

# THE STATE OF OUR SOFTWARE

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<p>Tiivistelmä - Abstract</p> <p>Ihmisen kyky symboliseen kommunikaatioon (kieli) ja konseptuaaliseen ajatteluun (mieli) erottaa meidät muista eläimistä. Kun kieltä ja mieltä käytetään sosiaalisesti ja lisätään yhteisön kokemuksista tiivistynyt viisaus, syntyy kulttuuri. Kulttuuri voidaan nähdä mekanismina, joka edistää yhteisön yhteenkuuluvuutta ydinperheen ulkopuolella. Sen lisäksi kulttuurin voidaan nähdä nostavan yksilön selviämismahdollisuuksia maailmassa tekemällä hänestä sosiaalisesti hyödyllisen, hyväksytyt ja halutun. Kulttuuri voidaan nähdä eräänlaisena lisäohjelmuna (software), jota biologisiin ominaisuuksiin perustuva koneemme (hardware) pyörittää.</p> <p>Osa kulttuurisesta ohjelmoinnista tapahtuu kouluissa oppiaineiden parissa sekä piilo-opetussuunnitelman kautta. Piilo-opetussuunnitelma tarkoittaa sitä mitä kouluissa opetetaan, mutta mitä ei näkyvästi julisteta opetettavan, esimerkiksi asenteita ja käyttäytymistä.</p> <p>Kielenopetuksella ja kulttuurisen tiedon siirrolla on tunnettu yhteys. Opetusmateriaalit antavat jonkinlaisen kuvan kohdekielen kulttuurista, välittävät arvoja, asenteita, ja niin edelleen.</p> <p>Tässä tutkimuksessa tutkin suomalaista englannin tekstikirjaa lukiotasolta. Tavoitteenani oli löytää millaista kulttuurista tietoa / ohjelmointia kirja sisältää a) kulttuurisen tiedon muodossa ja b) piilo-opetussuunnitelman muodossa.</p> <p>Keräsin tekstimuotoista dataa kirjan pääluvuista (<i>Key Texts</i>) ja analysoin dataa aineistolähtöisen sisällönanalyysin keinoin. Muodostin datasta 7 temaattista kategoriaa järjestääkseni ja kuvatakseni löydöksiäni:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Individualismi (<i>Individualism</i>)</li> <li>2. Kulttuurinen itsetietoisuus (<i>Cultural self-consciousness</i>)</li> <li>3. Psykologisaatio (<i>Psychologisation</i>)</li> <li>4. Globaali yhtenäisyys (<i>Global unity</i>)</li> <li>5. Konservatiivinen ääni (<i>Conservative voice</i>)</li> <li>6. Mikä on suosittua on hyvää (<i>What is popular is good</i>)</li> <li>7. Tulevaisuus (<i>The future</i>)</li> </ol>	
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## 1 Introduction

English has around 1,75 billion speakers worldwide, which accounts to around one fourth of the world's population (weforum.com). English is the most used language online with a 25.9% share in January 2020 (statista.com), and the average person spends, depending on the source, approximately 4-6 hours online (hostingfacts.com, ourworldindata.org, wearesocial.com). Taking these statistics into consideration, as well as English' status as a lingua franca, it is fair to say that English is the most influential language in the Western world, perhaps even the whole world.

As English is usually the first foreign language taught in schools of Finland, it is important to study what kind of worldview the students are offered through the teaching materials, which are, after all, a publicly administered window to the world of international and intercultural global consciousness. English can be seen as a key to another reality that is adjacent to the one we initially grow up in. The influence of English is enormous and so are the possibilities of the language user when properly equipped. New worlds; mental, social, economical and physical are bound to open with English.

Language and culture are intertwined. English is the dominant language and therefore it transmits the dominant culture. This study begins by inspecting how language and culture are related and how they share evolutionary origins. Everything began around 100,000 to 150,000 years ago when our thinking evolved from perceptual to conceptual (Crow 2002 as cited in Logan 2007: 64). Conceptual thinking is communicated with symbols and these symbols allow us to store information outside of the physical brain (McKenna 1992: 30). Over time many systems of symbols have emerged. Examples of these systems are speech, writing, mathematics, science, computing, internet (Logan 2007: 27-28), and *culture*.

This thesis will be an exploration from our ancestors' time to the current day while using systems of symbols as the common thread. This thesis will begin by inspecting the development of language and culture to understand their relationship, and to understand what *culture* actually is and what its origins are. Then I will look at cultural transmission in language teaching and then the concept of hidden curriculum is introduced. Then I will look at what the Finnish national curriculum says about language and culture. Then I will look at textbooks and previous studies done on the cultural content of textbooks. Then I will disclose the research design of this study and give a background scan of myself. Then, on the analysis part I will inspect *On Track 3*, a contemporary English textbook from the Finnish high school

level to see what kind of cultural knowledge and hidden curriculum content it includes.

Finally, I will reveal the results of the study, followed by a section for discussing the results.

The research questions of this study are:

1. What kind of cultural knowledge does *On Track 3* pass on (to the next generation)?
2. What kind of hidden curriculum content does *On Track 3* seem to have in terms of culture?

## **2 The relationship of language and culture**

Did you ever stop to think just how intricate, complex and useful human language is? We can signal moods, tell stories, motivate others, declare marriages and wars, guide, comfort, and advertise with it. It is quite amazing when you give it a bit of thought. Language is “a purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions, and desires by means of a system of voluntarily produced symbols” (Sapir 1921 as cited in Logan 2007: 26).

McKenna (1992: 30) adds to the definition that symbols also “allow us to store information outside of the physical brain”.

How did language come to be? It is still quite a mystery to researchers and scientists, and might require input from multiple disciplines such as linguistics, psycholinguistics, evolutionary biology, evolutionary psychology, phonology, cultural anthropology, physiology, cognitive science and so on (Logan 2007: 3).

This thesis is about our software, our cultural operating system. *Software* is used here as a metaphor for the extensions of our biological capabilities, which would in turn be *hardware*. Our software includes, for example; symbolic language, mind, and culture, as well as methods of inscription and data storage. Now, let us take a look at the developmental history of language, mind, and culture.

### **2.1 From perceptual to conceptual thinking**

The human mind is thought to have unique traits in comparison to other species: language, episodic memory, mental time travel, and theory of mind (Corballis 2014: 178). Logan (2007: 5) argues that language and mind emerged simultaneously in response to the hominid life becoming increasingly complex. Our ancestors had developed toolmaking, firemaking, engaged large-scale coordinated hunting and lived in larger social groups. Language and mind arguably evolved to regulate and control the social and physical environment which had become so complex that we needed a new tool (Logan 2007: 5, 44). Also according to Richard D. Alexander (1990: 4), the real challenge in the early living environments was not weather, food, parasites, or predators, but the complex social circumstances. We could no longer function in the complexity with our senses, perceptions, and learned reactions; we needed abstractions, we needed generalizations, we needed concepts. In other words, we needed relatively simple, shareable symbols to represent the experience of living. Scholars

like Corballis (2014: 178) and Terrence Deacon (1997) have argued that this ability to think and communicate in symbols gives the human mind its distinctive character.

Some researchers believe that *Homo sapiens* (*sapiens* is derived from Latin *sapiō* which means discerning, or capable of discernment) reached its current form when mind and language; tools of representation and conceptualisation, emerged. In addition to Logan (2007), Crow (2002: 93) is for this view. Crow has pointed out that human pictorial art requires a capacity for representation (as does language), and that this element was missing from *Homo erectus* and Neanderthals. Different researchers trace the transition to *Homo sapiens* somewhere between 100,000 and 170,000 years ago (Logan 2007: 64, Corballis 2014: 207).

Logan (2007: 64) argues that three distinct developmental milestones in hominids are represented by the emergence of language:

1. from percepts to concepts
2. from brain to mind
3. from archaic predecessors to *Homo sapiens*

At least the second and third milestone can be traced back to 100,000 to 150,000 years ago which seems to correlate with the explosion of human culture and technological progress of that period (Bickerton 1995 as cited in Logan 2007: 64). Other authors like Jackendoff (2007: 109) also agree on the “common intuition” that the development of language, human thought, and civilization are “intimately connected”. Logan (2007: 5) continues that the “transition from percept-based thinking to concept-based thinking represented a major discontinuity in human thought and entailed three major stages or breakthroughs in hominid cognition:

1. Manual praxis articulation (or tool making or tool use)
2. Social organization (or the language of social interaction)
3. Preverbal communication, which entails the use of hand signals, mime, gesture, and prosodic vocalization”

When these three spheres became engulfed by language there were three combinatory results, respectively:

1. Technology
2. Commerce
3. Art

When humans could not talk, they were *prelingual hominids*. They were able to communicate nonverbally using gestures, signals, mimicry and prosodic vocalization. Prosodic vocalization is “natural” vocal communication; it could be a grunt of hurt, an excited yell, or singing of comforting tunes to an infant. Prelingual hominids’ thinking was perception-based. A practical example of a prelingual hominid’s functioning could be the following: a hominid perceives a beast and signals their child to be still and silent with a hand gesture and expecting mimicry, stops movement himself. In a sense, everything happens right now, and communication is instinctive and reactionary.

After the emergence of conceptual thinking and language, the child could be educated beforehand for the case of encountering a beast. The optimal ways of behaving do not need to be useful right then, and the beast does not need to be in sight right now because of mental concepts that refer to real things. In a sense, the ability to conceptualize allowed us the ability to plan; think about the past and plan for the future. Some animals prepare for the future instinctively, for example when gathering and hiding food for the winter, and some live intelligently via some learned responses to stimuli but as far as we know, humans are the only species capable of imagining a potential future, to plan, and to act accordingly (Logan 2007: 44).

In addition to imagining the future, conceptual thinking has other powers. In a language, concepts are represented by words. Concepts enhance and organize our cognition. A good example of this is what concepts do with our memory.

Try to get a clear picture of your *whole collection of memories*. What a difficult task, right? Now, let us use a word to represent a concept, and see in action the organizing force that concepts have on our minds. Think of your memories that the word *love* brings forth. Now your mind is filled with memories (some of them arguably hazy or even false) and they have all been summoned and organized using the word *love*. The word had the power to transform the brain state and to replace a set of percepts with a concept - it was in a sense a

mind-altering experience. As we see, language is powerful in its ability to structure and sharpen our cognition and as De Saussure says; “Without language, thought is vague, uncharted nebula. There are no pre-existing ideas, and nothing is distinct before the appearance of language” (De Saussure 1966 as cited in Logan 2007: 107).

It can be argued that language (and inscription and data storage which language made possible) extended the brain and our capabilities, and allowed expansion of the human enterprise to numerous important areas, such as (but not limited to) science, mathematics, and writing (Logan 2007: 6).

## **2.2 Into the concept of software**

In preliterate societies speech was the main channel of communication. It was basically used to coordinate cooperation and to maintain and negotiate social relations within the group. In addition, speech turned into a way of storing cultural information in stories, poems and songs. As the stories' complexity increased, a need for organization emerged. Rhyming, rhythm, meter, and plot arguably emerged as ways of structuring and organizing the stories. They allowed for easier memorization, recording, and recalling of information (Logan 2007: 30). New elements of language emerge when complexity so requires; when there is an information overload. (Logan 2007: 9).

