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Ethnicity in the Work of Benjamin Zephaniah
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Zásady pro vypracování

Autorka se ve své práci zaměří na problematiku etnicity v díle současného britského básníka a prozaika Benjamina Zephania. Zaměří se na relevantní aspekty postkoloniální kritiky s cílem vymezit skupinu otázek a koncepcí (např. kulturní rozdílnost, asimilace, diverzita, vykořenění apod.). Na tomto metodologickém základě vystaví kapitoly, které budou obsahovat rozbor Zephaniových básnických sbírek *Propa Propaganda* (1996), *Too Black, Too Strong* (2001) a románu *Refugee Boy* (2001). Hlavním obecným cílem bude zmapovat způsoby, jakými se Zephaniah staví k otázkám spojených s etnicitou, asimilací a osobní identitou. Práci završí kapitola, ve které autorka z dílčích zjištění vyvodí obecnější závěry.

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ANNOTATION

This bachelor thesis focuses on the depiction of certain concepts connected to ethnicity in Benjamin Zephaniah's pieces of literature. The concepts of assimilation, culture, and uprooting are first defined in this bachelor thesis. Zephaniah's depiction of these concepts is then analysed with the support of excerpts from the author's novel and poems.

KEYWORDS

ethnicity, assimilation, culture, cultural identity, uprooting

NÁZEV

Otázka etnicity v tvorbě Benjamína Zephania

ANOTACE

Tato bakalářská práce se zaměřuje na zobrazení jistých pojmů spojených s etnicitou v literárních dílech Benjamína Zephania. V bakalářské práci jsou nejprve definovány pojmy asimilace, kultury a vykořenění. Vyobrazení těchto pojmů je poté analyzováno na základě úryvků z autorova románu a básní.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

etnicita, asimilace, kultura, kulturní identita, vykořenění

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INTRODUCTION

The topics that are frequently discussed in postcolonial literature are the topics that are closely connected to colonization. The writers often write about the past and present effects of colonization. The topics usually portrayed in postcolonial literature are, for example, migration, resistance, slavery, and race. The issues of ethnicity and racism appear among many postcolonial pieces of literature. People of racial and ethnic minorities have in the past and, to some extent, still are suffering from racial discrimination, injustice, and acts of violence. Since race and ethnicity are widely discussed topics in society, their inclusion in literary texts is common. Several writers include topics connected to ethnicity in their pieces of work because they want to bring recognition of the struggles people of ethnic minorities experience. The authors writing about such struggles are often people who live in a society where the majority of people are of a different ethnic group than them. Therefore, such authors write about the experiences they themselves have encountered. An author who writes mainly about these topics is Benjamin Zephaniah.

Benjamin Zephaniah is a British writer, actor, and performer of Jamaican origin. His texts often discuss topics connected with ethnicity, racial discrimination, and political and anti-empire topics. The topics associated with ethnicity that are frequent in Zephaniah's texts are, for example, the concept of assimilation, culture, and uprooting. Those three topics are also the ones that are focused on in this thesis. Examples of these concepts are found in selected works by Benjamin Zephaniah. The author writes both prose and poetry. Therefore, this thesis analyses one of his novels and two collections of poetry. The novel *Refugee Boy* (2001) is aimed at adolescents. However, it depicts a very complex issue and explores it from a socio-cultural viewpoint, which makes the novel interesting for older generations as well. The two collections of poetry analysed in this thesis are called *Propa Propaganda* (1996) and *Too Black, Too Strong* (2001). These poetry collections deal with themes similar to those in the novel. Zephaniah, however, aims the poems published in these collections of poetry at adult readers. Therefore, given that Zephaniah discusses the concepts of assimilation, culture, and uprooting differently in each of the selected works for this thesis, each text needs an individual approach and analysis.

This thesis is divided into three chapters. Each chapter discusses a selected concept connected with ethnicity and examines it both theoretically and practically. This means that each concept is defined, and examples from selected texts written by

Benjamin Zephaniah containing these topics are later listed and described. Each concept included in this thesis is analysed individually, but as all these concepts are connected with each other, the connections between the concepts are explained.

The first chapter aims to analyse the topic of assimilation. It begins with several definitions of the concept and describes the differences and similarities between the individual definitions. The definitions of assimilation are then summarized, and the main idea of the concept is stated. The chapter further lists examples of assimilation found in Benjamin Zephaniah's texts. Each example is explained and analysed from the point of assimilation. As assimilation is portrayed differently in each example stated in this chapter, the examples and the texts as such are compared.

The second chapter of this thesis discusses the topic of culture. Apart from the definitions of culture, definitions of other concepts connected to culture are necessary to understand the complexity of the concept. The definitions of culture, cultural identity, and cultural bereavement together create an understanding of culture relevant to this thesis. The chapter continues with a few excerpts of Zephaniah's novel and several parts of selected poems from the two selected collections of poetry. All these examples contain aspects of culture and are explained accordingly and compared to each other.

The last chapter of this thesis is about the concept of uprooting. As the concept of uprooting is understood differently by each person who examines it, many different definitions of this concept exist. Several definitions are cited in this chapter and summarised with the aim of creating a united idea of what the concept as a whole means. Uprooting, as well as the concepts analysed in previous chapters, appear a lot in Benjamin Zephaniah's texts. Therefore, this chapter, similarly to the previous ones, lists examples from Zephaniah's selected texts and comments on them accordingly.

1. ASSIMILATION

Postcolonial literature and postcolonial writers often write about issues of injustice, discrimination, racism, and cultural resistance. In the postcolonial period, there was a rise in the so-called migrant novels. Ass Gandhi notes, “These texts/writers are often seen to embody energies and values allegedly lacking or under threat in the postcolonial world.”¹ Thus, writers often portray difficulties people faced during postcolonial times. As the majority of the colonised were of different ethnicities than the colonizers, the topics appearing in postcolonial literature were connected to the topic of ethnicity. When it comes to the topic of ethnicity as such, many other concepts are closely linked to it. One of them is assimilation. Given that this concept is a largely discussed and quite a general topic that can be examined from different points of view, there are many interpretations and definitions, each carrying a slightly different meaning. For example, Eamon Callan defines assimilation as:

The choice or unchosen fate of many people is to leave the culture in which they grew up and live in another. These paired cultural departures and arrivals may be gradual or abrupt, partial or comprehensive, ambivalent or wholehearted. “Assimilation” is the word we use to name them.²

In other words, assimilation is the process of becoming similar to others by acquiring and using their customs and culture. Thus, most migrants have come across assimilation to some extent, maybe without even noticing it.

Sarah E. Simons defines the same concept slightly differently, being more specific than Callan. She understands assimilation as:

that process of adjustment and accommodation which occurs between the members of different races, if their contact is prolonged and if the necessary psychic conditions are present. The result is group homogeneity to a greater or

¹ Leela Gandhi, *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 161.

² Eamon Callan, “The Ethics of Assimilation,” *Ethics* 115, no. 3 (2005): 471, accessed November 21, 2023, doi: 10.1086/428460.

lesser degree. Figuratively speaking, it is the process by which the aggregation of peoples is changed from a mere mechanical mixture into a chemical compound.³

Simons undoubtedly narrows assimilation down to the differences between individual ethnic races and not only between people of different cultures, which differs from the previous definition of this concept.

Robert Ezra Park and Ernest Watson Burgees see assimilation from a more general point of view. They see it as one of four main categories of human social behaviour, the other three being conflict, competition, and accommodation.⁴ Park and Burgees define assimilation as “a process of interpenetration and fusion in which persons and groups acquire the memories, sentiments, and attitudes of other persons or groups, and by sharing their experience and history are incorporated with them in a common cultural life.”⁵ Park’s and Burgees’ view of this concept was accepted by many, and many other authors built their definitions on this one. One of them is Kimball Young, who took the previous definition and added a supplementary one to create his own interpretation of assimilation, which reads as follows: “the common sharing and fusing of folkways and mores, of laws and all the other features of two or more distinctive cultures by people who have come into direct relations with each other.”⁶ By looking at these two definitions, it can be examined that the ones from Park, Burgees, and Young differ from Simons’ one. Neither Young nor Park and Burgees apply assimilation only to contacts between different ethnic groups. Both these definitions are applied to contacts between people of various cultural backgrounds. Therefore, it does not mean people need to be of a different race or even from a different nation for there to be a potential dealing with assimilation.

When looking at the interpretations of assimilation described above, one sees connections between them all. However, there are differences, especially when it comes to the group of people or individuals each definition examines. Some are applied to different ethnic groups, some to different nations, and some to different cultural backgrounds. Despite the differences, all these definitions have the same or similar main

³ Sarah E. Simons, “Social Assimilation. I,” *American Journal of Sociology* 6, no. 6 (1901): 791-792, accessed November 9, 2023, doi: 10.1086/211021.

⁴ Walter Hirsch, “Assimilation as Concept and as Process,” *Social Forces* 21, no. 1 (1942): 35, accessed November 9, 2023, doi: 10.2307/2570428.

⁵ Robert Ezra Park, and Ernest Watson Burgees, *Introduction to the Science of Sociology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 735.

⁶ Kimball Young, *An Introductory Sociology* (New York: American Book Co., 1939) 495.

idea. In each interpretation, the main idea is differences between individuals or groups and adaptation to an unknown environment.

