REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN FROM DEVELOPING COUNTRIES IN REALISTIC AND HISTORICAL FICTION: OPENINGS FOR INTERCULTURAL LEARNING

by

KINGA VARGA-DOBAI

(Under the Direction of DR. ELIZABETH ST.PIERRE)

ABSTRACT

In the past, multicultural approaches to children's literature have been interpreted as a form of sensitivity toward the representations of minority cultures, that is, the *Other* (Bhabha, 1994/2004). A more complex understanding of multiculturalism is necessary in order to move beyond simplistic representation of culture and the Self and to attend to differences from a global perspective.

This study, a poststructural textual analysis of 15 realistic and historical fiction books for young-adults, uses poststructural feminist theories of *subjectivity* (Butler, 1992) and *memory* (Hilts, 1995; Loftus, 1994), and the postmodern theory of *becoming* (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980/1987) to challenge essentialist understanding of the concept of *Other* and representation, specifically in relation to portrayals of women and girls from developing countries. As poststructuralism "sees the person constructed through language" (Burr, 1996, p. 33), my textual analysis examines how the experiences and subjectivity of women and girls have been constructed in those books. To reflect on my own position as a researcher and reader within the research project, memory-based multigenre writings, a combination of conventional and digital

stories, were used as a form of "text making" (Pahl and Rowsell, 2010) and tool for textual analysis.

Beyond a critique of representation, the use of a textual analysis can be a useful resource in the pre-service teacher education classroom to develop intercultural understanding and move beyond simple "diversity" approaches in education that rely on a tourist perspective (Short, 2009) and surface-level information about another culture. Intercultural learning raises questions about language and the production of the subject; encourages discussions about ideology, power and positioning; and allows for multiple readings of texts.

Further exploration is needed to critique simplistic representations of cultures in texts that market particular human experiences as culture-specific rather than variations of race, class, gender and economy-related social discourses.

INDEX WORDS: multicultural children's literature, poststructuralism, postmodernism, realistic and historical fiction, representation, subjectivity, memory, becoming, Us/Other binaries, interculturalism, multigenre writing

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DEDICATION

To Anya and Apa, for filling up my room with books, and to Mark, for carrying those books all the way to America.

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…One sits and beats an old tin can, lard pail.
One beats and beats for that which one believes.
That's what one wants to get near. Could it after all
Be merely oneself, as superior as the ear
To a crow's voice? Did the nightingale torture the ear,
Pack the heart and scratch the mind? And does the ear
Solace itself in peevish birds? Is it peace,
Is it a philosopher's honeymoon, one finds
On the dump? Is it to sit among mattresses of the dead,
Bottles, pots, shoes and grass and murmur aptest eve:
Is it to hear the blatter of grackles and say
Invisible priest; is it to eject, to pull
The day to pieces and cry stanza my stone?
Where was it one first heard of the truth? The the.

(Wallace Stevens, *The Man on the Dump*)

"The theory is not used to explicate the fiction. The fiction is not presented as a proof for theory. Neither theory nor fiction is presented as the sight of Truth. My intent is not to interpret, but to use; read together, the fiction and theory indicate critiques and concerns of the moment."

(Brenda K. Marshall, *Teaching the Postmodern Fiction and Theory*)

Chapter 1

Introduction

The French philosophers, Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) defined the classic interpretation of books and literature as the root-book, a field of representation that stands in for a field of reality: the world. Its aim is to represent that outer reality as accurately and transparently as possible. As they represent, root-books generally rely on certain elements: a main character with a clearly definable identity (good characters and bad characters), a linear plot with a beginning and an end, and an objective reality that is describable. In this sense, root-books are based on an essentialist view of the world. In the field of children's literature, novels of realistic and historical fiction are good illustrations of the concept of the root-book. Lynch-Brown and Tomlinson (2008) claimed, in their definition of the genres, that telling the story as it was, presenting "historical facts with as much accuracy and objectivity as books of history" (p. 170), is one of the purposes of, for example, historical fiction. In realistic and historical fiction novels, authors also describe everyday life and actual people in rich detail to make the book believable. The goal of the root-book is to mirror the outside world realistically, so its work is reflection.

Some scholars of children's literature, however, have challenged this assumed characteristic of the genre and argued that realistic and historical fiction books are often partial and exclusionary and simply unable to reflect reality. C. S. Lewis (2002/1966), for example, compared fairy tales with realistic stories and came to the conclusion that stories and characters placed in realistic settings are often misleading. Similarly, Stewart (2008), in her analysis of the

representation of non-Western countries in realistic fiction books, claimed that Western authors often describe non-Western places as fundamentally flawed. I initially chose to study children's literature because of my fascination with folk and fairy tales and storytelling, but my interest shifted when I realized how realistic fiction can marginalize and exclude, how it can Other cultures.

In this study, a poststructural textual analysis of 15 realistic and historical fiction books for young-adults, I used poststructural feminist theories of *subjectivity* and *memory*, and the Deleuzian theory of *becoming*, concepts that I will discuss in detail later, to challenge essentialist representations of women and girls from developing countries in relation to nationalism, nationalist war, state oppression, cultural traditions, and immigration found in multicultural children's literature. To do so, it was necessary to reflect on my own position as a researcher and reader within the research project, using memory as a tool for textual analysis.

Background of the Problem

Because I grew up as an ethnic minority in Romania, I became aware quite early of what Othering meant, how racial groups and nations discriminated against one another, and what this discrimination entailed for the practices of everyday life. But I was only able to theorize Othering once I had studied poststructural/postcolonial and feminist theories and could use them to analyze children's literature. Postcolonial theorist, Bhabha (1994/2004) explained that the colonizer creates his own identity through differentiating between his Self and the Other. For the dominant ethnic population, the dominated ethnic minority is the Other who is similar but still different since he/she speaks another language and has different cultural traditions. In terms of gender, the Other to man is woman, and such binaries are further complicated by additional divisions as well, such as the differences between first-world and third-world women.

The A-ha moments offered by these theoretical lenses helped me make sense of the cultural and personal displacements I had experienced in my past as a Hungarian minority and in my present as a newly immigrated Eastern-European woman in the United States. In the process of becoming a legal resident and, later, a citizen of the United States, I learned quite a bit about the media and institutional stereotypes of women from developing countries as victimized and in need of being saved. The topic of my study grew directly out of my own life experiences and a curiosity about and wariness of the representation of women like me in children's books.

While I was the national Other in Romania, I became a gendered Other in the United States, and I first began to experience this Othering when I applied for an American visa in Bucharest in 2003. Romania is one of the few countries in the European Union that had and still has strict visa application rules for the United States. Young women who marry American men are particularly suspicious and are scrutinized for fraudulent relationships. Along with the legal marriage certificate that my husband and I had to include in the visa application, we also had to submit emails, photographs, and additional evidence of our relationship. When I finally met the American ambassador after a six month waiting period and careful review of all my love letters, the only question she asked me was why I did not take my husband's last name. My answer was that I liked my own name. Her response was to refuse my visa application. Coming as I do from an upbringing that does not allow for the questioning of authority figures, I was ready to get on the next train home and wait for another appointment. My husband, however, called his congressman who, then, called the American ambassador from Bucharest, who, then, rescheduled me and granted me an American visa four days later. Ironically, I, too, was saved.

This was, however, just the beginning of a long institutional Othering process that continued when I moved to the United States and applied for permanent residence, commonly

known as the green card. The application manual included a checklist used to identify possible marriage frauds between an older, white, divorced man and a younger childless woman with little or broken English. Although I was naively surprised that my marriage could be considered a fraud from an institutional point of view, I had to admit that I fit the profile of internet wives, perhaps with the difference that my English was relatively good. I began to pay more attention to this kind of profiling in everyday life as well: the snarky comments about "trophy wives" and "gold diggers," movies and documentaries about docile "mail-order brides," all of which became an inside joke for my husband and me— that he had actually purchased me on romanianwives.com. As for me, a graduate student by this time, the discourse on the Other became something that I wanted to study.

Mohanty's (1984) work helped me understand the analytical principles that reinforce stereotypes and binary oppositions about the "average third-world woman" (p. 337) and shape her Western representation. I learned that binary oppositions, "mutually exclusive categories, such that given examples of human behavior must belong to one or other category–but not both" (Sim, 2005, p. 174), are based on an essentialist view that there is a unified, unique, coherent, and unchanging essence at the core of an individual. Mohanty further explained that this humanist principle assumes that third-world women are "an already constituted coherent group with identical interests and desires, regardless of class, ethnic or racial locations and contradictions" (pp. 336-337). The image produced about them was one described as "ignorant, poor, uneducated, tradition-bound, domestic, family-oriented, victimized" (p. 337), which stood in contrast to the self-representation of Western women as "educated, modern, as having control over their own bodies and sexualities, and the freedom to make their own decisions" (p. 337). After moving to the United States, I became this Other woman, and because of my personal

experiences, feminist readings and the realistic and historical fiction books written for young-adults about the female Other hit home.

Statement of the Problem

In my study, a poststructural textual analysis of 15 young adult books usually labeled realistic and historical fiction, I used poststructural feminist theories of subjectivity and memory, and the Deleuzian theory of becoming, to explore representations of women from developing countries in relation to nationalism, nationalist war, state oppression, cultural traditions, and immigration found in multicultural children's literature. I named the strategy employed by the authors of those texts to construct representations, a strategy of defamiliarization (Donovan, 2007), that is, an attempt to create distance between the experiences of the reader and the experiences of the characters of the book. Some authors, when employing the strategy of defamiliarization, use binary opposition in which third-world women and first-world women or men and women display opposite characteristics and so are limited to certain roles. Other authors, however, use narrative and linguistic elements of the text (e.g., point of view, metaphors) as a strategy of defamiliarization, in order to create distance between the experiences of the reader and the characters, to offer more complex portrayals of female subjectivity and to point to the idea of an instable changing Self. I named this particular use of narrative and linguistic techniques in the text, *becoming* (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980/1987), that is, a breaking away from essentialist understanding of the female subject, for example. As opposed to the term subject (often used in essentialist ways), the term subjectivity is a becoming because it focuses on the idea of that the self is continuously changing, and it is "a threshold, a door, a becoming between two multiplicities" (p. 249) as opposed to that of a fixed self.

According to Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) by "never ceasing to become" (p. 277) we can challenge dualisms and binary oppositions and the perception of the subject in those terms. To become is to pass through the binaries and to refuse to stay fixed in one perspective. That is why Deleuze and Guattari defined *becoming* as a "block of coexistence" (p. 292), that is not one or the other, but is "in between" (p. 293) spaces that connects two distant points. The block here is key because it refers to the "zone of proximity" (p. 293) that brings one concept together with another (e.g. content and form; reader and text, third-world woman and first-world woman), not in an effort to imitate or to identify with that concept, rather as a way to gain a less differentiated, fixed form and existence. Although in the analysis of the concept of subject such key-terms of multicultural children's literature as *stereotype*, *authenticity* or even the Other, would be considered essentialist and, therefore, inadequate from a postmodern point of view, Deleuze and Guattari would not argue against the usefulness of those terms. Rather they would argue that, in the process of *becoming*, we need to exhaust those terms by pushing them to a limit where they can "develop their power of escape" (p. 110) and create something new in relation to representation.

From a linguistic point of view, *becoming* may be interpreted as a non-explanatory use of language when "language stops being representative in order to now move toward its extremities or its limits" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1975/1986, p. 23). Hayden's (1998) description of *becoming* works well with Deleuze and Guattari's in that he describes the term "as a placing of linguistic elements into different relations" (p. 99), one that breaks away from binary forms of expression (content and form) and challenges traditional representation of the subject. Within this becoming, the hierarchy between main characters and supporting characters disappears. The author does no longer use language to describe the character's experiences, for example, fear. Instead, fear

becomes a character (e.g. *The Land of the Green Plums* [Müller, 1996]) and this kind of textual representation eschews the binary between the metaphorical and the real in the text. "There is no longer a literal or a figurative sense to the words" (Bogue, 2003, p. 104). Characters and words can no longer be differentiated as in their becoming they coexist within an open system (Hayden, 1998) without hierarchies and binary oppositions.

The analysis of the representation of women from developing countries in the children's books I studied from a poststructural/postmodern point of view, allowed me to indentify how the themes of nationalism, nationalist war, state oppression, cultural traditions, and immigration, or the authenticating details of "thick description" (Geertz, 1973, p. 6), such as dialect, description of rituals, customs, and/or the use of vocabulary from original language produced subject positions for female characters and thereby reinforced simplistic portrayals. The analysis of the representations also allowed me to explore how the above-mentioned themes and textual elements opened possibilities for more a complex rendering of female subjectivity.

Because a postmodern or poststructural framework requires that researchers pay close attention to their own subjectivity in the process of analyzing texts, I used memory, a concept closely related to the idea of subject formation, in order to respond to the novels in my sample and to think about my own subjectivity as well. The textual analysis of the books in Chapter Four of this dissertation is interspersed with memory-based personal narratives that show my own responses to issues raised (and not raised) in the book. For example, I write about how the issue of state surveillance, discussed in the book about Romania, played out in my family's life in the late 1970's and early 1980's. I also write about how the issue of nationalism (not discussed in the book about Romania) affected my everyday interactions. Some of the memory narratives include stories I heard from my parents or grandparents that relate to the events discussed in the

book. Others, however, do not have much in common with the stories that evoked them. Instead, they speak to the process of a reader's living through and making meaning of a text. Through this memory work, I do not put myself in the center of the research as the "'master of truth and justice' to… reveal the truth to those who are unable to see or speak it" (Foucault as cited in Lather, 1991, p. 157). Nor do I claim, based on my membership in a particular culture or nation, that my memory is a truer or more authentic response to lived experience than those described in the texts. My intention is rather to establish connections with the book through active and creative engagement—a becoming of representation.

Finally, I also explore how the realistic and historical fiction books in my sample could be used in an educational context as tools for "intercultural learning" (Fennes and Hapgood, 1997; Rizvi, 2009) through which students could gain knowledge of the world and develop transnational understanding.

Questions for Research

1) What are the possibilities and limitations of representation of women from developing countries in realistic and historical fiction books for young adults?
2) How is the Us-Other/man-woman binary opposition reinforced or disrupted through the discourse of nationalism, nationalist wars, state oppression, cultural traditions, and immigration?
3) How can memory help the reader understand the complications of representation?
4) What possibilities do realistic and historical fiction books offer for intercultural learning?

Multicultural Children's Literature and Representation

Multicultural children's literature became a fertile field of study for me because of its concern with multiplicity and issues of representation, particularly of certain minority cultures

and groups such as women. Multicultural approaches critique race, class, and gender-related portrayals in children's books; but this criticism entails a classical approach to the idea of representation: that a book can and should accurately and authentically reflect reality.

My postmodern and poststructural readings, however, argue against that classical view of literature and representation. In a Deleuzian ontology, representation in the classical sense is an order-word, or a stoppage, which means that the book does not represent, imitate, or mean anything. In Deleuze and Guattari's (1980/1987) interpretation of literature, which I will explain in detail in the next chapter, books exist through their interdependency with other dimensions and aspects of the world. A book is "a single plane of consistency" (p. 90) that connects with other dimensions of the outside world. Our task as critics is to show how those dimensions work together to produce what we call reality. Therefore, Deleuze and Guattari suggested that we should never ask what a book means; we should, rather, look at how the book functions, how "in connection with other things it does or does not transmit intensities, in which other multiplicities its own are inserted and metamorphosed" (p. 4). In this sense, the book becomes a little machine, and what should interest us is how the machine works.

While postmodernism critiques the classical understanding of representation (for example, that the book reflects an outside reality), it also recognizes that the concept itself cannot be dismissed out of hand. Deleuze and Guattari (1975/1986) explained that representation in the classical sense is, as mentioned above, an order-word, a limitation, an impasse but that it has the revolutionary potential of renewing itself. In this way, order-words can function as "pass-words" (Delueze and Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 110), as possibilities or openings that can help the concept acquire new functions. If a book is not an imitation of the outside world, of "reality," what might it become?

The goal of this dissertation is to investigate and explore the possibilities of representation using Deleuzian and poststructural feminist theory. The theoretical perspectives plugged into my dissertation, including postcolonial, cultural, and feminist theory, are fields related to multicultural children's literature that helped me in this work. With their common concern for racial, sexual, and political equity, these areas of study helped me better understand the complexity of gender issues across national borders, how Othering occurs among genders, and how in some cultural contexts the issue of gender becomes complicated by other socio-political issues, such as nationalism and state oppression. Moreover, poststructural qualitative studies helped me raise further questions about knowledge, reading, and text and the concept of representation in a Deleuzian sense.

Significance of Study

The significance of my study lies in its contribution to existing critiques of representation offered, for example, by Harris (1993), Bishop (1982), and Taxel (1981) in connection with portrayals of African Americans in children's literature and by Hamilton et al. (2007) in connection with gender portrayals. In particular, my study will address issues of representation pertaining to portrayals of women from developing countries. However, I will use different theoretical and methodological approaches (poststructural and Deleuzian) to critique conventional practices of representation. Although I will identify binary oppositions that produce subjectivity, I will not generate categories into which these binary oppositions may be divided, nor will I count their occurrence in the texts I study. As Clark (2000) claimed, even though quantitative or statistical analysis had a tremendous influence on feminist critiques of children's literature, counting models have serious limitations. The use of a qualitative approach (Clark, 2000) informed by a postmodern and poststructuralist theories will enable me to do more

than generate categories of representations of females in books or count multiple systems of oppression. It will allow me to investigate the "historical, philosophical, and cultural construction of the subject" (Marshall, 1992, p. 82), in particular, of women from developing countries in multicultural children's literature and how those representations create or challenge limitations for the characters. This approach also allows me to bring in my own subjectivity through the use of memory-based narratives and produce a critique and re-thinking of representation.

Chapter 2

Theory and Review of Literature

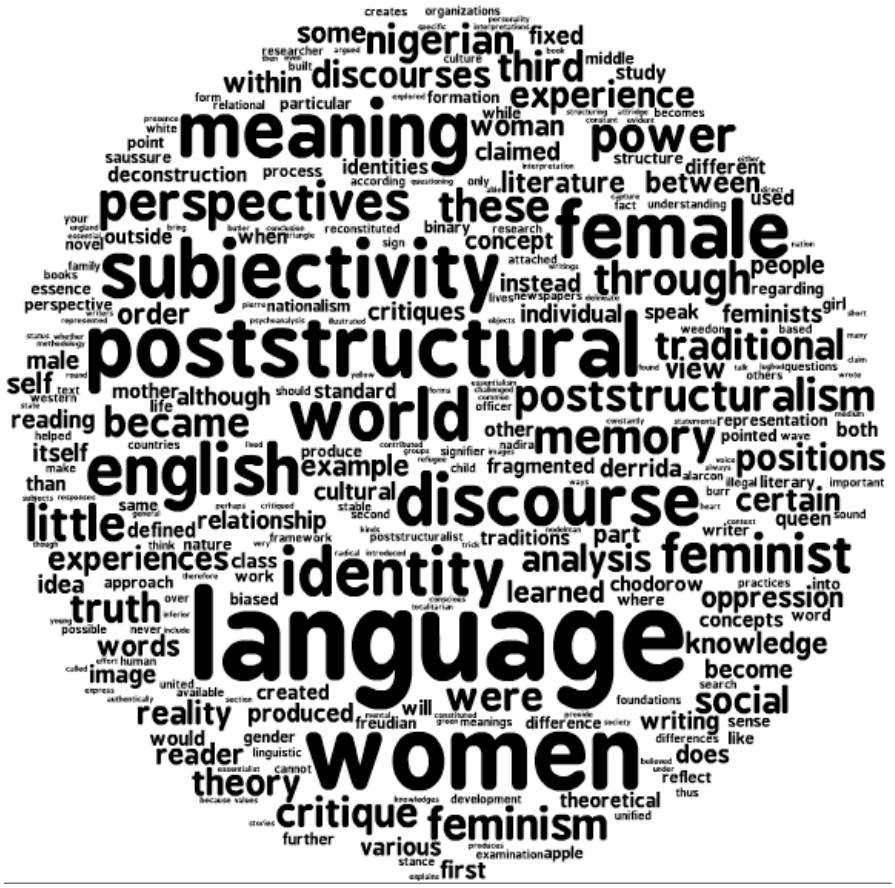

Figure 2. I generated this word cloud, a visual representation of the theory I used in this study, using an application called Tagul. This application, frequently used in educational contexts to visually represent ideas, turns words within a particular text into an image and gives larger size and greater relevance to words that appear more frequently and less prominence to words that are unsubstantial in the text. My word cloud highlights the main concepts in this discussion of the study's theory, and provides the reader with a visual summary of its main ideas.

Postmodernism and Poststructuralism

The major theories used in this study are postmodernism and poststructuralism, and, in particular, poststructural feminism. Postmodernism and poststructuralism are related terms as they both critique the modernist perspectives of rationality, authenticity and Truth and pay close attention to the structuring power of language. Postmodernism has been described as a "movement of thought" (Kuhn, 2009) that embraces the postmodern condition of fragmentation, the mixing of genres and styles, and playfulness. Poststructuralism has been described as a "body of theory" (Kuhn, 2009) developed by Foucault (1972), Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987), Derrida (1972/1981), and others that entails a variety of postmodern thinking (Call, 2001). In Weedon's words (1987/1997), poststructuralism explores the relationship between language, meaning, subjectivity, social organizations, and power.

Poststructural and postmodern theories distance themselves from the conscious, stable, unified, rational subject of positivist social science in its analysis of identity; from the binary oppositions of structuralism in its analysis of social organizations; and from the materialism and essentialism of Marxist theory in its analysis of power. Neither poststructuralism nor postmodernism are interested in determining the meaning of any of these concepts or phenomena; rather, they are committed to the examination of the principles of difference and deferral of meaning, continuously changing subject positions, and power relations within the available discourses.

Literature and the Postmodern

As discussed in Chapter One, *root-books* (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980/1987), such as realistic and historical fiction books for young-adults, employ a modernist approach and aim to represent a supposed outer reality as accurately and transparently as possible. Root-books,

however, are not thinkable in postmodern approaches, which doubt that there is a reality out there that can be captured in language, no matter how much description we provide. Deleuze and Guattari (1983) assured us that the root-book, as a form of reflection, is not the only book there is. According to them, a postmodern book is able to continuously destroy its own roots because it goes against linear storytelling and a structure that has a beginning, middle, and end. It prefers fragmentation and ambivalent characters, stories that do not have an ending, stories that fold onto one another and establish connections without hierarchies and foundations. A book of this kind does not have clearly defined subjects and objects; instead, it exists in a multiplicity of connections with other texts and with elements of the world. Culture and education, love and death, politics and war, and a variety of other stories (included by the author or evoked by the text) are all relations that come together to form this assemblage that we call a literary work. Deleuze and Guattari, therefore, described the literary work (whether a book, a movie or any other form of expression) as a machine, "a *system of interruptions"* (p. 36) that relates to and exists through the elements of the world defined as "a continual material flow (*hylé*)" (p. 36). The function of the machine is to initiate connections and relationships between heterogeneous parts. Bogue (2003), interpreting Deleuze and Guattari's explanation, described machines as "heterogeneous, dispersed parts that form connective, disjunctive and conjunctive relations through indirect processes, such that the parts function, interact, work, operate – yet all the while remaining parts" (p. 68).

A book is a machine that must be plugged into other machines in order to work: a love machine for romance, a war and history machine for historical fiction, a gender machine for feminist novels. Nationalism or communism, for example, are cultural formations that acquire new functions when they enter in relation with the text. Entering the text in a machinic sense,

however, does not mean that, for example, communism becomes the main content of the text; it rather means that the text helps the reader experience communist principles or ideologies through literary devices or narrative style. The book, in this sense, is not about communism but becomes an example of how communism functions.

In this way, hierarchies and binaries such as that between content and form break down in the postmodern work of art. The content of the book is no more relevant than the form through which it functions. The modern work of art is an *assemblage* (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980/1987), a multiplicity composed of heterogeneous elements that enter into relations with one another. One of my favorite books, *The Counterfeiters* by Gidé, (1973/1925) exemplifies this notion of assemblage and the breaking down of the content/form hierarchy. The style of Gidé's book, a novel within a novel with many characters and convoluted storylines, conveys the confusion his characters' experience, and the best way to follow his characters in this novel is to map them out. Gidé produced an assemblage that includes a social commentary on post-war France and its educational and moral laws, psychoanalytic analyses, and references to homosexual and bisexual love, as well as an appendix that contains journal entries and newspaper clippings related to the writing of the novel. Additionally, a part of the assemblage of Gidé's book is my personal connection with it. For me, his book is more than a novel about deceit and falsehood or an example of French existentialism. It is also about the second-hand bookstore where I found it when I was 20, about the ghost of its previous owner who bought the book in 1962 and inscribed it with love for his dear wife, Ilona. It is also about the misspelled words and the recycled Bibles onto which this book, and many others, were printed during the 1960's in Eastern-Europe—telling details that speak of the politics of the publishing industry in communist Romania at that time. The book is also about my college years and the discussions it generated among college

students, about my friends who borrowed the book and left their imprints on it and on me. *The Counterfeiters* does not function to simply represent reality—it rather functions as an assemblage made up of disparate elements that are completely entangled.

To think about a book in this way is to think about rhizomes, which Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) described as dimensions, "directions in motion" (p. 21) that "bring into play very different regimes of signs" (p. 21). Rhizomes connect elements that do not necessarily share the same traits. In botany, for example, rhizomes are stems that produce offshoots and multiplicities, non-linear connections that spring-up everywhere—think of crabgrass. There are no fixed positions and points in a rhizome and/or hierarchies, only lines that tie back to one another. Plants form rhizomes with everything else—with nature, animals, and people. One of Deleuze and Guattari's examples of a rhizome is the connection between the orchid and the wasp. Orchids are capable of forming the image of a wasp, and the plant tricks the wasp into polinating its flower. Orchid and wasp, thus, become a rhizome, producing and reproducing one another. As some of the main characteristics of the rhizome are connection and multiplicity with no originating source, another good example is the internet. The internet is a perfect rhizome; everything is connected with everything else: personal homepages, news websites, gossip columns, library databases, blogs—all are mapped out on the same plane. There is no center or hierarchy among those elements; they are heterogeneous parts that link and can link on multiple occasions to form a rhizome. The rhizome, therefore, does not have an essence; it acquires its nature from the continuously changing interplay of its components.

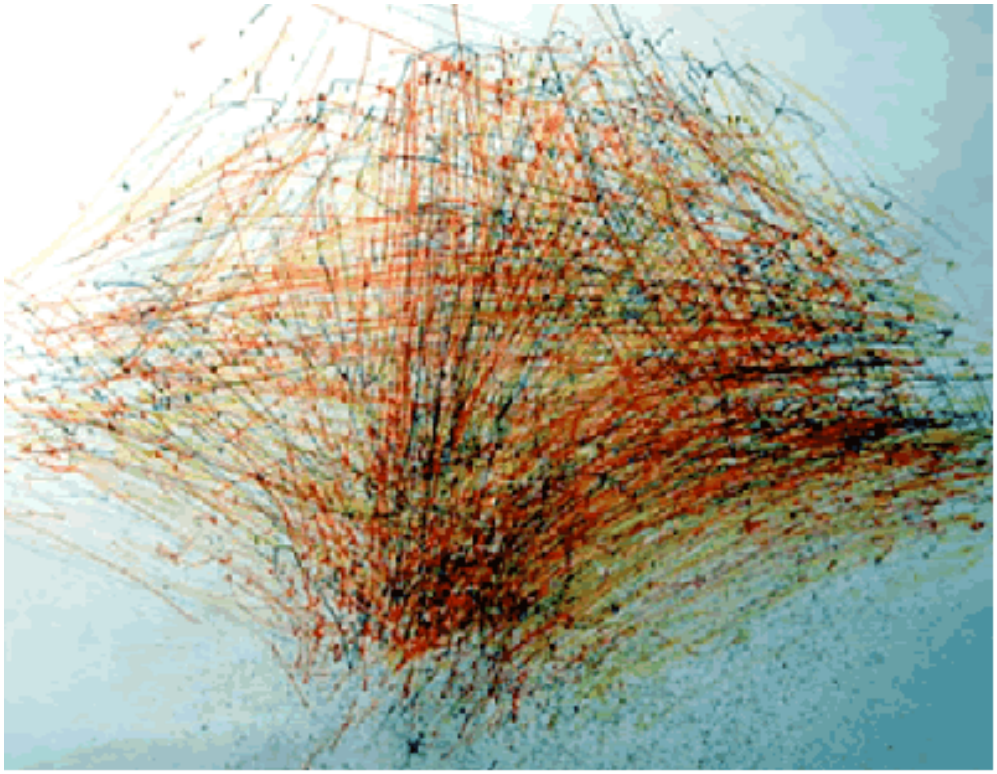

Figure 1. Rhizome Radar by Peter Nowicki

Literature and books, according to Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987), function in a similar rhizomatic system. Literature continuously converges and works with the rest of the world, connecting with politics, sociology, anthropology, popular culture, and/or history to work and, according to Hayden (1998), it assumes a certain quality that changes as soon as the relation between the components of literature change. For example, the politics, culture, and history following the civil rights or feminist movement produced a certain type of literature that was unknown to previous generations. The quality of this literature was emancipatory, and its goal was to contribute to the changing social norms and support racial and gender tolerance and diversity. In the 21st century, literature is different. Postmodernism has enabled a turn toward

fragmentation and multiplicity and hybrid identities, and it attends to the structuring power of language that can transform the interplay of the components and, ultimately, literature.

Using this postmodern approach, I outline in this chapter the theoretical assemblages that informed my study of the representation of women and girls from developing countries in 15 realistic and historical fiction books for young-adults. I provide an overview of the gender-related studies of multicultural children's literature criticism and of the related feminist theories (liberal, radical, black, third-world) that inform the portrayals of female subjects in children's novels and the development of poststructural feminist critiques of subjectivity. I then discuss the Deleuzian concept, *becoming*, and I close the chapter with reflections on how the concept of subjectivity and becoming informed my own approach to literature.

The Representation Machines in Multicultural Children's Literature—Gender Issues

Beginning with the 1960's, multicultural children's literature became a topic of conversation in education because of shifting social and political perspectives on race, class and gender and the emergence of a larger cultural critique that examined the covert power relations in society. According to Taxel (1997), multiculturalism and multicultural education "refers to education that addresses the interests, concerns, and experiences of individuals and groups considered outside of the sociopolitical and cultural mainstream of American society" (p. 5). In the United States it often refers to groups such as African Americans, Native Americans, Asian Americans, and Hispanic Americans. Multicultural literature constitutes an important aspect of multicultural education. Cai and Bishop (1994) suggested that the goal of multicultural literature was to "challenge the existing canon by expanding the curriculum to include literature from a wide variety of cultural groups" (p. 59). Therefore, multicultural literature "is about some

identifiable 'other'— persons or groups that differ in some way (for example racially, linguistically, ethnically, culturally) from the dominant white American cultural group" (p. 58).

Cai and Bishop's (1994) taxonomy of multicultural literature identified three major categories within multicultural literature. *World Literature* includes folktales, fiction, European classics, and other works from outside the United States adapted by American authors. *Cross-Cultural Literature* includes books that present the interrelation between people from different cultures with no specific reference to unique cultural experiences. It also includes books written by writers who do not belong to the specific cultural group they are writing about. Cai and Bishop, relying on the observation made by Dasenbrock (1987), also noted that this category of multicultural literature includes texts about Western cultures "with references to 'minority' or 'Third World' societies, or with members of such groups as their intended audience" (p. 61). Finally, *Parallel Culture Literature* includes books whose authors write about the culture they are a member of. Cai and Bishop emphasized that, although each of the three categories of literature has its own value, parallel literature is most likely to give an accurate and authentic picture of certain minority groups without misrepresenting or stereotyping them because the author, supposedly, knows her own culture better than an outsider.

In 1998, Cai revisited the problem of defining the role and goal of multicultural literature and, instead of focusing on the issue of authorship, he emphasized the importance of content and the pedagogical value of reading multiculturally. According to this new perspective, "every human being is multicultural," therefore, multicultural literature is inclusive of "as many cultures as possible with no distinction between the dominant and the dominated" (p. 313). He added that multicultural literature focuses on racial and ethnic issues. Stoodt-Hill and Amspaugh-Corson (2009) further argued that "books in any genre that include people—both those of color and

those who are not of color but who are part of a distinct cultural group, race, or religion" (p. 208) such as women, gays and lesbians, should also be included in the category of multicultural literature.

The study of gender portrayals in children's literature has been closely informed by both cultural and feminist studies because women, as members of culture, have often been represented as the Other in literature. Stephens (2006) argued that the initiative that "gender based stereotypes needed to be challenged and the relative representation of female and male characters should be monitored" (p. 133) was prompted by the women's movement of the 1970's called *second wave feminism*.

Traditional View of the Female Subject: Second Wave of Feminism

Butler (1992) claimed that traditional understandings of certain concepts, such as the subject, are necessary for the development of new critiques. She wrote: "Indeed, this 'I' would not be thinking, speaking, "I" if it were not for the very positions that I oppose, for those positions…are already part of what constitutes me" (p. 9). Traditional perspectives on the subject, *woman* include both the Aristotelian view that women are morally inferior to men and the early feminist critiques that failed to deconstruct the available discourses/foundations that produced biased interpretations.

