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Hybridity and Postcolonial Studies: Teaching English African Literature to an Italian High School Class

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To New York for challenging my fears

To Venice who reminds me that the more you know

The more there is to discover
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SOURCES
**Introduction**

The aim of the present paper is to illustrate the importance of teaching a Postcolonial perspective in Italian High School System. In doing so I taught contemporary African literature in English to an Italian High School class. The method I used for my research was mainly qualitative. Students were asked to brainstorm and answer to small questionnaires which aimed in analysing their general perception of the field of study proposed, as well as reflecting on the notion of identity.

My project was matured through my personal experience as a student. I never encountered the word Postcolonial, until the first semester of my third year as a bachelor student in foreign languages. That semester I discovered the world of Postcolonial Kenya, as well as the Western hegemony of culture. Being fascinated with the course I decided to deepen my understanding of some of the topics of Postcolonial studies by tackling 'Prejudice between Fanon and Berlin' as the final thesis of my bachelor degree. While leading my research I read *The Wretched of the Earth* which was very powerful in explaining Hybridity. The idea of hybridity among the themes analysed in Postcolonial studies is the one that, personally, I consider the most powerful in term of influence in current society. Indeed, the influence of colonialism for colonised people reflects today, the influence of globalisation. The concept of Hybridity as a global field has been recently analysed by scholars becoming a contemporary topic of debate. Particularly, it has emerged in the context of contemporary literature.

Thus, I decided to focus my research on contemporary literature, deciding to both teaching and analysing it. Again in my personal experience in school I hardly ever had the opportunity to tackle literature or history that was less than a hundred years old.
I understand the necessity to assimilate the past, but mostly I believe that literature reflects a particular time in history in addition to depicting the society of that same time. Having the chance to study a depiction of the contemporary world, enhances in my opinion, the possibility of understanding and possibly improving the reality we are living in. For all the previous reasons I attempted to teach Hybridity and 20th-century African literature to an Italian high school class.

The present paper is the survey of my research. The first chapter will introduce the field of Postcolonial studies and it will propose an in-depth analysis of Hybridity. The second and third chapter will explore the literature analysed in the teaching project with the class. Whereas the fourth chapter will tackle the experience of teaching and the results achieved.
Chapter 1
Postcolonial Studies & Hybridity

We are living the age of globalisation where knowledge appears to be a click away. The truth is none knows anything. And terror grows even bigger.¹

Igiaba Scego

This words by Igiaba Scego, a contemporary Italian writer of Somali origin, appeared on the Internazionale after the Paris attacks of the 13th of November 2015. The author appears to seek a reality where terror is defeated, but accessibility to information appear to prevent in-depth reflection and make knowledge vacuous. Individuals emerged loomed by surface information and seem unable to search and analyse them. In fact, this statement is made on the assumption that knowledge is the way to defeat terror. Knowledge of what is diverse in the globalised world appears to be crucial in order to stop people from fighting and starting to make sense of each other, but current society emerges impotent toward proper research.

This quote could seem too tragic. However, it is a fact that current affairs, environmental issues, and terrorism are contemporary problems. The concept of diversity (ethnic diversity, ideology diversity, etc.) plays a big role in most of them. A better understanding of this term and the related idea of hybridity, could maybe help in being more conscious on the above of issues. In addition to this, the project introduced some pupils to a reflection on the notion of hybridity, which currently appears to be of great interest in the development of civilisation due to its influence in the globalised

¹ Igiaba Scego, 'Not in my Name' Internazionale 14.55, 14th November 2015
The present chapter will concentrate on defining the field of studies analysed, as well as presenting an explanation of the concept of hybridity, considering some of the most important scholars which dealt with it.

1.1 *The Postcolonial Focus*

Postcolonial studies was born as the field of studies which had to come to terms with the world after colonialism. Scholars questioned about reasons for colonialism, but consequences also appear to be of great interest in current affair. The focus of Postcolonial studies does not just resolve in literature but in sociology, history, philosophy, political science, and anthropology. In fact, the process of colonialism reflects in different fields which render the subject varied in term of academic focus.

The most significant movement that began Postcolonial work was (and still is) the subaltern studies group that (re)examined Indian history and historiography. Coming from a Gramscian perspective of the subaltern coupled with the insights of various post-structuralist analyses, writers like Gayatri Spivak, Ranajit Guha and Dipesh Chakrabarty sought to transform the ways in which the subaltern was located within discourse, history and philosophy. It was, in fact, the emergence of subaltern studies that was seen as a signifier of Postcolonial criticism and discourse.²

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² Jasper Goss, 'Subverting whose Empire' p. 239
As suggested by Goss 'subaltern' is one of the main topics which Postcolonial studies concentrates on. In fact, the field in analysis showed the interest in capsizing history by focusing on the point of view of the subject that, for centuries, had been exploited in the history of the Western world. Postcolonial studies appears to aim in rewriting of history on a more democratic and global perspective. Goss, in addition to mentioning some of the most prized academics who contributed to the growth of this field of studies, touches upon the role of philosophy. In this sense the discourse on power by the 20th-century former philosopher Michel Foucault is pivotal. Foucault had a remarkable effect on the Postcolonial work of Said's for example. As noted by Goss:

Another important influence upon Postcolonial theory, but of a different character and time period was Edward Said's Orientalism. This work is perhaps the most significant (and successful) reworking of Foucault's discourse analysis. Said examined the way in which the East (the Orient) had been constructed in relation to the West in terms of discursive practices. The whole idea of a binary opposite (ie east/west) was the overarching legacy of Orientalism in Said's eyes, which determined any interaction between the West and the other. Orientalism became, 'an accepted grid for filtering through the Orient into Western consciousness' 3

Orientalism is a key text in Postcolonial Studies, as remarked by Goss, introducing the idea that the Orient was created by the West. Moreover, the dichotomy proposed by Said recollects, the impact of another post-structuralist philosopher Jacques Derrida. In fact, the philosophy of Foucault and Derrida seems to have profoundly influenced the development of the field in analysis, since it aims for a rethinking of the categories that organise individuals' minds.

3 Goss, 'Subverting whose empire' p.241
Postcolonial theory grapples with colonialism's legacies and seeks alternative representations or knowledge that do not fall prey to colonialist knowledge's misrepresentations and epistemic violence. This is why it is labelled post colonial theory: it seeks theories (knowledges), ways of representing the world, and histories that critique rather than authorize or sustain imperialistic ways of knowing. Postcolonial theory seeks to elaborate "theoretical structures that contest the previous dominant western ways of seeing things". 

In *Theory and Society*, Postcolonial studies emerges as searching for a more democratic representation of the world by reconsidering associations that, for centuries, have been depicted as the only possible ones. As it will be further discussed in the second chapter of this research, what appears to be contested on the Postcolonial claim is “the danger of a single story”. Postcolonial aims at deepening the perception and the understanding of the past, in addition to empowering the world with a new consciousness which might resolve in a more considered future. A future which is rapidly moving into interconnection due to globalisation, enhancing ties between East and West despite the apparent unwillingness of the West to withdraw its supremacy privilege.

While the repression of imperial history leads to analytical separations, so too does the assumption that Europe is the sole originator and agent of history without any contributions from other places or in the absence of relations with others. 

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4 Julian Go, 'For a postcolonial sociology' p. 31-32  
5 Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, 'The Danger of a Single Story'  
6 Go, 'For a postcolonial sociology' p. 37
In fact, Go suggests, that Europe has endured in perceiving itself as the only generator of history overlooking the role, influence and sometimes even the presence of other civilisations. Postcolonial studies though reveals its concern in remembering the presence of the Orient.

Despite previous explanations, Postcolonial studies may be scholarly referred as non-coherent, for instance:

However, the theory of Postcolonialism is at best a mishmash of deeply confusing elements drawn from literary criticism, history and philosophy. The importance of Derrida to Postcolonial theory is paramount, though it seems that Bhabha and Spivak (among others) have taken Derrida's maxim of 'there is nothing outside of the text' and converted it to 'there is nothing but the text.\(^7\)

In fact, as stated at the beginning of the present chapter, Postcolonial consists in diverse fields of studies which may distance from a clear-cut definition of what Postcolonial is. This tendency might even be a mere mirror of the “alternative representations”\(^8\) claimed by Go. Nonetheless, the latter characteristic of Postcolonial studies perfectly imitate hybridity, one of the field core concepts, which is the focus of the present analysis. Postcolonial as hybridity may need to be categorised since according to Blaine, “it involves a great deal of information processing”.\(^9\) According to the author, who concentrates on the psychological perception of diversity, categorisation is a human necessity but concepts such as Postcolonial and hybridity remain in the in-between of categories.

\(^7\) Goss, 'Subverting whose empire' p. 244
\(^8\) Go, 'For a postcolonial sociology' p. 31-32
\(^9\) Bruce E. Blaine Understanding the Psychology of Diversity p. 21
1.2 Hybridity in Postcolonial Studies

Hybridity is used to describe “a thing made by combining two different elements; a mixture.”\textsuperscript{10} The word *hybrid* originated in the early seventeenth century and was first used regularly in the nineteenth century to describe the offspring of two plants or animals of different species. From botanic and biology, the word started to be used in Victorian time to depict the children born from white colonisers and black slaves. Hybridity became slowly the interactions of the two cultures and being a hybrid quickly started to be considered as representing a “new form”. Nowadays, Hybridity is very much the interest of sociologists who concentrate on the consequences of globalisation. According to scholars, in fact, global movement tends to unify multiple societies. The problem with Hybrid is that it does not belong to one only thing:

Hybridity or belonging is a sensitive subject in some cases. The hybrid must belong somewhere eventually, and it must be classified somehow. Does a mule belong to the horse category, to the jackass (domestic ass Equus asinus) category, to both, or neither? Hybrids, whether plants or animals, can be seen to both (or more) parent systems or to neither. Sometimes the other of the parents on the basis of gender, power, or genres, and other products of human “culture” are treated classificatory perceptions and constructions.\textsuperscript{11}

Belonging is crucial in order to define an object. An object which is, usually, easily already belonging to a category. In fact, according to Blaine “thinking on categories requires less attention and memory resources”.\textsuperscript{12} By creating a new form

\textsuperscript{10} Meriam-Webster Dictionary, Web. 20\textsuperscript{th} Nov. 2016
\textsuperscript{11} Stross, 'The Hybrid Metaphor: From Biology to Culture' p. 260-261
\textsuperscript{12} Blaine, *Understanding the Psychology of Diversity* p. 21
Hybridity demands for the creation of a 'new category' requiring a stronger analysis of the object in question.

As Fearon explains in his essay 'What is Identity', identity refers to the individual, as well as the society he is living in. In addition to this, any individual recognises themselves with different personal labels, in fact, i.e. a woman could identify herself as a mother, a lawyer, or a lover. Furthermore, the same woman could possibly belong to different social groups. It is possible for her to be a Buddhist with French citizenship and Egyptian origins. Moreover, according to scholars, identity may be influenced by several factors, such as education, family, social-milieu, culture, and religion. Therefore, it is clear as a single individual is able to recognise himself/herself with a variegated amount of categories, usually due to disparate circumstances of life.

Thus, determining identity is a complex and rather arbitrary notion which transforms into a lifetime search. This process of identification requires categorisation which emerges as the mechanism adapted to create labels. Labels which express belonging. In this sense, all perceptions appear to be constructed, therefore the idea to construct new, inclusive categorisations emerges as reasonable. This reading of hybridity is central to the psychological perception that individuals construct in order to comprehend where they belong and in order to make sense of the world.

In fact, in spite of being a relatively new field of study, psychology enables an empiric understanding of some of the processes which permit social interactions between individuals. On the purpose of the present research, categorisation in empirical terms emerges as crucial since it prevents a judgemental acknowledgement of interactions between different cultures.

13 James D. Fearon, 'What is Identity?' Stanford University p.6
1.2.1 Frantz Fanon

As claimed by Prabhu who focuses on the first text written by Fanon Black Skins, White Masks, Fanon is one of the most influential contributors of Postcolonial criticism. Indeed, in the present definition of the concept of hybridity, Fanon's work is remarkable since it may be acknowledged as the overture of the discourse on Hybridity. He is a precursor of Postcolonial studies and he is focal to this survey since, as a psychiatrist, he studied some of the effects of colonisation on people's mind.

Fanon was of middle-class origin and he was born in 1925. Since of younger age, he reflected on the effects of race difference which felt particularly strong while he attended medicine in France. In fact, the black label revealed very strong on his personality, and Black Skins, White Masks which he wrote in 1952 his influenced by his personal experience. Soon after obtaining his degree decided to join the liberation movement which was asking for the independence of Algeria. He worked as a doctor in the country from 1955 and through this experience he wrote The Wretched of The Earth.

In addition to asking for the independence of the colonised country, which according to him has to be perpetuated in any meanings, he reports in the last chapter of his text several examples of the effects of colonialism in his patients' mind. According to Go in fact, Fanon's innovation has been to highlight the cultural and psychological dimensions of colonialism. Particularly in his penultimate work, Fanon was interested in the virulent racism of colonialism. Working as a psychiatric, he concentrated on the

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14 Anjali Prabhu, 'Narration in Frantz Fanon's Peau noire masques blancs: Some Reconsiderations' p. 1
psychological impact of racism, as well as on the process which enables the mutual
corstitution of the colonizer and colonize.15

In the last pages the author reflects on the issue of colonial identity, according to
him, in fact, the “systematic negation of the other, the raving decision of refusing
humanity to the colonised, colonialism forces colonised individual to the continuous
question: “Who am I?”16 Fanon proceeds by asserting that “colonised people are not
only dominated. (...) Algerians women wearing haik, palm groves and camels are part
of the landscape”17. Colonised are deprived of their humanity which reflects in the
removal of their personalities as well.

Psychiatric practice labels the mental disorders of our patient as "reactional
psychosis". In this sense the event which is the cause of the disorder is privileged
despite the role played by the biological and personal history of the patient as well
as the environment are considered as well. It appears that genesis event is to trace
on the ruthless bloody atmosphere, the generalisation of non human practice and the
firm impression that people has on being part of a true apocalypse. 18

As it may be inferred in the afore passage, the situations depicted by Fanon are
to be considered at the limit since they describe the consequences of a war. Despite this
though, they reflect “personalities which are definitely disconnected” due to
colonialism. In some sense, these examples explain a reality at the limit of hybridity.
Hybridity, at this time in history, has not yet been theorised as a fact in Postcolonial
studies nor it has started to be interpreted or assimilated, as it will be explained in later

15 Go, 'For a Postcolonial Sociology' p. 29
16 Frantz Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth p. 175
17 Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth p. 175
18 Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth p. 177
paragraphs. According to Prabhu, hybridity in its colonial version was predicated upon the superiority of the white race.\textsuperscript{19} Fanon in fact, concentrates on the consequence of colonialism in people's mind which appears to be disconnections of identity.\textsuperscript{20} This disconnection is well portrayed in the last chapter of his oeuvre, where Fanon recollects some peculiar example of this disconnection.

On the purpose of the present research, the example of a nineteen years old Algerian militant's experience reveals interesting. The young man is hospitalised because of sleeping disorders. He recollects that he was the only man left in his family to whom he claimed to be very closed. When he was away he discovers that his sisters and dear mother had been killed by a French soldier. He could not recover from this loss and he remembers that once when he was patrolling his squad stopped at the estate of a well-known colonizer of the area who had killed two Algerians civilian. At the estate, they found just his wife, who expressed her condemn toward her husband behaviour. Nonetheless, the soldier is unable to show mercy toward the woman because he reminds him of his own mother.

But I kept looking at the woman and thinking of my mother. She was sitting in an armchair and her thoughts seemed to elsewhere. I was asking myself why we didn't kill her. And then she noticed I was looking at her. She threw herself on me screaming: 'Please... don't kill me... I've got children.' The next minute she was dead. I'd killed her with my knife. My commander disarmed me and gave me orders to leave. I was interrogated by the district commander a few days later. I thought I was going to be shot, but I give a damn. And then I began to vomit after eating and I slept badly. After that this woman would come every night asking for my blood. And what about my mother's blood?\textsuperscript{21}

\textsuperscript{19} Prabhu, 'Narration in Frantz Fanon's Peau noire masques blancs: Some Reconsiderations' p.1  
\textsuperscript{20} Fanon, \textit{The Wretched of the Earth} p. 190  
\textsuperscript{21} Fanon, \textit{The Wretched of the Earth} p. 193
In its cruelty the above passage, explains what hybridity represents for Fanon. In his opinion Algerian colonised had always been treated as “inferior beasts” reflecting the assumptions made by French people that: “All Algerians are habitual killers, savage killers, senseless killers, robbery by an Algerian is always breaking an entry”. These assumptions categorized Algerians with one mere feature. It is to consider though that the young man’s action may be read as a revenge on his beloved mother's memory, in fact, the first to commit the deed was a French soldier. Is not he to be considered a beast for committing such a brutal action toward a civilian, with no probable need? The assumption will be that the French soldier was doing his job, protecting his country.