Aspects of assimilation can be seen in Benjamin Zephaniah's works, as he had to deal with racial differences in his own life. The reason is his Jamaican origin. Some examples can be found in his novel *Refugee Boy*. This novel is about a fourteen-year-old Ethiopian-Eritrean boy called Alem. As the novel is set during the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea, which took place between the years 1998 and 2000, it is difficult for the family to continue living there, as they live right on the border between these two countries and are not welcome in either one. The situation in the family's homeland forces Alem's parents to decide it would be best for Alem to move to the United Kingdom. Throughout the novel, Zephaniah describes the problems Alem has to deal with, many of which are closely connected with assimilation. Sercan Hamza Bağlama, who published a review of *Refugee Boy*, says that Alem assimilates to the new culture and society in order to belong somewhere and feel included. In the review, this is stated in the following citation:

As a refugee, Alem voluntarily embraces 'the proper refugee identity', which inaccurately creates a new social and cultural reality for him, and associates himself with the particular characteristics of that identity in order to be tolerated, recognised and included.⁷

In this citation, Bağlama applies the definition of assimilation to Alem's situation. The author of this claim states that the main protagonist of the novel takes in specific cultural characteristics that were unknown to him up until the point of his arrival in the United Kingdom. Because Alem was uprooted from his country, friends, and his family, and the change was so sudden, he experiences feelings of not belonging and exclusion from the new environment, culture, and society. Alem associates with different characteristics and creates his own new cultural identity in order to feel like a part of the new society.

In the novel, there are several moments where the concept of assimilation can be analysed. For example, one of the first moments in the novel where assimilation can be seen is at the beginning of the novel. When Alem and his father, Mr Kelo, arrive in the United Kingdom, Alem states: "I think something was wrong with his hair, he looked

⁷ Sercan Hamza Bağlama, "A Postcolonial Approach to Contemporary Refugee Literature: Benjamin Zephaniah's *Refugee Boy*," *TRT Akademi* 5, no. 10 (2020): 637.

burned. Did you see his hair? It was red, red like sunset, he looked hot, he looked burned.”⁸ Eamon Callan’s definition of assimilation would best be applied to this excerpt, as it describes a moment of arriving in a foreign country after being forced to leave the homeland. The depiction of this moment in the novel suggests that such a common thing to many may not be so familiar or even be something to get used to for others. Zephaniah’s aim in this excerpt is to focus on differences between different cultures and ethnic groups. He suggests that people who are unaware and lack knowledge of other people’s cultures and what people of different ethnicities look like are often surprised when exposed to each other.

In *Refugee Boy*, one of the main things Alem had to assimilate to was language. As Alem and his family’s homeland language was Amharic, it was difficult for Alem to speak only and primarily English, when they came to the United Kingdom. At the beginning of the story, Alem’s instinct was to speak his mother language, as he was used to until this point in his life. Directly after their arrival, Alem asks his father a question in Amharic, to which his father, Mr Kelo, replies: “‘What did I tell you? From now on you must try to speak English, you must practise your English - all right, young man?’ Alem panicked. ‘Ishi abbaye,’ he said. His father's response was swift. ‘English, I said.’”⁹ In this example, Zephaniah shows the difficulty and struggles of shifting your speech and thinking from your mother language to the language of the country a person should now use. There is also a hint of the shift from one language to a different one being more difficult when under pressure or panicking.

Further on in the novel, there are many more examples where assimilation can be analysed. Some of the other things the main protagonist had to assimilate to were, for example, the weather conditions, the school system, and the food. One thing Alem had a hard time understanding was the way British people are so keen on drinking tea. Being shocked by the number of cups of tea he was offered since his arrival in the United Kingdom, he stated: “‘What I have noticed in England is that so many people drink tea; everywhere you go, people ask if you want a cup of tea. We have tea back home, but here people drink it every five minutes, and tea here is so full of milk.’”¹⁰ Benjamin Zephaniah depicts this British stereotype a few other times throughout the novel, both before and

⁸ Benjamin Zephaniah, *Refugee Boy* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017) 14.

⁹ Benjamin Zephaniah, *Refugee Boy*, 13.

¹⁰ Benjamin Zephaniah, *Refugee Boy*, 92-93.

after this excerpt. By describing such a significant thing about the British this many times, Zephaniah also wanted to illustrate the true British character to the reader.

From these excerpts from *Refugee Boy*, it is apparent that assimilation is Zephaniah's frequent topic in this novel. Despite the fact that the word assimilation is not mentioned once in the entire story, its elements are visible from the context. Zephaniah did not feel the need to mention the concept as he made its appearance visible from the depiction of the moments describing the struggles of the main protagonist connected with his adapting to the new society and environment. One of the reasons why the word assimilation is not mentioned in the story might also be because the main protagonist does not realise that he is going through such a process. Zephaniah shows the struggles and difficulties of refugees and immigrants through Alem's pure and innocent voice. The outcome of Zephaniah's approach to depicting assimilation in such a way is that even readers who do not know the definition of this concept can form an idea of what it is from the context.

Despite not containing many examples and elements of assimilation as *Refugee Boy* does, there are few elements of this concept in Benjamin Zephaniah's collection of poetry called *Propa Propaganda*. The poems published in this book often portray topics connected to politics, injustice, and racism. Zephaniah's poems discussing such issues belong to one of his most recognized pieces of work. Zephaniah published several of these poems in this collection of poetry, and some will be analysed in this chapter. Because this collection of poetry discusses mainly injustice and political problems, the idea of assimilation is also present. In "Neighbours," Zephaniah suggests the following:

I am the type you are supposed to fear
Black and foreign
Big and dreadlocks
An uneducated grass eater.
I talk in tongues
I chant at night
I appear anywhere,
I sleep with lions
And when the moon gets me

I am a Wailer.¹¹

The concept of assimilation plays a significant role in this excerpt. One of the interpretations of this poem might be analysed in the author saying to his neighbour that he is proud of his ethnicity and will not assimilate even when he is put under the pressure by society. In this poem, Benjamin Zephaniah also depicts the difficulties of getting used to being looked at as a threat. One of the main things to get used to in general is being a person of an ethnic minority living in a foreign country. There still being people with many prejudices, this factor might be the hardest factor to get used to for many. It might even be something several migrants never adapt to because some natives never get used to having a person of an ethnic minority as a neighbour. While this excerpt differs from those from *Refugee Boy* and contains different elements of assimilation, it is still one of the major themes of this poem.

A poem called “Save Our Sons (SOS),” which is also published in the collection of poetry *Propa Propaganda*, portrays a similar view of assimilation as in the previous poem. This poem focuses on the struggles African men of England face because there are still prejudices, and not all people in British society have assimilated into them. The third and last stanza of this poem is written as follows:

We black men of England
Excel as if in sport
For our people,
Because some people
Want to see our face in court,
When we black men of England
Look the mirror in the face,
Through our sister’s eyes
We men shall rise
As proud sons of our race.¹²

The first line of this stanza is also the line that appears at the beginning of each stanza. By putting it in the poem several times, Zephaniah emphasizes the meaning of the line,

¹¹ Benjamin Zephaniah, *Propa Propaganda* (London: Bloodaxe Books, 1996) 42.

¹² Benjamin Zephaniah, *Propa Propaganda*, 18.

which suggests that there is a division of the people in British society. The African people of England are still perceived as outsiders as people have not accepted them in their society. One of the times the people of ethnic minorities are accepted or even celebrated is when they bring Britain success, for example, in sports competitions. Other times such people might still experience discrimination. People excluding certain people from their societies is a theme that appears both in this poem and the poem called “Neighbours” analysed earlier in this chapter. Apart from the previous poem, here Zephaniah influences the people to not assimilate, unite, and be proud of their origins. The author suggests that when people of the same origin unite, it is one of the ways to be accepted by some people at least.

Another poem from *Propa Propaganda* where assimilation appears is called “I Have a Scheme.” This is one of Zephaniah’s most recognized poems. Some of the first lines suggesting assimilation in this poem read as:

I see a time
When angry white men
Will sit down with angry black women
And talk about the weather,¹³

Assimilation in this excerpt is described from a different point of view than in previous examples. Zephaniah suggests that not only the people of a minority race should assimilate, but so should the people of the majority race as well, and all should not see differences between each other. The fourth stanza of this poem reads as follows:

I am here today my friends to tell you
That time is coming
When all people, regardless of colour or class, will have
at least one Barry Manilow record
And vending-machines throughout the continent of Europe
Will flow with sour sap and sugarcane juice,
For it is written in the great book of multiculturalism
That the curry will blend with the shepherd’s pie

¹³ Benjamin Zephaniah, *Propa Propaganda*, 9.

and the Afro hairstyle will return.¹⁴

Here, Zephaniah suggests his feelings of hopefulness in society as such. He feels hopeful that in the future, people will accept and assimilate into all cultures and ethnic groups different from their own and take upon their customs and culture. The fourth and fifth lines also suggest that in the future, multiculturalism will bring more availability of products typical for one's culture even outside their home country. Overall, assimilation in this excerpt can be seen as a synonym for multiculturalism. The author suggests that the need to assimilate will not be as significant as it currently is. Therefore, Zephaniah suggests that there will be the blending, acceptance, and presence of multiple cultures and ethnic groups within a society.

In the preface of Benjamin Zephaniah's collection of poetry *Too Black, Too Strong*, the author himself tells the readers what the poems in this collection are written about. Zephaniah states that the topics occurring in his poems are, for example, the topics of racism, ethnicity, injustice, and inequality. The poems often talk about the experiences of refugees. Zephaniah makes a clear note that he does not wish to speak about the experiences of every member of the Afro-Caribbean community. He just happens to be one of them and, along with many of the other members, wishes for full recognition. As he was born in the United Kingdom, most of his poems are set here. He also makes it clear that the more he travels and gets to know other places, the more he loves Britain, even though he has to fight for his place in its society.

Zephaniah's collection of poetry, *Too Black, Too Strong*, also contains several examples, where the concept of assimilation can be analysed. Unlike in *Propa Propaganda*, in this collection of poetry, there are more poems containing the elements of the concept of assimilation. "Bought and Sold" is the first poem of this book and shows more of the negative side of the impact assimilation has on people. Its first lines are:

Smart big awards and prize money
Is killing off black poetry
It's not censors or dictators that are cutting up our art.
The lure of meeting royalty
And touching high society
Is damping creativity and eating at our heart.