The second wave of feminism was a further theorization of gender inequality and women's position within dominant political discourses that had been initiated by *first wave* feminist writers (e.g., Wollstonecraft, 1787). Feminist scholars, such as Kolmar and Bartkowski (2005), claimed that boundaries between the two feminist movements are arbitrary although in the United States the first wave generally refers to the period between 1828-1920, while the second wave refers to the period between the early 1960s and the late 1970s. The first wave is

usually associated with the Woman Suffrage movement commonly linked with the names of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucy Stone, Susan B. Anthony and was dedicated to the struggle of women for the right to vote—the main objective of the first women's right meeting held in 1848 at Seneca Falls, New York. Second wave feminism, both liberal and radical, primarily focused on issues of gender inequality between men and women and was mainly preoccupied with deconstructing patriarchal conceptions of female identity. According to Nicholson (1997), liberal feminism is based on the premise that men and women are basically the same, and that women are able to perform the activities and tasks that men perform. Liberal feminists (e.g., Friedan, 1963; Jaggar, 1983) claim that gender equality in society can be achieved if women engage in actions that maintain their equality. In other words, equality can be achieved if women occupy positions in society that previously have been assigned to men. Radical feminists (e.g., Chodorow, 1978; Daly, 1968; Wittig, 1992), however, according to Nicholson, claimed that the issue of inequality is far more complicated and cannot be solved by simple role switching. In order to change the status quo of women in society, "one needs to focus on the deep ways society differentiated the life activities and psyches of women and men" (Nicholson, 1997, p. 3).

In spite of new critical insights, second wave feminism remained exclusionary because it examined the issue of female oppression from the perspective of Western, white, and middle-class female experience and built on foundations that were dominated by androcentric aspects. One example is Freudian psychoanalysis as described by Chodorow's (1978) theory on the development of feminine personality[5]. Although Chodorow's examination of female and male

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[1] Chodorow's central argument is that the roots of the psychological differences of males and females derive from the conflictive experiences of the Oedipal crisis mediated by the role of the mother who is the primary caretaker of children at this early age. The involvement with a female has conscious and unconscious effects on children of both sexes resulting in the development of different personality traits in the male and female children. Boys, in order to

identity formation is relevant since it introduced a female perspective into the field of psychology, she still built her theories on the male-centered principles of Freudian psychoanalysis (for example, the idea of the Oedipal stage). She defined female oppression based on the model of Western middle-class womanhood and analyzed the female psychic structure in light of the relational triangle established during the Oedipal stage.[2]

Second wave feminist research had tremendous impact on other disciplines such as children's literature. As a result of the consciousness raising activities of the feminist movement, publishers and critics of children's literature paid close attention to how children's developing sense of gender was influenced by the patriarchal ideologies embedded in children's books, and they welcomed books that challenged traditional gender role portrayals (Grauerholz & Pescosolido, 1989). Many of the picture books and old traditional folktales that portrayed female characters became the target of feminist literary criticism and were scrutinized for the messages they transmitted to young girls about femaleness, motherhood, and what it meant to be a woman in our world. Most of those early studies of children's literature applied a quantitative method as described below.

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achieve masculinity will reject their mother as a primary love object and become independent, while girls who keep their pre-oedipal ties to their mother will build oedipal attachments both to the mother and the father upon this relationship (Chodorow 1997, p. 183), remaining more dependent in their relationships with their mother.

[2] As opposed to Freud she rejected the idea of "penis envy", that girls would feel inferior and would turn away from their mother because of this lack or that girls would develop a weaker ego boundary than boys as a result of their dependency to their mother. She argued instead that this dependency brought about the development of a sense of empathy that, via internalization became a part of the female self and which further constituted the bases for a personality that defined itself relationally rather than in isolation. As a result of this "relational capacity" (Chodorow, 1997, p. 196) women became more psychologically able for child rearing, and the relational triangle of their psychic structure could only be completed with the birth of the child.

Quantitative and Qualitative Feminist Analysis in Children's Literature

About 1960, feminist research and criticism of children's literature (e.g., Ernst, 1995; Hamilton, Anderson, Broaddus & Young, 2007; Weitzman, Eifler, Hokada, & Ross, 1972) adopted a quantitative approach and primarily focused on providing statistical data regarding the treatment of male and female characters (e.g., occurrence and frequency of sex-role stereotypes) as well as the ratio of female to male characters (gender equality) in picture books and young adult literature. Weitzman, Eifler, Hokada and Ross' (1972) study was one of the pioneer studies that applied a quantitative approach to examine the frequency of sex-role based images in children's books. Their sociological analysis of Caldecott and Newbery Honor Books, Little Golden Books, and etiquette books written between 1938 and 1972 revealed a high number of sexist or sex-role based images. The examination of hundreds of medal winning books showed that even though stereotypical representations were reduced in Caldecott and Newbery Honor Books, they nevertheless still existed. According to those findings, girls were either underrepresented or were portrayed in traditional female roles as housekeepers, cooks, and helpers and performed activities that bound them to the private world of the home rather then the public world. While men as the main characters of most of the stories performed a variety of activities such as fighting, ruling, winning, and succeeding, women participated in three activities: loving, watching, and helping. A quantitative methodological approach, evident in even later studies such as the one by Hamilton, Anderson, Broaddus and Young in 2007, reported that in over 200 books examined by the authors, twice as many books had male as female character's names in the title. Furthermore, when female characters were represented in instrumental roles, those roles were more traditional than the ones male characters fulfilled, suggesting that men were still more adventurous than women.

Paul (2007) asserted that the goal of such statistical emphasis on sex-role stereotyping and criticism of sexism was "to create a more female-friendly climate" (p. 115), both in literature and in the outside world. The emergence of strong and daring female characters in children's novels was an attempt to deconstruct the female "essence" and to provide young girls with images of more daring, more active, and independent female characters. The search for alternate versions of gender representation, as addressed by qualitative criticism, brought about a heightened attention to issues of identity, voice, and agency of female characters in children's books.

Qualitative studies have traced the social, political, and cultural contexts that contributed to the formation of certain female subjects in children's literature, and scrutinized the socializing effects of such stories on girl readers. Zipes (1983/1993), for example, looked at how female characters in folktales have been modified and recreated in different historical times in order to meet the new social and cultural expectations of ideal womanhood. Lieberman (1987) examined the socializing effects of such fairy tales. The second wave feminist critique of gender images available in fairy tales and other works of children's literature resulted in the recovery of female literary traditions and the reinterpretation and rewriting of some of those stories from a feminist perspective.

Critical insights on representation, prompted by black and third-world feminists, further challenged feminist theory. The questions they raised were: Who are the women that we choose to portray in children's literature, and how do we choose to portray them?

Black and Third-World Feminism: Issues of Difference

Trites (1997) claimed that the rejection of traditional gender roles and the provision of the character with the ability to overcome her oppression was one of the most important characteristics of feminist children's novels. Such books, (e.g., *Cassie Binegar* by Maclachlan

[1982]), according to Trites, corrected images of female docility and portrayed female characters who were on a journey of self-discovery and in search of an identity.

This reversal of traditional gender roles, and the resignification of identity in the new portrayals of female characters was controversial. In some feminist novels (inspired by liberal feminist principles), girls defined their identity by undertaking roles that were traditionally assigned to male characters. Maisie, the heroine in Spinelli's (1991) *There's a Girl in My Hammerlock,* for example, became a wrestler. Although characters like Maisie turned against traditional feminine gender roles and became more adventurous, active, and daring, in the end, these books still remained a celebration of traditional male values. Paul (2007) claimed that these female characters tended to be like "men tricked out in drag" (p. 120) who sought adventure, profit, and someone to rescue, and as such, they did not transcend gender stereotyping. To empower girls with male characteristics was simple stereotype switching that maintained the male/female hierarchy and binary. Harding (1987) identified this attempt as the "add woman" aspect of early feminist analysis. According to Harding (1990), although early feminists challenged the practices of scientific method, they did not challenge the androcentric assumptions of science itself and the deep structure on which those assumptions rested.

Therefore, other feminist writers, as Trites (1997) argued, took a different turn in the portrayal of women and, instead of examining the question of identity, they focused on developing the agency of female characters. Inspired by radical feminist perspectives that emphasized the values of difference between men and women, some feminist writers celebrated nurturing, compassion, and communication, along with the emerging agency and individuality of empowered female protagonists who could switch between various subject positions. The issues of subject positions and difference, however, were further complicated by third-world (Alarcon,

1997; Anzaldua, 1987/2007; Ivekovic, 1993; Lim, 2002; Masson, 2004; Meyer, 1985; Molyneux, 2002; Narayan, 1997; Spivak, 1996; Wolchik, 1985) and black feminists (Hill-Collins, 2008; hooks, 1994), who claimed that women's voices in feminist research had usually drawn on Western, white, middle-class perceptions of femininity, and as a practice, either excluded or appropriated the differences and the point of view of minority voices or neglected to reveal the multiplicity of positions and subjectivity of women from various racial, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Harding (1987) similarly argued that feminist *conservatism* was not "welcoming to issues of race, class or cultural differences in women as subjects of knowledge" (p. 92). In this sense, feminist research continued the exclusionary practice of the white Western male discourse that had dominated research and theory for centuries.

The investigation of culture and ethnicity was a central agenda for third-world feminists who argued that many assumptions about gender were contingent on social discourses. Black and third-world feminists pointed out that the investigation of difference should not be relegated to the analysis of the woman/man binary but should scrutinize the "the many-headed demon of oppression" (Alarcon, 1997, p. 289) by which women of the world have been affected. For some women, equality and resistance were either not a possible option or became problematized by other oppressive structures such as nationalism, nationalist war, state oppression, cultural traditions, and immigration.

Third-world feminists critiqued the essentialist conception of human agency that women are able to overcome their oppression through resistance. Instead, they argued that it is the social discourses that either allows or prevents women them from making choices about their own lives. Some cultural and socioeconomic forces, such as nationalism, cultural traditions, and state oppression intersect with the oppressive structure of patriarchy and create difficulties that are

unfamiliar from a Western feminist perspective. For example, in certain cultural contexts, patriarchal power over women is reconstituted as traditions enacted in fundamentalist religious movements (Ong, 2001), and in order to keep the culture safe and intact, traditions become intrinsic in some nations' culture and politics. According to Barry (1981) traditions "as forms of ritualistic torture" (p. 50) such as excision and infibulations, the veiling and seclusion of women, and arranged and forced marriages are all traditional practices that are protected in the name of cultural integrity. Traditions become reified in society by gaining political and social dimensions even though such male-biased practices are oppressive to women. In other cases such as dictatorships, women's rights, education, and health become undermined by social and political conflicts. In Eastern-Europe, women who lived under totalitarian regimes experienced gender oppression differently from than women living in Western countries. Similarly, nationalist projects can consider attention to gender an obstacle (Blom, Hageman & Hall, 2000). Compared to the oppression of the entire population by the State or another ethnicity, gender oppression becomes irrelevant in some cultural contexts and complicates the question of subject position.[3] Hartsock (1990) further emphasized that social formations such as culture and race do not set apart genders but in some contexts unite them. In other words, men and women may unite in the face of conflicts provoked by ethnic war, nationalism, or state oppression. In conclusion, Alarcon (1997), from the point of view of third-world feminism, asserted that a sole focus on gender without consideration of other aspects such as culture and ethnicity could act as an

[3] Ivekovic (1993) claimed that war and nationalism suppress feminism in some countries. Yet, gender is an important organizing principle for nationalist wars as the power-complex within such social movements, the pattern that helps differentiate between Us and the Other, is based on the pre-existing binary model of gender. Patriarchy is not excluded, but rather complicated in the lives of non-western women in its relation with other social/political forces.

exclusionary practice through which the "autonomous, self-making, self determining subject" (p. 289) of dominant feminist discourse either ignores or appropriates the point of view of minority voices.

Such debates around issues of appropriation, exclusion, essentialism, and authenticity were particularly relevant in this study in my analysis of the representation of non-Western women and girls in realistic and historical fiction books for young-adults.

Women from Non-Western Countries in Realistic and Historical Fiction: Issues of Appropriation, Exclusion, Essentialism, and Authenticity

Authenticity, essentialism, appropriation and exclusion are important concepts addressed by critiques of representation in multicultural children's literature, particularly in realistic and historical fiction. Realistic and historical fiction are two different genres within children's literature and, as Temple, Martinez, and Yokota (2006) explain, one way to differentiate between the two is to look at how far in the past the story is set. Based on Stoodt-Hill and Amspaugh-Corson's (2009) definition, however, both genres share common characteristics: the goal of both contemporary realistic fiction and historical fiction is to transmit Truth and to describe events, people, and relationships as they might happen or could have happened. This kind of truth-seeking was deconstructed by poststructuralist thinkers, for example, by Derrida's (1978) critique of *presence*. The concept of presence refers to the mode of thinking of the Western philosophical tradition that reinforces binaries, seeks clarity and accuracy, and argues for authenticity, in an attempt to marginalize what is complex and contingent.

In many realistic and historical fiction books that portray women and girls from developing countries, authors attempted to capture presence by giving voice to their subjects/characters in first person narration. The author's note at the beginning or end of the

work promises us that the events represented in the books are indeed based on real events that actually happened in the past. They claim that characters in the stories were inspired by real, living individuals whom the author observed, met, interviewed, or whose story she heard about and presented to us in a truthful and objective manner. Staples (1989) for example, in an interview included at the end of her book, *Shabanu,* a realistic fiction book published in 1989 about a 12-year-old Pakistani girl, revealed that two of her characters, Sharma and Shabanu, were based on the story of two women she met and interviewed in one of the villages of Cholistan in Pakistan's Punjab province.

Multicultural scholars of children's literature challenged this claim of accuracy and objectivity. Taxel (1981), for example, argued that characters from the lower social class were seldom included as protagonists in books about the American Revolution, and the topic of social class remained either unaddressed or insignificant in relation to the fight for independence. Multicultural scholars (e.g., Stan, 1999; Stewart, 2008) also scrutinized the editing and publishing process that appropriated cultural experiences and determined what kinds of books would be published for American readers and how those books represented certain cultural groups, for example, women from the Third World. Stewart (2008) claimed that generally the number of books written on international topics is significantly lower than the number of other books published on multicultural topics and that most of the literature about other countries is written by Western authors. She explained that the editorial process used by American publishing industries ensures that unfamiliar words and concepts became adequately "Americanized" in order to become more comprehensible and familiar to American readers.

Most of the literature about non-Western countries written by Western authors describe non-Western cultures as fundamentally flawed (Stewart, 2008) and perpetuate binary

oppositions. Third-world women and girls who were formerly underrepresented in feminist theory and literature acquired a voice via first-world feminists. The voice *appropriations*, however, defined by Nodelman (2003) as "the art of claiming or appropriating the right to give voice to what it means or feels like to belong to a particular group" (p. 175), often promoted *essentialist* representations about the life experiences of third-world women and girls. Essentializing, according to Nodelman, "may foster the idea that members of an ethnic or cultural group are inherently alike simply because of their membership in a group" (p. 171).

In children's literature one contested example is Staple's *Shabanu,* a book that has been critiqued because it describes marriage and motherhood as an essential female duty. From that standpoint, women do not have a choice regarding whom they are going to marry; it is the decision of the parents, in particular, the father. Bradford (2007), in her analysis of the novel, argued that books such as *Shabanu* construct the female Muslim subject as "a unified, oppressed figure" (p. 49). Nodelman (2003), in his analysis of the same novel, claimed that Staples (1989), in fact, avoided essentializing her female subject and deconstructed the one-dimensional image of the third-world woman by introducing female characters who belonged to one culture but were very different in nature. Shabanu and her aunt Sharma were more rebellious while Shabanu's mother and sister were more accepting of their fate and roles. What Nodelman questioned, however, was whether Staples, in an effort to avoid essentialism, fell in the trap of inauthenticity and appropriated Shabanu's character to make her more familiar to the audience of the book. In order to turn the novel into a feminist text, Staples portrayed her as a rebel. But, as Nodelman asked, was this resistance really possible for women like Shabanu?

The concept of *authenticity* has been defined in terms of whether a book ignores or addresses cultural differences. Borrowing Virginia Hamilton's words, Sims Bishop (2003)

defined authenticity as portraying the essence of people. She claimed that authenticity could be further described as accuracy in relation to the *authenticating details* of the book such as dialect and in relation to the environment the author chooses to present, whether, for example, the ghetto is presented as a violent and dangerous place or as home. Troubles with authenticity in the critique of realistic and historical fiction within children's literature have been evident in discussions of authorship as well. Sims Bishop (1980) maintained that in order to present a *true picture* about a particular group of people or to validate a story as real and truthful, there is need for an insider perspective: the *real experience* of the author. Sims-Bishop, in her critique of *Words By Heart* by Ouida Sebestyen (1979/1997), a realistic fiction selected as the Best Book for Young Adults in 1979 by the American Library Association, claimed that the novel misinformed readers and reinforced racist attitudes because of a "flawed … outsider's perspective on Black lives" (p. 133). Sims Bishop argued that the author of the book, a white woman, failed to recognize or acknowledge the political, racial, and social realities (discourses) that shaped the experiences of Black people and that the shortcomings of representation produced a flawed portrayal of Black people in history by suggesting that they were submissive. In order to rectify such representations of minority cultures, multicultural books, according to Sims Bishop (1994), should contribute to an appreciation for people of color and their culture as well as a positive depiction of a diverse society.

Although, the focus on positive portrayals and the deployment of humanist concepts such as true and authentic identity were relevant strategic tools for the deconstruction of racist and sexist images identified in children's books, they were not adequate for addressing the dilemmas of representations. Nodelman (2003) argued that the insistence on exclusively positive portrayals of minority characters ignore that members of minority cultures are also capable of

actions viewed in a negative light. To deny this, according to Nodelman, leads to misrepresentation and positive essentializing that, similar to negative stereotypes, "deny the possibility of individual growth or change" (p. 171).

As the above-mentioned critiques show, authenticity in children's literature remains a difficult issue despite the debates it has generated over the years. Ultimately, problems with authenticity speak to the limitations offered by the essentialist perception of the subject. The belief in a stable female identity and a stable social reality that can be truthfully and authentically represented in research projects, books, or memoirs became a major focus of poststructural feminist critiques that did not focus only on who has the right to represent or who can provide better representations of an authentic life experience but doubted the possibility of an essentialist humanist subject. For example, St.Pierre (2008) pointed out that for the poststructuralist, face-to-face interactions that privilege the voice and words of the subject cannot ensure validity and Truth even in interview projects. A person's story can only be her interpretation of an event or of an experience, not the real itself—because the meaning of language changes depending on the context in which we use it and the person to whom we speak. What a question or an answer means to a researcher can easily mean something different to an interviewee.

Poststructural feminist approaches investigate the structuring function of language and discourse and the work of each in producing subject positions and subjects to populate those positions. Instead of assuming that women, whether black, white, first-world and/or third-world, have an essence, poststructural feminism challenges the idea of a core identity and argues that identity categories are not essential but are created by available discourses and cultural practices.

Discourse: A Poststructural Critique of Language

In order to critique traditional descriptions of the female subject, poststructuralism urges us to question the discourses and foundations that make certain subject positions possible. *Discourse theory* examines the complex relation of power and knowledge and investigates how dominant discourses perpetuate certain beliefs and established truths about the social identities of the female subject. In poststructural feminism, descriptions of the subject and reality are both constructed and deconstructed in discourse and social practices. Poststructuralism shifts the conversation from phenomenological questions about what concepts like subject, language, discourse, and reality mean to questions such as the following: "How does discourse [or power, or the subject or reality] function? Where is to be found? How does it get produced and regulated? What are its social effects?" (Bové, 1995, p. 3)

Foucault (1972) defined discourse as a set of coherent statements and "as practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak" (p. 49). In Burr's (1996) interpretation, discourse refers "to a set of meanings, metaphors, representations, images, stories, statements that in some way together produce a particular version of events" (p. 48), or people, or groups of people. We might talk about the discourse of humanism that produced various interpretations of human identity or the discourse of feminism that generated knowledge from the point of view of the female experience. Within the larger context of feminist discourse, we might also talk about the specific discourses that produce the life experiences of certain groups of women: middle-class women, working-class women and/or women from developing countries. Poststructural critiques doubt that knowledge and Truth and experience originate within a person's essential nature. They rather argue, as St.Pierre (2000) pointed out, that it is language and the linguistic realm, as well as cultural practices, that create and structure human experience producing "knowledge, truth, and subjects" (p. 486). Identity is created, maintained, and challenged in

both language and practice. Furthermore, language provides a space for transformation by enabling us to give various meanings to our experiences. In Burr's (1996) words, "What it means to be 'a woman', to be 'a child' or to be 'black' could be transformed, reconstructed, and for poststructuralism language is the key to such transformation" (p. 43).

This poststructural perspective on the structuring power of language is well illustrated in Cleaves's (2008) novel *Little Bee*, a book about a young Nigerian refugee. While being detained in an immigration center in the southeastern part of the United Kingdom, Little Bee reflects on how the different uses of the English language (English she learned in Nigeria and standard English that she learned from newspapers and magazines like *The Guardian* or *The Times*) shaped and brought together her Nigerian and her new immigrant identity. She described her own English used in Nigeria as a trick played on standard English. Her Nigerian English borrowed words and vocabulary from standard English but attached meaning to it using the context and the values of the Nigerian culture. Little Bee's Nigerian English is incomprehensible for users of standard English as it incorporates idioms particular to the life experiences and modes of thinking of her own people. Little Bee explained this when she said: "For example, the Queen could never say, *There was plenty wahala, that girl done use her bottom power to engage my number one son and anyone could see she would end in the bad bush*. Instead the Queen must say, *My late daughter-in-law used her feminine charms to become engaged to my heir, and one might have foreseen that it wouldn't end well*" (p. 3). Although Little Bee found her Nigerian English to be interesting like storytelling, she also recognized it as a sign of her refugee or illegal immigrant status. Thus, in order to establish a new identity and to become invisible, Little Bee learned to use the Queen's English without "the tricks of her mother tongue" (Cleave, 2008, p. 2).

Little Bee's observation that there was nothing natural or true about her identity aligns with the poststructural claim that, although language has the power to structure our experiences, it also limits us. Little Bee learned to speak the Queen's English and learned to become someone different from newspapers and magazines she read. This new language, however, could not entirely express the various aspects of her identity shaped both by her Nigerian background and her new illegal status in England. The complexity of her subject position also suggests that her social identity is not static. Little Bee's observation is in agreement with the poststructural claim that the truth of an individual and social reality cannot adequately be contained and transmitted in language—a notion that Derrida (1972/1981) has critiqued through the theory of *différance*.

Derrida (1972/1981) challenged the idea that language is transparent, can mirror reality, and thus clearly express or describe ideas, feelings, or the real to others. In fact, the theory that language is a tool that can provide access to true knowledge of the self and reality first became problematic for the linguist, Saussure (2006/1916). Saussure refused the idea that there was a direct relationship between language, the mind, and the outside world. The idea that words did not derive from nature and did not have an intrinsic meaning but rather acquired meaning within language is the basic tenet of his structural linguistics[4]. In spite of his radical linguistic perspectives, however, as St.Pierre (2000) argued, Saussure (2006/1916) did not recognize that the same signifier (spoken sound) might also have different meanings. He believed that when the signifier became attached to the signified, their relationship became fixed. "Once words

[4] In Sausurre's explanation, even though in many modern languages there is a correspondence between the word apple and the outside reality of the fruit, in ancient Greek for example the word apple denoted not only the round red-yellow or green fruit but round fruits in general. In that case, there was no direct correspondence between the word and the outside reality. Thus, Saussure divided the sign into the signifier (sound-image) and the signified (mental-image) and claimed that the sound image of apple did not evoke the same mental-image in all of us: some might think of apple as red and small, others might think of it as yellow or green

become attached to particular meaning they are 'fixed' in that relationship, so that the same word has always the same meaning" (Burr, 1996, p. 38).

The Saussurian idea of fixed meaning became important for Derrida (1978), who contrarily claimed that language cannot capture and contain meaning, that, in language, meaning is always deferred. In Cleave's (2008) novel, Little Bee explained this when she realized that although her Nigerian English was different from the language used in England, standard English was also open to shifts in meaning. This contradiction was evident in her conversation with a detention officer at the refugee center. Upon her release, Little Bee first thanked the officer saying: "*Thank you sir, may God move with grace in your life and bring joy into your heart and prosperity upon your loved ones*" (p. 3). When the officer, in a reaction to her words, pointed his eyes at the ceiling, Little Bee realized that she "went over the top" (p. 3) and that the Queen's English she learned from books and newspapers was different from the language people actually spoke. In order to conceal the fact that she learned English from books, Little Bee had to learn to speak like an English girl, and this shifting and changing language gradually changed her as well—she became the girl who did not look English and did not speak like a Nigerian. In Derrida's interpretation, there is no fixed meaning, origin. identity, or essence at the heart of existence; language can create us anew.

Subjectivity

If language cannot be a transparent "expressive medium" (Jackson, 2003, p. 701) of an essence that really exists out there waiting to be discovered, voiced, or interpreted but is rather a medium that creates reality, meaning, Truth, and so on, then the subject (also created in language) cannot have a unified nature and stable presence that can be accurately or authentically represented. Poststructuralism troubles the concept of an essential, fixed identity of the female

(or male) subject and instead focuses on *subjectivity*: "the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual, her sense of herself and her ways of understanding her relation to her world" (Weedon, 1987/1997, p. 32), a relationship that is "linguistically and discursively constructed and displaced across the range of discourses in which the concrete individual participates" (Belsey, 1997, p. 661). Poststructuralism has distanced itself from the notion of an authentic individual and rather proposes "a subjectivity which is precarious, contradictory and in process, constantly being reconstituted in discourse each time we think or speak" (Weedon, 1987/1997, p. 32). From a poststructuralist stance, Butler (1992) argued that the female subject does not have a well-defined fixed core; rather, it is in constant production, formation, and change.

For me, the idea of changing and contradictory subjectivity is closely related to the Deleuzian concept of *becoming*. Both concepts helped me analyze the female characters in the realistic and historical fiction novels in this study and deconstruct the concept of representation that relies on an essentialist subject and a reality that exists in advance of language.

Becoming

According to Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987), by "never ceasing to become" (p. 277) we can challenge dualisms and binary oppositions. The idea of becoming is to refuse to stay fixed in one perspective, one subject position. That is why Deleuze and Guattari defined *becoming* a "block of coexistence" (p. 292), not one or the other but an "in between" (p. 293) space— a "zone of proximity and indiscernibility, no man's land, a nonlocalizable relation" (p. 293) that connects two distant points and carries them into the proximity of one another.

Becoming may also be described as a process, an attempt to move away from binary modes of thinking, "to create something new" (Negri, 1990, para. 4).

Becoming is a breaking away from an essentialist understanding of the female subject, for example. As opposed to the term subject (often used in essentialist ways), the term subjectivity is a becoming because it suggests that the self is continuously changing, and it is "a threshold, a door, a becoming between two multiplicities" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 249) as opposed to a fixed self. Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) also pointed out that every becoming entails the minoritarian/majoritarian dichotomy that does not only oppose but mutually produces each another. Majoritarian refers to the norm and dominant ideologies, the standard or the status quo and minoritarian to the opposite. In their interpretation, minority does not refer to a group of people that occupy a non-dominant position as opposed to a dominant one. Minoritarian rather represents a process of change and becoming, a "political affair" (p. 292) that disrupts dominant categories, activates variations, and brings into coexistence the two poles which mutually affect one other. Therefore, every becoming is a becoming-minoritarian, through which the two opposing sides continue to produce one another. In becoming, it is not only men who become minoritarian but also women. For example, the Western feminists attempt to speak for women in non-Western countries is a majoritarian move. In order to become minoritarian, Western feminists experimented with representation in research.

Becoming is well-illustrated in Budhos' (2006) *Ask Me No Question*, a novel that describes the experiences of illegal Bangladeshi immigrants in the United States by focusing on a 14 year old girl, Nadira, and her family. In this book, women from cultures in which they were bound to male-biased traditions acquired a different subjectivity (became wage-earners) in an environment where the old cultural values lost their significance. Under new circumstances,

Nadira and her mother learned to be more assertive and assumed more responsibilities for the future of the family. Nadira's mother's becoming is illustrated in her new position as a self-reliant person who took charge of the family's life after her husband's imprisonment. This new becoming, however, would not have been possible without the existing binary opposition between her and her husband. Her minoritarian role helped her become somebody else in the course of the novel, a change that affected all members of the family.

Minoritarian/majoritarian are two distinct concepts, but one is the condition of the other, and, thus, they are not separable. The mother's minoritarian role is the condition of her becoming and in the gender relations portrayed in this novel the two minoritarian/majoritarian components are drawn together. The majoritarian and minoritarian attitudes of the father and the mother cannot be clearly distinguished by the end of the novel. Sometimes they assume one, then the other, and sometimes they combine elements of each. As Deleuze and Guattari (1991/1994) wrote: "every concept relates back to other concepts, not only in its history but in its becoming or its present connections" (p. 19), and in this zone of neighborhood the related components overlap and become indiscernible. At the end of the novel we no longer see the majoritarian/minoritatrian distinction in the mother's and the father's roles; their becoming has challenged the binary oppositions of the two, situating them somewhere in between.

Conclusion: Subjectivity, Becoming, and the Reader

A poststructural point of view of *subjectivity* and the Deleuzian theory of *becoming* helped me explore the representation of women and girls from developing countries in relation to nationalism, nationalist war, state oppression, cultural traditions, and immigration found in multicultural children's literature. In particular, I examined how realistic and historical fiction books produced knowledge and Truth about women and girls from developing countries through

linguistic representation. A poststructural/postmodern approach also helped me reflect on my own work and writing.

As the study progressed, I realized that it was important for me to consider my own subjectivity in connection with the literary work by reflecting on my positions as reader, writer, and researcher. While Nodelman (2003) urged writers and researchers to learn to find the various subject positions, "lived narratives," or "the storylines that make up one's life" (p. 178), he also suggested that writers reflect on the process of writing. To do that, as I discuss in the next chapter, I used short, memory-based writings as a method of analysis. Similarly to Nodelman, Abu-Lughod (1990) claimed that the possibility of a feminist research might lie in the researcher's (writer) effort to reflect on the act of writing and on the partiality of all knowledge, representation and identity. My reflective writing unsettled the man/woman, first-world woman/third-world woman binary oppositions and experiment with the idea of what representation could become.

My responses to the texts I studied were compelled by the unwritten, ghost-like quality of literature that Attridge (2005) called *singularity,* a "*demand* that this specific collocation of words, allusion, and cultural references make on me in the event of my reading" (p. 67). Attridge's poststructural questioning stance helped me challenge the conventional view that the purpose of a literary text is to mirror an objective reality outside itself and that the critic's role is to determine whether the author accomplished that feat. Instead, in my study I experimented with a different kind of analysis: the experience of reading itself and the becoming of representation. Derrida (1992) defined this experience of the writing or reading of literature as an *act* that is the closest to a certain *functionality* or *essence* that literature can provide.

This kind of poststructural reading of a text engages the reader in a creative process. While I was the reader of the texts that I had decided to examine, I also became a creator of stories by including my own memory-based writings with my reading. This type of inventiveness involves a living-through of the work and a re-imagination of its cultural materials (Attridge, 2005). Through this event, I was not, however, in search of a more adequate Truth but rather different truths and meanings that become possible in the becoming of representation.

Chapter 3

Methodology

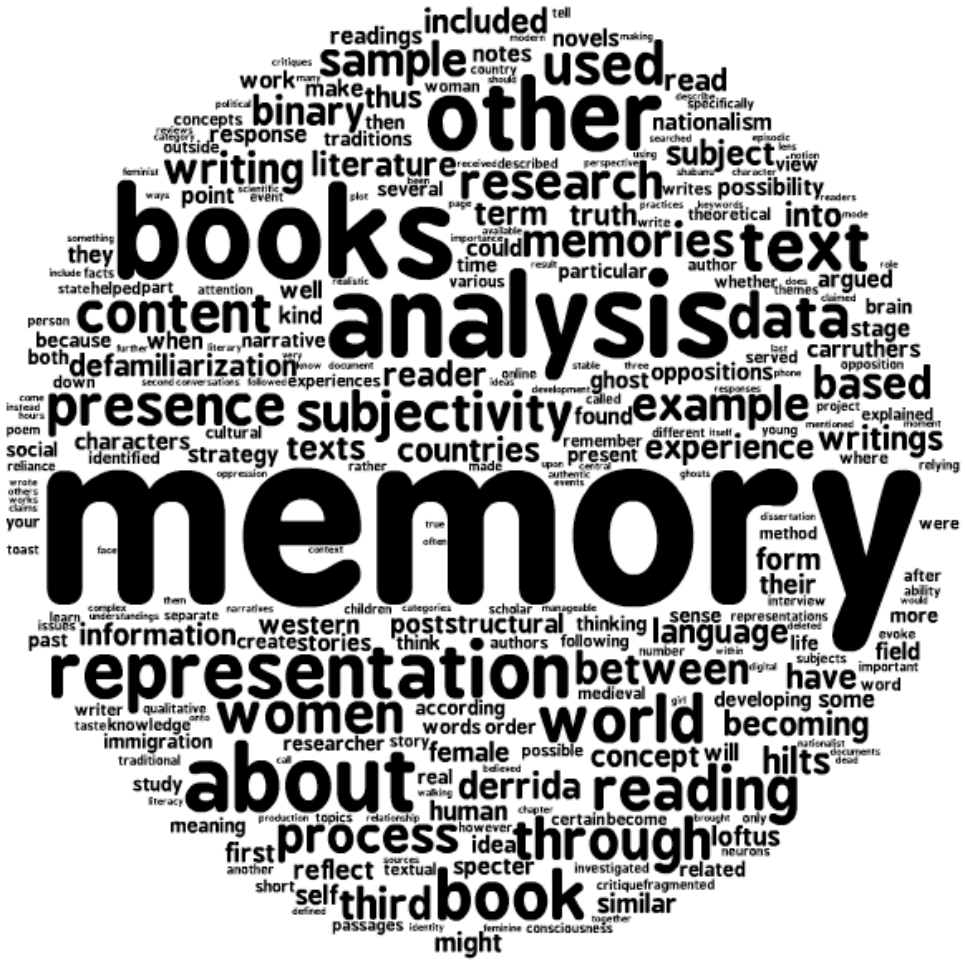

Figure 3. Visual representation of chapter three using the application Tagul.

