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Aspiring to a postcolonial engagement with the Other: an investigation into student teachers' learning from their intercultural experiences during a South Indian study visit

by

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for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

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Aspiring to a postcolonial engagement with the Other: an investigation into student teachers' learning from their intercultural experiences during a South Indian study visit

Abstract

My thesis is an exploration of how an intercultural experience may alter one's view of the Other and in doing so cause a reconsideration of the Self through 'Westerners' ontological and epistemological repositioning as privileged and knowledgeable subjects. Taking a post-structuralist approach and using postcolonial theory, I use three key theoretical themes to consider their influences on learning: intercultural learning, place and pedagogy. I begin from the premise that to varying extents, and in different ways, we in the 'West' are written through with the colonial in conscious and unconscious ways.

The thesis draws on my reflexivity and empirical data focused on the intercultural learning performed by 14 student teachers from a 2014 study visit to South India. The student teachers reflected on their learning in a semi-structured journal that they used to write a reflection about their learning after returning 'home'. The journal and reflection, alongside later unstructured interviews, constituted the empirical data that informed the thesis. The thesis, however, also used 'fictional' data to augment the empirical data drawing on creative accounts of intercultural learning performed by 'Western' film characters from their travels to India, arguing that it is possible to work between the binary of 'fact' and 'fiction' within a post-structuralist methodology.

Diverse narratives of intercultural learning emerged from the data that highlighted how the intercultural engagements became opportunities for reflexive reconsiderations of Self and Other, often triggered by critical moments I call 'colonial signatures'. Reflexivity and an understanding, particularly of postcolonial theory, were important to deepen intercultural learning that acknowledged a perception of place, including a global understanding of one's learning that I call a 'latitude and longitude of learning'. The research revealed how an engagement with the Other challenged learners to problematise their worldviews and where agency emerged to change aspects of their lives in varied and rich ways.

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Chapter 1 Introduction to the Research

1.1 Introduction

Over the last decade there has been considerable national focus on the internationalisation of higher education within a neo-liberal agenda (Harris, 2008) and global partnerships between schools have been promoted by the UK Government. One significant aspect of such development has been the inclusion of international study visits into school and university teaching programmes. Such visits are controversial matters and there is a growing body of literature that reviewed the influences of study visits on participants' thinking, which often showed limited exposure of the global powerbase on which these thoughts were constructed (Martin and Wyness, 2013; Martin and Griffiths, 2012).

My thesis aims to throw more light into the debates about international study visits through an exploration of how an intercultural experience in South India may alter UK-based student teachers' views of the Other and in doing so cause a reconsideration of themselves. It investigates the nature of student teachers' (hereafter called 'participants') intercultural learning through engagement with a short study visit (hereafter called the 'visit') to Kerala, South India and considers whether this learning has the potential to develop the participants' thinking and actions especially through intercultural triggers to their learning. In addition to my own learning, my thesis focuses on the *ways* and *what* the participants learnt from the visit.

In this chapter I discuss the development of my research aims and enquiry foci which were partly formed from my experiences of previous study visits to South India. I use postcolonial theory to consider my own, as well as participants', learning about themselves and others (hereon called 'Self' and 'Other'), which I argue was partly consequential of the location of that learning and the pedagogies used in the visit. In considering the nature of my research three key conceptual themes of *intercultural learning*, *place* and *pedagogy* emerged from the data and are used, within my broader postcolonial lens, to explore these issues.

I introduce my post-structuralist ontological positioning in this chapter whereby I regard a search for an immutable truth through language to be futile. Rather, I attempt to pursue as *faithful* an interpretation of reality as possible and augment my empirical data, focused on the participants' intercultural learning, with 'fictional' accounts of intercultural learning in India by those from 'Western' countries. Psychosocial 'pedagogical ethnography' methods

are developed within my post-structuralist stance to interpret data positioned between what I argue is a 'factual' and 'fictional' false binary.

The participants consisted of 14 postgraduate student teachers, aged between 22 and 29 years old. Twelve of the participants were female and two were male. Thirteen of these students were white-British UK nationals and one was from Cyprus. Five participants were primary phase and nine were secondary phase specialists. I led the study visit with a colleague and was the only member of the group to have visited India before. Only five participants had previously travelled beyond Europe or the USA¹.

Diverse narratives of intercultural learning emerged from the data that highlighted how the intercultural engagements became opportunities for reflexive reconsiderations of Self and Other, often triggered by critical moments I call 'colonial signatures' that may act as bridges and/or barriers to deepen intercultural learning. Reflexivity and an understanding particularly of postcolonial theory were important to deepen intercultural learning linked to personal perceptions of place and global interconnectedness which I call the 'latitude and longitude of learning'. The research revealed how an engagement with the Other challenged learners to problematise their worldviews and where agency emerged to change aspects of their lives in varied and rich ways.