¹⁴ Benjamin Zephaniah, *Propa Propaganda*, 10.

The ancestors would turn in graves
Those poor black folk that once were slaves would wonder
How our souls were sold¹⁵

This excerpt also contains a different view of assimilation from the previous ones. In *Refugee Boy*, Benjamin Zephaniah says that assimilation is an inevitable feature when it comes to contact with people of different nations or cultures. On the contrary, in “Bought and Sold,” Zephaniah sees adapting and acquiring too much of a foreign culture as something that is making the individual’s original culture and its habits and customs disappear. Acquiring too much of a different culture is what makes other cultures step aside, and therefore, there is a threat of less diversity in literature and cultures overall. Not only are these adaptations a threat to the diversity of culture in media, but they might also be a threat to the education and general knowledge about other cultures and people’s origins. People of ethnic minorities not acquiring the habits of natives of a particular country may result in them having more knowledge about other cultures and there being more diversity in individual cultures. This is the negative impact of assimilation Zephaniah wanted to point out in this poem.

Another poem from *Too Black, Too Strong* containing aspects of assimilation is called “The Men from Jamaica Are Settling Down.” The first stanza reads as follows:

From de land of wood an water
Came they to where de air waz cold,
Dem come to work wid bricks an mortar
They heard de streets were paved wid gold,
From de land of fish an ackee
To de land of fish an chips came they,
Touching on a new reality
Where de sky waz white an grey.¹⁶

In this stanza of the poem, assimilation can be analysed in the transition from one environment to another. The first and fifth verses refer to Jamaica, and from the usage of some words, for example, ‘fish and chips’, Zephaniah suggests that the people from

¹⁵ Benjamin Zephaniah, *Too Black, Too Strong* (London: Bloodaxe Books, 2001) 15.

¹⁶ Benjamin Zephaniah, *Too Black, Too Strong*, 37.

Jamaica are settling down in the United Kingdom. This phrase and other phrases, for example, ‘where de air waz cold’ and ‘Where de sky waz white an grey’ refer to the adaptation to specific foods and weather conditions. In this short excerpt from the poem, Benjamin Zephaniah shows the contrast between the old way of the migrants’ life and the new one, while also describing the specific features of each country.

This excerpt also suggests internal conflict connected with the question of to what extent a person should assimilate. The language used in this poem is a tool that helps depict it. Zephaniah accepts the English language, which means he is willing to use it, and therefore, he assimilates. On the contrary, he uses Jamaican Patois for the spelling of these words, which suggests an accent specific to the people of his origin and culture. By doing so, the author suggests that he is not willing to assimilate completely.

Kwame Daws reviewed Zephaniah’s collection of poetry *Too Black, Too Strong*, in which he includes a few comments about the poem “The Men from Jamaica Are Settling Down.” The author of the review states the following:

In a short note introducing the poem “The Men from Jamaica Are Settling Down,” Zephaniah lets us know that the piece was first commissioned by a BBC-linked film company which eventually turned down the piece because the last two stanzas were too political and too confrontational.¹⁷

Zephaniah refuses to change his poem to meet the expectations of others and “takes pride in declaring that he will not compromise on the struggle.”¹⁸ The last stanza of this poem is written as follows:

Black pioneers came on de Empire Windrush
On June twenty-one nineteen forty-eight,
These souls were titanic, these minds were adventurous
They came from de sunshine to participate,
They are leaders, they are de home makers
They have been upfront since their ship came around,
But in-between lines you’ll still read in de papers

¹⁷ Kwame Daws, “Too black, Too Strong by Benjamin Zephaniah,” *World Literature Today* 76, no. 2 (2002): 159, accessed November 14, 2023, <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/40157349>>.

¹⁸ Daws, “Too black, Too Strong by Benjamin Zephaniah,” 159.

The men from Jamaica are settling down.¹⁹

This poem is written about the journey of a large group of immigrants from the British West Indies who arrived in the United Kingdom. In this stanza, Benjamin Zephaniah suggests that the souls of the men from Jamaica who arrived in the United Kingdom are strong. The men came to the United Kingdom with the vision of a better life and later experienced racial discrimination and social injustice. As the men had to deal with being forced to assimilate into a different environment and society while being discriminated against, Zephaniah celebrates that their souls survived.

Another poem from *Too Black, Too Strong*, where Zephaniah uses words written in his Jamaican English accent, is a poem called "Translate." Some of its lines are written as follows:

Sometimes I wanda
Why I and I
A try so hard fe get
Overstood,
Mek we juss get
Afrocentric,
Dark,
Who in space
Who on eart
Who de hell we writing fa?²⁰

Disappointment and hopelessness are the two emotions that this poem evokes. Zephaniah wanted to portray the experience several refugees and uprooted people go through and the emotions that it brings them as they try to assimilate into a new society and acquire aspects of its culture. The author suggests that despite the fact that the majority of uprooted people actively try to assimilate into a new society in order to belong and feel a part of it, they are very often overlooked and misunderstood. As can be seen in the last line of this excerpt, Zephaniah suggests that the uprooted end up asking themselves the question of who they are doing all of this for. Going through the process of assimilating

¹⁹ Benjamin Zephaniah, *Too Black, Too Strong*, 40.

²⁰ Benjamin Zephaniah, *Too Black, Too Strong*, 83.

seems useless to them as they don't feel appreciation and acceptance from the other side. If such a thing happens and the uprooted feel unaccepted in the new society, they might not feel the need to assimilate anymore, and they might start to get resistant to it. This is a theme that commonly appears in Benjamin Zephaniah's poetry, which is stated in the following citation by Susan Sathyadas, who says that "Zephaniah's poetry dramatizes the predicament of a society whose assimilation into a rapidly globalizing modernity is marked by multiple forms of resistance."²¹ In other words, the author of this statement argues that Zephaniah's poetry often depicts the challenges and difficulties faced by society as it tries to adapt to a rapidly changing globalised world. These adaptations and navigating through these changes often lead to an increase in society's resistance to assimilating into the globalized world. The resistance comes from both the majority society and the uprooted and, therefore, the minority or an individual living in a country unknown to them. In the case of this poem, the resistance comes from both sides. The narrator resists assimilation because the new society resists their acceptance.

²¹ Susan Sathyadas, "Benjamin Zephaniah: Contemporary Voice of Resistance in Black Britain," *International Journal of English And Literature* 7, no. 4 (2017): 87, accessed February 15, 2024, doi: 10.24247/ijelaug20179.

2. CULTURE

Another aspect connected with ethnicity is culture. As well as assimilation, culture is a term that can be looked at from several points of view. Considering that many people have examined this concept, there is no single definition that uniformly describes it. This chapter will list and examine several definitions of culture and other concepts closely connected to it. Given that culture is a very broad and encompassing term, the definitions of other concepts, such as cultural identity, cultural differences, and cultural bereavement, will be necessary for understanding the concept of culture relevant to this thesis.

As the concept of culture is an encompassing term, several definitions exist. Clyde Kluckhohn and Alfred Louis Kroeber wrote a book about the whole concept, in which they listed many definitions made by others. Kluckhohn and Kroeber summarised the definitions of culture listed in their book and created their definition of this concept, which reads as follows:

Culture consists of patterns of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (=historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values.²²

In other words, Kluckhohn and Kroeber state that culture is the characteristics of a group of people. Culture is connected with the history of the group, and many of its characteristics emerged long ago. Despite the fact that the authors of this definition describe culture as a patterned behaviour of a group, they also suggest that the culture of each group evolves. This is for the fact that society's values and ideas have changed since the time when the basis of the majority of cultures emerged. By making this remark, Kluckhohn and Kroeber suggest that the cultural characteristics of a group have the same core, but as they are passed from one generation to the next one, some of its aspects change.

Another author who studies the concept of culture is Lionel Laroche. He wrote a book about cultural diversity in which he published several claims about culture. In one of the claims, he states that culture is "a group phenomenon. It is associated with a specific society or people. Culture is to this society or people what personality is to an

²² Clyde Kluckhohn, and Alfred Louis Kroeber, *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions* (Cambridge, MA: The Museum, 1952), 35.

individual. It distinguishes one society or people from another.”²³ In this citation, Laroche compares the cultural characteristics of a group of people to the personality traits of individuals. He states that the personality traits of individuals are similar to what culture is to a group. Saying this, he suggests that he sees culture as characteristics that specify a group of people. Another claim Laroche makes about culture reads as follows:

Culture is inherited. It is transmitted from one generation to the next through a variety of means, such as arts, stories, tales, novels, movies, and education. The transmission of cultural values from one generation to the next is both active and passive: Children learn both from the rules, guidelines, and insights provided by their parents and teachers as well as from the observations of how adults handle specific situations.²⁴

In these two claims, Laroche suggests that culture is something people belonging to one group have in common. As Laroche compares the culture of a group to the personality traits of individuals, it can be analysed, that he sees the culture of a group as its characteristics that make it unique from others. Therefore, the claims suggest that people belonging to one group share some characteristics such as certain beliefs, habits, traditions, behaviour, knowledge, etc. To preserve these cultural characteristics of individual groups, people pass them from one generation to the next. The passing and learning of these characteristics can be both passive and active.

Apart from the definitions of culture, Laroche created a visual representation of culture for the readers to understand how complex the concept is. He compared culture to an iceberg, supporting his view by saying, “Parts of culture are visible, whereas others are deeply submerged.”²⁵ In this quote, he explains why he sees connections between culture and an iceberg – both culture and an iceberg have parts that are visible and parts that are not. Laroche also included a picture of an iceberg to which he added certain cultural aspects that he sees as the visible parts and the ones he considers the invisible. The parts of culture considered visible by Laroche are, for example, the food, clothing, or art of that specific culture. On the contrary, the parts considered invisible are socially accepted behaviours, values, preferences, and more. Further in his book, Laroche

²³ Lionel Laroche, *Managing Cultural Diversity in Technical Professions* (London: Butterworth-Heinemann, 2003), 2.

