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Title "There we were, now here we are." An Analysis of the Exceptionalist Discourses Underpinning the Relationship between Finnishness and the Other			
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Abstract			
<p>Over the past few years, there have been some noticeably problematic trends threatening the place of the Other in Finland. Globalisation, as theorised in neo-liberal paradigms, calls for the opening up of markets, as well as a mobile citizenship able to meet the needs of economies underpinned by competition and innovation. This has led to a state of affairs in which hundreds of millions of people feel insecure about their place in both the employment market and wider society, with the Other as the most visible manifestation of this fear. Finland continues to have particular difficulties in adjusting to this situation owing to a specific journey towards nationhood, in which its public education system was given the twin tasks of engendering a national ethos and social equity. It is contended in this thesis that nation-building stories always carry the potential for ethnocentrism as they must – of necessity – define who belongs to the nation and who does not. This relationship between the national ethos and equity has never seriously been critiqued, and Finland's growing far-right movement has thus been able to posit consensus and a culturally homogenous state as solutions to the challenges of neo-liberal globalisation.</p> <p>This thesis aims to understand the contemporary difficulties in the relationship between Finnishness and the Other, and is grounded in the disconnect between rhetoric and what can be observed on a daily basis. Finland has been framed as a tolerant nation with no history of racism or colonialism, and yet the anti-immigration Finns Party won the second largest number of seats during the last parliamentary election, there is still some debate as to whether the Finnish 'n'-word is offensive or not, and successive administrations have pursued assimilationist policies towards the Sami and Roma minority populations.</p> <p>The thesis provides a holistic picture of the problematic discourses delineating the relationship between Finnishness and the Other. The epistemological and ontological assumptions here are based on the post-structural position that power and knowledge are continuously constructed and contingent, and the postmodernist distrust of metanarratives. This allows for a destabilisation of the socio-historical factors contributing to Finland's mainstream nation-building narratives in order to demonstrate their subjective and provisional nature.</p> <p>The methodological framework of this thesis is critical discourse analysis, in which the utility of research is to find a social problem grounded in semiotics, investigate the factors that prevent the problem from being addressed and whether the issue is caused by the existing social order, before suggesting how things might be otherwise. The first research question asks which exceptionalist discourses can be found in research on the relationship between Finnishness and the Other and identifies three 'Traits of Exceptionalism' stemming from historical amnesia towards Finnish colonial complicity, Finland's place in the West, and the popular image of Finland as a tolerant nation. The second question assesses how these discourses are reproduced and/or contested in the student responses to the survey on internationalism in higher education collected in the Ethical Internationalism in Higher Education project (EIHE). Based upon a discourse analysis of these responses, the thesis asserts that these discourses are largely being reproduced and goes on to discuss the limitations this places upon interactions between Finns and the Other.</p> <p>In common with research orientations based upon post-structuralism and postmodernism, this thesis does not call for a prescribed solution to the existing problem but is rather part of wider calls to broaden the conversations it is possible to have regarding Finnishness and the Other. It recognises that the exceptionalist nature of this relationship is vital for the legitimacy of the existing social order, but also explicitly lists the possibly catastrophic implications of allowing this kind of relationship to continue. Finally, it challenges universalist assumptions about what constitutes a human subject and tries to offer more pluralistic lenses that position the Other as a subject in her own right.</p>			
Keywords Exceptionalism, Finland, Critical Discourse Analysis, Colonial Complicity, Nation-building, the Other			

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1. INTRODUCTION

“We consider that it is our task here to narrow differences, to seek constructive solutions, rather than sharpen or sustain existing conflicts or create new ones. We in Finland are, to a large extent, a nation of co-operators; and we know that true co-operation is best advanced by strongly independent-minded individuals. We believe in the possibility of harmonising dissimilar interests for the benefit of all. We see ourselves as physicians rather than judges; it is not for us to pass judgement nor to condemn, it is rather to diagnose and to try to cure” (Speech given by President Urho Kekkonen at the General Assembly of the United Nations, 19 October 1961).

The above text is taken from a speech made by long-serving former President Urho Kekkonen over half a century ago. It has been selected as the opening paragraph for this thesis because it evidences certain elements of Finnish identity construction – visible even today – that appear couched in benevolence but yet carry a darker underside. In his expositions upon what the world might learn from the Finnish Educational Miracle, Pasi Sahlberg presents a nation that is unique due to the fact that “fairness, honesty and social justice are deeply rooted in the Finnish way of life” (Sahlberg, 2011, p. 10). Moreover, and in common with Kekkonen’s rhetoric, it is stated that Finns would rather solve problems than try to talk about them (p. 61). It is not my intention in this thesis to dispute the validity of the concepts Sahlberg lists. I am, however, deeply concerned with how a society comes to define itself as ‘fair’, as well as how protestations to the contrary might be received. Additionally, I wonder what the consequences of a solutions-based attitude towards societal issues, as well as a professed aversion to discussing these problems might be. When and how is a phenomenon defined as a problem? Who gets to make this decision? Who decides upon the solution and who stands to benefit?

Within Kekkonen’s declaration, it is possible to observe discourses of exceptionalism: In a world divided by a Cold War, Finland is a nation of co-operators, ready and willing to work for the benefit of all. Christopher Browning states that the idea of the ‘Nordic exception’ has been a key component of Nordic identity construction since the end of the Second World War. The ‘exception’ came in two forms. First of all, it was a manner through which the Nordic states were able to carve out a place for themselves within a paradigm of international

relations characterised by Cold War binaries of capitalism versus communism and East versus West. Secondly, it created a discourse whereby to be 'Nordic' was seen as exceptional, in that the term came to be associated with modernisation, progress, peace and conflict-resolution, presenting a favourable contrast to Western European states that appeared unable to solve problems without recourse to war (Browning, 2007, p. 27).

The extent to which the Nordic exception has contributed to the self-image of the states it encompasses varies across the board but it had a major impact in post-war Finland due to the *realpolitik* implicit in Finland's geographical proximity to the Soviet Union. Finland was perceived as a gateway between East and West, as well as between two political ideologies competing for global supremacy. Moreover, its position was vulnerable as it had fought against both the Allies and the Soviet Union during the Second World War. Thus, the idea of combining the 'best' of the two systems into a 'Third Way' (ibid) gave Finland the distinctive identity it needed to forge its own path, while not alienating either the Western or Eastern Bloc. Elements of Finland's own past were incorporated into the concept, thereby mutating it into a distinctive brand of 'Finnish exceptionalism' which was underpinned by the "idea that Finland is innocent in relation to colonialism" (Rastas, 2012, p. 90) due to a selective historical amnesia (p. 89) concerning Finland's colonialist behaviour both at home and abroad. The upshot of this is that for decades Finland has been able to present an image of a tolerant, multicultural modern democracy, unscarred by racist imaginaries, and ideally positioned to help other states achieve such success (see, for example, Sahlberg, 2011; Simola, 2005; Country Brand Report, 2010).

The last few years have seen significant challenges to this image. The far-right Finns Party experienced a breakthrough in the 2008 municipal elections, later winning the second largest number of seats in the 2015 parliamentary election and being invited to form a government with the Centre Party and the National Coalition Party (Sundberg, 2015). Additionally, the strongly conflicting reactions to the recent European migrant 'crisis' (Yle, 2015; BBC, 2015) hint that societal tolerance is perhaps predicated upon consensus and not actually having to address the true implications of diversity. Simply put, if a society's self-perception is based upon celebrating its own rationality, educational achievements, and progress - as well as a historical amnesia towards the more conflict strewn and racist elements of its past - it would

not be easy for that society to take a systemic approach towards tackling challenges stemming from racism or opposition to multiculturalism. The system has already been defined as clean, and, as noted by Nicolson et al, “this disavowal of race quickly becomes a denial of the social fact of racism” (Nicolson et al, 2015, p. 3).

I would like to have a conversation. Rather, I would like to have a conversation about my right to have a conversation. That conversation is about racism in Finland and this thesis is concerned with helping to open up spaces in which to have the conversation. In short, I am presenting a critique towards discourses that are often hidden behind naturalised language or are visible only in their absence. I am doing so in order to address a topic that very few people appear to want to discuss. In *The History of Sexuality*, Michel Foucault writes of the taboo many societies have regarding talking about the sex lives of children and argues that within communities that have already defined children as essentially sexless, the very act of talking would be to acknowledge that children are sexual beings (Foucault, 1990, p. 4). In a similar vein, Anne Rastas states that a silence exists in Finland when it comes to racism (Rastas, 2012, p.101) and this makes it extremely difficult for anyone, let alone an outsider, to address instances in which ethnic discrimination rears its head.

In the last few years I have asked many questions and received no satisfactory explanations: If there are no racist Finnish people, why did the Finns Party – an organisation that is explicitly anti-immigration and mono-culturalist in its rhetoric (Arter, 2010, p. 498) – win twenty percent of the votes in the last parliamentary election? If Finnish people are uniformly tolerant, why do so many still deny that the Finnish ‘n’-word could possibly be construed as racist? If Finland has never exhibited signs of colonialist behaviour, how can one explain decades of assimilationist policies towards the Roma community (Grönfors, 2004) or the fact that the Finnish government is still yet to ratify the International Labour Convention’s “Convention No. 169,” a binding international agreement that guarantees indigenous peoples (such as the Sami) the same rights as other citizens (Yle, 2015)?

I began to investigate this topic more fully when I was asked to join the Ethical Internationalism in Higher Education (EIHE) team. Funded by the Finnish Academy of

Science and hosted by the 'Education, Ethics, Diversity and Globalisation' (EDGE) research group in the Faculty of Education at the University of Oulu, the EIHE project ran between September 2012 and July 2016 and included 23 universities from across the globe. The project was based on an understanding that internationalism in higher education has been underpinned by neo-liberal imaginaries that hinder the university's ability to respond to our current global crises in non-instrumental ways (Andreotti, 2013). It employed a mixed-methods approach in collating and analysing survey responses, policy documents, and interviews with both students and faculty to critique these imaginaries and provide a database for work aimed at reimagining internationalism in higher education in more ethical, pluralistic ways.

The survey from which my data is gleaned was sent to undergraduate students and faculty in a variety of disciplines at twenty different universities across six continents, inviting respondents to answer a series of quantitative and qualitative questions pertaining to internationalism. My own data comes from answers provided to the qualitative questions by 421 students from faculties of Education and Science at two Finnish universities, and specifically references the students' conceptions of their own relationship with the Other. While I was busy entering the students' responses onto the EIHE database, it occurred to me that a good deal of the text I was reading seemed hemmed in by the inconsistencies of a mainstream brand and nation-building narrative that portrays Finland as so well-educated as to be almost beyond racism (Simola, 2005; Sahlberg, 2011, pp. 5-7), while factors such as election results and media coverage of the European migrant 'crisis' would indicate otherwise (Yle, 2015; BBC, 2015). The responses gave me a starting point through which to explore Finnish history. I did not see them as gateways as of themselves to some kind of 'deeper' understanding of Finnish attitudes towards the Other, but, as representations of a certain kind of conflicted stance towards the Other, I wanted to explore the very possibility of their existence. Furthermore, having examined the socio-historical roots of the discourses surrounding the students' answers, I decided to work through the societal implications of these conceptualisations of the relationship between Finnishness and the Other.

While this process was going on, I was still struggling with the ethical implications of what I was doing. I did not want to define all Finns or even all Finnish students as racist, and yet

I was observing systemic problems linked to racism on a daily basis. I was aware that I was dealing with a very tiny sample of Finnish people, and yet I could see that their words were framed by many of the same discourses I had noticed in mainstream nation-building narratives. A breakthrough came when I was lucky enough to attend a Doctoral Candidate seminar in which Rene Suša presented his PhD, *Social Cartographies of Internationalisation of Higher Education in Canada. A Study of Exceptionalist Tendencies and Articulations*.

I had never met Rene before but, like me, he was part of the EIHE team and a number of my colleagues made me aware that it would be to my benefit to make his acquaintance as we shared similar research interests. I, as noted, was concerned with the socio-historical framings of certain conceptualisations Finnish students seemed to have of their relationships with the Other, Rene was exploring the extent to which the responses of Canadian students to the EIHE survey were bound up by exceptionalist discourses. Throughout the seminar, Rene faced challenges from several academics in attendance regarding the validity of his work. The feeling was that Rene – even though his data was both quantitative and qualitative in nature – had used relatively few examples from the students’ answers in order to make generalisations that supported the points he wished to emphasise. Rene’s response resonated deeply with me because he put into words *exactly* what I was trying to do with my treatment of data but had not yet been able to properly articulate. Rene said, “I am not trying to generalise and the choice of which responses I used is clearly subjective. I am using these answers in order to talk about things which otherwise would not be talked about.” Put simply, Rene refers to specific cases of Canadian exceptionalism within the students’ answers, and employs them to analyse potential underlying assumptions at a societal level (Suša, 2016, p. 16).

The aims of thesis are to explore the groundings of the exceptionalist discourses visible in research on Finnishness and the Other, and to assess the extent to which they are visible in the rhetoric of Finnish students of higher education. It is hoped that my efforts to do so will help place these discourses within their socio-historical contexts, thereby demonstrating their subjective and provisional nature and opening up spaces within which new and/or alternative discourses that theorise the relationship between Finnishness and the Other in more pluralistic ways might contribute to the ongoing conversation.

1.1 Positioning

Before we begin, it might be expedient for me to position myself within this conversation. I am English but I have lived in Finland for ten years. All three of my children were born here, speak Finnish as a first language, and are attending school within the public education system. When I first came to Finland I felt very welcome, was given the opportunity to learn Finnish, and quickly found a place at university to study education. However, over the last few years I have been a little less secure of my place in society. In my own faculty it is possible to observe a systematic opposition to theoretical models that are not premised upon Enlightenment or rationalist assumptions, while dissenting voices in education are often foreclosed using the Finnish Miracle narrative. On a personal level, I have been made to feel like a troublemaker for disagreeing with special education professionals when it comes to my youngest son's educational future. What I would like to make clear at this point is that I enjoy living in Finland and I do not think that the intercultural situation here is any worse than could be found elsewhere. That said, I believe that there are issues that need to be addressed relating to taken-for-granted assumptions about Finland's past. I consider myself well-placed to make a contribution to this field as I have lived here long enough to have some understanding of societal norms, but as an 'outsider' I am able to see that they are not necessarily as 'natural' as they might appear.

1.2 Research Questions

Further on in this thesis, I make the comment that most of the research that has been conducted on the more challenging aspects of the relationship between Finnishness and the Other stems from two distinct positions. It has either been concerned with interpersonal manifestations of discrimination (see, for example, Rastas, 2005; Alemanji, 2016) or on theorising a specific underlying socio-historical issue that appears to feed into the discourses framing Finnishness and the Other (see, for example, Vuorela, 2009; Nicholson et al, 2015). My choice of research questions reflects my desire to bring together these two positions in order to present a more holistic picture of the social problem I am investigating.

My research questions are:

1. What exceptionalist discourses can be found in research on the relationship between Finnishness and the Other?
2. How are these discourses reproduced and/or contested in the student responses to the EIHE survey on internationalism in higher education?

The first of these questions will be addressed in the *Theoretical Framework* section of this study as I examine the literature that has been produced regarding Finland and the Other. My aim here is to bring to the surface the elements within Finland's mainstream nation-building narratives that have contributed to the existing state of affairs, and that demarcate both how Finnishness is viewed in relation to the Other and what it is even possible to say about the dynamic between the two.