Eventually spoken records were not enough, and out of this need emerged written and numerical records. This allowed for an increased amount of data to be stored, organized, and analyzed. Writing and mathematical notations quite naturally paved the way for science to emerge, as science is “a *systematic* enterprise that *builds and organizes knowledge* in the form of testable explanations and predictions about the universe” (Wikipedia, my italics). Modern science and the scientific method allowed for such complexity and amount of data to be stored and recalled that it arguably led to the development of computers (Logan 2007: 31). “Computing increased the sheer number of messages that needed to be communicated as well as the number of people that needed to be communicated with” which led to the inventions of networks, servers, and finally, the internet (Logan 2007: 33). Interestingly, each step of development from speech to the internet\* has been more powerful in handling information but “less poetic” (Logan 2007: 33), with the notable exception of the internet's multimodality (sound, videos, pictures, text). It is likely that in the future there will be even more powerful systems for handling information.

\**speech-writing-mathematics-science-computing-internet*

Speech, writing, mathematics, science, computing, and the internet can be seen as socially mediated inscription platforms (Logan 2007: 27). The platforms listed after speech have enabled the development of ideas that could not have arisen out of speech alone (ibid). These methods of inscription and data storage are an extension of our brains, and can be said to be *software* on top of the biological *hardware*.

Another term that is close to how I use *software*, is *cognitive artifact*, which means the “artificial devices that maintain, display, or operate upon information in order to serve a representational function and that affect human cognitive performance” (Norman 1991 as cited in OSB: TGoHCI: Chapter 28). In other words, cognitive artefacts are man-made things that externalise and enhance our cognitive abilities. This text, for example, is a cognitive artefact as well as the computer it was written on.

Culture, the main subject of this study, is also a piece of software, as well as an inscription tool. Let us explore why.

### **2.3 Culture = software**

Evolution is a slow process. Genetic variation and natural selection could not have, in time, one by one, bred the cognitive skills necessary to invent and maintain “complex tool-use industries and technologies, complex forms of symbolic communication and representation, and complex social organizations and institutions” (Tomasello 1999 as cited in Logan 2007: 176). To accentuate, current paleoanthropology research suggests that a) only during the last 2 million years did the human species show anything else than the typical cognitive skills of great apes, and b) the first significant signs of species-unique intelligence emerged in the last 250.000 years (ibid).

To solve this puzzle that does not make sense timewise, Tomasello suggests a system where systems and information are piled up on top of themselves. Cultural traditions and artefacts modify over time while learnt lessons are inscribed to them (Tomasello 1999 as cited in Logan 2007: 176-177), and they are passed on socially. It could be said that culture is a software that has allowed us to bypass some limitations of nature’s hardware, namely, the timely restrictions of evolutionary mechanics. This raises an interesting question: how much responsibility do we carry *right now* for the evolution of our species through culture compared to pre-programmed forces of biological evolution?

So as we have understood, culture is a living software with a guiding function. Logan comes to the same conclusion:

“A possible metaphor for the role language plays in enhancing brain function is the disk doubler or zip drive used to provide a microcomputer (an artificial brain) with a compact way to store and process data and information ... culture also acts as a zip drive storing the lessons learned by a society in the mind of each individual in a society or culture” (2007: 67).

## **2.4 The function of culture**

Shared values and attitudes contained in culture increase the cohesion of the group and therefore they increase the possibility of survival of the group members (Logan 2007: 243). Perhaps the most important institution of culture throughout history has been religion. A shared belief system, a shared view of the world, and allowed and disallowed ways of behavior were celebrated and enforced in religious meetings and rituals. To have everyone submit to the same higher values increases the cohesion of a group. In addition to their cohesive effect, religious meetings were important socially and economically - alliances were formed around campfires or on the yards of temples and churches (Logan 2007: 245).

To uphold a wide-reaching culture where most people are not intimately tied, as well as to sustain economic integration beyond the capacity of the biological bonds, symbols of common belief must exist for literal or nonliteral worship (Johnson and Earle 1987 as cited in Logan 2007: 243). These symbols can range from national flags and songs to religious symbols and “worshipped” concepts, such as freedom, democracy, or the Finnish *sisu* (ibid.). The symbols extend the individual’s self-interest to broader social units whose familiarity and importance are recognized and upheld by the symbols (ibid.)

## **2.5 Defining culture**

In the academic realm there are numerous ways to define culture. In this section I will explore some of the definitions that exist, and in the end I will lock in the definition for this study.

### ***Culture as knowledge that is passed on to the next generation***

Culture can be defined as knowledge that is passed on to the next generation (Logan 2007: 241). It serves as a guiding and optimizing tool in society as it contains most of the lessons of survival from one’s ancestors. It would be costly time- and energywise if every human had to learn all communal lessons through trial and error, and perhaps it would be physically

dangerous as well (Boyd & Richerson 1985 as cited in Logan 2007: 241-242). In addition to surviving, by imitating the local ways of being one also becomes socially accepted, even though this might happen at the cost of individual originality. Cultural information adds an additional margin of survival to the individual and the cultures that are most adaptable are the most useful for survival in a changing environment.

Cultures guide our decisions and actions more than we might consciously realize. Logan (2007: 269) makes an analogy of a fish being unaware of the water that surrounds it; the water in which it lives and in which all action is taken. Logan (ibid.) says: “Each action or choice we make is a figure embedded in the ground of our culture. We are aware of the figure but not the ground, which melts into our consciousness and is taken for granted”.

### ***Culture as distinct from nature***

Regardless of genetics, a child will grow up to acquire cultural patterns of the people who they live and interact with. Different forms of media also have an effect (Duranti 1997: 24). This is a part of the socialization process where the child’s mind and behavior are steered towards what is more broadly accepted rather than what is merely acceptable in the family (Mauss 1935 as cited in Duranti 1997: 26). Culture is said to be learned through imitation as well as trial and error (Oswalt 1986 as cited in Duranti 1997: 24).

Of course, this is not far from Logan’s perspective of seeing culture as knowledge, refined by experience, which is transferred from one generation to the next. What these perspectives also share is an acknowledgement for culture to control individual expression for the common good of society.

For the German philosopher Hegel, culture meant a process of getting out of the self-interested biological self and taking someone else’s perspective (Duranti 1997: 25). Almost as if culture is a guidebook for empathetic, cooperative living.

### ***Culture as knowledge***

According to this perspective, also known as the *cognitive view of culture*, members of a society need to know or believe in certain things to operate in a commonly accepted way. Culture is not seen as material, or even behavioral, but as the invisible factor that models our perceiving, interpreting, and relating to things, people, emotions, and so on. (Goodenough 1964 as cited in Duranti 1997: 27). Some scholars, like Keesing (1972 as cited in Duranti

1997: 27) have compared culture to the grammar of a language, as a person needs sufficient knowledge about what is generally believed and what actions generally need to be done to thrive in society, much in the same way as you need to know grammar to use a language sufficiently. This perspective differs from *culture as knowledge that is passed on to the next generation*, because this perspective does not emphasize the passing of the knowledge from the old to the young. Rather, culture is seen as the rules for successful social living.

### ***Culture as socially distributed knowledge***

This perspective focuses on a certain practical apprenticeship for learning - in opposition to looking at *culture as knowledge* where culture gives sufficient information to function in the society. Mere mental knowledge makes a person rigid when something unexpected happens, or when they become stuck in a situation. Exposural teaching and exemplary action are at the heart of this perspective, as well as the fact that not everyone in the same society has the same cultural capital or experience (Duranti 1997: 30-32).

### ***Culture as communication***

In this perspective culture is seen as a system of signs, where reality is represented in “stories, myths, descriptions, theories, proverbs, artistic products and performances” to make sense of it. The world must be communicated to be lived, and all this communication establishes symbolic relationships between people, who without the communicated culture would be disconnected and without meaning in the world (Duranti 1997: 33). It is thought that even though man is civilized and technologically advanced, the basic structures, characters, plots and metaphors in our myths are often familiar from history when stripped of their new clothes, pointing to Lévi-Strauss’ (as cited in Duranti 1997: 33) assumption that the human mind would be the same everywhere. Lévi-Strauss (ibid.) also claims that the differences in thinking of modern humans and our ancestors can be explained with the different technological resources available used to build theories.

Lévi-Strauss also believes that culture, in myths, gets communicated through people, and not the other way around (Duranti 1997: 35-36). As if culture is something of a background force that envelopes its characters and drags them to somewhat predisposed plot lines. This idea is very similar to what was written before about the fish not being aware of the water that surrounds it.

Clifford Geertz also sees culture as communication, but in his perspective the point of interest is not Lévi-Straussian (trying to see universal patterns of behavior in culture), rather he looks at culture as the never-ending process of personally attaching meaning to life (Geertz 1973 as cited in Duranti 1997: 36). Geertz' approach is more interpretive than factual, more personal than general. Culture as communication can also be seen to entail *metaphors as folk theories of the world* (Duranti 1997: 38).

### ***Culture as a system of mediation***

In this view culture is seen as a tool to mediate between the human and the environment. Duranti (1997: 39-43) makes a distinction between physically mediating the environment (e.g. pushing an intruder away) and pointing to an exit sign, or telling them to leave, where only the latter cases would be culturally mediated, as they are symbolic activities.

Symbolically or linguistically mediated situations can be seen as an expression of distinction from primitivity; actions and reactions are negotiated on the social plane rather than the physical plane (ibid).

## **2.6 Additional views on culture**

Edward Tylor (1871: 1) says that culture is “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society”. In a sense he is talking about ways how people act in the world. Clifford Geertz (1973: 8) is of same opinion, saying culture is:

“historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about and attitudes towards life” also “culture is patterns for behavior not patterns of behavior”

Lee Cronk never explicit his definition, but in his text it is implicit that culture is “socially transmitted information” which takes its “physical form ... as mental representations inside people's heads” (1999: 13-14).

## **2.7 The chosen definition of culture in this thesis**

When reading the different definitions of culture it becomes obvious that they are all quite alike. What can be extracted from the different definitions is that they seem to agree that culture has a guiding social function. Therefore I decided to choose Logan's definition for this thesis: *culture is knowledge that is passed on to the next generation*. I found this definition to be the most all-encompassing and also it makes sense to use Logan's definition, as I was

researching a school textbook, and one of schools functions is to arm the next generation with what the society needs (see chapter 3.1 for more).

## **2.8 Concluding the relationship of language and culture**

Both language and culture include symbolically encoded concepts (Durhan 1991 as cited in Logan 2007: 245). Language is the medium for the transmission of culture and at the same time culture is the medium for the transmission of language.

The amount of information a person can gain by only observing the world with their own senses is limited. A very large portion of what we know of our environment had been previously stored in our culture, stories, institutions and so on, and it was passed to us in words, pictures, and symbols. The culturally normative ways of describing, defining and categorizing things with culturally normative symbols leads to a certain conformity of being. In time, this leads to the phenomenon of culture being literally reinforced by language. The language is the medium and the culture is the message. (Logan 2007: 246.)

### **3 Cultural transmission in language teaching**

When teaching a foreign language, there is always a hidden curriculum. Byram refers to this as the “part of foreign language teaching which conveys information, attitudes, images and perhaps even prejudice about the people and countries where the particular language is spoken” (1989: 1). Kramsch (1993: 8-9) also acknowledges the notion that language teaching includes teaching culture and raises the question of how much of the cultural information should be made explicit and how much can be understood implicitly. Kramsch (1993: 9) also says that language use cannot be dissociated from the creation and transmission of culture (1993: 9). In other words, when teaching a foreign language it is inevitable that the culture associated with the language is taught also.

Let us consider the implications of this phenomenon. When a Finnish student learns English in the classroom through the teaching materials that have been administered to the teacher, they are also offered a certain view of the world. It is not trivial what stories the books include, about whom, from what angles, and so on. Even though it might seem like they are merely teaching materials, they inevitably contain cultural information, subtle or explicit. Language cannot be used in a vacuum, it will inevitably point to something that exists beyond the classroom, as it embodies the values and meanings of a culture. (Byram 1989: 41).