²⁴ Laroche, *Managing Cultural Diversity in Technical Professions*, 2.

²⁵ Laroche, *Managing Cultural Diversity in Technical Professions*, 4.

explains the main concepts of his book, which are cultural diversity and cultural differences. The comment he makes on cultural differences reads as follows:

Cultural differences are differences in either the visible or invisible part of the iceberg between two cultures. They include differences at all levels, from the clothes people wear to their motivations and religious beliefs. Cultural differences include differences in everyday SOPs; for example, do we shake hands or bow to greet one another? When we say we meet at 9 a.m., do we mean 9 a.m. sharp or anywhere between 9 and 9:30 a.m.?²⁶

In this citation, Laroche refers to the connection between culture and an iceberg explained above. He states that cultural differences can be both visible and invisible and that these differences occur in people's everyday lives when they encounter others in their SOPs, which is an abbreviation standing for 'standard operating procedures.' His claim about cultural differences in connection to the visible and invisible parts of the iceberg can be further analysed. The visible cultural differences can be perceived as those with which people come into contact first. In other words, these are considered to be the differences people notice without having to come in close contact with people of different cultural backgrounds. The invisible cultural differences cannot be spotted at first glance, and therefore, a person has to be exposed to a different culture and get to know people from a different cultural background to spot these differences.

Cultural identity is another term closely associated with culture. One of the people who defines the concept of cultural identity is Vivian Hsueh-Hua Chen. In her paper, she states that "Cultural identity refers to identification with, or sense of belonging to, a particular group based on various cultural categories, including nationality, ethnicity, race, gender, and religion."²⁷ In other words, she suggests that the group or a combination of groups a person belongs to defines their cultural identity. Chen also states that:

Cultural identity is constructed and maintained through the process of sharing collective knowledge such as traditions, heritage, language, aesthetics, norms and

²⁶ Laroche, *Managing Cultural Diversity in Technical Professions*, 6.

²⁷ Vivian Hsueh-Hua Chen, "Cultural Identity," *Key Concepts in Intercultural Dialogue* 1, no. 22 (2014): 22, accessed February 16, 2024, <<http://centerforinterculturaldialogue.org>>.

customs. As individuals typically affiliate with more than one cultural group, cultural identity is complex and multifaceted.²⁸

In this citation, Chen suggests that people within one cultural group share some features which impact their opinions, behaviour, beliefs, or the way they perceive others. As each individual belongs to a different number of cultural groups of different kinds, everyone's opinions, behaviour, beliefs, etc., are impacted by multiple different factors. Altogether, these aspects form the cultural identity of a person.

Every person has their own cultural identity, which consists of many aspects and is influenced by the individual groups a person belongs to. Those people who choose to move or are forced to move to a different country often come across the difficulty of maintaining their cultural identity. Dinesh Bhugra, who studies the psychological effects migration has on people, declares that:

When people migrate from one nation or culture to another they carry their knowledge and expressions of distress with them. On settling down in the new culture, their cultural identity is likely to change and that encourages a degree of belonging; they also attempt to settle down by either assimilation or biculturalism.²⁹

In this citation, Bhugra suggests that people's cultural identities change upon arrival in a country different from their country of origin. In general, it happens because a migrant or a refugee in a foreign country is expected to adapt to its culture and accept different habits, beliefs, and behaviour. The people's cultural identities often change by assimilating to a different culture and an unknown environment.

The concept of cultural identity and the difficulties of maintaining the cultural identities of individuals who are exposed to a different culture for a long period of time are often associated with the concept of cultural bereavement, which is defined as:

the experience of the uprooted person – or group – resulting from loss of social structures, cultural values and self-identity: the person – or group – continues to live in the past, is visited by supernatural forces from the past while asleep or

²⁸ Chen, "Cultural Identity," 22.

²⁹ Dinesh Bhugra, "Migration, distress and cultural identity," *British Medical Bulletin* 69, no. 1 (2004): 129, accessed February 16, 2024, doi: 10.1093/bmb/ldh007.

awake, suffers feelings of guilt over abandoning culture and homeland, feels pain if memories of the past begin to fade, but finds constant images of the past (including traumatic images) intruding into daily life, yearns to complete obligations to the dead, and feels stricken by anxieties, morbid thoughts, and anger that mar the ability to get on with daily life.³⁰

Maurice Eisenbruch, the author of this definition, states that cultural bereavement is not only a thing commonly experienced by migrants and refugees but also inevitable to some extent. As can be seen in this definition, cultural bereavement is the process of losing one's cultural identity or parts of it. It is a process experienced by uprooted people when they move to a country of a different culture. Losing their cultural identity while adapting to a different culture is a process many of them go through even subconsciously.

It is important to note that although the loss of cultural identity and cultural bereavement can be understood as synonyms, it is not necessarily always true. There is a close connection between these two terms, but they should not be interchanged. Dinesh Bhugra explains the connection between these two terms and says that “cultural identity is influenced by various factors both during and after the migration process, and cultural bereavement is a potential inherent consequence in people who have migrated.”³¹ Thus, Bhugra suggests that cultural identity is changed both during and after the process of migration. Therefore, it can be said that loss of cultural identity is happening during and after migration as well, whereas cultural bereavement is the possible consequence of events connected with the process of migration. The acceptance and acquisition of certain characteristics that change one's cultural identity is inevitable, while on the contrary, cultural bereavement is not experienced by all migrants and is only possible. Both these terms also depend on several other factors. For example, there is a difference in the process of adaptation to a new culture between a person who willingly left their homeland and a person who was forced to leave. Both these people experience the loss of cultural identity as they are exposed to a culture different from the culture of their ancestry. However, the person who was forced to leave their home country might be more resistant towards a different culture and protest against taking in its characteristics. In such a case,

³⁰ Maurice Eisenbruch, “From Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder to Cultural Bereavement: Diagnosis of Southeast Asian Refugees,” *Social Science & Medicine* 33, no. 6 (1991): 674, accessed February 17, 2024, doi: 10.1016/0277_9536(91)90021-4.

³¹ Dinesh Bhugra and Matthew A. Becker, “Migration, cultural bereavement and cultural identity,” *World psychiatry: official journal of the World Psychiatric Association* 4, no. 1 (2005): 22, accessed February 15, 2024, <<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1414713/>>.

the loss of cultural identity might not be so significant in comparison with a person who willingly left their home country and was eager to take in aspects of a different culture.

Culture, as well as assimilation, is a concept closely connected with ethnicity. As each ethnic group has its own culture, a person moving to a country of a different ethnic group feels the need to assimilate. The loss of one's cultural identity is caused by assimilating to a different culture. These two concepts can also be understood from a different point of view. When a person moves to a country of a different ethnic group, not only does the person assimilate, but the citizens of the country might need to assimilate to the minority groups as well. Allowing people of different cultures to join their own and learn about other cultures in the world results in multiculturalism and cultural diversity. This means that the concepts of culture and assimilation are not only connected with ethnicity but also intertwined together.

The appearance of the concept of culture is evident throughout the whole novel *Refugee Boy* by Benjamin Zephaniah. As Alem is forced to leave the culture of his homeland, he comes across several cultural shocks. After he arrived in the United Kingdom, he had to settle down and get used to new people, a new environment, and being far away from his family and friends. "Since moving to Manor Park, he had been so busy getting to know the area and getting to know the Fitzgeralds that he hadn't had much time to think about anything else."³² This excerpt follows a moment in the novel when Alem looks at his family photo and realizes that he has not been thinking much about his family's situation at home. Getting used to a new culture makes him think about his origin less, and it can be seen that he is somewhat losing his cultural identity.

Especially at the beginning of the novel, Alem has a hard time dealing with being exposed to a different culture and struggles to find a balance between the culture of his ancestry and the British culture. In his review of *Refugee Boy*, Sercan Hamza Bağlama states the following:

While identifying England with positive characteristics and qualities, Alem, perhaps unconsciously, degrades and demonises his own roots and identity. [...] This subsequently creates a situation in which Alem develops an inferiority complex, which has social, cultural and intellectual aspects, and strives to

³² Benjamin Zephaniah, *Refugee Boy*, 87.

compensate for his insecurity, unbelonging and low self-worth through mimicking the sociocultural and ideological rituals of the dominant social order.³³

To simplify this, Bağlama views Alem's idealization of the British culture and behaving in a way that is appropriate for British society as a thing that takes away Alem's identity. Alem does not fully understand the customs of the culture. He only imitates how the people of the society act and the customs of their culture, which makes him feel like an outsider and as someone who does not fully belong in the society. Therefore, as he behaves differently, he loses the cultural identity of his ancestry and has a hard time finding a balance between maintaining his culture of origin and acquiring aspects of the British culture. The loss of cultural identity is an inevitable thing for Alem, given his situation and the consequences. As stated earlier in this chapter, the authors view this process as a common experience found among people like Alem.

Losing one's cultural identity can be caused by the limited availability of things such as music, books, or art in other cultures. Thus, when Ruth, the daughter of Alem's foster parents, gifts Alem Eritrean and Ethiopian music, he feels very grateful. "He had never been interested in music and he certainly was not the type to listen to traditional music, but this was different."³⁴ Although music was not one of Alem's passions, being gifted two CDs containing aspects and specifics of the culture he was born into brought him back to his home country for a while. He could hear the sounds of home, and it had a profound effect on him.³⁵ By depicting this moment in his novel, Benjamin Zephaniah focuses on the importance of cultural reminders. Being reminded of a culture that is close to an individual can be very important. Especially after the individual has not been exposed to it or has not encountered it for a long time. In such a case, it has a profound impact on a person even if it is done in a way that would usually not have such an impact on them.

