, thus help in preparing pupils for English-medium instructions in the classroom. The fourth point is literature's effect as a change agent. In this she argues that "good literature deals with some aspects of the human condition, and can thus contribute to the emotional development of the child, and foster positive interpersonal and intercultural attitudes." (Ghosn, 2002, p. 2). Therefore, the use of literature in the EFL classroom has several good implications added to it working as an agent of change.

Some central models for integrating indigenous literature into the EFL classroom are Bank's models for integrating multicultural content into regular curricula. The models are organized hierarchically in the following order: contribution approach, additive approach, transformation approach, and decision-making and social action approach. This paper will just reference the two latter mentioned. In the two higher levels of Bank's theory, transformation, and decision-making and social action approach students are "encouraged to view problems, themes, concerns, and concepts from the perspective of different cultural groups." (Rasiniski & Padak, 1990, p. 577). This can be done by pupils studying Indigenous history or culture through their perspectives and stories, rather than through the lens of non-indigenous. By working through these perspectives, it can help empower exploited or victimized indigenous groups. At the final, and most important level, decision-making and social action approach, students are encouraged to "identify social problems and concerns, make decisions, and take actions to help resolve the problems they have identified." (Rasiniski & Padak, 1990, p. 588). Using Bank's models in learning about Indigenous cultures can therefore be of great use in the EFL classroom.

Criticism of empathy and literature

As seen above, creating more empathy can be seen as an effective tool to combat various cultural and societal problems of today, such as prejudices, racism, and social differences. Carolyn Pedwell (2016) warns against this notion and argues that although the development of empathy is universal, it is usually the socially privileged subject who is the empathizer (Pedwell, 2016, p. 26). Therefore, the act of who to extend empathy towards can be seen as a way of asserting power. The skills of the privileged can be “cultivated, honed and tested through empathy”, while the less privileged “remains simply the object of empathy and thus once again fixed in place” (Pedwell, 2016, p. 14). This means that the very empathy the privileged tries to extend can itself create a further distance between them. Therefore, it is important for the EFL teachers to beware of the distance that the power dynamics potentially could create.

Adding to this discussion Jurecic (2011) argues that there is mostly a rhetorical rhythm at work when using literature for the purpose of developing empathy. In this she concludes that just because reading gives people access to different cultures, people, and places, doesn't mean that they will teach or learn people how to act or feel (p. 14). Research within affect theory warns us about feelings like pity, empathy and compassion due to its possible connection with forces within political movements, cultures, ideologies, and histories. This means that readers should be warned that although the emotions seem authentic and personal, they could be false or oversimplified understandings of cultural or social relations, appropriations, or expressions of power (Jurecic, 2011, p. 12). Choosing good literature that doesn't have any negative connections can therefore be seen as a hard task to do, yet its importance is made clear.

Indigenous peoples and literature

Through looking at data on Native Americans, the importance of developing empathy is made clear. There are an estimated 4.5 million individuals who identify as Native Americans in the US, and nearly half of these live in reservations or other defined tribal areas (Aspen Institute, 2022). As a group they have experienced a vast amount of historical trauma due to colonization, neglect, racism and segregation. This has led to several educational, economic, and health disparities in comparison to the general population. Data on Native Americans find that alcoholism mortality rates are 514 % higher than the general population, the poverty rate is 23.6%, and suicide rates are more than double of the general population Aspen Institute,

2022). In the book I've studied, these worrying themes are explicitly referenced and discussed.

When discussing music featuring indigenous performers Dylan Robinson (2020) argues that the tears of audiences can be translated to success, and even to a transformative power (p. 202). They argue that sound can create a moment of togetherness, and this experience is called *communitas*. Victor Turner states that *communitas* are a collective state "where all personal differences of class, age, gender, and other personal distinctions are stripped away allowing people to temporarily merge through their basic humanity" (Turino 2008, 18. In Robinson, 2020, p. 204). This transformative power of music, I believe, can be transferable to indigenous literature as well.