I develop my ideas of my two particular original contributions to knowledge in this chapter, namely the 'latitude and longitude of learning' and the 'colonial signature', before considering the wider significance of the thesis to myself and to education policy and practice focusing on the internationalisation of higher education and development education. I explain the key terminology used in the thesis, including my careful use of 'centred-minority' and 'excentricised-majority' in preference to terms like 'global north' and 'global south', to delineate the powerful centre from the periphery. Finally, a summary of the structure of the thesis is given to provide a guide to the research in the following chapters.

¹ This 'background' information is provided to support understanding of the visit but with no assumption that such data would become significant within the research process or outcomes.

1.2 Development of Research Aims

Background

The aims of my research emerged firstly from my engagement in 2007-8 with educational study visits to South India through my institution's links in the region, and secondly from my wider perceptions about Kerala as a global site of learning. Both these dimensions influenced the nature and focus of my thesis which I reflexively consider in chapter two. My engagement in India was two-fold: firstly, as part of a short teaching visit to schools and colleges in Kerala and secondly, as part of a relatively longer undergraduate extra-curricular visit to Kerala and Tamil Nadu. The visits enabled links with colleagues in the UK and India to develop and deepened my interests in South India, its people and cultures. Each experience challenged me to find new layers of complexity through discussion, observation, reading and reflection but, significantly, rarely with conclusions firmly made. I was enthused by these intercultural experiences and established a short annual study visit for postgraduate student teachers to Kerala in 2009.

It was on the basis of my early intercultural experiences that I developed a research proposal to investigate learning in this South Indian context focused on how field experience might influence participants' understanding of the Other and their consequent future practice in the UK. My motivations for this derived from my perceptions about the potential deep learning² from such a visit which is recognised in the literature, but which is also countered sometimes by reports that the learning from such experiences may also be shallow and rarely transformational (Scoffham and Barnes, 2009; Martin, 2008). An investigation into the ways how, and what, participants learnt through study visits emerged. My initial proposal contained two major theoretical areas of intercultural learning and longer-term professional development, both of which were linked to notions of participants' personal and professional epistemologies. In narrowing my focus upon intercultural learning I left the long-term professional development focus for future research to consider.

² I read deep learning (Marton and Sajournalo, 1976) as when learners make strong connections between a new idea and their own lives. In doing so, they look for a broader and deeper meaning to the new idea themselves.

Research aims and enquiry foci

My research focuses upon the *ways* that the participants learnt interculturally from the visit to Kerala in 2014 as well as *what* they learnt and in doing so considers whether such learning has the potential to challenge or transform pre-existing understandings of Self/Other. I acknowledge the influence of myself on the participants' learning throughout the visit and research process. It was imperative, therefore, that in addition to being reflective I was *reflexive* about my influences and power throughout my research in terms of its conceptualisation and on the participants' experiences.

In order to direct my research, and in ensuring that I remained faithful to the aims of the study, the following seven enquiry foci were developed which also exposed the main theoretical themes of my research:

1. **Assumptions** I initially wanted to understand the participants' pre-visit assumptions about Kerala/India and any perceived differences and similarities between there and 'home'. I also wanted to find out from where the participants had drawn these assumptions in order to help gauge if their influences were significant to any future learning. Such questions also helped participants to articulate dimensions of their personal and professional epistemologies prior to arriving in India.
2. **Influence of place** By considering the (changing) perceptions of Kerala/India in relation to the participants' learning during the visit, I was able to begin to review the potential influence of place on learning in local and global contexts. I began to consider whether the 'latitude and longitude' engendered particular kinds of learning; that is to say, I was interested in the idea that place is significant to learning and that it acts as a filter between Self/Other.
3. **Power** It was important to frame my considerations of intercultural learning within my epistemological framework of postcolonialism in order to recognise the power dimensions within study visits. I explored the significance of language in my research, firstly, given the colonial power implications of the English language in India and, secondly, given the fundamental importance of language and text in post-structuralism.
4. **Colonial signature** I developed the notion of 'colonial signature' to ascertain how engagement with a range of signifiers such as language and images potentially act as personal triggers, or barriers, to intercultural learning through exploration of similarities and differences between Kerala and 'home'.

5. ***Intercultural learning process*** The argument that learning is socially constructed suggests that learning occurs when previously held beliefs or assumptions about knowledge are challenged. I wanted to investigate in what ways, and to what extent, the exposure of, and challenge to, previously held assumptions influence the nature of participants' intercultural learning on the visit. This question built on the exploration of place as an influence on intercultural learning, as a filter between Self/Other, as well as revealed aspects of personal and professional epistemologies.

6. ***Changing perceptions*** I also wanted to consider in what ways (if any) the participants perceived that their experiences and reflections about the visit altered their views about Kerala/India, their views about 'home', and the relationship between the two. Analysing changing perceptions helped identify what participants had learnt from the visit and whether there had been any changes in their worldview.