Hybridity here reflects on the violence that represents both the coloniser and the colonised. The violence perpetuated by the colonised though, appears stronger than the one of the coloniser. The colonised was reckoned in one only characteristic which he emerges to conform in. Fanon’s comment on the episode claims that in spite of the treatments, the young man personality remained seriously flawed suggesting that only time may heal his dislocated personality.

The possibility to assume both the black skin and the white mask simultaneously or alternately is what has been seized upon in dramatization hybridity in the very existence of the evolué under colonialism as described by Fanon (…) the desire to be worthy of the other's love or admiration-in other words in one's identification as a consciousness-an overarching totality of coherence for the self perspective

Fanon's discourse concentrates often on violence but he is capable of tracing the

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22 Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* p. 222
23 Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* p. 194
24 Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* p.192
disconnection of the mind which results in the encounter of two separate reality in colonial terms. The European coloniser in fact, made the assumption that by colonising he was spreading civilisation, assuming that the other populations were lacking in it.

For centuries Europe, which later will be referred as the Westerners, protected its exploits on the need of spreading the civilisation to individuals who did not share the same values. Westerners' values were perceived as better, therefore colonised were not treated as peers but as inferior. The psychological implications ended in the disconnection of personality because even if introducing the colonised to the coloniser's values he never fully integrates with the colonised because he was born in a culture which was different. In this situation, the colonised mind in Fanon's opinion feels disconnected because he finds himself in-between too cultures. The quest for identity is challenged and apparently results in despair, playing off the coloniser against the colonised.

Despite being in the power position the coloniser as well suffers from the situation imposed. Fanon reports the case of a European police officer diagnosed with depression caused by inflicting torture to the Algerian patriots. The man is disconnected because the trauma of his job caused him insomnia and repulse for his own position. The case of the daughter of a senior civil servant is again very remarkable because she seems to perceive the war as absurd.

My father was a senior civil servant. He was in charge of a vast rural area. As soon as the troubles broke out, he threw himself like a maniac into a frenzied manhunt for Algerians. (...) I watched helplessly as my father slowly changed. In the end I decided not to go and see him any more and stay in town. In fact every time I went

25 Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* p. 194
home the screams coming from downstairs kept me awake at night. (...) You see I'd lived for a long time in the village. I know almost all the families. I had played with the young Algerians of my age when we were little. (...) If I were Algerian I'd join the resistance movement. (...) The funeral sickened me," she said. "All those officials mourning over the death of my father whose 'high moral qualities had won over the native population' made me feel nauseous. Everyone knew it wasn't true. (...) They knew that ten people were killed under torture, and yet they came to recite their lies about his devotion.... I have to confess that words don't mean much to me now, not very much. (...) They offered me financial support but I refused. For me it was bought with the blood my father had spilled. I don't want any of it. I intend to work."  

The woman's words emerge as disconnected from reality. Her world integrated Algerians, but with the war, that world was replaced by a reality that she refuses to recognise. The woman reckons to be part of an in-between world and seems to not understand why that world is not to be real any longer.

Fairchild's reading of Fanon claims that:

Fanon's conclusion is a direct appeal to like-minded individuals to transform themselves in an effort to remake the world. It is a strident call for the rejection of the European model that has brought the world to atomic and spiritual disintegration. From the degradation of European domination, however, lies hope for the African and that hope, paradoxically enough, lies in the struggle for liberation. It is in struggle that the people be united, that a new cultural form emerges, that the spirit of Harambee is born.  

According to Fairchild, Fanon aims for the development of a world violence and struggle emerge as regenerative. Europe reveals as the defeated dominator. A dominator

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26 Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* Page 204-205
27 H. Halford Fairchild,'The Wretched of the Earth in Contemporary Perspective' p. 192-193
who has found his power on division. Freedom and liberty though will be founded on inclusiveness, as if from pain individuals might, eventually, learn to “pull together” in order to create a better society.

1.2.2 Homi Bhabha

Teaching sometimes means labelling something that might already be clear in pupil's mind. This is the case for hybridity. The contemporary globalised world is rich in culture connections and the aim of the present survey is to elucidate how most of the cultures are bind together. Fanon focused on the disconnection produced by the colonial encounter of two cultures, his work was reinterpreted and enlarged by Bhabha as it will be further discussed in the next chapter of the present research.

Homi Bhabha is an Indian-born scholar currently teaching in the United States. Together with other scholars such as Edward Said and Gayatri Spivak, he is reckoned among the most important theorisers of Postcolonial Studies of the 1990s. His work, particularly *The Location of Culture*, enlarged the concept of Hybridity.

According to Goss the influence of Fanon in Bhabha is relevant because of the identification of the psychological ramifications of colonialism: “Fanon's illustration of a colonially transforming discourse/other, argues Bhabha, ‘[with] its displacement of time and person, its defilement of culture and territory, refuses the ambition of any "total" theory of colonial’” 28

Go's reading continues on the same line as Goss, arguing that, with the influence

28 Goss, 'Postcolonialism Subverting whose Empire?' p.241
of Derrida and Foucault, Bhabha suggests that all types of "knowing" leads to essentiality and dangerous universality. Bhabha's theoretical musings and readings of the colonial archive celebrates ambiguity, liminality, or "hybridity" which, according to Bhabha, unsettles the categorical binaries typical of colonial discourse and Western rationalism.\footnote{Go, 'For a Postcolonial Sociology' p.243} What Bhabha seems to express is the necessity to reconsider the categorisation used in terms of culture.

Bhabha discourse starts with an analysis of Fanon's work and his focus on the identity of the black man. According to Fanon blackness is realised when the difference in skin colour is made clear by white people.\footnote{Frantz Fanon, Black Skins, White Masks p. 88} Identity appears to be constructed through the encounter with another individual. Bhabha enhances the binary opposition, in addition to clarify the process of identification. For him, identity passes through three essential parts.

First to exist is to be called into being in relation with what an otherness, its look or locus. (...) Second: the very place of identification, caught in the tension of demand and desire is a space of splitting. (...) Finally, the question of identification is never the affirmation of a pre-given identity, never a self fulfilling prophecy-it is always the production of an image of identity and the transformation of the subject in assuming that image. \footnote{Homi Bhabha, The Location of Culture p. 44}

Bhabha reads identification as a binary process which appears to require the individual and the otherness. Otherness comprehends a spatial conception that is crucial in colonial discourse but might surface as unimportant. This process of identification is
though always related to a colonial reality which comprehends the dichotomy native-settlers. On the final part though the question of hybridity emerges.

Bhabha's claim is that colonial discourse created the image of degenerated natives which needed to be helped with administration and education. The stereotype is created in order to block differentiation.\(^\text{32}\) On this line, it is important to point out the aforementioned human psychological need for categorisation which tends toward stereotyping, Bhabha states that:

> Colonial authority requires modes of discrimination (cultural, racial, administrative...) that disallow a stable unitary assumption of collectivity. Produced through the strategy of disavowal, the reference of discrimination is always to a process of splitting as the condition of subjection: a discrimination between the mother culture and its bastards, the self and its doubles, where the trace of what is disavowed is not repressed but repeated as something different- a mutation, a hybrid.\(^\text{33}\)

Discrimination to prevent collectivity results in Hybridity. A hybrid appears to be the result of deformation and displacement perpetuated by colonialism which effected particularly its identity.

Hybridity represents that ambivalent 'turn' of the discriminated subject into the terrifying, exorbitant object of paranoid classification – a disturbing questioning of the images and presences of authority(...) It is the power of this strange metonymy of presence to so disturb the systematic (and systemic) construction of discriminatory knowledges that the cultural, once recognized as the medium of authority, becomes virtually unrecognisable. \(^\text{34}\)

\(^\text{32}\) Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* p. 60 
\(^\text{33}\) Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* p. 111 
\(^\text{34}\) Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* p. 113-114
Bhabha constantly refers to the struggle for power of colonial authority which consequence is a more evaluated culture who is authorised to take advantage of a lesser culture. In spite of differentiation, though the outcome appears to be a hybrid which is “unrecognisable” and lacks in a category. Hybridity in this sense is the product of a relational process.

Bhabha’s discourse, in the end, explains clearly the hybridity of cultures, their inherent indetermination. In the following passage, he reminds as well, the purpose of Postcolonial studies to eradicate the authoritative tendance shown by colonial powers.

The postcolonial perspective-as it is being developed by cultural historians and literary theorists-departs from the traditions of the sociology of underdevelopment or 'dependency' theory. As a mode of analysis, it attempts to revise those nationalist or 'nativist' pedagogies that set up the relation of Third World and First World in a binary structure of opposition. The postcolonial perspective resists the attempt at holistic forms of social more complex cultural and political boundaries that exist on the cusp of these often opposed political spheres. It is from this hybrid location of cultural value-the transnational as the translational-that the postcolonial intellectual attempts to elaborate a historical and literary project. My growing, conviction has been that the encounters and negotiations of differential meanings and values within 'colonial' textuality, its governmental discourses and cultural practices have anticipated, avant la lettre many of the problematic of signification and judgement that have become current in contemporary theory. 35

As claimed by Goss, Bhabha comes closer to identifying post-colonialism as post-coloniality, that is as a condition of being-in literary, subjective and epistemological terms. The postcolonial exists along with the colonial (hybridity and

35 Bhabha, The Location of Culture p. 173
ambivalence). The influence of the philosophical discourse of Foucault and Derrida, as well as the attention to the literary form maintain the academic view of the author, who is nevertheless able to express the necessity to review the categorisation of knowledge in addition to show the inherent characteristic of the hybridity of contemporary society.

1.3 Hybridity & Globalisation

On the afore chapters Frantz Fanon and Homi Bhabha traced some of the features of hybridity in relation to colonial history. As mentioned, the concept of hybridity moved from biology to cultural studies and appears to have been of great interest in the field of Postcolonial studies because of the issues related to identity which are often observed among colonised individuals.

Identity has indeed been, the focus of the present survey since it was one of the reflections proposed in the teaching project. In fact, according to most recent theories which will be further discussed in the following chapter, hybridity might present effects on everyone who is conditioned by globalisation.

In spite of creating a despotic dynamic of power at the expenses of the colonised countries, it is a fact that colonialism competed in the amplification of culture connections. In addition to this, it created the basis for the global expansion that, together with the influence of increasing technologies and internet, reduced distances

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36 Goss, 'Subverting Whose Empire' p. 242
between people and their cultures. Due to this mutations, the concept of nation and purity grows more shallow and seems to lose its distinction in the academic world.

Nonetheless, current affair depicts a very different portrait. Religious fundamentalism, growing populism in politics and lack of humanitarian concern towards immigrants, express a serious clash between the history of ideas and the application of the same ideas in the everyday world. What emerges is the need for society to acknowledge the changes carried by Globalisation.

Often Globalisation phenomena might be perceived as a threat to the purity of the identity of nations and subsequently of their citizens. What seems to be often forgotten is the interdependency that characterised the world and the consequent shallow nature of the concept of purity in relation to nations, cultures, and peoples. In its 'Hybridity between culture and Biology' Stross states that the concept of purity is ephemeral:

There are after all no "pure" individuals, no "pure" cultures, genres. All things are of necessity "hybrid." Of course we can construct them to be relatively "pure," and in fact we do so, which is precisely how we manage to get new hybrids from pure-breds that are former hybrids.37

As expressed by Stross purity in relation to individuals and cultures is an idea that empirically does not exists because everything is a Hybrid. In fact, everything is connected together it is generated by something that already existed which had been influenced to some extent. Despite this, acknowledging Hybridity in every aspect of human relations is destabilizing because it threatens human identity.

37 Stross, 'The Hybrid Metaphor: From Biology to Culture' p. 264
As discussed at the beginning of this chapter human categorisations tend towards known and shaped categories. Hybridity, on the other hand, is described as in-between and it eludes a firm definition. Furthermore, personal identity represents often a certitude of individual it manifests people's need for belonging. It is unlikely for Europeans to reflect on the fact that nations they reckon as their homelands were artificially created by a treaty in 1648. Usually, French are thought as French, Italian as Italian, failing to remember that Italy has been Italy for little more than a hundred and fifty years. What become apparent is that the artificial conventions of some individuals are debated, in some occasions, as “categorical imperatives” or as “natural laws”. It is to reckon that deterritorialization, one of the consequences of Globalisation, threatens local traditions. On the other hand, it broadens people's understanding of diversities as well as improving the acknowledgement of culture connections.

Scholars claim toward Globalisation often focuses on the shortening of distances and deterritorialization. Stuart Elden proposes a very interesting reading on the mathematical geometrical perception of space which through time and discoveries has led to the understanding of the world as a whole in reference to its resemblance to a sphere. “Space is no longer that of a single country (or later, nation), but that of the world as a whole. The abstract space is extended to the globe, which is understood as a geometrical object.”

Therefore, deterritorialization emerges as a rethinking of space. Tomlinson's *Globalisation and Culture* discusses space considering the influences of distances. According to him technological improvement of transportations lead a radical change in the perception of territory which in recent times has mostly been considered

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38 Stuart Elden, 'Missing Point: Globalisation, Deterritorialization and the Space of the World' p. 9
in terms of time. The journey from Venice to New York is not regarded as crossing the Atlantic Ocean, but rather on the nine hours flight required to reach the final destination.\textsuperscript{39} Tomlinson's reading focuses on the “concept of connectivity and proximity”, for instance he claims that airports are all the same because their prime role is to facilitate people who travel for business purposes. Being connected means being close and globalisation enhances proximity between people as well as modifying their perception of space.

In his oeuvre, Tomlinson considers cultural homogenisation, which will be discussed by Pieterse as well. Cultural homogenisation foresee the tendance of differences between cultures to conform. The former author refers to business purposes “For the orientation of business travel is actually to minimize the cultural difference so as to allow the 'universal' practices of the international business culture to function smoothly.”\textsuperscript{40} He reckons that discovering new cultures is a rather different feature which respond to different needs. In a sense the author commands the impossibility of cultural differences in economic field, enhancing the probability to maintain those differences outside the business sphere. Globalisation may be seen as the mere product of economical development but, despite the business travel it depicts as well the encounter of cultures which end up mixing as further reckoned by Pieterse who additionally points out that globalisation has been a very long process in history.\textsuperscript{41}

\textsuperscript{39} John Tomlinson, \textit{Globalisation and Culture} p. 4
\textsuperscript{40} Tomlinson, \textit{Globalisation and Culture} p. 7
\textsuperscript{41} Jan Nederven Pieterse, \textit{Globalisation and Culture: Global Mélange} p. 42
1.3.1 Jan Nederven Pieterse

Jan Nederveen Pieterse is a former scholar in terms of globalisation and multicultural society and according to Claudio Baralli, he is the only one to have produced an effectively combined reading of the two phenomena.42 In his Globalisation and Culture: Global Mélange, he proposes, as suggested on the preface by Baralli, a very interesting reading on the changes of society produced by Globalisation and Hybridity.

The second chapter of Pieterse oeuvre revolves on human integration suggesting that all human beings are migrant. Pieterse questions whether if individuals tend toward integration thanks to Globalisation.

Pieterse claims that the notion of cultural differences has mutated. Diversities emerges as a possible conflict between civilisation or cultural conformation due to consumerism or again a process of mélange and cultural hybridisation. The author refers to the first two processes as traditional, on the purpose of this study they may be referred as a “Western” interpretation. The latter process may be read instead as Postcolonial reading since according to Pieterse it recognises the existence “half-bred or mulatto”.43 The author goes on:

Hybridity is a remedy against cultural differentiation which is core of racial and national doctrines. In fact, Hybridity employs exactly those experiences that in cultural differentiation had been marginalised and forbidden. Hybridity subverts nationalism because it privileges the crossing of borders; it overrules political and

42 Pieterse, Globalisation and Culture: Global Mélange Preface p. 9
43 Pieterse, Globalisation and Culture: Global Mélange p.71
ethnic identities as well claims of purity and authenticity because Hybridity generates on the indefiniteness of borders. If modernity embodies order and clear separation through well defined borders, Hybridity mirror a post-modern awareness of collage, transgression and subversion. Foucault would define it: “a resurrection of subjugated minds”.44

Pieterse's explanation of Hybridity contains partly Fanon's and Bhabha's. Pieterse, in fact, observes the existence of the in-between as a fact and he reckons the process which has led to ceased it as a deficiency, empowering people with the freedom to connect to the concept of Hybridity as a privileged view of the world.

His discourse appears associated with the Postcolonial perspective even in the use of Foucault's words which seeks for a change of perspective, appears cardinal in Postcolonial studies.

Furthermore, Pieterse debunks the idea for cultural uniformity. In his opinion, in fact, what is often marginalized by scholars who defend this theory is the influence that so-called “Eastern” culture has on the “Western”. The impact of Globalisation in mutual.45

Pieterse study concentrates as well on the anti-hybridisation reaction. For instance, he proposes a reading of Friedman state on the triviality of defining culture and languages as mixed. Pieterse claims that the above statement represents a sea change in social structures and practices pointing out how for centuries the search of patriarchal aristocratic and racial views pursue a higher nature of purity. In his words: “To regard this as trivial is so profoundly misread history”46

44 Pieterse, Globalisation and Culture: Global Mélange p. 71
45 Pieterse, Globalisation and Culture: Global Mélange p.88
46 Pieterse, Globalisation and Culture: Global Mélange p.106
What emerges from the aforementioned analysis is that Hybridity is a fact in today Globalised society. In this sense, diversities emerges just as aspect of cultures which are from their very origin mixed together. The concept of purity has failed and what is left are powerful diversities of a culture that is unique in the global world.
Chapter two

Teaching the Postcolonial Mainstream

The chapter will focus on the two short stories which were taught in the teaching project. Firstly, there will be an introduction to the genre of short stories, secondly, the focus will shift on the two authors chosen and their work.