The second question will be looked at in the *Empirical Framework* and *Discussion* sections. The goal here is to trace the extent to which the exceptionalist discourses identified in the existing literature on the topic have been disseminated amongst a group of young people that have recently passed through Finland's public education system. This is relevant because it may hint at whether these problematic discourses will continue to frame conceptualisations of Finnishness and the Other in future, especially given that half of our students are in the field of education. Furthermore, within the responses of our students, many of the limitations imposed on this relationship, through its delineation by unchallenged discourses grounded in unhelpful assumptions, are made visible. This puts us in a better position to participate in conversations as to how things might be otherwise.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Epistemology and Ontology

Having already positioned myself in terms of how my life situation and experiences impinge upon my choice of this particular thesis topic and my interpretation of it, before discussing the methodology it would be pertinent to reveal my own underlying assumptions when it comes to the nature of research. My epistemological understanding is that knowledge does not exist as an objective entity but is rather continuously constructed, remade and refined by social actors for specific purposes. This does not occur in a vacuum and the level of power afforded to respective knowledges affects the degree to which they play a part in shaping the structure and existence of new knowledges. In this sense, I do not regard the treatment that myself and others will afford to this data (or indeed any data) as neutral but as “partial, incomplete and always being re-told and re-membered” (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. vii).

My research paradigm explicitly avoids rationalist or positivist notions of looking beyond the data in order to generate rules or facts (MacLure, 2003, p. viii). This is for two reasons. First of all, given what I have already revealed of my epistemological assumptions, it would be unethical and somewhat hypocritical to objectify knowledge that I have had a hand in creating. In analysing Fairclough’s version of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Poole argues that all too often Fairclough only interrogates discourse types that appear to justify political ideas he wishes to dispute (Poole, 2010, p. 152). This is not an isolated complaint towards critical theory. Indeed, Spivak has specifically addressed it in her own work on post-colonial theory, stating that researchers working from an emancipatory standpoint have a responsibility to apply the same reflexivity to their own theoretical models as they would to those of perspectives they are attempting to critique or deconstruct (Spivak, 1999). Secondly, one of the major contentions of this thesis is that the problem I am focusing on has to a significant degree been caused and framed by discourses that only admit the possibility of a single truth. Attempting to counter these discourses with another single truth would be ethically problematic and wholly counter-productive. The manner in which I wish to treat my data draws inspiration from Maggie MacLure:

“We should not ‘burrow’ into discourses looking for meanings. We should instead look for the external conditions of its existence, its appearance and its regularity. We should explore the conditions of its possibility. Just how is it possible to know that, to think that, to say that – these are the questions we should be asking” (MacLure, 2003, p. 49).

In other words, if I am to posit that reality, knowledge and truth claims are contextual and socially constructed, my research paradigm must thereby concern itself with how this process takes place (Berger & Luckmann, 1985, p. 13).

2.2 Post-structuralism and Postmodernism in Research

The theoretical underpinnings of this thesis draw upon two strains of thought. I hesitate to call them ‘schools’ or ‘philosophies’ since to do so would be to undersell the diffuse nature of the thinkers that (mostly unwillingly) are commonly associated with them. Perhaps a less contentious way of conceiving of them would be as dispositions towards research and the nature of reality in general, as opposed to actual theories in their own right. These strains are post-structuralism and post-modernism. They have been chosen based on what I have already discussed in terms of my own epistemological standpoint, but also because of the manner in which they enable me to treat discourses.

Post-structuralism is a label that has been applied to the work of a group of diverse French and central European thinkers that arose in the middle of the 20th century (Kellner, 1987, p. 1). While it once again must be stressed that there is very little in the way of homogeneity in much of this work, it can be said that post-structuralism emerged as a critique of structuralism. Writers influenced by structuralism held that human societies and cultures could be rendered intelligible by examining their structures (Peters, 1999). Language was a key part of this contention since it was perceived as the link between what was real and what was abstract (*ibid*). In this sense, the author – or anyone in a position to create text – is in an exceptionally powerful position since she is able to define meaning. Post-structuralism

rejects such binary oppositions between author/reader and oppressor/oppressed, arguing that structures are inter-related and that meaning is always being produced by everyone and is thus contingent. This has often been called ‘destabilising’ the subject, and it is perhaps best described by Emmanuel Levinas:

“...language refers to the position of the listener and the speaker, that is, to the contingency of their story. To seize by inventory all the contexts of language and all possible positions of interlocutors is a senseless task. Every verbal signification lies at the confluence of countless semantic rivers. Experience, like language, no longer seems made of isolated elements lodged somehow in a Euclidean space...(Words) signify from the “world” and from the position of one who is looking” (Levinas, 2006, p.11)

The significance of this for our purposes is in the scope it affords us to look at Finland’s mainstream nation-building narratives and muddy the waters somewhat. As will be seen, the story of how Finland has risen from a forgotten imperial possession of Tsarist Russia to a “functional, sustainable, and just country with equitable public education” (Sahlberg, 2011, p.10) is presented as a linear journey whereby some early teething problems were shaken off and the natural cooperation and tolerance of Finnish people have united the country ever since. This is all very well but it ignores increasing evidence of cross-cultural difficulties in Finland (Nicolson et al, 2015), as well as historical analysis that explores Finland’s complicity in colonial enterprises both at home and abroad (Rastas, 2012). Mikander has noted that if nation-building stories whitewash social antagonisms, the only options remaining are to subscribe to and support the story or to go against the grain (Mikander, 2011, p. 34). It is the binary choice of being right or wrong, good or evil. In rejecting such simplistic notions, post-structuralism opens up the possibility of examining how these choices are themselves created by the discourses surrounding them, thereby broadening the parameters of what we might be able to think and say regarding the issue at hand. Put simply, and as very basic example, a non-Finn expressing disapproval at her treatment in a Finnish university might then be met with a reaction other than incredulity (‘because that kind of thing does not happen here’) or outright anger (‘because you do not understand our culture and are being ungrateful’).

Like post-structuralism, postmodernist ideas came to prominence in the middle of the last century. The salient feature of postmodernism is in its rejection of Cartesian Enlightenment certainties in which fundamental human truths could be established if only the correct formulae were found, as well as the modernist belief in teleological progress (Aylesworth, 2015). In reference to the latter, the events of the early 20th century in which millions had died in two world wars, ethnic genocide, and nuclear attacks – all of which had been enabled by scientific (or quasi-scientific) advancements and justified using rationalist argumentation – had profoundly shaken any consensus in a linear conception of progress or of science as a unilateral public good. When it comes to the former, the postmodern critique is encapsulated by Jean-Francois Lyotard's work on what he termed 'metanarratives', transcendent ideas about imagined futures that are employed as justifications for a particular set of actions. Postmodernism denies the possibility of objective reality or values, and argues that such phenomena are constructed via human agency, discourse and power relationships. Indeed, Lyotard tentatively defines postmodernism as "incredulity towards metanarratives" (Lyotard, 1993, p. 1).

I have already stated my intention of using this thesis to unpick the metanarrative of the mainstream history of Finland's nation-building project. However, the importance of postmodernism to what I offer in return cannot be overstated. As previously mentioned, I am not aiming to replace one truth with another. I am not going to state a single solution for the problems I identify because I would consider it unethical to do so and I do not believe there to be one. Devising a solution would involve creating a metanarrative of my own or borrowing one from elsewhere, and either option would foreclose the ability of others to construct their own futures. It is for these reasons that this thesis is underpinned by postmodernist conceptions of the purpose of academic work, in which the subjectivity of my own position is made clear (others can and will interpret my data differently), and there is no call made for a prescribed set of actions. I am simply attempting to help create spaces in which new and divergent voices might be heard.

As with any strain of thought, both post-structuralism and postmodernism have been subjected to a number of criticisms since their emergence. Unusually, the perspectives have been attacked from both the political Left and Right for exactly the same reasons: a perceived

impenetrability in semantic style and the supposed undermining of established societal institutions and practices without offering anything in their place (see, for example, Callinicos, 1990; When, 2004). I will take this opportunity to reflect upon these criticisms as well as explain why I consider the orientations suitable for my thesis. As noted, thinkers who oppose post-structuralism and post-modernism generally do so from one or both of the following standpoints. First of all, the philosophers charged with writing from a post-structural or postmodernist perspective are held to be deliberately diffuse and impenetrable, wilfully avoiding being pinned down to any fixed position (Willower, 1998, p. 449). This means that neither post-structuralism or postmodernism has a stable or universal definition. Now, for anyone who has read Emmanuel Levinas, Jacques Derrida or Michael Foucault, this is not a criticism that can simply be dismissed out of hand: they *are* often incredibly difficult to understand. That said, I believe that this criticism fundamentally misses the point of what thinkers of this ilk are trying to do. At the most basic level, many of the philosophers said to have provided the theoretical foundations of these two perspectives outright reject any conception of a unified theory of either post-structuralism or postmodernism, and frequently protest that they do not consider themselves to be part of such a theory were it even to exist (Harrison, 2006). Furthermore, both perspectives arose from an opposition to worldviews based upon metanarratives and a desire to produce academic work that emphasised the intrinsic plurality of human experience (Popke, 2003, p. 306).

The second of these criticisms is directed towards the emphasis that post-structuralism and postmodernism place upon deconstruction. The most notable expression of the technique can be found in the work of Jacques Derrida, who described it as a “problematization of the foundation of law, morality and politics” (Derrida, 1992, p. 8). Derrida argues that at its most fundamental level, Western philosophy is driven by a wish for certainty and that this certainty becomes the pivot around which meaning arises. Thus, in order to understand how meaning is constructed we must then deconstruct concepts that are regarded as certainties, such as law, justice and family. A research outlook that encompasses deconstruction is often attacked for moral relativism and for undermining the very emancipatory movements that it purports to favour (Willower, 1998, p. 500). Again, this misses the point of the possibilities inherent within post-structuralism and postmodernism. Deconstruction is a tool that can be employed to decentre concepts that are so ubiquitous as to be considered almost objective realities. In this thesis, I will draw upon Derrida’s deconstruction of the Western subject in

order to examine how the manner in which Finnish students conceptualise their relationship with the Other is historically and theoretically contingent upon a particularly rationalist idea of what it means to be a human being (see, for example, Yenenoglu, 1998, p. 3). Deconstructing metanarratives does not deny a person's right to make moral judgements or to oppose oppressive power structures but asks her to be aware of the constructivist nature of her truth claims. In this sense, post-structuralism and postmodernism can be seen as intensely ethical as they challenge the researcher to subject herself to the same methodological rigour and she would employ upon her chosen topic.

2.3 Critical Discourse Analysis

Having introduced the ontological and epistemological assumptions of my study, I will now discuss my methodological framework. For this, I will be employing Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). I use the phrase 'methodological framework' rather than 'methodology' advisedly, since CDA is more of an orientation towards research that focuses on "the role of discourse in the (re)production and challenge of dominance" (van Dijk, 1993, p. 249) as opposed to an actual methodology in itself. There is no universal agreement amongst CDA practitioners as to what its methods actually are (Suspitsyna, 2012, p. 53; Guo & Shan, 2013, p. 40), with researchers pragmatically selecting a method based upon the demands of a particular task at hand. With that in mind, I will begin by describing the version of CDA I employ in this study and how it affects the way that I interpret data. I will then move on to the methodology itself, which is a form of discourse analysis developed by Fairclough (1995) but that is articulated a little more clearly and fully in Tatiana Suspitsyna's article, *Higher Education for Economic Advancement and Engaged Citizenship: An Analysis of the U.S. Department of Education Discourse* (2012). The idea underpinning Fairclough's CDA is best encapsulated below:

"CDA is analysis of the dialectical relationships between discourse...and other elements of social practices. Its particular concern is with the radical changes that are taking place in contemporary social life, with how discourse figures within processes of change and with shifts

in the relationship between discourse and more broadly semiosis and others elements of social practices” (Fairclough, 2003, p. 205).

The starting point for my analysis came from the data itself. Having worked on the EIHE project for almost two years, I decided to write a thesis based upon themes I noticed within the accumulated data. I chose to look at the Finnish responses to the survey questions as this is the context I am most familiar with, and – as previously stated – the issues focused on in the questionnaire are very topical in contemporary Finland. The themes that I will discuss in this thesis were not part of any preconceptions I had as to how Finnish students conceptualise their relationship with the Other, but rather arose from patterns I noticed within the qualitative data. However, in the spirit of full disclosure, it should be noted that were it not for my own concerns regarding a pronounced shift to the right in Finnish politics (Nardelli & Arnett, 2015) these aforementioned patterns might not have been quite so noticeable. I did not actively choose to use CDA prior to viewing the data, but it became apparent early on that this methodological framework was appropriate because of my aim of investigating a social problem. Moreover, everything I was doing began with language. The details of what the students were saying and the context in which their speech acts took place (Gee, 2011: 12) acted as guides for exploring the historical groundings – both Finnish and European – of the current relationship between Finland and the Other.

At this point I consider it expedient to reflect upon why I chose CDA as my methodological framework and not conventional discourse analysis. As I touched upon in the previous paragraph, and perhaps to the detriment of my own research, I did not consciously choose a methodology prior to analysing the data. Rather, the process went something like this: I read through all of the Finnish students’ responses to the qualitative questions in the EIHE survey; I noticed discourses within these responses that seemed to be framed by similar limitations I had observed in mainstream articulations of cross-cultural encounters in Finland (see, for example, Nicolson et al, 2015); I used these discourses as pivots to explore Finnish and European history in order to explain the possibility of their existence and, in turn, help place the mainstream parameters of how these issues are dealt with in their socio-historical contexts, with the aim of contributing towards broadening the discussions pertaining to interculturalism in Finland. This being the case, I only really began to consider my

methodology after discussions with other members of the EIHE team who told me that what I was doing had much in common with discourse analysis or CDA.

When considering this issue and comparing the two, I found within Norman Fairclough's version of CDA (2002) a systematic process for doing discourse analysis that aims at addressing a social problem. I noted earlier on that the groundings of this study are in language; that is, the written responses of Finnish students to open-ended survey questions on internationalism in education. While this is undoubtedly the case, my primary goal is not to analyse discourse as of itself. Rather, I analyse discourse in order to help develop an understanding of the aforementioned social problem. This is the key reason why my methodological framework had to be CDA and not discourse analysis.

I have chosen Fairclough's approach because it gives me the scope to use discourse to address the issues I have already discussed. I will now describe the five-step analytical programme that serves as a guide by which I apply my method to the data, using some simplified examples from the latter parts of this thesis. Following this, I will make a few general points as to why CDA is appropriate for a study of this nature, before elucidating upon my methodology itself. The stages of Fairclough's CDA are as follows:

1. **Identify a social problem that is in some way framed by issues of meaning-making (semiotics).** In this instance, the social problem I have identified is that racism exists in Finland but when anyone tries to address it, they are either condescended to ('You must have made a mistake') or met with active hostility ('You just don't understand how things are in Finland').
2. **The researcher must then attempt to identify the factors that prevent this problem from being addressed.** This could be seen as the part of Fairclough's approach that has most in common with conventional discourse analysis as it refers to exploring the factors that allow for the existence of the discourse. In my theoretical section I analyse the literature related to Finnishness and the Other and identify what I term 'Traits of Exceptionalism'. These are discourses visible in mainstream Finnish nation-building narratives that position Finland as somehow exempt from the

intercultural challenges that face other states, as well as innocent in relation to racist or colonialist thinking in the past. In this sense, the factors that prevent this problem from being addressed are that the problem is already understood not to be a problem!