The data analysis method used in this study was poststructural textual analysis. Traditional qualitative research describes textual analysis as a form of content analysis that, according to Patton (2002), refers to analyzing various texts, interview transcripts, diaries. From a poststructural perspective, Prior (2003), in her discussion of the use of textual analysis in social science research, explained that this method is not restricted to the examination of the content of a document itself, but attends both to the mode of production and function of a given document (how it is molded to be used for different ends), and its effect on the reader. Following this method of analysis, in my previous chapter, I examined multicultural children's literature, in particular, realistic and historical fiction books for young-adults about women and girls from developing countries, and I explored how these books have been used in the context of education. In this chapter, I will describe how I analyzed and responded to the 15 realistic and historical fiction books in my sample.

My theoretical approach to textual analysis was informed by the poststructural feminist critiques of *subjectivity* and the Deleuzian concept of *becoming*. I used *memory*, that I will discuss in detail shortly, as a tool for textual analysis. As poststructuralism "sees the person constructed through language" (Burr, 1996, p. 33), I examined how the books constructed the experiences and subjectivity of women and girls from developing countries. I also used my own memory-based writings, a combination of conventional and digital stories, in order to reflect on my own subjectivity. The poststructural textual analysis of female subjectivity involved the analysis of:

- Conventional narrative structure in order to identify the setting, plot, characters, themes of the young-adult novels

- Representation of women in relation to issues of nationalism, nationalist war, state oppression, cultural traditions, and immigration in order to identify the main discourses the authors drew on in their representation of women and girls from developing countries
- Representation of Us/Other binary oppositions (women/men, first-world women/third-world women) in the books in order to identify the strategies through which the author created distance between the experiences of the reader and the experiences of the characters of the book
- Alternative representation in order to identify how the authors deconstructed Us/Other binary opposition and offered more complex character portrayal

While the above-mentioned categories served as a framework for the analysis of the texts, I did not count the instances of gender or nation-related conflicts or binary oppositions. Nor did I try to determine whether representations of women and girls are authentic or stereotypical. Because the theoretical perspective that I used in this dissertation is poststructuralism, I did not assume that I could, first, determine what a true or correct representation might be and, second, that such representation would be possible or desirable. Instead, relying on Attridge's (2005) observation that what we learn from literature is not the Truth but rather what a particular telling of the truth is, I argued that representation is always contingent and incomplete. In my analysis, I reflected on the limitations of the representations of the female subjects offered by the author. The additional stories that I included through my memory-based writings contribute to the critique of the partiality of all representation and gestures toward new understandings of what representation might become.

The Sample

In my study, a textual analysis of 15 young adult books usually labeled realistic and historical fiction, I used poststructural feminist theories of *subjectivity* and *memory*, and the Deleuzian theory of *becoming*, to explore representations of women from developing countries in relation to nationalism, nationalist war, state oppression, cultural traditions, and immigration found in multicultural children's literature. The books in my sample depict female characters from many different countries, including Albania, Romania, Dominican Republic, India, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nigeria, Korea, and China. I limited the number of books to 15 in order to keep the dissertation project manageable.

Prior to my research I read several realistic and historical fiction books for young-adults about women and girls from developing countries. Based on the readings, my initial assumption was that those books relied on Us/Other binary oppositions in the representation of female subjects. Although I could not predict that other books on similar topics would rely on Us/Other binaries as well, I was expecting that various forms of binaries may exist in other young-adult books on similar topics. Us/Other binaries, however did not become a criteria based on which I selected books for my sample. My criteria for selecting books was as follows:

1) The protagonist of the book was a woman from a developing country or the representation of a female character from a developing country was a key element in the book.
2) The presence of the following socio-political issues in the book: nationalism, nationalist war, state oppression, cultural traditions, and immigration. While *war* was a keyword I used to select my sample, I decided to exclude novels that concentrated on the Holocaust in order to narrow my study.

3) Originally, the issue of immigration was not a criterion for selection but because many books in my sample ended with the characters' immigration or contemplation of immigration, it became an important keyword.
4) Because the category of young-adult includes a wide variety of readers (ages 14-21) while selecting books, I included two novels, *The Land of the Green Plum* by Müller (1997) and *Little Bee* by Cleave (2008) that could be read by young-adults, even though the books were not marketed as such.

I identified some books in my sample through my graduate courses on children's literature. In order to locate other books, I searched for keywords (nationalism, nationalist war, state oppression, cultural traditions, and immigration) in the Children's Literature Comprehensive Database (CLCD) and NoveList database through the Georgia Library Learning Online (GALILEO). The keyword searches helped me locate book titles and book reviews in the database. I requested and received several recommendations through the CHILD_LIT mailing list, a listserve for media specialists, public school teachers, college professors, graduate students interested in children's literature. I also used online vendor websites such as Amazon.com where I read book reviews of other books with similar topics. I found Amazon.com's *What Do Customers Ultimately Buy After Viewing This Item?* and *Look for Similar Items by Subject and Category* as well as *Listmania* features very useful. Additionally, I examined the book selection process and nominee list of the *Georgia Book Awards Program* for possible titles. To determine whether available novels were appropriate for my project, I searched book reviews for details about the plot and characters. After the reading surveys, book reviews, and book recommendations received online, I collected the books that I found suitable for this project.

The books in my sample were published between 1989 and 2009, and they discuss current socio-political issues related with immigration, veiling and racial discrimination or other relevant topics from the recent past such as ethnic war and dictatorship. Lynch-Brown, Tomlinson and Short (2010) defined the use of such topics in young-adult literature as social and new realism that addresses the controversial aspects of human life. This definition, however, also raises the question of how to make a distinction between realistic and historical fiction books. Temple, Martinez and Yokota (2006) suggest that one way to differentiate between the two genres is to look at how far in the past is the story set. Some scholars have argued that books written about events that happened twenty or twenty-five years ago should be characterized as historical fiction. Others maintained that it is rather fifty years that would separate a work of historical fiction from realistic fiction. The argument over classifying these two genres is still ongoing and as Stood-Hill and Ampspaugh-Corson (2009) pointed out it often depends on the reader's view how these works would be categorized. I consider the majority of the books realistic fiction with the exception of *Red Scarf Girl* (Jiang, 1997) that discusses the socio-political movement in China, commonly known as Cultural Revolution, from 1966 through 1976, and *When My Name Was Keoko* (Park, 2001) a book that discusses the Japanese occupation of Korea in the 1940s.

To address the Insider/Outsider debate raised by Sims Bishop (1980) in relation with issues of representation in multicultural children's literature, in my sample most books are written by Western authors some of whom worked as journalists and anti-war activists for many years and have been involved in humanitarian organizations abroad. The exception is Müller (1993) who relies on her own experiences of growing up in Romania during communism in writing her novel, and partially An Na (2001), Jiang (1997) and Park (2002) whom are first generation immigrants in the United States. While Sims Bishop (1980) argued that the authors'

cultural belonging is pertinent to a sensitive portrayal of a particular culture, for example, an author from an outsider perspective would present the ghetto as a violent and dangerous place, and from an insider perspective as home, I found that most authors in the sample attempted to address the complexities of life irrelevant of their own cultural background. They mainly accomplished this by avoiding generalizations and introducing female characters with changing subject positions and experiences. Some of the characters in the books, for instance, are tradition bound, while others are or become more self-reliant. One exception, perhaps, is Paterson (2009), a two-time winner of the Newbery Medal and National Book Award, whose narrow portrayal of an Albanian family and the refugee experience in her latest book draws on the *western savior* cliché, an updated version of the *white savior* stereotype frequently used in relation to portrayals of African Americans in children's literature in the past decades (Taxel, personal communication, May 4, 2011). Beyond the authors' attempt to provide rich content, the overall artistic merit of these boos also contribute to more sophisticated portrayals. Some of the authors in the sample, for instance, McCormick (2006), An Na (2001), Staples (1989) are accomplished award-winning children or young-adult book authors with a distinctive literary style, while Mooney (1997), for instance, is a journalist and her writing reads more like a fictionalized news coverage than literature. Jiang (1997), who immigrated to the United States as an adult and opened a business that promotes cultural exchange between the West and China, shares a writing style similar to Mooney's (1997).

From a poststructural/postmodern perspective, most young-adult books in my sample could be described as *root-books* because they aim to represent reality accurately and transparently. The authors' note at the beginning or at the end of the work promises us that the events represented in the books are indeed based on real events that actually happened in the

past. The characters in the stories were inspired by real living individuals whom the authors observed, met, and interviewed, or whose story they heard about and presented to us in a truthful and objective manner. In spite of these claims of accuracy, however, some authors, as mentioned before, rely on contradictory discourses in their books and engage in more complex portrayals that I termed *becoming*. For example, in *Under the Persimmon Tree*, Staples (2005) uses the *western savior* discourse by introducing an American woman who opens a school for Afghani girls, but in parallel she also uses her American character in the book to critique Westerners' inability to comprehend the complexity of life and culture in women's lives in Afghanistan. These contradictory discourses that are also evident in *The Breadwinner* (Ellis, 2000), *Red Scarf Girl* (Jiang, 1998) and others suggest that we can never gain objective knowledge about a culture and its people even in realistic fiction books.

Because I wanted to limit the sample to a manageable size, I did not include non-fiction books and picture books in my sample. The intended audience of the books ranges from upper-elementary to high-school readers. Some books in the sample with more complex character portrayal and storyline and high literary quality won national awards, for example, *Shabanu* (Staples, 1989) won the Newbery Honor, *Sold* (McCormick, 2006) won the National Books Award, *A Step from Heaven* (An Na, 2001) won the Michael L. Printz Award for Excellence in Young-Adult Literature. All books in the sample, however, are recommended readings by book review magazines such as the *School Library Journal* and *The Horn Book Magazine*, *Library Journal*, *Publisher's Weekly*, and the *American Library Association Booklist*.

The novels in my sample are as follows: *Before We Were Free* by Alvarez (2001), *A Step from Heaven* by An Na (2001), *Little Bee* by Cleave (2008). *The Fattening Hut* by Collins (2005), *The Breadwinner* (2000) by Ellis, *Red Scarf Girl* by Jiang (1997), *Sold* by McCormick

(2006), *Girl of Kosovo* by Mead (2001), *Voices of Silence* by Mooney (1997), *The Land of the Green Plums* by Müller (1996), *When My Name Was Keoko* by Park (2002), *The Day of the Pelican* by Paterson (2009), *Shabanu* (1989) as well as *Under the Persimmon Tree* (2005) by Staples, *Homeless Bird* by Whelan (2000).

The Process

In my analysis of female subjectivity, I first examined *textual subjectivity*, the incorporation of subjectivity in the linguistic fabric of the texts (Spearing, 2005). In doing so, I focused on how the narrative reinforced and/or challenged Us/Other binaries. After reading several books in my sample, most of which strongly relied on binaries, I identified the Us/Other binary opposition as a strategy of *defamiliarization*, a method used by authors to create distance between the experiences of the reader and the experiences of the characters of the book and to present Western readers with unfamiliar and uncommon human experiences. Another strategy of defamiliarization I identified was the strategy of *becoming* (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980/1987), a particular use of narrative and linguistic techniques in the text that offered more complex portrayals of subjectivity and challenged the Us/Other binary oppositions. Books that rely on Us/Other binary oppositions are in majority in comparison to books that rely on the strategy of becoming. Furthermore, although all books in my sample received awards of some kind, several of the books that rely on the strategy of becoming received major recognition in the field of literature. As mentioned before, *A Step from Heaven* by An Na (2001) received the Michael L. Prints Award in Excellence for Young-Adult Literature, McCormick's (2006) *Sold* was a National Book Award Finalist, *Little Bee* by Cleave (2008) was a New York Time Bestseller, and *The Land of the Green Plums* is the best-known work of the Nobel Prize-winning author, Müller (1996).

After identifying the Us/Other binary as a strategy of defamiliarization, I focused on identifying the textual practices through which the acts of defamiliarization are deployed. For example, I followed how the narrative structure, point of view, and social and political discourses in the books (nationalism, nationalist war, state oppression, cultural traditions, and immigration) produced binary oppositions, and I marked the text when I came across such instances. I also attended to the practices through which the authors argued for the truthful-ness of their representations. I used the term *presence* to identify passages in the text where the authors made truth-claims in regards to the sources of inspiration of their stories. In parallel, I looked at how the subjectivity of women and girls from non-Western countries was described in more complex ways, for example, how the author reflected on the multiplicity of subject positions that women and girls inhabited or on the variety of different experiences they encountered. Beyond descriptions, I looked at specific uses of linguistic devices such as metaphor that rendered impressions about the character or her experience instead of directly describing an event. I paid attention to the use of genre and style, for instance, the blending of poetry and narrative and the use of multiple voices as strategies of defamiliarization, and I used the term *becoming* to mark such instances in the text.

Analytic Notes

In the first stage of analysis, I read the books and marked passages I found important with sticky notes and identified the use of *binary oppositions* and *becoming.* I also wrote analytic notes that documented my initial reactions to the texts. During that first reading, I listed the main topics I identified in the texts, such as nationalism, nationalist war, state oppression, cultural traditions, and immigration, and related themes (underlying significance behind the topic) I identified at that point such as fear, betrayal or surveillance, veiling. In my analytic notes, I

included page numbers or quotes from the texts related to representation. For example, while reading *Red Scarf Girl* by Jiang (1997), a book about the cultural revolution in China, I wrote a two-page reflection in which I identified communism as the main theme of the book, and I noted binary oppositions and narrative techniques that I interpreted as elements of defamiliarization. In general, my analytic notes included theoretical interpretations in response to the study's research questions. The analytic notes did not become a part of the dissertation, but they helped me organize my thoughts about the readings and observations relevant to my research questions and the representation of subjectivity, and they helped me prepare my analysis. As opposed to the traditional data analysis process, I did not create strict categories to sort the texts and in order to conduct a "manageable classification" (Patton, 2002, p. 463). Nor did I code the texts in order to establish "core consistencies and meanings" (p. 452). Although I identified certain common themes and topics in the book, this has not turned the chaos of textual analysis into an easily manageable task. My initial interpretation documented in my analytic notes of the books has changed as I wrote this dissertation because I continued to read about both poststructuralism and young-adult literature. In that way, I could not separate analysis from reading and writing, and the analysis of the books occurred while I was writing about the texts.

At one point, I began to move material from the dissertation into what I called *ghost chapters,* which I think of as space that helped me document my thinking in the process of writing and organizing my dissertation. The ghost chapters incorporate ideas and writings that I abandoned and deleted from the final version of the dissertation because, although they were necessary steps in developing my analysis about the young-adult books, they did not have a place in the final version of the work. The deleted material included initial analysis of the young-adult books, writing prompts that occurred to me and I had to write down immediately, and

observation of everyday interactions that gave me ideas for my writing and analysis. Reflections on readings, both scholarly and children's literature, that I never actually referenced or included in the final version of my dissertation but which helped me understand certain concepts and make connections between ideas, have also been included in my ghost chapters. For example, in preparation to my theory/literature review chapter, I started to read a collection of letter exchanges between Karl Marx and his wife, Jenny von Westphalen, and a collection of political speeches by Nicolae Ceauşescu, the late Romanian communist dictator. These letters and speeches helped me understand that language and discourse creates and does not reflect reality. Although Marx advocated equality among men and women and social classes, in his personal life he did not allow his wife to become actively involved in politics, which became a point of complaint in Westphalen's letters. Similar, although Ceauşescu in his speeches seemingly supported the involvement of women and minorities in the Communist Party, during that time they were rarely given leading positions in politics. The ghost chapters also included a series of email exchanges between me and my father on the issues of gender equality and unequal pay between men and women in Romania. While I "explained" to my dad that gender inequality in Romania is evident in the income disparity between female and male teachers (my father receives a higher pay as a teacher than my mother who is also a teacher), my dad "explained" to me that gender inequality is also evident in the retirement policy differences for men and women (my mother will be able to retire with full pension at the age of 55, while my father, to receive the same benefits, has to work until he reaches 65). His comments helped me think about the complexities of gender related issues and discourses across cultures and economies. The ghost chapters also included my reflections on the Romanian movie, *Police Adjective* by Porumboiu (2010), which movie helped me understand the Deleuzian concept of *machine* and *rhizomatic*

analysis as played out in a visual narrative. I saved these writings because they gave me ideas for other research projects that I would like to pursue in the future and because they illustrate the rhizomatic nature of the analysis process, the false starts and dead-ends, and the messiness of research in general. The analytic notes I included at the end of this chapter in the form of data poems are excerpts from my Ghost chapters.

Additionally, the data poems reflect my thinking about the novels and the processes that we usually do not consider part of data analysis. The temporary states of confusion, the conversations we have with friends about the books we are reading, the memories that occur to us while reading, and the ideas that occur while we are thinking about analysis are all part of data analysis. It occurred to me during analysis that it would be important for me to defamiliarize analysis itself, and I documented that work in my analytic notes.

While reading, I also marked passages in the text that evoked my own memories, and I recorded them in a separate document. This strategy served several purposes: (1) a form of reader response, (2) reflecting on my own subjectivity, and (3) defamiliarizing conventional data analysis and representation.

Memories and Ghosts

The specter or ghost is "a paradoxical incorporation, the becoming-body, a certain phenomenal and carnal form…a 'thing' that remains difficult to name: neither soul nor body, and both one and the other" (Derrida, 1994, p. 5). Derrida's ghost challenges the singularity of a position because it occupies an in-between space. It is not in the past, nor in the present; rather, it moves between the two. Derrida (1994) described human memory as a form of ghost. To call the ghost, he explained, is to evoke or bring forth a memory. He argued that memory is useful

for deconstructive work because it challenges binary modes of thinking and occupies an in-between space and connects the *actual* and the *inactual*.

The use of memory in my textual analysis enabled me to do research differently. Instead of reinforcing old concepts, or as Derrida put it, letting ourselves "be entertained and occupied and *played* or *tricked* [jour] by the dead" (p. 142), the use of memory in analysis helped me reflect on my own subjectivity as I read and analyzed the texts.

The use of memory in data analysis is not new. St.Pierre (1997), in her critique of traditional qualitative research methodology, identified an out-of-category kind of data she termed *transgressive*. Those data included emotional data, dream data, sensual data, response data, and memory data as unacknowledged but nonetheless important sources of knowledge in the course of research. A text or an interview, for example, might evoke certain memories in the reader/researcher, which might further evoke strong emotional and mental responses that influence the way the reader/researcher responds to and interprets that particular text. Faust (2004), in his study of family literacy, claimed that memory had an important role in "how each of us make sense of our lives" (p. 564). He argued that the crafting of life histories and memories can serve as a transformative literacy event that helps students "become thoughtful readers and writers in other contexts" (p. 570) and creates links between literacy and self-formation.

Through the use of memory in my analysis, I unsettled the first-world woman/ third-world woman binary opposition, and I attended to both my own and my subjects' (the characters in the books) fragmented identities and to the similarities and differences we share. In my analysis, I did not engage in the role of reader as a passive recipient. Instead, through memory, I attempted to create a participatory relationship between reading and writing, and was deeply

imbricated in the meanings I made (Jung, 2005). This participatory relationship helped me deconstruct the reader/writer binary opposition. Furthermore, following Abu-Lughod's (1990) suggestion that the possibility of feminist research might come from the researcher's (writer's) effort to reflect on the partiality of all knowledge, representation, and identity, I believe my memory-based writing helped me to reflect on the contingency of representation available in realistic and historical fiction books for young-adults about women and girls from non-Western countries.

The Work of Memory

Hilts (1995) described memory, as an effect "more or less permanent that remains after a presence to the sense has gone" (p. 27). As he explained our understanding of the future are based upon what we know from the past. Thus, in my analysis, memory became a bridge between the past and the future, the text and me. Loftus (1994), a psychologist and an expert on human memory, distinguished three stages of memory development: (1) sensory register, (2) short-term memory (STM) and, (2) long-term memory (LTM). I used long-term memory in my analysis. Loftus explained that sensory memory, a vivid record of an image, a sound, or, for example, the title of a book or the color of its jacket, holds information for less than a second. For this information to last longer, it must be transferred to short-term memory that helps us remember, for example, a page number or a phone number while we are dialing it. Short-term memory, then, if repeated becomes long-term memory that, according to Loftus, is capable of storing a limitless amount of information in our brain. In the course of the textual analysis of 15 realistic and historical fiction books for young-adults, long-term memory as "a complex construct of experiences stored with particular attention to importance and accessibility" (Loftus, 1994, p. 13) helped me make connections as a reader with the texts in my sample.

The findings of neuroscience and specifically, Tulving's 1970's classification of memory types, as used by Hilts (1995), helped me understand how *skill* or *procedural memory* "the ability to rehearse and learn sequences of skill," or *episodic memory*, the ability "to recall specific episodes, whole events, from life," and *semantic memory*, "the memory for facts such as names, numbers, ideas, and other similar material we manipulate in daily life" (pp. 186-187) were engaged by my readings of the books and became stories or reflections that I included in my analysis.

From a scientific perspective, memory, of any kind, is a result of the rhizomatic work of neural cell assemblies in our brain. Neurons, as Hilts (1995) pointed out, are not randomly joined by one another. Neurons form bulbs, regions, maps (rhizomes) onto which the impressions of the outside world are laid out and decoded. When the brain receives signals from the outside, it translates them into the language of the brain, an "electrical and chemical chatter" (p. 167) that does not, in any way, resemble the original message. The original message becomes fragmented. The neurons of the eye perceive scales of light and dark. Other neurons perceive textures, contrast, or degrees of brightness, temperature, and odors. Higher cell assemblies detect the abstract meanings of the received signals, and all this information is sent to and absorbed in the brain by the hippocampal system. In this way, information becomes what we call memory. In the following quote, the French novelist, Marcel Proust (1913/1982), described evocatively this sensation of remembrance, the childhood memory of summers spent at the countryside with his grandfather—a memory instigated many years later by the act of drinking tea. The "taste of rusk dunked in tea" he wrote, "was one of the hidey-holes where the dead hours—dead to the intellect—went to tuck themselves"(p. 51). Thus, the hidey-holes of the texts in my sample, the description of certain events, feelings, experiences, the particular uses of

narrative and linguistic devices, evoked memories in my brain—sounds and colors, music or conversations, and this act of remembrance, no matter how ample or fragmented, became a crucial part of my experience and analysis of the text.

It is important that memory not be perceived as a static and stable representation of an authentic past (Hilts, 1995). My memory about the past is scattered and fragmented, it's malleable, it adds on and confuses knowledge and thought. Memory is "a site of endless construction where facades come down, beams are shifted, walls are sucked together or blown apart "(Hilts, 1995, p. 224)—think of the movie *Inception* (2010).

Like Hilts (1995), Loftus (1994) argued that, when we try to remember something or try to reconstruct facts based on the fragments of what we remember, we often make "'constructive' errors" (p. 40). The mechanism we have "for updating memory" (p. 49) makes it difficult to distinguish between old and new memory or true and untrue memory. Both Hilts (1995) and Loftus (1994) concluded that memory is imperfect, and it not only distorts our experiences of the world but also constructs it. "The act of memory," wrote Hilts (1995), "is an act of construction, not of recording" (p. 220) because, as a central faculty of our mental life, its goal is to construct narratives and tell stories. Thus, in my study, I investigated how my readings of the books in my sample evoked memories, not in the sense of telling a better Truth about the representation of women and girls from developing countries but, rather, to tell another story.

Memory and Writing as Methods of Textual Analysis

"We are the learned or ignorant caretakers of several memories" (p. xxl) wrote Cixous (1994). According to her, when we write, we inscribe the memory of what we have read, noticed, and learned from other texts in language. Language, she claimed, remembers for us, with or without our knowledge.

This idea of inscribing memory into writing or reading goes back to medieval literature. Carruthers (2007) explained that for medieval scholars the reading and remembering has been closely connected. The etymology of the Greek word *to read* is Á*nagignósko,* but the literal meaning of the word is *to know again* or *to remember*. Carruthers described the practice of remembering through language as a process of making something familiar, "making one's own what one reads in someone else's work" (p. 50) and further noted that that work can be transformative. Relying on Hugh of St.Victor's chronicle, Carruthers (2007) differentiated between several stages of the reading process. One stage, called *lectio*, emphasizes the understanding of the meaning of words, and it mainly offers information about the text and disciplines such as grammar and rhetoric. The other stage called *meditation* "a murmur, mouthing the words subvocally as one turns the text over in one's memory" (p. 51), constitutes an ethical activity because the reader transforms one's text into his/her own. Medieval scholars believed that this ethical phase of reading prompts you to build upon the information provided by the text and interfere with it, make it subjective, make it your own through your memory. For them, there was no clear distinction between what they read in the book and their own experience. Evoking Petrarch's, words, Carruthers wrote: "for 'what I read in a book' is 'my experience,' and I make it mine by incorporating (and we should understand the word 'incorporate' quite literally) in my memory" (p. 55). Cixous (1994) called this kind of work, a feminine writing (écriture feminine) that has revolutionary potential as it seeks alternative forms of perception and expression. As opposed to the modern scholar who only pays attention to the authority of words and meaning, who strives for objectivity, accuracy, and authenticity and treats the text as evidence to reinforce certain interpretations, those who practice feminine writing re-create and re-experience the text through the Self.

It is this alternative form of expression that I, through the use of memory-based writings, sought out. The use of memory in my own research allowed me to connect my self as a reader and writer as well as my self as a woman who grew up in a developing country to my research on how women and girls from developing countries were represented in realistic and historical fiction books for young-adults. The short narratives, poems or digital projects that I included as a form of response in my analysis, were based on memory, specifically episodic and semantic memory. The writings that I included reflect the memories prompted by the readings. While some of the writings share topics similar to those discussed in the books, in some cases their relationship is not as literal and has little to do with the main story of the book. For instance, in response to the novels that deal with the notion of traditions and nationalism, I included three writings (an essay, a scripted phone conversation, a video) as additional interpretations of the concept of nationalism played out in the context of international soccer games. Another memory-based writing includes a digital project in which I collected cold war era jokes as a response to one of the books in my sample on communism. The memory-based writings are my responses to the books, and my own connection to the event described in the story.

Conclusion

In my research, *memory* served as a poststructural analytic strategy, a ghost that haunted my reading as I investigated the representation of textual subjectivity in 15 realistic and historical fiction books for young-adults. Additionally, memory helped me rethink what the subject, representation, or textual analysis could become. If our memories exist in a form of continuous change, and if these memories are able to change the way we experience the world, we can no longer assume a fixed personality or subject. Furthermore, what is the work of memory in reading and writing? Following Derrida's (1994) suggestion to think about the specter (memory)

as a possibility, I used memory to experiment with the concept of representation, to reflect on my own subjectivity, and to situate myself as a researcher. Faust (2004) believed that thinking of memory as spectre makes it possible for people "to learn how to think differently by learning how to listen to the stories they tell about themselves and their world" (p. 587).

What follows is a collection of data poems, deleted texts that I originally compiled in my Ghost Chapter. Some of those texts contain words and ideas, initial reactions to the readings that I abandoned or rethought, while others, for example, the last piece, is a reflective poem about the process and complexity of analysis.

Data Poem #1

Deconstruct, urge, erase, interpolate, interrogate, cross out, inhabit

Deploy, employ, contest, enact, purport, tap, prompt, retain,

rumigate, postulate, replicate, explicate, proliferate…ate

Endeavor: profound, transient.

My agency

cut, cut, cut.

……..

Data Poem #2

HERE COMES PROUST: TEA AND TOAST

To define feminine specificity through recourse to maternity, whether biological or social or to argue for the specificity of a lesbian experience is a way to return to an identity category that is normative and exclusionary…
"*There is nothing outside-the-text*" (p. 102) Derrida wrote
When I was a kid I was told that books can do magic: the best way to memorize a text is to read it carefully 20 times and put it under the pillow for the rest of the night.
A game that helped me learn.

I SHOULD USE THIS IDEA OF TEXTUAL SUBJECTIVITY AT THE BEGINNING OF THIS CHAPTER AND FIRST WORK IT TOGETHER WITH THE IDEA OF IDEOLOGY

AND THE FIRST TWO SECTIONS ON MIDDLE EASTERN AND EASTERN EUROPEAN WOMEN. FOR EXAMPLE TEXTUAL SUBJECTIVITY IN BINARY OPPOSITIONS…

Defamiliarization is a KIND OF BECOMING OF THE TEXT AND THE AUTHORS ARE USING SEVERAL TOOLS TO ACOMPLISH THIS DEFAMILIARIZATION. USE THIS IDEA AS A FRAMEWORK FOR ALL THESE BOOKS. START WITH SHABANU AND PERHAPS SOLD AND ASPECTS OF DEFAM…IN THE BOOK…THEN GO ON AND BREAK IT DOWN IN THE OTHER BOOKS: RED SCARF GIRL (MACHINIC ASSEMBLAGE AND THE PERSPECTIVE OF A COMMUNIST GIRL THAT GRADUALLY CHANGES); LITTLE BEE (LANGUAGE) AND THIS IS ACCENTUATED IN GREEN PLUMS THROUGH METHAPHORS. OTHER WAYS OF BECOMING/DEFAMILIARIZATION: PARALLEL STORYTELLING (MY NAME IS KEOKO, THAT PLAY) NOT SURE WHERE ANTONIA AND SOLD COMES IN HERE ???

WHAT IS THE BECOMING OF THE CHARACTER AND WHAT IS THE BECOMING OF THE BOOK? FOCUS ON LANGUAGE TO GIVE AN IMPRESSION OF A PARTICULAR EXPERIENCE, NOT DESCRIBE THE EXPERIENCE, NOT RELY ON BINARIES TO DESCRIBE THE EXPERIENCE, BUT RATHER RELY ON THE TEXT TO CREATE AN IMPRESSION…
……..

Data Poem #3

Memories,

things that you write down and then you cross out.

the phone conversations,

the thousand trips to the library,

the atmosphere of working,

the memory of smoke and the sighs…

walking…running…walking…

the Yoga breaths

the sitting on the sofa moments,

the confused moments,

the empty hours, days…dinners

your mother's vitamins,

your dog's face,

your movies,

things that you write down and then you cross out.

Your ghosts.

Chapter 4

An Interpretation

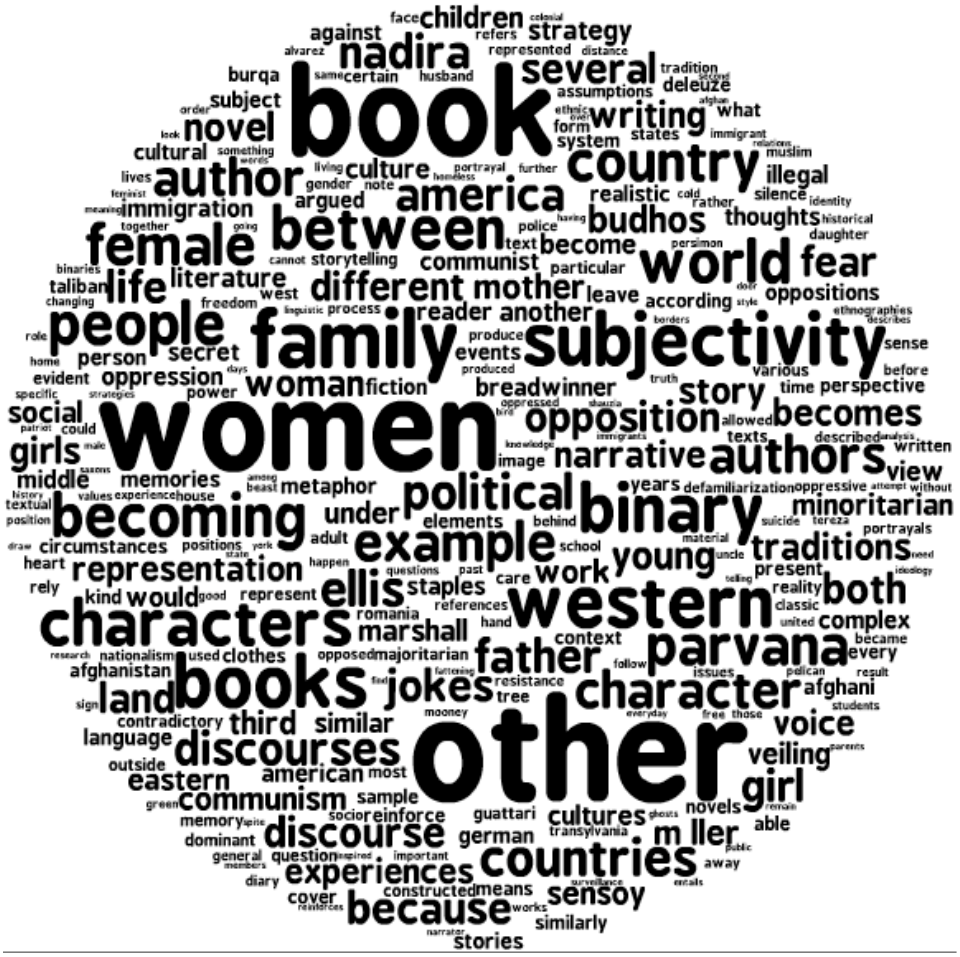

Figure 4. Visual representation of chapter four using applicationTagul.