7. ***Personal and professional change*** The final dimension of my thesis was to consider how the participants perceived that such intercultural learning through their South Indian experiences had altered (if at all) their personal and/or professional epistemologies. In considering these dimensions I explored difficulties of articulating Self in respect to the Other and acknowledge the potential tensions between this and the overall post-structuralist framework of the thesis.

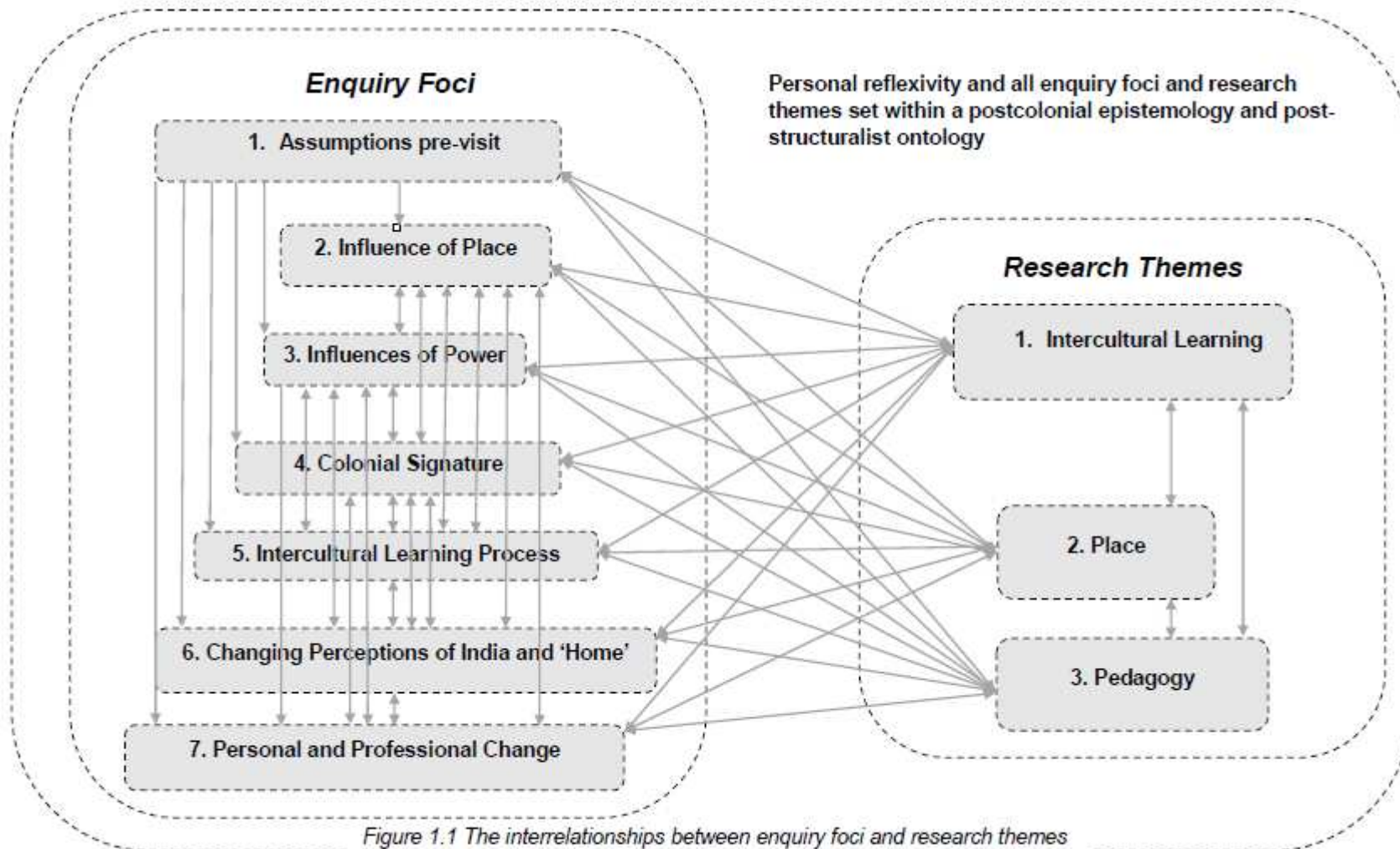
The enquiry foci potentially appear mutually isolated and linear when expressed textually; however, they are interrelated, fluid and permeable as expected within a post-structuralist ontology. It is for this reason that I chose the term enquiry foci, as it indicates the questioning nature of these seven areas of investigation, and avoids the linearity implied by terms like 'line of enquiry' or the positivism of 'research objective'. Figure 1.1 attempts to convey the fluid and complex interrelationship of the enquiry foci as well as my three theoretical research themes through the use of dotted parameters to each box. The enquiry foci and research themes are permeable and are influenced by my reflexivity as well as my postcolonial epistemology and post-structuralist ontology. All enquiry foci and the research themes are interrelated as they are all mutually influential which is represented by the connecting arrows.