3. **The third step is to question whether the phenomenon is caused by the existing social order.** This is slightly awkward as my understanding of power is influenced by the Foucauldian branch of post-structuralism, which considers power to be “diffuse rather than concentrated, embodied and enacted rather than possessed, discursive rather than purely coercive, and constitutes agents rather than being deployed by them” (Gaventa, 2003, p. 1). Furthermore, this thesis is not concerned with what might be simplistically termed ‘blame’. However, like Fairclough, I acknowledge that while power might be diffuse, it can be brought into some sort of focus through analysing discourse, and it certainly cannot be ignored that some actors are in a stronger position to initiate and shape discourse than others (Fairclough, 2001). In order to delve into whether the problem is caused by the existing social order, we will discuss whether racism is necessary for Finland’s mainstream nation-building narratives.
4. **The researcher will try to find gaps and limitations within the existing discourses in order to help find new ways of conceptualising the identified problems.** Within the *Theoretical Framework* of this thesis, significant attention is paid to the absence of what Mikander terms ‘visible antagonisms’ (2012) in mainstream nation-building narratives. These are elements that would muddy the waters of Finland’s history and demonstrate that consensus does not come about naturally, but is the outcome of a specific process of either ignoring or wiping out discourses that hint at dissensus or a portrayal of Finland contrary to that of the story being told. The limitations of the existing discourses will be demonstrated in the responses of our surveyed students, who, as products of the Finnish education system will have absorbed the official version of history. When it comes to the final part of the fourth step, my previously stated aversion to metanarratives still holds true but in the alternative conceptualisations I present in the *Discussion*, I hope to bring to the fore ideas about the relationship between the subject and the Other that are based on a pluralistic rather than universalistic understanding of humanity.
5. **The researcher will reflect upon the work done and the extent to which it contributes towards emancipatory goals.** I am not entirely comfortable with this

final step because it seems slightly arrogant. It is not really for me to judge my work in such a way. All I will say is that I have elucidated upon a course of action that I believe will help broaden the discussions relating to the social problem I have identified, and I will carry out this plan to the best of my ability.

As might be inferred from my description of Fairclough's five-step approach, CDA, unlike some other forms of discourse analysis, does not perceive language as being all-powerful as of itself, but as a meaning-making system whose power depends upon how it is utilised and by whom. This stance makes it a valuable tool in bringing forth the perspectives of less-powerful societal actors (Weiss & Wodak, 2003, p. 14), as it enables the researcher to delve into how discourses may uphold – either consciously or unconsciously – existing power structures, and, conversely, how picking at their threads could create spaces whereby these power structures can be challenged. Furthermore, as CDA helps us to place discourses in the context from which they came, it serves both to humanise apparently neutral concepts, thereby making them contestable, as well as allowing space for other marginalised perspectives to come to the fore (*ibid.*).

The CDA assumption that power stems not only from discourse but from how discourse is employed and by whom, is extremely valuable in a study such as this. This is because one of the central aims of CDA is attempting to make visible how discourse operates as an instrument of power, which – as it has been noted – is an exceedingly difficult task (Blommaert, 2005, p. 25). I am investigating racism in Finland. As I have previously stated, this is not an easy thing to talk about because of a silence surrounding these issues in mainstream nation-building narratives (Rastas, 2012, p.101). Thus, I attempt to use the discourses I perceive in my data to help make visible the groundings of the power relationships between Finns and the Other. The intention is to add to calls that there is indeed something that needs to be talked about (see, for example, Mikander, 2012; Nicolson et al, 2015; Rastas, 2012), and to suggest alternative ways of doing so that do not revolve around right/wrong, good/evil binaries.

2.4 Discourse Analysis

“A discourse analysis is based on the details of speech...that are arguably deemed relevant in the context where the speech was used and that are relevant to the arguments the analysis is attempting to make. A discourse analysis is not based on *all* the physical features present, not even all those that might, in some conceivable context, be meaningful, or might be meaningful in analyses with different purposes” (Gee, 2011, p. 12).

As we have discussed in the previous section of this thesis, my epistemological assumption is that reality and meaning have no objective reality but are continuously constructed through human interaction, power relationships and the workings of language. This being the case, my understanding is that entities such as culture and society can only ever be viewed partially since a significant portion of what constitutes them is never explicitly stated but assumed to be known by all (p. 8). An appropriate way of analysing this kind of data is to focus on the discourses within. There are many definitions of what a discourse is, but for the purposes of this study I adhere to the Foucauldian conception whereby discourses are “ways of constituting knowledge, together with the social practices, forms of subjectivity and power relations which inhere in such knowledges and relations between them” (Weedon, 1997, p.108). In this sense then discourses are not merely producers of meaning, but form the way in which it is possible to see the phenomena they describe (ibid). As my assumption is that there is nothing neutral to be found beyond the discourse, I will use the existence of the discourse itself as the starting point of my analysis. I intend to explore the conditions that made a particular discourse possible (MacLure, 2003, p. 49).

In the paragraph that opens this section, Gee contends that a discourse analysis is not a recounting of all the discourses that can be observed but an examination of those that are considered relevant to the speech event itself and to the argument that the researcher is trying to make. In common with all methodologies, discourse analysis is a completely subjective way of treating data as the choice of which discourses are studied is based solely upon the proclivities of the researcher. Since I have already stated that this study is carried out under the assumption that objective truths cannot be discovered and that the purpose of work of this nature is to broaden the parameters through which phenomena can be viewed, this subjectivity does not necessarily impinge upon the validity of the data. However, the validity does hinge on the researcher being forthright in revealing the criteria used to select the discourses in question, not deliberately ignoring discourses that run counter to the argument

posited in the study, and acknowledging the limitations of the data as well as the fact that the data will be interpreted differently by others (Golafshani, 2003).

As can be observed at the beginning of the section, Gee asserts that a discourse analysis is not based on *all* the physical features of a text but on those deemed relevant by the researcher to the context that frames the text and to the specific purpose of the analysis (Gee, 2011, p. 12). With this in mind, I will explicitly state that the discourses I focus on in this thesis have been chosen as examples of what *I* perceive to be problematic trends in Finnish conceptualisations of the Other. I must reiterate that the discourse analysis herein is not intended as a generalisation of attitudes towards the Other or as an attempt to portray all Finns or even all Finnish students in a similar fashion.

The type of discourse analysis I utilise in this thesis is based upon an implementation of Fairclough's three-level method (1995) found in Tatiana Suspitsyna's *Higher Education for Economic Advancement and Engaged Citizenship: An Analysis of the U.S. Department of Education Discourse*, that is grounded in Fairclough's understanding of the interplay between power relations and linguistics (Suspitsyna, 2012, p. 54). I will employ this methodology when examining my empirical data. The text below is a description of each level as well as a brief demonstration of the type of analysis they enable. The demonstration will centre on a student response in the EIHE survey to the question; *Can diversity enrich your university experience?* The response was from Student 1ED013 and it is as follows: "The European paradigm differs quite a lot from e.g. the African paradigm."

1. **The first level is explicitly textual with the analysis concentrating on the "textual and grammatical means of constructing reality" (ibid). This refers to the linguistic formations that help produce the discourse. We might ask which verbs are employed and why, and what is absent. We could speculate upon how different audiences might respond to the text.** When it comes to our piece of text, we can see that the student seems very sure that this difference exists. It is not offered as an opinion but as a statement of fact. The use of the word 'paradigm' is interesting in that it is generally associated with theories, so this would indicate that our student

understands there to be some fundamental difference between how Europeans see the world and how others see the world. This hints at a tentatively pluralistic view of humanity, but is undermined by the essentialisms of ‘European’ and ‘African’. We could also enquire as to why ‘African’ seems to be the word that denotes difference. Perhaps the most intriguing element of the text is in its overall ambiguity as to whether it is a positive or negative answer to the survey question. It could be framed either way.

2. **The second level is concerned with the discursive formation of the text. We can ask who is speaking and to whom, how the speaker positions herself, and within which genre (ibid).** In terms of our piece of text, it seems as though our student is identifying herself as European by using that construction before its African counterpart. Furthermore, the absence of any language that qualifies the statement as an opinion gives the impression that the student feels very qualified to comment on this particular issue.
3. **The third level identifies the discourses within the text as social practices and attempts to establish links between what is said in the data and the wider social problem (ibid) of racism in Finland.** When it comes to our piece of text, there is – as we have already acknowledged – some tentative hint at a limited form of pluralism. The student seems to understand that there are differences between European and African worldviews. However, the manner in which these two concepts are essentialised links uncomfortably to Greek/Barbarian, civilised/uncivilised, developed/developing binaries that are the hallmark of problematic European Enlightenment constructions of the subject and the Other. We will delve into Finnish nation-building narratives in the next chapter, but it can certainly be said that Finland used such tropes in order to engender a national ethos.

Now that we have established our epistemological and methodological base, in the next chapter we will look at some of the key concepts guiding the direction of this thesis, before moving onto the *Literature Review* in which we will examine the work that has already been done on Finnishness and the Other and attempt to answer our first research question.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, I will introduce some key theoretical concepts that are crucial for both an overall understanding of the context from which this thesis stems, as well as the way in which I interpret and analyse the data. The first two of these concepts, *the Other* and *Exceptionalism*, will be described in a general way, with their theoretical foundations explained and definitions given as to how they are perceived within this study. I will go more into how they link to Finnish history in the *Literature Review*. The third concept, *the Finnish Educational Miracle*, will be dealt with here as it is a vital component to any understanding of Finland's national self-image and serves as another lens through which the students' answers might be viewed. While the first two concepts can be applied to an analysis of the nation-building narratives of any state, the third is culturally specific to Finland and perhaps its inclusion in this thesis warrants an explanation.

The Finnish Educational Miracle has been chosen for a variety of reasons. The historical stretch of my analysis is intentionally broad, because I hope to be able to demonstrate that the Traits of Exceptionalism I identify were inherent from the very outset of the Finnish nation-building narratives I focus on, as well as in the major concepts that these stories rest on: The Western idea of the subject, Enlightenment rationalist philosophical formations, and the German Romantic paradigm of what constitutes a nation. Talking about the Finnish Educational Miracle enables me to demonstrate the manner in which exceptionalism still plays a major role in Finnish identity construction, and how these exceptionalist discourses have taken on new forms (see, for example, Country Brand Report, 2010). Secondly, and in common with many other states (see, for example, FutureBrand, 2014), there has been some effort amongst policymakers and key stakeholders in business to create a specifically Finnish 'brand'. The goal of this project is to illustrate how Finland – known for tolerance, equality, fine schooling, and skill in negotiation – “will solve the world's most wicked problems” (Country Brand Report, 2010) and then capitalise on these solutions. According to the report published by the Country Brand Delegation, Finland's “expertise in education” (p. 9) will be a key element of this because it can be used to help and profit from countries torn apart by conflict (ibid). It might be argued that this emphasis on education comes very much out of a context where there is a lack of other alternatives, particularly after the collapse of

Nokia. However, the rhetoric in the Country Brand Report frames the educational miracle in exceptionalist terms as the perception that Finland is successful in this field allows for the global spread of a wholly benevolent image, and tacitly exonerates Finns from having to address anything problematic within their own system (see, for example, Schatz, 2016).

I should also note that one other reason education has been chosen is the fact that my empirical data comes from a group of Finns who have only recently passed through an education system whose job it is to engender a national ethos (Koski & Filander, 2013, p. 586). Furthermore, half of them are studying for future careers in that same education system. Thus, I cannot help but be interested in the extent to which the discourses surrounding this system are visible in their responses to the survey questions.

The final part of my theoretical framework will be a literature review of academic work focusing on the problematic natures of Finland's relationship with the Other. In this, I will explicate upon the main concerns that have arisen over the past decade or so, although it should be stressed that the range of work is not large and that research on Finland and subjects such as immigration has tended to be directed towards how best immigrants might assimilate into the native culture (Rastas, 2005). This section will also be used to answer my first research question: **WHAT EXCEPTIONALIST DISCOURSES CAN BE FOUND IN RESEARCH ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FINNISHNESS AND THE OTHER?** Finally, I will place my own thesis among this pre-existing body of work and suggest the gap that it might help to fill.

3.1 Who is the Other?

While many of the formative cultures were collectivist by nature (see, for example, Harari, 2014), it has been explicated that the duality between the self and the Other can be found in the earliest roots of human consciousness (de Beauvoir, 1953, p. 16). There is undoubtedly some evidence for the existence of the conceptual framework for the Other in the philosophies of Ancient Greece based upon their ontological structures. Investigating gender

identities in the literature of Ancient Greece, Daša Stevović has stated that, “traditional Greek identity (was) constructed through binary oppositions, (the) primary ones being Greek/barbarian, then free/slave and male/female” (Stevović, 2015). Of these three binaries, the most relevant for our purposes is that of Greek/barbarian as it is one of the earliest expressions of the dichotomy between what it means to be ‘civilised’ and what it means to be ‘uncivilised’. When referring to the ‘civilisation’ of Ancient Greece it is important to remember that the vast majority of historical and literary sources stem from, and are preoccupied with, Athens. The Athenian, guided by Plato’s *nomos* (law based on discussion and reason), is the norm by which all other cultures are judged. This is clearly demonstrated in Aeschylus’ *Oresteia* where the contrast is continually made between the free polis of modern Athens and the rule of tyranny in ancient Mycenae (Georges, 1994, p. 79).

Aeschylus’ treatment of these two city-states is an example of what Spivak termed ‘othering’, a process by which a dominant power can define itself against those it wishes to colonise and marginalise (Spivak, 1985). Jensen has identified three antecedents to the concept, these being an understanding of self, early postcolonial theory, and the role of language in the construction of identity (Jensen, 2011, p. 64).

In terms of the first of these antecedents – and in common with the binary logic that has set the parameters of European thought since the Ancient Greeks – in order to define oneself or one’s culture fully, one must first create an opposition from which what one *is* and what one *is not* can be clearly seen. This principle is illustrated well in de Beauvoir’s work on the othering of women by men, in which she argues that the latter can only construct himself as essential in relation to an inessential other, the former (de Beauvoir, 1953, p. 17). Thus, by making himself essential, the latter becomes the subject (the creator, the actor, the powerful) and the former becomes the object (the created, the acted upon, the powerless, the entity who is given life only through proximity to the subject).

The early postcolonial theories referred to in Jensen find their clearest articulation in Edward Said’s *Orientalism*, in which Said assesses the validity of the knowledge claims of what used to be called ‘Oriental Studies’ in Anglo-American universities. Without wishing to

understate the complexity of Said's work, in our context it can be seen as a geographical and cultural accompaniment to the understanding of self. Said argues that the Orient is not an entity in its own right but was rather created by Europeans as a way of categorising the Orient in a manner consistent with its place in European history (Said, 1991, p. 1). He goes on to state that the European conception of the Orient as backward, violent, and consistently in need of aid, allowed for a construction of European identity as superior in comparison to that of non-Europeans (p. 7). In other words, the non-European is othered so as to justify her treatment by the European.

The third of Jensen's antecedents to othering is articulated superbly by Said:

“There is nothing mysterious or natural about authority. It is formed, irradiated, disseminated; it is instrumental, it is persuasive; it has status, it establishes canons of taste and value; it is virtually indistinguishable from certain ideas it dignifies as true, and from traditions, perceptions, and judgements it forms, transmits, reproduces” (p. 19).

All of the workings of power listed by Said are brought about by language, a crucial factor in forming and developing identity (Jensen, 2011, p. 64). As we have seen, Said asserted that the identity of the Orient was largely a European construction, meaning that much of what was commonly understood and *known* about the former did not stem from the Orient itself, but was rather a reflection of European experiences in the Orient. This would be problematic enough in a vacuum as it places the European (the subject) in the discursive position of defining the Oriental (the Other), but it is also crucial to remember that these European experiences in the Orient were and are filtered through a colonial lens. This is especially evident in the 21st century where through the ever-increasing reach and influence of neo-liberal globalisation, this European/Oriental binary has extended generally into a state where the Global North (developed) and the Global South (developing) are defined in relation to one another (Springer, 2011). For the purposes of this study, the fact that I chose CDA as my methodological orientation is a recognition of how vital it is to trace the discourses that frame identity and to enquire as to where they came from and who they are for.

Given what we have discussed regarding the process whereby an individual or cultural group is othered by a subject in a position to define meaning (Bauman, 1991, p. 8), in the context of this thesis the Other is the non-Finn against whom what it means to be Finnish is constructed. Othering in Finland will be explored in greater depth during the empirical section of this study as it is visible in the students' responses. Let us now move on to a concept indelibly linked to the Other: that of Exceptionalism.