Alem and the Fitzgeralds, his foster family, come across cross-cultural differences. As Alem's foster family is not only of a different ethnicity but also of a different race than Alem, the Fitzgeralds lack knowledge about African culture. This is explained, for example, in the part of the novel discussed in the previous paragraph. When Ruth wanted to remind Alem of his culture through music, she told him that she did not

³³ Bağlama, "A Postcolonial Approach to Contemporary Refugee Literature: Benjamin Zephaniah's *Refugee Boy*," 638.

³⁴ Benjamin Zephaniah, *Refugee Boy*, 201.

³⁵ Benjamin Zephaniah, *Refugee Boy*, 201.

know any Ethiopian bands. Even after research, she could not find any, so she bought him CDs of traditional music because those were the only ones with Ethiopian-Eritrean music she could find. Alem did not mind and thought “the Fitzgerald family’s willingness to look after him was more important than their lack of African culture.”³⁶

Culture, especially cultural differences, plays a significant role in *Refugee Boy*. Benjamin Zephaniah indicates that there might be several encounters with cultural differences when immigrants or refugees enter a new country. Losing cultural identity when acquiring aspects of a different culture is inevitable. Several times in this novel, Zephaniah also comments on the importance of cultural reminders if a person wants to preserve their culture. One of the cultural reminders depicted in this novel is, for example, the music Alem is gifted. Another time Alem was brought joy by doing a thing typical of his culture was when he was eating typical Ethiopian food in the traditional way with his father. Neither Alem nor his father cares about the opinions of other customers in the restaurant, who show confusion when they see Alem and his father feeding each other with their hands. This was due to the fact that the customers were European and did not know the traditional way of eating in Ethiopia. Benjamin Zephaniah emphasized the joy of this moment in *Refugee Boy*, and he wanted to point out the gratitude the main character felt for doing a traditional thing for his home country he might have taken for granted before after being away from its culture and his father for a long time. Overall, Benjamin Zephaniah celebrates the culture of Alem in this novel and suggests that even small encounters with cultural traditions can be of great importance to individuals.

Benjamin Zephaniah’s collection of poetry *Propa Propaganda* contains a few poems dealing with the aspect of culture. One of them is a poem called “Reggae Head.” The style this poem was written in suggests to the reader certain aspects of Jamaican accent. An excerpt from this poem reads as follows:

Dem tek me to a station
Put me pon probation,
But I still a dance
Wid de original nation,
Oooh

³⁶ Benjamin Zephaniah, *Refugee Boy*, 86.

Dem can't get de Reggae out me head.³⁷

Benjamin Zephaniah wrote this poem, along with several others in this collection of poetry, in a Jamaican accent and uses the unusual spelling of the words. The author uses this method a considerable amount of times in his poems so that the readers can understand parts of Jamaican culture and the specifics of its language. The main idea of this poem is that even though the narrator is forced to, he will not abandon his culture. Reggae is a music style that originated in Jamaica; therefore, it is a part of its culture. Therefore, the line "Dem can't get de Reggae out me head.", which is at the end of every stanza of this poem, suggests the unwillingness to abandon specific cultural aspects. In this poem, Reggae functions as a representation of the whole Jamaican culture, which suggests that the author appreciates the Jamaican culture and is praising it. A sense of pride in the author's culture is not the only interpretation of this poem. Each reader can apply its lines to their own culture, meaning this poem can have unlimited interpretations.

Another poem from *Propa Propaganda* that talks about culture is called "I Have a Scheme." The appearance of the concept of culture in this poem has already been mentioned in connection with assimilation in the previous chapter. As Zephaniah mainly writes about assimilating to other cultures in this poem, both these concepts are possible to be analysed here. Zephaniah praises multiculturalism, which can be analysed in the fifth stanza of this poem, which reads as follows:

Let me hear you say
Multiculture
Amen
Let me hear you say
Roti, Roti
A women.³⁸

Culture and assimilation are the two concepts intertwined together in this poem. According to Zephaniah, people will take in aspects of different cultures in the future and it will become a normal thing for people to not see differences between different cultures. Therefore, by depicting such cultural diversity and multiculturalism in this poem,

³⁷ Benjamin Zephaniah, *Propa Propaganda*, 19.

³⁸ Benjamin Zephaniah, *Propa Propaganda*, 9.

Zephaniah suggests that the need to assimilate might not be as crucial in the future as it currently is.

A poem from Zephaniah's collection of poetry, *Too Black, Too Strong*, where the concept of culture appears, is a poem called "Carnival Days." Zephaniah wrote this poem about the Notting Hill Carnival, which takes place in London once a year. This carnival is mainly about the celebration of Afro-Caribbean communities and cultures. The fourth stanza of this poem, which describes the celebration of multiple cultures, is:

On days like these we dance the sun
We cannot make dis love indoors,
Or be restricted by the idea of a roof,
Dis soul, dis reggae, dis calypso,
Dis sweet one music we make
Is for all of us who work dis land
And cannot be contained by bricks and mortar,
It is we, the beat and the streets.³⁹

In this excerpt, Zephaniah suggests that the Notting Hill Carnival is a festival to which people of Afro-Caribbean cultures look forward to and he encourages the people to unite and celebrate their cultures together. The author describes this carnival as an opportunity to bring certain cultural aspects, such as the clothing, music, and dancing to the streets of London without feeling the need to assimilate and hide the cultures of the people. Zephaniah also suggests that the people should celebrate their cultures because the cultures, which are the minority in Britain, survived under the pressure of the influence of the majority British culture. This is suggested in the first stanza of the poem. Some of its lines are written as follows:

On days like these we dance to us,
With the drum beat of liberation
Under the close cover of European skies,
We dance like true survivors⁴⁰

³⁹ Benjamin Zephaniah, *Too Black, Too Strong*, 45.

⁴⁰ Benjamin Zephaniah, *Too Black, Too Strong*, 45.

Overall, the main idea of this poem is the celebration of cultures and the acceptance of the existence of several cultures in a society.

Another poem from *Too Black, Too Strong* that talks about culture is a poem called “Knowing Me.” This poem portrays the idea of the rejection of cultural stereotypes and the labelling of one's identity. Some of the excerpts suggesting this are:

I don't wonder what will become of me
If I don't eat reggae food or dance to mango tunes,
Or think of myself as a victim of circumstance.
[...]
I have now reached the stage
Where I am sick of people asking me if I feel British or Welsh Indian,
African or Black, Dark and Lonely, Confused and Patriotic.
[...]
I am not half a poet shivering in the cold
Waiting for a culture shock to warm my long lost drum rhythm,
I am here and now, I am all that Britain is about
I'm happening as we speak.
Honestly,
I don't have an identity crisis.⁴¹

The line “I don't have an identity crisis” appears at the end of every stanza of this poem, which suggests that Benjamin Zephaniah feels a sense of annoyance when having to repetitively prove to others that he does not want to put a label on his cultural identity. The author does not feel the need to strictly pick between certain cultures, and as it is not important to him, he does not pick one. In the first part of this excerpt, Zephaniah also rejects the expectation that he needs to stay true to his culture of origin. He does not think of not staying true to the habits and traditions of his culture of origin as an abandonment of the culture. Thus, this poem is mainly about the rejection of cultural stereotypes and, at the same time, about the acceptance of multiple different cultures by one individual.

The last poem from *Too Black, Too Strong* that is to be analysed in this chapter is a poem called “The Approved School of Reggae.” Some of its first lines are:

⁴¹ Benjamin Zephaniah, *Too Black, Too Strong*, 64.

You may not be able to play your Reggae
Like the roots sisters and brothers
Who were born with it in their veins
You may not,
Not touch the hearts of the sufferers
Or suffer,
For your estate is great.
You came, you saw, you copied,
And the record company loved you,
But you can't swing it
Like a buffalo soldier
Or a dreadlocks Rasta,
U.B. robbing we.⁴²

In this poem, Zephaniah suggests that it is not appreciated if a person creates a certain subject by copying different cultures. He portrays this idea in his poem by depicting a non-Jamaican person who creates reggae music. As reggae is such a signifier of Jamaican culture, Zephaniah views it as a music genre that should be practiced only by Jamaicans for it to stay as significant for Jamaican culture as it currently is. It can also be analysed that copying aspects of a different culture results in a worse quality of the creation than it would have if it was created by a person who was born into the culture. This is for the fact that the citizens of a specific country are exposed to its culture since the time of their birth and therefore they often identify with it. The creations of such people might therefore be more authentic. Thus, in this poem, Zephaniah states that certain cultural aspects should stay only within the society of the culture.

⁴² Benjamin Zephaniah, *Too Black, Too Strong*, 80.

3. UPROOTING

The third concept closely connected with ethnicity chosen for this thesis is the concept of uprooting. Uprooting is a process that can happen to people in different situations, and people who have studied this concept perceive it from several different points of view. Noelia Bueno Gómez, one of the people who have studied the concept of uprooting, says that:

To be uprooted from life means that one does not feel or is not considered to be completely alive, present, as if one was not fully existing in society, one's own body or inner life: it is a state of alienation from social, physical and psychological human roots, i.e. one's own social relations and roles, physical integrity and personality are severely damaged or broken.⁴³

As can be analysed in this definition, Gómez states that uprooting is the experience of a person who has been detached from their roots. Such detachment and separation from the known environment can cause feelings of not belonging in the new place and the new community. Thus, uprooting can be seen as a process experienced by people who decide to move or are forced to move to a foreign country.