Culture, as defined above, is knowledge that is passed on to the next generation. The designers of the teaching materials are at a position of power where they get to decide the stories, the cultural programming, and the implicit and explicit images of life that the students get to see. The teaching material will make the student look at a certain direction, with a certain attitude, and to somewhat disregard other directions. Cultural teaching is an inevitable companion of language teaching and so the designers of the material must know their responsibility in upholding good cultural teaching (Byram 1989: 4). Of course, the question of what would be “good cultural teaching” is quite difficult. Anyhow, to be able to do “good cultural teaching”, the designers of the books must be aware of the process of passing cultural information. How the book designers structure and represent knowledge of the world will, along with mental and emotional learning processes, lead to specific psychological outcomes in the students.

When teaching a language, it is relatively simple to measure how well the students have learned the correct use of the language, as linguistic competence can be somewhat objectively measured. It is way more difficult, as it is more abstract and formless, to get a grasp of how

much and what kind of psychological change the cultural information included in the language teaching has caused in the student.

How aware are language teachers, (and other teachers as well), of their and their materials' role as a cultural transmitter? Values, norms, taboos, social structures, and so on are implicated or explicated in the teaching material, as well by the person teaching.

People working in the educational field must be aware of their responsibility of shaping the next generation. The educational system is, of course, quite conservative in nature, so it would be logical to assume that the generational psychological spirit handed down by the branches and members of this institution would be, more often than not, in favor of conserving the status quo rather than encouraging the students to reinvent or destroy what is established.

Is the educational sphere outdated? Does it offer, in a positive sense, the safe-play route for life - the *least bad* way of life, the least risky path that comes down to the lowest common denominator? Does the educational system encourage people to thrive or to conform? These kinds of questions give reasons to study the teaching materials from the cultural point of view.

### **3.1 Suspicions about hidden curriculum**

Most often the term hidden curriculum refers to the implicit means that lead to the school institution fulfilling one of its most relevant functions: to positively affect the continuous renewal of work force, ideology, and social classes, but traditionally teachers are not very conscious of these societal functions of school (Broady 1986: 14). Schools will attempt to arm the next generation with qualities that the society demands (Broady 1986: 15).

Hidden curriculum emerges from the structures of the school work such as hierarchy, length of lessons, division of subjects, system of diplomas, and from the social classes of students and teachers, as well as from the gap of how school work is said to be and what the actual experience of the participants is (ibid.). For the purposes of this study I argue that hidden curriculum should also be commonly understood to emerge from the teaching materials.

Hidden curriculum is influential and according to some, more influential than the formal curriculum (Snyder 1973: xiii). The most critical claims say that schools (in the USA, but arguably this could apply elsewhere too) were designed to be "instruments for the scientific

management of a mass population”, who through conditioning become easily predictable and easily controlled (Gatto & Slayback 2017: 22). According to Snyder (1973: xiii) there is no “kindergarten, high school or college that is without a hidden curriculum”. Claims like the ones above give reason to look at the school system and its materials from a more critical perspective than what we are used to.

The school system has been criticized for standardizing and measuring the wide range of “human drives, skills, desires, dreams, and futures” as well as talented individuals settling to fight for jobs they did not care for that much (Gatto & Slayback 2017: XIV). Slayback also thinks that schools are working as intended, and it is the young people that have to “stop waiting for permission from others and create opportunities” themselves (Gatto & Slayback 2017: XVI). According to him, human genius is actually a very common quality, but it gets lost in the standardization (Gatto & Slayback 2017: XIX). He also holds a radical-sounding view: schools are meant to dumb young people down and even “coax them into addiction and dependent behavior” (Gatto & Slayback 2017: XIX). The authoritative nature of the school system, its rewards, disgraces, evaluations and so on are seen to make students give up their will “to the predestined chain of command”; in other words to conform, and wait for someone better informed to tell them what to do (Gatto & Slayback 2017: 6-7).

I ask the reader to recall the idea of culture being compared to the water fish swim in, something that surrounds people while them being unaware of it. Through hidden curriculum, some of this cultural programming, which makes people behave in a certain way, takes place. People might not be able to articulate why they act a certain way or have a certain set of values. It is all in the water and who injects the water with what. You are the fish. We all are. As Bornstein (2014: 25) says, school is not only about learning the right answers, it is also about learning normative behavior in a civil society.

What is not said, what is left out again and again from the explicit manifestations of curriculum is also important. If a certain topic gets left out repeatedly people will, at a level that is mostly unconscious, begin to deem this topic as irrelevant (Bornstein 2014: 7). Eisner explains what kind of effect leaving some things uncovered can have: for example, if there is a lack of art education, people will lack an aesthetic perspective and will devalue art (Bornstein 2014: 24). Because of this phenomenon, it is not trivial what is given attention and what is not.

### 3.2 Language and culture in Finnish national curriculum

In the general section of the Finnish national curriculum LOPS 2015, language and culture are mentioned. Each student's linguistic and cultural identities are supported in various ways and the students are guided to understand their linguistic and cultural rights in different situations. There is an explicit goal to guide students to appreciate different languages and cultures, as well as to advance bilingualism as well as multilingualism.

In the general section of foreign languages of the Finnish national curriculum (LOPS 2015) it is mentioned that the teaching aims to do the following:

- strengthen the students' will and skills to act in culturally varied environments and affiliations.
- deepen the students' skills of global citizenship
- strengthen the equality of the sexes via encouraging open-mindedness

In the distinct section of English teaching the LOPS 2015 holds that the students:

- Understand the significance and role of English as a language of international communication
- Advance as users of the English language and *as actors* in the culturally diverse world in local, national, European and global communities

On the basis of these language sections of LOPS 2015 it seems like the Finnish school authorities have 2 clearly defined ideologies: promote the capabilities of the students to function globally and promote the equality of the sexes.

### 3.3 Textbooks

A school textbook is a tool for educational purposes. Its main purpose is to transmit information about the subject learned, in this case, English. In addition to teaching the actual school subject, textbooks are widely considered to transmit cultural information, such as, but not limited to values, skills, attitudes, emotions, ideologies, power relations, and significant silences (Lappalainen 2011, Risager 2018: 1). Textbooks are a complex form of publication as they contain material of many different genres both written and picked from other sources by the authors (Fairclough 1992, Lähdesmäki 2009, as cited in Risager 2018: 10). In Finland, the textbooks used in schools have to follow the current national curriculum.

Textbooks are a key part of Finnish school culture and therefore carry a lot of power in terms of representing the subject at hand. The English books will paint a certain image about the English speaking world as well as the language and its users. In Finland, the schoolbooks will have to follow the current national curriculum, so the contents of the books are partially determined by the educational authorities.

In addition to being an educational tool, the textbook is a commercial product for the publishers, and therefore it is expected to make a profit. In order to make a profit for the publisher, the book must be chosen over its competitors. From the school's point of view, the book should be usable for many years and come with a suitable price (Hannus 1996 as cited in Lappalainen 2011) From the student's point of view the book should be as interesting as possible. Taking into consideration all the factors, the textbook will inevitably be a compromise between the wants of educational institutions, the financial interests of the publisher, the wishes of the books' longevity from the schools, as well as the students' desires for the books to be interesting.

### **3.4 Previous studies on textbooks**

Studies on English textbooks' content and attitudes have been done in the past. Gray (2010) did a comprehensive study of English textbooks used for second, foreign, or international language teaching. The books were produced by Oxford University Press, Cambridge University Press and Longman and they were characterized as "ELT (English language teaching) global coursebooks". These books were characterized by discourses of "individualism, egalitarianism, cosmopolitanism, mobility, and affluence, in which students are increasingly addressed as consumers". In addition, Gray found out that balanced representation of men and women, as well as sensitivity to globally perceived "inappropriate topics" had been guidelines for the authors. (Gray 2010 as cited in Risager 2018: 15). According to Risager (2018: 15), these "inappropriate topics" are referred to as PARSNIP (politics, alcohol, religion, sex, narcotics, isms and pork) in ELT publishing.

Lappalainen (2011) has in her MA thesis studied the presentation of American culture in EFL textbooks in Finland. She conducted a study of 22 books but focused on five because of their suitability and them having references to American culture. She used content analysis as her method, which searches for meanings, not how the meanings are created, as done in discourse analysis (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2009, as cited in Lappalainen 2011). Lappalainen classified her findings under 11 sections, such as (not in the original order):

1. Social identity and social groups
2. Social interaction (included *conventions* of verbal and non-verbal interaction, as well as the subjective values and attitudes of characters - these two are almost direct cultural programming)
3. Belief and behavior (examples of taken for granted actions and religious/moral beliefs within the social groups)
4. Point of view and style of the textbook authors (represented through, for example, fictional characters as well as the choices of authentic outside material)

Lamponen (2012) has, also in her MA thesis, studied the cultural content in two English and Swedish textbook series in Finnish upper secondary school. She used theoretically directed content analysis as her method. Lamponen (2012: 37) criticizes, among other issues, the stereotypical and fixed-in-time representations of culture. The categorisation of the data in the study was somewhat similar to what Lappalainen (2011) did, with 10 categories like “*Social interaction, View of life, Society and national identity, Daily life*” and so on. Two interesting categories that were not found in Lappalainen were “*Culturally unaccepted phenomena*” and “*Technology and economic life*”. The results of the study showed that the books gave a lot of weight to daily life and daily characters instead of using famous artists or sports icons. The studied books were credited with offering the students somewhat genuine information of life in the target countries instead of giving vague, stereotypical information that would help them navigate the countries as tourists.

## **4 Research design**

The following chapters will introduce the research design of this study. First, qualitative research and content analysis are introduced, as this study is a qualitative study and the method used is data-based content analysis. Then, the process of making this study is explained and the data is introduced. Finally, I will give a small background scan of myself, suggested by Risager (2018) to give context to the analysis I make. It is difficult in a study of this nature to completely eradicate the influence of the subjective perspective of the researcher.

### **4.1 Aims of the study and research questions**

Despite the several studies that have been made on the cultural content of English textbooks, a study like this is rare, where the evolutionary history of culture is taken into consideration, as well as looking at the books from the point of view of hidden curriculum. In a sense, this study aims to be more penetrating than the adjacent studies. Also this study was done on a very current book (2019) and when researching material to find out what is going on right now, the newer the material, the better.

The research questions are

- What kind of cultural knowledge does *On Track 3* pass on (to the next generation)?
- What kind of hidden curriculum does *On Track 3* seem to have in terms of culture?

### **4.2 Qualitative research**

Qualitative research is sometimes described as humanistic, soft, understanding and interpretative (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2018: 16). Its polar opposite, quantitative research, is a colder method, focusing on numbers, averages, and statistics. The description of qualitative research as *understanding* has a psychological flavor; a form of absorption into the material takes place (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2018: 33-34). The researcher assumes the atmosphere and character of the material and reads into its suggestions and messages. In this way qualitative research, for example, of a book, has something akin to a psychoanalytic component; trying to see the world through its eyes.

It is crucial to recognize the method of research as a determining factor of the final results, and how the results should be looked at. It could be said that the way the researcher collects and analyses data will stand as the justification and explanation of the results (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2018: 17). There are ethical concerns in the field of qualitative research, perhaps the

key one being the dependability of a study (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2018: 20). This is natural, as in qualitative research phenomena are not looked at with a large, impersonal scope, but a more specific, understanding, interpretative scope. This causes inevitable questions about the researcher's role in the layout of the study, the analysis, and the results. Often, researchers making a qualitative study gain credibility for their studies with the use of outside sources, and by fitting their methods of research into commonly accepted names and frameworks. Still, the subjectivity of qualitative studies remains its main weapon, while at the same time it being its main weakness. If we look at science and research in general, it is the power of subjectivity in the researcher that has the potential to generate or find something new. The citing of previous research will give a firm background, but without the ingenuity of the researcher themselves, one is not making new research, but rewriting passages from the past. Nevertheless, the biggest challenge of qualitative research remains in connecting observational sensitivity and the academic demands for certainty.