Indigenous literature's transformative power can come from its earlier mentioned function as a change agent. Something, which can be done by deepening and fostering EFL pupils' understanding and knowledge of indigenous cultures. However, Rasinski & Padak (1990) argues that curriculum in multicultural education tries and fails to make schools places where different cultures and backgrounds are fostered through various inclusion policies (p.577). A central reason for this is due to teachers not going in depth on multicultural topics. Rasinski & Padak (1990) argue that pupil's work with literature usually involves them or the teacher reading about various multicultural groups, followed by small post-reading discussions. In this, pupils simply learn some consideration of cultural beliefs and values (p. 577). This, of course, is better than nothing, but to develop empathy, more work around the texts is needed. Therefore, the teacher's role in making lessons that help develop empathy is critical.

Land and language in indigenous literature:

A central and important element when discussing and analyzing indigenous literature is its relationship with the land. Warren Cariou (2020) argues that the importance of this relationship is shown through its representations of the environment, territory, hunting and/or harvesting, dancing, the environment etc.... (p. 1). In describing the relationship between land and narrative, Cariou (2020) introduces the term "territory". Territory is, amongst other things, "the mode through which indigenous people are attached to community and to the earth" (p. 2). These narratives can be seen as a crucial part of teaching about indigenous cultures and can be seen several times in *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*.

Methodology and literary choice

For this paper I have chosen to do a qualitative content analysis of the book *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie. Mayring (2000) defines qualitative content analysis as “an approach of empirical, methodological controlled analysis of texts within the context of communication ...” (In Drisko & Maschi, 2016, p. 5-6). Content analysis is a great research tool to use for quantifying and analyzing themes, meanings, or concepts such as those found in *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*. The novel is multimodal with both pictures and text. Multimodal means that it has two or more ways of communication processes or modes (weteachliteracy, 2022). Using multimodal texts has several benefits, one of these is its ability to improve comprehension. This is done by pupils having different modes to learn and understand information. Multimodal texts can also help increase motivation in pupils through it giving them different ways to gain information (weteachliteracy, 2022). By the *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* being multimodal it will be of great use for the age group I am working with.

I chose the book *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie due to its several connections and relativity to my topic. Alexie is of Native American descent and is a highly influential and respectable indigenous author. Murray (2021) refers to using literature written by indigenous peoples as an “*indigenization*” of materials. This means to use varied authentic materials where Indigenous voices are included and are seen as equally important as the majority voices (p. 4). Using texts written by indigenous authors and witnessing texts from the Indigenous perspectives can therefore be seen as central to this term. Murray (2021) also argues that there is an inequality in the power dynamics of relations between the majority society and the indigenous (p. 4). Thus, by using this book, instead of one written by a non-indigenous, it can help include the voices of indigenous peoples in the EFL classroom.

Analysis

Genre and tone

The National Book award winner *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* (2007), is a young adult novel where we witness the story through both words and pictures from the first-person narrative of the fourteen-year-old Arnold Spirit, Junior. The story takes place on the Wellpinit reservation. Which, according to Junior, is “located approximately one million miles

north of Important and two billion miles west of Happy” (p.30). Throughout the book we witness Juniors struggles in finding his own identity due to him not feeling Indian or white.

The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian (2007) has a light and funny tone throughout the novel. This gives the novel a unique ability in which it presents, often dark themes, in an easier and more accessible way for young readers. Junior is a funny and entertaining character who is always filled with joy and hope, even at the darkest of times. He draws hilarious pictures and cracks jokes. For instance, when he enumerates about which tribes he belongs to as a way of coping with all the death around him: “And to the tribe of bookworms. And the tribe of cartoonists. And the tribe of chronic masturbators.” (p.217). Here Alexie uses irony and humor to connect with the audience. This youthful tone can be seen in the illustrations throughout the novel as well. For instance, when Junior draws his girlfriend’s racist dad, Earl. He is illustrated as a caricature of a slimy, angry, smelly worm (p. 109). Although the story is quite sinister with Earl threatening to punch Junior and disown Penelope if they end up pregnant with a “charcoal baby” (p. 109), the combination of the illustration and Junior’s hope, joy, and excitement to be alive still makes the tone light and fun.