Few other claims about uprooting have been made by Charles Zwingmann and Maria Pfister-Ammende, who published a book about this concept. In this book, they claim that "Uprooting is a phenomenon found among migrants, refugees, and members of stable societies."⁴⁴ By claiming that uprooting is experienced by these groups of people, Zwingmann and Pfister-Ammende agree with the previous definition by Gómez. Further claim by the same authors comments on the difficulties uprooted people experience. The claim is written as follows:

Although the immigrant is allowed to settle down and establish a home, adjustment may be impossible because of prejudice or bureaucratic measures. In certain areas there exists a paradox between pressure upon the newcomer toward assimilation and his rejection by society if he proves unsuccessful or too

⁴³ Noelia Bueno Gómez, "Life Uprooted. Social and Moral Challenges of Woe," *Revista Portuguesa de Filosofia* 77, no. 2-3 (2021): 961, accessed March 3, 2024, doi: 10.17990/rpf/2021_77_2_0959.

⁴⁴ Charles Zwingmann, and Maria Pfister-Ammende, *Uprooting and After...* (Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 1973), 3.

successful in it. He may be expected to conform to the host culture but not be allowed to become an integral member of it.⁴⁵

In this citation, Zwingmann and Pfiser-Ammende state that the settlement of uprooted people in a new environment is difficult and not always successful due to surrounding influences. Immigrants and refugees are often viewed with prejudice and are not always welcomed by society. Uprooted people are often expected to assimilate gradually into their new environment, but if an uprooted person assimilates to a new environment and a new culture too quickly or too slowly, he or she may face rejection from the new society. Thus, both the authors of this statement and the author of the first statement about the concept of uprooting agree that it is a phenomenon experienced by immigrants and refugees that brings along with it many other difficulties.

Another person who studies the concept of uprooting is António Guterres, who also agrees with the statement that uprooted people face other difficulties. He states that “People moving between countries and continents, voluntarily or involuntarily, especially in the absence of legal permits, face detention, harassment, and discrimination, as well as the risk of transfer to remote and dangerous locations.”⁴⁶ In his definition, Guterres agrees with the previous authors but further suggests that uprooted people are at risk of deportation from the countries they migrated to, especially when they have not secured all legal documents needed for their stay.

When inspecting the interpretations and statements about the concept of uprooting, it can be analysed that despite the differences between them, they all have the same main idea. Uprooting is considered to be the process of being separated from the known environment of the uprooted person. Whether a person is being separated from a country, community, or culture, uprooting is the experience the person goes through to a certain extent. All the authors mentioned in this chapter agree that uprooted people come across several difficulties that are connected with the changes in the surrounding environment and society. People who have moved countries often settle down into a new culture and society by assimilation. Each person assimilates in a different way, and it takes them a different amount of time, which may not always be accepted by society, and therefore, the uprooted may come across as being rejected or discriminated.

⁴⁵ Zwingmann and Pfiser-Ammende, *Uprooting and After...*, 3.

⁴⁶ António Guterres, “Millions Uprooted: Saving Refugees and the Displaced,” *Foreign Affairs* 87, no. 5 (2008): 91, accessed March 3, 2024, <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/20699306>>.

The concept of uprooting is a topic Benjamin Zephaniah often includes both in his poems and novels, which is a claim supported by Susan Sathyadas. “As a Jamaican black performance poet in a whitened world, Benjamin Zephaniah’s case illustrates how a writer may live outside the culture and region of his ancestry and champion the cause of the black races in verse and fiction.”⁴⁷ Sathyadas states that the reason why Zephaniah writes about such topics is his own experience. As he lives outside of his culture of origin, he often portrays his experiences in his texts. He talks about true events that people like him experience and, thus, brings recognition of such experiences to the wider society.

The concept of uprooting is very significant in Zephaniah’s novel *Refugee Boy*. Graham MacPhee comments on Zephaniah's fiction in the following citation, which reads as follows:

Zephaniah’s fiction for young adults often features protagonists who are intelligent and talented, but who feel frustrated with formal education and who find themselves in conflict with systems of authority. Yet these figures are not without fault and may indeed become involved in disruptive and even destructive events.⁴⁸

Further on, the author of this claim lists examples of main protagonists from Zephaniah’s novels to support his idea. Along with comments about other main protagonists from other Zephaniah’s novels, the author of this claim includes a comment about the main protagonist of the novel *Refugee Boy*. MacPhee says the following: “Perhaps most fully realised is Alem in *Refugee Boy*, an asylum seeker from East Africa. Alem’s reflection on his own identity and his perception by others directly confronts the reductive nature of stereotyping in the public sphere”⁴⁹ Being perceived stereotypically is something Alem experiences. Zephaniah suggests this several times throughout the novel. One of the times is, for example, at the end of the novel when Alem says: “think of all the things you could call me – a student, a lover of literature, a budding architect, a friend, a symbol of hope even, but what am I called? A refugee.”⁵⁰ By depicting this, Zephaniah aimed to show another thing that is commonly experienced by many refugees

⁴⁷ Sathyadas, “Benjamin Zephaniah: Contemporary Voice of Resistance in Black Britain,” 85.

⁴⁸ Graham MacPhee, “Benjamin Zephaniah: Popular Poetics Against Populism,” *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Contemporary British and Irish Literature* 1, no. 37 (2020): 386, accessed March 16, 2024, doi: 10.1002/9781118902264.ch37.

⁴⁹ MacPhee, “Benjamin Zephaniah: Contemporary Voice of Resistance in Black Britain,” 386.

⁵⁰ Benjamin Zephaniah, *Refugee Boy*, 284.

and asylum seekers. People of the society often perceive them only as refugees, and they do not see their personalities. The people also often do not care about the skills that the refugees have that could potentially bring prosperity to their country or society.

In Benjamin Zephaniah's *Refugee Boy*, the main protagonist experiences moving to a different country, which makes the concept of uprooting one of the main ones in this novel. As stated in previous chapters, Alem's parents force Alem to leave his home country and move to the United Kingdom. The author portrays Alem being left alone in a new country, focuses on his settling down in the new culture and society, and describes the feelings he feels in each step of the process. Zephaniah saw the importance of the description of the situation and the whole process of Alem's moving to a different country, but in the novel, there is more emphasis on the description of Alem's feelings and the emotional effects the whole situation has on the main protagonist. Zephaniah focuses on the portrayal of Alem's feelings with the aim of attracting the emotional side of the reader. In *Refugee Boy*, the concept of uprooting is evident throughout the novel, and there are several moments where Zephaniah describes Alem's feelings connected to his uprooting. One of the moments is portrayed after Alem settles into his new home with his new foster family. At this point in the novel, Alem is still new to the whole situation, and he feels sadness and concern when he thinks about Ethiopia, his friends, and his family. Benjamin Zephaniah suggests that the war that is happening in Alem's home country and the lack of information he has about the current situation there makes it harder for Alem to settle down. This excerpt depicting this moment in the novel is:

As he lay on his bed in the darkness, he thought about what was happening back home. He wondered how his parents were and what was happening to his friend Dawit back in Ethiopia. Although people knew Alem's story, no one really talked about the war back home; London was like another world.⁵¹

In this excerpt, Zephaniah suggests that the uncertainty about the state of his friends and family makes Alem look back and think about them and the war more often, which does not make his settling down easier. It is inevitable for Alem to not think about his home, friends, and family, but the uncertainty he lives in slows down his settling down into a new society and culture. It is also suggested that Alem has no one to talk to about the war in his country, as the people in the United Kingdom lack knowledge about it and as he

⁵¹ Benjamin Zephaniah, *Refugee Boy*, 89.

does not know many people who are familiar with his country of origin and its culture. Altogether, the uncertainty and the alienation from the new society he feels make his settling down more challenging than it would be under different circumstances.

Not long further in the novel Alem has a conversation with Mrs Fitzgerald after she comes to wake him up and tell him that he has been allowed to start going to school soon. The conversation continues as follows:

‘How long can I stay there for?’

‘You can stay there for as long as you like,’ she said, levelling out her voice.

‘You can stay there until you’re sixteen if you like, if you’re good, that is; it’s your school.’

Alem swiftly sat up in the bed. ‘What, do you think I will still be here when I am sixteen?’

‘That’s another question,’ Mrs Fitzgerald replied, ‘and one we don’t know the answer to – so let’s deal with what we know now, you’re going to school.’⁵²

In this excerpt, it can be seen that Alem does not wish to stay in the United Kingdom permanently or even longer than necessary. Benjamin Zephaniah here suggests that Alem is scared by the thought of staying separated from his family for another two years and that he wishes to reunite with them and return home sooner. As Alem is uprooted involuntarily and sees his stay in the United Kingdom as a temporary one, he does not feel the need to settle down and fully assimilate into the new culture.

Uprooting, as well as assimilation and culture, is a concept that largely appears in Benjamin Zephaniah’s *Refugee Boy*, which can be examined in the examples listed above. The main protagonist of this novel becomes involuntarily uprooted and deals with several difficulties connected to this process throughout the duration of the novel. As the wider society may not realize the kind of obstacles the uprooted come across, Zephaniah aimed to put recognition on the experiences such people experience while describing the fate of Alem.

A poem called “The Death of Joy Gardner,” which is published in Zephaniah’s collection of poetry *Propa Propaganda*, talks about a true event that took place in 1993. Joy Gardner was a student of Jamaican origin living in London whose death was caused

⁵² Benjamin Zephaniah, *Refugee Boy*, 90.

by police. In this poem, Zephaniah expresses his anger and frustration with how the British law treats the uprooted. The first stanza of this poem is written as follows:

They put a leather belt around her
13 feet of tape and bound her
Handcuffs to secure her
And only God knows what else,
She's illegal, so deport her
Said the Empire that brought her
She died,
Nobody killed her
And she never killed herself.
It is our job to make her
Return to Jamaica
Said the Alien Deporters
Who deport people like me
It was said she had a warning
That the officers were calling
On that deadly July morning
As her young son watched TV.⁵³

In this stanza, precisely in lines five and six, Zephaniah suggests that Gardner did not enter the United Kingdom illegally, but as the law changed, she was unable to renew the legal documents necessary for her stay. Zephaniah expresses his frustration with the British government for not being able to protect her and for the fact that the police officers were not found guilty, which he suggests in lines seven to nine of the poem. Further on in this poem, the author describes the impact this incident had on the public and influences people to speak about this incident in order to make a change and avoid such incidents in the future. Benjamin Zephaniah chose this violent story of Joy Gardner as the subject of his poem because he wanted the readers to become familiar with her fate, and he also used it to get the wider society familiar with the potential dangers that many uprooted people are threatened with. On the contrary from the novel *Refugee Boy*, this poem conveys a more serious problem the uprooting of a person can cause. As Benjamin

⁵³ Benjamin Zephaniah, *Propa Propaganda*, 11.