1.3 Theoretical Framework and Research Themes

Theoretical framework

My thesis explores the ways that an intercultural experience causes one to perceive the Self differently. Such an understanding is alluded to by Kipling (1891) in the second line of his poem *The English Flag*: "And what should they of England know who only England know?" There is an intimation of imperial conquest later in the poem (Allen, 2007), but the importance of understanding 'home' (within which I include understanding the Self) through intercultural learning experiences is important to my thesis. The lenses through which we learn are often opaque and sometimes culturally buried to such an extent that we believe our thinking to be 'natural'. A failure to acknowledge these lenses can result in circumscribed understandings especially in an intercultural setting. The powerful cultural norms of an existing belief system are a significant challenge for a study visit to expose, let alone overcome, but without such an exposure to the cultures of 'home' and 'abroad' (and the attendant hidden assumptions of 'home'/Self and abroad/Other) it is harder for learners to access deeper levels of learning.

I argue that intercultural learning entails learning which acknowledges differential powers between visitor and host. I used *postcolonial theory* as my theoretical framework to consider if those of us from the 'Occident' can ever become postcolonial in our engagement with the 'Orient' by exploring the epistemological positioning of myself and the participants, including our relationship with the research setting. My postcolonial reading of learning was based on Said's *Orientalism* (1978/83); however, in deepening my argument I drew on Yeğenoğlu's (1998) feminist reading of Orientalism and the more nuanced notions of stereotyping developed by Hook (2012) and Bhabha (1994/2004).



Research themes

I argue that the relationship between Self/Other is fluid, with permeable boundaries. It is situated in the *place* of learning with the potential for our *intercultural learning* to be translated to the 'home' setting. A study visit with an open and fluid *pedagogical* approach to new experiences and environments could provide the provocation to reflect upon cultures of theory, practice and policy in India and the UK. It potentially causes participants to challenge personal and professional ontologies and epistemologies by exposing assumptions that we make in life. This construction of meaning could be at different levels and scales ranging from understanding daily school routines in India to reconsidering one's worldview.

In order to investigate participants' intercultural learning, three research themes emerged as key issues from developing my enquiry foci which I used to structure my study

1. intercultural learning
2. place
3. pedagogy

The fluidity and permeable nature of my research approach illustrated in figure 1.1 embraced the interrelationship of the three themes. Intercultural learning theory is pivotal to my research as it provided me with a basis on which to consider the participants' learning between and across cultures. I argue that any engagement with peers in a different culture is not a neutral act and its global location, or place, and the pedagogical ways with which we learn and engage interculturally are important research themes which can deepen our understanding of intercultural learning.

1. Intercultural learning

I draw on intercultural learning theories that acknowledge the affective and existential dimensions to learning when I argue that our responses to intercultural experiences, including place, go beyond a simple cognitive consideration. These theories of learning were reviewed in order to consider learning in different cultures to one's own. I argue that learning is situated and contextualised and that the geographical global position of this learning has significance. In arguing this I acknowledge that the interrelationship between Self/Other is globally positioned and I draw on theories of critical cosmopolitanism (Delanty, 2006;2009; Holliday, 2011) to develop this argument.

Critical cosmopolitanism argues for the development of a cosmopolitan imagination which I see, in the case of intercultural learning, as a potential re-visioning of Self/Other through the challenge it provides to our worldviews and underlying assumptions. As such it provided a potentially powerful lens to consider the depth of intercultural learning from international study visits. Such a critical social theory with its tendency to focus on matters beyond the scale of the person, however, was a potentially difficult lens with which to analyse learning and personal change. Accordingly, I employ a psychosocial³ reading of Self/Other, discussed in chapter five, to help enable attention to be given to micro as well as macro-cultural influences.

The variable outcomes of study visits are reviewed in a number of papers, for example, Martin and Wyness (2013); Scoffham and Barnes (2009); and Weeden and Hayter (1996). Study visits can result in superficial, shallow learning or be easily, or conveniently, forgotten once the participants return 'home' and their hosts return to other activities. Weeden and Hayter (1996, p. 108) cite this concern in the title of their chapter "Learning experience of a lifetime or just more Savannah" and Finney and Orr (1995) indicated limited change in participants' views about other cultures citing the need to overcome personal ontologies and epistemologies developed over a lifetime for greater change to occur. Conversely, deep learning associated with study visits has been found by some researchers to lead to increased "self-confidence, enhanced self-esteem and a predisposition to take action" (Scoffham and Barnes, 2009, p. 267).