Alexie’s choice of making the novel multimodal is a great literary choice when writing in the genre of young adult literature. *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* creates a bond where readers can identify and feel close to Junior. This friend-like-relationship between Junior and the reader is created by Junior sharing everything that is going through his head, including his hopes, dreams, and fears. Junior also shares relatable struggles of adolescence, for instance, relationships, hormones, and his sexual desires. This openness and familiar adolescent struggles can help the readers empathize with Junior. Building on this point Alexie seamlessly adds other more darker themes like racial identity, poverty, and class on top of this. Another tool Alexie uses to build this relationship with the reader is through addressing his young audience directly.

Junior is aware of the reader and directly asks them questions and gives comments. This can be seen in the following examples: “Do **you** know the worst thing about being poor?” (p. 8) and “I’m not even writing this story the way I actually talk, because I’d have to fill it with stutters and lisps, and then **you’d** be wandering why **you’re** reading a story written by such a retard.” (p. 4). In the former example Junior questions the readers directly, in the latter he is explaining to the readers. Through addressing the readers directly, the feeling of connection and sense of understanding is built with Junior. This breaking of the fourth wall combined with the light and humorous tone, could help pupils feel more empathy towards Junior.

Forney's several illustrations highlight and give another comical insight into Junior's thoughts and feelings at the present time. She uses three different drawing styles throughout the book. One where the comics are scribbled, like in figure 1, one where the cartoons are more realistic, and one where the comics have a more finished look. Each of these styles serve to reinforce Junior's narrative power in the story. Adding to this, the illustrations can deliver meanings themselves. An example of this is in figure 2 where Junior illustrates himself as half white and half Indian, and the differences in status, wealth and health is clearly seen. It is through a combination of Alexie's writing style and Ellen Forney's several illustrations that the readers can develop the feeling of conversing with a friend. Which in turn will support development of empathy with him, and in a broader perspective towards Native Americans in general.