3.2 Exceptionalism

Exceptionalism is another concept, much like the Other, where one would suspect that its existence could very well be tied to the earliest human interactions. Of course, an overly deterministic and traditionally Whiggish view of the past in which the ebbs and flows of history are subsumed into an inevitable march towards the primacy of the rational Western subject should be avoided, but, on a purely theoretical level, it is difficult to imagine any sort of self-consciousness without an attached notion of being somehow special, of being exceptional. It has been posited by the controversial literary critic Harold Bloom that the principle of interiority – of an individual's mental or spiritual being – was invented by William Shakespeare (Bloom, 1994). There is no evidence that this is something Shakespeare deliberately set out to do, but the interiority arose from the manner in which his characters expressed themselves as individual entities with their own wishes, plans and motivations, that often ran contrary to what was deemed acceptable within their familial circles or to wider society. They were exceptional. I consider Bloom's contention as somewhat of an essentialism as any cursory reading of history reveals this type of rationale in the behaviour of the earliest royals or politicians (see, for example, Ives, 1995). Perhaps it would be safer to say that Shakespeare was one of the first writers to deal in the exceptionalism of the 'normal' individual.

In this thesis we are concerned with the exceptionalism of nations, and while there is no authoritative definition of the concept, all of its articulations point toward its being "a matter of self-understanding" (Nolte & Aust, 2013, p. 409). The most notable early expressions of exceptionalism in this particular context stem from 19th century German romantic

philosophers such as Johann Herder and Johann Gottlieb Fichte. Frustrated by the Germanic states' inability to put aside their differences in order to form a greater German nation state, Herder and Fichte essentially declared politics redundant to the achievement of this goal, instead emphasising the importance of shared language, culture and traditions (Patten, 2010).

“...an empire consisting of one nation is a family, a well-ordered household: it reposes on itself for it is founded on nature, and stands and falls by time alone. An empire forcing together a hundred peoples and a hundred-twenty provinces is a monstrosity and no body of state” (Herder, 1969).

The apparent chauvinism of Herder's sentiments can seem shocking to a contemporary reader, but it is vital to remember the historical context in which he was writing. The 19th century was a period in which European states competed against each other for colonial possessions across the globe. The status of a nation was directly proportionate to the size of its empire, the degree to which it was able to benefit economically from the areas it colonised, and its capacity to defend that territory. Given this state of affairs, Herder's calls for a nation based upon a single people could be conceptualised as a heroic call for a reformulation of what it meant to be a powerful state. Herder's position has also been defended through an insistence that he was not actually promoting the German nation at the expense of others, but believed in the rights of all nations to pursue their own destinies (Patten, 2010, p. 657).

Patten's advocacy for Herder is couched in terms that are broadly true but also limited. While Herder might not necessarily have been arguing for the exceptional nature of the German people, his rhetoric is deeply problematic in that it frames the *nation* and the *people* in exceptionalist terms. In explaining that Herder's point is merely that “a people should determine its own cultural path” (p. 658), Patten opens up some very pertinent questions: Who are these people? Who belongs to them and why? Who is allowed to make that decision? Who speaks on behalf of the people? In employing a reification of language, culture and traditions in order to construct a national spirit, Herder utilises exceptionalism due to the fact that his construction will – of necessity – include some and exclude others.

For, as we have previously discussed, a concept cannot be fully defined unless it has something to define itself against.

The most conventional use of exceptionalism in an academic sense has been its employment in research conducted from an international legal standpoint. Nolte and Aust argue that the United States – as the ‘last remaining superpower’ – often takes an exceptionalist position when it comes to exerting its influence upon global politics (Nolte & Aust, 2013, p. 407). By this, they suggest that the US assumes foreign policy positions that it would condemn in other states, and engages in activity that undermines the sovereignty of these states, based upon a self-perception of being engaged upon a special mission and having an exceptional role to play in geo-politics (p. 410). Nolte and Aust note the prevalence of John Winthrop’s iconic “shining city on the hill” declaration in discourses that justify US military interventions, citing former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright’s advocacy of US attacks on Kosovo as an example (ibid).

The goal of their work though is to investigate whether a European exceptionalism exists that can be compared to its American equivalent. They suggest that this European exceptionalism would “derive its character from the claim to lead by example or to provide the world with a model of governance which is deemed to be superior over other existing forms of political organisation” (p. 408). In their articulation of what the concept entails it becomes clear that their explicit focus is the European Union rather than Europe as a whole, which may well account for their conclusion that no such exceptionalism exists. While there is a body of rhetoric surrounding the EU that stresses a Europe united and determined to use the pain of its shared and scarred history to forge a better future (Klos, 2016), the discourses the EU is framed by via mass media tend to stress economic imperatives and loss of national political independence (Hix, 1999). As we have seen, exceptionalism is a concept that has deeper historical roots in being utilised to construct national rather than transnational identities, and this is as true in Europe as it is in the US (Rastas, 2012, p. 89). Of course, the legal context in which Nolte and Aust work cannot be ignored. The US *does* utilise exceptionalism to bend and even override international law far more than the EU. However, there is also the question of power differentials. If any European state, with its own

exceptionalist nation-building discourses, were in a similar position to the US, who is to say that it would conduct itself any differently?

Moving on to how exceptionalism is understood in this thesis, the concept has been more recently employed by postcolonial and critical theorists focusing especially on Europe as a way of helping to delve into how racism and discrimination continue to persist amongst a body politic that since the middle of the 20th century has largely been underpinned by post-racism discourses (see, for example, Ponzanesi, 2016).

“For Europeans, race is not, or really is no longer. European racial denial concerns wanted race in the wake of World War II categorically to implode, to erase itself. This is a wishful evaporation never quite enacted, never satisfied. A desire at once frustrated and displaced, racist implications always lingering and diffuse, silenced but assumed, always already returning and haunting, buried but alive. Race in Europe has left odourless traces but ones suffocating in the wake of their at once ruinous stench” (Goldberg, 2006, p. 334).

Given the fact that Europe had just played host to the most violent act of ethnic genocide in world history, had been fraught with ethnic tensions for hundreds of years, and was about to begin the process of decolonising the Global South, it does not take much of an intellectual leap to appreciate the reasoning behind this wish to put racialist thinking firmly in the past. At the time it seemed like the most ethical thing to do, as well as the most politically expedient. However, it was undermined by one fundamental flaw: racialist thinking *was not* in the past. This is not to characterise that particular historical epoch as especially racist in comparison to any other period, but to suggest that a political entity made up of nation states is inherently racialist because – as we have seen – the creation of those nation states hinges on a choice between who belongs and who does not. Carl Schmitt once famously described the sovereign as “he who decides on the state of exception” (Agemben, 2003), and this is deeply relevant for our purposes. If, as Goldberg suggests, racism no longer exists for most Europeans; this is a form of exceptionalism. It is to posit the idea that something that once was is now no longer; that something which may go on elsewhere in the world has no place here. As I will try to demonstrate in the *Literature Review* and *Empirical Framework*, this exceptionalism is taken a stage further in nations that are able to present themselves as having no colonial history (Vuorela, 2009) for they have the ability to state, and more

importantly, believe and be believed, that they were not, are not, and could never be racist. They are exceptional. And we must ask the question: if there is no racism, what happens when there is?

I mentioned at the outset of this section that there is no universally accepted definition of what exceptionalism is, perhaps because of the diffuse history of the concept. For this thesis, I understand it to be the idea that a particular person or nation is entitled to special treatment and does not necessarily need to be held to the same set of rules that bind others (Cairns, 2001, p. 33).

3.3 The Finnish Educational Miracle

In this study, the Finnish Educational Miracle is seen as a major component of the specific kind of exceptionalism that has developed here. The educational miracle contributes to Finnish exceptionalism in two key ways. The first of these relates to the process by which Finland became a nation state, and the second is strongly tied to more recent efforts of building a distinctly Finnish ‘brand’ (Schatz, 2015, p. 331). While these two strands may appear to be mutually exclusive due to the former seemingly being in the ‘past’ and the latter being a more contemporary issue, I consider them to be interconnected as they are both examples of the crucial role education plays in Finland. Moreover, it is difficult to imagine education having such a major part in the construction of the Finnish brand were it not for the way it was utilised during the nation-building process.

It has been noted that in any analysis of Finland, particular attention must be paid to the historical context from which the nation state arose (Andreotti et al, 2015, p. 248). Even if we only look back over the past two hundred years: Finland has been colonised by Sweden, annexed by Imperial Russia, scarred by one of the most brutal civil wars in modern European history, invaded by Soviet Russia, and occupied by Nazi Germany (ibid). Thus, it could be said that any attempt to develop what might be termed a ‘national consciousness’ has taken place in a frontier environment, fraught with danger and potentialities for this consciousness

(and, later, the nation state itself) to be wiped out. This state of affairs is perhaps best encapsulated in the well-known slogan coined by Johan Vilhelm Snellman, “Swedes we are no more, Russians we cannot become, therefore Finns we must be.” Another interpretation of this phrase is that it essentialises the kind of us/them binary (Appadurai, 2006) evident in Herder’s nation-building ethos, as well as engendering the idea that only through ‘becoming Finnish’ could Finns hope to make the step from backwardness to controlling their own destiny (Andreotti, et al, 2015, p. 249). Education was put to work in achieving this goal, being “formalised as the process that would heal the wounds of past subjugation and guide all Finnish people out of ignorance and poverty towards a shared collective future” (ibid). We see here the roots of Finnish education helping to bring about a sense of exceptionalism, as it zeroed in on a supposed national genius within the culture (via a veneration of the Finnish language, literature, music, and art) and the importance of the state of sovereignty (“therefore Finns we must be”), two factors that Appadurai has identified as inherent to the ethnicist tendencies of all nationalisms (Appadurai, 2006, p. 6).

While Finland was declared independent in 1917, the construction of an education system to fulfil the aforementioned task had to wait until the 1960s. This is primarily because the intervening decades were marked by conflicts on a national and global stage and, throughout this period, the fundamental concern was simply safeguarding this independence. Two factors are held to be key to the successful implementation of the Finnish education system. The first of these is the decision of policymakers in 1963 to make high-quality comprehensive education free for all children. This edict is understood to have “created prosperity, safeguarded democracy and evened out divisions between regions and social classes” (Country Brand Report, 2010, p. 9). The second factor was initiated in 1979 and is the requirement that all teachers should have a master’s degree, thereby increasing teachers’ dedication to the job and commitment to developing their craft by affording them a level of professional respect they would not find elsewhere (Sahlberg, 2011, p. 78). This should also have a positive effect upon students as the assumption would be that this law increases the quality of teaching.

The Finnish Educational Miracle is essentially a slogan denoting how a small north European country transformed its education system from poorly performing to one of the best in the

world in the space of a few decades (p. 1). It is not part of the remit of this thesis to discuss either the ethical implications or the efficacy of using student test scores to measure the success (or lack thereof) of education systems. Let us simply say that this is what the PISA rankings do and that these rankings are taken seriously by policymakers across the globe (Coughlan, 2013). Throughout the first decade of the 21st century Finnish students regularly scored in the top three in most of the PISA categories, thereby ‘proving’ the excellence of Finnish education. The fact that this success has been achieved at a fraction of the expense of other countries’ per-head spending on education only increased the international focus on learning how to do things ‘the Finnish way’, and a lucrative market has opened up for Finnish educational experts to help others in the field. Pasi Sahlberg has posited that there are five things that the rest of the world can learn from the Finnish ‘educational miracle’:

1. That high-quality education and equitable education are not mutually exclusive.
2. That focusing on some sensible and realistic goals, such as reducing the number of early school leavers and improving teacher morale through professional development, can have major positive effects.
3. That there is an alternative to neo-liberal approaches to educational change.
4. That forging connections with businesses is a necessity.
5. That it is possible to still have faith in public education (Sahlberg, 2011, p. 5).

As stated at the outset of the section, this thesis argues that Finland’s new position as a global leader in education (Country Brand Report, 2010, p. 3) has contributed to the continuation and development of exceptionalist discourses in Finland. While experts such as Sahlberg do not advocate other countries simply adopting the ‘Finnish way’, the assertion that the rest of the world can learn from Finland is deeply problematic on multiple levels. It positions Finland as the educational saviour of states whose schooling systems are deemed to be failing, especially those in the Global South (p. 9); and it fosters the idea that equity has already been achieved in Finland, thereby foreclosing any arguments to the contrary (see, for example, Nicolson et al, 2015). Furthermore, the use of the educational miracle in the creation of a Finnish ‘brand’ eliminates many of the complexities from the narrative of how the education system was constructed. It is presented as a solution that other states can use to solve their internal problems (ibid). Thus, the only thing Finns have to learn is to be more

confident in telling the world about how their country can help others (Country Brand Report, 2010, p. 5).

Going back to our discussion on the initial reasons why an education system was considered so vital to the creation of an independent Finnish nation, we can see that the system was constructed on the basis of a desire to engender a national consciousness. This is understandable given the historical context from which the desire arose (Andreotti et al, 2015, p. 249). However, the fact that this goal was conceptualised as collective and universal means that there was little space for either opposition or dissent, leading to a homogenised idea of what it meant to be Finnish (ibid). The recent international attention devoted to Finland's education system places the nation in a special position because the perception is that it is succeeding where others are failing. It also gives Finland scope to advise others on best practice. Thus, Finnish education is underpinned by exceptionalism as the nation-building task it was created for has never been subject to sustained critique, and the Finnish Education Miracle continues this exceptionalism because the country is understood as a model of success, equity and tolerance that needs only to continue to build upon its existing practices.

3.4 Literature Review

The purpose of this section is to provide an overview of the body of literature available that centres upon Finland and its relationship with the Other, with the aim of answering my first research question. It has already been stated that within this thesis, exceptionalism is understood as the idea that a particular person or nation is entitled to special treatment and does not necessarily need to be held to the same set of rules that bind others (Cairns, 2001, p. 33). As I examine the literature I will take account of the discourses that construct and shape this exceptionalism. I call these discourses 'Traits of Exceptionalism' and a full list of them can be found at the end of this section. This list serves as the answer to my first research question.

As I have alluded to at various points throughout this study, the amount of research that has been conducted on this theme is not large but it is certainly valuable and has increased in volume over the past ten years or so. The reasons why this kind of work has not begun to appear until relatively recently are actually referred to in the literature itself: the fact that Finland only fully opened its doors to immigrants in the mid-nineties, and was the last Nordic country to do so (Andreotti et al, 2015, p. 250); the development of new theoretical models that have allowed for a reassessment of Finland's 'innocence' in overseas colonial enterprises (Vuorela, 2009); a recognition that the Finnish state has been responsible for internal colonisation; and the willingness of a small number of researchers to make spaces in which the Other in Finland might tell her story (Rastas, 2012).

I would argue that any literature review of work of this nature should begin with Anne Rastas as her output tirelessly "examines different articulations of Finnish exceptionalism" (p. 89) in encounters between Finns and the Other. Her writing has a holistic feel because she problematises unchallenged discourses in their literary as well as interpersonal manifestations. In *Reading History Through Finnish Exceptionalism*, Rastas provides an overview of the foci of her research. Of particular interest is the manner in which she traces the history of the Finnish 'n'-word. Earlier on in this thesis, I positioned myself as a non-Finn and at this point it would be pertinent to note that I am white. However, I do not believe that one needs to belong to a particular ethnicity to find the 'n'-word deeply offensive, in that it is a linguistic manifestation of white supremacy, colonialism, violence, and bigotry (Asim, 2007, p. 4). While I recognise that my circle in my home country is rarefied in that it is made up of well-educated people who broadly belong to the centre-left of the political spectrum, it is not – on the whole – greatly different from my circle in Finland. In England, I have rarely ever heard the 'n'-word from the mouth of someone who does not belong to a far-right political organisation. In Finland, I have heard it a lot and occasionally from people who I would consider both intelligent and decent.