The teaching project, concentrated on African examples of Literature because appeared the most effective in questioning the image that the West has on the continent. In addition to this, as it will be further discussed in Chapter 4 Africa is related in colonial terms with Italy, as well as presenting many powerful examples of contemporary English literature.

Mainstream Postcolonial literature consisted of two short stories as well as other literary texts examples. The decision to propose this kind of literature to the class was given by multiple reasons. First and foremost, short stories appear to be the depiction of our time and in traditional Italian teaching short stories are not very much of use because, as it will be further discussed the tendency, is to remain close to the syllabus proposed by the book adopted in schools. Normally, 20th century short stories might be the object of study in later university programs. Therefore the use of short story, to the purpose of the present study, which aims at introducing pupils to more contemporary critics, emerges as reasonable.

In addition to this, the discussion with both the class professor and Professor Bassi led to the conclusion that the genre of short story was the most effective tool in terms of canonic literary examples since it would provide a glimpse on the field of
Postcolonial studies which was one of the main the goals of the project undertaken. In fact, this type of literature was able to help the class to become familiar with the field of Postcolonial without alarming students with the analysis of a book. Moreover, using short stories enabled the introduction of two different backgrounds of Africa which described the worlds of the authors proposed.

2.1 On Choosing Authors and Their Work

Most of the authors analysed in the present research are men, notwithstanding this, Postcolonial studies engages with people despite their genre. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and Nadine Gordimer are among the most acclaimed African authors and their work served as the example of today's African literature.

This project was deeply influenced by the inspiration that the author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is able to empower people with. Adichie reveals herself as genuinely charismatic and very passionate. Though the text chosen for the project may not appear as straightforward as her speech on TEDx Talks or other speeches that she held, the themes undertaken are of current interest for every human being and she reveals herself as a very powerful example of today's Africa. Gordimer was chosen because, as Adichie and before her, she shows her passion and charisma in her literature. The two authors appears to believe in the power of literature to induce the readers to reflect on their society, Gordimer's work reveals the power of an African woman who fought against apartheid through her literature and she was awarded a Nobel Price for
her commitment. Gordimer's work together with Adichie revealed powerful in showing a fighting portrait of Africa.

Comparing Adichie with Gordimer may not appear clear at a first since the two lived different experiences in Africa. Gordimer was white, wealthy, and was born in South Africa. Adichie is black and her parents were poor because of the war in their home country, Nigeria. In addition to this, Adichie was born fifty-four years after Gordimer, fifty-four years in which the world, and particular the African continent had undergone some major change, namely decolonisation. Though those differences are part of the reasons that make a comparison on the two authors worth analysing.

In fact, ethnic diversity is able to provide a diverse perspective on the theme approached whereas time distance enables students to reflects on Africa as a continent that has faced and is facing major changes. In order to provide a better comprehension of Postcolonial studies, it was important to propose to the students different examples of Africa, so as to stimulate the students an understanding of the variety of the African continent which apparently has been too long hidden and forgotten in traditional Italian teaching.

Furthermore, in spite of differences the two are both contemporary women writing about their countries and about the world, they are both dealing with identity, expatriates and some of the leading issues which individuals and society have to undergo. Both the authors appear to use their words not only to depict the society they are living in but to make that same society reflect on its core issues, a reflection which may seek for an improvement.

In this sense, determining the story has not been as obvious as choosing the
authors. In fact, literature had to consider what worked best for the purpose of the project. As said before, when assembling the project short story revealed its potential on the scope of teaching Postcolonial literature. Nonetheless, selecting one work among Gordimer's was a delicate process. Her collection of short stories is, in fact, extensive and probably any of her tales would have been provocative or dense in significance. In spite of this, a decision had to be taken eventually and it must have considered the selection offered by the other author examined: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. As it will be further discussed in the present chapter, Adichie's collection of short stories appears in *The Thing Around Your Neck* published in 2009. The story which titles the book was very powerful in tracing a Western point of you on Africa.

Furthermore, the plots are similar both dealing with themes of migration and diaspora. Particularly of the Black community, which is a major discussion in Postcolonial Studies. In fact, Adichie's story depicts the experience of a young migrant in the US and migrant happens to be the protagonist in Gordimer's story as well.

On the other hand, Gordimer's 'Africa Emergent' was persuasive in outlining the tragedy of Apartheid as well as giving a glimpse of the time when some of today's migration had started. Nonetheless, the story was too long, also the second part of the story distanced itself from Postcolonial discourse and drama complications seemed excessive to be applicable to the project plus, the information revolving on Hybridity, Identity, expatriates and the depiction of South Africa Apartheid felt sufficient in the first part of the story. Therefore, on the best interest of the project, the student analysed just the first part of Gordimer's oeuvre.
As it will be further explained, the cut did not damage the focus of the two short stories which actually, give the impression to complement each other as well as introducing some of the most powerful reflections that the present project aimed at conveying.

\[2.2 \textbf{Short Story as a Genre}\]

The genre of the short story has been prospering in the last century in Western writing. Modernism marked a turning point in the development of the genre, nonetheless, storytelling has always been part of human history since ancient time and the genre of the short story does not appear to have developed in a pure homogeneous way. Rather it presented dissimilarities in its definition that greatly combined with the underlined topic of hybridity which is a focus of the project.

According to Allan Pasco the genre “lacks a really firm definition” and does not show “universally accepted conventions”\textsuperscript{47} In fact, short story deficits a precise definition probably due to its adaptability since it may reproduce epic poetry, religious preaching, anecdotes. Pasco claims that short story may be impossible to define because of its dynamism: “The hope to contriving a definition of short stories which will remain useful until the end of time will be possible only when short stories dies as a genre.”\textsuperscript{48}

This genre is far from perishing. Notwithstanding, the human needs for categorisation is always present and Pasco continues by stating that unconsciously a

\textsuperscript{47} J. Allan Pasco, 'On Defining Short Stories' p.408
\textsuperscript{48} Pasco, 'On Defining Short Stories' p. 409
reader is always searching to look for what he can recognise in his frame of knowledge. Curiously the same author comments on this human trait which led to replete harm in the course of history because individuals' expectations did not correspond with their experience and nonetheless clung with their misconception.

Pasco's reading on the genre corresponds perfectly to the analysis proposed on the present survey which aims in depicting the fragile nature of categorisation and the need to challenge it as often as possible in order to improve individual's understanding of the world.

Moreover, according to Walter Benjamin, the Modernism prosperity of the genre of short story is to be reconnected to the development of society. In his 'The Storyteller' Benjamin reflects on the ending of storytelling due to the problems of communicability related to the end of the 1st World War. “Counsel woven into the fabric of real life is wisdom. The art of storytelling is reaching its end because the epic side of truth, wisdom, is dying out” Benjamin seems to date the ending process of storytelling back to the birth of the novel which in his opinion represent the profound perplexity of living.

Information as a new form of communication has changed the purpose of storytelling, Benjamin claims that: “by now almost nothing that happens benefit storytelling, almost everything benefits information” which, in his opinion, resumes already with an explanation. On this perspective, Isabel Allende mentions the loss of oral storytelling tradition which has been challenged by new technologies that request the

49 Pasco, 'On Defining Short Stories' p. 410
50 Pasco, 'On Defining Short Stories' p. 410
51 Walter Benjamin, 'The Story Teller' Chapter I p.362
52 Benjamin, 'The Story Teller' Chapter IV p. 364
53 Benjamin, 'The Story Teller' Chapter VI p. 365-366
need for the written form. Benjamin's work instead continues by quoting Paul Valéry's reading of modern storytelling as a metaphor for modern time in his opinion, in fact, human beings no longer pay attention to something that cannot be abbreviated.

Therefore, short story emerges as the abbreviation of storytelling. Individuals emerge as no longer able to reflect on their experiences. Information, alienation and chaotic rhythm of life confirm short story as the growing example of our time. According to Warde, short stories are anyway able to provide deep reflection on life episodes in his 'The Short Story: Structure of a New Genre' the author quotes some of the most famous Modernist writers which succeeded in reflecting “the confusing and complex formlessness of life itself.” Mansfield, Hemingway, Porter, Joyce, Miller Woolf are just some of the names who were able to recreate in few pages the complexity of human perception.

The short story represents the portrait of the modern time of technology, alienation, wars and the fact that individuals might be unable to reconnect with, at times, overwhelming reality surrounding them. The genre of the short story emerges as perfect in order to recreate the small time needed to think of lives in moments.

Despite the lack of common rules which may produce a clear-cut definition of short stories, what emerges distinctly from scholars' reading of the present genre is the process of construction required, what Benjamin defines craftsmanship. Allende agrees commenting on the challenge undergone when creating a short story: “A short story is like an arrow. You have only one shot. It needs the right direction and speed. The perfect

54 Isabel Allende, 'The Short Story' Short Story the Journal of Modern Literature  p. 22
55 Benjamin, 'The Story Teller' Chapter IX p.368
56 William B. Jr.Warde, 'The Short Story Structure of a New Genre' p. 156
tension”.\textsuperscript{57} Pasco final statement is that a short story may be labelled as a short literary prose fiction which in order to be effective must be able to recreate a world first.\textsuperscript{58} As the reader may understand when reading the short stories in the appendix of the present survey, the two authors inquired appear to succeed in recreating that world enabling the reader to fully emerge in the text.

2.3 Nadine Gordimer

The choice of introducing this author to the students was led by multiple reasons. First and foremost Gordimer is a South African writer. When thinking about South Africa students often perceived it among the most westernised countries of the African continent and often forget its troubled past and its cultural differences. Furthermore, South Africa in sociological and linguistic terms represents a compound example of Hybridity, just considering the eleven official languages which represent the country and the Apartheid history deeply relates with the theme of hybridity.

In addition to this, Gordimer represents the decolonised generation and her contribution in the building of her country as well as her personal history depicts the rising of a new country on a Postcolonial perspective. Gordimer was personally involved through her writing and personal political stand to the cause against apartheid. Apartheid is known to have kept the South African society separated for many years and in fact, one of the biggest issues of this age was preventing the mixed race from

\textsuperscript{57} Allende, 'The Short Story' p. 23
\textsuperscript{58} Pasco, 'On Defining Short Stories' p 420
growing. Therefore interracial marriages were prohibited in this time, as it will be further highlighted in the third chapter of the present survey. Indeed, preventing interracial marriages has been a prominent feature of the fight against hybridity in many other societies in which purity and separation emerged as the core value. Despite belonging to the white and wealthy community, the defeat of separation was for Gordimer the key to build a stronger and better country. In addition to this, comparing two African women of different origins felt very much appropriated even considering the fight for women undertaken by Adichie,\textsuperscript{59} the other author examined. On feminism Gordimer had one very powerful quote: “serious writing is an androgynous being”\textsuperscript{60} proclaiming her belief in the androgyny of many of individual personal inquiry.

Nadine Gordimer was born in South Africa in 1923. She became a novelist at the age of 15 publishing her first oeuvre. Her life happened mostly close to Johannesburg where she was born from a white middle-class family. Her mother was of Jewish origins, though she attended a Catholic church throughout her life she gained interest on the Apartheid matter which was of major importance in the development of the young South African country. Alienation and exile are the themes the author concentrates more on her writing. She received the Nobel Price for literature in 1991. Her wide reading informed her about the world on the other side of apartheid—the official South African policy of racial segregation—and that discovery in time developed into strong political opposition to apartheid. Her stories concern the devastating effects of apartheid on the lives of South Africans—the constant tension between personal isolation and the commitment to social justice, the numbness caused by the unwillingness to accept

\textsuperscript{59} Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, 'We Should All be Feminist'
\textsuperscript{60} Rajiv Mehoratra 'In conversation with Nadine Gordimer' minutes 1.40
apartheid, the inability to change it, and the refusal of exile. She has travelled extensively, has written non-fiction on South African subjects and collaborated for TV documentaries.

In 1951 the 'New Yorker' took one of her short stories. Her short story collections include *A Soldier's Embrace*, *Something Out There*, *Jump and Other Stories*, *Loot* which is a collection of ten short stories widely varied in theme and place. She was an ardent opponent of apartheid and refused to accommodate the system, despite growing up in a community in which it was accepted as normal. Her work has therefore served to chart, over a number of years, the changing response to apartheid in South Africa. Her first novel, *The Lying Days*, was based largely on her own life and set in her home town. Burger's Daughter was written during the aftermath of the Soweto uprising and was banned, along with other books she has written. She was also a founder of the Congress of South African Writers.

### 2.3.1 A Conversation with the Author

As a living author of the 20th century, it was possible to analyse the author personal perception of her work as well as the development of her homeland. Gordimer political engagement in her home country was powerful. As aforementioned the author was deeply involved in the battle against apartheid and she used her work to grow a conscience on this issue. On this sense, Gordimer has commented on the nature of Racism in South Africa. She soon comprehends the need to fight against Institutionalised racism.
The author recollected racism to the master-servant dichotomy related to colonial past which made impossible for her to mix genuinely with black Africans being the child of a white master. The only occasion in which the author was able to confront with black students was at University were few postgraduate blacks had the concession to attend classes which were not available in the education system reserved for Black citizens. In this moment the author reckons having started her way to freedom from racism to which she had been indoctrinated since childhood.

As a stranger in her own land in this interview, Gordimer claims her responsibility as a white African to take a stand and believe in the future of her country. On the essay ‘1959: What is Apartheid?’ Gordimer begins the work as follows: Men are not born brothers; they have to discover each other, and it is this discovery that apartheid seeks to prevent.

On racism, the author comments the role played by media in the construction of information, for instance, she recalls an episode of violence in South Africa stating that the news reported just one side of the coin. In fact, the reports showed some Black Africans attacking some Whites but it lacked in depicting Whites shooting six blacks. Gordimer's comment on this sense is: “There is distortion by omission on the news”. In this sense, Gordimer's work emerges as very much related to the Postcolonial discourse proposed in this survey. In fact, distortion seemed to have been the point of

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61 Nobelprize.org ‘Interview with Nadine Gordimer’ minutes 1.32
63 Nadine Gordimer, Living in Hope and History Notes from Our Century p.105
64 Interview with PBS News ‘Nobel-winning South African author Nadine Gordimer in 1987’ News 1987 minute 9.27
view in the regard of history for a long time before the beginning of Postcolonial Studies which aims at empowering people with both the side of the coin.

On the same topic of human awareness of the world, Gordimer claims that human beings are experiencing an age of confusion which is related with globalisation. When talking to Al Jazeera in 2012 she states:

“We are living a peculiar phase of confusion about what it means to be a human being and how indeed to bring us about it in our separate society where the concept has been threatened”

With these words, the author may comment on the growing sense of populism that threatens democracy despite the globalisation of the world. Separate societies give the impression to resolve fear when indeed it broadens it. Gordimer seems to aim for differences to be kept between societies but as well as this they shall be mutually discovered in order to create mutual respect which is what every individual should deserve and demand in spite of his culture or social condition.

Gordimer's political role in her country has been active as she participated in the African National Congress, therefore on her interviews she was often questioned on political affairs. In one of her last interviews on Hardtalk by BBC she remembers that South Africa had had its first comprehensive vote in 1994 she comments by stating that the country had not yet lived one generation outside the law of apartheid. The author's claim reveals the difficulties when working for a change, but fear between races is one very important change that she aims to make with her writing and one of the way to

65 Interview 'Talk to Al Jazeera - Nadine Gordimer: 'The culture of corruption' ' minute 16.53
66 Interview BBC Hardtalk - Nadine Gordimer, South African writer Part 1.wmv minute 1.42
produce that change emerges to be elevating the potential of hybridity. “Let us mix let white and black produce colour”\textsuperscript{67}

In this sense the analysis of Gordimer’s later works proposed by Dimitriu is peculiar. On her survey Dimitriu defines the author as a Global writer, particular in her definition of margins peripheries which is a hot theme in postcolonial discourse.