Zephaniah aims this poem as adult readers, he was not scared to portray such a cruel true event.

Another poem from *Propa Propaganda* that should be mentioned in this chapter is a poem called “Homeward Bound.” Benjamin Zephaniah wrote this poem about a man who moved from Jamaica to the United Kingdom. Its first stanza is written as follows:

That old man
Cut sugarcane in Jamaica
After he graduated from Sunday School,
Fed up with cutting cane
He came here for a better life.
He came here on a big ship
With big dreams
And two guineas,
He came here full of hope
With a great big smile,
He came here for the welcome
And the promise.⁵⁴

In this poem, Zephaniah says that it was the man’s choice to move to a different country. Therefore, this poem talks about being uprooted voluntarily, which differs for example from *Refugee Boy*, where the uprooting of the main protagonist is involuntary. The author describes that the man moved to the United Kingdom with the vision of a better life and a brighter future. Thus, Zephaniah wanted to bring recognition of the fact that some people become voluntarily uprooted and leave their old lives behind with the vision of a better life, which differs from the previous examples mentioned in this chapter. Further in the poem, Zephaniah states that the man’s expectation was not fulfilled and that he wishes to return to Jamaica. The stanza of the poem suggesting this is written as follows:

That old man
Was going home anyway,
All his Jamaica nights are in his head,
Fed up with the weather

⁵⁴ Benjamin Zephaniah, *Propa Propaganda*, 52.

He wants a better life,
All his English days he voted Labour
But he thinks that Labour didn't vote for him,
And now he only wants to see his saviour
Sweet Jamaica.⁵⁵

In this excerpt of the poem, it is suggested that the man idealized the life in the United Kingdom, and the reality did not meet his wishes and expectations. Lines six and seven together suggest that even though the man tried to assimilate to a new culture and reroot in the new country, he was unsuccessful. His unsuccessfulness in settling down into a new culture and society might have been caused by rejection and discrimination by the society he moved into, which Zephaniah precisely suggests in line number seven of this poem. The author here wanted to point out that even when a person voluntarily leaves their home country, the process might be challenging, and it does not always end successfully.

The next poem, in which Benjamin Zephaniah portrayed the difficulties the uprooted deal with, is a poem called "Want To Be a Soldier." This poem was also published in the collection of poetry *Propa Propaganda*. As the title suggests, this poem talks about the life of soldiers. Some of its first lines are written as follows:

De life of a soldier is very hard
Dem never wid dem families dem always is abroad
It teks a tough guy to live on de edge
It teks courage to mek pledge,
It teks yu independence an yu sanity
Yu muss hav strong feelings fey u flag an country⁵⁶

To be a soldier is very demanding and tiring, which is the main idea of this poem Zephaniah wanted to portray. Soldiers are often separated from their families and have to shift their lives if they want to protect their countries. Zephaniah, in this poem, praises soldiers for how brave they are, but at the same time, suggests that not every person chooses to be a soldier to protect their country. The line that appears in the second stanza

⁵⁵ Benjamin Zephaniah, *Propa Propaganda*, 53.

⁵⁶ Benjamin Zephaniah, *Propa Propaganda*, 46.

of the poem, “Do you need security to kill?”⁵⁷ suggests that some people join the army to get away with their behaviour. Thus, the author praises those soldiers who voluntarily suffer to bring prosperity to their country and become separated from their families and the society they live in. On the contrary, the author degrades such soldiers, whose reasons for joining the army are inhumane. This poem thus portrays the concept of uprooting differently than the examples mentioned earlier. The other examples portrayed uprooting as a process the uprooted go through with for the vision of a better future, whether the uprooting is voluntary or involuntary. This example on the contrary states that some people become uprooted to get away and not be punished for certain things.

A poem from Benjamin Zephaniah’s collection of poetry, *Too Black, Too Strong*, talks about the topic of uprooting and is called “Appeal Dismissed.” Selected lines of this poem read as follows:

I can see your fearful tears
Before me on your statement,
From where I sit I can see your dark terrorised skin
Shivering and barely holding your self together,
I can see your gaping scars wide open
Begging for compassion,
[...]
You are not a dissident,
You are not even a liar,
You are what I would call a credible witness,
But I have no reason to believe that your persecution was official.
[...]
You were not raped because of your dark skin
You were not raped because of your gypsy tongue,
You were raped because you are a woman
[...]
You have been the victim of an act of depravity.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Benjamin Zephaniah, *Propa Propaganda*, 46.

⁵⁸ Benjamin Zephaniah, *Too Black, Too Strong*, 27.

Zephaniah wrote this poem about a Polish woman who was seeking asylum in the United Kingdom. The trial ended unsuccessfully for the woman, and she could not stay in the United Kingdom as, at that time, rape was not recognized as a form of persecution by the law, and her appeal for asylum was dismissed. Thus, the British government was unable to protect the woman, and she was forced to leave the United Kingdom. In this poem, Zephaniah expresses his anger with the judge who refused to accept the woman's claim for asylum. The author also expresses his anger and frustration with the law because it was unable to protect many asylum seekers and refugees in general.

Another poem from *Too Black, Too Strong*, where the concept of uprooting appears, is called "Chant of a Homesick Nigga." The fourth stanza of this poem is written as follows:

There's too much time in dis dark night
And all my ribs are bare and bruised,
I've never dreamt of being white
But I can't bear being abused,
I'm one more nigga on your boot
Dis night you want dis coon to die,
I have not hidden any loot
And you have killed my alibi.
[...]
I see me coming to my end,
Another nigga far from home.⁵⁹

Here, Zephaniah writes about a person of an ethnic minority living in a society of a different ethnicity. It is suggested that the person experiences discrimination and rejection by the people of the new society because of the person's race. The title of this poem suggests that the person is uprooted from his home country and culture. In the first stanza of this poem, Zephaniah states that the person wishes to return back to his country and reunite with his friends and family. Further in the poem, it can be analysed that the person experiences abuse by police officers. The lines suggesting this are written as follows:

You patrol the streets where folk like me are found.

⁵⁹ Benjamin Zephaniah, *Too Black, Too Strong*, 29.

I do recall how I have seen
Your face in school upon a time
Telling the kids how good you've been
And of the joys of fighting crime.⁶⁰

A similar theme that appears in the previous poem appears in this one as well. Both these poems talk about injustice towards ethnic minorities by legal forces. This theme also appears in the poem "The Death of Joy Gardner," analysed earlier in this chapter. This poem and a poem that talks about the destiny of Joy Gardner, published in *Propa Propaganda*, both capture the fate of people who died as a result of incidents with the police. By depicting such incidents, Zephaniah wanted to suggest that changes in the law are necessary in order to protect the refugees and the uprooted.

⁶⁰ Benjamin Zephaniah, *Too Black, Too Strong*, 29.

CONCLUSION

This thesis aims to examine certain concepts that appear in pieces of postcolonial literature. Specifically, it explores the topics that are connected with ethnicity and also those that are often portrayed in the novel *Refugee Boy*, the collection of poetry *Propa Propaganda*, and a second collection of poetry *Too Black, Too Strong*, all of which are written by Benjamin Zephaniah. The concepts this thesis analyses are the concepts of assimilation, culture, and uprooting. This thesis further examines how Zephaniah portrays these concepts in the selected texts.

The first chapter of this thesis analyses the concept of assimilation. The concept is analysed theoretically, listing multiple definitions of this concept. Assimilation being a concept studied by many sources, this chapter lists multiple definitions from books and academic journals. Although each author of each definition views assimilation in a different way, the core idea of the concept of assimilation is the adaption to a different group of people. Since Zephaniah views assimilation as a process commonly experienced by several people who move countries, this concept often appears in both his poems and fictions. As the novel *Refugee Boy* is targeted at young adults, the concept is portrayed through the innocent voice of the main protagonist of this novel. This differs from the collections of poetry *Propa Propaganda* and *Too Black, Too Strong*, which are both more explicit as the target readers of these poems are adults. In each of these texts, the concept of assimilation is portrayed differently. For example, in *Refugee Boy*, assimilation is viewed as an inevitable thing. In contrast, in a poem from *Too Black, Too Strong*, Zephaniah sees assimilation as a process that makes for less cultural diversity. On the contrary, a poem from *Propa Propaganda* describes a time when there will not be the need to assimilate.

The second chapter addresses the views of the concept of culture. It aims to create a unified idea of the concept as it is an inclusive and encompassing term. This is achieved by examining definitions of other concepts such as cultural identity, cultural differences, and cultural bereavement. The visualisation of culture as an iceberg supports the complexity of the concept. The novel *Refugee Boy* portrays the difficulties of maintaining aspects of the culture of the ancestry of the main protagonists. Zephaniah also emphasises the importance of subjects that remind the person of their culture of origin. The selected poems of *Propa Propaganda* praise multiculturalism and portray the refusal of bereavement of certain cultural aspects despite the pressure a person is put under by

society. The poems from *Too Black, Too Strong* celebrate and recognize different cultures and reject the need to identify with only one culture and labelling it.