Representation of Textual Subjectivity

In Chapter four, I address my first two research questions—What are the possibilities and limitations of representation of women from developing countries in realistic and historical fiction books for young adults? How is the Us-Other/man-woman binary opposition reinforced or disrupted through the discourse of nationalism, nationalist wars, state oppression, cultural traditions, and immigration?

For the third research questions, the textual analysis of 15 realistic and historical fiction books for young-adults, I use poststructural feminist theories of *subjectivity* and *memory* and the Deleuzian theory of *becoming* to explore the representation of textual subjectivity of women and girls from developing countries in relation to nationalism, nationalist war, state oppression, cultural traditions, and immigration. Textual subjectivity, according to Trites (1997), can be investigated in several different ways. One form of investigation attends to the use of perspective or point of view through which the author constructs the experiences and consciousness of her characters. These constructions may occur in dialogues, inner thoughts, or in the use of metaphor. For example, in *Before We Were Free* (Alvarez, 2002), the author used a naming metaphor, *cotorrita,* to define her main character and capture an important aspect of her personality. Anita, a teenager who lives with her parents in the capital city of the Dominican Republic under the dictatorship of General Trujillo, refers to herself as a *cotorrita*, a little parrot who talks too much. Her subjectivity in the book is also constructed via diary entries through which the character keeps track of events and records her own thoughts. Textual subjectivity may also be constructed through *intertextuality*, references to other sources and texts. For example, the author may use poetry, photographs or other artifacts to explore nuances of the

character's subjectivity. My memory-based writings, included as responses to books in my sample, use such elements of intertextuality.

In portrayals of textual subjectivity, the author may address social-political issues such as war or nationalism and portray how they affect the characters. For instance, female subjectivity as represented in the 15 books in my sample is framed by socio-political problems present in the books' narratives, issues such as ethnicity and nationalism, nationalist wars, cultural traditions, state oppression, and immigration. Female subjectivity in these novels is constructed by these socio-political problems, and, thus, the portrayal of female experience is closely tied with detailed descriptions of specific events and circumstances from the history of a nation state or culture. While producing portrayals of subjectivity, the author may also, to a greater or lesser degree, be influenced by certain ideological assumptions or discourses of her own culture and incorporate or draw on those assumptions in the storytelling.

Narratives can draw on ideological presuppositions on various levels. McCallum and Stephens (2010) claimed that authors may express a more or less overt attitude towards the implications of ideology. On one hand, the author may offer explicit descriptions of certain ideologies. For example, communism is central in Jiang's (1998) book, *Red Scarf Girl*. On the other hand, the author's representation of her characters or a historical background may also be influenced by the ideological assumptions of her own, Western perspectives. Marven (2005) concurred that, although texts may not be clear reflections of an outside reality, they are not produced in isolation from their context. Ideology is always embedded in context, and so that ideology is a discourse available to the author. Hollindale (1988) called this more subtle use of ideology by the author, *implicit*, or a passive and unconscious ideology that lies in the author's "unexamined assumptions" (p. 30) that reinforce or naturalize certain beliefs.

For instance, some young-adult books written by American authors may rely on Us/Other binary oppositions that assume that women from non-Western countries are by nature different from women from more economically developed Western countries. Those texts usually draw on the discourse of Us/Other to establish the binary opposition of women vs. men and/or women from Eastern vs. women from Western cultures and countries. Children's literature scholars (see for example, Sensoy and Marshall, 2010) have argued that colonial discourses[5], and implicit Us/Other binary oppositions are particularly relevant in books that deal with representations of women in regard to issues of traditions, nationalism, and ethnic war; and they often depict women and girls from non-Western countries as victims who have to rely on the help of the Western woman to survive.

From a poststructuralist point of view, however, texts do not have a fixed meaning, and, therefore, any particular text may be open to various interpretations. Mills (2004) argued that texts are not informed by one discourse alone; rather, the author may apply several different and often contradictory discourses to construct her/his text and characters. "Discourses," she wrote "do not exist in a vacuum but are in constant conflict with other discourses and other social

[5] Homi Bhabha (1994/2004) claimed that the Us/Other binary opposition, whether in terms of gender, nation or race is rooted in a strong psychological need for differentiation. Although Bhabha did not pay any particular attention to the issues of gender, his analysis of Othering and Difference has been useful for discussions of representation of women since Bhabha's perspectives are applicable to gender relations as well. Bhabha claimed that the colonizer (oppressor) creates his own identity through differentiating between his Self and the Other. For the dominant ethnic population, the dominated ethnic minority is the Other who is similar but still different because he/she speaks another language and has different cultural traditions. In terms of gender, the man's Other is the woman and such binaries are further complicated by additional divisions as well, such as the differences between first-world and third-world women.

practices which inform them over questions of truth and authority" (p. 17). Similarly, as Jones (1993) pointed out, within these discourses women may inhabit contradictory subject positions. Simultaneously, a girl may be assertive and independent yet easily controllable. Furthermore, Bathrick (1995) argued that the problems with language and representation should force us to look at the text/context and ideology/reality dualisms not as mere opposites, but as a "network of textual relationships" (p. 15). In this sense, the textual subjectivity related to various social issues in these novels is constructed on several different levels. It is, for example, informed by the insider discourses of communism, nationalism, and traditions available in the particular countries that the authors write about and that they may have been a citizen/member of. They are also constructed by an outsider North American or Western discourse that the authors may be a member of. Furthermore, the texts constructed by the discourses of communism or gender construct those discourses in turn. Thus, as Marshall (2004) pointed out, the representations of women and girls in children's literature are discursive constructions, and the emphasis on discourse "does not imply a subject unhinged from material reality. Rather, texts provide a site where the linguistic and the material converge, and where the knowledge about the girl is produced" (p. 259) in complex and often contradictory ways.

Realistic and Historical Fiction and Ethnographic Writing

The realistic and historical fiction books about foreign cultures in my sample share strong similarities with classic ethnographies (see for example, Malinowski, 1929/1987) that rely on participant observation and interviews to inquire about specific aspects of a culture and the life of its people, and realistic or historical fiction authors often follow the same paths of research to gather information for their books. Another characteristic authors of children's books and ethnographers both use is *defamiliarization*, described by Donovan (2007), as "a means of

destabilizing a reader's perspective" (p. 33). While providing the reader with information about a different culture, the author focuses on the uncommon or the unfamiliar to create distance between the reader and the culture that is being written about—often through the use of the Us/Other binary opposition. Postcolonial theorist, Bhabha (1994/2004), explained that this strategy assumes that the discourse of the one who represents is the dominant discourse and that the discourse of the represented is the strange or minority discourse. In this way the Us/Other binary is established. Reliance on the socio-political discourses of nationalism, nationalist war, state oppression, cultural traditions, and immigration may serve as elements that support this Us/Other binary opposition in the process of representation.

Furthermore, neither classic ethnographers nor children's book authors speak directly to their audiences in their texts. Ethnographers usually use an impersonal, objective voice to write about what they observed, whereas children's book authors tell the story through a protagonist. Thus, both classic ethnographers and children's book authors use particular narrative strategies to produce the truth about a certain culture. Trinh (1989) in *Woman, Native, Other*, her critique of traditional social science research, compared classic ethnographers to "active huntsmen" (p. 56) who set out to elevate the cause of the Other to the level of science and who claim to speak from a neutral position using an impersonal voice that allows them to capture the essential, fundamental nature of the natives and thereby establish universal knowledge claims based on what was said or observed. Similarly, the authors of realistic fiction novels tend to hide their own voices and assumptions behind the main character's first-person narration, or an omniscient third-person narrative. The shortcomings of both writing methods— the tendency to rely on Us/Other binaries in descriptions of other cultures— has been widely critiqued by critical and

poststructuralist scholars. As a result, we have seen numerous experiments in the social sciences with ethnographic writing (see for example, Wolf, 1992; Krieger, 1983).

The books in my sample experiment with portrayals of female subjectivity using alternative ethnographic styles of representation. In the first part of my analysis, I will look at how socio-political discourses (cultural traditions, nationalism and war, state oppression, and immigration) and Us/Other binary oppositions are used as strategies of *defamiliarization* to construct female subjectivity. For the second part of my analysis, I have borrowed Deleuze and Guattari's (1980/1987) concept of *becoming* to trace other strategies of defamiliarization used by the authors such as the specific use of linguistic or narrative techniques.

The Discourse of Us/Other

Stan (1999) argued that the rationale for bringing books from other countries to America was to "increase international understanding" (p. 168). She described this body of literature as international books written in other countries, translated into English, and then published for an American audience, as well as books that may have been written in English in America by authors who originally came from other countries. International books, according to Stan, are published in America for several reasons: they are prize-winning books in their own countries, and they deal with universal story lines that would not be difficult to follow by American readers or they are longer fictional books that provide cultural and geographic information about certain countries. From a similar perspective, Sensoy and Marshall (2010) identified a set of books published in America after September 11, 2001, written by and/or about Middle-Eastern subjects as "the plight of Muslim women and girls" (p. 295). I would add that the category of children's books portraying women or girls from non-Western countries includes literature about Eastern-European, Central and South American, Asian, and African countries as well.

Sensoy and Marshall (2010) argued that such books rely on colonial discourses and employ an emergent discursive strategy, "the missionary girl power" (p. 296) that positions first-world girls in the role of the savior of her third-world sister. In these books, such as *The Breadwinner* by Ellis (2000), the authors argued, third-world girls are represented as poor, uneducated, and generally oppressed by their social circumstances. Along with Nodelman (1992), Sensoy and Marshall believed that such representations are imperialist because they imply the power of the outsider to speak for those who supposedly cannot speak for themselves and further establish an Us/Other binary opposition[6] between the observer and the observed. Within this binary, the Us is the dominant authorial voice, and the Other is the dominated object of the Western female gaze. One important element that channels the Us/Other binary opposition in several novels from my sample is the aspect of the *tradition* of *veiling*.

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[6] Bhabha (1994/2004) suggested that the ambivalence between the oppressor and the oppressed, the psychological need to differentiate between one and the other is best explained by Lacan's interpretation of the Imaginary. The Imaginary is a psychic realm, "the world, the register, the dimension of images, conscious or unconscious, perceived or imagined" (Sheridan, 1997, p. ix) that originates in the mirror stage when the child learns to identify with the outer world. During this developmental stage, the child discovers herself/himself through the mother or in the image reflected in the mirror, and this identification will serve as the basis for her/his emerging selfhood. But this identification through which the subject recognizes herself is also potentially confrontational, "because the image of a unified body does not correspond with the underdeveloped infant's physical vulnerability and weakness" (http://www.english.hawaii.edu/criticalink/lacan/index.html). Therefore, the image the child sees in the mirror will be established as an Ideal toward which she/he will always strive, and can never attain. The fullness, completeness of the I, according to Bhabha is always threatened by a lack that cannot be attained. Thus the image in the mirror will be perceived not only as an I, but also as an Other, or a rival. The tension between fullness and lack, and the difference between I and the Other, brings about the development of two different forms of identification: that of narcissism and aggressiveness, represented in the Freudian psychoanalysis by love and hate, two emotions rooting in the same psychic space. As a result of this fundamental psychological predisposition, the subject will project aggression toward the Other.

Tradition of Veiling

According to Barry (1981), traditions "as forms of ritualistic torture (excision and infibulation) and imprisonment (seclusion and veiling) suggest the degree of value that society places on women" (p. 50). Veiling, the seclusion of women, and arranged and forced marriages that we see examples of in both *The Breadwinner* (Ellis, 2000), *Homeless Bird* (Whelan, 2000), *Shabanu* (Staples, 1989), and *The Fattening Hut* (Collins, 2005) are all traditional practices that, according to Barry (1981), are protected in the name of the cultural integrity and become reified in society by gaining political and social dimensions. Traditions, as a part of a political structure, mask the oppression of women and perpetuate female oppression by designating loyalty to male biased traditions as a form of essential female duty (Barry, 1981; Narayan, 1997). In portrayals of subjectivity, the tradition of veiling, for example, from a Western perspective, is associated with the oppression of women.

In portrayals of textual subjectivity, the fascination of the West with the issue of traditions, and specifically veiling, is not new. Steve McCurry's famous photo on the cover of *National Geographic* in 1985 of the 13-year old Sharbat Gula, the Afghani girl with the green eyes and the follow-up story 17 years later is a good example of the Western curiosity for the tradition of veiling (see for example, Newman, 2002). Similarly, the recent veil debate in France that concluded with the 2010 banning of the full burqa in public spaces has been in the forefront of international headlines worldwide (see for example, CNN Wire Staff, 2010). In the category of young-adult literature, *The Breadwinner* (Ellis, 2000), *Under the Persimon Tree* (Staples, 2005), *Homeless Bird* (Whelan, 2000) and *The Fattening Hut* (Collins, 2005) are good examples of the Western fascination with Afghani girls and the tradition of veiling in the Middle-East and

illustrate how the authors, to a greater or lesser extent, reinforce the image of the non-Western woman and girl as the opposite or Other to women and girls from the West.

As a case in point, in *The Breadwinner* (Ellis, 2000) a book about an Afghan girl, Parvana, and her family who live under the oppressive power of the Taliban, the author paid close attention to detailed portrayals of traditions as restrictions of a culture (Chang, 2001), and how they affected the lives of women and girls. The emphasis on traditions and Othering is evident in the marketing strategy for the book that describes the novel as a realistic portrayal of events that the author personally witnessed during her visit to Afghan refugee camps. The publisher's description on the back cover of the book invites the reader into the dark and secluded lives of Muslim women: "Imagine living in a country in which women are not allowed to leave the house without a man. Imagine having to wear clothes that cover every part of your body, including your face, whenever you go out" (back cover). The note also tells the reader that, during her visits, Ellis heard many stories like Parvana's and that the royalties from the book will be dedicated to the education and support of Afghan girls.

In the genre of realistic fiction for young adult readers, *The Breadwinner* (Ellis, 2000) is not the only novel that relies heavily on the Western fascination with the issue of veiling in its marketing approach. The 2005 edition of both *Under the Persimmon Tree* by Staples and Whelans's (2000) *Homeless Bird* also displayed on their front covers the image of a veiled woman. The note on the back cover of Whelan's book suggests that the main character, Koly, lives in a cruel and strange world (India) of threatening traditions, while Staple's (2005) book is marketed as an eye-opening novel about war-torn Afghanistan. Additionally, Collins's (2005) book *The Fattening Hut*, a book about female genital mutilation (FGM), is dedicated "for all the girls and women in the world who have no voice" (back cover). In these books, the burqa has a

strictly negative value. Ellis (2000), for example, used third person narration right from the first pages of her book to inform the reader about the severe rules of the Taliban and how they impacted the lives of both women and men in Afghanistan. The Taliban forbade girls to go to school; forbade women from leaving their homes without their husbands, fathers, or brothers; and forced them to wear burqas that cover them from head to toe. In *Under the Persimmon Tree* by Staples (2005), the burqa has a similar negative value, described by the author in a third-person narrative: "In the cool autumn weather, Nusrat forgets how suffocating the folds of the burqa's synthetic fabric can be in hot weather, and how peering through the crocheted latticework eyepiece can feel like looking through the bars of prison" (p. 21). Nusrat later describes a scene in which her sister-in-law is almost arrested by a Taliban soldier for not wearing her burqa properly. Similarly, in *The Breadwinner* (Ellis, 2000), Parvana tells us that she was afraid to look at the Taliban soldiers because they whip and beat women to punish them.

Along with the third person narration, Ellis (2000) and Staples (2005) also used dialogue to further produce the image of the veil as an obstacle and the image of the Muslim woman as a victim. Since Parvana is too young to wear a burqa, and because as readers we experience the events through her thoughts, her questions, "'How do women in burqas manage to walk along those streets? How do they see where they are going?'" (p. 17), reflect the point of view of a person unaccustommed to this strict dress code as a part of her tradition. The father's response, "'They fall down a lot'" (p. 17), also creates a distance between the experiences of women who read the book and the women the book is written about and further reinforce the Us/Other binary opposition between the Western and non-Western subjects.

Embedded in their storylines, both Ellis (2000) and Staples (2005) used the element of being disguised as a boy as an *authenticating detail* about the lives of Middle-Eastern women and girls.

In *Under the Persimmon Tree* (Staples, 2005), one of the main characters is Najmah, a young Afghan girl who traveled from Afghanistan to Pakistan after Taliban soldiers killed her mother and her younger brother. In order to stay safe during her travels, she cut her hair and dressed up as a boy. Similar, in *The Breadwinner* (Ellis, 2000), after her father was taken away, Parvana cut her hair short and dressed up in boy's clothes so she could work at the market translating letters. Such details in the book were inspired by stories that frequently happen in Middle-Eastern cultures. On May 30, 2010, *The New York Times* reported that two Afghani girls, aged 13 and 14, who, disguised in boy's clothes tried to escape their forced marriages, were captured and beaten as a punishment (see Nordland and Rubin, 2010). Disguise is also evoked in *Offside* (2006), Iranian film director Jafar Panahi's movie about the story of a group of six girls who, disguised as boys, attempted to sneak into the Iranian-Bahrain qualifying match during the 2006 German World Cup. According to an interview with the director, the story was inspired by an incident when his daughter was refused entry to a soccer game but eventually managed to sneak in using a disguise (see Wisniewski, 2010).

However, Sensoy and Marshall (2010) argued that in Ellis' (2000) book, being disguised as a boy became a strategy through which the author reinforced the first-world woman/third-world woman binary oppositions and the image of the Muslim woman as a victim. Parvana's mother and older sister were victims because they were not allowed to leave the house on their own. Parvana, who enjoyed the freedom of being among people disguised as a boy, was also a victim because the responsibilities of being the breadwinner after her father's arrest were overwhelming. The Us/Other binary is present in Parvana's conversation with her friend Shauzia, another girl who disguised herself and worked with Parvana at the market to support her family. Shauzia described her family members as being argumentative and demanding of her

and compared the unbearable circumstances of her life in Afghanistan to the freedom of the people of France. To avoid being trapped in her home and in order to escape her family life, she planned on leaving Afghanistan in secret.

This aspect of the Us/Other binary is evident in Ellis's (2000) description of Parvana's family as well. The author informs us that although Parvana, as did many others, lived with her parents and three siblings in a one-room apartment in a bombed-out district of Kabul, her family was exceptional. Unlike many Afghani men and women, her parents were highly educated: her father was a high-school teacher who attended schools in England and her mother was a writer who worked at a radio station before the Taliban forbade women to work. Sensoy and Marshall (2010) argued that such description reinforces the East/uneducated vs. West/educated binary opposition in such a way that Parvana's family represented Western values within their own culture. They also argued that Parvana's "missionary girl power" (p. 309) through which she was able to help the other female characters in the book was a Western imposition that reinforced the third-world woman/first-world woman binary opposition. Parvana is constructed as the strong girl who "often serves as a model feminist, crafted on the ideals associated with white, middle-class, heterosexual notions of femininity" (Sensoy and Marhsall, 2010, p. 303). Using Narayan's (1995) concept of "paternalistic care," they suggested that the discourse of care operates on two distinct levels in the book. First, on the level of fiction, the author positioned Parvana, the third-world girl, in need of the care of the Western world and, second, those people who buy the book take part in a "*literal* care project" (p. 299) to support Afghani women. While the authors admitted that there was a paradox here, in the sense that *The Breadwinner* functioned both "as a story and an educational/humanitarian project with feminist aspirations"

(p. 299) as well as a discourse of "paternalistic care" (p. 299), they, nevertheless, maintained that the colonial project to rescue the oppressed third-world girl became central in the novel.

Although *The Breadwinner* (Ellis, 2000) advocates binary oppositions in its portrayal of female subjectivity, and the above-mentioned examples from the book underline this claim, the argument that Parvana's character is a strictly Western feminist construct, and that her image indirectly reinforces the oppressed figure of the third-world woman could be challenged. In fact, the claim that Parvana's character and her ability to take care of her family is a Western feminist imposition is built on the assumption that the third-world woman is a victim, and any resistance on her part must be a Western feminist imposition. Furthermore, the argument that the family's decision to cut Parvana's hair short and dress her up as a boy was informed by the Western expectation "that girls should be unfettered by the requirement to cover themselves and their faces" (Sensoy and Marshall, 2010, p. 303) assumes that all Muslim women embrace the tradition of veiling. It has been argued, (see for example, Ahmed, 2000; Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2006) that the tradition of the veil is complex and entails a range of possible meanings. Although some Muslim women embrace the tradition of veiling and see it as a sign of resistance (the burqa, as a sign of oppression, was transformed into a sign of resistance in Afghanistan when the Revolutionary Association of Women in Afghanistan [RAWA] hid video cameras under their garments to record the atrocities of the Taliban against women [Sensoy and Marshall, 2006]). For others, however, this tradition may be oppressive.

Furthermore, the argument that Ellis' (2000) book is a continuation of the "Western representations of Muslim women" (Sensoy and Marshall, 2010, p. 299) is also problematic because it does not acknowledge that veiling in Middle-Eastern cultures has multiple meanings as does Western discourse about the Third World that is infused with contradictory perceptions

of womanhood. In my interpretation, Ellis' book employs several different discourses simultaneously, and I describe that strategy as the *becoming* of representation. On the one hand, the imperialistic move of the First World to represent the truth about the lives of Muslim women and girls is evident in the marketing strategy of the book and the underlying Us/Other binary oppositions. On the other hand, the multiple subject positions evoked in the portrayal of female characters strive for complex descriptions of the possible life experiences of Afghani women and girls. In the discursive construction (text) of textual subjectivity in The Breadwinner (Ellis, 2000) the linguistic, or, in other words, the storytelling strategies and the context converge (Marshall, 2004) and together produce a complex depiction of life. Because the circumstances that surround these women are complicated and "their world both nurtures them and destroys them at times" (Yenika-Agbaw, 2002, p. 121), the portrayal of female characters from the Third World remains a challenge not only for Western authors but also for authors who write about their own culture. In order to attend to the complexities of those life circumstances, Ellis (2000) depicted her characters negotiating multiple discourses and navigating multiple subject positions within the constraints of their environment.

For example, Parvana's mother and her good friend, Mrs. Weera, were portrayed not only as women trapped in their houses but also as women resisting the system when they began to publish a secret magazine in which they told their own stories along with the confessions of women and men about the wars and battles in and around the country. Mrs.Weera and Mother also opened a secret school for a small number of girls who were not allowed to go to school otherwise. While Parvana's family valued education, and the education of girls in particular, there are also characters in the book who do not share their perspective. Shauzia, for example, tells Parvana that her father's family did not believe in girls being educated, and that that is why

they do not support Shauzia's schooling. In this way, as a form of becoming of representation in the portrayal of textual subjectivity, Ellis (2000) brought in a variety of perspectives about women's lives, and the contradictory aspects of her book speak to the complex and difficult task of cultural representation. The claim that women in the book who show more resistance represent the Western discourse of paternalistic care limits the possibility of perceiving culture as a contradictory space where material reality is constantly shifting. In this sense, Ellis' portrayal does not represent the telling of truth about people but rather how material reality and context is being negotiated in the process of storytelling.

Memory: That Everything Happens on a Sunday

One of the most memorable scenes for me in *The Breadwinner* (Ellis, 2000) occurs when Parvana's father is arrested and taken away by force. This episode resonated with me because my grandfather was arrested in very similar circumstances and imprisoned for three years when my mother was six years old, and she often talked to me about that difficult time in their lives. For several years after his release, she could not go to sleep at night until she heard his car stop in front of the house. Growing up, I always wondered what those three years must have been like for my grandmother, who was, as I write this, my age when her husband was arrested, and also for my mother who was a "daddy's girl."

My grandfather only talked about those years occasionally and when you expected the least. One time, while I was writing my homework at the kitchen table in my grandparents' house, he stopped reading the newspaper for a second, picked up the bottle of ink that was in front of me and said that prisons always smell of ink and cigarettes. His comment didn't make much sense to me at the time, but I held onto it. Recreated from such fragments of memory, old photographs, family stories, letters, and postcards, I offer here two memory narratives about my

grandparents' stories. Because family artifacts (photographs, letters, objects) are powerful storytelling elements, I have included in one of my stories the image of a postcard that my grandfather sent to my grandmother from prison in 1962.

First Story: Tata (grandfather)

The blue paper slip came in the mail and ordered my grandfather to report to the police station the next day. He left for the police station that particular Saturday morning as on any other morning of the week when he went to work. The girls promised to be good and help out, and he promised to bring them a present on the way home. But before he left, he slipped his paycheck under my grandmother's pillow and, for a long time, just sat there on the corner of their bed.

The police officer took the blue slip away from him. *You don't like this country anymore, Mr. Dobai? You can see all the way to Budapest, can't you? Don't worry, you'll have some time to think about it…* A black car took my grandfather away from the small police station the very same day, and nobody knew anything about him for three weeks.

Later my grandmother learned that he was taken to Jilava, one of the largest detentions centers in Romania, well-known for its high number of political prisoners who, in one way or another, had committed criminal acts against the state. Telling a joke about communism was a criminal act, listening to the Free Europe Radio was a criminal act, learning a foreign language was a criminal act. Sometimes, not being able to prove that you didn't commit a criminal act was a criminal act too. His being a political prisoner was almost like a joke, because he never cared for politics. He was a businessman who knew a lot of people—a person with good connections perhaps—but with little interest in resisting the system. At Jilava they questioned him for days about a friend who left one day without goodbyes and sent a postcard home weeks

later saying that Israel was beautiful. The police and the Securitate (Romanian secret police), who controlled everything in the country at the time including people's telephones and mail, suspected that it was my grandfather who had helped Mr. K. escape. My grandfather denied the allegations.

Tata didn't speak Romanian very well. The place where he grew up was almost entirely Hungarian…he never had to learn perfect Romanian to run his business, so he didn't. He was able to get by in prison, but his accent was strong enough that the prosecutor made fun of him when he talked. *What are you saying? What is he saying? I can't understand what he is saying. What country do you live in, Mister? If you live in Romania, why can't you speak Romanian? Move to Hungary if you only want to speak Hungarian.* He spent three years in Jilava making matchsticks during winter, planting tomatoes in the spring, picking tomatoes in the late summer. After a while, they stopped asking him about Mr. K..Then one day, they let him leave. There wasn't much to bring for the girls but a bag of tomatoes from the field where he worked.

Second story: Mama (grandmother)

My grandparents had two young girls, and when my grandfather was arrested, my aunt was eleven and my mother was six. Mama found his paycheck hidden under her pillow the day he left to report to the police, and he didn't come home the next day or the day after that either. Weeks later, with the help of a friend, a business partner of my grandfather's, she found out that he had been arrested. They advised my grandmother to wait; they told her that sooner or later there would be some message from him or about him. She hid the money in a broken vase behind the stove.

The message came six weeks later from Jilava. The postcard she received was in my grandfather's handwriting, but the words were not Hungarian. Written or verbal communication

was only allowed in the language of the State so that the prison authorities could understand it.

Figure 5. Family postcard sent in 1962

Mama didn't speak Romanian well either, so a friend helped her write a response. Later, she bought a Hungarian-Romanian dictionary so she could look up words in Romanian and write letters on her own.

Every other month when visitations were allowed, she made the ten-hour train ride to Jilava. She clutched her fingers around the metal bar while standing in the crowded aisle of the moving train, rehearsing the Romanian sentences: *The girls are fine, Magdi had pneumonia, but she is ok now, Erzsike lost her first tooth, she'll start school in the fall, they say they miss you and come home…* It was difficult to talk in someone else's language, a language you never really spoke, so she and Tata mostly just stayed quiet.

My grandmother moved in with her parents that first winter. Life went on, her girls went to school, she took care of the house, and in the evenings and on Sundays she learned words in Romanian from her dictionary. And late one spring three years later, on a Sunday afternoon, without warning or announcement, somebody knocked on the door, and my grandfather was standing in the doorway—with a bag full of tomatoes in his hand.

Paternalistic Care and the American Presence

Paternalistic care (Narayan, 1995) that reinforces Us/Other binaries in portrayals of textual subjectivity is more evident in Staples' (2005) *Under the Persimmon Tree*, and is directly represented through the character of Nusrat, *aka* Elaine, and her opposition to the other female characters of the books, particularly Najmah. Along with the idea of paternalistic care, the Us/Other binary opposition in this book also introduces the American presence. Nusrat, an American woman who moved to Peshawar and changed her name after she married a Pakistani man, repeatedly privileges Western values as opposed to the values Pakistani women respected.

Paternalistic care is evident in Nusrat's relationship with the other women and her Pakistani students. Even though Nusrat changed her name when she moved to Pakistan and submitted herself to the country's dress code, she appeared to be more open-minded than, for example, her mother or sister-in-law. While Nusrat waited for her husband to return from Mazar-i-Sharif where he worked at a hospital, she opened her house for children who had lost their parents and taught them, among other things, about astronomy and science. The author described Nusrat as "being after the mind" (p. 76) of the children whom she considered lost without education. Nusrat saw herself as the person who had to turn "their time of greatest need into a time of opportunity" (p. 77). Her students, among which there was an older widow, were portrayed as being transformed by Nusrat's help and guidance and gained hope from her, "I didn't know what would become of Amina and me until I came to the Persimmon Tree School. Now I know what will become of me. I will become a teacher like you" (p. 175). When Nusrat found out that her husband has most likely died during a bombing, she decided to move back to America. She hoped to take one of her students with her, Najmah, the other main character of the book, to offer her a better life. From Nusrat we learn that women in Afghanistan age quickly

from bearing children often die before they turn forty-five years old. Nusrat offers Najmah an alternative, moving to America where she could become a lawyer, a doctor, or anything she wanted to be (Staples, 2005). Although Najmah refused to leave Afghanistan, the author closed the book with Nusrat's hope to return some day and build a school there in the honor of her husband and to help girls and young women like Najmah.

Nusrat's character reinforces the Western/non-Western woman binary opposition, but through her actions, the author also critiqued Western misconceptions about the role of tradition in Muslim women's lives. When Nusrat encouraged her husband's family to celebrate a meteor shower at her house, Sultan and Jamshed, the male family members, instantly agreed while Asma and Fatima, her sister and mother-in-law, refused to participate because, in the old tradition, the falling of a meteorite is a bad omen. In order to critique Nusrat's Western perspective and inability to understand the complexity of traditions in Muslim women's lives, the author pointed out that she was surprised by the two women's reaction, because they were "well-educated women" (p. 49). This remark implies that Nusrat only finds value in the principles and beliefs of Western education. When Fatima explains that being educated does not have anything to do with the respect of traditions and that, in spite of their being silly, she still respected the myths she was raised with, Nusrat argues until Asma finally changes the subject. This segment of the story, thus, could be interpreted as a critique of Westerners' inability to comprehend the complexity of culture and tradition in women's lives across cultures. Nusrat fulfills a double role by both embracing paternalistic care and by reinforcing the Western/non-Western woman binary oppositions. However, in the end, her return to America also suggests that her work in the Muslim world could not bring about significant changes. Thus, the author's choice to refuse to stay fixed in one perspective portraying Nusrat, on the one hand, as a person who cares for the

fate of the Pakistani women but, on the other, is unable to identify with their life experiences could be interpreted as a *becoming* of representation in the novel.

Becoming, however, is missing from *The Fattening Hut* by Collins (2005) and from *Homeless Bird* by Whelan (2000), two books that discuss similar issues, the tradition of the child bride and of female genital mutilation (FGM). The books heavily rely on the discourses of paternalistic care and Western presence and promote an Us/Other binary opposition. In a final note included at the end of the book, Collins (2005) claimed that her intention in writing the book was to reach out to the human community of the world and tell them a myth grounded in truth. On the back cover of *The Fattening Hut* (Collins, 2005), Booklist's review described the book as a "gripping survival story" that raised questions about human rights. *School Library Journal* said the book is powerful and unique, and the *San Diego Union-Tribune* praised the "beautifully crafted free verse that thrums with the rhythm of escape" (back cover).