She seeks to show that there are no clear boundaries between metropoles and margins, and that it is necessary to adjust global interests to a series of intersecting margins. Gordimer conceptualises ‘margins and centres’ as global networks of many margins in diverse locations, including the ‘margins-in-centres’.\textsuperscript{68}

Dimitriu analysis concentrates on Gordimer’s references to global perspective concentrating on the ethics of mutual enrichment and she invites artists to value differences. According to Dimitriu Gordimer does not dismiss her interest in her country rather she takes up fully the destiny of world society by concentrating on the need to mutual knowledge.\textsuperscript{69}

Indeed, in ‘Living in a Frontierless Land’, published \textit{Living in Hope and History}, Gordimer confronts with globalisation claiming the necessity for Foreign Affairs institutions to invest in “developing peaceful, fruitful, and progressive relations with other countries”.\textsuperscript{70} In her work the author reckons the interconnection of the world and she appears to praise hybridity since it improve creativity, on the other hand, globalisation proves to question culture which appears to be the core for a healthy

\textsuperscript{67} Interview BBC Hardtalk - Nadine Gordimer, South African writer Part 2.wmv minute 9.52
\textsuperscript{68} Dimitriu, Ileana ‘Postcolonising Gordimer: The Ethics of Beyond and the significant Peripheries of Recent Fiction’ p.160
\textsuperscript{69} Dimitriu, ‘Postcolonising Gordimer: The Ethics of Beyond and the significant Peripheries of Recent Fiction’ p.165
\textsuperscript{70} Nadine Gordimer \textit{Living in Hope and History} p. 211
mutual exchange between societies. This exchange according to Gordimer, starts in the exchange of the arts, which not only enhances the process of creativity but in Gordimer's point of view it may implement mutual respect of cultures. “Globalisation is a circular concept the very root of the word implies at once a setting forth and receiving in one continues movement”. 

On an interview released at Al Jazeera in fact Gordimer claims in not believing in God. In her words God is the answer to humans' condition for many people, nonetheless she proclaims herself atheist and she reckons the answer to her condition in a quote by William Butler Yeates: “What do we know but that we face one another in this place?” People encounter emerges to be a gift and the challenge to know and respect one another. The author consistently aims in praising through her work and her engagement this mutual understanding as well as fighting the idea of separateness which for many years intended to prevent individuals from knowledge of what is diverse.

2.3.2. Africa Emergent

The story was published in Selected Stories in 1975. It might have been influenced by Gordimer's private life. The author, in fact, set the text on an artistic milieu, the same she was living in due to her second husband profession as an art dealer. The protagonist of the work is helped in his career by an architect who happens to be the narrator of the story. In fact, the protagonist of the story is Elias, a young black sculptor. Elias finds many difficulties in becoming the former artist that he hopes and he

71 Gordimer, Living in Hope and History p. 213
72 Yeates, William Butler Interview 'Talk to Al Jazeera - Nadine Gordimer: 'The culture of corruption' ' minute 24.35
believes he could improve his art as well as his connection and possibly making himself known in the art field by studying in the USA. In fact, despite recognising him as an artist his home country does not provide for a higher education which he aims to achieve in the US. After being chosen by an art school in New York and having found a white sponsor for his project he is denied the Visa to study abroad and decides to expatriate forever in the US.

Though his life in the US reveals very different from the one he had imagined. Black people were striving to obtain more rights. In this sense, his “condition” of African Men is taken advantage by local American politicians in order to help the “Black Cause”. Feeling alienated by society and life itself Elias commits suicide. The stories proceeds by depicting Elias friend, who had not been denied the exit permit. The man had joined him in US, but has failed in succeeding his dream and therefore comes back from the country and leave at the expenses of his dead friend.

The examples of hybridity are multiple in the text. For instance, the following passage appears captivating:

And he was there more often than anyone- the plump and cheerful front-of-house manager; he was married, but as happens with our sex, an old friendship was a more important factor in his life than a wife and kids- if that’s a characteristic of black men, then I must be black under the skin myself.  

The architect is recollecting Elias habit to spend a lot of time with him despite having a family of his own. The architect who is white, describes this attitude as a characteristic of black men in the beginning, soon admitting that he recognize himself in this feature.

73 Gordimer, Nadine 'African Emergent' p. 438
and therefore he must be black underneath. The passage appears to express that every man black or white, rich or poor usually acts similarly when relating to friendship. Humanity seems to reckon, search and praise the same features and Gordimer appears to show the will to remind to the whites the fact that blacks act the same in relation to friendship as if to reveal again the humanity of blacks.

Soon Elias' blackness is remembered and again Gordimer appears to judge this need of blackness confirmation which is depicted as very relevant on the eye of the South African authorities.

Inevitably he was given no reason for the refusal. The official answer was the usual one – that it was 'not in the public interest' to reveal the reason for such things. Was it because 'they' had got to know he was 'living like a white man'? (Theory put to me by one of the black actors in the group.) Was it because a critic had dutifully described his work as expressive of the 'agony of the emergent African soul'? Nobody knew. Nobody ever knows. It was enough to be black; blacks are meant to stay put, in their own ethnically-apportioned streets in their own segregated areas, in those parts of South Africa where the government says they belong.74

The passage discusses Elias' failed quest for the visa which should have allowed him to study in the US. As it may be inferred from the passage the visa is denied and the author attempts to understand the possible reasons for the denial for which no official explanation had been given.

Moreover, in this few lines indents are used three times and they seem to infer mockery, if not sarcasm. From a stylistic point of view indents are used to express the idea of someone else. The first indent describes the point of view of the government.

74 Gordimer, 'African Emergent' p. 440-441
which for its authority is in no need to clarify its decision. The second opinion belongs to another black person who appears to have deeply understood that white and black shall not be mixed, and to some extent sounds judgemental on his perception of Elias.

The last indent considers the general idea given by a critic which apparently represent the idea recognised by the majority of people: the agony that blacks have to undertake if they want to emerge. It is very peculiar that, if considered in the opposite sense from the one proposed by the author, the indent explains perfectly the situation lived by Black African in the country. “the agony of the emergent African soul' who was 'living like a white man' is 'not in the public interest’” as if to say that the problem is not truly recognized.

In addition to the above passage there is one last episode which seems to be worth concentrating on:

Of course we his friends – decided out of the facts we knew and our political and personal attitudes, why he had died: and perhaps it is true that he was sick to death, in the real sense of the phrase that has been forgotten, sick unto death with homesickness for the native land that had shut him out for ever and that he was forced to conjure up for himself in the parody of ‘native’ dress that had nothing to do with his part of the continent, and the shame that a new kind of black platform-solidarity forced him to feel for his old dependence, in South Africa, on the friendship of white people. It was the South African government who killed him, it was culture shock- but perhaps neither our political bitterness nor our glibness with fashionable phrases can come near what combination of forces, within and without, led him to the fatal baptism of that early morning.75

Elias committed suicide, his architect friend feels sorry for his death and appears to feel

75 Gordimer, 'African Emergent' p. 443
responsible for his death as if he could have done something to prevent Elias from killing himself.

Elias Nkomo had spoken at an anti-apartheid rally. Elias Nkomo, in west African robes, was on the platform with Stokely Carmichael. 'Well, why not? He hasn't got to worry about keeping his hands clean for the time when he comes back has he?'

Gordimer here uses a historical figure among US political black activists to proceed with her fiction. Stokely Carmicheal was indeed an activist born in 1941 who died in 1998 who fought his entire life for the African American rights and later became an activist for the Pan-African movement; which aims to spread the awareness on the African and African descendant’s cause in the US.

On the passage above the author suggests possible consequences for a South African citizen protesting against the regime, even if outside their home country. The architect implies though that there will not be consequences in Elias case because his exit permit will not allow him to come back to his home country.

After this episode, Elias is found dead and the episode is recollected with sarcasm. It appears that US politicians were just using Elias for their own purpose totally unaware of the real situation in South Africa. This may be implied by the fact that Elias in the protest is wearing West African traditional clothes, suggesting the stereotype which Westerners, according to Wainaina, still perpetuates when thinking about Africa: the absence of individuality.

The text refers constantly to the need of identity which Elias himself is searching his failure in finding a community which encloses him deeply ends in a feel of rejection

76 Gordimer, 'African Emergent' p. 442
which culminates with his suicide and his rejection of life itself. His country is disinterested in allowing the opportunity to study and improve his career and the country where he goes to live as an expatriate, where he accept to live on a permanent base with the hope to improve his life delude him by taking advantage of his African origin.

Despite having been cut at this point for different reasons, overall the text up until Elias is very dense in significance and was able to introduce to the students different topics which were discussed in class. Apartheid and South Africa peculiar situation as a decolonised African country, Hybridity and Identity. The same and other themes will be further discussed in Adichie's “The thing Around your Neck”.

2.4 Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie was born on 15 September 1977 in Enugu, Nigeria, the fifth of six children to Igbo parents, Grace Ifeoma and James Nwoye Adichie. She grew up in Nsukka, in the house formerly occupied by Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe. Adichie's father worked at the University of Nigeria as Nigeria's first professor of statistics, and later became Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the University. Her mother was the first female registrar at the same institution.

The author completed her secondary education at the University's school, receiving several academic prizes. She went on to study medicine and pharmacy at the University of Nigeria. During this period, she edited The Compass, a magazine run by
the University's Catholic medical students. At the age of nineteen, she left for the US to study communication at Drexel University in Philadelphia and later she went on to pursue a degree in communication and political science at Eastern Connecticut State University, where she also wrote articles for the university journal. After graduating summa cum laude from Eastern in 2001, she completed a master's degree in creative writing at Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore. It is during her senior year at Eastern that she started working on her first novel, *Purple Hibiscus*, which was released in 2003. The book has received wide critical acclaim: it was short-listed for the Orange Fiction Prize and was awarded the Commonwealth Writers’ Prize for Best First Book. Her second novel, *Half of a Yellow Sun*, set before and during the Biafran War, was published first published in 2006. Like *Purple Hibiscus*, it has also been released in Nigeria. Adichie was a Hodder fellow at Princeton University during the 2005-2006 academic year, and earned an MA in African Studies from Yale University in 2008. In 2011-2012, she was awarded a fellowship by the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, Harvard University, which allowed her to finalize her third novel, *Americanah*. The book was released to great critical acclaim in 2013.

### 2.4.1 A Conversation with the Author

In addition from being an author, Adichie is a well reckoned scholar and critique of literature. She gained popular influence in the West probably due to her famous speech on Feminism which she held for Ted Talks in Euston in 2011. Feminism depicts
surely one of Adichie's interests but her commitment toward Postcolonial studies and the perception of Africa in the West has been the focus of many other speeches.

'The Danger of a Single Story' held in 2009 is certainly one of her most engaging in this sense. Adichie discusses on what has been defined as the enemy of Postcolonial Studies: the one perspective. The author born and raised in Nigeria remembers reading UK's and American books when she was a child. Those books portrayed an everyday life which was very different from the one she was surrounded by, yet since that routine was the only one depicted in the books she read, she assumed that that was the only reality worth being portrayed. Thus, the author remembers perfectly the mental shift she experienced when she discovered African literature she realized that even her own reality was worth a blank page.\(^7\)

Later Adichie recalls her arrival in the US as a student and soon confront with the “single story” that her room mate had on Africans being poor, uneducated and miserable. On this the author states:

After I had spent some years in the U.S. as an African, I began to understand my room mate's response to me. If I had not grown up in Nigeria, and if all I knew about Africa were from popular images, I too would think that Africa was a place of beautiful landscapes, beautiful animals, and incomprehensible people, fighting senseless wars, dying of poverty and AIDS, unable to speak for themselves and waiting to be saved by a kind, white foreigner.\(^8\)

Adichie's impression recalls, and probably refer too, 'How to Write About Africa' another text analysed in the teaching project which will be further discussed in the

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\(^7\) Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, 'The Danger of a Single Story' TEDx Talks 2009 minutes 1.38-2.35

\(^8\) Adichie, 'The Danger of a Single Story' TEDx Talks 2009 minutes 5.55
following chapter. As it will be commented later Wainaina's claim aims at defeating the image that Westerners have on African. What Adichie adds on this discourse is to point out the straightforward mechanism which enables such a “single story”. As Adichie states being always confronted with the same image leads to expecting the fulfilment of that image. As mentioned in the first chapter of the present survey researches shows that minds tends toward what it knows and often toward stereotype and the problem with stereotypes according to Adichie “is not that they are not true but that they make one story become the only story”. 79

Adichie reckons the difficulties in engaging properly with people and often places as well. She reckons the frustration that people encounter when they would like to truly know something and simply find the task impossible to be accomplished. Nonetheless, frustration emerges insignificant compared to the robbing of people dignity. In her words:

The consequence of the single story is this: It robs people of dignity. It makes our recognition of our equal humanity difficult. It emphasizes how we are different rather than how we are similar. 80

The author's words are very powerful at defining what appears as the light motif of the topic considered in the present survey, thus that diversities as a border just prevent people from focusing on their primordial hybridity: being human. Adichie does mention the role of power in forging the “single story” the same power which had been crucial in protecting purity, developing race theories and maintaining

79 Adichie, 'The Danger of a Single Story' TEDx Talks 2009 minutes 12.56
80 Adichie, 'The Danger of a Single Story' TEDx Talks 2009 minutes 13.44
the role of Western hegemony for many decades. She uses her mother tongue to talk about power. "Nkali" is a noun that may correspond to being greater than another. The world seems to have long been dominated by this word and single stories emerge as the product of that noun.

In another very compelling monologue, the author comments European Power in Africa at the conference ‘Narratives for Europe’ held at the University of Amsterdam in 2011. In this occasion, Adichie refers to a speech made by the former French President Nicolas Sarkozy when in Dakar Senegal in 2007, in order to talk about the story that Europe tells itself in relation to its colonial history in Africa. Adichie reckons that countries tend to be evasive in the past they feel ashamed about despite this the past is the past because it is collectively acknowledged and if it is no longer remembered it might not even have ever happened.

It is not that Europe has denied its colonial history, instead Europe has developed a way to tell the story of its colonial history that ultimately evades that history.  

This statement deeply relates to the one made by Gordimer on showing just one side of the coin. Adichie’s words though correlate to a characteristic that in addition of omitting a part of the story it sugarcoat it for some of the characters. In fact, Europe emerges as having erased the brutality of its colonial past by teaching its citizens to show mercy towards the poor Africans. The present day European story of

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81 Adichie, ‘The Danger of a Single Story’ TEDx Talks 2009 minutes 9.36  
82 Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, ‘Narratives of Europe’ Amsterdam 2011 9.18
Africa is a story of aid. It is a story that is almost entirely divorced from its colonial past.  

During the speech, Adichie uses very carefully the word blame as if it was something that European would not consider “politically correct”. In the speech it emerges clearly that Europe has adopted a very careful language in order to tell the story of Africa so that considering colonisation as a guilt would never have happened. The same language that helped to justify the creation of race theory and consequent “White man's Burden” has lately been used to erase that part of history.

Adichie's discourse, in the end, does not give the impression to be judging toward Europeans rather it demands a shift in the way of thinking. It demands a reading in-between the lines of history. A simple reading that shall result not in blame but in mutual peer knowledge and respect.

2.4.2 The Thing Around Your Neck

The story appeared for the first time in Prospect 99 in June 2004. In 2009 it gave the name to the collection of short stories where it appeared. It tells the story of Akunna, a young Nigerian woman who wins the Green Card lottery and moves to the US. At first, she lives with her uncle in Maine but soon, after her uncle attempts to abuse her, she transfers in Connecticut where she starts working as a waitress in a diner. There she meets a wealthy American student with whom she starts a relationship. Their

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83 Adichie, 'Narratives of Europe' Amsterdam 2011 16.58
relationship has to undergo cultural clash problems, as well as social differences between the couple. In the end, Akunna is asked to go back to Nigeria by her family.

An interesting stylistic tool applied by Adichie is the use of the second person narrator. The entire story is told using “you”, helping the reader to embrace the story and personify with the protagonist. Adichie, whom, as explained above, personally experienced being an expatriate in the US for study purposes seems to expect with this text, to be telling a universal depiction of the life of young women expatriate.

In addition to this, the story tackles the fact of being an expatriate from the opposite angle compared to the one seen in 'African Emergent'. In fact the life depicted is the one of the expatriate, whereas in Gordimer the setting remains in South Africa, the original country. Moreover, the general perception of the text appears more contemporary in time and culture compared to Gordimer's.

The examples of Hybridity in Adichie's text are more complex probably even due to the fact that historically Hybridity became to be fully theorized in Postcolonial Studies in the 90s as explained in the first chapter of the present survey; Gordimer's text belongs to the 70s and is consistently more concerned with the Apartheid issue in South Africa.

Adichie offers a very interesting depiction on how Nigerian perceive the US. The tone is set from the very beginning of the story:

You thought everybody in America had a car and a gun; your uncles and aunts and cousins thought so, too. Right after you won the American visa lottery they told you:

In a month, you will have a big car. Soon, a big house. But don't buy a gun like those Americans. 84

84 Adichie, The Thing Around Your Neck p. 115
The prejudice tone on Americans is already clear from the beginning and further explained by her uncle who tells Akunna “to expect it; a mixture of ignorance and arrogance” from the part of the US citizens. Soon even their reaction and prejudices on Africans is clarified to Akunna:

They asked where you learned to speak English and if you had real Houses back in Africa and if you had seen a car Before you came to America. They gawped at your hair. Does it stand up or fall down when you take out the braids? (…) Then he told you how the neighbours said, a few months after he moved into his house, that the squirrels had started to disappear. They had heard that Africans ate all kinds of wild Animals.  