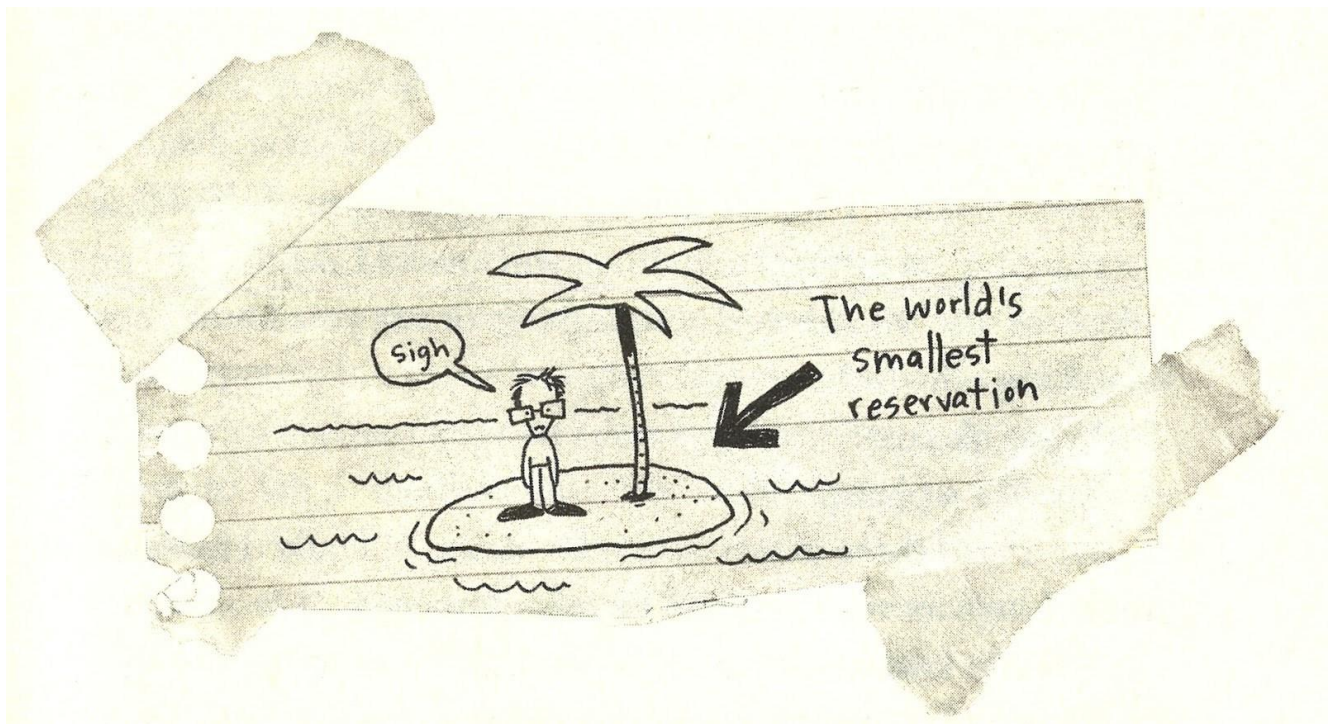


Figure 1

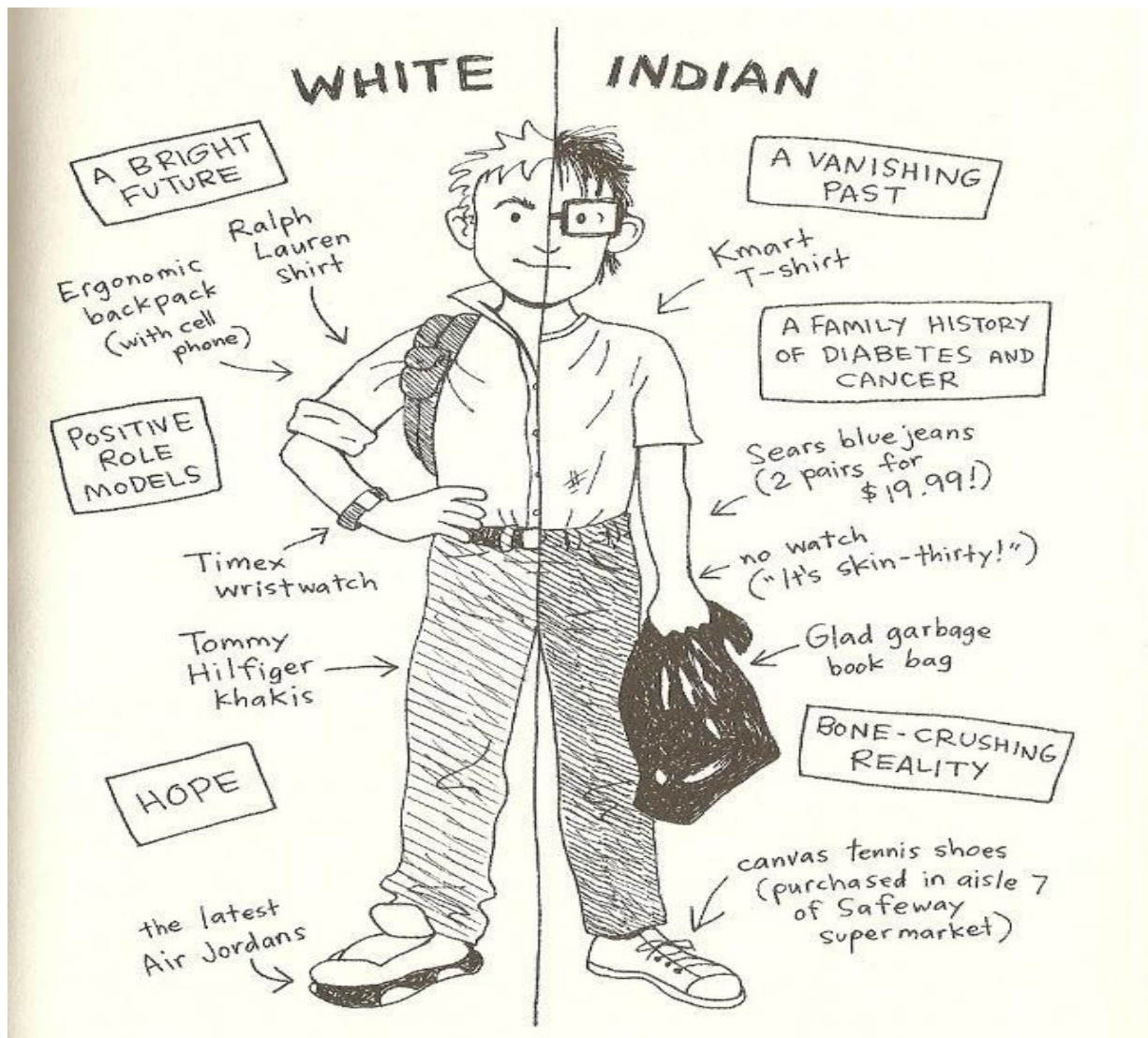


Figure 2

Symbolism, imagery, allegory

The use of symbolism, imagery, and allegory in the novel helps to enhance and give access to various themes like poverty and systematic racism. This is done by combining Alexis' detailed and creative descriptions with Forney's illustrations. The effect of this intertwined combination can be seen in the chapter "Why Chicken Means So Much to Me". Junior says that he sometimes goes "eighteen-and-a-half hours" without food and that sometimes "sleep is the only thing we have for dinner" (p. 8). Although the situation is gloomy and it highlights Junior being poor, Alexie's imagery writing style and Forney's symbolistic illustrations brightens up the situation while still maintaining the message. Another example of these modalities working together with the literary devices can be seen in Junior's description of his favorite food, Kentucky Fried Chicken, combined with Forney's illustration of a shrouded

chicken wing (p. 8). Alexie uses these literary devices as tools to talk about poverty in a way that the young adult readers can comprehend.

Systematic racism is expressed both directly and non-directly using symbolism throughout the book. An example of this is when Junior gets passed a geometry book by his teacher Mr. P that belonged to his mother (p. 30-31). This geometry book can be seen as a symbol for how systematic poverty can be found in the reservations for Native Americans. This systematic racism is seen through the book being so old that even his mom had it, thus the expectations and the budget the school has for their students is extremely low compared to regular schools. For regular schools wouldn't have books that went on for generations, this is something Junior comments directly, "My school and my tribe are so poor and sad that we have to study from the same dang books our parents studied from." (p. 31). Junior ends up throwing the book at his teacher, and in doing this, Junior is fighting back against the system. Therefore, the book can be seen as a catalyst for change and hope, for by doing this Junior is rejecting the school's educational offer. Although the main symbolisms are about the struggles and unjust treatments of Native Americans, like the ones mentioned above. The novel also includes some 'supernatural' symbols as well.