Every single time I am in a conversation with a person who uses the word, I will make a point of explaining to them why the word *is* offensive (this is not a subjective opinion) but also of asking them why they have chosen to use it. Without fail, the answer I receive is that, "in Finnish, the word isn't offensive. It just means 'black person'." This places me in a

difficult spot because on the one hand, I hold dearly to the belief that if an individual or group to which a certain word is applied says that it is offensive, one really has no business arguing to the contrary. On the other hand, I am not Finnish and while I can speak the language on a conversational level, my knowledge does not extend to the etymology or connotations of words Finnish people apply to ethnic groups.

This is a desperately important issue in general, but especially in the context of this thesis because it points to our understanding of exceptionalism as a state of being where a separate set of rules apply for a specific individual or society than for everyone else. In this instance, the ‘n’-word is almost universally regarded as offensive in any language, but apparently this is not the case for the Finnish language. Rastas set out to investigate the issue by conducting interviews with school-aged children of African descent living in Finland. Some of the children revealed that they had been subjected to deliberate racism in school but a significantly higher number stated that while they had experienced racism, they considered it to be unintentional. However, when they tried to take the issue up with the perpetrator or with a teacher, they were generally told not to be so sensitive and that the ‘n’-word does not have the same connotations in Finnish as it does in other languages (Rastas, 2012, p. 92).

Given that this was such a common response to the interviewed children when they had tried to confront racism, Rastas delved into the etymology of the Finnish ‘n’-word in order to investigate whether there was any justification for it. First of all, she reframed the traditional view that early usage of the ‘n’-word proved that it was simply a neutral word employed to classify a particular ethnic group, by inviting us to consider that perhaps it was “proof of racist thinking in earlier times” (p. 93). Next, she examined the usage of the word in policy documents and newspapers over the years. She found that although the word was still sometimes used during the 1980s, it fell out of the political and media lexicons in the early to mid-1990s, which just happened to be the era when Finland’s borders were first fully opened to immigrants from across the globe. This would indicate that there is an awareness in Finland that the ‘n’-word is indeed racist (p. 93).

As previously stated, the theme in Rastas that is most relevant for our purposes is her concrete example of Finnish exceptionalism in action. The ‘n’-word can be defined as inoffensive because – unlike other European states – Finland is understood to have no history of either racist thinking or colonialism (p. 95). I have also taken inspiration from the methodology Rastas employs as it is a fine example of CDA in action. A social problem relating to semiotics is found, the issues preventing a solution being found and the societal actors who benefit from the existing state of affairs are identified, and possible ways forward are suggested.

Rastas posits that in research on Finland, the utility of exceptionalism as a concept is its capacity to help us describe how certain interpretations of history are employed for ‘strategic purposes’ (p. 89). She calls these purposes ‘historical amnesias’ and suggests that they are constructed in order to avoid “moral and ethical judgements related to our responsibilities towards those who are not included in the national (Nordic or European) ‘us’” (ibid). This brings us nicely to Ulla Vuorela and her article, *Colonial Complicity: The ‘Postcolonial’ in a Nordic Context*. In her work, Vuorela uses the concept of ‘colonial complicity’ to theorise Finland’s position in relation to colonialism. The premise behind this goal is that while Finland is geographically situated in the continent that was and is most responsible for colonialism, it has never been considered as one of the major beneficiaries of the process. However, it certainly cannot be seen as innocent. Vuorela locates Finland “at the centre but also in the margin” (Vuorela, 2009), which borrows from Foucault’s insight that power is a relational and dynamic entity that one can simultaneously hold and be subjected to (Foucault, 1990).

Vuorela does not herself define ‘colonial complicity’ but envisions it in a similar manner to postcolonial theorists, who “mostly (use) it with reference to participation in the hegemonic discourses, involvement in the promotion of universal thinking and practices of domination” (Vuorela, 2009). If we begin with the latter, Vuorela immediately disavows any sense of colonialist behaviour being unfamiliar to Finland by referring to the way in which such practices have been inflicted upon minority groups amongst its own population. She mentions that the native Sami people have been forced to retreat further and further north and now largely live in Lapland, hundreds of kilometres away from where they originally

settled. She also states that successive government policies towards the Roma people have involved discriminatory and even racist elements (ibid). More shockingly, she brings to light a plan concocted in the early 20th century of establishing a Finnish colony in the country now known as Namibia (Löytty, 2006). It is, of course, crucial to stress that this plan never came to fruition. That said, the fact that it was ever posited, coupled with the treatment meted out to minority groups within Finland's borders, indicates that the nation has a history of involvement in practices of domination. Going back to Rastas' article, Finland's continued failure to acknowledge its own colonialist behaviour is an example of historical amnesia.

When it comes to promotion of universalist thinking, Vuorela points to the more recent example of Finland's role in development work in the Global South. Vuorela is well placed to comment upon this as she has taken part in work of this nature in Tanzania, and notes that at least in decades past, Finland – along with the other Nordic countries – were characterised as the 'good guys' (Vuorela, 2009), in comparison to states such as the US and the Soviet Union who were still essentially pursuing imperialist foreign policies (Pieper, 2012). Vuorela argues for the need to problematise this perception as it disguises the more distasteful factors inherent in Finnish aid to the Global South (Vuorela, 2009), which are couched in universalist thinking. These are the unchallenged assumption that education is a one-way process in which the 'developing' Global South learns from the 'developed' Global North; the fact that Finland was able to use its conduct towards the Global South as a way of developing its own self-image (Browning, 2007, p. 33); and Finland's failure in recent years to challenge neo-liberal models of development (Vuorela, 2009).

Finally, Vuorela refers to her own childhood growing up in the mid-20th century in Helsinki to illustrate Finnish participation in hegemonic discourses. She writes vividly of her excitement at obtaining the latest confectionary imported from British colonies and of enjoying literature soaked in colonialist imaginaries, such as Frances Hodgson Burnett's *A Little Princess*. Looking back with the benefit of hindsight, she is able to see that these two things were indicative of Finland being exposed to the 'positive' side of colonialism in terms of products and worldviews that underpinned white superiority, without having to deal with the 'negative' aspects (ibid). Finland never established any colonies and so did not undergo the painful recriminatory process of decolonisation. Indeed, Vuorela argues that it was never

seriously forced to examine the racist nature of colonialist discourses until the first wave of large-scale immigration in 1994 (ibid).

Vuorela's work is important in that it provides us with a lens to see how a country that is not traditionally associated with colonialism still benefits from the process. It also hints at the deeply embedded nature of these discourses. They take place at the level of 'common-sense' and everyday interactions, and are thus difficult to bring to light because they appear objective. At this stage I feel that it is once again worth emphasising that the aim of this study is not to criticise Finland per se, but this notion of Finnish exceptionalism. As Rastas and Vuorela demonstrate, it is premised upon a singular reading of history in which all opposing stories are whitewashed; and as I will argue in the empirical section, it is a major obstacle towards fostering genuine dialogue between Finns and the Other.

From looking at the last article, we see the necessity of theorising Finland's colonial involvement slightly differently than that of states that actually engaged in empire building. In the next article, it is argued by Pia Mikander that no such argument can be made in relation to Finland and mainstream narratives of progress, and the unquestioned superiority of the West. The purpose of *Othering and the Construction of the West: The Description of two Historical Events in Finnish School Textbooks* is to test the extent to which the main values of the Finnish National Core Curriculum are visible in school textbooks. Now clearly such a task would be beyond the scope of what might be achieved in an article for a scholarly journal, so Mikander restricts her analysis to the treatment afforded two key events in the annals of Western history in Finnish history textbooks (Mikander, 2012, p. 31). These two events are the battle of Thermopylae in Ancient Greece, and the attacks of 9/11 and subsequent invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan.

The values of the aforementioned curriculum that Mikander pays closest attention to are democracy, human rights and equality. She posits that an education based upon these concepts would entail "respecting the equal value of all human beings and challenging prejudiced conceptions, as opposed to constructing Westerners as superior to other people" (ibid). School textbooks are an excellent place to start when it comes to the kind of discourse

analysis Mikander carries out because, as has been noted by Popkewitz, their content is presented as objective (Popkewitz, 1998, p. 145). Therefore, the analysis focuses on what a society is passing down as legitimate knowledge (Mikander, 2012, p. 32).

Despite their occurring 2500 years apart, Mikander draws attention to a remarkable degree of similarity between how the two historical events are treated in the textbooks. The Battle of Thermopylae, in which an alliance of Greek city-states repelled a huge invading army from the Persian Empire, is presented as the first great battle for Western values (p. 41). Ancient Greece is written about as the birthplace of “essential features” (ibid) of the West, such as freedom and democracy. Students are invited to consider how different the world might have turned out had Persia won the battle, thereby implying that these aforementioned ideas could only have developed in the West. Mikander argues that this particular imaginary forecloses the possibility of non-Europeans contributing to our shared history because it ignores their contributions to democracy and freedom (ibid). I would also suggest that presenting history as a teleological march towards a supposedly universal set of principles cannot help students engage with the ontologies and epistemologies of the Other, for how could they conceivably be taken seriously in such a context?

In terms of the treatment of 9/11, Mikander brings to light the absence of discourses that problematise the Allied Forces’ invasion of two countries in the Global South, without any proof of their involvement in the initial attacks. Students are asked to imagine the lives of the people killed in the World Trade Centre, but no such invitation is made to consider those of the (equally innocent) people killed in the subsequent invasions. This creates a double bind whereby students only need to identify with Westerners, and in which Western lives are shown to be more worthy of grieving – and hence more valuable – than non-Western lives. Finally, and once again, the West is presented as wholly benevolent and reasonable, whereas the Middle East (the anti-West, the Other) is volatile and intolerant. Mikander makes the valid point that this portrayal bears no relation whatsoever to the actual reality of recent history, and wonders why the two world wars, the Holocaust, and European state tyranny are not mentioned (p. 32).

I consider Mikander's understanding of the values in the Finnish National Core Curriculum to be a little simplistic, in that she does not apply the same degree of analysis to their construction that she does to the school history textbooks. Democracy, human rights and equality are not stable concepts but are ideas that have been developed by individual and societal actors, and as such are subject to different interpretations. The stories in the history textbooks Mikander talks about do not necessarily fly in the face of the values. In fact, the battles in question are justified as fundamental to their survival. The story being told is that these values developed in the West, could *only* have developed in the West, and that it is the West that must fight for their existence. In other words, arguing that properly teaching these values would enable students to see through the idea of Western superiority rather misses the point as it is their supposed universalism that underpins this framing of Western superiority! On the other hand, the article is valuable for our purposes because it demonstrates how Finland, while pleading innocence to colonialism, still positions itself within Western Enlightenment rationalist narratives of progress. This gives us another lens through which to analyse the data.

A more contemporary look at Finland's relationship with the Other can be found in Michelle Nicolson, Vanessa de Oliveira Andreotti, and Bobby Fortune Mafi's *The Unstated Politics of Stranger Making in Europe: A Brutal Kindness*. In this article, the media coverage and discourses surrounding a number of recent events that involve problematic encounters between Finns and the Other are analysed so as to explore how a rejection of racism can become a refusal to recognise when it actually occurs (Ahmed, 2012). The article demonstrates how neo-liberal globalisation, far from spelling the end for nationalism and traditional nation-building narratives, has served to reconfigure them as millions of people face a future of uncertainty and change (Nicolson, 2015, p. 1).

The incidents or 'critical events' (ibid) that the article addresses are not intended to be indicative of how the general population in Finland behaves towards the Other. Much like the student responses I employ in this study, they are utilised in order to delve into the discourses that frame them and to bring attention to issues that would otherwise remain undiscussed. Of the 'critical events' chosen, almost all are extremely brutal and are examples of physical or verbal violence carried out by Finns on non-Finns. In 2012 in my hometown

of Oulu, a Moroccan man was shot dead in the pizzeria where he worked by a Finnish man who took objection to his refusal to stop speaking Arabic with another customer (p. 8). The media reaction to this event was varied but a significant amount of attention was directed towards the comments of a politician belonging to a far-right party, who suggested that the killer should be given a medal for standing up in defence of Finnish culture (ibid). While it cannot be said that this remark was met with widespread approval, a good deal of the media coverage did not focus on what the politician actually said but on whether or not he should have the right to say it.

In *Reading History Through Finnish Exceptionalism*, Anne Rastas writes that “losing the power to define what ‘we’ are like is understood as a threat to the national identity, instead of an invitation to self-reflection and new interpretations of history” (Rastas, 2012, p. 89). This contention is pertinent here for two reasons. The first reason relates to the ‘critical event’ itself where one can only assume that the Finnish man’s actions were motivated by a perception that the non-Finn’s use of a different language was a threat or an insult to the Finnish way of life. It ran counter to his understanding of what Finland is or should be. The second reason brings us to the discourses surrounding the incident, which very quickly moved away from the murder itself and coiled around freedom of speech. While the tragic nature of the event in terms of its violence was not shied away from, there was a failure – and we can only speculate as to whether it was deliberate or not – to place the killing within a wider context of Finnish racism. It was treated very much as an isolated incident perpetrated by a deviant individual, as Finnish people “are not and cannot be racist” (Nicolson et al, 2015, p, 8). The issue of freedom of speech comes to the foreground as a discourse of defence, as the furore surrounding one incident should not be grounds for disallowing Finnish people from saying what they want to say in their own country. In other words, a conversation about a racially motivated murder carried out by a Finn on a non-Finn in which the latter is clearly the victim and the former may have to assess his own conduct, morphs into a conversation about freedom of speech in which Finland as a whole becomes the victim. This is an illustration of Ahmed’s assertion that a denial of the existence of racism makes facing up to clear examples of racism almost impossible (Ahmed, 2012).

This article places the prevalence of media discourses surrounding freedom of speech firmly in the context of neo-liberal globalisation. This form of globalisation has led to multi-layered and in many cases supranational forms of governance, national administrations stepping back from regulating capital, and a lack of job security for hundreds of millions of people as companies continually look for cheaper labour (Hooghe & Marks, 2003, p. 70). By and large, the mass media and the political left have failed to either critique this state of affairs or offer alternative ideas for how globalisation might be theorised, meaning that a lot of people feel scared and alienated as they are left worse off while being told that there is basically no alternative (Falk, 1997, p. 17). In a national sense, the Other is the most visible manifestation of what has supposedly gone awry. Nicolson et al. argue that this viewpoint is especially prevalent in relatively young countries, where liberal democracy has been tied to a strongly ethnocentric nation ethos (Nicolson et al, 2015, p. 1). As we have seen, Finland certainly falls under this category. Far-right political organisations have won widespread support by mobilising racist discourses that are often framed in ‘neutral’ terms, such as the impossibility of separate cultures intermingling and the fact that there are now more immigrants in Finland than ever before while many Finns are struggling to find work (Finns Party, 2016). This is again an instance where a failure to countenance that racism might exist in Finland has been extremely counter-productive, leading to a situation where ordinary people have little scope to address legitimate concerns within the mainstream body politic. Furthermore, and as the authors of the article note, if visible antagonisms are removed from nation-building discourses in which the only solution to the ills of neo-liberal globalisation is the nation itself, the situation is only going to get worse for non-Finns as they are seen to have no place in a successful Finland (Nicolson et al, 2015, p. 3).

I believe *The Unstated Politics of Strange Making in Europe: A Brutal Kindness* to be a very important article because – as with Vuorela’s work – it attempts to provide suggestions in answering a terribly complicated question; this being why a state that is considered to be both tolerant and well-educated is having so many problems with adjusting to the realities of large-scale immigration and is home to a growing far-right movement. Also, it brings together the historical and the contemporary in its demonstration that Finland’s refusal to deconstruct its national ethos has grave consequences as it has allowed for the popular diffusion of discourses positing that the only solution to neo-liberal globalisation is an ethnically homogenous Finland. If Finland and Finnish people are already *known* to be

tolerant and well educated, with no history of racism, why should the national ethos have to change? (p. 6).