The third and last chapter of this thesis examines the concept of uprooting, which is also connected to ethnicity. It claims that the concept is the experience of a person who moves to a different country or culture and is separated from the known environment of the person. As the title suggests, the main protagonist of the novel *Refugee Boy* experiences uprooting. In this novel, Zephaniah portrays the fate of a person who became uprooted involuntarily. Such people might find the process of assimilating harder than people who change cultures voluntarily. Apart from the excerpts suggesting the difficulties of the main protagonist connected with uprooting stated in this chapter, the whole concept can be analysed throughout the novel without it being explicitly mentioned. In *Refugee Boy*, Zephaniah states that the difficulties connected with the uprooting of a person are being perceived with stereotypes and finding a balance between maintaining the cultural identity of a person and acquiring aspects of the new culture. In the selected poems from *Propa Propaganda*, the author describes his frustration with the inability of the British government to protect the uprooted. Zephaniah also wanted to portray that the attempts of the uprooted to reroot in a new society are not always successful. A similar portrayal as in this collection of poetry appears in *Too Black, Too Strong*. Zephaniah's frustration with the government is a theme he also suggests here, along with the other difficulties the uprooted experience, which Zephaniah suggests to be discrimination and rejection by society.

To conclude, this thesis proves that the selected concepts are the topics Benjamin Zephaniah often portrays in his work. The description of these concepts proves that they are not only all connected to ethnicity but also to each other. When a person is uprooted, they assimilate to a new culture. The experience of a person being uprooted is a theme Zephaniah includes in both his poetry and prose as he speaks from experience and wants to bring recognition of such people among the wider society. As he wants to bring recognition of people like him to as many people as possible, he articulates his experience to several target reader groups. The portrayal of the experiences is written appropriately, considering the group of people in the target audience.

RESUMÉ

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá analýzou aspektů, které úzce souvisí s otázkou etnicity, což je koncept, který se velmi často vyskytuje v dílech postkoloniální literatury. Cílem této práce je tyto koncepty popsat a zjistit, jak tyto koncepty zobrazuje v jeho dílech britský básník a prozaik s jamajskými kořeny Benjamin Zephaniah. Práce je rozdělena do tří kapitol, z nichž každá analyzuje jeden z vybraných konceptů. Každá kapitola začíná obecným představením daného konceptu a posléze jej za pomoci odborných publikací definuje. Jakmile jsou koncepty definovány, kapitola posléze navazuje analýzou daného konceptu ve třech vybraných dílech, kterými jsou román *Refugee Boy* a dvě básnické sbírky *Propa Propaganda* a *Too Black, Too Strong*. Úryvky těchto děl obsahující relevantní koncept jsou uvedeny a analyzovány vždy v příslušné kapitole. Každá kapitola se posléze zabývá stručnou komparací samotných konceptů vyobrazených v úryvcích. Dílčí zjištění z každé kapitoly jsou následně vyhodnocena v závěru této bakalářské práce.

Úvod této práce zahrnuje představení postkoloniální kritiky. Uvádí témata, která se velmi často vyskytují v dílech postkoloniální literatury a uvádí důvody, které vedly autory těchto děl k zobrazení právě těchto témat. Mnoho těchto témat je úzce spojených s otázkou etnicity, což je z velké většiny způsobeno původem autorů. Úvod dále nastiňuje celkový výčet kapitol a vyobrazuje, o čem je každá kapitola napsána.

První kapitola této bakalářské práce pojednává o konceptu asimilace. Začátek této kapitoly představuje stručný úvod do samotného konceptu a popisuje, jak se tento koncept vztahuje k otázce etnicity. Následně je koncept asimilace na základě několika odborných textů a odborné literatury vydefinován. Jelikož je asimilace jako taková velmi obsáhlý pojem, existuje mnoho definic, které spolu ne vždy souhlasí. Tato kapitola tak nachází podobnosti a rozdíly mezi jednotlivými definicemi a vytyčuje hlavní myšlenku tohoto konceptu, na které se všechny definice shodují. Každá z uvedených definic v této kapitole pojednává o asimilaci jako o procesu adaptace do neznámého prostředí, jednotliví autoři definic ale nachází asimilaci v odlišných skupinách lidí. Někteří z autorů uvádějí, že se na sebe asimilují lidé z odlišných kultur, někteří to naopak specifikují na lidi z odlišných etnických ras. Tato kapitola dále navazuje stručným představením románu *Refugee Boy* a uvedením do jeho děje. Tento román pojednává o osudu čtrnáctiletého afrického uprchlíka, který se usazuje ve Velké Británii, což znamená, že se sám potýká s asimilací. Analýza uvedených úryvků potvrzuje, že se tento koncept v románu vyskytuje. Kapitola dále popisuje, jak autor tohoto románu asimilaci zobrazuje. Dále kapitola stručně uvádí básnickou sbírku *Propa Propaganda*, jejíž básně komunikují

hlavně politická témata. Vybrané básně z této sbírky jsou posléze analyzovány a zobrazení konceptu asimilace je porovnáno se zobrazením stejného konceptu v dříve analyzovaném románu. Bezprostředně po krátkém úvodu druhé básnické sbírky kapitola navazuje analýzou příkladů básní ze sbírky *Too Black, Too Strong*. Koncept asimilace je nalezen v jednotlivých příkladech a kapitola je završená komparací jeho zobrazením v těchto příkladech s příklady předešlými.

Druhá kapitola této bakalářské práce se týká konceptu kultury, který je též úzce spojený s etnicitou. Tato kapitola definuje kulturu jako koncept sám o sobě, jelikož je to ale velmi obsáhlý termín, definuje i některé další koncepty s kulturou velmi úzce spojené. V této kapitole se tak nachází definice kulturní identity, kulturních rozdílů a kulturní ztráty. Definice těchto konceptů dohromady formují jednotný pohled na koncept kultury, který je pro tuto bakalářskou práci relevantní. Kapitola dále následuje výčtem a analýzou úryvků z románu *Refugee Boy*, ve kterých lze analyzovat koncept kultury. Hlavní protagonista tohoto románu se v průběhu děje střetává s několika kulturními šoky, několik z těchto střetů je v této kapitole uvedeno a analyzováno. Benjamin Zephaniah v tomto románu také popisuje, jak důležité je být čas od času vystaven aspektům původní kultury člověka. Zephaniah napsal několik z jeho básní v jamajském akcentu, což samo komunikuje určité aspekty kultury. V této kapitole je uvedena jedna z těchto básní, která je publikována ve sbírce básní *Propa Propaganda*. Druhá analyzovaná báseň z této básnické sbírky byla již analyzována v kapitole předchozí. Jelikož tato báseň komunikuje jak koncept asimilace, tak koncept kultury, je zahrnuta v obou kapitolách. Analyzované básně z této sbírky básní vyzdvihují multikulturalismus a popisují osud lidí, kteří se své kultury odmítají vzdát. Multikulturalismus, oslava jednotlivých kultur a odmítání nutnosti identifikace pouze s jednou kulturou jsou témata vybraných básní z básnické sbírky *Too Black, Too Strong* analyzovaných v závěru této kapitoly.

Třetí kapitola této bakalářské práce analyzuje koncept vykořenění. Kapitola začíná několika definicemi tohoto konceptu a dopadů, které tento koncept na vykořeněné lidi má. Autoři, jejichž definice jsou uvedeny v této kapitole se shodují na faktu, že vykořenění je proces separace od rodiny, kultury či známého prostředí jedince. Tato kapitola dále komunikuje, že vykořenění je proces, kterým procházejí imigranti a uprchlíci, o kterých často Benjamin Zephaniah ve svých textech píše. Například v románu *Refugee Boy* je hlavní hrdina vykořeněn nedobrovolně, což neusnadňuje jeho usazování v nové společnosti, ale naopak jej zhoršuje. Tato kapitola také znázorňuje, že na vykořeněné lidi se často přihlíží s předsudky a často jsou diskriminováni, což je i

případ hlavního protagonisty analyzovaného románu. Úryvky z tohoto románu potvrzující tato tvrzení jsou v této kapitole uvedeny a analyzovány. Kapitola dále navazuje výčtem vybraných básní z básnické sbírky *Propa Propaganda* a jejich analýzou. Básně analyzované v této kapitole komunikují nešťastné osudy vykořeněných lidí. Důsledkem nešťastných osudů těchto lidí bylo právě jejich vykořenění a s ním spojené předsudky a stereotypy, se kterými na ně bylo společností pohlíženo. Problémy spojené s vykořeněním jsou analyzovány také v básních z básnické sbírky *Too Black, Too Strong*. I tyto básně, stejně jako ty předchozí komunikují nešťastné osudy a události, které se vykořeněným lidem stávají. Jelikož osudy lidí v analyzovaných básních z obou básnických sbírek hovoří o vážných tématech, jako je v těchto případech úmrtí, je v této kapitole závěrem zmíněno, že Zephaniah vidí hlavní problém v britském zákonu, který není schopen uprchlíky a žadatele o azyl ochránit.

Závěrečná kapitola této práce vyvozuje obecnější závěry zjištěné v dílčích kapitolách. Jedním ze zjištění této bakalářské práce je, že všechny koncepty, které jsou analyzované v této bakalářské práci jsou spojené s etnicitou. Pokud je jedinec vykořeněný, asimiluje se do jiné kultury, což znamená, že všechny tyto pojmy nejen souvisejí s etnicitou, jsou ale také vzájemně propletené mezi sebou. Pomocí analýzy vybraných textů je zjištěno, že se všechny tyto koncepty také vyskytují v textech Benjamina Zephania. Závěrečná kapitola této bakalářské práce se uzavírá porovnáním způsobů, jakými Zephaniah dané koncepty zobrazuje v jeho dílech. Jelikož je román *Refugee Boy* cílený na adolescentní skupinu čtenářů, zatímco básnické sbírky *Propa Propaganda* a *Too Black, Too Strong* jsou cíleny na dospělé čtenáře, zobrazení analyzovaných konceptů není v románu zpravidla tak explicitní, jako v analyzovaných básních.

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