One of the supernatural events is the story about Turtle Lake who lays the center of Junior's reservation; it is for the Spokane clouded with mystery and stories. It is a mile around and very deep, and no one has been to the bottom (p. 222). It seems that Alexie is symbolizing the deep mystery that is within the Spokane people. This mystery surrounding the lake is intensified when Junior hears the story of "stupid horse". Stupid horse drowned in the lake, resurfaced on the shores by another lake, then gets burned, and a short while after the entire lake gets caught on fire, and shortly thereafter the horse gets washed up on shore again (p. 223-224). We don't get a clear explanation for this supernatural story, therefore we, as readers, can only assume and interpret from our understanding of Native American culture. I believe it symbolizes a lost sense of Native Americans' identity of being connected to the spiritual part of their culture. The natural and spiritual were much more connected before, but due to white settlers displacing them to reservations, their spiritual identity is now mostly a memory.

Themes

The Absolutely True-Diary of a Part-Time Indian introduces and explores themes that are both important and relevant for young adults. One of the most prevalent and big themes is

race. This can be seen just from the title of the novel and in figure 2. In figure 2 Junior's identity gets split into Indian reservation Junior and Arnold in the white school. This split shows several big differences in how the races are portrayed. For instance, white Arnold has a "bright future", "positive role models", "hope", is well kept with a good economic base while Indian Junior has a "vanishing past", "a family history of diabetes and cancer", "bone-crushing reality", is not well kept and has a bad economic base (p. 57). This splitting of identity and race indicates that one's ethnic or racial identity isn't static, but rather something that is versatile.