As it may be inferred the expectations on Africans appear to be quite clear from the above passage. As predicted by Wainaina, African shall fit into the imaginary given and again the individuality of people appears of no interest. Assumptions, as the one suggesting that squirrels were eaten by the new Nigerian family coming into the neighbour, are preferred to deep understanding or even mere questioning. Keeping on the surface seems to be the trend even when considering Akunna's uncle personal development:

He told you that the company he worked for had offered him a few thousand more than the average salary plus stock options because they were desperately trying to look diverse. They included a photo of him in every brochure, even those that had nothing to do with his unit. 

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85 Adichie, *The Thing Around Your Neck* p. 116  
86 Adichie, *The Thing Around Your Neck* p.115
The state of Maine being in the very northern part of United States, far north than New York has hardly being influenced by the Great Migration of the 1920s which saw 60% of African American moving to the north of the Nation. Consequently, in Maine the percentage of Black people is very small. The company where Akunna's uncle work is willing in treating him with respect because he is important for the developing of the company itself. In fact, following the anti-racial law of 1966, the companies had to have policies which aim to include people of different origins. The language used by Adichie set a tone which could appear contradictory or sarcastic. In fact considering the prejudices explained, saying that “they were desperately trying to look diverse” may appear as a euphemism. Though the society acts with prejudices toward the new incomers they need them for economical and low pressure reasons which will make the company improve its reputation in the society which is about to develop.

One of the most interesting examples of hybridity appears middle way through the novel when the relationship between Akunna and the American man is at its start.

He was waiting outside (...) asking you to go out with him because your name rhymed with *hakuna matata* and *The Lion King* was the only maudlin movie he'd ever liked. You didn't know what *The Lion King* was. You looked at him in the bright light and noticed that his eyes were the colour of extra virgin olive oil, a greenish gold. Extra virgin olive oil was the only thing you loved, truly loved, in America.\(^\text{87}\)

At first, the man attempts to seduce Akunna by referring to “The Lion King” one of the most popular Disney films of Western recent tradition. The film is set in Africa

\(^{87}\) Adichie, *The Thing Around Your Neck* p. 121
and therefore represents a depiction of the continent which is inscribed even in 'How to Write About Africa' by Wainaina. Akunna does not understand this reference to her 'supposed' culture because she has never seen the film. What seduces her is the man eyes which she compares to extra virgin olive oil. She says that extra virgin olive oil was the one thing why she <<truly loved America>>. Nevertheless, this kind of oil originates in the Mediterranean area, the fact that Akunna links the oil with America is a consequence of globalisation which makes different products from different region available worldwide.

The paradox of this line appears to be very clear. The general depiction of the African culture is incomprehensible to African people and the representation of the Western culture is indeed overturned and unclear to Africans.

Another very interesting example which will be later analysed by Trevor Noah as well refers to the fact that:

Many people at the restaurant asked when you had come from Jamaica, because they thought that every black person with foreign accent was Jamaican. Or some who guessed that you were African told you that they loved elephants and wanted to go on a safari.  

Jamaicans are black and usually carry an accent when speaking English consequently Akunna must belong to the Jamaican. In some cases, people guesses that she is African and again they show the stereotypes which Wainaina applies to describe Africa from a Westerners point of view.

The reading of this could refer to Adichie's discourse on the “Danger of a single Story”. The author, in fact, led a well-recognised speech at TEDx Talks in which she

88 Adichie, The Thing Around Your Neck p.119
remembers spending her youth reading literature which did not represent the world she
was living in. The literature she refers to is English classical literature. She could not
identify with that literature but if she had known the literature which represented just
her own culture she would have been incapable of understanding the other. This is
precisely what appears to happen in this story.

In addition to the Hybridity clash. The interracial relationship between Akunna and her
American lover is worth mentioning not just because of the judges Akunna feels when
she is with him\(^9\) but even the cultural clash between the couple which seems to express
a deep but maybe cynical depiction of the contemporary world.

He didn't eat meat because he thought it was wrong the way they killed animals
(…). Back home, the meat pieces you ate, when there was meat, were the size of
half your finger. But you did not tell him that. You did not tell him either that the
dawadawa cubes your mother cooked everything with, because curry and thyme
were too expensive, had MSG, were MSG. He said MSG caused cancer.\(^{90}\)

The paradox of eating habits in the United States in contrast with Nigeria seems
to read the deep absurdity of individual search which is influenced by territory and
culture but mixes in experiences. 'The Thing Around your Neck' appears to be the
distress of an expatriate away from is homeland the same distress that Elias felt, though
he appeared to reckon the same distress when he was living in South Africa. On the
third ultimate page from the very end of the story, Akunna seems to feel that “thing”
loosening, probably because she is starting to adjust in Connecticut, but her father dies

\(^{89}\) Adichie, *The Thing Around Your Neck* p.122, 123, 126

\(^{90}\) Adichie, *The Thing Around Your Neck* p. 123
and she is asked to go back to Nigeria. She does not know if she will be back despite having someone waiting for her.
Chapter 3

Other Texts

The following chapter will illustrate the other texts used in the teaching project. In fact, contemporary literature appears in different forms and in order to broaden students understanding of the topic in analysis it seemed pivotal to show some different Postcolonial examples. In addition to this, reducing the study of Postcolonial to novels and short stories appeared to be counter-productive as well as contradicting with the theme of hybridity. In fact, it may be implied that literature as a genre is hybrid since it recreates and renovates in diverse forms. Hybridity may be considered representative of literature which mixes together different forms of art together and academic purposes.

Therefore, the different genres of literature appeared crucial in order to propose a compelling reflection on the theme analysed. The research of alternative literature brought to the work of three men. Two of them come from the “Black Continent” and one comes from the “Old Continent”. Their works precisely tackle the Postcolonial themes that are the focus of the present survey.

Wainanina's article was the first text used in the teaching project to introduce the class to Postcolonial Studies. Instead, Trevor Noah sketch was shown after reading the canonic literature in order to enhance pupils understanding of Apartheid. The decision to include The Last King of Scotland in the project was discussed with Professor De Rossi who often uses film viewing as a conclusion of a teaching module. The chapter will now propose a closer analysis of these works as well as explaining their connection with the project.
### 3.1 Binyavanga Wainaina

The choice to introduce the work of Wainaina to the project has multiple reasons. First of all, as Adichie, this author belongs to that young generation of African who aims in changing the image that the West endure when portraying the African continent. In this sense, his first novel, *One Day I'll Write About This Place*, is provoking depicting a society which is completely different from the image of suffering and misery that Westerners portray. It recollects the story of a young middle-class African, he depicts his story. In addition to this, Wainaina represents one of the English speaking countries who has a very important colonial past. In the last century Kenya has increasingly been producing literature and as a founder of *Kwani*? Wainaina proved meaningful in terms of connection with the purpose of the project.

Binyavanga Wainaina was the first author analysed in class. He is of Kenyan origins and was born in Nakuru in 1971. He completed a Master in Philosophy and in Creative Writing at the University of East Anglia. He is the founding editor of the literary magazine '*Kwani*?' and won the Caine Prize for African Writing in 2002 and he has been writing for the New York Times, the Guardian and National Geographic. He is the director of the Chinua Achebe Centre for African Writers and Artists at Bard College. His first book, a memoir entitled *One Day I Will Write About This Place*, was published in 2011. In January 2014, in response to a wave of anti-gay laws passed in Africa, Wainaina publicly announced that he was gay, first writing a short story that he described as a "lost chapter" of his 2011 memoir entitled "I am a Homosexual, Mum".

The claims by Wainaina which reflects Adichie assertion on 'The Danger of a
Single Story' seems to enhance the Hybridity of African society. The authors do not deny that Africa shows misery but they want to reproduce with their literature that misery is not the only feature that Africa may be portrayed with. As for a half-breed, this characteristic is not the only one that he will reckon himself in and society should improve their view of the other not just as poor, Black, Muslim, White, Jew, Meticcio but as something in-between which as Gordimer suggest, shall be discovered in order to be understood and appreciated.

Wainaina concentrates as did Adichie, on the humanitarian and charitable approach that the West appears to maintain when dealing with Africa. In an interview to Al Jazeera in April 2013 the author states: “the world of humanitarianism and aid in Africa is designed to keep the people passive dependent and allow power the existing narrative for the West must be a dependent and collapsed place”.91 The image proposed matches the one of the flat characters which has no role in the story. According to Wainaina, Africa itself seems to not have had its active role in history but he wish for this role to come soon.92

On this matter, he discusses China's investments in Africa. As chapter one attempted in demonstrating, hybridity might mirror the global economic tendency of Globalisation and indeed Wainaina comments on the global shift in African economic dynamics. In fact, in the last two decades China reveal its great interest toward African prime resources.93

According to Horace Campbell, who analysed the economic relationship between Africa and the world major economies, the US who was responsible for the

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91 Binyavanga Wainaina, 'Talk to Al Jazeera 13th April 2013' minute 2.50  
92 Wainaina, 'Talk to Al Jazeera 13th April 2013' minute 14.32  
93 Wainaina, 'Talk to Al Jazeera 13th April 2013' 16.53
Neocolonialism which aimed in continuing the hegemony perpetuated by the European countries with colonialism failed to help Africa. China, on the other hand:

China embraced the African liberation process with diplomatic, political, material and military support. (…) China has not been identified with the structural adjustment policies that impoverished Africa over the past 30 years.

Therefore, China's economic interest may surface as helping Africans to find that role in the dynamic of the global world and 'How to Write About Africa' appear to suggest that Africans are ready for that role.

3.1.1 'How to Write About Africa'

Wainaina's 'How to Write about Africa' is a very provocative text of the early 21st century. The article was republished multiple times. For the purpose of the present research, the class read the 2005 version published in Granta's 92 of the same year. The text, which was later published in the New Yorker, is deeply satirical. Despite belonging to the written form and possibly being categorized in mainstream canonic literature, it is an article which appears to be a recipe for Western writers to talk about Africa to dehumanise the civilisations living on the continent. This instructions style together with the absence of a story justifies the reflection on considering the text as Alternative Literature.

As it will be further discussed in the next chapter, the article was used during the
first lesson with the class. Teaching Postcolonial issues to a class which has never encountered the topic before and which mainly maintains a Western approach toward knowledge and learning may be arduous and confusing, but Wainaina's work hardly needs further ado than mere reading. In fact, the satire and humour used as well as the popular examples, help a clear capsize of the Western imposed perception on Africa.

In addition to this, as aforementioned, the article give the impression to be very much related in the discourse by Adichie on “The Danger of a Single Story”. In this sense, it appears interesting analysing the following passage

Among your characters you must always include The Starving African, who wanders the refugee camp nearly naked, and waits for the benevolence of the West. (....) She must look utterly helpless. He can have no past no history; such diversions ruin the dramatic moment. She must never say anything about herself in the dialogue except to speak of her unspeakable suffering. (…) these characters should buzz your main hero, making him look good.(…) Your hero is you (if reportage) or a beautiful, tragic international celebrity/aristocrat who now cares for animals.

After concentrating on different stereotypes which are often used in the Western tradition to describe Africa, Wainaina appears to give an utterly important reading on how the African characters should be treated. The dehumanization of the African characters appears to be central to the purpose of the Western writing. The character must recognize with just one feature: desperation. It should always be a flat character. Though as Adichie recognized in an interview* people are complex always. Wainaina outline seems to imply that Western literature in relation to African character should always remain Victorian with no interest in showing complexities of people. The reader emerges as a simpleton due to the necessity of perpetuating the image of Africa to be
saved. Adichie expresses her consents on this theory in the speech she had in Amsterdam\textsuperscript{96} where she referred to the information given on the fact that in Europe the teaching of colonialism remain one which allows Africa to be the one who needs protection whereas Wainaina said in his interview with Al Jazeera he hopes for Africa to gain a status in which his saying will be worth all over the world.\textsuperscript{97}

\textbf{3.2 Trevor Noah}

According to Martha Burns pupils are more likely to learn when they are relaxed.\textsuperscript{98} Noah's sketch was introduced in the project because of the “comic relief” and humour which aimed in lightening the process of teaching. In fact, considering that pupils were not at all familiar with the field of study, and taking into account that the short story proposed were quite dense, Noah' monologue proved appropriate. Furthermore, notwithstanding irony, Noah monologue proves deeply related with the Postcolonial Studies and Hybridity. The comedian is in fact able to propose a wit reflection on the current society by recollecting his personal experience with separation. Therefore, the use of Noah's work proved convincing in terms language teaching and Postcolonial analysis.

Noah was born in South Africa to a black South African mother and a white European father, Noah has hosted numerous television shows including South Africa’s

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{96} Adichie, 'Narratives of Europe' Amsterdam 2011 9.18
\item \textsuperscript{97} Wainaina, 'Talk to Al Jazeera 13\textsuperscript{th} April 2013'
\item \textsuperscript{98} Martha Burns, 'Dopamine and Learning: What The Brain’s Reward Center Can Teach Educators' The Sience of Learning 18\textsuperscript{th} Sep. 2012
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
music, television, and film awards, the South African Comedy Festival and two seasons of his own late night talk show, Tonight with Trevor Noah. He made his U.S. television début in 2012 on The Tonight Show with Jay Len and has also appeared on Late Shaw with David Letterman becoming the first South African stand-up comedian to appear on either late night show. He currently held The Daily Show for comedy central. The same show was used in a teaching project: “Getting Political Science in on the Joke: Using the Daily Show and Other Comedy to Teach Politics”. Stacie L. Beavers attempted in teaching Political Science through the viewing of American Daily Show. According to Beavers, in fact, political science require great attention on the part of the students which might easily abandon attention because of the difficulty and sometimes monotony of the topics proposed. Daily shows through comedy and humour emerged as an appealing method to induce interest on the subject proposed. 99 Furthermore, the class read a short story by Gordimer who happens to be a compatriot of Noah. On the purpose of the present research, it revealed stimulating offering the students a different perspective on Apartheid. As aforementioned Gordimer was a White writing against separation, therefore, her perception is different compared to Noah's who in his own word was “born a crime”.

3.2.1 'Super Black'

The sketch analysed in class was made at the Apollo theatre in in Harlem, New York, in 2013. In the monologue which lasts eight to nine minutes (fully transcribed in

99 Beavers, Stacie Getting Political Science in on the Joke: Using ”The Daily Show” and Other Comedy to Teach Politics p.415
appendix number two of the present survey) Noah recollects some of his personal experiences with Apartheid as well as his personal quest for identity.

In particular, Noah reminds suffering from being the product of interracial marriage which was illegal in his country.* He recollects suffering for being labelled as a “half-cast” and rejoices when finally he is labelled as “Black Hitler” when visiting Germany. The label Hitler is apparently due to Noah intonation when speaking German. The reflection on the present passage was enhanced by the fact that the class had recently ended the history module on the tragedy of the Second World War. In fact, despite been called “Hitler”, Noah claims to be happy because he is finally defined as black, a label that he always searched from his childhood. This categorisation had been negated to him because he was a half-breed, a hybrid. As it may be inferred his experience is deeply relevant with hybridity as the central idea of the present survey. Noah is an example of the stigmatization reserved toward the non-pure. As if purity was the single important feature.

Moreover, the fact that the colour of his skin was not black “enough” reads as deeply ironic. As if to highlight that racial issue does not end between black and white but continues in the shadow that may appear in-between. Noah ironic assertion appears to be that labelling someone’s skin colour is more important than being compared to a dictator as if categorising the appearance of someone may act as an antidote of his personality. The absurdity of the monologue reach is peak in this moment, in the sense that it reflects on the identity categorisation given by society where individuals want to feel enclose. As mentioned in chapter one of
the present research categorisation tends on staying on the clear-cut surface rather than questioning the in-depth shadows.

In addition to this, the comedian has recently published a book which recollects his life under South African Apartheid. As in the sketch, he remembers being “born a crime” since his mother was black and his father was a white. His comment on the law which prevented mixed intercourse is as follow:

In any society built on institutionalised racism, race-mixing doesn't merely challenge the system as unjust, it reveals the system as unsustainable and incoherent. Race-mixing proves that race can mix (...) Because a mixed person embodies that rebuke to the logic of the system, race-mixing become a crime worse than treason.100

On this matter the comedian reflects on the shadows of race which became important in his home country: “unlike in America, where anyone with a drop of black blood automatically became black, in South Africa mixed people came to be classified in their own separate group, neither black nor white but what we call “coloured”101. Noah claims appear quite resolved. This interesting line on the topic is given when talking about his experience in the United States were the black label is indeed an issue in society. He is told that in America he would be labelled as “Super Black”; nevertheless, just after landing in New York, he is confused for belonging to the Mexican community. What emerges first is that categorisation are indeed diverse in any society as in the US being Black may compare to being Meticcio in South Africa.

100 Trevor Noah, Born a Crime 2016 p. 30
101 Noah, Born a Crime 2016 p. 30
Noah states that he felt disappointed but started to learn Spanish “if not why not?”. The reaction proposed is very much opened and willing to improve his knowledge of a culture which is not his own but that will, after all, enrich him. Despite acknowledging the importance of roots and acceptance Noah shows good will in learning and understanding something which in theory does not belong to him but which he decides as an individual living in the world, he wants to be curious about. Noah expresses the will to connect with people and embrace the diversities that represent different cultures but that does not necessary have to act as a boundary between cultures. The will to discover and learn diversities concentrates on the similarities that there are between cultures rather than differences. Differences which were developed through time, history, territory, differences that can be overcome with mere curiosity.