My initial research question is concerned with the socio-historical factors that underpin discourses framing the relationship between Finnishness and the Other. Having explored the literature relating to the subject, I can identify three Traits of Exceptionalism that may serve to help us answer this question. They are not meant to be comprehensive and are offered with the understanding that other researchers can and will find different strands to focus upon. They are:-

- Historical amnesia towards colonial complicity. Finland never had an empire of its own and thus did not engage in the colonialist and racist behaviours and paradigms that characterised other states. Any evidence to the contrary should be dismissed as it fails to fully understand how things are done in Finland. This lack of a colonial history also means that racism cannot possibly be an issue in the present.
- Finland as part of the West. Finland is part of a Western tradition dating back to Ancient Greece, in which democracy and human rights are universal values that could only have been developed in the West and can only be safeguarded by the West. This discourse also incorporates such trends as binary logic and neo-liberalism.
- A tolerant nation. Finland's nation-building discourses present an image of a tolerant, well-educated people. Calls for engagement with the Other can only occur within pre-existing frameworks as they are perceived as at best neutral, or at worst wholly benevolent. Within the schooling system, the national ethos has been constructed in conjunction with societal equity and there is nothing problematic in the relationship between the two.

It is vital to stress that these traits do not exist in a vacuum and are not mutually exclusive. The final article we looked at in this review brought to light how the historical and contemporary intertwine when it comes to discourses framing the relationship between Finland and the Other. As I made clear at the outset, this thesis does not posit a catch-all solution to combat these problematic discourses. I do not believe that there is such a thing

and to suggest otherwise would be contrary to my ethics as a researcher, which are based upon the constructed and provisional nature of all knowledges. What I am trying to do is pull at the thread of these discourses to see how they came into being. It is hoped that by doing so, I will help to show that they are by no means ‘natural’ or ‘objective’. They were created by human beings. Thus, as human beings we have the potential to form new discourses that frame the relationship between ourselves and the Other in alternative ways.

Finally, I would say that my thesis fills two gaps in the body of literature that has already appeared on this subject. First of all, having read a significant number of articles that refer to Finnishness and the Other, I would say that they all tend to focus on a single salient factor. The exception is the last article we looked at, in which the implications of the homogenous nature of Finland’s nation-building narratives are explicated upon in terms of their implications for responding to the challenges of neo-liberal globalisation. However, due to space constraints and because the main issue identified is the way in which nationalisms have changed in this particular context, the socio-historical factors underpinning the nation-building narrative are somewhat glossed over. In this study, I have attempted to bring together every single problematic strand I could find in order to provide an overall picture of the discourses surrounding Finland and the Other.

The second element in this study that contributes to the field is in the empirical data. I have already discussed the EIHE project and its aim of creating a database that would serve as a starting point for researchers looking to theorise internationalisation in higher education in ways that are more ethical. The project only wound down in June 2016 and the data has not been readily available for long. To the best of my knowledge, this is one of the only occasions the data from Finnish students has been utilised in academic work, and certainly one of the first times it has been employed in a master’s thesis. As I have discussed throughout this study, the data is put to work to help us elucidate upon issues that would otherwise not be spoken about. However, the data is interesting as of itself because it provides insights into what Finnish students consider their relationship with the Other to be, as well as the kind of discourses underpinning these understandings. Moreover, in the existing literature on the topic, researchers have tended to focus either on theorising the problems at hand or using empirical data to investigate them. When it comes to the literature

I looked at, Anne Rastas is the only exception. Thus, the manner in which I utilise both theory and empirical data hopefully presents a holistic picture of the discourses framing Finnish conceptualisations of their relationship with the Other.

4. EMPIRICAL FRAMEWORK

The purpose of this chapter is to analyse the data gleaned from the responses of Finnish students to the open-ended questions in the EIHE survey in order to formulate an answer to my second research question: **HOW ARE THESE DISCOURSES REPRODUCED AND/OR CONTESTED IN THE STUDENT RESPONSES TO THE EIHE SURVEY ON INTERNATIONALISM IN HIGHER EDUCATION?** As has been noted on multiple occasions, this question is considered an important one to ask as answering it will give some indication as to the extent to which problematic discourses pertaining to Finnishness and the Other are disseminated within the public education system these students recently passed through. Furthermore, it allows us to speculate upon whether these discourses will continue to frame the relationship in the future, and this is particularly relevant given that half of our respondents are studying for careers in education. In common with the methodological framework of Fairclough's CDA, we may also discuss the limitations such discourses place upon the manner in which these students perceive their relationship with the Other. The third and fourth stages (whether these discourses are caused by the existing social order, and possible ways forward) will be handled in the *Discussion* section.

Throughout this section, the three Traits of Exceptionalism discourses that serve as the answer to my first research question will be employed as lenses to examine the students' responses. Five pieces of text taken from the survey answers of five students will then be subjected to a discourse analysis (see Section 2.4 for further details) that I hope will illuminate different articulations of (and divergences from) the discourse in question.

In collecting this data, I looked through the responses of 421 students, majoring in education and science, from two Finnish universities. The text I have chosen comes from answers to the following open-ended questions within the EIHE questionnaire:

12a. How does internationalisation affect society in general?

13a. How do you imagine global citizens should think, relate and/or act in the world?

14. Apart from possible language difficulties, do international students or students with diverse backgrounds face challenges in your institution?

15. Can diversity enrich your university experience?

16. To conclude, we welcome any final thoughts you have regarding your university experience, internationalisation, and this survey.

In order that the pieces of text I have chosen are placed as much in context as possible, I will always explicitly state which of these questions the student was responding to. Finally, the decision to place the responses under a single category has not been taken lightly. In many instances the responses I have selected exhibit elements of all three Traits of Exceptionalism. My choice of how to best categorise the responses was based upon which of the discourses I perceived most strongly within the text. Finally, it should be noted that the Finnish students that responded to this survey did so in their own language, which of course means that the data I utilise in this thesis has been translated. There has been some debate as to whether the translator should be made visible in qualitative research unless one is specifically working in the field of linguistics, as in many cases (such as this thesis) language is used primarily as a means of investigating a wider problem (see, for example, Temple & Young, 2004). I consider it important to disclose this information as it is relevant to the trustworthiness of my study. There are admittedly some instances where it is not clear whether textual ambiguity is due to the students themselves or the difficulties inherent in rendering phrases that work well in one language into another language. However, I do not believe that the process of translation has affected the tone of the opinions visible within the students' responses.

4.1. Historical Amnesia towards Colonial Complicity

1. *"A global citizen knows what is best for all people, not just themselves or their own country" (2TO099).*
2. *"I am interested about different cultures and I think that internationality is mind-opening and educational. I would like, however, that countries could still strongly*

maintain their own cultural inheritance (it feels like it has started to diminish in Finland for example the language is depoverishing as it gets influences from English)” (2BS048).

3. *“I don’t feel that there is any racism or unequal treatment, contrarily I think international students are taken good care of” (2BS037).*
4. *“I am interested in the education systems of different countries and developing them” (2BS059).*
5. *“At least I want to believe that they don’t or that they don’t face any remarkable challenges in relation to others” (2BS047).*

As indicated by the opening few words, the first response is an answer to question 13a. On a textual level, the use of the word ‘knows’ indicates that the student is confident as to the validity of what she is saying. This is framed as a statement rather than an opinion. The tone of the text is fascinating because I am sure the student intended it to be benevolent but it comes across as uncomfortably dictatorial. Who could possibly *know* what is best for *all* people? Also, after using the term ‘all people’, it is noteworthy that the student chose to qualify it with ‘not just themselves or their own country’ as this would appear superfluous. The fact that the individual and the state (as the traditional guardian of the rights of the individual) are drawn out hints at a Western Enlightenment conception of the human subject (Tate, 2013, p.258). At a discursive level, we do not know whether the student regards herself as a global citizen but she certainly has very clear ideas as to what being one should entail. This indicates that she is positioning herself as someone making a sensible suggestion to an audience of other concerned individuals, who may or may not be global citizens. There is an intriguing link between text and wider society here because an apparent desire to help people is framed in such hegemonic language. One cannot help but be reminded of the first Trait of Exceptionalism as many colonial enterprises were justified using logic and language such as this. We are *helping* and we *know* what is best because we are developed and the colonial is not (see, for example, Spurr, 1999).

The second statement is an answer to question 12a. Textually, the first thing that jumps out is the manner in which ‘internationality’ is associated with ‘mind-opening’, whereas one’s own country should be about a singular ‘cultural inheritance’. Furthermore, the way in which

the Finnish language has changed in mixing with English is described as ‘depooverishing’, rather than, for example, ‘developing’ or ‘diversifying’. While the word ‘depooverishing’ is clearly an error made by the translator, it does not take much of a leap to imagine that the Finnish phrase employed must have meant ‘impoverishing’, ‘devaluing’ or something of that nature. As a discursive event, the statement seems to be addressing participants in the contemporary conversations on multiculturalism in Finland in which, as we have discussed, the lines are constructed through binaries: one can either believe in multiculturalism or one can see it as an assault on one’s own culture. The student seems to be trying to go beyond this but she is only able to do so by jumping between the former and latter stance. On a societal level, the text points at a relationship with the Other that can only occur elsewhere. We can learn about different cultures through internationalism, but in our own country we are Finns. This links in with the exceptionalist and ethno-centric nation-building narratives we alluded to in the *Theoretical Framework*, in which the national ethos is built by defining an entity in opposition to the excluded Other. A clear educational consequence of this train of thought is that the Other is only there to learn from on our terms, but has nothing to offer when it comes to our own societies (Todd, 2010, p. 30).

The third response is an answer to question 14. Unlike some of the other respondents, this student is sure to identify her ideas as opinions rather than facts, by using formations such as ‘I don’t feel’ and ‘I think’. The fact that the student employed the word ‘any’ before ‘racism’ points at an outright denial of the possibility that racism could exist on any level within her institution. At a discursive level, this student seems to be speaking for her entire university as there no hint of a separation between her own opinion and the institution itself. In terms of the wider link between the text and society, once again we have a piece of text that is couched in relatively benevolent terms but that is awash with uncomfortable undercurrents. The student appears satisfied that there is no racism and is at pains to point out that her institution looks after international students well. Two things peek out from the text. First of all, there is a subtle ignorance of the agency and responsibility of individual Finnish students in either perpetuating racist acts, or in confronting them. It is solely the preserve of the institution to ensure that everyone is treated well. This has echoes of the discourses relating to Finnish education and nation-building we explored in previous sections of this thesis, in which it is accepted that the state is inherently fair and egalitarian, thereby foreclosing any evidence to the contrary (Nicolson et al, 2015, p. 6). Secondly, the

agency of the Other is removed by the idea that she is someone to be ‘taken good care of’. Again, it should be stressed that it is entirely likely that this statement was underpinned by a genuine sense of gratitude on the part of the student that, in her mind, international students are treated well. However, there is once again a tacit assumption that Finnish authorities would simply *know* how to treat the Other, as well as the colonialist understanding that it is our job to make sure *they* are looked after (Easterly, 2006, pp. 146-7). Does the Other get a say in this?

The fourth statement is a response to question 12a. On a textual level, it is an interesting formulation as it does not seem to actually answer the question at hand. Rather, the student focuses on the potential inherent within internationalisation to help her further pre-existing career goals. Moreover, there are words missing from the text that one would assume would almost *need* to be there. The student wishes to develop the education systems of other countries. She does not want to ‘help’ or ‘assist’ in such a process. On a discursive level, the student seems to be identifying herself as part of the Finnish Education Miracle, and as a stakeholder in attempts to advise other states on their schooling systems. I imagine that the student considers that her audience would find nothing problematic in the idea that a Finnish person could simply go to another country and behave in this manner, so it appears that she considers this an intelligent and ethical position for well-educated people to take. There is a very clear link between this piece of text and the rhetoric in the Country Brand Report, in which sentiments of a clearly imperialist nature are framed in language of kindness and of giving a gift (Country Brand Report, 2010, p. 9). While the student’s response must be understood in the context it came from (a question about internationalisation), the fact that she feels entitled to articulate such ideas gives the impression that Finland’s education system is already perfect and can now be used to save others. Again, this demonstrates an alarming degree of historical amnesia when it comes to colonial complicity because it fails to consider how such a one-sided dynamic could be problematic in fostering discriminatory conceptions of the Other, in which she has nothing to offer us and needs our help in order to become more like us. It is also worth remembering that Finland is still very much involved in ‘development’ work in the Global South.

The fifth statement I have chosen in relation to this particular trait is an answer to question 14. The main thing I noticed about the text was its deeply uncertain tone. The student does not even give an opinion as to whether international students face non-linguistic challenges at her institution, but says simply that ‘I want to believe that they don’t’. It is almost possible to see elements intruding into the student’s thinking that she does not want to admit to in her use of the phrase ‘remarkable challenges’. While this might be just a semantic accident, an acknowledgment that everyone faces challenges, or even a translation issue, it could also be an admission that the student has noticed something that challenges her faith in the institution and her fellow students but is attempting to downplay it. As a discursive event, the student seems to be trying to avoid responsibility in speaking for either herself, her fellow students or her entire university. This is intriguing as of itself as her stance – or deliberate lack thereof – appears grounded in the discomfort of knowing that in Finland race is something that one does not talk about because to do so would be to accept that there is a problem (Rastas, 2012, p. 101). This leads nicely into how the text intertwines with what is going on at a societal level. Finland has already defined itself as innocent in relation to colonialism and inherently tolerant when it comes to its treatment of non-Finns or national minorities (Nyyssönen, 2013). Therefore, there is no scope in which racism can be conceptualised as a systemic problem rather than as an example of individualised ignorance and lack of education.

4.2 Finland as part of the West

1. *“Clashing of cultures and groups has caused negative conflicts” (IED004).*
2. *“Everyone should be respected as people – it is ‘things’ that are the cause of disagreements, not people” (IED063).*
3. *“Everyone’s challenges are personal” (2BS039).*
4. *“According to the golden rule” (2TO011).*
5. *“Yes, through them we can learn of different points of view on the same thing” (IED004).*

The first statement is an answer to question 12a. On a textual level, the most noticeable element of the sentence is the student’s use of the word ‘negative’ before ‘conflicts’. This

opens up the possibility that perhaps there is an understanding that not all conflict is necessarily bad. This is also supported by the fact that the student is only characterising cultural *clashes* as negative, as opposed to all mixing of cultures. On the other hand, it should be noted that the student does not go on to discuss more positive examples of where cultures and groups mix. As a discursive event, the student is responding to a question on an issue she seems to find objectionable and the text's slightly argumentative tone suggests that she is aware that her stance may not be supported by the audience (the compilers of the survey). In terms of how this text links to society, I have placed it under this trait because I consider it indicative of several trends within the Western experience.

The first of these pertains to the very foundations of what might be called 'Western civilisation'. As we have seen, the Ancient Greeks anchored their own understanding of logic on the principle that an entity cannot simultaneously belong to different categories, and it is from here that our radical dichotomies between principles such as good and evil were born (Blair, 2000, p. 24). The manner in which the student theorises internationalisation seems not to allow for a plurality of opinions, but merely suggests that it can either be a good thing or a bad thing. Secondly, in common with the nation-building discourses we discussed in the *Theoretical Framework*, the student appears to have a very homogenous idea of what can constitute a culture or a group, with any outside influence seen as undesirable. This has very obvious implications for any relationship with the Other. Thirdly, and this again relates Western values, ever since the Enlightenment project, European thinkers have largely embraced "critical rationality, conscious reflection, self-determination and the search for universally acceptable fundamental principles and values" (Baumeister, 1998, p. 308). While this can be understood given that the project was in part an attempt to liberate academic enquiry from hundreds of years of stultifying ecclesiastical control, Enlightenment principles now operate on an ontological level and this has serious consequences (Foucault, 1984, p. 36). These are that any point of view not underpinned by rationalist paradigms can immediately be disregarded on the basis that it is unscientific. Moreover, it has fed into a Western understanding that reaching consensus is the ultimate aim of political debate, and that anything threatening this consensus should either be co-opted into the existing orthodoxy or removed entirely (Todd, 2010, p. 99). This has much in common with mainstream discussions of Finnishness and the Other (Huttunen, 2009, pp. 106-108). In this context, what room is there for the Other's subjectivity?