Race is also directly connected to poverty in the novel. This is seen indirectly through the story, but also through Junior directly commenting on it, "But we reservation Indians don't get to realize our dreams. We don't get those chances. Or choices. We're just poor. That's all we are." (p.13). Race and class are therefore intertwined when connected to the Native Americans in the book. Alexie makes us witness just how devastating poverty is for the Native American community. This poverty increases alcoholism and reduces hope, which again leads to a ramped increase in deaths and suicides. The white geometry teacher Mr. P solidifies this point through his postcolonialism confession. He confesses the following:

We were supposed to kill the Indian to save the child... I didn't literally kill Indians.

We were supposed to make you give up being Indian. Your songs and stories and language and dancing. Everything. We weren't trying to kill Indian people. We were trying to kill Indian culture. (p. 35)

The confession of Mr. P makes it clear to the reader how colonialism has affected and still is affecting Native Americans. Junior is told that Indians are thought to give up from their childhood, and that everyone has given up. This is made clear when Mr. P concludes, "We are all defeated." (p. 42). Mr. P tells Junior that if he doesn't leave the reservation that "they're going to kill you. I'm going to kill you. We're all going to kill you. You can't fight us forever (p. 43). From the sinful character Mr. P, we explicitly get told that life on reservations is a doomed life, that there is no hope, no justice, and no future. Therefore, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* can be seen as a direct critique of the previous and ongoing treatment of Native Americans.

Discussion

The Absolutely True-Diary of a Part-Time Indian gives the readers a glimpse into the harsh and unjust world that many Native Americans experience. It provides the readers with heartbreaking messages on poverty, racism, alcohol, and abuse through the genre it is written in and the literary tools used. A lot of the power of literature comes through witnessing and interacting with the narrative. Sherman, I believe, therefore made a great literary choice in writing from Junior's narrative when discussing topics surrounding Indigenous peoples. By writing from the narrative of Junior, the EFL pupils can witness and interact with new perspectives and insights. This insight that Junior's narrative gives throughout the novel is part of what can support EFL pupils to develop empathy with Indigenous peoples. Because Junior is a kid relatively close to their age it is easier for pupils to see themselves in his shoes. Especially compared to if he was an adult or a character not as relatable. Adding to this, through Junior sharing both his relatable adolescent struggles and tougher experiences like systematic racism, the readers could develop a sensation of a friendship. This friendship gets enhanced when Junior directly references and asks the readers various questions as well. Junior treats the reader as someone close to him, which causes the reader to feel actual proximity to the content. Connecting this back to the term *communitas*, I would argue that literature's transformative power in its effect of developing empathy, can come from such a relationship. Which then gets more accessible to pupils by being multimodal.

Sherman's funny, light and youthful writing style, combined with Forney's fun visuals is part of what makes the book suited for the EFL classroom. By witnessing Junior's ups and downs through the two modalities, pupils could improve their ability to empathize with Junior, because the message is expressed in two modalities. From a teacher's perspective this is gold, because the book covers both visual and literary learners. So *The Absolutely True-Diary of a Part-Time Indian* can be of great assistance for learning in the age group this paper is aiming for. It enables pupils to comprehend the various contents of the book and increases their motivation.

This unique emotional access that this novel creates through narrative and characters, is what makes it a great tool to help develop empathy. This is done by the readers relating and connecting to Junior as a character. So they see him as a person in his entirety, not merely a poor Indian. Furthermore, the pupils hear how the Native Americans lost a part of their culture through the story about the stupid horse. The story of the mysterious turtle lake and Stupid

horse, I would argue, represents part of Indigenous people's lost relationship with the land. Connecting it to the term 'territory', turtle lake can symbolize Indigenous peoples' attachment to the earth. For the Spokane, turtle lake is clouded with mystery, something which can represent some of their lost connection to the spiritual part of their culture. The pupils can see how the Native Americans long for their connection to nature, which was unfairly taken away from them. Not only is this a big pit in the middle of their society, but it is now foreign to the Spokane people, who used to be one with nature. Proof of how sad this loss of land is expressed through the character Mr.P, who elaborates on this.