The fact that Noah is able to joke about such a hard time in his childhood and his own identity make the discourse even more relevant on the purpose of the project. In fact, he demonstrates that there are multiple ways to process reality. There are multiple ways to overcome categorisation, and irony does serve in remembering the other side of the coin which his compatriot Gordimer aimed to fight for.

### 3.3 'The Last King of Scotland' by Kevin MacDonald

The project did not consider this film in its beginning and actually, there was a shift back in time. Before the viewing of the film, in fact, students concentrated on Noah's Sketch which is the most recent example of literature offered in the project. The
The movie represents, chronologically, the earliest example of literature since it reports Amin's story which dates between 1971-1979.

In addition to this, the story portrayed in the film shows a point of view which may appear in contradiction with the Postcolonial view that the present project attempted to show to the class. As in fact, it depicts wars, poverty, struggle for power, violence, misery. The film concentrates many of the stereotypes which Westerner are used to referring to when thinking about Africa. Nonetheless, the viewing was proposed as a closure of the Postcolonial reflection. This shall have empowered the students to watch the movie with a Postcolonial point of view.

Moreover, *The Last King of Scotland* does concentrate on issues of identity, culture clash, prejudices and stereotypes which are the focus of the project. Plus, the film was able to show the starve for power and the violence which has played a major role in the story of colonialism and decolonisation. A decolonisation that the pupils were possibly able to consider from a different point of view thanks to the project undertaken. Despite its cruelty, though the film attempted in giving the class a hint on the consequences of colonisation and decolonisation in some of the African countries and therefore it proved significant to improve students reflection on the topic analysed.

*The Last King of Scotland* is a 2006 British drama film based on the homonyms novel by Giles Foden published in 1998. The film, which was a financial success, was directed by Kevin MacDonald and was co-produced between companies from the United Kingdom and the United States.

The film tells the fictional story of Nicholas Garrigan, a young Scottish doctor who travels to Uganda and becomes the personal physician to president Idi Amin who
led the country from 1971 to 1979. Despite inaccuracies with the novel the film was very much acclaimed by critics and is still considered to be a very controversial film production of decolonisation in Africa.

Indeed, it emerges that the story depicted in the book is rather different than the one proposed in the movie. According to Lesley Marx, the film ended deeply changed. MacDonald may be reckoned to have a documentary intention on the rise and fall of Amin despite claiming that the movie is an interpretation of Garrigan point of view on the issue. In spite of this, it is indeed the protagonist, Nicolas Garrigan, who results fairly different in the two transpositions. According to Marx the doctor in the film is “helpless, peripheral and ineffectual” because he appears to act passively toward Amin's dictatorship which is untrue Foden's book. The reading is in the whole unclear, the doctor seems to go to Africa to search for something new as he appears bored from his reality in Scotland. Indeed, what he reveals attracted to is fame and power which he finds thanks to Amin. Fame and power are the quest for the rising leading class of the country and seem to be the same feature that Amin himself, a product of Western education, searches.

Thus, what emerges quite clearly according to Marx, Evan and Glenn is the controversial role that the Brits play on the destitution of the dictator. At first, they seem to promote Amin's campaign as a president of the country but later in the story, they attempt in killing him. Their role appears, therefore, dubious in the storyline. Marx claims that “Nicholas repeatedly asks whether he is a “spectator’ or an “actor,” observer or participant in the drama in Uganda” revealing his own in-between feature. In this

102 Lesley Marx, 'The Last King of Scotland and Politics Adaptation' p. 54
103 Lesley, 'The Last King of Scotland and Politics Adaptation' p. 64
104 Lesley, 'The Last King of Scotland and Politics Adaptation' p. 63
sense, it is worth mentioning as well the final speech by Amin to Garrigan which is shown in the film:

Did you think this was all a game? “I will go to Africa, and I will play the white man with the natives!” Is that what you thought? We are not a game, Nicholas. We are real. This room, here; it is real. I think your death will be the first real thing that has happened to you. 105

These lines read as a deep critique of the role played by the colonizers in the African countries. Despite appearing in the film, which undergone a Western re-work, the words emerge unquestionably critical toward the Western country. In addition to this, Amin's speech perfectly connects with the concept proposed by Wainaina and Adichie which denounce the Western inclination to consider Africans as flat characters. Amin's words are stronger as he compares colonisation to a game but the underlying message results similar. In the film, there are no winners nor win, on the other hand, there might appear to emerge a fearful awareness of what colonisation has left in Africa.

105 Kevin MacDonald The Last King of Scotland minutes 1:26:37
Chapter 4

Teaching Postcolonial Studies to an Italian High School Class

After introducing the field of studies examined and the literature used, the following chapter will describe the teaching project undertaken with the class as well as the results achieved. Nonetheless in order to ensure a clear understanding of the experience of teaching the chapter will lightly introduce the field of Postcolonial Studies in Italy.

As explained in Chapter 1, Postcolonial Studies is a recent discipline which has mainly developed in English and French Academic as it relates to the equivalent colonies. Despite this Italy experienced an interesting increase in the field of Postcolonial in the last two decades which will be further discussed.

The focus will then move to Multicultural Education which is the field of education where it belongs the teaching proposed in the present text. Despite the fact that Postcolonial Studies in Italy concentrates mainly on Migrants' Literature, the chapter aims at showing the relevance of Postcolonial studies in relation to the consequences of globalisation and therefore its interesting role in comprehending global movements of society.

4.1 Postcolonial Studies in Italy

Postcolonial interest increased in Italy in the last two decades emerging as late in comparison with other academic reality in Europe. According to Lombardi and Diop,
the Italian interest toward postcolonial studies has grown mainly in departments of English and American Studies of the Italian universities, as explained in their introduction to *Postcolonial Italy: Challenging National Homogeneity.*\textsuperscript{106}

In the same collection, Ponzanesi states that Italian Postcolonialism is “bleated compared with other European Postcolonialism.”\textsuperscript{107} In fact, it is true that Italy does not have a very important colonial history; it conquered fours countries in Africa- Ethiopia, Somalia, Eritrea and Libya- that had already been colonised by England.

In addition to this, the country experienced its greater colonial empire during Fascism, which is still nowadays perceived as a controversial time for Italians. The authors, in fact, reckons the incapacity for Italian to deal with the brutality of their colonial past as well as a way to redeem from the II World war event.

with the complicity of the media and cultural establishment, Italian civil society has, until recently, been kept in ignorance with regard to its colonial past, as this part of Italian history has been absent from school textbooks and from the general public domain.\textsuperscript{108}

Media emerges as playing a very important role in shaping the Italian conscience on their past as well as on their present on migration. Lombardi and Diop portray a serious insensibility toward a period of Italian history which was, and is, relevant.

Nonetheless, according to the text, the reason for the Postcolonial delay in Italy are not just an ostensible will to erase the past. In fact, in addition to outlining the small colonial past of Italy the authors, refers to the Italian tendency toward migration. Since

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item 106 Cristina Lombardi-Diop, Caterina Romeo *Postcolonial Italy: Challenging National Homogeneity* p. 11
\item 107 Lombardi-Diop, *Postcolonial Italy: Challenging National Homogeneity* p.51
\item 108 Lombardi-Diop, *Postcolonial Italy: Challenging National Homogeneity* p. 11 p.7
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
the second half of the 19th century, in fact, millions of Italians left their homeland initiating a diaspora which led to the institutions of the academic field of studies related to the issue in the US for example.\textsuperscript{109}

On the other hand, Italy became a destination for migrants just the late 70s, delayed in comparison with other European countries. Migrants establishing in Italy come from Africa, China, and Eastern European countries. Particularly from Africa arrived those migrants who started the phenomena of “Letteratura Migrante”. These people contributed to the creation of Italian migration literature related to colonial and postcolonial time. Franca Zullo, in ‘Costruire l'impalcatura del proprio futuro’ quotes some of the most prominent names such as Ramzanali Fazel, Scego, Ghermandi, Ali Farah. According to Zullo these authors' literature depicts the recurring issues of Postcolonial discourse, such as language, identity, recovery of history, cultural appropriations.\textsuperscript{110} Zullo in fact, comments them as able to portray the life in-between which is typical in the colonised migrants.

Furthermore debating on the same issue, Mengozzi in \textit{Narrazioni Contese} proposes a similar reading to Dimitriu's on Gordimer. Both authors in fact agree on the arise of a global literature influenced both by past colonialism and present globalisation which are slowly producing a global mindset on authors.\textsuperscript{111}

An interesting essay on this topic appears to be ‘Letteratura migrante in Italia' by Paola Ellero. The author propose a glimpse of some very interesting examples of Italian migrant literature whose sizeable theme is often cultural clash they experience.

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{109} Lombardi-Diop -Romeo, \textit{Postcolonial Italy: Challenging National Homogeneity} p.5
\textsuperscript{110} Federica Zullo, ‘Costruire l'Impalcatura del Proprio Futuro’ \textit{Introduzione agli Studi Postcoloniali} p. 235
\textsuperscript{111}Chiara Mengozzi, \textit{Narrazioni Contese} p.89
\end{flushright}
because of being born in-between two cultures. In her survey the author reckons that this type of literature is of recent discovery in Italy and she appears clear on the fact that discussion on this kind of literature remains poor in Italy probably because, in her opinion, Italian have still the tendency to think of cultures on the dichotomy us-them which is perpetuated by media.\textsuperscript{112}

According to Paola Ellero in fact, media coverage on migration has mostly concentrated on the differences of incoming migrants in Italy, mostly referring to migration as an emergency, despite the fact that this emergency has endured in the last twenty years.

In this sense Lomabardi and Diop's claim is similar. In the introduction to their collection they comment on how Italian relates with migrants literature:

\begin{quote}
postcolonial writing is often haunted by the denial of political and cultural citizenship, as the legal principle for its acquisition is still caught in the ambiguity of racialist and biologist definition of Italianness\textsuperscript{113}
\end{quote}

Scholars appear to agree on the fact that Italians do not seem inclined in questioning their “Italianness” which due to the relative young unification and relative issues maintain as unstable. Moreover, migrants literature may emerge as a threaten to the instability of the Italian identity.

Furthermore, it is important to point out the perception of race in Italian current society\textsuperscript{114} As Lombardi states in her essay, Fascism played a major role in “washing

\textsuperscript{112} Paola Ellero, 'Letteratura Migrante in Italia' p.3-7 Lingua Nostra e Oltre Anno 3 N. 3
\textsuperscript{113}Lombardi-Diop, Paradigms of Postcoloniality in contemporary Italy p. 58
\textsuperscript{114} Cristina Lombardi 'Postracial/Postcolonial Italy' p.175-186
away blackness” and this situation persisted in Italian society up until the 90s. The author reports a research done in some Italian Elementary schools in the same period of time. Pupils were asked to describe how they would have reacted if their parents were black. Results appear frightening with most of the students expressing shame and disgust to this possibility.

Stereotypes persist in the Italian perception of blackness and migrants and this phenomenon has not changed since media coverage perpetuates the image of migration as a calamity. In this sense, it appears significant to quote again Igiaba Scego who opened the reflection proposed in Chapter 1.

The author who represents a former example of Italian Migrants' Literature reflects on the stereotype that she has to confront herself with being a black Italian. According to Romeo who concentrates on Scego works in her essay published on *Postcolonial Italy: Challenging National Identity*,

the author struggles with the difficulty of imaging herself as a black Italian, since the Italian collective imaginary is still very resistant to considering the intersection of blackness and Italianness as a viable possibility.115

As aforementioned Italian society results in being resistant to the change nonetheless, Franca Sinopoli in her *Postcoloniale Italiano* expresses the upcoming growth of Postcolonial Italy which appears in many different fields as an interest in embracing change. For instance, in the second chapter of her analysis Sinopoli questions the influence of images when dealing with hybridity. The author traces the importance

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115 Caterina Romeo 'Racial Evaporations' *Postcolonial Italy: Challenging National Homogeneity* p. 229

76
of Postcolonial Studies to debunk the validity of stereotypes and she also claims the essential role of literature in depicting a different point of view which according to the author could be one of the few possibility to eradicate the phantom images (stereotypes) that prevent an authentic dialogue between individuals.\footnote{Franca Sinopoli, \textit{Postcoloniale Italiano} p. 52}

What emerges as the light motif between Postcolonial studies in Italy and teaching Postcolonial African literature in English is the underlying hybridity of knowledge and its power to demolish stereotypes. Knowledge spread and develop in different forms because of interactions between people and cultures which always brings to the new hybrid. The germ of postcolonial studies in English and American studies department together with the birth of migrants literature led to the interest in postcolonial Italy. What it is tried to infer is that teaching Postcolonial Literature in English mirrors the hybridity of knowledge. Italian Postcolonial Literature was given not only by the fact that English is the language in which Postcolonial Literature developed at its most but as well as this the encounter with Italian field permitted the development of another hybrid knowledge. As aforementioned purity is reckoned among things which used to be hybrid before. Knowledge itself is hybrid and the choice to present postcolonial African literature in English aims not only to express the fact that eventually, individuals all belong together but as well that reflecting on a different culture past may help to reflect on one's own past.

Greene envisions a way for Italy to reach that interaction of knowledge, which has already started thank to the Migrants' Literature:
Excavating the cultural hybridity of modern Europe is not accomplished by way of linear narrativization, but rather by new modes of storytelling that bring together what appear to be disparate and unrelated networks of movement, communication and interaction. Members of diasporic communities residing in Western European countries enact strategies for talking back to hegemonic host cultures that relegate non-western subjects to the role of an Other.\textsuperscript{117}

Nonetheless, as expressed by Ellero, Italian media coverage, as well as a lack of multicultural education, appears resolute in considering Italian own past as the only one valuable showing an adversity toward the new. In this sense, the project focus appears very relevant. As explained in the introduction of the present survey, the decision to undertake the project was mainly led by a personal experience with Italian teaching which seemed to lack a Postcolonial and Multicultural didactic. As Adichie attempt to explain in her speech in Amsterdam, the story that Europe tells itself about Africa is a story of charity and need, a story that seems to aim in both forget and expiate the “sin” of colonialism. The author assumes that this enduring image of Africa might be maintained in European schools which seem to contribute in twisting Europe role in African history. As she stated at the conference of 'Europe in Narrative':

What if I walked in an average classroom anywhere in Europe class and ask the students what comes in mind when I say Africa? In addition to the usual war, poverty and aid there is no doubt that the word charity would come to mind if I asked those same students if there were some sort of connection between their countries and the Africans they would probably say no there might have been something in the past but it does no longer have bearings with the present state of things.\textsuperscript{118}

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\item \textsuperscript{117}Shelleen Greene 'Envisioning Postcolonial Italy' p. 253-254
\item \textsuperscript{118}Adichie, 'NarrativeAmsterdam 29\textsuperscript{th} April 2011 minutes 23.12
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
As discussed above the author attempted to depict the image that Europeans have about Africa and she debunks as well the process which leads to the upcoming of this categorisation. Her words touch the schooling system as well since school perpetuates the underlying image of miserable Africa, by omitting the other side of the coin. In this sense an example of Italian Literature of migration reveals impeccable. In Lontano da Mogadiscio the Somali-born author Shirin Ramzanali Fazel confirm this image categorisation of Africa which she experiences on her own skin when arriving in Italy. In fact, the author remembers the hostility and ignorance of Italians toward a country of which she had studied everything in school.

Loro conoscevano solo l'africano dei documentari in bianco e nero: l'africano dei film di Tarzan che fa roteare gli occhi parlando all'infinito. Provai una gran rabbia, ma non per loro! Io come moltissimi Somalì, avevo studiato la lingua italiana e la storia d'Italia, mentre l'Italia non s'era mai degnata di fare altrettanto con noi. I bambini, in Italia, sui libri di scuola hanno ancora la figura del negretto col gonnellino di paglia, l'anello al naso e l'osso tra I capelli. 119

The author perfectly reflects on the illusion of the former colonial motherland toward Africa expressed by Adichie. Moreover, she expresses her fury for an interest that she understand to be unilateral. In Somalia, she was encouraged to study and appreciate Italian culture. On the other hand, Italian were not at all encouraged to reflect on their colonial past in Somalia or not even to update their categorisation on Africans which reveals the same during Fascism. Fazel depicts a country that, despite a poor colonial past, necessarily belongs to that Europe that struggles to propose a less stereotyped image of Africa.

119 Shirin, Ramzanali Fazel, Lontano da Mogadiscio 1994
Acknowledging and working on Postcolonial Literature in any taught language helps on highlighting the similarities of every individual as well as the Hybridity which characterize any culture: as for example its inherent quest for Identity. In addition to this, often times reflecting on the culture which is not our own may appear less provoking but indeed very effective in reproducing the same interest toward the world individuals were raised in. In fact, as the project suggested every culture is at its core a Hybrid and making this concept aware to students is important in any language they will encounter. In this sense, it is relevant to talk about the situations of multicultural education in Italy.