#### **4.3 Content analysis**

Content analysis is a self-explanatory method which can be used in all traditions of qualitative studies (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2018: 103). Content analysis is widely used in theses, but there is "little information available on the method" (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2018: 19), perhaps because the method is so self-explanatory, as well as case-specific and flexible. The difference between content analysis and discourse analysis is, from the point of view of this study, surprisingly subtle: Tuomi & Sarajärvi claim (2018: 54) that content analysis looks at communication as a "picture of reality" whereas discourse analysis looks at communication as "constructing reality". In this study, the interest will be on "the picture of reality" the textbooks paint, but also inevitably how it is done. It is not adequate to make a sharp distinction between the cause and effect here, as they are both important and interesting from the perspective of the study. The combination of multiple methods is recognized as viable in the modern postmodern science, as is the open-minded DIY ("do it yourself") -attitude of the researcher towards the methods used (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2018: 61-62).

Timo Laine (As cited in Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2018: 104) has developed a guiding structure for making content analysis (modified slightly by Tuomi & Sarajärvi, as well as myself). This 6-step strategy is the recipe that was used to structure this study.

1. Decide what is interesting in the material and make a strong decision
2. Go through the material, distinguish, and mark the objects of interest

3. Leave everything else out from the study
4. Gather the marked data and separate it from the other material
5. Classify or theme the relevant material
6. Write a conclusion

There are three main ways to do content analysis; theory-based content analysis, theoretically directed content analysis, and data-based content analysis (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009: 108-118). Theory-based content analysis is based on an established frame of reference and the aim of the study is to fill in the empty spaces in the model (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009: 113). In theoretically directed content analysis the categories are known beforehand, but the analysis is still done on the terms of the data (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009: 117).

Data-based content analysis was chosen for this study because the frame is developed around what is found, therefore it is the most suitable for this study, as the aim was to dive into the book and its content to find out what there is. Not so much trying to fill some pre-existing categories or find pre-defined subjects. Nevertheless, eventually the content analysis will have to be categorized or organized in other ways for the ease of the reader (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009: 108).

The method for analyzing the data is data-based content analysis with a dash of critical discourse analysis. Discourse can be defined as “use of symbols in context” (Lahdenpää 2018). Therefore critical analysis of discourse essentially means analysis of a text within its context.

#### **4.4 Data: On Track 3**

The subject of this study is *On Track 3*, an English textbook for Finnish high school students. The book is split into 4 main sections, called *Units*, around 40 pages each. In addition to the *Units* there is a grammar section (also around 40 pages long) at the end of the book. In each *Unit* there are 2 Key Texts. The reason to choose this book was because it was mature in its content. In the beginning I had three Finnish EFL books to research with the same research questions, but I decided to focus only on this one because the two other books were aimed at younger students and contained so much fiction, pictures, and touristy information that they seemed to lack directly applicable real-life substance.

#### **4.5 How the analysis was conducted**

The process of analysis began with reading the book and paying attention to culturally informative content. I took notes and wrote preliminary analysis. Then I limited my research to only the Key Texts because they are the “main content” of the book, as the name “Key Text” suggests. In a larger study, one could have included other sections of the book as well, such as exercises and info boxes.

The next step was to write a large free-form document about the Key Texts. Basically I wrote down every observation that seemed significant, and analyzed them with the research questions in mind.

The next step was to structure the large pool of unclassified information into clear and understandable form for the reader. I inspected the pool of data with the aim to structure and categorize the findings. The process was successful and I came up with 7 categories that structure the findings and quickly give a clear picture of the study. The categories are:

1. Individualism
2. Cultural self-consciousness
3. Psychologisation
4. Global unity
5. Conservative voice
6. What is popular is good
7. The future

#### **4.6 Background scan**

It is important to understand that the analyst will have an effect on the perspective of the analysis, and for this reason I will give a brief background scan of myself.

- ESL teaching: At the time of writing this thesis I had worked as a private teacher of English.
- Knowledge about the institutional and social context: I am a product of the Finnish school system and have followed a route of primary school - junior high school - high school - university. As a citizen of Finland and an avid observer of the world I consider myself well-experienced and informed about the status quo of the current society and its institutions.
- National affiliation: I am Finnish with no significant ties to other nationalities.

- Political position and agenda: I do not see myself as having a political position or agenda.
- Cultural identities: I see myself as a critical thinker who sometimes struggles between originality and conformity.
- Position in the global relations of power: I am not in an institutionalized position of power globally.
- Transnational experiences and networks: I have travelled the world a bit and therefore I have some connections in foreign countries. I have made friends and acquaintances with people all over the world.

## 5 Findings

Here I will present my findings which consist of 32 independent examples that are put into the 7 previously mentioned categories. The examples are included as screenshots of the e-book version of On Track 3. I was given permission by the publisher (Sanoma Pro) to include the screenshots if I sent them the thesis after completion. The screenshots have been purposefully sized to include some context around them.

### 5.1 Individualism

Individualism refers here to putting importance on the individual person instead of a group or a community. It can show itself by people wanting to be “stars” rather than play for the team. In individualism, the more you stand out from others, the better. In collectivism, which can be seen as the opposite idea, people see it preferable to fit in with others and be similar to others.

#### *Example 1 (from Key Text 1)*

This example includes a whole lot of individualism with the major theme being selfies.

On Track 3 2020

← UNIT 1: Express yourself • Topic 1: Selfies • Topic 1 Key text: Five reasons...◀ ▶

## Topic 1 Key text: Five reasons...

... to take more selfies!

Selfies get a bad rap. We always hear how people who take selfies are vain, self-absorbed narcissists. Or that the selfie is the symbol of the “Me, Me, Me Generation”. Luckily there are plenty of experts out there who disagree. Here are five reasons to celebrate the selfie.

[Kopioi linkki](#)

In the introduction paragraph of Key Text 1 it says: “We always hear how people who take selfies are vain, self-obsessed narcissists. Or that the selfie is the symbol of the Me, Me, Me Generation.”

These sentences acknowledge the culture the readers live in; a culture where people are focused on themselves, to such extent that they resort to photographing themselves as a common form of self-expression. The selfie is then referenced as the symbol of the “Me, Me,

Me Generation”. The message could not be much more clear. The cultural ground the authors of the textbook acknowledge to exist is very self-oriented.

### ***Example 2 (from Key Text 1)***

This is another example that includes individualism, again talking about selfies but this time from the perspective of the selfie-photographer being in control of their own image.

#### **1 Selfie control**

The one thing that separates a selfie from other kinds of photographs is that it puts the model firmly in charge of the process. That’s why journalist and photographer Pat Bailey describes selfies as empowering: “The person taking a solo photo is completely in control of how they want the world to see them.” This is the exact opposite of being in somebody else’s snapshot.

Selfies are described as empowering: “The person taking a solo photo is completely in control of how they want the world to see them” and how that is the “exact opposite of being in somebody else’s snapshot”. These sentences reflect a very individualistic attitude, where being in control of one's image is of high importance.

### ***Example 3 (from Key Text 1)***

In this example selfies are said to allow for identity experimentation. Like in the last example, being in control of your image, identity, and self is deemed important and therefore individualistic attitudes are present.

#### **2 Role play**

Psychologist Dr Kramer, a lecturer from the University of Toronto, goes further. She argues that selfies also allow us to experiment with different identities. “We all like to try out a new image and see how it feels,” she explains. “Children often dress up, or pretend to be other people. Exploring different roles is a part of growing up. In that sense, I’d say that selfies are a healthy expression of a natural human impulse.”

In the second paragraph of Key Text 1, titled “Role play”, a psychologist argues how selfies allow us to “experiment with different identities”. This supports the individualistic attitude

prevalent in what was said before; the person can and should be in control of their own identity or image. This notion conjures the postmodern ideal of how almost everything, especially related to identities, is flexible and negotiable, without anything being fixed or predisposed. It is also individualistic: we should be able to define our own identity, and try as many as we would like, before we find the one(s) worth sticking to. This is in contrast to collectivism, where this kind of exploration is not encouraged.

#### ***Example 4 (from Key Text 1)***

In this example the importance of feeling good about oneself is emphasized, leading to an interpretation of individualism.

### **3 Happy snapper**

Then there's the feel-good factor. Emma Kirby, a 22-year-old Instagram user from Durham, says "It's always nice to document a good hair day, or an outfit you love." In her view it makes sense to celebrate the times we feel good about ourselves. The same goes for snaps of friends. "Why wouldn't you want to capture and share fun moments with your mates?" According to Emma, selfie-snappers are smart. They keep good memories long after the rest of us have forgotten them.

In the third paragraph of Key Text 3, "Happy snapper", an Instagram user Emma Kirby argues how "it makes sense to celebrate the times we feel good about ourselves" with a selfie, for example when one has a good hair day or does something fun. She then likes to share the moments with her friends. Sharing feels good, especially when feeling special about oneself. This seems like an individualistic cultural value: to do something that makes you feel good about yourself and sharing it to friends, who then might acknowledge your actions or being.

These examples make it clear that the self and individualistic attitudes are quite important in today's culture in On Track 3's portrayal.

## **5.2 Cultural self-consciousness**

Cultural self-consciousness refers here to recognizing how and why things are the way they are in the culture, while the recognition must come from *within* the culture in question.

### ***Example 5 (from Key Text 1)***

This example compares modern selfies to legendary artists' self-portraits and includes cultural self-consciousness in the sense of understanding what is going on.

#### **5 The art of the selfie**

Remember that self-portraits have been around for centuries. When Rembrandt or Van Gogh painted themselves, nobody accused them of being shallow, superficial attention-seekers. Instead, these images are considered works of genius. Now, some curators are starting to consider the selfie as an art form. Hugh Dornbrush, founder of the start-up *selfie.com* argues that “the selfie is fundamentally a self-portrait using modern technology. And of course that is art.” The thousands of Londoners who flocked to the Moving Image Art Fair to see the exhibition *National #Selfie Portrait Gallery* would agree.

The fifth paragraph is titled “The art of the selfie”. Next to the text is Rembrandt’s painting from 1643: *Self-portrait as a Young Man*. Within the text it is said that in the previous centuries someone making a self-portrait was never considered to be shallow, superficial or attention-seeker. It seems like the text situates itself on the side of the youth and the selfie-culture, indirectly defending them. Later in the text, Hugh Dornbrush, who is the founder of *selfie.com*, says: “the selfie is fundamentally a self-portrait using modern technology”. Here the text definitely takes the pro-selfie side, which is generally the view of the youth, the primary group of taking selfies (and the primary group using the textbook). This example definitely expresses self-consciousness about the culture in question, because the book designers know what is going on culturally and situate themselves accordingly with the text.

### ***Example 6 (from Key Text 6)***

In this example stand-up comedian Noah Trevor’s multiculturalism is the key for the epiphany of cultural self-consciousness.

**Simon:** He'll certainly bring a more global point of view to *The Daily Show*. Plus, he's got millions of fans on social media, so he's connecting with the so-called second-screener. He is in that sweet spot for this particular show: a young adult, multi-racial, international, articulate and very funny. Plus, coming from the background that he does, he can poke fun at holy cows in a way that a white American host probably couldn't.