2. Place

I argue that intercultural learning is globally situated. I thought that location and place were potentially significant to the nature of the learning experience during the visit and, consequently, I developed the idea of the 'latitude and longitude of learning' to indicate that learning is not bounded or fixed to a location, but that it is strongly influenced by constructions of place and the global interrelation between that place and elsewhere. Constructions of place go beyond its location and include a 'sense of place' which draws on our subjective interpretations of place. The participants' perceptions of 'home' and Kerala as places, and their conceptions of the global interconnectedness and interdependence of places, potentially constructed their personal 'latitude and longitude of learning'. I argue that by rearticulating our sense of place we can reconsider what the Other means to us, which has the potential for such a reconceptualisation to challenge and

³ In drawing on authors like Frosh (2013; 2015) and Hook (2012) I am influenced by their psychoanalytic thinking but use their writing 'psychosocially' and not within a psychoanalytical methodology.

change ourselves. Place, therefore, was arguably a significant filter between the Self/Other and our cognitive and emotional responses to them.

3. Pedagogy

Any pedagogy associated with intercultural learning by those from the 'centred-minority' that involves those from the 'excentricised-majority' is a political act. It exposes power dimensions within our relationships and aims to develop a criticality through its pedagogy such that it has the potential to expose and challenge assumptions in our thinking. In turn these challenges may lead to possible epistemological and ontological shifts or, in other words, transformational learning (Mezirow, 2000). I liken the pedagogy of intercultural learning to the education for 'critical consciousness' (Freire, P. 2003). I regard the role of teacher as that of a 'cultural worker' (Freire, P. 2005) emphasising Spivak's ideas of "learning to unlearn" our 'centred-minority' privileges as analysed by Andreotti (2007, p. 76).

I argue that an intercultural pedagogy should emphasise the importance of relationships in our engagement with the Other. The construction of these relationships, which extend beyond the cognate to emotional and existential dimensions, could be built upon hope (Freire, P. 1992) and humility. Hope comes from the 'liberation' that springs from an initial awareness of the ways that we are 'written through' with the colonial which potentially turns to an understanding of the postcolonial possibilities in our relationships between Self/Other. This new relationship forms through a developing humility towards the Other taught through a "decolonial curriculum" and a "pedagogy of lovingness" (De Lissovoy, 2010, p. 279).

1.4 Approaches to the Research

In searching for a methodology, I found Holliday's own search for a method to "find alternative, more creative methods which dig beneath the surface - to find the hidden and counter-cultures of the Periphery with which to shake the centre image" (2011, p. xi) a powerful guide.

If I aspire to a postcolonial reading of Kerala, and of Self/Other, it would be incongruent to ontologically position my research strictly and unproblematically within the Eurocentricism

of Enlightenment thinking. In firstly acknowledging, and then attempting to reduce⁴ the Eurocentric nature of my research, a post-structuralist approach was taken rather than more positivist influenced approaches. My subjective engagement with the research process and setting necessarily results in a different identification and interpretation of findings compared to any other researcher conducting the 'same' study. The findings are thus highly situated and contextualised. All data and their sources were critically reviewed, but no one single voice was acknowledged to present a claim to truth above another and, accordingly, I make no attempt to search for an immutable truth. The representation of reality was explored in this light. I aspire to claim that the research makes as faithful a representation of reality as possible, but I acknowledged that other realities exist that are neither privileged nor reduced as a consequence of my research. I argue that by working between the binary of factual/fictional accounts of intercultural learning in India by those based in the 'centred-minority', I was able to read more 'fictional' accounts as equally faithful representations of reality compared to 'non-fictional' accounts of the same. Overall my post-structuralist approach enabled me to play with the de-centred fluidity and removal of boundaries that such a methodology permitted.

In making claims to represent reality it is important for me to expose the lenses through which these claims are made and to recognise the ethical issues regarding the power in being able to make these claims compared to those without a voice in this research. This caused me to consider the degree to which South Indian voices were included in the visit and research as well as those of the participants. The 'Subaltern's voice' is a key dimension of postcolonial theory (Spivak, 1993/2009) and if Indian-focused research ignored local voices any claim to postcolonialism would be greatly minimised. Rather, it could be regarded as another example of colonial plundering of Indian knowledge without any reciprocation or sharing of knowledge and which dismissed the importance of relationship development through the visit. Both of these would be antithetical to the intended ethos of the visit.

My empirical research, however, focuses purely on the UK-based participants and in particular their intercultural learning from the visit. Through this focus I explored the influences of local people and place on this learning but it was important to recognise that in doing so I did not attempt to speak for the 'Subaltern' (Spivak, 1993/2009). To do so at any depth would have required me to attempt to work within different cultural epistemologies and to attempt to translate these into my 'centred-minority'-based thesis.

⁴ I considered it impossible to attempt to remove this entirely given my cultural heritage and academic location of this thesis.