The character Mr. P can help illustrate insights of the unjust and terrible things that were done to Native Americans. These actions are part of the reason for the destructive poverty and widespread alcoholism that is a huge problem among Native Americans today, as mentioned in the data presented. Through Mr. P's postcolonial confession to Junior, readers can see and reflect on these unjust problems in a way that could help them develop empathy towards Indigenous peoples. Building on this point, it can help pupils understand that the circumstances Native Americans live in, are wrongfully applied to them. Therefore, pupils might see that Native Americans are victims to the conditions and virtually not self opposed. In conclusion, pupils can see the story objectively through Mr.P's confession. By witnessing Mr. P from Junior's narrative, the reader might feel more empathy for Junior, and ultimately for Indigenous peoples, because Mr.P is brutally honest about how the Native Americans were treated.

By using Indigenized literature, like *The Absolutely True-Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, in the EFL classroom, pupils' scope expands. Their minds being stretched by a new experience or perspective, will hopefully make them critical towards various ideologies, political movements, cultural appropriations, and other expressions of power. For instance, in EFL textbooks Indigenous peoples can often be portrayed in stereotypes, something which can increase the distance between Indigenous and non-Indigenous. Thus, by using indigenized literature like the one this paper addresses, it can help against some of the critiques of Jurecic and Pedwell. For by using authentic Indigenized literature, it gives back the narrative and voice to the Indigenous peoples. Adding to this, Indigenous peoples get to decide themselves how they want to portray their own history, culture, and identity. In *The Absolutely True-Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, Sherman portrays the Native American history and culture from his point of view, and so EFL pupils get to witness this story from the perspective of a Native American. This means that pupils get to see an authentic version of a Native American's story

rather than a stereotyped impression from an outsider. This can help develop empathy, which comes from the authenticity that Indigenized materials can bring. Thus, through the novel being written by a Native American it can help EFL teachers avoid certain wrong assumptions, and it can help develop empathy through its authenticity.

My research question was: *How to encourage empathy with Indigenous peoples and cultures through working with The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian in the EFL classroom?* The number one point is to use authentic literature written by Indigenous peoples, that represents their voices in a real and raw manner. Where they get to own their own narrative, so the Indigenous peoples claim back the power of their stories. By doing this, non-Indigenous can not express their own ideologies and narratives upon a story that is not theirs. A great example of such literature is the novel *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*. Here Sherman tells the story authentically through his Native American point of view. My second point is when an EFL teacher is working with Indigenous literature, it is important that the literature is properly processed. This could be done by the pupils doing group work, activities, discussions, and working in depth. By working with Bank's two upper multicultural models, pupils will have a better chance of developing their empathy towards indigenous peoples and cultures. *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* can be a great raw material to use when working with Bank's multicultural models to develop empathy. My last point is to fill up the classroom with diverse Indigenous literature. Let the pupils have rich access to several different types of literature written by Indigenous peoples. *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* is a perfect example, because it addresses important issues in society, and it aims at a young-adult audience with a heavy message in a light manner. Making the content more accessible to pupils. All these reference points above can be part of what makes the book great to encourage empathy with Indigenous people in the EFL classroom.

Conclusion

This paper addresses the thesis *How to encourage empathy with Indigenous peoples and cultures through working with The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian in the EFL classroom?* Through my research I discovered that improving empathy could be done by using authentic literature written by Indigenous peoples, and working with Bank's multicultural models. *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* meets these requirements and aims at the age group within the EFL classroom, therefore it is a great novel to use for working with Indigenous peoples and empathy. A teacher could have the students

read this novel and process its content using Banks' models. Activities where pupils have to see through the perspective of Indigenous peoples are suitable for this purpose.

I believe this novel is great to use in the EFL classroom to help develop empathy with Indigenous peoples and cultures. Because it is relatable and accessible to young people. Also the book is fun, well written and entertaining, therefore it will engage the pupils. This book also tells an important story of the struggles a Native American can meet in today's society. Which I find important because it is relevant. Adding to this point, the pupils witnessing Native Americans' story through their perspectives is important, because I think it broadens the pupils' understanding and enables them to reflect upon the issues.

For further work this topic is transferable to other multicultural or suppressed groups, examples might be the Sami people, African Americans, or the LGBTQ community. Working with multicultural literature can also be done in collaboration with other subjects such as History or Norwegian.

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