On page 67 Simon says that because of Noah's background (and skin color) he can "poke fun at holy cows in a way that a white American host probably couldn't". The text here implies that different rules of accepted behavior apply to different races; that without the possibility of self-irony, racial or otherwise sensitive jokes could not be as harsh. This example is cultural self-consciousness at its finest.

#### ***Example 7 (from Key Text 6)***

In this example Noah Trevor's different-race parents are the butt of Noah's joke. Laughter and unveiling of taboo are combined in this example leading to conclusions of cultural self-consciousness.

**Simon:** I heard that he had a rather unusual childhood?

**Karen:** It was certainly unusual at the time. His mother was a Xhosa woman, his father a white Swiss-German man, and in apartheid South Africa, this sort of relationship was illegal. Trevor has worked his unconventional parents into one of his routines, saying, "It was very awkward, growing up in a mixed family, with me being the mixed one. My mum was like 'Ohh, I don't care, I don't care, I love my white man!' And my dad? Well, you know how the Swiss love chocolate, so..." But

jokes aside, it can't have been an easy life.

According to Karen, Noah has said:

"It was very awkward, growing up in a mixed family, with me being the mixed one. My mum was like 'Ohh, I don't care, I don't care, I love my white man!' And my dad? Well, you know how the Swiss love chocolate so..."

This citation is of course comedic, but why it is comedic is the important question. There are two tabooish subjects at hand: the race question of black and white and the subject of sex. When a subject is taboo, we tend to refrain from engaging with these subjects and therefore they become stored in the subconscious mind. When we push away material, the material is stored with a certain energy charge in our subconscious mind. When the repressed material is brought to the surface we find the release of the energetic charge relieving, which, in addition to other comedic devices such as word play or wit, makes us laugh. So unveiling taboos in a clever way is funny. Looking at the issue from the perspective of cultural self-consciousness, passing of knowledge, and hidden curriculum we can make a few observations: 1. sex and racial questions are reinforced as taboos 2. in the sphere of comedy exists a permission to expose taboos.

***Example 8 (from Key Text 9)***

In this example there are two archetypes that constantly appear in myths and stories; the lover and the warrior woman. The characteristics of the archetypes are explained in the screenshots. Interpretations of cultural self-consciousness will follow, this time because of a reversal of traditional gender roles, as well as these archetypes perhaps functioning as the easily admirable ideals for the young men and women reading the book.

**Modern incarnations:** The James Bond books and movies show a continuing fascination with the lover-hero archetype. The darker side of this character is embodied in the modern vampire who is deeply attractive to women but also a threat to them.

## The lover



**Characteristics:** Young, attractive and restless. Usually male, he is a risk-taker with a taste for adventure. He admires beautiful women, but is unable to commit to one person. This also makes him a heartbreaker.

**Skills:** Charm and self-confidence. He is skilled in the art of seduction. However, his pursuit of women means he can be lured into danger by a femme fatale (another popular archetype).

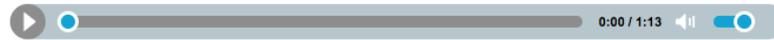
**Background:** The lover-hero appears in the Finnish epic *Kalevala* as the impulsive Lemminkäinen. In the legend of *King Arthur* he takes the form of the handsome Sir Lancelot. He appears again in eighteenth century Italy, this time as the famous seducer Casanova.

The lover is described as “young, attractive, and restless. Usually male, he is a risk-taker with a taste for adventure. He admires beautiful women, but is unable to commit to one person. This also makes him a heartbreaker”. His main skills are charm and self-confidence and he is skilled in seduction. His weakness is the femme fatale, the irresistible and dangerous woman. Historical incarnations mentioned in the text are the impulsive Lemminkäinen from *Kalevala*, the handsome Sir Lancelot, or the Italian seducer Casanova (*but they are now described as the lover-hero!*). Modern incarnations mentioned are James Bond, once again described as a *lover-hero*. Also vampires, who are often portrayed as attractive but dangerous to women, are mentioned to represent this archetype.

Instantly when looking at the text a question arises: why did the title change from *lover* to *lover-hero*? Looking at the characters (James Bond, Lemminkäinen, Sir Lancelot, Casanova, and “the modern vampire”); it is obvious how they are not only *lovers*, it is not their main function at all. As important, or even more, is their strength or skills, an exception maybe

being Casanova. But even Casanova was not all charm, as his accomplishments include, for example, a famous jailbreak. Here is what was said about the warrior woman to be used as a reference for the thought patterns of the upcoming paragraphs:

### The warrior woman



**Characteristics:** Young, female, decisive and courageous. This fighter is highly independent and possesses a clear sense of purpose.

**Skills:** Mastery of weapons as well as martial arts. Being a woman, she is often underestimated by the men around her, much to their cost.

**Background:** She exists in the stories of many cultures including the old Chinese ballad *Mulan* about a warrior princess who fought against Mongol invaders. Meanwhile in the West, the ancient Greeks told tales of fearless female warrior tribes, known as Amazons, who used bows and arrows to deadly effect.

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**Modern incarnations:** *Buffy, the Vampire Slayer*, the eponymous heroine of the American TV series, is a modern version of the warrior woman. She also appears in comic books in the form of the Black Widow, and in the *Game of Thrones* novels as Arya Stark. Katniss Everdeen from the *Hunger Games* trilogy is another incarnation of the warrior woman.

My theory is that the book has purposefully flipped the traditional gender roles: now the warrior is a woman and the lover is a man. The flip needs a bit of softening support (calling the men *lover-heroes*) because while possible, the men are doing a lot of other things as well; mostly fighting. Also looking at the warrior woman, it is still a marginal role in terms of number of appearances compared to the amount of warrior men. It is a fascinating flip, and the cultural implications are obvious: both genders can do what the other has predominantly done in the past. The hidden curriculum hints towards a more fluid conception of the roles of the sexes, even if it has to be softened up a bit (“lover-hero”), or feel a bit manufactured (the admittedly low % of women warriors to men warriors).

Perhaps the warrior woman and the lover (man) are admired role models of high schoolers’ behavior right now. It is difficult to say what the primary target group of the textbook thinks,

but it is entirely possible that the book is catering to their fantasies. That, or trying to flip their way of thinking. A large questionnaire study would have to take place to know what the Finnish high school students actually say to admire.

### ***Example 9 (from Key Text 14)***

In this example The Dancing House in Prague is talked about in relation to the geopolitics prevalent at the time of building it. The power shift from communism to democracy in the now disintegrated Czechoslovakia is acknowledged in the text and the Dancing House is the symbol of the cultural shift.

#### **The Dancing House, Prague**

The unique, funky design of this building in Prague was very controversial at the time. People complained that it clashed with the Baroque, Gothic and Art Nouveau buildings in the neighbourhood, but today it is one of the must-see tourist attractions in the city. The two architects who designed it each had a different take on what the structure represented. The Czech-Croatian architect said that the two parts of the building, static and fluid, symbolise the transition of Czechoslovakia from a communist regime to a democracy. The Canadian-American architect thought it looked like two dancers, and wanted to call the house *Fred and Ginger*, after a famous pair of Hollywood dancers. Later he changed his mind and said that he was reluctant to import "American Hollywood kitsch" to Prague. But the *Dancing House* is such an accurate description of the building that the nickname stuck.

The Dancing House is a wonky looking building that consists of two unique looking parts with bent surfaces and glass panels. The two parts are built to stick together, and with a bit of imagination, they look like they are dancing or hugging each other. One of the two designing architects is said to have designed them in this way to symbolize the transition of Czechoslovakia from a communist regime to a democracy. The building of the Dancing House began in 1992 around the time of Czechoslovakia's dissolution and the building was finished in 1996.

The other architect wanted to name the building Fred and Ginger after two famous Hollywood dancers, but later changed his mind because he did not want to import “American Hollywood kitsch” to Prague.

The statements of the architects are very interesting because they both acknowledge the changing of the geopolitical power dynamic when Soviet Union and communism started to crumble in favor of American capitalism and democracy. In a sense, the hegemony of the United States and its culture is acknowledged, but at the same time it is despised, calling it “kitsch”. The text affirms the dominance of American influence, not directly but subtly.

All in all, these examples point to an understanding of what is going on in the culture, and an acceptance of it.

### 5.3 Psychologisation

Psychologisation refers here to a phenomenon where an increasing amount of human phenomena are given a psychological term or explanation. In a sense, it refers to an increased explanation power of our species. Many terms and ideas that used to be largely reserved for the initiated experts only have become common knowledge, and are shared here at the high school level.

#### *Example 10 (from Key Text 1)*

In this example narcissists and selfies make a comeback, but this time, as the theme is psychologisation the focus is on the psychological term “narcissist”.

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## Topic 1 Key text: Five reasons...

[Kopioi linkki](#)

### ... to take more selfies!

Selfies get a bad rap. We always hear how people who take selfies are vain, self-absorbed narcissists. Or that the selfie is the symbol of the “Me, Me, Me Generation”. Luckily there are plenty of experts out there who disagree. Here are five reasons to celebrate the selfie.

The fact that the term “narcissist” is used, points to a phenomenon where the term, which is at its root, quite extreme, has been taken for common use and it has gone through an inflation in its strength of meaning. It used to be reserved for the sphere of the psychological profession, but now it is in common day use along with many others, like *crazy* or *psychopath*, perhaps decreasing the weight that they used to have. More psychology for the layman means a deserved spot in *Psychologisation*.

### Example 11 (from Key Text 9)

In this example the psychological term “archetype” is delivered to the layman, previously being mostly reserved for advanced students of Jungian psychology.

## Topic 9 Key text: Everybody needs a hero

[Kopioi linkki](#)



Big-budget movies increasingly rely on international filmgoers to recoup their costs. As a result, hero figures who are instantly recognisable across continents and cultures are now in strong demand. This might explain cinema’s love affair with the archetype, a fictional character who appears again and again in myths and stories around the world. Archetypes resonate with global audiences, and this makes them excellent choices for heroic characters.

Here are three types of hero archetypes who are hundreds of years old and still going strong today.

The archetype, a term that the Swiss psychologist Carl Jung popularized, is an advanced psychological concept in the sense that it argues for hidden patterns in the life experience. Archetypes are abstractions that have condensed and refined over time, leaving only the most essential characteristics included. In that sense they can be seen to represent a very high order of truth, something that has stood against the test of times and relatability. The archetypes suggest that life has a story-like quality to it. Such a profound psychological suggestion about life deserves a spot in the category of *Psychologisation* where more and more advanced psychological ideas are introduced to more and more common people, not merely experts.

### Example 12 (from Key Text 10)

In this example, the whole Key Text is, as an exception, included. The text informs us about the psychosocial ways of humanity via the phenomenon of Slenderman, an internet monster. The psychological content in this example earns it the status of being included in *Psychologisation*.

## Topic 10 Key text: Slenderman

[Kopioi linkki](#)

### The monster from the internet



Every generation creates its own monsters. Folktales from the distant past are populated by witches and werewolves that prowl the forest. Then, as cities spread and the forests thinned, a new cast of fictional villains arrived to take their place: mysterious hitchhikers loitering by the roadside or murderous intruders slipping into suburban homes. Now, in the age of the internet, another monster has stepped into the limelight: Slenderman.

### Man in black

Slenderman is a tall, thin figure with a blank face who lurks in places where few people go – abandoned buildings, deep woods, a playground with a rickety steel jungle gym. Dressed in a black suit, he stands eight feet tall and is able to stretch or shorten his arms at will. Sometimes he is portrayed with octopus-like tentacles sprouting from his back.