The *Fattening Hut* is narrated from the point of view of the main character of the book, Helen, who is a member of an unidentified tribal group (the author did not identify the country where the story took place, but she mentioned Nigeria in her endnote) and who was only fourteen years old when she was sent to the fattening hut, a place where women spend time to gain weight before they marry. Although Helen is not interested in marrying, she is forced to spend weeks in the fattening hut by her mother and her sister, Miduna. The only female character who sympathizes with Helen is Margaret, her aunt, who never married and lives on her own. From Helen, we learn that women in her tribe do not know how to read, with the exception of her aunt who learned to read from the English people who visited their village a long time ago and opened a school. Her aunt also abandoned her tribal name, took up Margaret instead (Margaret was the name of an English woman who came to their village), and moved out of her

father's house. Thus, right from the first pages, the author sets up the civilized/uncivilized binary and the discourse of Othering through the characters of the English people, specifically a woman named Margaret who came to study their customs and opened a school, and the women from the tribe who refused education. The mother, who represents traditional values, blames the English visitors for spoiling her daughter:

> Mother says that if the English people
> had not come here
> when Aunt Margaret was a child,
> to study all our customs and our ways,
> and if they had not kept a school
> upon the island for a time
> for girls as well as boys
> she would not have this trouble with me now. (p. 8)

Although this statement in the book could be interpreted as a critique of colonization, the author undermines that message by aligning Helen's point of view with a Western perspective that rejects the values of the tribe as undesirable. Moreover, the mother, who embraces tribal values, is represented negatively—she is docile with her husband but aggressive with Helen. Motherhood is also described in undesirable ways. The mother has "a large body" (p. 27) from bearing many children, and Miduna has a baby latched onto her breast all the time. As opposed to them, Margaret, who never had children, is beautiful both in her face and in her body and, in spite of her status as an outcast, is still well respected because of her healing skills (Collins, 2005). While Margaret encourages her to read and be independent, Miduna encourages Helen to accept the cutting of girls and their father's wish for her to get married within their tradition. In

order to avoid being mutilated, Helen runs away one night, and, with the help of her aunt and a friend, meets two English women (researchers) at the edge of the island who help her escape. Although the foreigners refuse initially, after Helen explains what happens to the girls in the village, the researchers, whose Western sensibilities are shocked by her story, agree to rescue her.

By aligning her main character with the values represented by English visitors and by portraying the other female characters in the book simplistically, Collins (2005) engaged in the Othering of this distant tribal culture. Her poorly developed characters turned the tradition of the fattening hut into a preachy critique of the customs and traditions of an unspecified tribal group. Instead of drawing on the possible complexity with which women approach their cultural tradition, Collins described them as uncritically embracing violence. The only characters who stood up against the traditions of the fattening hut were women who had Western names (Margaret and Helen) and had embraced Western values.

The Us/Other binary, as a strategy of defamiliarization deployed in the portrayal of textual subjectivity, is captured in *Homeless Bird* (Whelan, 2000) as well. This is the story of an Indian girl, Koly, whose arranged marriage to a sick man leaves her a widow by the time she is fourteen. Although Whelan's character portrayal is more developed than Collins' (2005), the unrealistic Cinderella-like elements of the story still rely on the simplistic good/bad categories into which the characters of the book are divided. Koly was fascinated by her brother's books and would have liked to learn how to puzzle out the characters (Whelan, 2000), but traditions do not allow her to read or go to school. The Othering of the Indian culture, thus, is established in the first pages of the book when Koly mentions that, according to their tradition, women who read are considered lazy. Her father-in-law eventually taught her to read despite her mother-in-

law's disaproval, who "was suspicious of books, treating them as scorpions" (p. 64). Koly, nevertheless, found refuge in the secrets of the books. Her Cinderella story continued when the mother-in-law abandoned her in the city of Vrindavan and when, with the help of a boy she met at the train station, she found a woman in the city who took in abandoned widows. Koly's remarkable talent to do embroidery was soon discovered, and she found a job at an embroidery shop in town. Toward the end of the book, the young man, whom she met at the train station, asked her to marry him, and he built a private room for her in their home so she could continue to work. The final chapter suggested that there was a bright future awaiting her as an artist. Thus, as opposed to the fate of many other widows who were sacrificed after their husbands' death, Koly was not only saved but was also be able to coordinate her traditional duties of motherhood with her career. When her employer asked her if she would have time to work at home, she responded, "'I'll make time,' I promised. 'The house will not always be so clean, the cooking may be a little hasty, and the whining children will sit on my lap and I'll sing to them while I work'" (p. 180).

While the author's decision to provide Koly with the possibility of both motherhood and satisfying creative work could be interpreted as an opening for a more complex portrayal of female subjectivity, the fairy-tale like ending of the book sets her apart from the other female characters and, in fact, puts the possibility of her difference in question. What remains quite elaborate, however, is the one-sided and narrow depiction of an inferior India with cruel traditions and women who do not wish to be educated.

Memory: Bogdan

The story of abandoned widows like Koly reminded me of the Roma children on the streets in Romania, particularly in larger cities. You see them selling flowers, washing car windows at stop-lights for a few coins, or, sometimes, wandering around the streets begging for money. Bogdan was one of the Roma kids I got to know when I was a junior in college in Kolozsvar (Romanian, Cluj-Napoca). I met him in a pub/restaurant where my friends and I met on Saturday nights. Although children don't usually hang out in bars late at night, Roma children are often exceptions to the rule, and Bogdan was one of those exceptions. I am not sure where he came from or why he was in that pub that late in the evening, sitting by the bar drawing and writing letters on old Bingo tickets. He may have been one of the professional beggers in the area who hung out around the nearby Bingo salon during the day and, sometimes, in the evening sneaked into the main lobby or the bar to warm up. He may have been just waiting for his mom to finish her shift somewhere. He gave me one of his drawings that night, and the next day I went back and left a notebook and some crayons for him with the bartender. I hope he got them.

He was writing letters
on used Bingo tickets
he found on the ground.
He was eight.
Big brown eyes,
cold little hands
in a long coat…
smoking thrown away cigarettes

to avoid hunger.

But when he smiled,

he was eight again…

even through the cigarette smoke.

And he liked me,

because I gave him

my butter croissant.

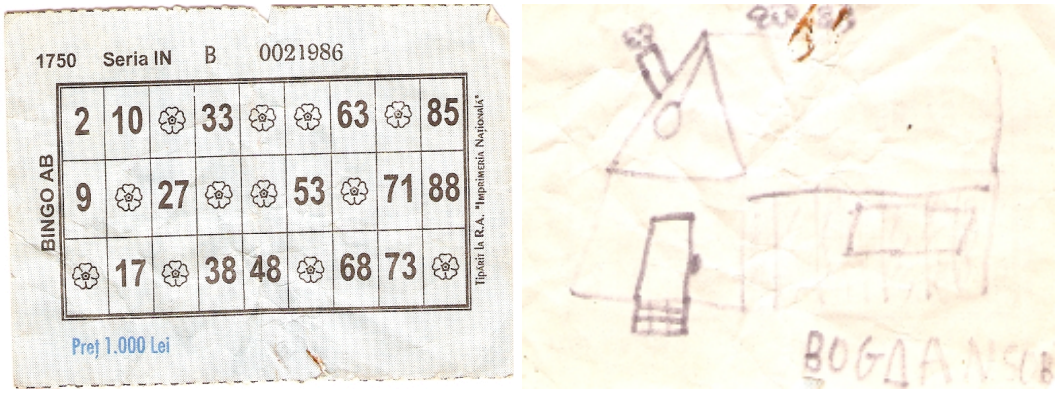

Figure 6. Drawing on bingo ticket by Bogdan

Nationalism and War

Sensoy and Marshall's (2010) argument that cross-cultural books written by American authors often reinforce binary oppositions in the representation of textual subjectivity is evident in *Girl of Kosovo* by Mead (2001) and *The Day of the Pelican* by Paterson (2009). These books deal with countries within the old Eastern Bloc, also called "countries behind the Iron Curtain," that included Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia as well as East Germany.

Radulescu and Glajar (2004) argued that the representation of Eastern European women in literature and other forms of media has been similar to the representation of the Other of

Africa or the Orient. Women from Eastern Europe are not entirely Other because they are white and European, but they are not entirely familiar either because they belong to the Balkans—which, for Westerners means their fragmented, unstable, and less "civilized" neighbors[7]. In the Western imagination, the Balkan is "a familiar 'other' that still partakes of Europeanness, like the subconscious mind that is part of our consciousness, but not quite" (Radulescu, 2004, p. 32). Eastern-European women, in this sense, occupy a position of liminality defined by Radulescu and Glajar (2004) as "'the lands between' masculine and feminine, the vampire and the victim, the asexual and the dangerously sexual, East and West, the familiar and the exotic" (p. 4). According to Holden (2004) the most common stereotypes associated with Eastern-European women are the dangerous but enigmatic monster in the form of a Vampire-woman or an alluring and sexualized woman; the Amazon-like woman capable of extraordinary bravery; and the wretch, the silent and abused woman. In some cases, these portrayals intersect with one another, and sometimes they take on more sensitive and complex representations.

The realistic and historical fiction books in my sample both rely on and deconstruct some of the above-mentioned portrayals in the production of female subjectivity. Like other books in my sample I have already discussed, these books promote Us/Other binary opposition. They emphasize that nationalism and war as socio-political forces shape the lives of Eastern-European people in general and women in particular. Women in these portrayals are only visible as members of the family unit, and they protect the family as an "allegiance to the nation" (Ivekovic, 1993, p. 120).

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[7] Albania, Bulgaria, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, Kosovo, Greece, Montenegro are some of the countries fully located on the Balkan peninsula, Romania, Moldova, Hungary, Turkey are, sometimes, also referred to as the Balkans.

Girl of Kosovo (Mead, 2001) focuses on the survival of a 12 year old Albanian girl, Zana, and the tragedy of ethnic cleansing that wiped out thousands of Albanians living in Kosovo that forced many others to leave their homeland at the end of the 1990's. The images of terror and fear depicted in great detail all through the book convey the helplessness of the characters, trapped in their own homes surrounded by Serbian soldiers. The death and murder of a friend, acquaintance, or neighbor is common in the lives of Albanian children like Zana who lost her father and one of her brothers in an attack carried out by Serbian soldiers when the family tried to escape. Although she survived, her ankle was seriously injured, and she spent months in a hospital without knowing whether her family was still alive. When she finally returned to her village, her recovery was delayed by the lack of proper medical care and her mother's negligence.

The concept of Other that receives its content from the social relations determined by gender and race gains new dimensions in Mead's (2001) book when applied to the issues of nationalism. National identity as described by Meek (2001) has strong "territorial attachments" (p. ix) such as language, culture, or land; and as soon as the danger of losing any of those attachments arises, the Us and the Other mentality, or the feeling of Nationalism, is set into motion.[8] The binary opposition in Mead's book plays out mainly in the national struggle of Serbians and Albanians. In some instances, the ways in which men and women relate to issues of war also promote a man/woman binary opposition. As with other works of realistic fiction, this book includes an author's note in which Mead (2001) explained that Zana's story was inspired by the story of a family she met during her visit to Kosovo after the Serbian-Kosovan war

[8] Nationalism is defined by Gellner (1983) as a political principle which holds that "the political and the national unit should be congruent. Nationalist sentiment is the feeling of anger aroused by the violation of the principle…a nationalist movement is one actuated by a sentiment of this kind" (p. 1).

ended.[9] The setting of *Girl of Kosovo* is rural, and the family's poverty is emphasized in the novel through contrasting comparisons of the village and the town to which Zana traveled later in the novel. As the story progresses, there is also a rescuer/rescued binary of the West and East represented by a UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) doctor and the villagers. Likewise, NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) troops are represented as the rescuers and the opposite of both the Serbian army who persecuted the Albanian community, and of the Kosovan Liberation Army (KLA), made up of untrained Kosovan men eager to take revenge.

Men and women in Mead's (2001) representation are portrayed through the Inside and Outside Other (Ivekovic, 1993) binaries. While Albanian men and women together are represented as the Other to the Serbians and also as Other to the West (England or America, etc.), within this category men are portrayed as soldiers who are willing to fight for the nation and die for the sake of Kosovo, while women are portrayed as those who need protection and oppose the war. The Eastern European woman as a silent victim is reinforced in Mead's portrayals. For example, Dr. MacDonald sent Zana to the hospital and later took care of her when she returned home because the mother, deeply affected by the death of her husband and son, was unable to care for her children. The mother is described as being absent from the family life, "Just her body was there. Nothing else. Some times when the baby cried, she didn't even rock the cradle. " (p. 49). In a similar manner, Zana fell into a deep depression after her return to the village and refused to eat, which further delayed her recovery.

While the female characters of the book expect to be saved by the outside help of the West (NATO), the male characters, for example, Ilir, the son, or Uncle Vizar, would rather fight

[9] According to Gellner (1983), nation is a "mere category of persons, occupants of a given territory, or speakers of a given language, who become a nation if and when the members of the category firmly recognize their mutual rights and duties to each other in virtue of their shared membership of it" (p. 7).

for their own freedom. One of the most interesting aspects of the novel is the clash between Zana's mother and Zana's brother, which best illustrates Ivekovic's (1993) perspectives on pacifism/violence associated with the female/male binary opposition. After the father's death, it was the mother's responsibility to keep the family safely together, and safety for her meant waiting for the help of NATO troops. Ilir, on the other hand, without his mother's knowledge, joined the Kosova Liberation Army (KLA) in order to fight the Serbians. "There's going to be another war. I can't sit home and watch while the Serbs blow us to bits… It's time for us to win our independence… Everyone needs to help. We've waited five hundred years for freedom from our oppressors. We can't miss this chance" (Mead, 2001, pp. 70-71). The mother, disappointed by the inhumanity of the war and violence, described the liberation army as disorganized and made up of unskilled sixteen-year-old boys. Along with Zana, she did not believe that counter-violence could ever bring about peace: "despite what Uncle Vizar said about being martyrs and heroes and wanting to die for the cause of free Kosovo, I knew I didn't want to die. I just wanted to live" (p. 27). Later, when the Albanian villagers led by Ilir had turned against the only Serbian family that was left in the village, Zana again stepped up as a pacifist and saved the family from the angry crowd.

The Us/Other binary is also present in *The Day of the Pelican* by Katherine Paterson (2009), another rendering of the Serbian-Kosovan war. The setting is in a small town in Kosovo, and the main character is a 12-year-old Muslim girl, Meli. Paterson uses foreign terms in the book using them to accentuate the East/West binary, the woman/man binary, and exotic Othering. There are several references in the book to food items, for example "*pashteta*" (p. 20) and "*flija*" (p. 31) or types of clothing, such as "*dhimmi*" (p. 61) that the author italicized and set apart but at the same time left unexplained. The author also used the term "healing broth" (p.

123) to emphasize the traditional ways in which the grandmother was cared for in Kosovo. This Othering is evident both in the family portrayal and the description of gender relations between men and women. In a somewhat stereotypical representation of traditional Eastern-European family structure, Meli had three more siblings, and they had a very close relationship with their extended family, uncle, aunts, and cousins. Paterson also described cooking as an explicitly female activity.

> Auntie Burbuque made the best pepper and eggplant sauce Meli ever tasted, but she was careful not to say this aloud. She wouldn't want to hurt Mama's feelings. They ate goat cheese with bread and pepper sauce, and thick potato soup. As a special treat, the women would make a savory cheese pie, which they filled with leeks and potatoes or spinach and even sometimes a bit of meat. (p. 49)

Except for Meli's conversations with her family members, there are no instances of women speaking in the first part of the book unless it is connected with domestic work. Another telling example through which Paterson (2009) produces her female characters as Others is in the description when the family left their home escape from the Serbians. While the men were loading the car with food (food being almost always some kind of sausage, cheese and bread), "the women began silently to clean an already spotless kitchen" (p. 58). As opposed to women, men are involved in the decision making for the family, "The men" Mead wrote, "would go into the men's chamber and decide their fate" (p. 53), and women only wondered without asking what those decisions would be. The man/woman binary is only disrupted after the family moved to America as refugees, which directly speaks to American ideology and the land of the free. In the last part of the book, the mother is represented as the middle person who tried to work things out between the more traditional perspectives of the father and the new and less traditional

American experiences the children desire. The mother quietly managed to convince the father that the children should be a part of a Halloween celebration and that Meli should play on the girls' soccer team. These oppositions between the two cultures positioned America as being prosperous in contrast to Kosovo. For instance, when the children waited for their lunch on the airplane, the flight attendant offered them coke which Meli described "a rare treat from back in the days when they had such a thing as treat" (p. 98). America also offers opportunities that Meli could not have had in Kosovo such as playing on the girls' soccer team.

The book also references the 9/11 attack to reinforce the generosity of the American people who embraced the Lleshi family despite their Muslim heritage. Although the children do face some bullying in school, their teachers apologize to the parents and promise to prevent such incidents in the future. Paterson (2009) also used this incident to emphasize the difference in the values of the two countries, Kosovo representing nationalism and hate, America celebrating acceptance and multiculturalism. Paterson thus ignores the acts of discrimination Middle-Eastern people faced after the enactment of the PATRIOT Act, an acronym for: Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act of 2001 (Wikipedia). The father described disrespect toward difference as "the way of the old country" (p. 135) and America as the country of new beginnings.

Although both the male and female characters in *Girl of Kosovo* (Mead, 2001) and *The Day of the Pelican* (Peterson, 2009) are associated with more traditional gender roles (in *Girl of Kosovo* men are obsessed with war and women are pacifists; in *The Day of the Pelican* men are patriarchs and the women are silent), the *becoming* of representation is noticeable in the authors', especially Mead's (2001), attempt to disrupt both the Albanian/Serbian and man/woman binaries and portray the characters taking on various subject positions. For example, in *Girl of Kosovo*

the author described in detail the atrocities of the Serbian soldiers, yet, in parallel, she also introduced Lena, a Serbian girl whose father helped Zana get to the hospital at the end of the novel. While it was Zana and her mother who advocated peace, the father who died early in the novel was also in favor of peace and rejected hatred. Also, while the mother was more affected emotionally at the beginning of the novel, she recovered and took charge of the family. Thoughout the novel there is an allusion to the tragedy caused by the delay of the NATO intervention in Kosovo. One example is Zana's ironic remark, "Finally, after ten years of persecution and killings, the world had come to help us!" (p. 88). Another example is the mother's remark in which she pointed out that the British doctor could never entirely understand the situation of Albanians in Kosovo. In Paterson's (2009) book, I could not identify social critiques or the deconstruction of binaries. Although she included details about the casualties of war, the groups of Albanian refugees who were accidentally killed by NATO troops from Western countries—specifically America—America is still described as the ultimate Dream Land in opposition to the inhuman life circumstances of Kosovo.

Memory: Triptych

In response to my readings of *Girl of Kosovo* (Mead, 2001) and *The Day of the Pelican* (Paterson, 2009) I wrote the triptych (Kirby and Kirby, 2007) that follows about the concept of nationalism and nationalist discourse as I observed it during the 2010 soccer World Cup games. The topic of nationalism is in the focus of both books and is evoked through descriptions of war and physical violence. While I was reading the books, I was also following the international soccer games and the fandom that surrounds this sport with its obvious physical manifestations (body paint using the colors of the flag, costumes, head pieces) gave me additional interpretations of the concept of nationalism.

By definition the Greek word, *triptych*, refers to a set of three panels set side by side. Starting with the middle ages, triptych was a popular format used in Christian art. Altarpieces in churches were often carved or painted as a triptych with the three-hinged panels displaying different elements of the same scene. For example, the *Elevation of the Cross* by Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640) displaying the crucifixion of Jesus is a triptych. In contemporary times, as Kirby and Kirby (2007) pointed out, artists, sculptors, and also writers have adapted the format of a triptych to convey meaning. In teaching writing, Kirby and Kirby used it as a strategy for memoir writing that allowed school children to create three written pieces on a selected topic to experiment with artistic representation. The three pieces of the triptych described by Kirby and Kirby may be closely linked by subject matter, but they may also be connected by, for example, theme, metaphor, or color. The writing strategy employed by the tryptich could be considered postmodern in the sense that the "consumers of the art form" (Kirby and Kirby, 2007, p. 106), the reader, and his/her interpretation is also involved in the creation of meaning of the triptych.

The goal of my triptych is to represent the possible complexities of nationalism as a socio-political phenomenon. While in the two young-adult books, *Girl of Kosovo* (Mead, 2001) and *The Day of the Pelican* (Paterson, 2009), the rendering of nationalism is restricted to negative portrayals of war, in the triptych I wrote, I reflected on nationalism as an everyday lived experience that surrounds soccer fandom. Arthur Koestler (1905-1983), Hungarian-born British essayist and writer, once wrote that there is nationalism and there is soccer nationalism and that the latter is far stronger than the former. Soccer was also described in a 2002 article by Anne Applebaum as the last acceptable form of nationalism that allows for the flag-waving and anthem-singing of chauvinistic patriotism. However, within this form of cultural and national identification sustained by language and national symbols, the possibility of a national essence is

also challenged by the consequences of immigration and bordercrossing among the countries of the European Union (many soccer-players are first-generation immigrants). Additionally, as a result of those bordercrossings, the meaning of cultural stereotypes becomes complicated. Nationalism in soccer, as described in the three panels of the triptych I wrote below, moves beyond negative/positive binaries and becomes a simulacrum of a pure national essence that, as such, no longer exists.

In the triptych that follows, I included, for the first panel, a phone conversation with my sister about our memories of soccer based on an actual conversation we had during the 2010 World Cup games. In this conversation, I recreate not only our emotional reactions to the games but also reflect on how the discourse of nationalism frames everyday conversations and how, in turn, those conversations simultaneously reinforce and deconstruct the discourse of nationalism (my sister and I assign essentialist characteristics to national teams but also question the concept of national belonging). The second panel in my triptych is a short essay I recently wrote about the 2010 World Cup that took place in South Africa in which I reflect on the fragmentation of national identity and the potential socio-political and cultural connotations of choosing a developing country as host of international soccer championship. The third panel of my triptych is a movie that I created using photographs of soccer fans at the South African games. The movie focuses on the relevance of cultural stereotypes displayed on the bodies of people as an expression of national belonging and a simulacrum of a national identity that is fragmented.

Triptych Panel #1: Telephone Conversation

Watching soccer is one of my favorite memories of childhood. Growing up, my sister and I would not have missed the Sunday afternoon soccer games we attended with my grandfather for anything in the world. During those games, besides learning the rules of soccer,

we were also introduced to the issue of national identification. Even though we lived in Romania, I was an ethnic Hungarian and always rooted for the team with the most Hungarians. Things got a little more complicated when the Romanian national team with several Hungarians among its players had to play against the national Hungarian team. In those cases, when Hungarians played against other Hungarians, it was difficult to decide whom I would really root for—my grandfather always said that one should always root for the team that plays a nicer game. My sister and I remained fans through the years, and we have watched many other games with my grandfather later on—the latest during the 2010 World Cup. The following phone conversation was based on such memories about soccer.

Kinga's sister in her office in Budapest, Hungary sits at her computer getting ready to leave work. She dials a number on her cell-phone. Kinga, in her living room in Athens, Georgia sits at the table in front of her computer. Her TV is on ESPN. Her phone rings, and she answers it.

B: Hello, are you there?

K: Yes, I'm here, hi. Well, how are you feeling, my darling? Ha ha, the Spanish player was boasting before the game that the Swiss don't have a chance like this, and they don't have a chance like that and …blablabla

B: They were not boasting…

K: Yes, they were, I saw the interview. And the Swiss guy was just standing there like…you know, we are just happy to be here, this is such an honor for us...this and that, he was so sweet and humble…

B: Ok, but let's just be clear that the Spanish team was better. The Swiss goal was a joke, and now they are all worked up about it, it's unfair…

K: That's right, but, you know, the Spanish shouldn't be so full of themselves…God doesn't beat you with a stick, right? (laugh)

B: Ok, whatever, but be realistic, the Spanish had 27 attacks, the Swiss had 7, right?

K: Did you count it? Too bad they couldn't get one score out of all those 27 attacks. (laugh)

B: I didn't count it, the commentator was saying at the end, and, yeah, out of those sorry 7 attacks the Swiss somehow managed to kick one in, 'cause, they were lucky. Fine, it's true… the Spanish defense was bad, but even then, their game strategy is nicer…

K: The Swiss were so happy though.

B: Yeah, it's easy for them to defend, they are all the size of a double door, they were just defending all through the game, it was nothing but pure luck…

K: Ah, and did you see that other game, the ball slipped out of the goal-keeper's hand?
B: Which game?

K: England-USA

B: Oh, I haven't seen that one all the way through…but here we go again, what's up with the English? They could have beaten these guys easily, and, instead, they were stumbling around all over the soccer field for the entire time…I'm so disappointed.

K: The British were really upset, you know. Oh, did you know that the American goal-keeper's mom is Hungarian?

B: (laugh)… Another Hungarian relative…I'm not surprised. (laugh) Frankly, I don't care if the British lost, on the contrary, I'm glad that America won, but in the end it's gotta be either Spain or Portugal.

K: Who were you rooting for tonight, France or Mexico?

B: France??? No way, it was Mexico.

K: I was with the French, I love Ribery. That's how I imagine Bill Sikes from Oliver Twist. (laugh)

B: I don't like the French players, they are too arrogant, sorry…
K: Well, I guess we are not on the same page.

B: That's ok. What matters, though, is that the Spanish will win or the Portuguese…

K: Do you remember when you got in an argument with Tata because you were rooting for Italy, and he was rooting for the French, and he said that the French played a nicer game and the Italians manipulated the game with their usual drama, and you got all upset?

B: No, I don't remember …When?…Oh, when Zidane head-butted the Italian? What was his name?

K: Materazzi. You know, last World Cup, when the Italians won…

B: That's right, that's right! I remember. Tata and I aren't on the same page either. (laugh)

K: Right (laugh), but the Italians got really beaten today, so baaad they were crying.

B: Poor, Italians. I haven't seen the game. Was it that bad, really?

K: It's a shame! I would cry too if I was them. Well, it's a shame for the French too, there won't be any big parties in France, that's for sure.

B: True!
K: Phew, considering that the Italians won the World Cup four years ago, and now they were not even able to beat Slovakia??!!! All these big teams went down. And the Italian coach would not even shake hands with the Slovakian coach…unbelievable !!!

B: Really?
K: The American commentator even mentioned it…

B: Good for him, they should all have their opinion about the French team…ha-ha.

K: Wait a minute, I'm not talking about the French.

B: Who are you talking about then?

K: The ITALIAAAANS. The Slovakian player, even went up to one of the Italians to shake hands, and he would not even look at him, just walked past him…

B: Too bad, they don't know how to lose.

K: Right. Did I tell you that the Americans pronounce Sarkozy's name with an s instead of sh…they have no idea what it means in Hungarian with an s, you know. (laugh)

B: Right, Sárközy with his Hungarian ancestors, I hope he, at least, knows.
K: I don't know, but, hey, now I'm going to root for the Germans.

B: What??? How can you like the Germans?

K: What's your problem with them?

B: I don't like their game, it's so boring, that's all.

K: I would say, elegant.

B: Yeah, right! The famous German team, and half of the players are Turkish immigrants, how ironic (sigh). And they don't support their gay players.

K: Ok, now wait a minute, that's a big taboo for all the soccer teams, not just the German. I think they are, actually, more open to it than the French. There is this guy, Lemaire, and he was fired from a small Club, because he was gay, I just read it the other day.

B: Right, and Lippi too, the Italian coach, said that openly gay players on his team would cause a scandal. My friend, M. sent me the link, he knows I'm into soccer. He's not anymore, he says.

K: How can you be not openly gay? They want you to be secretly gay, I guess, if you play soccer. It's a shame.

B: Right.
K: Who is Cs. rooting for?

B: Whoever I am not, he doesn't care so much about soccer. But, hey, this is the line up for me: Portugal, Spain, Brazil, Argentina and one of the African teams. In the end, it could be either Portugal or Spain… I would still be happy.

K: Do you remember Gullit?

B: Gullit, sure, I remember.

K: He is one of the American commentators.

B: I will google him, he must look a lot older now. Does he still have the rasta hair?

K: No, short hair…

B: Well, hey…I gotta go… Maybe we talk tomorrow after the game.

K: Ok, let's do that.

B: Hold you fingers crossed for Portugal.

K: Sorry, hon, I'm going with the Germans!

Triptych Panel #2: Essay

In 2010, a year of prominent political debates over immigration laws around the globe, national soccer teams became reminders of the fragmented identities of a colonial past. The definition of national identity seems blurred when the players of Western national teams are often immigrants or children of immigrants coming from third-world or developing countries. Currently, French footballer such as David Trézéguet is of Argentinean decent, and several

members of the German team come from a variety of national backgrounds. For example, Podolski, Klose, Trochowski are Polish immigrants, Cacau immigrated from Brazil, Marin is of Serbian-Bosnian origin; Gomez of Spanish/German heritage; Tasci and Oezil of Turkish origin and Aogo is of Nigerian/German background.

Despite efforts to become a unified European Union that dilutes national identities and strives for tolerance and political correctness, national pride is still in the forefront of soccer championships. Bodies of players and fans become displays of nationalist symbols and stereotypes. French fans wearing berets, Italians wearing Roman warrior helmets, Japanese fans wearing kimonos…anything goes when it is about soccer. At the same time, the 2010 World Cup appeared to be a part of a larger political project, an effort to challenge stereotypical notions of African identity associated with the poor, hopeless and uncivilized, since South Africa, too, could host an international championship. One of the motivating factors behind a South African World Cup could have been the deconstruction of a pure, national essence that transforms destructive nationalism into a constructive national identification capable of understanding difference. In spite of fragmented identities, World Cup soccer has, and perhaps always had, the potential to unify people.

Tryptych Panel #3: Video

To view this video, please go to: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6MPBWnZHni4

Communism and Dictatorship

While the man/woman binary opposition is more prevalent in some books than in others—for example in the novels with female protagonists from the Middle-East or Eastern-Europe—various aspects of Us/Other binaries exist in all the novels in my sample as elements of textual subjectivity. In the novels dealing with state oppression including *The Voices of Silence*

by Mooney (1997) and *Before We Were Free* by Alvarez (2002), the Us/Other binary opposition is represented through the contrasting portrayals of Eastern/Western countries.

Although the systems of government portrayed in these two book, including communism (Romania) and dictatorship (Dominican Republic), are different political formations, they are similar in that sense that they both function as autocratic forms of government with leadership is in the hands of one person or a small group of people who exercise power arbitrarily. *The Voices of Silence* (Mooney, 1997) evokes the Romanian dictator Ceauşescu's communist era and the 1989 revolution that concluded with his assassination and the end of communism in Romania. *Before We Were Free* (Alvarez, 2002) portrays a similar authoritarian political organization headed by General Trujillo's dictatorship in the Dominican Republic during the 1960's. Both books rely on ethnographic elements to provide descriptions of the political formations of these two countries and details about the life circumstances of its people. While silence and surveillance is a common theme for both authors, Mooney (1997) also emphasized the element of lack (mostly of food) during the years of communism in Romania.

Surveillance, hunger and silence.

At the end of the 1980s, Romania was on the verge of economic collapse. Ceauşescu's modernization agenda and the emphasis on the development of heavy industry placed the country in great debt. In order to pay the loan, the government reduced wages and limited electricity and heating in public housing, limited foreign import, and sold everything that was produced in the country abroad. Because of a shortage of food in most places, people stood in lines every day for basic food such as bread and milk. At the same time, through the omnipresence of the *Securitate* (the secret police) in every institution, the Party made sure that

the fear of being reported on or arrested prevented the population from expressing their discontent.

This is the picture of Romania as described in *The Voices of Silence*, written by Mooney (1997), a British journalist who visited Romania right after the fall of communism in 1989. The story is told from point of view of the 12-year-old Flora who lived with her parents in Bucharest, the capital city of Romania. Through her eyes, we learn about the final days of the Romanian communist leader Nicolae Ceauşescu, the surveillance practices of the communist government, the fear and distrust of the people, and the everyday struggle for food—events that led to the 1989 revolution.

Mooney's book (1997) references many interesting details about the lives of the Romanian people and the context of communism. Following the tradition of realistic and historical fiction authors, she included a note at the end of her book explaining that she had visited Romania after 1989 as a journalist and that, in preparation for writing her novels, she had interviewed people about the unfolding of the revolution and the experience of having to live under Ceauşescu's dictatorship. To write *The Voices of Silence*, she used details from people's retellings as well as her own observations.

Like other books in this sample, there is an Us/Other binary in *The Voices of Silence* (Mooney, 1997) represented in the opposition of Eastern and Western countries with Romania identified as the country that needs the help and the assistance of the West (Britain, France, United States). The binary between the modern West and the underdeveloped and traditional East is already evident on the cover of the book. As scarves and traditional costumes are often associated with Romania, the cover image of the 1994 UK edition displays a group of women with headscarves facing away from the viewer and a little girl with a similar headscarf turning

back and looking directly at the camera. Although Mooney did not discuss the issue of traditions in a Romanian context**,** throughout the book she reiterated phrases such as *the lack of luxuries* and the *lack of basic food items* and included details about how economic conditions affected the lives of people and set apart Romania from other countries. For example, the author repeatedly wrote that Flora's mother woke up at dawn every day and went out to stand in line for bread and that her father always carried a shopping bag in case, on his way home from work, he might find something to buy. Flora's birthday was also meant to emphasize the difference between the lives of children from the West and those from Romania; for example, her parents surprised her with the rare treat of a fried egg and a few strips of salami with cheese for breakfast and a headscarf. Mooney stressed the importance of lack in people's life not only by visually setting the names of food items apart, for example, she italicized *fried egg* in the paragraph but also by placing the detailed description of eating, or the desire to eat, as the focus point of the first person narration. The book opens with Flora's dream about chocolate and bananas, the reoccurring theme of hunger and desire in the book associated both with longing for the West and suspicion toward people who possess such goods. When Daniel, the new boy, came to Flora's class and tried to befriend her by giving her small presents such as Wrigley's chewing gum, or M&Ms, Alys, Flora's friend, warned her that he was probably a spy because only the people who had something to do with the secret police could afford good food. Flora, however, was attracted to Daniel, the intelligent and enigmatic new boy who was always ready to express his opinion. Through another binary opposition, Flora compared him to kids from America and Britain who were "open and free with each other" as opposed to Romanian children who were "scurrying around with their head down" (p. 27). Flora, who was deceived by Daniel's confidence and his small presents, eventually told him about her father's secret plan to flee the country illegally.