The second statement is a response to question 13a. On a textual level, it is interesting that the student used apostrophes around the word ‘things’. This would give us the impression that the student is affording more weight to the word than that of its typical meaning. Given the overall point of the sentence, I believe it would be safe to assume that the student is perhaps referring to ideas or politics. In addition, the second word in the response (‘should’) illustrates an acceptance that not everyone *is* treated as a person. On a discursive level, the student appears to be taking the position of a sensible, well-educated member of the public who is calling for us to overcome superficial differences – which are the only ‘things’ that divide us – and recognise our essential humanness. In terms of how the text links to societal issues, it is based upon a very Western conception of the subject whereby ‘humanity’ is conflated with ‘goodness’ (Todd, 2010) and, despite outward appearances, we are all understood to be the same underneath. This stance is difficult to grapple with because of its being couched in language that we understand to be universal, and it is impossible to dispute the appeal of the idea that if we just recognised that we are all human beings, everything would be fine. The problem is, however, that we *are* all different, and not just superficially. We have different ideas about what knowledge is, how we classify that knowledge, who gets to decide what counts as knowledge, what kind of political system we would like to see, whether God(s) exists, and even the nature of reality. This again ties in with Finland where challenges of an intercultural nature are increasingly met by calls for more consensus (Keskinen, 2012, p. 73), which seems counter-productive to say the least. Also, the stance that we are all human beings divided only by ‘things’, underpinned as it is by the paradigm of the Western subject, has further consequences for our dealings with the Other because it removes human agency and personal responsibility from the equation.

The third response is an answer to question 14. This is another example where there is no indication within the text that the student is aware that she is expressing an opinion rather than stating a fact. Furthermore, this is perhaps an occasion where more is revealed by what is absent from the text as, on the surface, it is difficult to see the point of the statement. ‘Everyone’s challenges are personal.’ Surely this would be a given? The lack of any qualifying remarks suggests that the student either does not see – or is deliberately ignoring – that a challenge can be dealt with both individually and collectively. On a discursive level,

I believe that the student is positioning herself in defence of her institution in that she seems to dismiss the very premise that a university should take any responsibility for helping international students with challenges. The manner in which this text is bound up in societal phenomena intrigues me greatly because, again, on the surface there seems to be nothing going on. But then we look a little harder. There is no explicit denial within the text that international students face extra challenges at the institution in question. It is more of a denial that anyone should be held responsible for these challenges except for international students. This attitude is very much indicative of both traditional and newer forms of Western thought. When it comes to the former, we have seen how the Western conception of the subject constructs human beings as individual rather than collective beings, who will act after rationally assessing what the pros and cons of any given situation (Outram, 2013, p. 2). Thus, individuals would of necessity face challenges on a personal level because it is understood that we all know what is best for ourselves. When it comes to the latter, the ascendancy of neo-liberal paradigms of governance in which aforementioned Western liberal conceptions of the subject have been employed to undermine the role of administrations – state or otherwise – in intervening to ensure a basic level of equity has shifted mainstream discourses on issues such as poverty and discrimination away from the body politic and onto the shoulders of the individual (Davutoğlu, 2013, p. 40). Once again, the consequences for the relationship between Finnishness and the Other is that racism cannot be conceptualised as a systemic issue, and therefore how could anything possibly change?

The fourth piece of text is an answer to question 14. On a textual level there is not much to say about it as it is so brief. Again, it is formulated as a statement rather than as an opinion and this is interesting as of itself because the question is asking for a subjective answer as to how a global citizen should think and act, and the student responds with what is essentially framed as a declaration of fact. As a discursive event, it appears that the student is putting herself in the position of articulating something that everyone knows so it would appear that any elaboration would be unnecessary. In terms of how this links in with wider societal issues, I would posit that the unproblematic way the student states that one single rule could possibly be the basis for dealing with *everyone* once again has groundings in Western universalist thinking whereby all difference is seen as essentially superficial (Todd, 2010, p. 4). This presents particular challenges for Finland in particular as it once again provides ammunition for denying the validity of race as a concept (because we are all the same),

which – as we have seen – can lead to a dismissal of the social fact of racism (Nicolson et al, 2015, p. 3). Also, the notion of tolerance within the Golden Rule positions the subject as normal and kind, and the Other (who needs to be tolerated) as marginalised (Brown, 2008). We are gifting the Other our tolerance on the understanding that she would wish to be treated in the same manner as we would. Any attempt by the Other to dispute this point is construed as ingratitude.

The fifth piece of text is a response to question 15. On a textual level I noticed that this student, unlike many of her counterparts, actually made sure to answer the question. Indeed, the first word is ‘Yes’! When our respondent discusses learning from international students, her choice of phrase (‘through them’) is notable because it reveals nothing of how this process actually takes place. There is a complete absence of verbs. There is also something to be said for our student being sure to point out that international students can reveal alternative views ‘on the same thing’. The obvious question is, “Why only the same thing?” As a discursive event, the student is still speaking from a position of authority but the fact that the question is actually answered in a direct manner means that her text seems more like an opinion than a statement. There is none of the ambiguity that can be observed in the responses of some of the other students, and we might speculate that this may be because she is aware that the audience will approve of what she is saying. In terms of the link between the text and wider society, there are a variety of issues one could latch onto here but I would say there are two that are extremely pertinent for our purposes. First of all, while it is encouraging that our respondent sees international students as beneficial to her own university experience, the manner in which she does so is problematic. The Other is presented as a valuable resource for alternative points of view on what we already know but the possibility that there is anything apart from this ‘same thing’ is implicitly denied. This is another example of difference being conceptualised in Western Enlightenment principles and colonialist assumptions (Pashby, 2011, p. 28) and it prevents the Other from being a subject in her own right.

As noted previously, the process by which Finnish students learn from international students is not explicated upon within the text. This suggests that the role of the Other within Finnish institutions is viewed in a primarily instrumental manner. Again, this could be seen as an

example of the role the West places in shaping discourses in Finland as this particular form of objectification is delineated by justifications for the internationalisation of higher education at policy level being framed by market discourses in which the process is not presented as an end in itself but rather as one of the means by which the skills and innovations necessary for economic life in the 21st century are generated (Hénard et al, 2012, p. 8).

4.3 A Tolerant Nation

1. *“Internationalisations brings new perspectives, but also creates more patriotism and appreciation for one’s own country, which is positive” (2BS059).*
2. *“According to my understanding they receive good guidance and they have a tutor who helps them with things” (1ED004).*
3. *“We are all equal regardless of our backgrounds. Everyone should be treated well and righteously” (2TO032).*
4. *“Internationalisation is not learned by studying or by doing exams, but, by experiencing. I have lived and worked for over 10 years in other parts of Europe” (2TO030).*
5. *“For example in Finland many Finnish students may shy away from making contact with different people even though they don’t intend to discriminate against them” (2BS048).*

The first response is an answer to question 12a. On a textual level, the construction of the sentence is interesting in that there is a ‘but’ after the first clause. Given that this clause refers favourably to internationalisation, one would expect that the student’s use of the word ‘but’ would denote that something negative is about to follow but that is not the case. The student simply lists a second positive aspect of internationalisation, which she considers to be an increase in patriotism and appreciation for one’s own country. Does this separation between ‘new perspectives’ and ‘one’s own country’ indicate that they are mutually exclusive concepts in the student’s mind? Perhaps it could be that the former is applicable elsewhere but not at home? On a discursive level, the way in which the student discusses the issue at hand is fairly congenial and indicates a comfort in her own role, which appears to be

straddling a middle ground in which an appreciation for the more multicultural aspects of internationalisation is tempered by an acknowledgement of the importance of her own country. Most audiences would probably find at least something to agree with.

On the third level of analysis, the text reminded me of some of the themes we examined in Nicolson, Andreotti, and Mafi's article, in which the authors argue that neo-liberal globalisation has reconfigured nationalism (Nicolson et al, 2015, p. 1) as a defence mechanism against a perceived loss of power and independence. It could be argued that the current trend of internationalisation in education is underpinned by a neo-liberal understanding of the utility of schools and universities (see, for example, Pike, 2012). Thus, it seems peculiar that a student who appears to consider the proliferation of new perspectives as a positive thing also supports patriotism, particularly given that in Finland a dedication to the latter seems to come with an aversion to the former. I think that this is an illustration of how the discourse of Finland as already a tolerant country delineates attitudes towards patriotism and nationalism (Nicolson et al, 2015, p. 6). As we have seen, the Finnish education system was built with the twin aims of fostering equality and engendering a national ethos, and the idea that these two goals might contradict each other has never been seriously considered.

The second response is an answer to question 14. On a textual level, I found the continual use of the word 'they' in reference to students from diverse backgrounds to be jarring in a visceral sense. For all I know, this could have been completely innocent on the part of the student. However, given the socio-historical development of the relationship between the Western subject and the Other, that word conjures uncomfortable images of dehumanisation, objectification, and us/them binaries (see, for example, Gregory, 2004). As a discursive event, the student is careful to frame her response as an opinion rather than a statement, which serves to invite the audience into the conversation a little more than some of the other student responses. In terms of how the text relates to social issues, it is once again fascinating to observe where our respondents locate responsibility for helping international students. It seems to have nothing to do with themselves or their fellow students, but is purely the preserve of the institution itself. In this instance, our respondent's elucidation upon the role of the tutor is notable in that it looks to be framed by an implicit trust in Finland and its

institutions. The institution is inherently fair and it has appointed an agent to ensure that the Other will meet no problems. The implications of such a conception are that once again, racism cannot be dealt with on a systemic level because the system has already been defined as fair.

The third response is an answer to question 13a. The text comes across like a declaration, but it breaks down a little when one examines why certain words and phrases are included even though they would appear to be superfluous. For example, the student states that we are 'all' equal, which is a fairly unequivocal statement that is not easy to misunderstand. She then muddies the water a little by qualifying the statement with the phrase, 'regardless of our backgrounds.' This indicates that the student realises that in reality we 'are' *not* all as equal as she would like to think. This makes the first sentence more aspirational than declarative. This impression is reinforced by the second sentence, in which it is posited that everyone 'should' be treated well, thereby suggesting that everyone is not. On a discursive level, the student is putting herself in a position of making recommendations to an audience in terms of how to behave. This might be a controversial stance to take, but then I cannot imagine that any potential audience would object too much to what she is saying. On the third level, the statement that we are all equal 'regardless of our backgrounds' is interesting because it could be interpreted as emancipatory or hegemonic. As noted, the fact that the student felt the need to qualify her initial statement indicates that she knows everyone is not treated equally, and that a large part of this is because of one's background. There is potential here. However, by essentially removing 'background' from the equation, the student is operating within the wider European trend of denying race as a concept (Goldberg, 2006, p. 334), and the identified Finnish trend of simply trusting society's inherent fairness to level out the playing field once unhelpful differences are removed (see, for example, Sahlberg, 2011; Simola, 2005). Again, this way of thinking very easily leads to a situation in which only one subjectivity is recognised: that of the 'tolerant' majority.

The fourth response is an answer to question 12a. On the initial level, I found this fragment of text intriguing because the student offered a lot more of herself than is commonly found within many of the other responses. She does not simply offer an opinion on how best to learn about internationalisation, but also supports her contention with some autobiographical

information. In this sense, then, there is a clear distinction made between Finland and ‘other parts of Europe’. As a discursive event, this student seems almost to be distancing herself from her fellow students and aligning herself with what she imagines the survey audience to be (well-travelled academics with a stake in the internationalisation process). When it comes to the link between the text and wider society, the response has ethical implications in itself as, by her advocacy of travel as the only way of ‘learning’ internationalisation, the student is tacitly and unproblematically acknowledging that the process would be inaccessible to few outside of wealthy pockets of the Global North. The text could also be interpreted as a critique of the Finnish education system in that our student seems adamant that it is not possible to ‘learn internationalisation’ in schools. This would suggest that the student has experienced schooling in which only a single perspective is presented, in terms of historical development. If Finland has already defined itself as tolerant, there really would be no need for other perspectives or even a recognition that they could even exist. We might also speculate that perhaps the student is referring more to the mono-cultural nature of the classrooms she was educated in. This hints at quite a narrow understanding of difference as it seems that only outward representations are taken into consideration. I believe this to be another occasion where mainstream nation-building narratives have served to narrow the parameters for how a relationship with the Other might be considered. Are Finnish people really all the same? Is Finnish culture really so homogenous? Can a Finn from the majority White population not also be the Other?

The fifth statement is a response to question 14. On a textual level, the use of the phrase ‘For example’ to open the sentence would suggest that this is part of a wider fragment of text but it is not. It could be speculated that this particular employment of the phrase is an example of a Finnish construction that does not necessarily carry over well into English, or an error of translation. It may also be indicative of a deeper thought process going on within the student. After all, this sentence seems to be an attempt to make sense of why things are as they are in Finland (much like this thesis!). On a discursive level, the student almost plays the role of narrator, speaking for Finnish students but also somehow above them and able to make sense of their foibles. She appears to be doing this for an audience of non-Finns who may not quite have the knowledge of Finnish culture to come to the correct conclusions. On the links between the text and society, the student seems to be defending Finland from a perceived accusation of racism by making the generalisation that it is not a desire to

discriminate that makes Finnish students shy away from associating with the Other. This is an essentialism that seems to be based on an ontological understanding that Finnish people cannot possibly be racist (Nicolson et al, 2015, p. 8), because the student makes no attempt to provide evidence or argumentation to support this claim. While I do not wish to give the impression that I consider all Finnish students or all Finnish people to be racist, some of the discourses that frame mainstream conceptualisations of Finnishness and the Other are soaked in exceptionalist and racialist assumptions (see, for example, Vuorela, 2009). If we do not acknowledge this, Finland will always be portrayed as tolerant and racism will be seen as the strict preserve of a few deviant entities on the extreme far-right who just need to be better educated. Again, this underplays the extent of the problem and gives no scope for racism to be dealt with systemically.

My second research question is concerned with how the discourses (Traits of Exceptionalism) identified in the *Literature Review* are contested and/or reproduced in the responses of the students to the EIHE survey on internationalism in higher education. Having examined the student responses using discourse analysis, it seems very much as though these discourses are largely reproduced in the student responses I selected. It is also noticeable that even attempts to characterise the Finnish student body or educational institutions as tolerant and un-racist do so using argumentation framed by our Traits of Exceptionalism. In common with Fairclough's CDA, we will talk further about the implications of my findings, whether anyone benefits from the existing state of affairs, and alternative theorisations of the relationship between Finnishness and the Other in the *Discussion*. Before that, however, we will look briefly at how I have tried to ensure reliability and validity during the course of this thesis.

5. VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

I believe that throughout this thesis I have been explicit about my research orientation, my positioning and my values so as to ensure as best I can the trustworthiness of what I am presenting here. However, I acknowledge that many of my interpretations may contain biases that I am not even aware of. I referred earlier to Spivak's assertion that researchers writing for emancipatory purposes cannot be exempt from the type of analyses they apply to hegemonic discourses (Spivak, 1985; 1999). Discourses are always being reproduced and reinterpreted and we all have a role to play in this process. I accept that my own writing and analysis is framed by ontological and epistemological orthodoxies that I am not even aware of. Due to the theoretical framework and methodology employed in this study it would not be a productive exercise to attempt to separate myself from what I have written. The aim at the outset was never to find the objective reality of the situation in Finland pertaining to Finns and the Other. Rather, I was attempting to place the discourses surrounding the current state of affairs into their socio-historical contexts, in order to help open spaces for alternative discourses to come to the fore. Having tried to be as transparent as possible about this goal, I will now address how reliability and validity are understood within this study, and briefly discuss an ethical concern I have pertaining to its contents.