My research was not an erroneous omission of the Subaltern's voice, but a deliberate attempt to focus the research wholly upon the intercultural learning of the UK-based participants. Although I aim to be faithful to the participants' perceptions of intercultural learning, ultimately what is represented in my thesis are my interpretations of their learning which became a reflexive dialogue between me and their narratives. The final narrative is mine, but in articulating my perceptions of intercultural learning I aimed to be reflexively overt about my beliefs about intercultural learning from study visits and how these possibly influenced the participants' learning, as well as how the research itself and the participants' learning influenced me.

In a thesis that explores the relationship between Self/Other and looks for changes in participants' ontologies and epistemologies, it was important to explore what I mean by these terms. I argue that Self/Other occupy a nuanced position with permeable boundaries in the construction of one's ontology and epistemology. Any shift in one's thinking towards, and about, the Other is mirrored by a shift in the Self with the potential to alter one's personal understanding.

A post-structuralist ontology seemed highly congruent with the postcolonial epistemology which informed the theoretical engagement with my research. Such a combination of ontology and epistemology recognises the inequalities and power relationships between the 'centred-minority' and 'excentricised-majority' and enables open, fluid and complex realities to be explored. Ahluwalia (2010) shows the connection between post-structuralism and postcolonialism by illustrating the strong, mostly north African, Franco-colonial influences on, and perhaps even 'origins' of, post-structuralist thinking of seminal writers such as Cixous (1975/86) and Derrida (1967/2001; 1992). It was important to review how such post-structuralist and postcolonial thinking translated into my research setting and in doing so I drew on the postcolonial writing of Andreotti (2006, 2007, 2010, 2011); Spivak (1993/2009); and Bhabha (1994/2004).

My initial readings about more traditional ethnographic research methods (which intended to make a minimal impact upon the research field e.g. Stephens 2007) were replaced by a realisation that even if I could separate out the intentions of my research and teaching I could not do so with some of the actions associated with both endeavours. My teaching and research were underpinned by postcolonial theory and were performed simultaneously, no more so than during the plenaries during the visit and in the construction of the learning journal. My research therefore had a *de facto* political dimension and as such I turned to critical ethnography to explore a suitable method of research (chapter six).

I drew on Carspecken (1996) in developing a 'Critical Ethnography of Pedagogy' to enable a de-centred reading of culture that "recognize[d] the influence of ideology and the marginalization of non-western cultural realities" (Holliday, 2011, p. 3). In an attempt to understand the ways that intercultural learning took place during the visit I requested that participants completed an intercultural learning journal (appendix two) about their lived experiences during their visit. I also asked them to record their thinking/positioning before and after the visit. These reflections were developed into an academic reflection written after the participants returned 'home' and a follow-up interview conducted three to four months later, both of which formed significant parts of my 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973). My 'thick description' incorporated these data as well as my theoretical, 'fictional' and experiential influences. Through my immersion into the interconnected elements of my thick description it potentially enabled me to represent cultures in depth and complexity through my analysis and achieve rich yet tentative conclusions.

1.5 Significance of the Research

Personal significance

The personal dimension of this research stems from my belief in the mutual social and moral benefits of meeting people, learning about new cultures through the broadening of one's mind and understanding of one's Self and place in the wider world. Furthermore my early Indian study visit experiences highlighted the potentially significant influence of international, intercultural experiences to changing our worldviews. It is the potential depths of learning and agency that were of such personal significance to me and which became a key element of my research. Through my research I have deepened my theoretical understanding of intercultural learning, power and representation which I subsequently used to develop my approach to teaching and to study visits.

Significance to policy

My research is situated within at least two policy areas that also relate to professional and academic dimensions of the participants' lives. As student teachers they were simultaneously immersed in cultures of higher education that include 'internationalisation', and learning to teach a school curriculum with a global dimension. Similarly, the visit is an example of the internationalisation of higher education and my findings may contribute to

debates around study visit policy and practice in compulsory education which is a feature of the global dimension of learning. By highlighting these policy areas, I illustrate a relevance to my research beyond my own writing, but do not intend that this should determine overall parameters to its significance.

1. Internationalisation within university-led initial teacher education

My empirical research focused on the process and outcomes of an elective international module for postgraduate student teachers which might potentially provide insight into the internationalisation of Initial Teacher Education (hereon ITE). Study visits are an example of how universities have enabled students to experience international dimensions to their learning. Such developments are associated with a range of European-wide policies, commonly named the 'Bologna Process', which has called for a range of developments in higher education, including

- curriculum development,
- inter-institutional cooperation,
- mobility schemes, and
- integrated programmes of study (Stewart, 2008, p. 7).

European political will to develop pan-European education policy is arguably underpinned by cultures of globalisation which encompass "worldwide discourses on human capital, economic development, and multiculturalism; intergovernmental organizations; and multinational corporations" (Spring, 2009, p. 1). It is perhaps such large-scale political and economic power that contrasts with the personal endeavours of intercultural learning that I consider in my thesis which illustrates tensions between education policy and practice at a range of scales.