4.2 Multicultural Education in Italy

Multicultural education in Italy does not appear to be urgent in the education system. The reason may be that in comparison with other countries Italy has experienced immigration for a relatively short time. Moreover, despite an increase shown in the last two decades, students with immigrants origins represent just the 10% of pupils. The most up-to-date image depicted by MIUR (the Italian ministry of education) shows that within this data second generation migrant represents now the more than 50% of the foreign students, giving the impression that the issues that Italy has to confront are not just related to integration but as well to second generation incomers.120

120 MIUR Servizio Statistico October 2015
On this sense, the data collected on 'Inverventi a Favore degli Immigrati Stranieri' shows a perturbed situation as it defines a disinterest toward the integration of students. The survey concentrates on the gap between Italian and non-Italian students' performances in school, which appears to be quite important. The author, Eduardo Barberis, questions the method used in Italy as well as the expectations of the new Italian citizens, and in doing so he investigate the multicultural method used in Italy.\textsuperscript{121}

According to the author, the intercultural approach preferred in Italy in order to deal with the integration of students. This reveals halfway between multicultural approach, which in his description tend to highlight differences between societies, and assimilation which aims in condemn the different feature of every culture. The approach chosen in Italy aims in considering identity as individual rather than communal enhancing the possibility of dialogue between diversities.

According to Barberis though, despite relativism, one culture appears persistent in considering itself as the one to look at. Furthermore, the spectre of assimilationism tout-court which jeopardise the possibility to express diversity emerges as strong. Moreover, Barberis refers as well to Italian regional differentiation which mirrors in migrants students performances.

Nonetheless, the intent of the present survey is to demonstrate that the teaching proposed in the project is no relevant just in purposes of class integration. As specified in Chapter 1 the growing tendency toward a globalised system requires society and cultures to improve their awareness of other identities as well as the one they reckoned as their own. In this sense, multiculturalism emerges as a core of the education of any

\textsuperscript{121}Eduardo Barberis, 'Educazione Culturale in Italia: Rischi e Sfide' p. 12
country. Italian history on multicultural education appears to lack the need to prepare younger generation to the global shift as well as dealing with migrants integration.

According to James Lynch, the goal of multicultural education must be the persuasion that teachers and pupils end up perceiving cultural diversity as a creative factor in their lives. The author continues expressing the increasing global conscience toward environmental issues, human rights that define ethic and human values, which are core to multicultural education as applicable to every people of the world. In fact, the author stresses that every society lives nowadays in mutual interdependency.  

Lynch critics multicultural education which from its birth has maintained a narrow-minded approach limiting the possibility to increase its global possible impact. In this sense, he refers to the continued focus on diversities categorisation rather than interest to similarities between cultures.  

Lynch's approach on Multicultural education is very relevant to the project proposed since it aims at highlighting both the common ground of cultures and the creativity carried by each culture diversity. The project aimed at reflecting on the hybridity of each culture which is in the end influenced by other societies. Concentrating on diversities seems to add fuel to the idea of purity as if differentiation is what makes people pure hybridity instead concentrates on how the interaction between culture bring them together showing that diversities are to be praised but does not necessarily have to act as a boundary.

In this sense foreign language teaching is crucial. Language teaching carries multicultural education on its core because any language carries a mindset which

122James Lynch, Multicultural education p. 7  
123 Lynch, Multicultural Education page 9
portrays a culture. Learning a foreign language may represent the single occasion to reflect on diversities of cultures in school. Whenever teaching foreign languages the teacher has the duty to explain the differences carried within the language that he is depicting, even because often times those differences may act as a communicative issue. Teaching a language permits communication between peers and this is the goal of multicultural education as well: to allow individuals with different cultural and social background to communicate with mutual respect.

In this sense concentrating on the teaching of English present multiple interesting features. English, in fact, is not just the language of Shakespeare it is an official language in 54 countries in the world. Colonialism helped the spread of English around the world as well as opening the language to regional variation. Moreover, English reveals as a very peculiar case since in the last decades it has confirmed itself as Lingua Franca in both the economic and political world. With over one and a half billion speaker the language is very adaptable to change but this is not always considered among teachers.

Carlos A. Melero Rodriguez questions English teaching in Italy and what emerges is a disinterest toward the development of English outside the UK. Considering the development of English as a global phenomenon, the author defines “paradoxical” to concentrate English teaching on an only modelled- variety.¹²⁴ The author acknowledges the complexity of dealing with such a diverse idiom but again he states that sociolinguistic is a very important part of a language that shall not be forgotten despite its instability.

¹²⁴Carlos A. Melero Rodriguez ‘L’Inglese nella Scuola Italiana Santipolo ’p. 187
Therefore, the project proposed in the present survey confirms interesting as, in addition to concentrating in the field of Postcolonial studies, it partly demonstrates the sociolinguistic power of English in Africa. Rodriguez condemns English teaching in Italian compulsory education as in his opinion teachers often lacks in preparation. In spite of this data shows that Italian performances in English have increased in the last decade. Nonetheless, as pointed out by Rodriguez what appears persistent in general language teaching in Italy is the lack of the cultural dimension of the language, which in the particular case of English does not reflect just in the canonic countries that media refer to when thinking of English speaking countries.

In this sense, it is worth mentioning the language acquisition model proposed by Balboni emerges worth analysing. The image below depicts the diagram proposed by Balboni which reflect foreign language performance. Balboni reflects on the ongoing trends of foreign language teaching which aims in producing language and as depicted in the diagram “linguistic competence” represent just a third of the abilities needed in order to master a language performance.
Extra-Linguistic competence, which reflects non-verbal communication, Socio-Cultural competence, which indeed reflects intercultural communication, combined emerges to have a greater influence on the language performance. Thus, as explained by Balboni in order to create an effective communication in the external world student's mind must master extra-linguistic competence and socio-cultural pragmatic structural competence as well as the mere linguistic competence. Language, therefore, represents a cultural code on which it is essential to reflect upon in order to create an effective communication. Although, improvement in the education of competences are slowly happening what emerges is that Italian teaching endures in proposing notion and facts as the only way to learn. Thus the Italian education system appears to fail in demonstrating how those notions and facts may improve everyday life as well as individuals' awareness of the diversity of the world.

In fact, despite improvements in language teaching, the Italian language teaching in compulsory schools endure in concentrating on the linguistic competence. This is demonstrated by Rodriguez's claim on the disinterest toward varieties of English and in fact, most of the Italian textbook proposed just RP English.

Paola Della Valle in her essay 'Riflessione su una didattica della letteratura Inglese nella scuola secondaria superiore' analyse the literature teaching in Italian high schools which perfectly matches the project proposed in the present survey. Valle analysis on this field of studies suggested that despite MIUR encourages different types of syllabi the one preferred by Italian teachers is the chronological one, usually proposed in class-books. These texts usually prefer the chronological development of

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125 Paolo E. Balboni Le Sfide di Babele p.26-27
126 Paola Della Valle, 'Riflessioni su una didattica della Letterature Inglese per la Scuola Secondaria Superiore' Ricognizioni 2014 p. 109
literature to the thematic approach, despite the latter being known to improve the
student perception on the authors as well as enhancing the cultural feature of the time
analysed.

Literature may act as a precious contributor in developing those extra and
sociolinguistic skills which, as aforementioned influence deeply the final language
performance. In fact, literature is the reflection of the time it was produced in. By
analysing it, students and later society might acknowledge its own world. Literature
express those competences which are linguistic, extra and sociolinguistic. When dealing
with a foreign language the deep analysis of a text carries all the information which are
hidden in the mindset of that language. This may be the reason why the study of
contemporary literature is crucial because it deepens both the linguistic skills and it
allows the reader to reflect and confront the world he lives in. Moreover, literature
teaching may help in producing stereotype “stereotype inhibition”.\textsuperscript{127} In fact, as
demonstrated in Chapter 1, the stereotype is part of the categorisation system of
individuals which tends toward a simplicity rather than questioning. Therefore,
encouraging students to reflect on some of the examples of Postcolonial literature in
English may help them to acknowledge and possibly change their stereotypes on Africa,
for instance. In addition to this reflecting on Hybridity may produce as well cross-
categorisation\textsuperscript{128}, the awareness that despite being very different people always share
common features.

The study of history emerges as necessary in order to understand the
development of society, it must be studied in order to understand the collective heritage

\textsuperscript{127}\textsuperscript{Blaine, Understanding the Psychology of Diversity p.215}
\textsuperscript{128}\textsuperscript{Blaine, Understanding the Psychology of Diversity p.217}
of a culture as well as mistakes undertaken, past literature is remarkable for it expresses
the habits of people living in the past as well as ameliorating the comprehension of
history. The teaching of contemporary literature instead is crucial because it enhances
the perception of the reality individual are living in the moment they are reading.

Precisely the survey aims in collecting all the aforementioned discourse on
teaching. As explained multiculturalism is a fact in today society and globalisation
requires for individuals to acknowledge and respect mutual culture. Multicultural
education aims in producing this awareness and it is a fact that anyone who is
attempting in learning a new language he is learning how to be multicultural. Language
teaching, therefore, must provide all the information and tools necessary to the student
to both enhance his/her perception of the world as global and his/her language
performance. Understanding the world of Postcolonial even on a basic level may truly
impact the multicultural world hidden in RP English. As aforementioned English
teaching in Italian High Schools has long distanced the chance to show the variety of
English cultures. This Postcolonial project aims in demonstrating its infinite aspects as
well as the empowerment that this awareness may bring to future influence toward a
respectful and inclusive world.

In this sense, Grant and Brueck propose a Multicultural Education which tend
toward a global perspective as: “When we learn to recognize 'the infinite extent of our
relations' we can trace the strand of mutually supportive life, and discover there the
glittering jewels of our global neighbours”\textsuperscript{129}

\textsuperscript{129} Carl A. Grant and Stefen Brueck ' A Global Invitation' p.3 from \textit{Intercultural and
Multicultural Education}
4.3 The Project

That is part of the beauty of all literature. You discover that your longings are universal longings, that you're not lonely and isolated from anyone. You belong.

F. Scott Fitzgerald

The aim of the project undertaken was to enhance the Hybridity of cultures in order to possibly produce a more respectful way to look at diversities. In his words, Fitzgerald is able to enclose the power of literature to induce people to reflect on how their personal quest for identity is shared everywhere in the world.

The project intended to induce encourage this type of reflection on students by discussing Postcolonial Literature. The aim was to empower students with basic competences to read the world from a broader perspective than the mere Western one. The current world with its rampant migration, the economic interdependence due to globalisation appear to demand an open spirit of its inhabitants. Openness is gained with knowledge and respect of diversities which can be achieved through the analysis of literature.

The class that participated in the project was the 5 AA class 2016 of Liceo Cornaro in Padua. Professor De Rossi, the English teacher, kindly accepted to collaborate and 'donate' his class for the study purposes of the present thesis. The school carries two main specialisations: foreign languages and applied sciences. For the purpose of the survey the class given, specialised in applied sciences. In fact, one of the reason for the project was the possibility to enlarge the Western-imposed vision on Literature in particular, which is a field that belongs to humanities studies. In this sense,
it was relevant to direct the study to students with specialisation in applied sciences since according to MIUR statistics they are more likely to choose scientific universities degrees. Whereas foreign languages students (the other specialisation offered by Liceo Cornaro) are in percentage more likely to continue their career in the humanities. Therefore the class chosen belonged to the applied science since the students might be less likely to encounter Postcolonial perspectives in their future career in Universities.¹³⁰

The class chosen was in the last year of Liceo, the choice had been taken for syllabus purposes, last year Humanities syllabi in Italy generally concentrates on the 19th and 20th centuries event. In addition to this, the ministry of education encourages projects on contemporary event, in the last year of Liceo¹³¹. During this year students had analysed colonialism their history class. In addition to historical purposes, the choice of a higher class considered the students level of English which in European Scale should be of B2 for the last year applied science class.

The project officially started on the 2nd of May 2016. There had been a previous class in which I participated in order to familiarize with the students. It ended with the final test on the 31st of the same month. The class schedule envisaged three hours of English language per week, considering that one hour had already been assigned to final exam preparation, the project lasted a total of twelve hours.

¹³⁰ Liceo Scientifico: Economia- Statistica 14,8, Ingegneria 21,3 Letteraria 3, 9 Linguistica3,7 MIUR ‘Il Passaggio dalla Scuola Secondaria Superiore all’Università’ P.11
¹³¹“Indicazioni nazionali riguardanti gli obiettivi specifici di apprendimento concernenti le attività e gli insegnamenti compresi nei piani degli studi previsti per i percorsi liceali di cui all’articolo 10, comma 3, del decreto del Presidente della Repubblica 15 marzo 2010, n. 89, in relazione all’articolo 2, commi 1 e 3, del medesimo regolamento.” Allegato B p. 17
Class participants were twenty-six, eight girls and eighteen boys. There were no major ethnic differences in the class though one of the students had been adopted and two of the students had eastern European origins.

The level of English was truly a B2, students were capable of speaking writing and comprehension despite the difficulties of the given topic. The English Professor had been the same in the class from the first year of high school (which in Italy lasts five years) and after concentrating on language and Grammar until the first semester of the third year of Liceo, the topic moved to English Literature. 2015/2016 syllabi had concentrated on *Lord of the flies* and *1984*.

### 4.3.1 Introduction

The goals of the teaching project were:

- Empowering students with the instruments necessary to reflect on a Postcolonial view of history and global perspective of relations between individuals
- Reflecting on African English contemporary literature
- Reflecting on migration and related Hybridity of individuals
- Improving students understanding of the variety of English.
- Reflecting on the notion of Hybridity as Global Identity

At first, it emerged important, to comprehend students' understanding of Postcolonial studies, therefore the initial task given was to respond to a small questionnaire.
1. What do you think is the aim of Postcolonial Studies?
2. Write three to five keywords you know are related to Colonialism.
3. How would you define the world Hybridity?

Six students among the twenty-six present in class, did not answer the first question, other eight did not respond to the third question. Twelve students attempted in responding to all the question proposed.

The replies given to the first question considered were variegate. Some were accurate “Understand how colonialism changed world culture” or “the aim of Postcolonial studies is to study how people lived in the colonies” or again “they study the reason and method of colonisation done by Europeans”. Some responses concentrated on the Sociological and Anthropological side of the studies “give awareness on the existence of other cultures which differ in the thinking from the western one” or “to study how different cultures interact with one another. One replied: “Maybe to understand the relationships of power between countries”.

The second question was replied by all the students, more recurring words were: power-six times, economy-four, war-eight, culture-five, freedom-two, empire-six, control-two, trade-two, exploit-three, slavery-ten, poverty-two, land-three, conquest-two, submission-three, violence-two, Africa-three, mineral resources-two. Other words appear just once and it is interesting to note that those words comprehend the countries involved in creating colonialism in Africa: Europe, India, capitalism, evolutionism, ivory, opportunity, England, Belgium, self-interest rights, oppression, fight, illnesses, people, experiences, love, take, dominion, taxes, migration.
The two words which the students related the most with Colonialism are slavery and war. Imperialism power and economy appear very popular as well as submission conquest culture. Land, in general, emerges as in relation with colonialism and the countries named are: Europe, England, Belgium, India and Africa. Migration is quoted just once as well as capitalism evolutionism ivory taxes and experiences.

Eighteen students replied to the third question. Though it was the one where I expected to obtain the weakest replies, the response given were quite in line with the description of hybridity. The most popular reply was “Something in between” or “Mix” the reference to culture appeared in most of the sentences and some of the students replied it was a mixture of two different cultures. One of the replies was “a fusion of two different things, that have something in common but one has something that the other one hasn't and vice versa”

Another student replied “Hybridity is the term referring to the mixture of two or plus things that bring to the creation of another thing” this version is the one which refers more deeply to the meaning of hybridity in a traditional 90s Postcolonial view. Another The following “people who follow a grown up together model society is hybrid. People which are interested in mixing different cultures with the aim to grow together” refers more deeply to the global perception of hybridity introduced by Pieterse.

After brainstorming with the students in order to understand their level of comprehension of the thematic to be dealt with in the course of the project the lesson moved on to the reading of 'How to Write About Africa’ by Wainaina. The text was read aloud by the students and at each paragraphed the class stopped in order to comment on
the reading. The reading was completed in the second class and it followed an analysis of the themes surveyed by Wainaina.

The sarcasm of the text was completely understood by the class and made the students reflect on the partiality of their knowledge of Africa. Students confirmed the general aforementioned stereotype on Africa. The discussion mentioned as well on 'The Danger of a Single Story' by Adichie. In this sense, I attempted in explaining to the class the multiple views that history may have.

The discussion focused as well on the theme analysed in Chapter 3 of the present survey. The class concentrated on the notion of flat and complex characters as well as the sentence “Africa has to be pitied, worshipped or dominated.” In addition from being surprised on the Students confirmed the picture depicted by Wainaina as the one they had internalised about Africa from Western media. They particularly appreciate Wainaina's reference to Disney cartoon -such as The Lion King- which, they mostly agreed as the most popular in creating their image of Africa as children.