## **A star is born**

Unlike many mythical characters, the origins of Slenderman can be precisely dated. He was born on 8 June 2009 when a competition on the web forum *Something Awful* invited contributors to invent a modern myth that would terrify people. One contributor, Eric Knudsen, using the pseudonym Victor Surge, responded by posting two faked black-and-white photographs that seemed to show a tall, sinister figure loitering behind groups of children. Knudsen then added text suggesting that 14 young people and the photographer had gone missing shortly after the picture had been taken.

## **The creativity of crowds**

The post caught the imagination of other forum users who began creating their own stories about this faceless spectre. These quickly spread to other sites and soon Slenderman was appearing in fan art, horror stories, videos, video games and other media all over the web. One of his most popular outings was in the web series *Marble Hornets* which is posted on YouTube. These fake documentaries tell the story of a student haunted by Slenderman using supposedly found footage.

## **Electronic terror**

Slenderman is digital demon, a product of electronic media. From the very beginning he was intended as an internet meme – an idea that would spread virally across the web. Even his menace belongs to the computer age. He does not murder or eat his victims like the bogeymen who have come before him. When Slenderman strikes, all the viewer sees is a cloud of electronic snow.

## **Tragedy strikes**

Five years later, the Slenderman story took a disturbing turn. On 31 May 2014 two 12-year-old girls in Wisconsin stabbed a third girl nearly to death. They claimed the attack was intended as a sacrifice to Slenderman. The girls believed he would appear to them if they killed in his name. The attempted murder sent shock waves through communities both online and offline, and prompted Knudsen to issue a statement offering condolences to the families involved. He was “deeply saddened” by what had happened, but insisted it was not “the fault of Slenderman or horror writing in general that this happened”.

## **A need for horror**

A simple truth about human beings is that we enjoy being scared. Fear makes us fully alive, conscious, and in the moment. When we are frightened we are no longer preoccupied with dull, daily routines. In an age where many young people sit at their computers in the comfort and safety of their bedrooms, a digital horror like Slenderman may be a welcome visitor. A monster for our times.

There are two big findings in this Key text, which are relevant for this study because they share knowledge about the psychosocial ways of humanity. Firstly, all across history, people have created scary folk tales that have perhaps had an explanatory and educational function. Horror stories told in the historical times might have kept children from wandering in the dark alone, or encouraged the brave ones to explore darkness and tame their fear; make the unknown known. Of course there could have been true threats in the dark like dangerous animals or dangerous people. Perhaps people in the previous times also believed in monsters that do not exist with today's knowledge. Their social inscription platforms (e.g. writing, science, internet) were not as wide-spread and accessible and as a result they were quite reliant on what their fellows told them so it is plausible to assume they would not be so trusting in the embrace of darkness. Darkness, its sounds, all its possible dwellers, had to be explained, and the human mind is known for its ability to fill in the blanks. Creation of monsters could have been the needed missing link between the horrors of the material world and the horrors of the imaginary world. Fear often proves to be a strong emotion compared to curiosity, as the unknown darkness could just as well contain a metaphorical pot of gold. But often, people did not imagine the darkness to contain anything fantastically attractive or useful, rather, something dangerous and threatening. Perhaps it is our ancestral wiring for survival, as well as the folk tales, the collective survival stories if you will, that make us prepare for a grim future rather than a utopian one.

Secondly, when an idea gains enough momentum collectively in the minds of people, unexpected things can happen. In this case, when the phenomenon of Slenderman got wide-spread and developed enough and when people had focused enough attention and creative resources towards it, something happened in the material world. This time it was a great tragedy of someone getting almost killed. I would claim that the creation of Slenderman, a hostile creature, gave people a chance to express their dark emotions and tendencies, and

when the phenomenon got large enough, it started to resemble a cult where fact and fabrication lose their boundaries. The doers of the violent act were only 12 years old, people at a vulnerable age for suggestion. I reckon that they were hypnotized, seduced out of their minds, by the collective buzz around Slenderman, much in the same way as Charlie Manson's or Jim Jones' followers. I would go on to say that one hidden cultural message in this Key text is *be careful of what you (or your group) wish(es) for, you just might get it*. It sounds almost magical, but it is not far-fetched. Look at charismatic leaders for examples of people being mass-seduced into something that ends up being monstrous.

In the final chapter it is stated that humans enjoy being scared because it frees us from dull daily routines. When reality is not thrilling enough, we tend to create monsters. On the other hand, as the introduction paragraph says, every generation has created their own monsters and horror stories. These points in the Key text are supposedly meant to be educational about human nature. We have instincts that are wired for action, and when there is no sufficient real life stimuli, we turn to our imagination to create something exciting.

#### **5.4 Global unity**

Global unity refers here to the idea of tolerating and embracing people's different tastes, opinions, appearances, languages, cultures, histories, traditions, ideas, and so on. After all, we all live on planet Earth.

##### ***Example 13 (from Key Text 2)***

In this example the user of an imaginary internet music forum talks about the origins of different styles of music. Appreciating different musical expressions from all over the world can be seen to promote a sense of global unity.

The available equipment also shapes the sound. Early singers had to belt out their songs so that people in the back rows could hear them, but the arrival of the microphone changed all that. It allowed crooners to use a soft, sexy whisper to charm a predominantly female audience. The development of massive loudspeakers that didn't pop or distort sound, enabled arena rock in the late 60s, where bands like The Beatles performed to capacity audiences in sonically unsuitable sports arenas. Sadly, party music technology has not yet evolved to the point where it can please both party animals and their elderly neighbours.

Even before you hear music, it has been shaped by the environment it is supposed to be heard in. That slow church music of the Middle Ages? It sounds the way it does because it had to work within the four-second echo of the stone-walled cathedrals. African drums? They sound the way they do because they were traditionally played outdoors, often accompanied by dancing and singing.

Middle aged church music, African drum music accompanied by dancing, as well as the Beatles are mentioned in text. When the postings continue, dozens of different bands or genres are mentioned. The different bands and genres symbolize, in my estimation, different cultures, tastes, and people. Acknowledging the colorful variety of expressions can be seen as a token of tolerance.

***Example 14 (from Key Text 2)***

In this example #Opus is against the borders of musical genres, in the same way that someone with an agenda of unity would be against borders between people. #Opus talks about how categorizing kills music and how true musicians do not care for genre definitions or limitations. He/She finishes the post with the sentence "Music, all music, is for all of us.". The boundaries of genres can be seen to represent boundaries of different human expressions - which the famous musicians mentioned disregard in favor of unique combinations. I argue that no borders for music represents no borders on humans (physically or culturally).

**#Opus 5 April, 00:10**

Is *PatM* implying that all music except jazz is 'glib, flashy or shallow'? It is precisely this kind of categorizing that kills music. Musicians themselves don't seem to have a problem crossing the boundaries between genres. The jazz guitarist Pat Metheny does soundtracks for popular Hollywood films. Keith Jarrett plays both jazz and classical piano, winning Grammys in both genres. And Luciano Pavarotti, that larger-than-life opera tenor, arranged concerts and sang duets with almost every famous pop star of the day. Music, all music, is for all of us.

***Example 15 (from Key Text 2)***

**#RobertC 4 April, 02:15**

Why are you dissing our music? You want us to appreciate classical music, opera and jazz, but you won't make the effort to try and understand our music? When was the last time you listened to some new, innovative stuff? I'll listen to your Mister Menuhin if you listen to Macklemore. Deal?

In this example music is represented as a shaper of individual or group identity because #RobertC attacks a previous poster for dissing "their" music. #RobertC still wants to give the previous poster a chance for mutual respect by agreeing to try their music if they try his.

These examples (13, 14, 15) seem to be promoting tolerance and anti-racism. I see the mentioning of various genres and artists from all around the world and the demanded respect for all of them as one giant hobby horse whose function is to promote tolerance between different people, backgrounds, and interests. Example 15, where music is represented as a shaper of identities also provides support for this interpretation, because if music is identities, then a wide spectrum of music is a wide spectrum of identities.

***Example 16 (from Key Text 9)***

In this example the globally applicable archetypes are mentioned again. What would be more unifying in its spirit than a phenomenon that is applicable to people all around the world?

## Topic 9 Key text: Everybody needs a hero

[Kopioi linkki](#)



Big-budget movies increasingly rely on international filmgoers to recoup their costs. As a result, hero figures who are instantly recognisable across continents and cultures are now in strong demand. This might explain cinema's love affair with the archetype, a fictional character who appears again and again in myths and stories around the world. Archetypes resonate with global audiences, and this makes them excellent choices for heroic characters.

Here are three types of hero archetypes who are hundreds of years old and still going strong today.

In this Key text's introduction paragraph it is explained how archetypal characters are recognized all around the world, and how that is the reason they keep appearing in movies. The need for quickly recognizable characters stems from an increased global pressure of movies to capture a global audience and succeed. Only the best movies thrive economically, the ones that are watched the most, and therefore to be one of the best movies within this category, the movie has to have a wide appeal. Archetypes have been found out to have a wide appeal because of their universality, and therefore they reappear in movies (and stories) again and again. It is likely that they, in their universality, tell something about human nature. All in all, I find this example to be quite profound, as we are talking about globally attractive myths, which hint towards a globally similar consciousness, or if I may suggest; similar hardware in the sense of similar ancestral and evolutionary wiring. I would go on to suggest that the hidden curriculum in this example includes an idea of our psychology being very similar everywhere in the world.

### ***Example 17 (from Key Text 13)***

In this example two people are having a conversation about dystopian fiction. The topic switches to the tolerant attitudes towards the LGBT community that many young people have.

**MC:** Yes, a lot of these dystopian books handle that theme. After the alien attack in *The Fifth Wave*, for example, the heroine Cassie has to face a harsh and unforgiving world that is the polar opposite of her secure childhood home.

**JH:** But I think there's more going on in these stories than simply growing up. The adult worlds that the teenagers face are not just frightening – they're morally repellent. A series like *The Hunger Games* shows the older generation is getting it wrong. They have created a society which traps, manipulates and exploits the young. And what I like about these stories is that the young protagonists refuse to accept the status quo. They rebel. Katniss Everdeen, the main character of *The Hunger Games*, is transported to a huge arena and forced to fight to the death. But even in that dog-eat-dog environment she finds a way to defy the rulers.

**MC:** And that's true in real life too. It's usually the young who change things. Think about the shift in attitudes to the LGBT community, for example. It's happening because of young people.

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MC talks about how it is usually the young who stand up against the old ways and gives an example of the attitude shift towards the LGBT community. Making an explicit statement like this is in line with promoting an agenda of tolerance and therefore this example deserves a spot in the category *Global unity*.

## 5.5 Conservative voice

Conservative voice refers here to a more traditional attitude to life, being a bit romantic about the past ways. This approach is arguably complemented by wisdom granted by age.

Conservative voice also refers to valuing what has stood the test of time, instead of jumping full-heartedly on the newest trends.

### *Example 18 (from Key Text 1)*

In this example it is implicated that some art galleries are disapproving towards selfies leading to some conservative interpretations. In the fourth paragraph “Fun times” selfies are represented to be not culturally valuable to display in galleries, as they might “disturb patrons and undermine the cultural experience”. This stance, perhaps a more high-class, sophisticated

or traditional one, seems to be taking the voice of the previous generations, hinting that the acceptance and valuation of selfies is much lower, the older and more established one is. In this paragraph a selfie museum is mentioned where people get to recreate famous paintings with the visitor's own face. The fun value of the museum is emphasized. It seems like there is a discrepancy between what the old and young find fun and valuable. This paragraph seems to include a conservative voice.