At an institutional level, the internationalisation of higher education may be associated with the growth of the 'neo-liberal university' that favours economic growth over cultural development (Harris, 2008). At an individual level, international curriculum experiences *potentially* enable a broadening of students' cultural awareness, including reflecting on the ways they view the world. Without explicit exposure of neo-liberal cultures, however, it is likely that any broadening of cultural awareness will be limited (Martin and Griffiths, 2012). These institutional and individual levels are not necessarily divorced, as potentially seen in the growth of high fee-paying international students in the UK; however, this itself seems to have caused a narrowing of internationalisation to focus on recruitment often in certain curriculum areas (Magyar and Robinson-Pant, 2011). It perhaps suggests that internationalisation is not embedded in the cultural ethos of universities called for by Harris

(2008) in her vision of 'cultural internationalisation', which avoids the instrumentalism and neo-liberal agenda of some other internationalisation approaches.

Furthermore, education departments in English universities are arguably at the margins of internationalisation due to a number of external constraints on Initial Teacher Education (hereafter ITE) (Holden and Hicks, 2007). Central government control of ITE is argued as a worldwide inhibitor of internationalisation (ibid) and in England these constraints have tended to promote an inward facing curriculum that focuses on the technical-rational dimensions of learning to teach. For example, the UK government's Teachers' Standards focus the attention of the English ITE curriculum on classroom competence rather than enabling the growth of an international dimension.

Aspects of my empirical research that focus on the personal and professional outcomes of the visit may enable international experiences to be regarded as enhancements to learning within the ITE curriculum. This may counter the dominant competence-driven and insular curriculum and as such could be a valuable contribution to this policy area.

2. The global dimension of learning

My research has relevance to policy associated with the global dimension of learning, generally and specifically through the development of international school linking initiatives such as '*global school partnerships*'. The participants were mostly school pupils when the UK Labour Government's policy (e.g. DfES, 2005) provided recommended guidance to develop the global dimension of the primary and secondary phase curriculum. The guidance outlines eight themes which promote global learning and human rights across the curriculum: global citizenship, sustainable development, conflict resolution, interdependence, social justice, human rights, values and perceptions and diversity.

The eight themes potentially enable pupils to consider global equity across generations and time ("intergenerational equity") and within their generation and across space ("intragenerational equity"). However, difficulties emerge with underlying assumptions inherent in the guidance and the ways these themes are interpreted (Martin, 2011, p. 210). The guidance conveys an implicit "cultural supremacy" that risks endorsing a paternalistic donor-recipient understanding of 'centred-minority' relationships with the 'excentricised-majority' (Andreotti, 2008, p. 45). Furthermore in an earlier version of this guidance Graves (2002) notes how 'centre-minority' worldviews about poverty dominate the examples included and that wealth is regarded simply in economic terms and neglects "cultural, social, and spiritual wealth and diversity" (Martin, 2011, p. 212).

Research about the implementation of the global dimension (Edge *et al*, 2009) has shown that through the curriculum pupils tended to be more globally aware, including understanding global interconnections and other cultures, and the implications of their own actions on others and the environment. However, where schools had a charitable dimension to their global learning there was little to dispel the donor-recipient relationship (Martin, 2011).

Bourn (2008, p. 2), argues that the themes that often underpin global learning are associated with “social democratic politics” and it is unsurprising therefore that the UK’s Conservative-led Coalition government of 2010-15 diminished the global dimension to learning including removing it as a statutory cross-curricular theme. Perhaps, consequentially, in such a policy development vacuum, Bourn (2008) notes that schools often turned to NGOs to seek guidance and to teach aspects of the global dimension. Such developments in practice can be associated with ‘Development Education’, explored by Bourn (2015) in developing a theory and practice in this field. Table 1.1 summarises four principles and their associated dimensions that underpin his pedagogical framework of development education.

My thesis focuses on adult learning; however, it is relevant to development education as my empirical research focuses on those engaged in ITE and the focus upon their intercultural learning demonstrates ways that student teachers may develop an appreciation of the global dimension to learning. Furthermore, the themes that Bourn (2015) identifies resonate strongly with my research approach outlined earlier that involved a reflective, critical approach which aimed to expose assumptions about the world and examine the potential for this to change our worldviews. More specifically, with regard to study visits, the diminution of the global dimension in education policy in England is contrasted by the development of two initiatives by the Department for International Development (DfID) in partnership with organisations like the British Council and Voluntary Services Overseas. *Global School Partnerships* support partnerships that include school visits between UK schools and those in the ‘excentricised-majority’ and, more recently, *Connecting Classrooms* focus more on curriculum links and teacher visits.