It has been noted that reliability and validity are somewhat of an ill-fit when it comes to a qualitative research paradigm as they are grounded in positivist assumptions (Golafshani, 2003, p. 597) in which the goal of research is to establish as far as possible the incontrovertible truth of a particular theory or phenomenon. Given that qualitative approaches tend to either deny the possibility of universal truths or stress the necessity of allowing for the plurality of such truth claims, it follows that both reliability and validity need to be reconfigured to allow for a different set of ontological and epistemological assumptions (ibid).

Let us begin with what reliability would entail in a piece of quantitative research. Joppe defines it as the "extent to which results are consistent over time and as an accurate representation of the total population under study" (Joppe, 2000, p. 1). He suggests that the

best way of ensuring reliability within such an understanding is to test whether the study can be reproduced using the same methodology (ibid). This conception of reliability is not applicable to a great deal of qualitative work for a variety of reasons. First of all, the aims of quantitative and qualitative studies tend to be different, in that the former drives at an overall understanding of a particular situation, whereas the latter, as a rule, focuses on a deeper investigation into one specific aspect of a phenomenon. Thus, it is simply not possible for qualitative data to be ‘consistent over time’. People and phenomena change. Secondly, the data collection methods of qualitative research – fieldwork, phenomenography, discourse analysis, interviews – do not always allow for repetition. Finally, the idea that findings must be an ‘accurate representation of the total population under study’ is problematic for qualitative researchers as they often deny the validity of universal truth claims and generalisations, due to a pluralistic conception of the human condition.

When it comes to validity within quantitative research paradigms, Joppe states that it “determines whether the research truly measures that which it was intended to measure or how truthful the results are” (ibid.). Again, we are drawn back to this issue of truth. For the most part, qualitative research is not designed to provide ‘truthful’ results as it is underpinned by the assumptions that truth is a subjective entity. Were another researcher to conduct the same study, it is more than likely that she will emerge with different findings because she would not share the same understandings and ideas as the first researcher. Therefore, her interpretations of the data could not possibly be similar. Also, there is an element of doubt as to whether any research can ‘truly’ measure what it has set out to measure. For example, in the context of this thesis, I am trying to understand the problematic discourses surrounding Finland’s relationship with the Other. I have been open about this task, have spent months researching the issue, and have set about writing this thesis with all the intellectual rigour I can muster. However, the extent to which I am able to ‘measure’ what I set out to measure is still bound by the fact that this is all my own interpretation of the data at hand. Furthermore, because I am attempting to investigate issues that Fairclough terms ‘social problems’ (2002), I know that I am glossing over positive interactions between Finns and the Other. All one can do in this situation is to acknowledge one’s own limitations and subjectivities.

At this point it should be stated that CDA once again and unsurprisingly does not provide a unified definition of what reliability and validity are understood to be for research carried out using its methodological framework. The underlying assumption seems to be that individual researchers have “to make their own checks and balances” (Potter & Edwards, 2001, p. 108). Thus, when thinking about what the two concepts could possibly mean within this thesis I have explored qualitative research on a more general level. The definition of reliability that I utilise in the course of this study is that research should enable us to “understand a situation that would otherwise be enigmatic or confusing” (Eisner, 1991, p. 58). As I have stated on multiple occasions, the aim I started with at the outset of this thesis was to do precisely that. It is not for me to judge whether or not I have been successful in the task, but I have been at pains to bring together all of the various discourses I was able to find that delineate the problematic dynamic between Finland and the Other, whether they have roots in Finland itself, Ancient Greece or in the geo-political rhetoric of the Washington Consensus. Furthermore, I have analysed empirical data gleaned from Finnish students to delve into the discourses that allow for the possibility of their conceptualisations of the Other, and to examine the degree to which the discourses identified in the literature surrounding this topic have been disseminated. Finally, throughout this process, I have stressed on multiple occasions that I am not attempting to generalise my findings. I know that they are both provisional and partial. However, I hope that they can contribute to an understanding of the complex interplay between the discourses that frame this social problem, and to broadening the conversation pertaining to Finland and the Other.

Regarding validity, this is slightly more difficult to define when it comes to a qualitative framework for research because of its being inherently grounded (Winter, 2000, p. 1) in an epistemological orientation that still privileges universal truth claims. Thus, it has been posited that perhaps a better understanding for validity in our context would be to conceive of it as ‘trustworthiness’ (Seale, 1999). I consider this the most expedient course of action when it comes to my thesis as I do not believe it possible to ‘measure’ how truthful my results are, given that my research orientation envisages truths as subjective, constructed and pluralistic. I am able to answer for the trustworthiness of my research as I have been explicit about what my aims are, how these aims and my own biases affect both the data I chose and what I saw in this data, and what the limitations of my findings are. This entire study is an

interpretation of a particular situation that I hope will add to the potentialities for new or alternative conversations.

The only real ethical concern I have is that I do not afford space in this thesis for other ways in which my data might be interpreted. This was not intentional but was rather a result of a lack of space and time. However, I believe I have made it clear that the interpretations and conclusions here are mine and mine alone. They are partial, relate to the data as I see it, and are brought to the fore for a specific purpose. All of the articles and books I have used can be found online, and the EIHE database is readily available. I would truly welcome other interpretations of the situation and – most of all – for the conversation to continue down divergent pathways.

6. DISCUSSION

The goal of this thesis was to help make visible the parameters which frame the more problematic aspects of the relationship between Finnishness and the Other, so as to demonstrate that there is nothing natural about mainstream discourses and to broaden the discussions on immigration, race, and cross-cultural interactions in Finland. It was explained early on in the thesis that this goal arose from challenges posed towards multiculturalism in contemporary Finland, evidenced by the electoral success of the far-right Finns party and an increase in racially-motivated violence (see, for example, Haaparaava & Mäkilä, 2011). The mainstream response to these challenges across the political spectrum has been a call for more consensus regarding national values and for greater integration of non-Finns (Keskinen, 2012, p. 73).

Throughout the course of this study we have used relevant literature and our students' answers to pick at the historical threads of how Finland has portrayed itself in relation to the Other. In doing so, we have been able to discuss the possible limitations of positing consensus as the answer to cross-cultural problems. In summary, these are that a significant part of Finland's nation-building process has involved a historical amnesia towards the more racist and colonialist elements of its past, coupled with a discourse of exceptionalism whereby Finland is positioned as a highly-educated, problem-solving, tolerant, modern democracy that is somehow beyond many of the cross-cultural difficulties found in other European states. Thus, in calling for increased consensus there is a very real possibility that anything seen as a threat to social stability will be received negatively (see, for example, Young, 2001). In many ways, this is understandable. Any community must have a certain degree of consensus when it comes to laws or social niceties so that it does not fall apart. However, *this* consensus, based on the idea that Finnish society is already well-functioning and underscored by a rationalist Enlightenment conception of the human subject in which we are all essentially the same, provides very little scope for recognising the subjectivity of the Other in her own right. In this sense, any thoughts or desires the Other may have outside of this consensus can easily be portrayed as irrelevant or even wrong. Furthermore, a consensus in which it is accepted that racism does not exist in mainstream society and only occurs amongst isolated pockets of poorly educated deviants can serve to narrow the

parameters of what it is possible to say about discrimination (Nicolson et al, 2015, p. 8). Cases of systemic racism can all too easily be dismissed as examples of the Other ‘complaining’ or not being able to adjust to ‘normal’ procedures. *These* are the implications of where we stand right now.

As noted, in answer to my second research question the discourses I have termed ‘Traits of Exceptionalism’ are largely reproduced in the students’ responses to the EIHE survey. Before explaining exactly why I believe this to be, it has to be acknowledged for the sake of validity/trustworthiness that, as I have previously stated, the context of where this study is coming from very much guides the type of discourses I notice in both the literature and the students’ responses. The thesis arose from my desire to explore the groundings of the more problematic aspects of the socio-political scene in Finland when it comes to how the relationship between Finns and the Other is treated. Undoubtedly, there are many positive trends too. It is just that the other side of the coin is rarely even spoken about, which means we are left with a situation where more people are voting for far-right political organisations more than ever before and yet we are led to believe that there is no racism in Finland (ibid). I wanted to be part of a wider effort to open up that conversation. *This* is what has to be understood when considering my interpretations of the data.

The first Trait of Exceptionalism identified in the *Literature Review* was historical amnesia towards colonial complicity. This is the concept Ulla Vuorela uses to theorise Finland’s positioning in regards to colonialism, which is essentially that the country both benefitted from the process itself and exhibited colonialist thinking and behaviours, while not actually establishing any colonies of its own. Historical amnesia towards colonial complicity is evident as an underpinning of some of the students’ responses pertaining to whether non-Finns face any difficulties adjusting to life in Finnish universities as it is simply assumed that, in the first place, everyone is treated equally; and, in the second place, that treating everyone in the same way will inherently ensure fairness. This ignores instances in Finland’s history where everyone has must certainly not been afforded equal treatment (see, for example, Gröfors, 2004), as well as the possibility that the Other might be a subject with different ideas about how she would like to be treated (see, for example, Eklund, 2006).

The second identified factor in the *Literature Review* was Finland unproblematically placing itself within the Western Enlightenment tradition. In the students' responses, this was visible in their adoption of binary thinking when it came to considering Finland and difference. There was an essence of Finnishness that should not be sullied, whereas difference was something that occurred elsewhere. In terms of other specific Western themes, there was a significant degree of universalism in the students' responses as concepts such as human rights and the Golden Rule were assumed to apply for the benefit of all and by the choice of all. The neo-liberal rhetoric framing a number of the Finnish students' answers regarding the degree to which international students have affected their studies has a more contemporary flavour, but can certainly be understood in the context of Finland belonging to the West because of the paradigm's enormous influence upon mainstream European and US educational discourses (see, for example, Pike, 2012).

The final trait found in the *Literature Review* was the unquestioned assumption that Finland is a tolerant nation. This was evidenced most especially in student responses that hinted at possible challenges towards this conception but then removed the validity of these challenges. For example, a reluctance of Finnish students to mix with their international counterparts should be seen as simple shyness rather than anything more sinister.

Given that the same problematic socio-historical factors framing Finland's relationship with the Other are visible in many of the students' responses, the obvious fear is that these discourses will continue to disseminate, thereby strengthening a climate where racist thinking is coming increasingly into the mainstream body politic, while instances of racism are either downplayed or taken as an attack on a Finnish person's right to behave as she wishes in her own country (Moilanen & Autio, 2016). What I hope I have made clear in this paper is that I do not regard Finland as worse than any other country when it comes to racism. Rather, in examining the nation-building process that has occurred here, I have tried to demonstrate that Finland – although it has an admirable education system and a relatively equitable social structure – faces many of the same difficulties that can be found elsewhere.

In this *Discussion* we have already covered the first and second stages of Fairclough's CDA which are to identify a social issue that may have its roots in semiotics and then to establish the factors that serve as a hindrance to addressing this issue. When it comes to the third stage, which is to explore whether these problematic discourses are caused by the existing social order, I think we can answer in the affirmative. In the *Theoretical Framework*, we explored the roots of Finland's mainstream nation-building narrative and found that it was largely constructed upon an exceptionalism that removed Finns from the Other, and engendered the idea whereby it was only through Finnishness that a formerly 'backward' nation could make progress. Finland's place in the existing geo-political body is still based upon just such an exceptionalism but the rhetoric is less explicitly nationalist or racist and more predicated on being highly educated, tolerant, egalitarian, and – basically – having a society that is seen to work (see, for example, Country Brand Report, 2010).

The fourth stage of Fairclough's CDA is to look for gaps and absences within the existing discourses so as to posit possible ways forward when it comes to dealing with the aforementioned social issue. While I do not believe there to be any single solution to these problems, I would suggest that a good deal of hope lies in the admission that Finland is not so exceptional after all as this would seem to lead to a position of greater humility whereby it is possible to be, for want of a better word, 'good', without positioning the Other as 'bad' or simply carrying out 'benevolent' acts for the sake of building up a national image or brand. One such alternative practice for facing the Other is based upon this very idea. Imperfect education arose from Sharon Todd's work on cosmopolitanism, in which she acknowledges the desirability of broadening mainstream discourses surrounding the relationship between the subject and the Other. Todd states that we seem somehow stuck between the choice of a limited pluralism – involving "the aggregation of identities" (Todd, 2010, p. 10) – or a shared humanity, whereby difference is compromised and diminished (p. 16). In attempting to move beyond this apparent dichotomy Todd disputes the idea that cross-cultural problems can be addressed solely by appealing to humanity, arguing that conflating humanity with 'goodness' ignores the fact that issues of this nature are caused by humans in the first place. Todd draws on Emmanuel Levinas' treatise on hospitality in which it is explicated that the most ethical relationship between subject and Other (unconditional hospitality) is impossible in any practical sense, and notes that since we cannot take our ethics from abstract entities such as ideas and principles, they must then stem from our relation to the Other (p. 17). This

assertion forms the basis of imperfect education, since it is only in fully facing humanity and acknowledging our differences and shared capacity for good, evil and everything in between, that we are afforded the possibility of recognising the subjectivity of our own positioning. This would help us to meet the Other on a somewhat level playing field.

The capacity of imperfect education to grapple with the assumption that humanity must equal goodness is deeply relevant to this thesis, since we are discussing the implication of what happens when uncomfortable ideas such as violence and prejudice are removed from the human equation (p. 3). Todd herself states that “as long as the idea of humanity disavows what is “inhuman” and imperfect about us, cosmopolitanism cannot give an adequate response to the questions of violence and antagonism which plague our lives” (ibid). As we have seen in this thesis, a good example of this is the manner in which historical amnesia concerning Finland’s colonial past is often employed as a defence mechanism whenever cross-cultural difficulties are brought up (Rastas, 2012: 90). In other words, the grounds for critique are not considered valid as there is quite simply nothing to criticise.

In terms of beginning an educative process that acknowledges the way people actually feel and think about things, I also find Andreotti, Biesta, and Ahenakew’s three-pronged model of global-mindedness to be of use (Andreotti et al, 2015, p. 254). In common with my own research orientation which avoids prescribed solutions, the posited educational ramifications of this model are “that rather than aiming to shift individuals from one orientation to another - which would be the implication of a linear developmental understanding of global-mindedness – the focus should be on enlargement of the repertoire itself” (ibid). In other words, an individual would be helped and encouraged to develop self-reflexivity in order to step aside and see the subjectivities upon which her own perspectives are based. She would then be given the tool of three lenses through which to view her perspectives, as well as those of the Other. These are *Tourism*, in which difference is only seen as a superficial window dressing for objective truth; *Empathy*, in which perspectives are fused and it is considered that they are all equally valid; and *Visiting*, in which it is acknowledged that meeting new people and ideas can be uncomfortable, that there are reasons for one’s discomfort, and that it is okay to retain one’s thoughts and experiences in other places (ibid). The point of this model is to generate an awareness of one’s own responses to intercultural

situations, so that one has some idea of where they came from, as well as the ability to change them if one so wishes. This brings one's own agency to the fore in encounters with the Other, as there is a recognition that it is not simply the preserve of the Other to bring her own thoughts and behaviours in line with what one would expect. Rather, a meeting with the Other is a process whereby *both subjects* bring their own epistemological and ontological frameworks into the conversation.

Neither Todd's imperfect education nor the above model are offered as panaceas to the problems I have identified. They are described simply as examples of the many theories out there that afford the possibility of stepping outside of seemingly 'objective' knowledge structures and having new conversations. As such, I think that they fit in rather nicely with the interpretations offered in this thesis. I have already noted my distaste for the fifth stage of Fairclough's CDA, which is to talk about the extent to which my work has contributed towards emancipatory goals. The stage comes across as both simplistic and not a little presumptuous. However, I would like to think that anyone reading this thesis who shares similar concerns to the ones I have discussed could gain a degree of hope. While my own conclusions and ideas are partial and provisional, so too are those underpinning the nation-building narratives I have focussed on. Things do not have to be as they are. In the discourse surrounding human interactions, there is nothing 'natural'. We always have agency.

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