#### 4 Fun times

The fun side of selfies shouldn't be underestimated, either. This is something curators at the *Art in Island* museum have understood. While many art galleries have adopted a disapproving attitude towards the selfie, arguing that they disturb patrons and undermine the cultural experience, this Manila museum is specifically designed for photo opportunities. It has "paintings" you can touch, or even step inside, and unlimited, unhindered photo opportunities. It is full of 3D reproductions of famous paintings that are designed to offer visitors a chance to strike an amazing array of selfie poses.

#### *Example 19 (from Key Text 2)*

This example highlights a conservative voice through arguing for older music in favor of modern music.

This example includes a conservative voice, prevalent in this posting by #BachRock, where he/she says:

#### #BachRock 3 April, 00:55

I too am awake at this hour, listening to a lovely Beethoven sonata. This beautiful music has stood the test of time, and brings me endless joy. Real people play this music on real instruments. People like the young pianist Benjamin Grosvenor, or the violinist Yehudi Menuhin, have studied and practised their instrument of choice for years. But what can one say about today's music? Can it still be called music if the sound is created solely on a computer? Where are the instruments? Where are the musicians? Where, indeed, is the melody?

“Real people play this music on real instruments ... But what can one say about today’s music? Can it still be called music if the sound is created solely on a computer? Where are the instruments? Where are the musicians? Where, indeed, is the melody?”

This citation seems to represent tradition and older values. A young reader could easily dismiss this posting as opinions that are outdated.

#BachRock is also a proponent of music that “has stood the test of time”, which seems like a conservative statement because the justification for conserving something is that the something has proven to have value and therefore it is to be conserved.

### *Example 20 (from Key Text 2)*

In this example the conservative voice makes itself known through Simon preferring live stand-up comedy to videos.

**Karen:** Well yes, stand-up comedy is very often politically incorrect, and Trevor Noah has certainly raised some hackles with some of the things he has said. But you raised an interesting point there: many stand-up comics now use the internet to reach a wider audience, don't they? Post some skit online, then remove it after a while... also, downloads, social media, that sort of thing.

**Simon:** Right. But somehow I feel that laughing by yourself, in front of a screen, is not quite the same as laughing with others, in a theatre or a club – you know, with a stand-up comic standing in the spotlight on stage. When it comes to stand-up comedy, I think old-fashioned live performance is always better, don't you?



Simon argues how watching stand-up videos online alone just is not the same as laughing together with a live audience in a live setting with the comedian standing on the stage with a spotlight on them. When comparing a live setting to an online setting it is easy to see which

one is more conservative. Simon prefers and speaks for the traditional and therefore represents the conservative voice in this example.

### **Example 21 (from Key Text 9)**

In this example the conservative voice shines through the archetype of the mentor, more commonly known as the “wise old man”.

**Modern incarnations:** This archetype is embodied in Gandalf from the *Lord of the Rings* novels, and as Dumbledore the kindly headmaster who takes Harry Potter under his wing. *The Star Wars* movies feature not one, but two wise mentors – Obi Wan Kenobi and Yoda who teach Luke Skywalker how to become a Jedi Knight.

#### **The mentor**



**Characteristics:** Wise and experienced in the ways of the world. Usually an older man with grey or white hair to signal his sagacity. Good-hearted, but uncompromising in the pursuit of his goals.

**Skills:** Magical powers and a deep understanding of how the world works. A sage with strong leadership qualities. He also has the patience to guide and mentor a young protégé so they can achieve their full potential.

**Background:** Like the hero-lover, this wise old man also appears in the *Kalevala* and in the legend of *King Arthur*. In the Finnish epic he takes the form of the powerful Väinämöinen, and in the *King Arthur* story he is Merlin the magician. The shamans in the myths of Northern America and Asia who are in tune with the forces of nature

Previously I analyzed the archetypes of the warrior woman and the lover(-hero). The last archetype included in Key text 9 is the mentor. They are described as “wise and experienced in the ways of the world. Usually an older man with grey or white hair to signal his sagacity. Good-hearted, but uncompromising in the pursuit of his goals”. The skills of the mentor are magical powers, understanding of the world, leadership qualities, wisdom, patience and the ability to guide the young hero.

The mentor archetype can be seen as the inclusion of the conservative voice, as the qualities of wisdom, knowledge of the world, patience and so on are virtues of the elders of our world. The mentor has experience, but not the raging energy that the more protagonist-like archetypes have.

If the warrior woman and the lover (man) are representatives of the younger generation, then the mentor would be the representative of the older people, and therefore represent the conservative voice. Perhaps the textbook wants to give a voice and awaken respect for the older generations with more experience in the world.

### ***Example 22 (from Key Text 13)***

In this example the conservative voice is apparent in the attitude that there is nothing new under the Sun.

## Topic 13 Key text: Visions of the future

[Kopioi linkki](#)



Imagining a bleak or frightening future world is nothing new. Fritz Lang's silent movie *Metropolis* about a futuristic city built above a grim underworld of mistreated workers was released back in 1927. Five years later, Aldous Huxley published *Brave New World*, a novel set in 2540 London where human life is dominated and degraded by technology.

The text begins with “Imagining a bleak or frightening future is nothing new”. This is an important message to deliver to the high school audience who are starting to wake up to the state of affairs in the world: not only now with all our crises, but *throughout times* people have been worried about the future. The main reason for the worry is that we are *even able to* imagine a future with our minds capable of abstract thought. Remember how we discussed how some animals hide food for later use, and how the human capability to vision and prepare for the future far exceeds that capability in comparison. This example represents the conservative voice, because it is basically suggesting that, as the saying goes, there is nothing new under the Sun.

## 5.6 What is popular is good

What is popular is good refers here to an attitude where success and popularity are considered as proof of something being good and worthwhile. Sometimes success and popularity can justify breaking some rules.

### *Example 23 (from Key Text 5)*

In this example Banksy, a graffiti rascal turned art hero, is the embodiment of what is popular is good.

## Topic 5 Key text: Banksy: the world's most wanted graffiti artist

 Kopioi linkki

Back in 2014 members of a Bristol youth club woke up to find a piece of graffiti sprayed onto a wooden panel on the side of their building. Rather than expressing anger, Dennis Stinchcombe, the leader of the youth club, was overjoyed. "It is a dream come true," he said. "I'm absolutely buzzing." The reason for his elation? The painting – *Mobile lovers* – is the work of a famous British graffiti artist known as Banksy, and therefore very valuable. However, when Mr Stinchcombe took the decision to sell the stencilled lovers in order to raise money for the club, many local people were dismayed. "Street art belongs to all of us," said Katie Lyle, a local resident. "Ripping it off the wall is vandalism."

Key text 5 is titled Banksy: the world's most wanted graffiti artist. The text begins with an introduction paragraph with a story of how the leader of a Bristol youth club was elated to find that their building had been spray painted with graffiti. The leader was not angry, because the painting had been made by Banksy, a famous graffiti artist or a vandal, depending on who is asked. When the leader wanted to sell the painting to raise money for the youth club it would have meant removing the painting, a local, Katie Lyle, said that street art belongs to everyone, and ripping it *off the wall* would be vandalism.

This paragraph is delightful as it reveals an implicit attitude: the legitimacy of art depends on the fame of the artist. Even though graffiti is at its core and in most places, illegal, and considered messing up public property, when it is done by Banksy, it is welcomed rather than

disapproved. This is admitted in the second paragraph of the same Key text, where it says Banksy was frowned upon in the 1990s when he was starting out:

**Isn't it ironic, don't you think?**

How times have changed. When Banksy started out as a graffiti artist in the 1990s, he was the one accused of defacing property. Now that he has become a recognised artist, it is those who remove his paintings that are seen as the vandals. And town councils find themselves in the strange position of trying to preserve his work because it has become so valuable, while discouraging other graffiti artists. Christina Aguilera paid £50,000 for a single painting, while Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie have splashed out on several items for a cool £1 million.

After worldwide recognition, the public opinion has shifted towards acceptance, even to being welcoming. This could be seen to imply a few values:

1. public opinion is subject to change when the influence of someone/something exceeds a certain point
2. sometimes rules apply differently to famous people or famous enterprises
3. legitimacy of art (and perhaps other phenomena) is gained through wide recognition

These notions reveal a shallowness in the culture that is represented. Even if the substance of something does not change, it may not be cherished before many others accept it too. Also, if famous people are allowed to break the rules of society, this raises questions of fairness.

See how famous people like Christina Aguilera, Brad Pitt, and Angelina Jolie are said to have paid a lot of money for Banksy's work. Perhaps they have done it to support Banksy (*if* the money even goes to him, as he probably wants to stay unidentified), but it also raises the question: would they have paid so much for the same picture without the recognition Banksy has? Probably not, and this implies something about the represented culture: affiliation is a part of identity. Are the readers of the book taught to accept what is popular, even if it is controversial or illegal? Or are the readers simply informed about the ways of the world where recognition brings acceptance and fortune?

***Example 24 (from Key Text 5)***

This example also includes Banksy, this time embodying how ends can justify the means when the perpetrator is well liked or respected. Therefore, what is popular is good.

This paragraph explains how Banksy has infiltrated museums and galleries and left his own work there, and how Banksy has entered into the penguin enclosure of London Zoo and left behind, in huge letters: “We’re bored of fish”. Because Banksy’s work is satirical and often covers topics like war, greed, and hypocrisy, we might find his ways amusing or admirable. He is like Robin Hood, or a member of Ocean’s Eleven, or the Black Knight from Donald Duck comics. Something akin to a gentleman thief, an outlaw with an amicable ideology. The acceptance and glorification of such a character reveals an implicit cultural suggestion in the book: ends (political, just, or entertaining) can legitimize the (outlawed) means. What is popular is good.

### **Man of mystery**

Banksy is a pseudonym. Although his artwork has appeared in cities around the world, his identity is a carefully guarded secret. He is famous, not only for spray-painting public buildings, but also for infiltrating museums and art galleries without their knowledge, leaving his own artwork behind. Visitors to Gallery 49 in the British Museum were surprised to encounter a piece of cave art depicting a human figure going hunting with a shopping trolley. Two months earlier a portrait had appeared in the historical painting wing of the Brooklyn Museum showing a colonial-era soldier holding a spray can. Behind him is a wall he has sprayed with the message “No War”. Banksy has also climbed into the penguin enclosure of London Zoo leaving behind the words “We’re bored of fish” in 7-foot-high letters.

### ***Example 25 (from Key Text 6)***

In this example it is implied that a catchy story might be more worthy than truth therefore deserving a spot in *What is popular is good*.

**Karen:** Apparently – and this is hearsay, but it makes such a good story that I think people are starting to take it as gospel – he was at a gig one night and not laughing at any of the jokes. The host, getting a bit irritated, said to him, “Do you think you can do any better?” And he got up on stage, totally unprepared, and just spoke about his day. The audience loved him. He got a standing ovation, and he’s never looked back. He took to stand-up like a fish to water.

**Simon:** What about his break into the stand-up circuit? I heard that it happened quite by accident.

Here, in an excerpt from Key text 6, Karen tells a story of Noah Trevor’s breakthrough into the stand-up scene. Noah was at a stand-up show and did not find it funny at all. The lack of reaction apparently caused the host to get irritated and challenge Noah to do better himself. So he went on stage, unprepared, and everyone loved him, and gave him a standing ovation.

This story is quite interesting, as Karen even says that it might not be true, but how it is still such a good story people have started to “take it as gospel”; believe it without any doubt. I think this example suggests something about highly regarded values, especially in the sphere of entertainment: 1. A good story might be more valuable than truth 2. An underdog challenger is a loved character and their success is cheered upon.

### ***Example 26 (from Key Text 14)***

In this example the value of architecture is implicated to lie in its ability to attract tourists. Architecture is said to be the most visible and everyday form of art, a claim which is easy to accept. Cities are recognized for their famous buildings that leave their mark on the landscape, such as Paris and Eiffel Tower or London and London Eye. The text can be seen to imply that cities with eye-catching buildings become more recognizable and more attractive to tourists, and therefore cities should strive to have interesting architecture to be popular among tourists.