She realized that Alys was right about Daniel's identity when, several days later, two secret police officers came to their home to arrest her father. With the help of Alys, Flora managed to help her father escape. The last part of the book describes the events at the Palace and University Square in Bucharest in December 1989, the clash between the demonstrators and the army, and the news about the execution of Ceauşescu. At the very end, Flora and her mother reunited with her father who was fighting on the streets with the demonstrators.

Although the book concludes on a more optimistic note, the author's message at the end further produces the image of Eastern-European people—women in particular—as Other. In the author's note, Mooney (1997) suggested that people's lives in Romania did not change much after the fall of Communism. She indicates that they have been oppressed for centuries and are still in need of other countries' help. Mooney wrote, "Romania is still struggling and needs assistance" (p. 182). She further explained that fourteen-year-old Romanian girls would still think of a scarf and chocolate as rare gifts. In the last paragraph of her note, Mooney also suggested that in the hope of a better future, Flora perhaps found a good job and lived happily ever after or perhaps she moved to the United States "and wept to see the luxury her family and friends could never enjoy at home" (p. 182).

Memory: Chocolate Story

Although Mooney's (1997) novel is an exaggerated account of a Romanian childhood story of deprivation, some of the details of the book reminded me of my own childhood memories and daydreams about chocolate. Ceauşescu's rationing politics which meant that food was not distributed in stores freely but was distributed based on the head-count within the family (e.g., a family of four would receive two small loaves of bread per day) also implied that certain food items, such as candy, was limited. Although growing up I never lacked healthy food,

chocolate was a rare treat indeed. There were two kinds of chocolate bars that I remember: a dark-chocolate bar imported from China with a smiling lady on a red wrapper and a milk-chocolate bar with crunchy peanuts, called *Afrikana*, wrapped in yellow paper with a black palm tree on top, an import from Hungary. Afrikana was my favorite, and my grandmother used to cut it up and give it to us in small portions to make it last. Perhaps because it was a rare treat, chocolate, along with other candy, sometimes became a theme for make-believe games with my sister. For example, one of the games that my sister and I played was reading stories (cumulative tales) outloud to my grandmother and while doing that, we replaced the elements of the story with the word chocolate, caramels or whatever came to our mind that day. The story below was one of our favorite. The original version of the story uses the color red which I, here, replaced with chocolate:

Mama, I will tell you a chocolate-story. OK?

OK.

Once there was a chocolate-story, and in the chocolate story there was a chocolate house. The chocolate house was big and had lots of chocolate rooms, and the chocolate rooms were full of bananas. I had my own room, and Bogi had her own chocolate room, and Apa had his own chocolate room, and Anya had her own chocolate room, and Tata had his own chocolate room and, Mama, you had your own chocolate room. And we could chip off a little bit of the chocolate table or chocolate book and eat it, and the chocolate grew right back. And there was a chocolate car in front of the house, and I went far, far away. Suddenly, I got to a chocolate forest. In the chocolate forest there lived a chocolate wolf, he was all brown and he had big brown eyes and a chocolate tongue. I went out to the chocolate field, and I caught a chocolate

bunny. While I was catching the chocolate bunny, you Mama, were talking to the chocolate wolf. I caught the chocolate bunny, I caught the chocolate wolf, and I caught a chocolate bird. Then we got into the little chocolate car, I was sitting in the front, you, Mama, were sitting next to me, the chocolate wolf in the back with the chocolate bunny and the chocolate bird. And we were going and going on the chocolate street, far, far away and we got home. We opened the chocolate car, went into the chocolate room, sat down in the chocolate chair, turn on the chocolate TV, ate the chocolate dinner, drank the chocolate milk, took a bath in the chocolate water, brushed our teeth with the chocolate toothbrush and laid down on the chocolate bed. You, Mama, started saying that:

The chocolate kitty is asleep on the chair,

The chocolate dog is asleep on the rug,

The chocolate house is asleep on the street,

The chocolate chimney is asleep on the roof,

The chocolate key is asleep in the keyhole,

The chocolate book is asleep on the shelf,

The chocolate shoes are asleep on the floor,

The chocolate picture on the wall,

The chocolate car…

The chocolate tram …

The chocolate trolley…

The chocolate train…

Then you turned on the chocolate radio, and the chocolate music came on,

The chocolate wolf came in and was dancing with the chocolate bunny, and the chocolate bird was singing.

Then we fell asleep, and the chocolate story was over.[10]

The discourse of the ideal socialist woman.

In her book, *The Voices of Silence*, Mooney (1997) also drew on the discourse of the ideal socialist woman and the communist policy of full employment to portray the experiences of her female characters. During the period from the 1960's to the 1980's, Communist states provided educational opportunities for women, opened employment lines that previously were unavailable to women, and claimed that women's entry in the workforce would permanently solve issues of gender inequality. In the new system, women would work as full-time wage-earners, and onerous household duties that were traditionally women's responsibility would be alleviated by home appliances while childcare would be provided by state sponsored facilities. The ideal socialist woman, according to Wolchik (1992), was an outstanding worker and mother who was also an active member of the Communist party. In reality however, as Fisher (1985) pointed out, women were rarely granted leadership positions in communist governments. Domestic work also remained gendered. On the one hand, women's involvement in the workforce was an economic development strategy—a consequence of the political and economic crises present in many Eastern European countries in the 1970s and 1980s. On the other hand, their involvement in politics had a primarily symbolic nature in that women, like ethnic minorities, represented a demographic group. Because communist leaders paid little attention to gender inequalities in the workplace or elsewhere, the discourse of the liberation of women

[10] Adapted from Piros-mese (Red-story) by Gizella Hervai (1934-1982)

through work was undermined by a simultaneous discourse that emphasized the importance of economic recovery and workforce development regardless of gender or ethnic differences.

In evoking Flora's, the heroine's story, Mooney (1997) relied on those available discourses and portrayed women's work as being split between responsibilities for the home as well as public, responsibilities. Even though Flora's father helped out occasionally, standing in lines for food early in the morning was mostly the responsibility of the mother. "Mama worried about food and life, and Tata muttered about life and politics" (p. 15). Thus, a binary opposition between the two genders is established in which the father can express his dissatisfaction and desire for social change while the mother is wary of openly criticizing the social conditions of their life. For example, when Flora asked her mother why there was little food in the stores, the mother refused to answer openly and scolded the father who tried to explain Ceauşescu's anti-Western politics. "She shook her head, giving him one of those warning looks I had just started to notice" (p. 3). However, because the family represented a "space of solidarity" (Masson, 2004, p. 1) against the state, the mother was willing to support decisions that might benefit the family in the future despite the potential for danger. This aspect of Mooney's portrayal reinforces the role of the mother as a victim who is willing to sacrifice herself for the well-being of the family. When Flora's father decided to leave the country in secret leaving his family behind, the mother knew she would be persecuted by the secret police. She commented: "Life will be worse for us, because they'll punish us, because he's gotten out" (p. 108). In spite of this, she decided to support his plan in the hope of a better future for the family. Later on, when the father was in hiding, Flora's mother was questioned and remained under the surveillance of the secret agents.

In addition to the Western discourse of Othering and the discourse of communist policy that describes the apparatus of communism in detail (surveillance, distrust, fear, and the lack of food), the *becoming* of representation in Mooney's (1997) book is emphasized through the counter-discourses that dominated the country at the end of 1980's and that the author drew on in her narrative. Through the actions of the characters, we also learn how people resisted or opposed the acts of surveillance, the bugging of apartments, and the limitation of freedom of speech. For example, in order to avoid being overheard when Flora's parents discussed politics, the father turned on the radio. Mooney also touched on the notion of political jokes that parodied communism and the dictatorial regimes that were widespread in all countries behind the iron curtain and, which some have argued, contributed to the fall of Communism.

Memory: Cold War Humor

Communism is a political system famous for its brand of humor. Political jokes, born during the cold war years, built on the events of everyday life, and jokes about those in authority offered an escape from the dreadful conditions of everyday life as Freud (1905/1990) noted. In some national contexts, jokes were also dangerous—telling a joke to the wrong person could result in several years in prison. In spite of those dangers, people did mock the political system that oppressed them, and joking about the conditions of life became an art form. Beyond this, telling jokes also functioned as a counter-discourse to communist oppression and used the specific strategy of turning the language of the system against itself. Jokes became a part of the machinery of communism and relied on the use of absurdity to oppose the absurdity of communist propaganda and logic. The joke, as a cultural phenomenon, recycled specific communist slogans, expressions, and discourses, elevating them to the metaphorical level. During the years of Communism, telling jokes became an important part of everyday life and

covered a variety of different topics. There were jokes about the lack of food, the long queues, surveillance, and arrests; but there were also jokes about political leaders, anti-Western Communist propaganda, the secret police and their methods.

Cold war jokes were based on the realities of everyday life that one would rarely find in history textbooks and relied on a kind of oral storytelling characterized by complexity and wit. In fact, many of those jokes were only comprehensible if the audience was familiar with the historical and political background of the day and the political relationships among countries during the cold war. Communist jokes were funny because they ridiculed the ineffectiveness of the political system and its theory with dry, inventive and often surrealist humor and sophistication. Today, these jokes have lost their relevance and the role they fulfilled for over seventy years, but they remain an important legacy of the communist era.

In the following document, in Google Docs, I have put together a collection of cold war jokes, some of which I heard as a child and others I located through various online sources. When studying social discourses available during the years of communism in Eastern-Europe, jokes become relevant because they illustrate how an oppressive political system such as communism produced its own counter-discourse. Jokes also show how oppression and resistance are not opposite binary poles but complex variables on the continuum of a socio-political formation. In Deleuze and Guattari's (1980/1987) interpretation, jokes, as a form of resistance, would not be seen as the opposite of oppression, rather, they would be seen as its component "included in it, as its other face in a complex assemblage" (p. 107).

Since cold war jokes were shared in the form of oral storytelling and were often changed and altered to fit the national profile of a particular country or communist system, they have many different versions and variants. Those I have collected represent a combination of political

and police jokes as well as jokes about immigration and everyday life across the countries of the Eastern-European block. To view this document please visit: https://docs.google.com/present/view?id=dg8fkbs3_12frjjr8cf

Finding Voice in Writing

In *The Voices of Silence* by Mooney (1997) the portrayal of textual subjectivity is mostly limited to Us/Other binary oppositions and the silences of the female characters while in *Before We Were Free* (Alvarez, 2004) silence is transformed into an inner voice that as a form of *becoming* is channeled through the writing of diary entries and letters. *Before We Were Free* portrays an oppressive political system in the Dominican Republic under the leadership of General Trujillo. The story is told from the point of view of Anita, an 11-year-old girl whose family is involved in the underground movement against General Trujillo's dictatorship. Although this book focuses on silence as do other books by Mooney discussed earlier, the character uses her writing voice to express feelings and thoughts that she is not allowed to talk about.

Anita, the youngest daughter, was able to recognize her own subject position not only as a curious child who asked too many questions but also through the act of writing, an interior space where she could exercise control over her own thoughts that helped her come to terms with the confusion and loneliness she felt because of the family's secrecy. When Anita's father was arrested by the authorities for being involved in an attempt to assassinate General Trujillo, Anita and her mother went into hiding and spent several weeks in a bedroom closet at one of their friends' homes. In order to keep track of events, Anita wrote in her diary, which she called a third radio tuned to her heart, an outlet that helped her remain sane. "I start writing in my diary, so there's another voice that I can listen to" (p. 111). At the end of the book, Anita and her

mother left for New York where they learned that her father and her uncle had been murdered, and that they would not be able to return to the Dominican Republic. Being an outsider in an unfamiliar country, she used her diary and her writing voice to connect with her familiar self. She wrote about her memories, made lists of people, places, and foods that she missed and through writing came to understand that even though she had a new life in the United States, her old memories would always be a part of her when she grew up.

Although Mooney's (1997) and Alvarez's (2002) books have similar themes and characters who have similar experiences, their different use of narrative techniques result in different productions of female subjectivity. While Mooney's first person narrative technique heavily relies on the Us/Other binary oppositions and the discourse of fear that silences the main character, Alvarez, through the element of diary writing, finds a way to give voice to her character's thoughts and inner conflicts in a more nuanced way.

The Discourse of Immigration

One common thread that connects the stories of women and young girls across cultures and ethnicities is immigration. Immigration, mostly represented as the consequence of nationalist attacks, ethnic cleansing, and war, often becomes a relevant theme in the construction of textual subjectivity and reinforces Us/Other binaries in the books in this sample. In *The Day of the Pelican* (Paterson, 2009) and in *Under the Persimmon Tree* (Staples, 2005), the authors portray America as a land of freedom and peace as opposed to the war-torn countries of Kosovo and Afghanistan. Similar binary oppositions are evident in Collins' (2005) *Fattening Hut* as well where the English speaking researchers, at the end of the book, save the young girl from the violent traditions of her tribe and take her to their own country (either Britain or America).

However, while Paterson's (2009) book reinforced the positive image of America as the land of opportunities, Budhos (2006) in *Ask Me No Questions* presented a more complex picture of the experiences immigrants may encounter after leaving their homeland including difficulties of integration and language learning, the challenges of earning a living and supporting a family as a new immigrant, and the experience of being an illegal alien within the borders of the United States. I interpreted those elements of representation in Budhos' book, particularly her focus on issues relating to illegal immigration, as *becoming*.

Illegal Immigration

The issue of illegal immigration in the United States has recently been the focal point of political and public debates. In April 2010, Jan Brewer, Governor of Arizona, signed a bill on illegal immigration into law that sanctioned the prosecution and deportation of individuals without proper documentation. President Obama and others harshly criticized the law and characterized Governor Brewer's decision as an "open invitation for harassment and discrimination" (Archibold, April 23, 2010). Additionally, in August 2010, John Morton, director of U. S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), reported that in 2009, 380,000 and, in 2010, 136,000 undocumented individuals had been deported from the territory of the United States, pledging that the agency would continue to fight illegal immigration (Gosine, 2010).

While the initiative to implement stronger border security and a uniform immigration policy reform is ongoing, the 2010 law is not the first attempt to strengthen U.S. domestic security. In 2001, in response to the September 11 attacks, President George W. Bush signed into law anti-terrorism legislation, the PATRIOT Act, which gave law enforcement agencies full powers of surveillance including the right to search telephone and email communications,

medical and financial records and to detain or deport immigrants suspected of terrorist acts. Although Title 1 of the Patriot Act condemned discrimination against Arabs and Muslims, those communities were, nevertheless, the *de facto* main targets of federal authorities in the aftermath of 9/11.

It is the discrimination against Muslim-Americans that Budhos (2006) chooses as the main topic of her realistic fiction. The note at the end of *Ask Me No Question* tells us that her story was inspired by experiences of Middle-Eastern families who lived in the United States during the terrorist attack of 9/11, were suspected of terrorism, and imprisoned or interrogated afterwards. As a result of such atrocities, Nadira and her family, the characters in the book who were illegal aliens from Bangladesh, decided to leave for Canada. At the border, however, they were detained because of their expired visas. The father was arrested, and the family remained separated for months. The mother stayed behind to remain close to the father, and Nadira and her older sister, Aisha, returned to New York to live with their aunt and uncle. At the end of the book, the family reunited; but the strain of not knowing what was going to happen to the father, of having to disguise the absence of their parents and their identities as illegal aliens from the school authorities, permanently changed the way Nadira and Aisha perceived themselves in America.

Ask Me No Question (Budhos, 2006) is an interesting portrayal of clashing cultures, changing gender relations, and changing subjectivity. Textual subjectivity is conveyed through Nadira's point of view and the references she makes to the other female characters of the book. Women who came from cultures where they were bound to male-biased traditions and who were not permitted to work outside the home acquired a different subjectivity in their new environment where the old cultural values had lost their significance. Women found agency in

their new subject positions as wage-earners. For instance, at the beginning of the book Nadira's mother did not have much of a relationship with the outside world and she spent most of her time with domestic work. However, during her husband's arrest, she learned to enjoy her relationships with people and by the end of the book she had reconstituted her subjectivity. Under new circumstances, she became more assertive and assumed more responsibilities regarding the future of the family.

The changing roles of women or women's work outside the home in the new country also resulted in a changing relationship between the two genders (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001). While some of the male characters in the book, like the father, were able to cope with the changes in the family roles, in many cases, the new gender relations experienced within the immigrant family often led to domestic violence and the physical abuse of women (Suárez-Orozco, 2001). In Budhos' (2006) novel, conflicts between the aunt and the uncle and the uncle and his daughter occurred because the male character felt humiliated and angry for having to work in low-paying jobs. As his identity as a patriarch was challenged by the new economic and social circumstances, the uncle and his wife moved back to Bangladesh at the end of the book.

One of the overarching experiences that all the characters of the book face is the fear of deportation. The author described the illegal immigrant students as "the ones who try to get lost in the landscape of backpacks and books reports" (p. 29)—the kids who always refuse to answer personal questions. Budhos (2006), however, presents the reader with complex ways in which the female characters of the book dealt with the boundaries that surrounded their lives. The mother, for example, refused to leave the house because she was afraid to be in public without adequate language skills, but she secretly watched cooking shows on TV to learn English. Instead of hiding, Aisha, the oldest daughter, studied the social life, mannerisms, and language

use of her American colleagues while being among them and, by the end of the novel, she became an excellent student who was nominated to be the valedictorian of her class. Contrarily, Nadira became the "dreamy, second daughter" (p.2) who felt safer when she stayed quiet behind others. Her silence became a refuge from which she could observe others. During the father's arrest, Aisha isolated herself from the world but, for Nadira, this difficult time in their lives became an opportunity to step out of her silence and help her family. Learning that her father's imprisonment was the result of the misspelling of his last name, she was able to facilitate his release.

Budhos' (2006) choice *In Ask Me No Question* to end the well-developed and complicated storyline with a simplistic, fairy-tale like ending is a reminder that these stories are works of fiction and as such "are saturated with the dominant values of the society that produces them" (Nodelman, 2003, p. 151). Nodelman notes that as opposed to European children's literature, the emphasis on happy endings and hope is one of the characteristics of American children's novels. In spite of hardships and difficulties, the characters can always improve and achieve the American dream at the end of the book. Even the acceptance of limitations allows the characters to aspire towards more realistic goals. In this case, Aisha becomes a valedictorian and, because of Nadira's cleverness, the family is able to apply for legal residency in America. In spite of this, however, and in opposition to several other books in the sample, throughout the novel Budhos used several different storytelling elements including references to memory and detailed descriptions of geographic maps to explore the complexity of female subjectivity and to present us with a variety of the possible experiences of immigrant women in America, a strategy of *becoming* in her novel.

Maps and Memories

Female subjectivity in *Ask Me No Question* (Budhos, 2006) is also conveyed through the inner thoughts and dialogues of the characters, especially Nadira. An idea reiterated by several characters is that immigrants, just like anyone else, cannot be described or categorized in any one way. Nadira said: "I want to tell them that Abba's favorite show is *The Simpsons* and that he loves Tagore. I want to say that sometimes you can't know who a person is. Sometimes, they don't know who they are either. They can appear to be one thing—like me, fat and slow and lazy—but you can look at them another way too—and see something else" (p. 132).

As opposed to *The Day of the Pelican* (Paterson, 2009) where references to the country of origin reinforce the Eastern/Western binary opposition in terms of rural Kosovo and first-world America, in *Ask Me No Question*, Budhos (2006) uses references to the home country and memories about the home country to explore the character's thoughts. For example, when Nadira needed comfort and reassurance about the safety of her family, she asked her parents to tell her the old story of how they met each other in Bangladesh. She also used memory—for example, the memory of how she learned to swim and her father's encouraging words, "if you know how to breathe, you can get through anything" (p. 116)— to face the hard times in her life. Furthermore, while in *The Day of the Pelican* (Budhos, 2009) the author, through the voice of the father suggested that the children's identity will be defined by their new home (America), in *Ask Me No Question*, Budhos (2006) emphasized the *in between* quality of the characters' identity. Bengal, the country of origin of Nadira's family, is a land where there is "no difference between land and sea" (p. 20), the land disappears during the rainy season and it returns when the rainy season goes away. Nadira used references to Bengali proverbs ('Land disappears, land appears—this is our life') and references to the geography of her country as well as historical

events to describe living in-between things—the land and the sea, different countries (Pakistan and India), religions (Muslim and Hindu) and wars. In America, Nadira continued to live another kind of in-between life; in-between here meant to live in-between American and Bengali cultures.

Although Budhos' (2006) book ends simplistically with the hope that the family will be awarded legal status in the new country, she successfully critiqued the myth of America as the land of freedom and deconstructed the Western/non-Western binary opposition by showing that persecution can occur in both parts of the world, independent of the socio-cultural and economic development of its countries. For Nadira, Bengal remained the land of wars that killed many of her relatives but also the land of happy childhood memories. America, the new and dangerous land of hiding, also became the place where there were many new opportunities for the family. Thus, Nadira is defined both by her Bengali roots and by her immigrant experiences in America. From her point of view, the map of a country and the way its borders, history, and people are depicted is different from the stories told by the land itself. In order to understand the complexity of countries and people, one must put those two kinds of stories together, those told about the country or people, and those that the country or people tell. Budhos did not only include stories about the immigrant experience of persecution in Bangladesh or America but also drew on other important aspects of teenage years relevant in both Nadira's and Aisha's lives, including sibling rivalry, eating disorders, family relationships, and friendship. Among the many stories, memories were the connective elements that positioned the characters in-between past and present experiences and complex subject positions.

Memory

Figure 7. Photograph of church in Viile Tecii, Romania. July 2010.

Figure 8. Photograph of church in Viile Tecii, Romania. July 2010.

I took the above photographs this past summer while driving through one of the abandoned Saxon villages in Romania, Transylvania. The population of Transylvania consists of several different ethnicities. Along with Romanians, who represent the majority population, Transylvania also has a large Hungarian ethnic group and smaller Roma, Saxon and Serb

communities. The Saxons, who are of German origin, first settled in Transylvania in the 12th century. At that time Transylvania belonged to Hungary and the task of the German settlers was to protect the borders of the country. After the Treaty of Trianon following the end of WWI in 1918, Transylvania become a part of Romania, and the Hungarian and Saxon population became an ethnic minority within new borders. (Along with the Transylvanian Saxons, the Banat or the Sathmar Swabians also represented the German minority in Romania.) After WWII, the German government granted citizenship to the Transylvanian Saxons and Swabians and made efforts to bring them back to their home country. Repatriation, however, did have a price. During the 1970's Romania had closed its borders, but it was common knowledge that Ceauşescu "sold" the Germans: he made an agreement with the German government that, in exchange for foreign currency, Romanian citizens of German ethnicity would be allowed to leave the country. It is estimated that after the collapse of communism in 1989, half a million more ethnic Germans left Romania for West Germany. The vanished Saxons and Swabians became ghosts, abandoned memories. Schools, Lutheran churches, houses, and entire villages built in the particular Saxon style were left empty; today most of them are taken over by Romania's Roma population.

Although Viile Teaca, where I took this picture, is not empty today, and there are newly built churches nearby, the presence of this old building was the most intriguing sight for me in the village. In fact, there is no building there anymore, no side-walls, no roof, or pews or pulpit. All that's left is the façade of the church with a partial tower and broken clock, and the steps that lead up to an almost intact door, behind which there is nothing but the open field. After spending my spring and most of my summer thinking about memories and ghosts in relation to my dissertation, this open door and the remnants of this old Lutheran church became for me the perfect metaphor of a memory that's in between the present and the past.

Becoming: A Non-Explanatory Use of Language

As previously discussed, multicultural children's literature with its focus on the representation of the Other often functions via the strategy of *defamiliarization*, a disorienting of the reader's perspective. The aim of this defamiliarization strategy is to create distance between the experience of the reader and the experiences of the characters of the book. While in several of these sample books the authors relied on Us/Other binary oppositions in creating this distance between reader and characters, some novels in my sample also deployed a strategy of defamiliarization that I referred to in my analysis as *becoming*—a term closely related to the idea of subject formation addressed by both poststructural and postmodern theories, particularly Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987). An example of *becoming* would be a breaking away from an essentialist understanding of the female subject. As opposed to the term *subject* (often used in essentialist ways), the term *subjectivity* is a becoming because it focuses on the idea that the self is continuously changing, and it is "a threshold, a door, a becoming between two multiplicities" (p. 249) as opposed to that of a fixed self. To become is to pass through the binaries and to refuse to stay fixed in one perspective. In my analysis of *Ask Me No Question* by Budhos (2006) I have already described how the in-between space occupied by the female characters are a becoming of representation, through which the author challenged binary oppositions.

Becoming, however, may also be interpreted as a non-explanatory use of language, or as Hayden's (1998) described it, "a placing of linguistic elements into different relations" (p. 99), one that breaks away from binary forms of expression and the separation of form and content. The becoming of representation means that Communism, for instance, does not become the main content of the text. Instead, the text helps the reader experience Communist principles or ideologies through literary devices or narrative style: short sentences, interrogative sentences,

and metaphors, evoke how Communism functions. The narrative becomes a coded language that evokes rather than describes the experience of fear or surveillance. In this sense, for the postmodern work of art, the binary oppositions, the hierarchy between content and form break down. The content of the book is no more relevant than the form through which it functions. Such non-explanatory use of language is evident in such writings as Müller's (1996) *The Land of the Green Plums*. Although this book, and Müller's writings in general, would not be marketed as young-adult books in the traditional American sense of the term, I used her novel as a sample analysis to illustrate my interpretation of a becoming of representation played out in prose through a distinctive use of language and linguistic devices.

Metaphor and Coded Language

Female subjectivity in Müller's (1996) novel is addressed through an evocatively written stream of consciousness technique that brings together several different female characters portrayed in the book. The story is an autobiographical account of the author who was born and lived in Romania as a German ethnic minority during the communist dictatorship of Nicolae Ceauşescu.

In Müller's (1996) writing, communism becomes a machine with various elements: the factory workers and college students, the crazy people in the town square, the secret police officers and the mechanisms of surveillance, as well as the poverty of the country that drives many people to alcoholism or suicide. The various ways in which people resist repression are also parts of the mechanism of this political system. "The demented" she writes "exchanged fear for insanity" (p. 41) but the rest of them, those who were still in their right mind, had to learn how to live with the fear. Müller's narrative, thus, is the story of survival sought out within the close friendship of several people; Edgar, Georg, Kurt, three young college students, Teresa, the

daughter of a secret police officer, an unnamed seamstress who eventually leaves the country illegally, Lola, a girl from the countryside who commits suicide, and the unnamed young woman who assumes the character of the author in the book.

The rendering of subjectivity in Müller's (1996) novel is embedded in her narrative style, a kind of becoming of representation evident in a specific use of metaphors and an unusual poetry-like prose and imagery. There is nothing straightforward or explanatory in this kind of writing, Müller's narrative evokes a sensory experience of the mechanisms of repression and surveillance put to work in a Communist state. Thus, fear and confusion become a part of the aesthetic structure of the text (Fish, 2004) in the sense that the author does not tell you what living in fear or confusion meant but instead she focuses on evoking those feelings through the use of metaphors that function as a coded language. In Müller's text the meaning of every word is shadowed by the meaning of something else, similar as the characters in the book are shadowed by the lingering horror and brutality of mental and physical repression. In this sense, Müller deconstructs the content and form binary opposition evident in textual representation: the content of the book, that is the evocation of fear and secrecy, also becomes the form of the novel in the shape of a coded language. It is in this raw but dreamlike language and the fragmented rendering of memory that we find her subjectivity embedded.

Unlike the narrative style used in *The Voices of Silence* (Mooney, 1997), there is no linear storytelling in *The Land of Green Plums* although the author does follow some chronology in her retellings. Müller does not try to describe to the reader what communism was by enlisting the names of various organizations, or including slogans or quotations from the speeches of communist leaders. She instead uses sensorial and visual impressions to produce a picture about the country and its people and the mechanisms of power put to work.

Fear, perhaps the most developed element of textual subjectivity in her narrative, becomes a character that follows others as a ghost. Thus, the proletariat comes across as a group of drunken workers who gather in bars and drink until they lose their memory. However, they cannot leave their fear behind, fear is everywhere: in the apartment blocks, the railways station, the train rides, in the wheat fields and the graveyards, even in their drunken babblings, "the habit of fear does not desert their voice" (p. 31). The secret police officer, Captain Pjele, and his dog are also ghosts. The narrator simultaneously refers to them as grave-diggers because they put other people's lives in danger. Similarly, the workers in the factories, the people and the children on the streets, or the students themselves are all described as walking and living corpses. The young woman, who narrates the story, was also haunted by the ghost of her dead roommate, Lola, who committed suicide.

The heart-beast is another recurring metaphor in the book. Heart-beast means soul, but it also means fear, or it could also mean oppressive power, because in Müller's narrative the meaning of the word changes depending on the context she uses it in or the character she refers to. When Müller referred to her own heart-beast she referred to her own fear, when she referred to her dead grandmother's heart-beast she meant her soul, when she talked about the heart-beast of the Communists, the word translates as a destructive and oppressive force. Another important metaphor in the book that has many different connotations is the metaphor of the green plum. It means corruption, theft, greed and poison.

Similarly to fear, Western clothes and good food function like characters in the book and stand for the world outside of Romania or freedom. Although the narrator did not explain, for example, Tereza's actions and behavior, she often portrayed her wearing fine Western clothes and eating and drinking greedily. The narrator used the metaphor of eating and a porcelain

jewelry stand (a hand) to talk about Tereza's shallow greediness and her privileged background as the daughter of a secret police officer. Tereza's character became not only a symbol of privilege but also a sight of superficial understanding of freedom. Even she, however, with all her privileges is a prisoner of her own country: "…she was not the world. She was only what people in this country thought of as the world when they wanted to flee" (p. 118). Tereza's obsession with cloth and jewelry eventually led her to agree to cooperate with the secret police and turn on her friend. Müller (1996) uses the metaphor of jewelry and food in her references to other female characters as well. For the young woman's landlady, Frau Margit, sweets stand for her abandoned life in Hungary.

One of the most remarkable qualities of becoming in Müller's (1996) writing is her refusal to analyze her characters. Instead, she gave us her impressions about the way she remembered them: mothers and grandmothers are the ones who take care of others. This kind of rendering of impression is relevant in the scene of the young woman's encounter with Tereza's grandmother. "Tereza hadn't introduced me. Her grandmother didn't need my name; she saw a mouth in a face, so she gave me soup" (p. 143). In this simple line, Müller summarized her impression about the subjectivity of the grandmother as a person whose role was to take care of others almost in a machine-like way. Similarly, mothers symbolize pain and sickness or endurance. Because they were the ones who have to take care of the sick or elderly people around them (the husband, the grandfather and the grandmother) pain became a part of their own subjectivity, and that was all they talked about in their letters to their children. "…we were amazed that our mothers, who had never met in their lives, all sent us the same letters, full of their illnesses. By train that we no longer boarded ourselves, each sent us the pain of her gallbladder, her stomach, her spleen, her back…Our illnesses, our mothers thought to

themselves, are a knot with which to tie our children...” (p. 46). The passing of the time and the helplessness of the characters in the novel are hinted at by the grandmother’s gradual fall in to complete Dementia, singing and aimless wandering around the village.

Similarly to Budhos’ (2006) protagonist, the women in this book occupy in-between spaces, there is no good or bad character. Tereza helped the young woman hide documents from the secret police and became her accomplice in taking revenge on Captain Pjele. But, by the end of the novel, Tereza did become the spy she was suspected to be all along. The young woman’s feelings for Tereza have a similar double tone. She did not trust her, but at the same time, she worried when Tereza got sick and those moments of genuine friendship haunted her even after Tereza’s death. The young woman’s friendship with Edgar, Georg and Kurt was also situated in such in-between space. They shared their secrets but they also disagreed and insulted each other: “You Swabian farthorn, you Swabian cabbagehead, you Swabian ragbag. We needed the rage from all those words to separate us. We invented them like curses to gain distance from each other” (p. 75).

The short sentences and fragmented lines in Müller’s (1996) prose (form) channel this feeling of alienation (content) of the characters. Because they had to live in between truth and lie, they sought each other out but they kept distance in their language through codes. Edgar, Georg and Kurt and the young woman agreed to communicate through a coded language the secret police would not understand. Every time they sent a letter to each other, they put a hair in the envelope so they could know if it had been opened by the Securitate. The word nail-clippers in the sentence meant interrogation, the word shoes meant search, cold meant being followed, a comma after the greeting if their life was in danger. This coded use of language had a double meaning in Müller’s text. It created distance between the characters: the content of their letters

became almost nonsensical because of the codes and fragmented lines. At the same times, those codes also brought them closer together. The coded use of language became the telling of truth in disguise.