The discussion with the students was very productive and compelling. Students showed visible interest on the topic and appeared fascinated by the idea of a different perspective in terms of Postcoloniality. I was pleased both with their language and interest toward the project undertaken. Moreover, class participation was always relevant to the analysed topics.
4.3.2 Development

After discussing the themes introduced by Wainaina, the class moved to the examination of the “mainstream” Postcolonial Literature. Since time did not appear enough in order to continue with the traditional reading and commenting adopted for the analysis of Wainaina's text, I decided to assign the reading to the students who had to work in groups. In fact, during the first two class, I noticed that the class had a homogeneous level of understanding of both language and topic discussed, therefore, I thought interesting letting the students discover the texts working among peers in order to improve their autonomy.

To begin the task I attempted again the inductive method. I wrote the authors' name on the board followed by their home country “Nigeria” and “South Africa”. Then, I asked the students to provide some words related to both the authors or their nationality. Unfortunately, unlike the first brainstorm, the second failed in participation. Therefore I continued the authors' introduction with a deductive method.

The only word given by the students was Apartheid which allowed an explanation of South African rules and interracial marriage ban. In addition to this, I concentrated on Gordimer focus on Apartheid as well as tracing a short biography of the author. I gave the same biographical information on Adichie and I was careful in explaining the differences and similarities of the two authors' lives. I believed this important in order for the students to have as much elements as possible for an effective reading of ‘Africa Emergent' and 'The Thing Around Your Neck'.
Then, with the help of Professor De Rossi the class was divided into six groups considering students' weaknesses. Three groups were asked to read Adichie's text whereas the other three had to read the Gordimer's, afterwards the text had to be switched in order for all the students to read both the texts.

Students were asked to be as independent as possible during the first reading but I was available for any clarification on cultural references or possible questions on the texts. When the groups were finished with the reading participants had to confront on the text read. As a general task, I asked students to concentrate on examples of hybridity, apartheid, or colonialism which could be found in the literature analysed. This led to a close reading of each text. In this phase, teachers’ guidelines played a significant role, nonetheless, groups were able to propose interesting point of view on their analysis.

The complete reading of the texts required three lessons. After having read and analysed both the texts, groups participated in a point style quiz where each groups had to reserve their intervention. The questions revolved around the close reading of the texts such as: examples of Hybridity, or Apartheid. Students emerged to appreciate this proposition, in fact, in spite of being young adults competition between groups was a reason for the students to perform their best.

The quiz enabled a second class analysis of the literature proposed. In fact, during group reading, some groups might have analysed the texts differently, therefore the quiz function as a level up close reading as well as a revision of the Postcolonial interest of the authors.
As said before, Gordimer and Adichie represented the mainstream literature presented to the class. The texts were dense and challenging for the students, so the following class attempted to continue the discussion on Postcolonial Studies and Hybridity with the help of a South African comedian. In fact, the seventh lesson concentrated on Trevor Noah sketch.

I said to the class that there was going to be a listening comprehension class. The students watched the entire video once. After the viewing, students were asked to give the general concept of the monologue and some of them appeared to have caught the author's irony as well. Before proceeding with the second view, I outlined a small introduction on the author in order to improve students' understanding of Noah's speech.

On the second viewing, the video was stopped at every pause made by the comedian in order to test the understanding of the students. Indeed, some students showed a poor understanding of spoken English; the reason might be the frequent reference to popular culture to which not all the students were accustomed. Despite the difficulties, by the end of the second view, most of the students were able to understand the text and its general meaning. The class watched the video a third time, after a brief discussion on the theme raised in Noah's speech.

The class was deeply interested in the lines 'born a crime' and 'Black Hitler', which were analysed in order to clarify both Noah's role in the teaching project as well as his witty reading of Apartheid and racism.

Since one of the goals of the teaching project was to empower students with curiosity toward learning about different cultures, I tried to focus the class attention on Noah's
attitude toward learning Spanish as well. Students revealed to have caught Noah's line and found that his statement was very powerful.

A comic sketch is indeed a hard choice when dealing with a foreign language since irony is one of the most challenging aspects of language learning, despite this, I believe the analysis proposed was effective in explaining references to contemporary culture as well as giving a humoristic view on the general topic of the teaching project proposed, which might be insidious at times. Moreover, in spite of language boundaries students were able to understand the main jokes made by the comedian. After viewing the video a third time in order to complete the listening the class discussed the video in relation to the traditional literature. As foreseen the discussion related mostly on African Emergent since both Gordimer and Noah were born in South Africa. Students were able to confront with a “real” example of Apartheid an example which affected Noah’s life. As discussed in chapter two, Gordimer was a white South African who demonstrated with her work to be against segregation, Noah instead is a mixed raced South African who experienced segregation from the point of view of the oppressed. I believe these two people were able to offer a better understanding of race and the role that society plays in defining it.

As a final text, the students watched The last King of Scotland. The film was not discussed until the penultimate class which aimed in both analysing its link with the Postcolonial perspective and revising the main topics of the project.

In order to understand the students’ perception of the film, I asked the class to introduce the film and its point of view. Most students reckoned that the film showed a paternalistic European perception recognising in Garrigan some features of the white
saver. Students reckoned the ambiguity of the doctor which according to some of them often feels superior when in Uganda, nonetheless students were appeared confused on his inconsistent action with the Brits' conspiracy in the country.

On the other hand, Amin's character was mostly depicted as a dictator corrupted by power but his final speech in the movie appeared to persuade students on the complexity of issues generated by colonialism. According to the students, the film was an example of failed hybridity. In fact, many of them concentrated on the poor interaction between people with different backgrounds or race in the movie. In particular, the Indian ban emerged to work as another example of the impossibility to mix. Despite showing a possible contradictory point of view, the class was able to analyse the film considering the point of view analysed in the project showing the interest to maintain a more balanced understanding of history.

**4.3.3 Conclusion**

In addition to discussing the film and revising the project material, in the last lessons the class was asked to answer the same question that had been proposed on the very first class. Consequently to the project undergone the second question was slightly changed to: “Write some of the consequences of Colonialism in Africa”.\(^{132}\)

Twenty-four students out of twenty-six replied to all the questions, one student did not reply to question number one\(^{133}\) and another student did not reply to question number three.\(^{134}\) Replies to the first question concentrated the aim of Postcolonial

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132 First questionnaire: “Write three to five keywords related to Colonialism”
133 “What do you think is the aim of Postcolonial Studies?”
134 “How would you define the term Hybridity?”
studies on the search of consequences of colonialism as well as depicting a mission against “the wrong statements perpetuated by Western countries on Colonies”.

Six students described poverty and exploitation among the main consequences of colonialism while twenty students concentrated on prejudice, Apartheid, racism and hybridity. When defining the term students, even the ones that concentrated on poverty as a consequence of Colonialism, describe hybridity as a “mixture of different cultures” twelve students out of twenty-five who replied to this last question added that hybridity may help the integration between different cultures.

This second round of the questionnaire was not brainstormed because class discussion followed by the film analysis naturally shifted the conversation on Identity. In these case as well as in the other time in which they had been asked to, the class demonstrated an active participation. As mentioned on the first class I recollected Pieterse theory on Global identity in order to understand students perception on this.

Most of the students recognised the influence of globalisation on today's identity pointing out the economy as the leading argument for their statement. Wars and migration resulted also important in helping toward the shift on a global perspective of identity. On the other hand, many students pointed out the role of Europe in shaping their personal mixed identity. In fact, many students reckoned that their first perception of identity reveals to be European, especially if questioned in terms of the globe.

Most of the students appeared to agree on the fact that identity is mutable and highly influenced by culture mixing and many of them reckoned the importance of the internet when searching identity. Nonetheless, despite reckoning hybridity of culture,
some students attempted in debunking hybridity as improving people attitude toward diversities. These students claimed the importance of their personal original identity.

On the purpose of the research, it seems important to point out that, these students were the ones with non-Italian roots and therefore had been more keen on questioning their identity from a very early age. In particular one of them insisted in affirming the uniqueness of his identity. His affirmation was probably to trace in his personal background. This student, in fact, had been adopted from an Italian family and he recollected that when questioned on his origins people would say to him “you are not Italian you come from Romania”. This student personal history matches Fanon theory that diversity is confirmed when it is reckoned from the outside. The student clearly experienced a sense of hybridisation which was belonged in the outside. In spite of being white, raised in Italy from Italian parents and in spite of reckoning Italy as his only culture his identity is questioned because he has been adopted as a toddler. This student saw in hybridity a loss. The loss of his personal identity that he seemed to have struggled to obtain.

Nonetheless, as mentioned in chapter one the “shrinking world” according to Pieterse is not going to produce a unique culture rather it is likely to enhance the influence of cultures. In this sense, the adopted student case was indeed peculiar even considering the other students in class which had a non-Italian background. A couple of students moved to Italy when 10 and 12 years old, they attended Italian schools continuing respective eastern Europe tradition and Languages at home. These students in term of identity did not feel the same as the adopted students, in fact, they reckoned the global influence proposed in class.
In spite of feeling that they were considered different in some social contest in Italy, these two students felt that they belong to one culture, which does not appear to be the case for the adopted student who seems to express the necessity to categorise in order to experience belonging.

This discussion was the last one undergone by the project. The discussion aimed to recollect the topic analysed by in class in order to confirm the general goal of the teaching project. Moreover, the final discussion intended to revise the project in preparation for the final test which consisted in a 300 word composition. The class asked the students to produce a comment on Postcolonial Studies and hybridity relating their discourse to the literature analysed in class.

The question that the students were asked to replied, was decided together with Professor De Rossi who needed the test as their last mark. In order to test students effective learning of the texts analysed they were asked to bring examples of hybridity and Apartheid in their comment, in addition to testing their use of the English language.

On the purpose of the present project, comments helped to outline the results achieved in class. Six students out of twenty-six were unable to produce a clear comment, their texts concentrate mostly on historical figures on apartheid or colonialism and fail a personal reading of the topics analysed. All the other students were able to propose their own observation on the themes proposed on the teaching project.

Students comment confirmed class discussion. Postcolonial studies emerges as significant in changing students perspective on the world, and on Africa in particular. As in class one student in the test defined hybridity as the loss of personal identity. In spite
of this, hybridity proves its role in considering cultures as a mix that never was and
never will be pure. In this sense, many students consider Hybridity as a powerful theory
to improve individuals' perception of society since it concentrates on similarities rather
than on differences between individuals.

The literature proposed emerged as captivating and most of the students were
able to create interesting links among all the literature considered. In order to
understand the general class perception on the teaching project, I asked a sample of
students (thirteen of them) to reply anonymously to three questions which intended to
understand their opinion on the teaching project.

1. Did you like the themes considered?
2. Did you like the teaching method used?
3. What would you change?

The general feeling is that the class really liked the project undertaken and I
could tell this even from class participation which was constant throughout the month of
teaching. Mostly the project was appreciated because: “it introduces the theme of
diversity”, “it broadens world perception” or again in introduces a topic which is related
to current affairs. The student who did not like the project did not appreciate the text
chosen and would have preferred to continue with the syllabus in preparation for finals.

For what concerns the method, most of the students enjoyed the inductive
method which as discussed at the beginning of this chapter is still not popular in Italian
education despite its effectiveness in making students reflect on the analysed theme and
improvement in producing a critical point of view. Still, a few students found the method intrusive. Most of the students like the argument but they found the time too short and they would have preferred a traditional analysis of the short stories since according to them they were challenging at times. Considering that this was a pilot project and that the time given for the project was little, I believe the project was well received by the class and I am confident these students have assimilated the core concept of Postcolonial studies which is to question our perception of the world.
Conclusion

The aim of the present survey was to discuss the importance to teach a Postcolonial perspective in Italian High Schools. In order to do so, the survey reported an example of teaching African contemporary English literature to an Italian last year Liceo class.

As discussed above, Postcolonial is a field of recent analysis in the Italian academic and it has not yet been introduced in the compulsory education system. In spite of this, the challenging perspective on history introduced by Postcolonial studies emerges as crucial in order to help the growth of a global more inclusive conscience on Italian future society. Moreover, the project concentrated on the notion of hybridity studied by Postcolonial scholars which as recently been related to globalisation.

Hybridity in the global sense emerges as the trait disunion between cultures. In fact, debunking the concept of purity which appear contradictory with the very notion of society as interaction between different people, what is left is human need for categorisation and today necessity to understand categorisation of cultures as undefined because of globalisation interaction. Cultures in this sense is hybrid because they interact and the survey aim in expressing the potentiality of this interaction. The potentiality to defeat prejudices and stereotypes with the acknowledgement that the “other” may just represent a different side of the coin.

This other side of the coin is greatly expressed in Postcolonial discourse and its commitment to change Westerners perceptions on history, and it is shared by all the authors analysed and proposed during the project. Wainaina's text and the two short
stories attempted and succeeded, I would dare, in depicting an image of Africa that challenge the stereotype. In addition to this, Noah’s sketch showed that such topics may also be confronted with irony, but also with the serious hope that improvements can and must be made.

Italy emerges as still largely unwilling to deal with its colonial past, nonetheless preventing the discovery of the variety of Postcolonial English literature emerges as counter productive. English is the language that benefits the most from its colonial past because it is able to produce stories that reports many different and challenging perspectives which might reflect positively in today's world which tend toward populism often because of the poor questioning of stereotypes.
Appendix 1: *Transcription of Trevor Noah Sketch*

Good Evening.

I grew up in South Africa where I still live I enjoy it. I grew up there in a time known as apartheid. For those who don't know apartheid was a law in our country which made it illegal for black and white people to interact with one another. This was against the law. This world was awkward for me growing up because I grew up in a mixed family. With me been the mixed one in the family. My mum is a Black woman Klosa woman born in South Africa..... My father is Swiss. But they didn't care you know. They were … fighting the system

My mum was arrested for being with my dad. She would get fine she would get thrown into prison for the weekend but still she'd come back and she would be <<woo I don't care, you can't tell me who to love I want the white man>> she was crazy and my dad also was.. well you know how the Swiss love chocolate...

And so they got together and they had me which was illegal so basically I was born a crime. Which is something I think they never thought through because as a family we could not live together in the streets we could not even be seen together. my father would have to walk on the other side of the road and he would just wave at me from far like a creepy paedophile.. I mean like a paedophile.. there is no classy paedophile..

My mum could walk with me but if the police showed up she'd had to let go of my hand and drop me and act like I wasn't hers every single time because we were not supposed to exist as a family so my mum would let go she would be like look what game we play police would show up and she would say I don't know this kid, he is not mine I don't know.. It was horrible for me I felt like a bag of weed it was a though time.

The downside of being light was that I was different, people mocked me, gave me names like mixed breed, half-cast.. I hate that term.. Why half? Why not double or twice as nice? I don't know...

I wanted to be black to be honest that's all I ever wanted.. especially since one day growing up I met an American and he was shocked that in South Africa we had all this title and said to me you know Trevor if you go out to United States they labelled you as black I said really?? and he was like hell yeah yeah buddy everybody is black out there yeah you'd be super black! Super black?? that's sounds good to be so I made a choice
first chance I get to go to America I am going to make a piece of that black and I did! I bought an 18 hours journey. Johannesburg to New York I did not sleep a wink I just sat there in my chair like a mad men watching every single black American movie I could find sitting there going crazy practising Yeah yeah can call it that shit on me.. put it in your mouth 18hours later I landed in NY and I was fluent in my black American for shizzle my nizzle I had everything the walk I was even laughing. Black American feels so good and confident they will make you feel good and confident just by asking if you are you, and I was that black I was super black I was loving it.. then this guy walked up at me I don't know him he did not know me., he tapped me on the shoulder on the airport and he is like: Hey pompano que pasa o que arlo le que forutnati eres no? Illagamo! And I say what are you talking to me? And he is like yes I am talking to you man! I am just saying we made it babe we made it ha? Now that we made it here our kind we are gonna stick together hombre.. And I am our kind?? 18h of flight and I wasn't black I was Mexican! So I started learning Spanish.. If not why not?? I also started learning German. I'm learning German to connect with my father.. I d lost contact with him for many years because of apartheid but now we are starting to learn each other you know is taking time we are doing it slowly but I think the language will help me because I don't think he is proud of me he loves me but I haven't earned his pride I think partly because of my job.. as a comedian I don't rank that high in the world of German anything (...) German is holding me back (...) but I am learning I play German speeches on my ipad your brain remember things you don't even know it's beautiful the only thing was that apparently I downloaded some of Hitler speeches Its' google download! So I learned some of his nuances when speaking. I have been told that when I speak German I sound distinctively hitlerish which I found out in Germany.. not the best place to find out probably I was in colon and I went into a sandwich shop. The woman was really nice she asked me what I wanted I said to myself confidence Trevor confidence so I started to tell her what I wanted at some point she shut herself she went pale she looked me straight in the eyes and she said the shwarze Hitler! The black Hitler! I was so happy.. yeah because she said Hitler but at least she said I was black!
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