## Topic 14 Key text: Architects – artists for life



Architecture is probably the form of art that touches the lives of most people on earth. Think about it: unless you are out in nature, architecture is all around you, all the time. Let us, for the sake of argument, think about you as a tourist walking around some beautiful old cities in Europe. Barcelona looks different from Amsterdam, which again looks different from London, right? The most obvious thing that makes these cities look different from each other is the buildings. The architecture, in other words.

### ***Example 27 (from Key Text 14)***

This example, like the last one emphasizes the fame of the architecture being its meter of value.

Many buildings are so well-known, in fact, that they act as a sort of shorthand for identifying cities or countries. If you see the Eiffel Tower, you think of Paris. The Taj Mahal? India! The Alhambra? Spain! Those candy-striped domes of St Basil's cathedral in Moscow, the pyramids in Egypt? All of these are instantly recognisable icons, reflecting the culture of the people who designed and built them. As Frank Lloyd Wright, one of America's most famous architects, put it: "Without an architecture of our own we have no soul of our own civilization."

Here it is said that well-known buildings are "instantly recognisable icons, reflecting the culture of the people who designed and built them". The interpretation of this example is very much in line with the previous one, revealing an attitude of "recognition is something to strive for".

### ***Example 28 (from Key Text 14)***

If popular is good, then in this example showy is excellent.

## Burj Khalifa, Dubai



There are few places in the world today where architects have had such a dramatic impact as in Dubai. Using contemporary architecture, in less than 50 years they have transformed a Bedouin Arab desert state into one of the most important trading hubs in the world. In order to prove to the world that Dubai is in a class of its own, they built the tallest building in the world – The Burj Khalifa. Standing at 828 metres, it is three times as tall as the Eiffel Tower. The architecture of the tower is inspired by a flower, the spider lily. When seen from above, the building echoes the onion dome motif common in Islamic architecture. It is easy to understand why this graceful building is the pride of Dubai.

In this example, Burj Khalifa is discussed. It is the tallest building in the world, and according to the text it was built to prove how the recently grown economic hub of Dubai is in a league of its own. A building that goes higher than anything else can definitely symbolize a city that is, in their minds, better than any other. It seems like the text is giving off an implicit suggestion that if something is great, it is best to show it off. This is akin to a biological phenomenon where the strongest, healthiest, most resourceful animals will grow the most fabulous body parts and ornaments to signal their excellence. For example a peacock's tail or a deer's antlers. It is not far fetched to make a comparison between \*signalling theory (wikipedia.com) and the \*\*handicap principle (wikipedia.com), and using a stupendous amount of resources to construct a building that looks impressive. The text is implying that something showy is a proof of excellence. This is not a new cultural phenomenon as people all around the world have built monuments to assert their greatness. Rather, it seems like a phenomenon which has passed generations of pressure-testing and still exists.

\*Signalling theory: organisms with conflicting interests are evolutionarily pressured/motivated to give signals of their excellence.

\*\*Handicap principle: organisms with the showiest handicap factors are the most excellent of their breed: (peacock's huge tail that gimps the birds agility, or conspicuous consumption of humans that signals ability to be wasteful and still thrive).

***Example 29 (from Key Text 14)***

In this example being known and popular is the ultimate currency of being a building.

### The Gherkin, London



The cone-shaped building 30 St Mary Axe – informally known by Londoners as The Gherkin – was completed in 2004. It has been reproduced in many advertisements, drawings, photographs, and postcards as well as in films, television shows, video games, and other media. Although not open to the general public, it has become one of the world's newest urban icons, a junior partner to the Eiffel Tower and the Empire State Building. Apart from its striking appearance, it also has some eco-friendly elements. The unique diagonal steel structure maximises daylight and natural ventilation so that it uses only half the energy typically required by an office block. Like similar iconic buildings the world over, The Gherkin is a powerful branding instrument for, in this case, British design expertise.

This example talks about the cone-shaped building in London, nicknamed The Gherkin, which is said to have been reproduced in “many advertisements, drawings, photographs, and postcards as well as in films, television shows, video games, and other media”. It is also introduced as ecological with its natural ventilation and daylight solutions which allow the building to use only half of the energy it should. The last sentence of this paragraph is revealing: “The Gherkin is a powerful branding instrument for, in this case, British design expertise”. This supports what was previously about the paragraph on Burj Khalifa; buildings being monuments of excellence.

## 5.7 The future

This category refers to the thematic content of future worries and hopes about the world or about growing up to be adults.

*Example 30 (from Key Text 13)*

In this example the topic of the future is discussed through dystopian fiction.

**MC:** Why do dystopian stories hold such an appeal for youth audiences? One answer is that these narratives look at what is going to happen in the future, and it's the young – not the old – who are going to live in that future. Naturally, they're curious about what's waiting around the corner.

**JH:** And don't forget that teenagers are growing up in a world that is getting warmer, where animal and plant species are dying out, where sea levels are rising. Things like that are bound to raise worries about the future. So, the 2015 *Mad Max* movie, for example, is set in a dried-out world where those who control water control people.

**MC:** It's an unsettling idea. *The Maze Runner* also picks up the theme of a damaged planet. The Glade – the little world in which a group of boys live – starts to fall apart. Later, we find out that this has happened to the Earth as a whole.

**JH:** I think one reason that story resonates with teenagers is that it's about leaving the safe world of the Glade behind. The boys have to move away from their small but predictable environment, and venture out into the big, dangerous world outside. It's a metaphor for leaving childhood and entering the wider, more scary adult world.

Dystopian fiction is said in the text to be especially popular among the young for many reasons:

1. It is the young that are going to live in the future, not the old.
2. Ecological crisis is threatening the suitability of our environment.
3. The world in dystopian fiction is no longer safe and simple which is comparable to the process of growing up and individuating from one's parents.

These are all notions that fall under the category of the future.

### ***Example 31 (from Key Text 13)***

In this example the social and ecological challenges of the future are discussed.

Here, JH talks about the movie *Divergent*, where you are a threat if you do not fit in a socially accepted group. This has a direct correlation to the real world where social outcasts are

sneered at and their lives much disregarded. A divergent person can be threatening and face isolation, but it can also be a blessing for themselves and society.

**MC:** And that's true in real life too. It's usually the young who change things. Think about the shift in attitudes to the LGBT community, for example. It's happening because of young people.

**JH:** Yes, the set up of *Divergent* makes that point very clearly. It's about a society terrified of people who don't fit in. Everyone is forced to join a socially accepted group or faction and live by its rules. To be divergent is to be a threat.

**MC:** What I like about the book is the insight that on some level we're all divergent. I remember feeling like a freak when I was a teenager, a fish out of water. I didn't seem to belong anywhere. It never occurred to me then that being different might be a good thing.

**JH:** Absolutely. As long as our world has problems that need to be tackled – climate change, over-population, state surveillance, exploitative media – we will have dystopian fiction to address them.

When looking at this example from the point of view of *culture as knowledge that is passed on to the next generation* the readers are definitely warned about the dangers and problems that there are in the world that exists outside home. Perhaps it is a wake-up call for the readers to begin to gear up and prepare themselves for the big world.

***Example 32 (from Key Text 14)***

In this example the future is discussed through a futuristic Chinese city plan.

Winston Churchill once said “We shape our buildings; thereafter they shape us.” How we will live in the future may well be shaped by the buildings architects design for us.

### The 2050, Beijing



A mixture of residential and office space, including schools, theatres, a swimming pool, parks and shops, this idea for a building would be entirely self-sustainable. Solar panels, wind turbines and recycled rubbish provide enough energy for the entire building. Food is grown on roof farms that capture and filter rainwater. Several parks on different levels of the building have rainwater harvesting structures as well. All grey water in the building is recycled and re-used. All human waste is recycled, composted and used in the roof farms and balcony gardens. The walls of the building are made of a fleshy, organic fabric that filters polluting elements from the air. Up high, in clean air and open skies, is where the urbanites of the future will live. They may never come down to earth at all.

The building in this paragraph does not actually exist yet, it is an idea titled *The 2050, Beijing*. *The 2050, Beijing* is a futuristic ecological plan for a whole city area rather than a building. It is described to have huge systems of recycling water and human waste, as well as areas for growing food, and renewable energy. The picture below the text gives a visual idea of the whole plan: the image is assumedly a computer generated picture of future architecture with hollow skyscrapers full of plants and wind turbines, and streets gushing with trees. Now, one has to wonder why the book designers decided to situate the futuristic city plan to Beijing, perhaps they believe that China will be the next dominant country in the future instead of the United States. The inclusion of *The 2050, Beijing*, seems to be a nudge, as was the inclusion of the previously mentioned ecological disasters, for the students to become more aware of the need for an ecologically, and otherwise sustainable future.

## 6 Discussion

I went into this study wanting to learn about the cultural knowledge that is passed on to the next generation in the latest English teaching materials after learning that teaching a language always includes a hidden curriculum, which in this case means implicit or explicit attitudes, values, information, and so on, within the content of the book. The book *On Track 3* needed to undergo an autopsy and the method would be data-based content analysis.

The analysis was fruitful, and categories of *Individualism*, *Cultural self-consciousness*, *Psychologisation*, *Global unity*, *Conservative voice*, *What is popular is good*, and *The future* were established to describe and structure the findings. The information found was definitely in line with seeing culture as a self-updating, guiding software for living. The 7 categories offer both at a first glance, and with more thorough examination, important and relevant cultural information about what it is like to live right now in this cultural sphere. The results and the set-up of the study give clues for anyone interested to examine the cultural situations they are in to find the subtle trends beneath the surface.

*Individualism*, *Cultural self-consciousness*, *Psychologisation*, *Global unity*, *Conservative voice*, *What is popular is good*, and *The future* give, even as titles, a clear picture of what is happening in the book. Perhaps they hint towards what is going on outside the book as well. The themes and the categories seem relevant, even though this analysis was only of one book's Key Texts, and therefore it is limited in its width. What the analysis might have lacked in width, I would say it made up with its depth, as I was successful in delving beneath the surface and extracting valuable information and conclusions from the raw material.

The background section of this thesis is not to be overlooked. I would say that the evolutionary history of language, mind, and culture is an exploration that you, as a reader, and me, as the writer were privileged to undertake. Our ability to think conceptually might be one of our most defining characteristics as humans, and I feel it is fascinating and somehow soothing as well to have theories like the ones introduced in this thesis to scratch the surface of the mystery of consciousness, which lurks just below the surface of conceptual thinking and symbolic communication.

In addition to the evolutionary history part of the background section, the part where teaching and hidden curriculum are discussed is also valuable for almost anyone – it is relevant to understand that schools are institutions to equip the new generation of workforce with what the society needs and to increase social cohesion and perhaps conformity, in addition to their

obvious surface function of teaching and learning about pre-defined subjects like maths or geography.

In the future it is necessary to analyze English textbooks' cultural content in a similar fashion in order to get data that is not lagging behind the times. I feel like this thesis could spark inspiration for someone to research the origins of language, mind and culture, which would be amazing for the language departments of universities. Also for people who work in education or study pedagogy, the perspectives of hidden curriculum discussed in this study might be worth studying more, for example to find out who is making the grand decisions (that end up becoming educational ideology and guidelines) as to what the society needs, on what basis and on what merit are these decisions made, and who are the beneficiaries of such decisions.

I feel like the reader will exit the study with more than a handful of new information about the world we live in, perhaps also with a few new questions. Thank you for reading.

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