Third-person narrative is another strategy of becoming that Müller (1996) used to create an impression about the life and experiences of the characters. The young woman is alienated from her past as well, and her alienation is expressed in references to herself and her parents in third person: the child, the mother, the father. This alienation, in part, was imposed on them by the family secret: the father's SS background and his loyalty to the Führer until he died. The secret made them an accomplice, and because the child could not talk about it openly, she referred to her father as keeping "graveyards in his throat" (p. 14), a metaphor for his SS background but also for his alcoholism that eventually killed him. Similarly, the various nuances of greed (for food, for objects and for clothes or for freedom) as a form of helplessness and escapism are elements of a political systems imposed on people.

Memory: Impressions

The neighbor comes to the door every day. She comes with empty hands, and she always leaves with something: three slices of cake on a plate, some grapes, carrots from the garden, potatoes in a bag. She always wears an apron, and when she comes in, she sits down on the chair that's closest to the door so she can see who is walking up and down the street. She keeps her right hand in her apron pocket and her left hand under her apron. Then she takes her hands out of their hiding place to adjust her scarf. She takes her scarf off and combs her hair with her ten fingers, pulls it back tight in a bun, then she puts her scarf back on and makes a face while she ties a knot under her chin. The neighbor complains about her husband, because the husband leaves his money in the empty beer bottles. The neighbor works double shifts, cleaning the long

hallways in the hospital, even on the weekends the hospital needs to be cleaned twice a day…as soon as she finishes wiping she can start again. Grandmother gives her hot sweet corn so she will stop crying. She picks up the sweet corn and asks: *Where should I start, should I start at this end or at this end?* She does not cry anymore, she does not complain, she takes my advice, she starts eating the sweet corn on the skinnier end. She forgets about her drinking husband, her never-ending dirty hallways. Before she leaves, grandmother goes down in the basement and puts some potatoes in a plastic bag for her, and carrots and grapes for the kids. Then she takes out some money from her apron pocket and puts it on the top of the grapes in the bag: *buy some caramels for the kids…*

The neighbor comes to the door every day, then goes home and tells her husband where the potatoes are, where the carrots are, where the money is in the drawer, the liquor in the cabinet. The husband comes to the door when nobody is at home and takes the potatoes, the carrots, and the money from the drawer, drinks the liquor from the cabinet. The husband gets so drunk that he forgets to go home, he takes the potatoes and carrots and the money to the bar, and he puts it all in the empty beer bottles. He talks about golden curtain rings, suitcases full of money, motorcycles in the attic, until nobody believes him. At midnight the street sweepers step over his body fallen on the pavement…

Becoming: Trick and Deceit and Arranged Marriages

Staples' (1989) novel, *Shabanu, Daughter of the Wind* uses a similar technique of *becoming* as a strategy of defamiliarization in the portrayal of textual subjectivity. Fisher (2002) and Donovan (2007) defined *Shabanu* as a book that, like adult texts, persistently destabilizes the reader's perspective. Donovan claimed that "instead of gradually and inevitably moving child readers toward an inevitable acceptance of the subject position offered by Shabanu, the novel

keeps readers off balance and disordered" (p. 31) by evoking experiences and introducing ideas unfamiliar for the reader.

Shabanu, for which Staples (1989) received a Newbery Honor in 1990, is one of the first representations of Middle-Eastern subjects in American young-adult literature. Living in the Cholistan Desert, on the border between Pakistan and India, the eleven-year-old Shabanu is the daughter of a nomadic family of camel herders. In first-person narrative, Shabanu described her family's life in the desert with particular focus on her sister's upcoming wedding. Phulan's was an arranged marriage and Shabanu's future husband had already been chosen. The wedding plans changed when local landlord murdered Phulan's betrothed and, in order to solve the conflict, Shabanu was promised in marriage to the landlord's fifty-year-old brother, Rahim, who already had several wives. Her marriage to Rahim would ensure economic well-being for the parents and her sister and peace with other people in the desert. Although Shabanu tried to run away one night, her camel stepped into a hole and broke his leg, and she decided to wait with him until her father found them. The book ends with the scene of the father beating Shabanu for going against her fate.

The strategy of becoming in Staples' (1989) novel is evident, for example, in the description of the desert landscape and various customs and social practices. As opposed to mainstream American literature (see for example, McCarthy, 1985) that, according to Donovan (2007), describes the desert landscape as uninhabitable and antagonistic, Staples used positive attributes in her portrayal: the ground is covered by flowers, the sand sparkles like water, the winter sky is blue-green. Nomadic life is also portrayed positively. Although Staples' representation acknowledged the occasional hardships that the family has to face, for example, lack of water or sandstorms, Shabanu's father is a successful camel herder, and they are proud of

raising animals. At the same time, nomadic life is not the only mode of living in Staples' book. Desert life intersects with city landscapes where the agricultural and urban life practices exist side by side. On their way to the fair in Sibi, Shabanu and her father see camels and trucks and buses sharing the same road.

According to Donovan (2007), another element that Staples (1989) used to destabilize the readers' perspective in her treatment of female subjectivity is arranged marriages. Instead of using first-person narration as a way to critique or condemn this cultural practice, Staples used Shabanu's perspective to describe the many different ways in which arranged marriages played out in the lives of the people. The mother and father had a loving relationship, while Shabanu's Uncle worked in the city and saw his wife, Auntie, and their kids irregularly. Sharma, Shabanu's other aunt, left her husband and her arranged marriage and lived with her daughter running a successful business on her own. Women are also presented in very different ways. While her sister Phulan and their mother seemed to adhere more to cultural rules, Shabanu and her aunt Sharma were more independent. Despite of these differences, however, women like Sharma who stand for a more Western image of femininity in Staples' book, do not reject the social practices of their own culture, such as the arranged marriage. While Sharma was concerned over Shabanu's marriage, she did not reject it, she was rather concerned that Shabanu, because of her family background and age, will be despised and humiliated by Rahim's other wives: "Shabanu will be their slave. They're all uppity-uppity women. They get along all right. But what about her? Do you think they'll take a desert girl into their circle?" (p. 205)

When it became clear that the plans regarding Shabanu's and Rahim's wedding would not be changed, Sharma tried to help her learn "some of the tricks of women" (p. 209) that would ensure her safety among the other wives in Rahim's house. Trickery and deceit or

"resourceful behavior" (Bardhan cited in Spivak, 1993, p. 89), was described by Paul (1987) as female survival tactics and forms of resistance. Staples (1989) included this element in her book as another disorienting element to emphasize a perspective unfamiliar to Western readers who may consider the idea of deceit inappropriate or unfamiliar. Some of these tricks, to be clever and enigmatic, are presented by Sharma as one available choice Shabanu can make. "'You do have a choice, my little quail,' she says softly…'The choice is, you try to make him so happy he can't bear to be away from you a single moment'" (pp. 208-209). The other choice for Shabanu, would be to leave her husband and stay with Sharma.

Finally, the ending of the book violates the expectations of Western (American) readers on various levels (Donovan, 2007). From a Western perspective, Shabanu's beating by the father would most likely be considered abusive yet Shabanu accepted it and did not try to seek help. Staples similarly violated the idea of individualism as well when Shabanu accepted the arranged marriage instead of choosing to live freely in Sharma's house. By violating these norms of a Western audience, Staples refused to appropriate Shabanu's subjectivity or the subjectivity of Middle-Eastern women, in general. Shabanu's story instead reads as an alternative ethnographic writing, a form of becoming in which the author produces the story about Middle-Eastern women from multiple perspectives.

Becoming: Impressionist Accounts and Ethnographic Verse Novel

Becoming in Patricia McCormick's (2006) young adult novel, *Sold*, the story of a 13-year-old Nepali girl sold into prostitution in India, is most evident in the ethnographic writing applied by the author. Although McCormick's book is a fictional story, similar to other realistic fiction books in her endnote she claimed that she has done extensive research in Nepal on the issue of child prostitution and interviewed survivors about their stories. In the classic sense of

anthropological inquiry, McCormick continued what Patton (2002) described as the primary tradition of qualitative ethnography: the study of a culture and its people (specifically women).

A fictionalized ethnography, such as McCormick's (2006) novel, is certainly not the only one in my sample. Paterson's (2009) *The Day of the Pelican* or Ellis's (2000) *The Breadwinner* applied a similar approach in the sense that they used the genre of fiction to write in detail about a culture that is different than their own. Moreover, all of the authors in my sample included an endnote to their books in which they claimed that their stories were based on real events that they have personally observed or heard about. In spite of these similarities, however, the approach McCormick (2006) applied in her book is different. While several of the books, similarly to classic ethnographies adopted an explanatory form of writing (characterized by objectivity) and relied on binary oppositions in their portrayals of textual subjectivity, *Sold* instead talked about the small moments of life and rendered impressions about the experiences of people in the form of a verse novel, a blending of poetry and narrative. In doing so, the author mainly relied on stylistic devices, such as metaphor and inner dialogue to describe how poverty or the harshness of nature affects the lives of the people and, in particular, Lakhsmi's family. Thus, the first scene in the novel opens with an evocative metaphor of the *tin roof* as a recurring motif that stands for prosperity in this small Nepali village.

Lakshmi and her family are poor, her father died, and her new stepfather was a gambler. Being poor meant that the family did not have a tin roof, that they could not pay the rent in time, and that they had many debtors. When the monsoon washed away the family's crops, the stepfather decided to send Lakhsmi to the city to work as a maid. Although the mother did not agree, Lakhsmi convinced her that they could have a better life if she worked. Without the consent of the mother, the stepfather sold Lakshmi to a strange woman, Auntie, for five hundred

rupees. Auntie, then, introduced her to a man who traveled with her to India and sold her to the owner of a brothel, Mumtaz. By the time Lakhsmi learned about what she had to do to earn a living, it was too late to escape.

Although McCormick's (2006) portrayal followed the classic ethnographic tradition in the sense that she drew on the descriptions of geographic place and cultural practices, her focus is on the portrayal of the multiply positioned female subject. In this process of *becoming*, the author relied on what Visweswaran (1994) described as a "deconstructive ethnography" (p. 78) that applied an interrogative rather than an explanatory mode of writing and discouraged the identification with a stable unified subject or a fixed description of the culture. McCormick did not intend to describe the village community as made up of families who struggled with the same issues. Although the first setting of the novel was rural, the families in the village had different life experiences and different economic resources. Lakshmi's family was very poor, but there were people in the village who worked in the city or made a living by selling crops and were able to make a decent income. McCormick, similarly to Staples (1989), critiqued the family on a personal rather than cultural level. Lakshmi's family lost everything in the monsoon because the stepfather spent all his days at the tea-shop and did not help out around the house. Her best friend father, however, took good care of the family, building paddy walls to protect the crops from being washed away by the rain.

The author used similar techniques of becoming to describe what life is like during the dry and the rainy seasons. McCormick (2006) did not romanticize the life of the villagers; Lakhsmi did recognize both the beauty and the cruelty of her own environment. Thus, she described the peacefulness of her surroundings during the dry season, the "chill Himalayan air" (p. 9), the fields covered with the "cheerful dresses of the women" (p. 9), the babies napping in

wicker baskets, the "brilliant yellow pumpkin blossoms" (p. 9), their hut "torched with sunlight" while the rest of the village "remained cloaked in the mountain's long purple shadow" (p. 9), and in parallel, she also portrayed the dangers of the cool months and the cruelty of not having water for an extended period of time. "The rice plants are brown and parched, coated in the dust. The wind rips the weakest of them out by the roots and tosses them off the mountainside…The baby's eyes are caked with dirt. He cries without fury. He cries without tears" (p. 22). Similarly, while the rain was initially a blessing for the people, it slowly turns into a merciless enemy that "soaks the ground past the soaking point" (p. 33).

In order to ensure that Lakhsmi's perspective remained central in the course of the storytelling, McCormick (2006) did not treat her words ironically. In other words she did not use her character's point of view to set up a binary opposition between Lakhsmi and the pre-industrial or agricultural life of the Nepali villagers and the technologically advanced society of the audience of the book. In spite of all the dangers, Lakhsmi's life was full of happy moments and small pleasures. She enjoyed doing chores around the house, spending time with her friend Gita and playing the "hopping-on-one-leg game" (p. 3), brushing each other's hair or going to school. She embraced the traditional practices her mother teaches her: covering her head with a shawl, never looking a man in the eye or being alone with a man who is not a family member. She also embraced her arranged marriage to a young man named Krishna, and although she was not uncritical of her culture privileging the male children (for example, male children were breastfeed for four years, while female infants only for a few months), she accepted her mother's explanation that the women's fate to endure was also to triumph. Thus, Lakshmi's wish to leave the village did not result from her desire to escape from the fate that expected her to remain in

the village, but rather from her desire to provide her family with a better life and support them in a way that her stepfather could not.

Furthermore, another aspect of *becoming* is the author's focus on women's relationships to other women and the investigation of both their silences and the various subject positions they occupy. Thus, the first relationship of this kind that we witness is between Lakhsmi and her mother. Although their life is difficult, McCormick (2006) emphasized the strong bond between the two women and the ability to understand each other from body language. For example, when the cucumbers that Lakhsmi planted disappeared from the garden, both women knew, without talking, that it was the stepfather who sold them and gambled the money away. As opposed to other characters in my sample, their silence was not a sign of weakness in McCormick's portrayal, but rather a sign of their secret alliance that came to fore in the small resistant acts through which they opposed both the stepfather's abusive behavior and the hardships of poverty. This alliance is most evident in the scene where the mother surprised Lakhsmi with a handful of secretly kept maize that she set aside during the dry season, and a treat she set aside for herself: a cigarette from the stepfather's pocket. While Lakhsmi enjoyed her popcorn treat, the mother smoked quietly and they both daydreamed about the new crops they could sell together after the rainy days were over. This short but powerful description of an intimate moment between Lakhmsi and her mother was a telling detail of the many subject positions women may inhabit concomitantly, irrespective of the roles provided to them by their surroundings. In this scene, the mother was not the obedient wife who refused to question or hold her husband accountable for his irresponsible behavior. Nor is she the woman who believed that it was a privilege for a widow to have another man. Lakhsmi rather saw her mother as "the mischievous girl" (p. 27)

who enjoyed her stolen cigarette and thought about the ways in which she could provide a better life for her family.

Shifting identity, silence and female bonding are also relevant in Lakhsmi's relationship to the other women she meets in the brothel. Lakshmi who was a curious and observant child, quickly realized that in Mumtaz's house she had to prostitute herself, and that she would not be able to leave the brothel unless she paid off all her debts. When she refused to obey and to eat, Mumtaz cruelly beat her. The other girls in the brothel, however, helped her to learn to cope and Lakhsmi gradually found friendship with them. Throughout the book, and despite the horror of rape and child prostitution, McCormick's (2006) storytelling focused on Lakhsmi's relationship and camaraderie with the other girls, the love and care they showed for each other. Within the constraints of their environment, Pushpa, Anita, Shahanna and Monica taught her tricks that would make her life easier. One gave her a condom, another told her about the ways she could stay away from disease. They explained that in order so she could pay off her debt she had to have many customers, so they taught her how to be more seductive.

Seduction and the veil, a mostly negative element in the other books in my sample, takes on new connotations in *Sold*. To learn to use the veil in special ways is to learn to survive by switching between different subject positions "transformed from a crooked-faced country girl into a tiger-eyed city woman" (p. 143) and to pretend. Thus, to flick the end of the shawl in a come-closer gesture means to attract shy men with the extra coins. Shahanna further explains:

> Draw your shawl to your chin, bend your neck like a peacock.
>
> This will bring the older men to your bed, the ones who will
>
> leave sweet on your pillow.
>
> Press your shawl to your nose with the back of your head,

> Pushpa says, when you must bring a dirty man to your bed.
> He will leave nothing but his smell, the stick of sweat, and
> hair oil and liquor and man. But you can use your shawl to
> block the worst of it. (p. 143)

In her portrayal of the use of the veil, McCormick did not apply a Western perspective and express dismay or horror. Although the veil has seriously negative connotations as well, for example, one of the girls committed suicide by using her shawl, its use was mostly a part of the tricks the women were using to resist the oppressive circumstance of their lives.

Similarly to Staples (1989), the idea of trickery was also used by McCormick (2006) to present an experience less openly acknowledged by Western authors: the relevance of deceit for the survival of some women. However, by refusing to use the element of trickery ironically, the author did not set up binary oppositions between the experiences of the characters from the book and the experience of the Western reader. Beyond the harsh portrayal of physical and mental abuse, the close relationship of the characters and the small daily activities that they do apart from prostitution lent itself to a complex portrayal of female subjectivity that avoided the objectification of those experiences or stereotyping. Lakhsmi's friend, who taught her the tricks of seduction, was also the one who took care of her when she got sick or helped her to learn subtraction. Similarly, another girl from the brothel, a master of trickery, who "preens and struts and twines her arm around the men like a thirsty wine" (p. 149, was also the child mother who slept with a tattered doll. Furthermore, the author also included details in the story about the small happy moments when they watched Bollywood movies, or when they bought presents for the children who were born in the brothel, or when Lakhsmi learned how to read Hindi and English from the storybook given to her by the son of one of the women.

Although on the last pages of the novel McCormick (2006) introduced the figure of the American aid worker whom, accompanied by Indian police officers, came to look for women held captive, the text did not suggest that the American presence would solve the problems of child prostitution in India, and it did not portray the aid worker as the only positive character in the book. In the course of the novel, in fact, the author also portrayed an American man who came to seek pleasure in Mumtaz's brothel simultaneously with positive male characters from the Indian home culture. Furthermore, despite the ending that partially relied on the missionary discourse of Western (American) presence abroad, the author did not use Lakhsmi's perspective to critique the culture, nor did she produce her character to represent Western values. In this sense, deconstructive ethnography in *Sold* is a *becoming* that explores the possibilities of feminist portrayals across cultures.

Becoming: Political Discourses in the Context of Diaspora

As previously discussed, defamiliarization in American children's literature is often established by reliance on an Us/Other binary opposition within which Us represents the values of a Western audience and Other represents the non-Western culture the book evokes. It is not uncommon for books dealing with socio-political issues, such as dictatorship or war, to rely on the discourses of Us/Other to reinforce binaries. *Girl of Kosovo* (Mead, 2001) or *The Voices of Silence* (Mooney, 1997), discussed before, are good examples where the authors used the discourses of nationalism and communism to oppose Western and non-Western socio-political formations. *When My Name Was Keoko* (Park, 2002) is similar to these books in the sense that it focuses on the discourse of nationalism in its portrayal of the Korean diaspora following the country's occupation by Japanese forces and the further fragmentation of the country during

World War II. In Park's (2002) approach, however, the issues of nationalism and traditions, and their connection with subjectivity, take a different turn.

Park's (2002) *When My Name Was Keoko* is a polyphonic novel (Stephens, 2006) narrated by Sun-hee (Keoko) and her brother in individual chapters. The novel is based on the stories of her parents who lived in Korea during the country's occupation by the Japanese government. Through the eyes of a young child, Sun-hee, the book portrayed a segment of this part of Korean history. As a result of the assimilation project of the Japanese government, Sun-hee and her family were forced to leave their Korean names behind and take on new Japanese names. Sun-hee became Keoko.

National identity, nationalism and oppression are some of the main questions of the book, which also provides us with an interesting depiction of how the patriarchal structures within the family intersect with oppressive nationalistic attacks by the Japanese police. Although both narrators speak from a disempowered position, Sun-hee's subjectivity is further fractured by the gender division of the traditional Korean family where girls have to stay quiet and making decisions for the family is mainly "men's business" (p. 2). Those different perspectives provided by Sun-hee and her brother bring in a more complex description of the culture and political times from this particular time in the Korean history (Stephens, 2006). For example, both characters referred to incidents related to the recruitment of "comfort women" as well as the recruitment of young Korean men as kamikaze pilots by the Japanese military during World War II, and their slightly different interpretations of the events offer a more sophisticated understanding of the colonized subjectivity.

Thus, Tae-yul decided to join the Japanese army partially because he wanted to follow his Uncle's example and secretly work against the Japanese government. Knowing that the

families of volunteers would have a better treatment from the Japanese government, that they would "receive rice rations and other consideration," (p. 114) he also felt responsible to support and help his family. From his retellings we also found out about his desire to fly an airplane that along with his desire to support the family became an important part of the subject positions he undertook. When the opportunity came for training sessions, he volunteered for a kamikaze mission. Although Tae-yul was conflicted by having to attack the enemy (America), the ally of Korea, his excitement for flying an airplane was strong and he reflected on it in the following lines: "The war was a terrible thing. But during the war I had something to do, something really important. And flying was the most exciting thing I've ever done" (p. 185). Additionally, we also find out that Tae-yul was not going to attack the American ship, rather his plan was to fly into another Japanese airplane instead of the original target.

In parallel, Sun-hee focused on different aspects of the stories about kamikaze pilots and the war. According to her, newly trained Korean soldiers were often used in battles "to clear the way for the Japanese soldiers" (p. 114), they had to memorize speeches in honor of the Japanese emperor, they were receiving a limited variety of food because the Japanese war equipment was running low. Sun-hee 's various subject positions also intersect in the course of the novel. She accepted the traditions of her culture that assigned strict gender roles to girls (a girl is not allowed to express her opinion), and she respected those traditions. Within the constraints of her environment, however, she was also proud to assume more responsibility and, at times, she was able to act simultaneously from two very different positions, as in the scene where she became the "translator" of the letter written by her brother. In spite of the fact that girls and women were expected to stay quiet, she assumed the role of the interpreter in the family and explained the hidden meaning behind Tae-yul's words to her father. While she violated the unwritten codes of

gender expectations by being too involved, she simultaneously recognized the violation of gender appropriate behavior in other aspects of her actions: "I stared at him with my mouth open. It wasn't very polite of me, but I was too surprised to control my expression" (p. 147). Thus, Park (2002) was able to present us with a more complex picture of female subjectivity where Sun-hee was able to switch between her contradictory actions and embrace various aspects of her subjectivity at the same time.

Another important aspect of subjectivity lies in its connection with the issue of traditions and nationalism. In several books in the sample, nationalism or the adherence to traditions was represented in form of physical violence between two ethnic groups. In *When My Name was Keoko*, however, Park (2002) was able to provide us with a more complex understanding of violence and resistance by describing the colonizing tactics of the Japanese government and the ways in which the Korean population resisted those acts. The government's decisions, for example, to forbid the use of the Korean alphabet or to force the Korean population to change their names, were acts of colonization. The Korean population, on the other hand, resisted this colonization by using the Korean alphabet secretly or by choosing Japanese names that hid the meaning of their real Korean names. Sun-hee referred to this at the beginning of the novel when she explained how her Japanese name (Keoko) hid the meaning of her original Korean name, Sun-hee: "I liked how Abuji had hidden our real last name in the new one he'd chosen for us. And he's done the same for my first name as well. 'Ko' meant girl, but it could also mean 'the sun's rays.' Rays of brightness, the same meaning as my real name" (p. 15). In Park's novel, thus, feelings of nationalism or resistance were located in the power of language and not in violent acts; language constituted a space that keeps the culture and its tradition alive. This way,

as Stephens (2006) pointed out, language also became an important aspect of the characters' subjectivity.

Sun-hee's or the other family members fragmented subjectivity and cultural displacement is embedded in their language use that was a site of both hybrid formations (Korean and Japanese) and resistance against assimilation (they secretly use the Korean alphabet). Sun-hee reflected on this aspect of language, as a hybrid and resistant space, when she realized that she was unable to separate her Korean identity as conveyed in her traditions, stories or thoughts, from her identity that was only capable of expressing those thoughts in Japanese writing.

> Korean was the jokes and stories Uncle told us. It was the flag he'd drawn. It was the rose of Sharon tree Omoni had saved, and the little circle Tae-yul had carved on the bottom of the gourd bowls. Korean was the thoughts of Mrs. Ahn, in her own language, not someone else's. And my thoughts, too. I was Korean—my thoughts were Korean…My handwriting was, as always, quite tidy. But it was Japanese. I couldn't write in Korean; I'd never been taught how. Could Korean thoughts be written in Japanese? (p. 93)

Along with polyphonic narration, another important aspect of *becoming* that Park (2002) used is the reliance on the gaps or silences of the text in the course of storytelling, a strategy that challenges the omniscience of the narrator's point of view (Stephens, 2006) and forces the reader to look beyond the text to learn more. While in several books in my sample the authors often used the main character's point of view to make truth claims about certain events from a country's or culture's history, Park refused to do so when she described her characters as being confused or not knowing about the outcome of certain events. One of those incidents refers to the recruitment of young Korean women as comfort women. Sun-hee who witnessed the

recruitment and narrated the events did not mention what happened to those women later on. Although she questioned the truthfulness of the announcement that promised young girls the opportunity to work in textile factories, she also realized that young women would not be forced to serve as soldiers and accepted the possibility that they would be taken away to work in factories. "Perhaps it was as the principal said; surely, it was true that Japan needed more factory workers." (p. 96) As Stephens (2006) pointed out such gaps and discursive strategies in the text force the reader to "look beyond the story" (p. 142) instead of providing them with answers or explanations. The silence of the text and the character's confusion as a defamiliarizing element enacts, as Stephens argued, the political move of duplicity often employed by oppressive state apparatuses and establishes its own significance in more subtle ways. In Fish's (2004) explanation, in such novels political concerns become a part of the text as "components in an aesthetic structure" (p. 378). The notion of a duplicity, silence and confusion that enters text on a structural and aesthetic level is also evident in *Red Scarf Girl* (Jiang, 1997), a book about the cultural revolution in China.

Becoming: In-Between Spaces of Narrative

In *Red Scarf Girl* (Jiang, 1997) deceit and confusion, as assemblages of an oppressive political system, are evoked on two levels of the text: on the level of content, and on the level of narrative mode or point of view. On the level of the content, the author focused on the detailed description of communist state machinery; specifically the presence of several group formations such as the Red Guards, the Liberation Army, the Neighborhood Dictatorship Group and the Neighborhood Party Committee, as well as the Revolutionary Performance Group and Mao-ze-Dong Thought Study Group. Those groups control not only Ji-Li's family life, but also her future schooling and access to education. While at the beginning of the book she was one of the

best students in her class, even chosen by the Central Liberation Army Arts Academy to take part in a dance performance, she later lost this opportunity because of her family's class standing. The Jiangs were a black category family, as former landowners they were considered the enemy of the state. Later in the novel, and for similar reasons, she also lost the opportunity to enroll in one of the best high schools of her town.

Education and the school system through which the state disseminates its ideology are also portrayed in great detail by Jiang (1997). The Cultural Revolution introduced by Chairman Mao imposed strict rules on who could be rewarded among students, who could teach in school, and what could be taught. Leadership could only be distributed after a close background check of individuals and was awarded to persons who had no affiliation with wealth or private property. Politics as a school subject was replaced by the history of the Communist Party and chemistry, biology, and physics were replaced by Fundamentals of Industry and Agriculture. Final exams were banished in the name of equal opportunities for all students. The representation of indoctrination was also relevant in the ways in which the school system encouraged students to fight against traditionalist ideas such as the ones represented by the "'Four Olds': old ideas, old culture, old customs and old habits" (Jiang, 1997, p. 21). The new rules had direct relevance to Ji-Li's family; the Red Guards searched their house on several occasions, confiscated personal belongings and accused both parents of counterrevolutionary activities. The father was forced to enroll in political study classes and eventually was imprisoned for refusing to enroll in the Communist Party.

On the level of the narrative, the communist discourses deployed by these group formations are evident in the main character's changing and often conflicting points of view that interact in the production of female subjectivity. In *Red Scarf Girl*, thus, the author constructed

the narrative through Ji-Li's competing perspectives. Her subjectivity is best explained through the in-between spaces she occupies in her actions and her language. At the beginning of the novel Ji-Li's voice and thoughts echo the communist propaganda disseminated in school and the media on the elimination of old ideas and customs. Ji-Li referred to the leader of the country as our chairman Mao, and when she and her friend witnessed the elimination of a public sign (Great Prosperity Market) —seen as a mark of old values—they were inspired to change the names of the other buildings as well to contribute to the work of the Red Guards. In their dialogue the author relies on this discourse of proletariat:

> 'Look. This is called the Good Fortune Photo Studio. Doesn't that mean to make a lot of money, just like Great Prosperity? Chairman Mao told us that was exploitation. Don't you think this is fourolds?' Ji-yong asked enthusiastically.
>
> 'Right. We should change it to the Proletarian Photo Studio.'
>
> 'Here's another one. The Innocent Child Toy Shop,' An Yi exclaimed. '*Innocent* is a neutral word. It shows a lack of class awareness. What should we change it to?'
>
> 'How about the Red Child Toy Shop?'
>
> 'That's great,' I said. 'And we should change the Peace Theatre to the Revolution Theatre. After all, without revolution, how can we have peace?' (p. 25)

Later in the novel, however, after she has discovered that her family was blacklisted, and after she has witnessed the humiliation and persecution of her own family members, the author changed Ji-Li's point of view. While she still felt enthusiastic about following the rules of the new China, she felt confused and torn between her duties. Instead of aligning herself with either subject positions, that of the "fourold" or that of the new revolutionary, she was portrayed as having to navigate in between the two roles. She reached out to help her aunt who was

humiliated in public because she wore Western clothes and was unmarried but admired her aunt's son who refused to have any relationship with his mother. She lectured her sick grandmother about the opportunities and advantages offered by the new government but protected her and helped her hide when the authorities came to search the house. She hated her grandfather that she had never known for being a landlord, but she used a Chinese tradition considered "fourold" to predict her future, "Predicting the future was fourolds but we could not help doing it anyway" (p. 154).

Therefore, in Jiang's (1997) portrayal there is no general picture of female subjectivity. Women occupy different subject positions and their experiences are dictated by the changing discourses they occupy. Some characters in the book speak from the empowered new position of a communist student, woman and mother as well as worker, but some of them are silenced. For example, one of Ji-Li's classmate's mother, Sang Hong-Zhen, was empowered by the role she fulfilled as the Neighborhood Party Committee Secretary. This new subject position enabled her to become a leader, which further enabled her to achieve a better class standing, more income and the opportunity for better schooling for her children. Other women, however, including Ji-Li and her mother and grandmother were silenced and lived in fear because their new subject position was that of an outcast.

Subjectivity in the book is also defined in relation to gender roles. There were several references to female gender roles and motherhood, details that aimed to explain the communist ideology according to which having children and raising a family was a duty to the nation. Through Ji-Li's first person narration Jiang wrote: "Once Mom told me that she had her three children in three years because she wanted to finish the duty of having babies sooner, so she could devote herself wholeheartedly to the revolution" (p. 14). She further explained that, at the

same time, working outside of the house was also considered to be a duty that women had to fulfill for the nation and the state "…the government was encouraging families to eat at the neighborhood canteens to reduce housework and allow women to work outside the house" (p. 100).

Such subject positions, however, are not portrayed as fixed or static formations. Later in the novel, Sang Hong-Zhen lost her popularity among her fellow workers and her positions as a committee leader. Similarly, Ji-Li's subjectivity changed in the course of the novel while she oscillated between the ideologies provided by the school and the old beliefs that continued to exist through traditions, familiar relations and language. Ideologies reinforced by the communist state required that the old habits and cultural values, religious views, and even the use of certain words were evil, and that individuals who represented those old values had to be either remolded to accept the new rules or be ostracized. In spite of that, some characters of the book, including the protagonist, did not take those rules for granted; instead they navigated several discourses simultaneously. Jiang's (1997) portrayal resonates with Deleuze and Guattari's (1980/1987) claim that in social formations the multiple and contradictory forces preclude a single ideology to set foot. In their interpretation, ideology does not exist independently from the counter-forces that resist the beliefs that are put to power; the communist machine as represented in the novel is continuously resisted and reevaluated. There is no one ideology, rather various beliefs; multiplicities as contradictory parts of the assemblage.

Similarly to Park's (2002) novel, *When My Name Was Keoko*, in *Red Scarf Girl* (Jiang, 1997) the contradictory discourses and silences, as well as fear and confusion are strategies of *becoming* in the text. On the level of the text this strategy is evident in the fast-paced narration, inner dialogues and frequency of interrogative sentences. In the novel the main character is often

confused and torn between the ideal and practical aspects of communism: that freedom and equality, although noble in intent, remained unachievable ideological principles. Thus, the character's indetermination becomes an important strategy to emphasize the complexity of political discourses the characters encountered, and to challenge the authority of a clear point of view employed by the text.

On the level of the text, *becoming* also functions via linguistic and stylistic devices (metaphor, description, stream of consciousness, coded language, etc.). Instead of relying on binary oppositions to create an impression about a particular culture or to describe a specific event, the becoming of the text relies on language itself to create an impression about the experience the author intends to evoke.

Memory: Capriccio

I wrote the memory narrative that will follow in response to *Red Scarf Girl* (Jiang, 1997). I finished reading this book in the waiting room of a doctor's office during my annual check-up. Reading the book about Ji-Li's childhood and family made me think about my own parents and their life during Communism. I was eleven when Communism was over in Romania, but my parents grew-up and spent a large part of their adult life living under that regime. Being teachers as they were, and particularly my father who got a degree in Hungarian Literature and Language Arts, meant that they were under the close-scrutiny of the Securitate. When they detected suspicious behavior, for example, my mother's subscription for a magazine from Hungary or their private lessons in English, secret police officers often showed up at our house at unpredictable hours of the day or night for a short chat. Eventually my mother canceled her magazine subscription, and they stopped taking lessons in English. When they talk about those times today mostly in forms anecdotes, they laugh a lot and, according to my mother, they

always did laugh because that was one good way to cope with the absurdity of life. The following anecdote is in part based on entangled memories of hospital and doctor visits and on memories of my parents' stories.

Gray-brown hospital, the same as it was 10 years ago, the same as it was 20 years ago, warm Bleach smell, food smell, dark hallways, old men resting on the bench outside, smoking. I smile at them…they smile back. I find the nurses' office in the left wing of the building, I sit down to wait until they call me in, no need to tell them my name, they know my name, Varga-Dobai, right? Right! The nurse, in a gray-blue uniform, takes my pulse and looks for a vein in my arm with a syringe. *Oh, now, which one are you? Ok, so you are the oldest one, I thought so, 23, oh lordy, time is passing by…time is passing by…you look just like your dad…So, where are you now? Uhum, in Kolozsvar, you are teaching…English! That's great, my daughter is studying psychology… psychology!!?? Isn't that crazy…I don't know what she's gonna do with it, people don't have money here for psychologists, but that's what she wanted to do, oh Lordy…but English, that's good, you can make a lot of money with that, right? Private lessons, translations, you made a good choice, sweetheart… now, tell me, are they still digging for the Roman fossils in front of that Hungarian church in Kolozsvar…still? Oh Lordy that's just ridiculous, you know, when I was there*….I watch closely, blood running out of my vein, into the syringe, dripping into a tube. My skin is tight under the rubber band, pinches. The syringe reminds me of the story my mother told me about the time when she was a young school-teacher in this small village called Désháza, *about 20 years ago*, *22…to be exact*—my father added—*at the beginning of my glorious career* —my mother added with her usual optimism and laughed a little bit too, just out of habit, so, my mother told me that in that school, not bigger than a larger barn, where she used to teach, there was a man, Mr. A. Sz., the caretaker, or the way they put it, school-maid, which I

always thought was a funny word—but at any rate, one day Mr. A.Sz. got very upset, some time around 1977, about how unfair the world was, and that there was nothing to eat, no bread, no meat, not even salt in the stores, only mustard and canned fish, and *to hell with the mustard sandwich, dear comrade ladies, people cannot live on mustard sandwich forever*, and to tell the whole truth, Mr. A. Sz. was slightly inebriated at the time, just purely out of habit, and because otherwise he would not have had the courage to tell everybody in 1977 that he had enough of the mustard sandwich already, when even the walls had ears, but mostly the biology teachers, who kept silent and observed and only talked sporadically, but on those rare occasions told everything on everybody, especially to the mentos-on-heads (policemen), so, yes, the biology teachers had big ears and it reached into every corner and because everybody knew that, nobody ever talked in the teacher's room about how boring the mustard sandwich was, the comrades and comrade ladies just sat around in silence, next to the corner stove, and the stove did not give any heat, but at least it smoked and camouflaged the area and the comrade ladies' smile, and then Mr. A. Sz., standing in the middle of the teacher's room, went on and on complaining and flapping his hat down to his knees and back and, in one unpredictable moment, he threw his hat down on what he though was a chair, but as it turned out, he was wrong, as the thing he thought to be a chair was not a chair but a washing basin full of water for the comrades and comrade ladies to wash their chalky hands after they left the classroom, and the hat started to swim in the water around and around, and the comrade ladies didn't know whether they should laugh or cry or do both, so they just sat quietly in the smoke next to the stove while Mr. A. Sz. was railing against canned fish and bottled peas, and his hat was swimming in the water and with—*From now on, dear comrade ladies, you'll see that even the air will be rationed for us with a syringe*!—he picked up his hat from the hand-washing basin and left the room in tears. That's what I remembered when the

nurse was poking my arm with the syringe.

Becoming: Impressions and Memory

The rendering of subjectivity through linguistic devices, impressions and memory, as a form of narrative technique, similar to the one employed by Jiang (1997) or McCormick (2006), is also present in An Na's (2001) *A Step From Heaven*. The book is a coming of age story about a Korean girl, Young Ju, who moved to Southern California with her parents at the age four and grew into adolescence at the borderland of two cultures in America. Although An Na's characters are not illegal immigrants, the book shares similarities with Budhos' (2006) *Ask Me No Question*. Without adequate language skills, Young Ju's parents struggle to support the family, and their difficulty with understanding and accommodating the social and educational values of the new culture brought about challenges they could not cope with. The father, who stood for more traditional values and resented having to leave his profession in Korea for low-paying jobs in America, became violent with his wife and children and eventually decided to move back to his native country alone.

Along with the vivid portrayals of Young Ju's family life, the author also touched upon the process of negotiating values and ideals through which the character learned how to remain a part of her own immediate community but also stepped outside of it to build friendships with others. *A Step from Heaven* (An Na, 2001) is not a portrayal of one particular incident from Young Ju's life. An Na (2001), who partially based the character's stories on biographical information, instead created a remarkable collection of memory based first person narratives about the experience of growing up as a Korean immigrant in America. In an interview at the end of the book, An Na claimed that she could not follow a particular chronological order with her stories. "Memory" she wrote "doesn't come as a complete story with beginning, middle, and

end, but rather lives in moments that focus on a smell or a touch or a feeling" (p. 156). The stories of *A Step from Heaven* are an assemblage of the bits and pieces of memories of childhood and young adulthood that shaped who the character became as an adult.

Accordingly, in *A Step from Heaven*, An Na (2001) explored the possibilities of textual subjectivity through the sensory experiences of seeing, touching or feeling as evoked in memories about her childhood. For example, the first page opens with a description of her memory of becoming familiar with the sea, captured through the sensory experience of seeing and hearing the waves, or touching the cold water, and in form of a dialogue with a person that the author does not identify. The dialogue is not a conversation between two people, it rather consists of adjectives, verbs, onomatopoeia and short exclamations of encouragement and praise that attempt to recreate the experience of seeing and being in the ocean for the first time.

> Young Ju, can you be brave? Look, this is only a small wave. Do not worry. I will hold you tight the whole time. Can you try to be a brave girl for me?
>
> I will try.
>
> Good girl. Ready for the wave? Here it comes. Get ready. Up. And Down. There, do you still want to go back?
>
> Again. Do it again. Another one.
>
> That is my courageous girl. Hold onto my neck, Young, Ju. Here we go. Up. And down.
>
> *I am a see bubble floating, floating in a dream. Bhop.* (p. 7)

Although the author did not point this out, this first opening scene has another relevance for the portrayal of Young Ju's subjectivity in terms of her relationship with her estranged father. Before she left for college Young Ju found a photograph of herself with her parents at the beach,

and she realized that this old photograph related to her early memory of the ocean described in the opening scene in the book. She also found out that the voice she remembered talking to her was the voice of her estranged father. Thus, Young Ju's memory of that day at the beach became not only the memory of seeing the ocean for the first time, but also a kind of reconciliation with her absent father and another step into her own adulthood.

The ways in which the author counterbalanced the negative image of the father with the seemingly lost memories of the happy moments created a complex picture of human subjectivity. Instead of creating a traditional storyline based on binary oppositions, like that of the mother and the father, the author chose to render impressions about both parents: the mother's chapped hands from working two shifts in a restaurant kitchen, the father's sunburned skin or bleach smell from his gardening and cleaning jobs. The author did not analyze or explain how the mother or father looked, or how the father's abusive behavior affected her. She simply described what she remembered about him, and how the memories of both sad and happy moments shaped her growing up in complex ways. As an adult being able to look at the many sides of whom one can be, she understood that her father was not one bad memory, and that the social and cultural aspects of immigration (challenges, helplessness, poverty) may have contributed to the becoming of his new, often violent, self in a foreign country.

Another important aspect of textual subjectivity in *A Step from Heaven* is embedded in An Na's phonetic use of English words—a strategy to give an impression of not yet being able to understand English and of the memory of feeling displaced. By rendering words as she first heard them without understanding what they meant, for example: "Tees es Young" (p. 29) for This is Young, and "Wah ko um" (p. 29) for Welcome, or "Go-do-feesh" (p. 30) for Goldfish, she conveyed the subjectivity of being an outsider both socially and linguistically. Being outside

of the language was also evoked by the use of the Korean version of the word America (Mi Gook) that changed later on in the book as Young Ju learned to speak English and started to perceive America as her new home.

Conclusion

In this study, a poststructural textual analysis of 15 realistic and historical fiction books for young-adults, I used poststructural feminist theories of *subjectivity* and *memory,* and the Deleuzian theory of *becoming* to explore the representation of women from developing countries in relation to nationalism, nationalist war, state oppression, cultural traditions, and immigration. To do so, it was necessary to reflect on my own position as a researcher and reader within the research project, using memory-based writing. Beyond textual analysis, thus, my dissertation also became an experiment with poststructural feminist and postmodern storytelling, or as Cowan (1996) described it, mapmaking.

This mapmaking that included paintings, anecdotes, observations and feelings, and artifacts, is made of multiple layers (literature review, theory, methodology) and discourses (children's literature, reading and literacy research, feminist research, cultural studies), analysis and critiques (postmodern, postcolonial, feminist, multicultural). Mapmaking is also made of multiple stories: the characters' stories in the young-adult books that I examined, the authors' own stories who wrote them, and my own stories that I wrote in reaction to these texts. In spite of all these details, however, the map always remains incomplete. Schaafsma (1996) described this kind of rhizomatic approach as one that raises more questions, and it does not offer definite answers. In the process of mapmaking, "a process of unlimited deciphering" (Cowan, 1996, p. 243), one remains intrigued by what has not and could not be included.

A rhizomatic postmodern approach such as this, as Marshall (1992) argued, can be chaotic, and the sense that it tries to make is "limited, local, provisional…" but also "…self-critical" (p. 2). Marshall further explained that the result of a self-critical, postmodern approach is an "awareness of being-within a way of thinking" (p. 2) that is a recognition that we (subjects) are always controlled and constructed by language and the historical, social and cultural discourses that surround us. To name and pin down ideas, to claim control over language by concluding, is a way to reject this postmodern perspective that discourses are contradictory, and that we can never gain objectivity and full understanding in research. A postmodern work leads us to increased knowledge but never innocent knowledge, to a better understanding, but not pure insight; it is about the "threads that we trace and trace and trace, but never to a conclusion" (p. 4). Although this theoretical and methodological approach refuses the possibility of a single explanation, it, nevertheless, helped me explore critically such concepts as representation, *subjectivity*, Us/Other binary oppositions, *becoming*, among others.

In my dissertation, I followed a traditional format. In the introduction I situated the sample of 15 novels of realistic fiction portraying women and girls from developing countries within the context of multicultural literature and education. In the theory section I provided a review of literature relevant to my research, in particular, multicultural critiques on stereotyping, authenticity and representation, and in order to deconstruct the representations of women from developing countries in realistic and historical fiction books in multicultural children's literature, I focused on the poststructural feminist critique of *subjectivity* and the Deleuzian concept of *becoming*. In the methodology section I described how I used memory to support the method of content analysis. I also introduced the concept of *defamiliarization*, that is, a strategy used by the authors to create a distance between the experiences of the reader and the characters from the

book. In my analysis, framed by my research questions, I explored the possibilities and limitations of representation of women from developing countries in 15 realistic and historical fiction books, and how Us-Other binary opposition were reinforced or disrupted through the discourse of nationalism, nationalist wars, state oppression, cultural traditions, and immigration.

While the man/woman binary opposition is more prevalent in some books than the others, for example, in the novels with female protagonists from the Middle-East, various aspects of binaries exist in all of the novels listed in my sample. In the novels dealing with state oppression, nationalism and immigration, the Us/Other binary oppositions is represented through the contrasting portrayals of Eastern and Western countries, and man and women. Most common themes that support these binaries are: war and ethnic conflicts, poverty, fear, physical and emotional distress, death. In the novels dealing with traditions, Us/Other binaries included the contrasting portrayals of non-Western and Western feminist ideals. Most common themes identified are: veiling, arranged marriages, silence, seclusion and disguise, physical aggression against women from non-Western countries.

At the same time, as I described in chapter four, the Us/Other binary oppositions, whether in terms of gender or countries, are also challenged in these books through references to the "in between" spaces inhabited by the characters and to the changing and often contrasting subject positions they take up in their actions. Various uses of narrative techniques (symbolism, metaphors, coded language, internal thoughts, memories, maps) and complex character portrayal that I named *becoming* in my analysis support this strategy of deconstruction.

The inclusion of my memory-based writings helped me reflect on my own subjectivity as a researcher in response to the readings and challenged traditional understanding of representation. For example, the *triptych* that I wrote is not only telling of my subjectivity in

terms of my personal attraction to soccer but also speaks to my subjectivity as a researcher. During simple phone or Skype conversations or email exchanges with my parents, I often find myself listening to what is being said or analyzing their, or my own words through theoretical lenses. The stories that I wrote to connect to the texts in my sample, thus, became a *third space* (Bhabha, 1994/2004) that allowed me to deconstruct the personal/professional binaries in my dissertation. The triptych as a third space also helped me reflect on the complexity of Othering in national contexts. Instead of physical aggression or war (often focused on in children's literature in relation with the representation of female subjectivity), I approached the lived experience of nationalism as deployed in language through the conversation of two women about soccer.

Instead of engaging in the role of reader as a passive recipient, through memory, I also attempted to create a participatory relationship between reading and writing, and become a part of the creation of meaning of these texts. This participatory relationship between writing and reading helped me deconstruct the reader/writer binary opposition. Additionally, through the use of memory in textual analysis, I unsettled the first-world woman/ third-world woman, binary oppositions, and I attended to both my own and my subjects' (characters') fragmented identities, and to the similarities and differences we share. Finally, my memory-based writing allowed me to reflect on the partiality of representation available in books for young adults about women from Non-Western countries.

Chapter 5

Discussion for the Classroom

In this chapter I will attend to my third and fourth research question— What possibilities do realistic and historical fiction books offer for intercultural learning? How can memory help the reader understand the complications of representation? — and I will discuss the possibilities realistic and historical fiction books might offer for intercultural learning in the classroom. In addition, I will consider the implications for further research concerning creative uses of children's literature in the classroom.

Multiculturalism and Intercultural Learning

The development of intercultural competency is integral to multicultural education. Bennett (1986) explained that multiculturality, in a general sense, has been interpreted as a form of sensitivity to other cultures and cultural pluralism, and an "ability to shift into two or more rather complete cultural world views." (p. 185) For instance, if a person lived in a foreign country for an extended period of time, she might be able to shift into that country's worldview easily. In the United States, this shifting between two or more world views is often "nationally centered" (Boran, 2001, p. 273) because multiculturalism implies sensitivity toward ethnicities or cultures that live together within the borders of the country (White-American, African-American, Asian-American, Mexican-American) but downplays sensitivity to the differences and complexities of various ethnicities within the same group as well as sensitivity to differences in a global perspective. Furthermore, multiculturalism does not imply that a person who can shift into the cultural and linguistic worldview of those she lives in close contact with will be able to make that shift when she encounters people from unfamiliar cultural backgrounds. A

more complex understanding of multiculturalism, therefore, moves beyond pluralism and describes the multicultural person as "always being in the process of becoming a *part of* and *apart from* a given cultural context" (Adler, 1977, p. 31), constantly recreating herself when confronted with new encounters. Bennett (1986) and Allan (2003) further elaborated that, in this sense, a multicultural person, is able to extend his/her cultural identity to perceive difference as a process that constructs the self in various cultural ways. This kind of learning that builds on an openness toward other cultures, an acceptance of cultural differences, and an overcoming of cultural bias and ethnocentrism in a global sense was described by Hapgood and Fennes (1997) as *intercultural*. For a more cosmopolitan understanding of difference, according to Rizvi (2009), it is necessary to view culture "in the state of *becoming* as a result of interactions of various kinds" rather than in an essentialist way as "something that is entirely inherited within clearly definable boundaries and norms" (p. 264).

Children and young-adult literature on international topics can be a useful resource to develop intercultural understanding and move beyond simple "diversity" approaches in education that rely on a tourist perspective (Short, 2009) and surface-level information about another culture (e.g., food, clothing, music). Through the process of intercultural learning, students can develop an awareness that:

- One's culture shares both differences and similarities with and is always positioned in relation to other cultures
- Texts about other cultures do not represent the truth about the culture, only a particular person's point of view and assumptions about that culture
- Our assumptions about Others, as deployed in texts, are linked to discourses that envelope us, outside which it is difficult for us to think

- Discourses are not neutral but are situated in particular networks of power
- Texts do not have to be essentialist in regard to culture but can draw on several different and often contradictory discourses at the same time

In the process of intercultural learning, such awareness should contribute to critical thinking about how knowledge concerning Others is created, about understanding and respect for difference, about tolerance for ambiguity, about appreciating and valuing of Others, and about the ability to negotiate tension (Allan, 2003; Fennes & Hapgood, 1997).

Intercultural Learning in the Classroom Using Realistic and Historical Fiction

As a researcher and educator from a multicultural and multilingual background, I have been interested in how realistic and historical fiction about women and girls from developing countries could be used to promote intercultural learning in the context of pre-service teacher education. To enhance intercultural learning, in my classes students engage in the critique of traditional and digital texts that represent the Other—other cultures and people— through both traditional responses to literature (e.g., textual analysis as discussed in chapter three) and creative approaches (e.g., reflective and multigenre writing, artifactual literacy [Pahl and Rowsell, 2010], memory narratives, storytelling, role-playing) that I will discuss shortly.

Textual Analysis in the Literacy Classroom

Because some of the books in my sample rely on binary oppositions in their portrayal of other cultures and people, students responding to those books often replicate the binary oppositions in their writing. Although I cannot assume that they will accept the portrayals provided by the author without raising questions, in their journal entries or reflections about the book, some students do position women from non-Western countries as being in need of help, and they position themselves as either feeling sorry for the women or wanting to help them

overcome their oppression. In order to challenge those binaries and learn how knowledge about the Other is constructed in discourse, we discuss the role and relevance of power, positioning, and point of view in literary texts. In the analysis of these books, we shift attention from questions of what a true representation is to how we represent women from various parts of the world and how we can challenge those representations and the authority of the text. For example, we may ask: Whose perspective is represented in the text? Who creates knowledge about whom and how? What specific themes are emphasized in the book? Were the characters and the events believable? How did the author make them believable?

Because children's books are written by adults and therefore channel an adult point of view, we look at the various ways in which the authoritarian first-person narrative voice in realistic and historical fiction books create knowledge about women from non-Western countries. Do they proffer simplistic representations or more complex character portrayals? We discuss the elements of the narrative through which these representations are deployed in first-person narration, such as Us/Other binary oppositions, themes, the complexity of subject positions in the novels. We focus on particular female experiences, gaps, and silences in the text and look for possible stereotypes. Additionally, we discuss how authors make truth claims in their books about the authenticity of the story and its characters and how those claims manipulate the reader's understanding of particular cultures. We also discuss that, at times, representations in realistic and historical fiction books build on contradictory discourses that may be interpreted in different ways. For example, *The Breadwinner* (Ellis, 2001) could be interpreted as reinforcing the image of the Muslim woman as a victim but also as a text that provides its female characters with a variety of subject positions and that those conflicting textual representations are similar to the conflicting discourses that surround the lives of Muslim women.

This close textual analysis (Moje et al., 2000) that I have demonstrated in this dissertation enables critical thinking, stimulates the imagination, and helps to reduce the gap between learning and real-life contexts (Rimmington and Alagic, 2008). Appleman (2000) claimed that literary theory and analysis could help students understand the notion of *multiplicity* and *multiple perspectives* possible through multiple interpretations of texts. Using literacy practices that pay attention to such critical discussions of literature could help pre-service teachers make sense out of the seemingly disconnected events of their own everyday lives as well and help them attend to how power, positioning, and representation play out in everyday interactions in their own classrooms and in other contexts. Textual analysis also includes the analysis of 21st century and popular culture texts (Hagood, Alvermann and Heron-Hruby, 2010) such as movies, ads, news, magazine articles, photographs, blogs, and other media that provide opportunities for learning about Others and Us.

In addition to the analysis of texts, creative literacy practices (reflective and multigenre writing, artifactual literacy, memory narratives, storytelling, role-playing) written in response to realistic and historical fiction books requires students to bring their own experiences to issues described in the novels and encourages an openness toward other cultures, acceptance of cultural difference, and overcoming cultural bias and ethnocentrism in a global sense.

Storytelling, Artifacts, and Multigenre Writing in the Literacy Classroom

Because the understanding of the Other must begin with the understanding of the Self (Bennett, 1986; Rizvi, 2009) and the relational aspects of cultural formations, creative literacy activities offer producive approaches to reader response and writing by emphasizing the relevance of the reader's experience. These connections are important because in the process of reading people do not respond directly to events described in books, rather, to the meaning they

attach to these events (Bennett, 1986), and in the creation of meaning personal experience is crucial. Reader response in a poststructural/postmodern sense is a *becoming* because it challenges essentialist understanding of textual analysis and involves the reader in a co-creation of the text. While in the context of literacy education the approach that connects textual analysis with personal response has been coined by the term *text to self* connections, the *becoming* of this term implies that the use of creative responses in relation with texts is not simply a strategy to enhance text comprehension (to understand the story better), rather a rethinking of textual representation. The narratives of pre-service teachers in response to books about body-image problems, for example, become extensions of those stories, and beyond text comprehension, those narratives also provide information about the students' cultural background and a broader critique of gender related issues across countries.

To bring personal experience to reading means that we pay particular attention to the individual nature of reading and responding to literature (Rosenblatt, 1938/1968). Emphasizing the subjectivity of the reader, we shift the emphasis from the text and its supposed embedded meaning to the process of meaning-creation by the reader as a response triggered by his/her life experiences articulated in a particular context. In my class, storytelling and multigenre writing about artifacts and memories as a form of reader response to realistic and historical fiction about women and girls from developing countries provided opportunities for such meaning creation. Stories are not only universal in the sense that they cross the boundaries of cultures (Roche and Sadowsky, 2003), but they also mirror the human thought that functions in the form of a narrative rather than in an analytical structure. Storytelling challenges the kind of knowledge-making process and writing style that we prioritize in our schools. Gee (1986) called this type of writing "essayist writing" (p. 727). Logical, impersonal, and emphasizing reasoning and truth-

value, it is the kind of text associated with middle-class or upper middle-class groups and the language of academia.

As I have read the well-articulated, well-argued reading responses to realistic and historical fiction books of my white, middle and upper middle-class students' in the past two years, I have often wondered what was hidden behind the safety of those nicely-tailored and impersonal academic words. They commented on genre, point of view, and plot. They evaluated the author's portrayal of character, and the author's style; but in their writing they rarely discussed the personal connections they made with books. On the other hand, when I asked them to discuss the books in their literature circles, they often reflected on personal connections to the novels in forms of stories, anecdotes, or memories. I realized that my students believed the writing and language of academia did not offer opportunities for personal reflections in the form of storytelling, and as the instructor of a course that focused on the relevance of stories and literature in literacy instruction, I found this contradiction ironic. Although there was tremendous value in their more academic responses, I wanted my students to explore the possibilities of storytelling in connection with reading response. Because stories are centered on the human experience, I was curious how the process of storytelling itself would allow my students to learn about themselves and their cultural backgrounds and how stories would help them explore possible roles and interpretations of events that they would not have thought about until writing narratives. I wondered how stories could help them make sense of their lives, and ultimately how stories would allow them to challenge the Us/Other binary oppositions they recreated in their own responses to realistic and historical fiction books.

With than in mind, I should point out that the memory-based narratives included here were a critical influence on data analysis and interpretation. Storytelling allowed me to reflect on

my own experiences as a woman, a researcher, and an immigrant and struggle on a personal level with the key concepts of the dissertation (representation, discourse, Other, culture, etc.) not only in light of theory and children's literature but also in light of my own lived experience. Because I was able to reflect on my own subjectivity in the process of responding to the texts I studied, writing, reading and criticism became a creative act that made the dissertation writing personal, fresh, or, as Garber (2011) put it, "productively strange…endowing it with fresh and startling power" (p. 15).

This creative work intrigued me as a researcher, but from a pedagogical point of view I was also interested in the opportunities storytelling could offer in my teacher education courses to promote intercultural learning. Therefore, along with textual analysis, I encouraged my students to bring in personal experiences in the process of responding to realistic and historical fiction books. As I have mentioned earlier, when responding to young-adult books that present human experiences unfamiliar to the reader, students often claim that although they feel empathy for the female characters in the books, they are not able to more deeply connect with the experiences of women from other cultures (e.g., books about Muslim women) and perhaps because of this, they often replicate the Us/Other binaries of those books. In their responses to realistic and historical fiction books, they indicate that they feel so privileged in their own social circumstances that they are unable to entirely comprehend the life experiences of these other women.

In order to bridge this binary of Us/Other, I have engaged them in textual analysis to specifically identify the process of Othering in literature; but from a poststructural and postmodern point of view, I have also encouraged them to move beyond a rigid understanding of what the text-to-self connection could mean and instead perceive it in a fluid, less literal way.

The *third space* (Bhabha, 1994/2004) that they found in storytelling through multigenre writing enabled them to reflect on their own lives, and to connect with the themes of feeling silenced, ostracized, or empowered without having to replicate the stories of the novels. The reflections on memories that occurred to them while reading the books and, on times when they felt powerless or stereotyped or when they either knowingly or unconsciously stereotyped somebody else helped the students situate themselves not only in relation to the text, but also to the world. Along with textual analysis, my students' stories contribute to the critique of texts about women and girls from developing countries that rely on simplistic and essentialist understandings of cultural, racial, and gender relations. For example, the student narratives on eating disorders such as anorexia or bulimia written in responses to *The Fattening Hut* (Collins, 2005) approached the issue of body-image from a global perspective. Although the ways in which cultures produce acceptable or desired beauty standards varies (some cultures view fullness as more beautiful; others prefer thinness), they are similar across cultures and countries as they encourage potentially destructive and self-destructive practices. The student narratives in responses to *The Breadwinner* (Ellis, 2000), which approached the theme of seclusion and the confinement of women from a Western perspective, shed light on the stigma of teenage-pregnancy and the lack of discussion about sexually active teens or the number of pregnant school-dropouts even in economically well-developed countries such as the U.S. Narrative responses to *Sold* (McCormick, 2006) tackled the issue of sex-slavery among teenage American girls from middle-class suburban backgrounds. The work of these narratives was not to simply counterbalance binaries but rather to think about how gender-related discourses function across cultures and how they intersect in spite of their apparent differences.

One of the most effective storytelling strategies that my students and I have used is multigenre writing (Romano, 1995). To enhance the reading and writing connection and learning in a new global digital age, my students explored multigenre writing as a method of inquiry, and they co-created the meaning of the text by reflecting on their own stories and/or memories through the use of both traditional and digital writing practices. Multigenre writing incorporates poetry, narrative, persuasive, essay, and digital writing as well as photographs and/or music to convey meaning about a particular topic or theme. Multigenre papers and assignments rely on student's creativity and encourage them to bring their personality to writing, to experiment with artistic representation, and to reflect on their cultural backgrounds in the process.

Such stories also have artifactual qualities (Pahl and Rowsell, 2010). When we tell stories about ourselves, we often incorporate details about objects (e.g., books, photographs, personal items) that carry relevance for us from a personal and cultural perspective, and these details provide an insight into how we interpret and experience our lives. Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton's (1981) empirical study of family objects, as well as Hurdley's (2006) and Miller's (2008) studies about interactions and stories around family objects helped me and my students understand how lived experience links to literacy and self-formation, how the artifacts that surround us become expressions of ourselves and our cultural background, and how our relationship with objects organize and produce us as individuals.

Yet the meaning of these objects is not evident; rather, our understanding of our relationship with them is produced in conversations and stories about them (Hurdley, 2006). The objects/artifacts that I have included in my dissertation were only objects until I realized that the memories and stories that surrounded them were not only relevant for me personally but relevant in the larger context of the dissertation in that contributed to the critique of cultural

representation. For example, the Google doc about communist era jokes points to the complexity of cultural and political discourses available in everyday life not addressed in the sample of young-adult literature that I examined. My childhood memories of soccer games, and my story about the Bingo ticket added additional layers that contributed to the representation of a culture and its people. Similarly, the objects that my students wrote about in their responses to books about immigration or war were representative of their cultural backgrounds and helped to position them in relation to others. The narratives about cherished family recipes, gold figurines, hand-made rosaries, antique photographs allowed pre-service teachers to explore their own home culture and its relation with the values, beliefs, and traditions of the wider society and to discover the differences and similarities they may share within the same cultural group and with others.

These stories are not, however, truer or more real than the representations we encountered in the novels. Instead, by including artifacts and stories in relation to novels about women from developing countries, we take part in an ongoing and always incomplete creation of representation, of *becoming*. Fonow and Cook (2005) defined this kind of meaning-creation as *reflexivity*, a tendency "to reflect on, examine critically, and explore analytically" (p. 2218) the nature and process of interpretation. In my work with pre-service teachers, creative literacy practices helped us reflect on our own subjectivity and position as readers and writers, and on "how does who I am, who I have been, who I think I am, and how I feel affect" (Pillow, 2003, p. 176) our response to texts.

Beyond a critique of representation and an opportunity for intercultural learning, stories are also avenues for the intersection of home and school communities (Schaafsma, 1989). With emphasis on the personal, stories not only challenge the school/home binary opposition but also provide a space for inclusive literacy that honors students' cultural backgrounds and home

communities. Bruner (1986) described narrative as "a map of possible worlds" (p. 66) that provide individuals with a space where they can form relationships with others and learn about each other's differences and similarities. Narrative also provides an opportunity for those "who feel bored, powerless, disenfranchised, those who are angry" (Schaafsma, 1989, p. 90) to tell their stories and for those who come from privileged backgrounds to reflect on their life experiences in critical ways.

Additionally, storytelling in the form of multigenre writing offers opportunities for reading and writing instruction. In order to become familiar with various genres, multigenre projects require that students use mentor texts and study closely the writing genres they intend to employ. Multigenre projects are grounded in research and help students learn how to locate information using websites and search engines and how to organize data effectively as parts of a paper. Multigenre projects also allow students to engage with their topic on a deeper level, and it provides creative control over the process of writing.

Conclusion

Intercultural learning in the pre-service teacher education classroom builds on textual analysis and questioning about the subject and language; encourages discussions about ideology, power and positioning; and allows for multiple readings of texts. Textual analysis, along with storytelling, artifactual literacy, and multigenre writing, contribute to what Ladson-Billings (1994) called "culturally relevant teaching" (p. 17) that helps students from both the dominant and minority cultures understand how cultural representations are formed and how those values can be challenged. A culturally relevant pedagogy assists students in overcoming the negative effects of the dominant culture including invisibility or stereotypical representations in textbooks and literature, and it allows them to bring in experiences that are relevant to their own culture. In

doing so, it gives them the opportunity to reconstruct the complicated power relations that produce their lives. Textual analysis, for example, whether applied to critical discussions of book characters or actual people, encourages us to think about the concept of the subject in different terms—not in the humanist sense of a rational individual with predetermined and fixed characteristics but as a construction of language and culture, a subject that is a *becoming*.

Whether drawing on the artifacts of everyday life or memories to tell stories, themes borrowed from everyday life are inspirational (Pahl and Rowsell, 2010). Literacy activities that rely on everyday life themes and students' creativity deconstruct what text and analysis could become in a postmodern, rhizomatic world. Besides textual analysis, storytelling, artifactual literacy and multigenre writing, with their emphasis on the lived experience and home culture, also promote intercultural learning and the co-creation of meaning by the text and the reader. The goal to encourage student narratives is not to undermine the gravity of women's issues across borders, some of which may be incomprehensible experiences for the young women in my classes—or me. The goal is rather to critique simplistic representations of cultures in texts that market particular human experiences as culture-specific rather than variations of race, gender, class, culture, and economy-related social discourses. This approach to literature that emphasizes both the textual analysis of the text and personal experience is rhizomatic in that, pre-service teachers acquire analytical tools to interrogate the text and to view realistic and historical fiction novels not as true representations, but as "part of a larger socializing apparatus" (Sensoy and Marshall, 2010, p. 298) that markets these texts as true representations. Beyond acquiring analytical tools to view literature, a rhizomatic approach also offers the possibility for these teachers to learn about themselves and others. The various ways in which my students and I responded to books about women from developing countries became a form of "intercultural

interaction" (Rimington and Alagic, 2008, p. 33) that allowed us to position ourselves in relation to the world and other people. This type of "text making" (Pahl and Rowsell, 2010) has the power to make meaning and to transform and to enable new ideas and insights to be thought and lived.

My study, a textual analysis of 15 realistic and historical fiction books for young adults about women and girls from non-Western countries, was a useful attempt for experimenting with creative responses to reader response and to investigate the possibilities of representation in such texts. As Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) warned us, however, there is no final word when it comes to representation. The concept remains inadequate and inappropriate, and the best I could do in this study was to experiment, interpret, and attempt to breath new life into old stories. My analysis of these books and their use in the classroom with pre-service teachers made me realize that even books like those in this study's sample, fairly simple, uncomplicated texts, can open up opportunities for literacy, for deconstructing such concepts as subject, culture or representation. I do not, therefore, argue against teaching the more simplistic texts in favor of those that are more insightful about culture because meaning is not in the text. Meaning is, as we have said for decades now, created in our interactions with the text. I hope my study has provided a glimpse into the possibilities of such critical and creative interactions with texts for literacy and intercultural learnin

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