The involvement of DfID and its partners shifts the primary agenda from education to development (Leonard, 2008) which arguably changes the nature of the relationships between host and visitor. As I have noted earlier (e.g. Martin 2008), linking between the ‘centre-minority’ and ‘excentricised-majority’ is contentious. Disney (2004) argues that without global school partnerships being mutually planned, or with only superficial

Principle	Dimensions
Towards A Global Outlook	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sees a global outlook as a process of learning and engagement. 2. Moving beyond concern for the poor and recognising the importance of social justice and international solidarity. 3. Developing a sense of global responsibility.
Recognition of power and inequality in the world	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understanding the relationship between power and development and how power is exercised through society. 2. Awareness of the historical forces of colonialism/imperialism and their contemporary implications at social, cultural and economic levels. 3. Understanding the forces of globalisation that are complex and multi-layered and ways it may lead to new forms of social interaction. 4. Implications of power and inequality for the Global North and South that go beyond a North/South binary.
Belief in social justice	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sense of concern and care for a better world is likely to start as a moral position but which is not necessarily explicit. 2. Belief in social justice that stems from personal values and influences pedagogy. 3. Wish to see a more equal and sustainable world that may extend to being a responsibility.
Commitment to reflection, dialogue and personal and social transformation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Critical thinking: questioning existing views about the world that expose assumptions in our thinking. 2. Self-reflection on worldviews and a dialogic approach to learning. 3. Transformation that arises from changes to our worldviews and our way of being in the world.

Table 1.1 A pedagogical framework of Development Education (after Bourn, 2015, pp. 102-119).

connections, such global partnerships risk becoming neo-colonial endeavours that exploit the ‘excentricised-majority’ partner and promote, rather than dispel, stereotyping of the Other. It is the ‘missionary’ approach of some schools to their ‘excentric-minority’ partner that helps maintain the colonial mindset, and Martin (2007) questions the purpose of these supposed partnerships.

An exposure to the ‘excentricised-majority’ through school partnerships does little to develop teachers’ global understanding without reflecting about the ways that ‘centre-minority’ teachers and the curriculum are written through with the colonial (Merryfield, 2000). A later review of global partnerships for DfID (Sizmur *et al*, 2011) identified benefits to teacher and pupil global understanding, but the research only considered UK-based respondents, which perhaps illustrates the inequality in these global partnerships. It is such inequity that led Leonard (2008, p. 70) to prefer the term “global school relationships” to

avoid the misconception of the greater equity implied by 'partnership'. However, and notwithstanding the criticisms of global partnerships above, the benefits to school partners in Uganda in terms of the schools' self-esteem, quality of teaching, girls' motivation, and community pride in the school were identified by Bourn and Bain (2012).

The complexity of thinking that is required to engender mutually successful links is considered by Burr (2008) who acknowledges that often practitioners who consider themselves aware of inequity and promote social justice do not question these matters within school partnerships. The implied lack of reflection or reflexivity in such unexamined assumptions is, perhaps, where the focus of my research and its findings are most pertinent and possibly provides insight into this complex and potentially contentious domain.

Understanding intercultural learning through 'fiction'

Published research already cited around the theme of international study visits has tended to utilise various forms of empirical approaches and my research is no exception to this. It was not my intention to promote or reject any particular readings, but to seek multiple and fluid readings of intercultural learning to deepen my understanding through questioning, observation, reflection and reflexivity; all situated within a post-structuralist framework.

Using 'fiction' alongside 'non-fiction' is not a new phenomenon in post-structuralism, but in working between the binary of 'fact' and 'fiction'⁵, and by drawing on a range of sources, it enabled me to review a much wider array of data which deepened my understanding of intercultural learning. In chapter seven I analysed the intercultural learning of 'centre-minority' characters in three films: *The Darjeeling Limited* (2007); *Outsourced* (2006); and *Holy Smoke* (1999). These films portray contemporary intercultural learning by young adults from the 'centre-minority' during and after visits to India and I juxtaposed their 'fictional' learning with my analysis of the participants' learning in later chapters.

⁵ I use the terms 'factual' and 'fictional' with inverted commas to indicate my refusal to accept the binary that presents the former as being true and the latter made up.

1.6 Specific contributions to Knowledge

The 'latitude and longitude of learning'

My research explores the potential significance of the visit's geographical location upon the participants' learning. It is possible that an intercultural visit could be based entirely within the UK, for example by engaging with those communities with a high proportion of Asian heritage people. But sensitivities are exposed in such a concept that identifies certain peers as a group worthy of a study visit, including the dangers of giving this group a singular identity and its potentially voyeuristic nature. These sensitivities about 'Othering' are significant to an overseas study visit and are considered throughout the thesis, but there are other reasons why this visit and research were located in Kerala rather than within the UK.

My research was highly contextualised and situated. Understanding the potential influence of place on the participants' learning is an important dimension of my thesis. My work draws on theories of place to consider the influences of Kerala on those who visit in terms of how they learn and what they learn about. Post-structuralist views of place regard them as fluid, flexible domains with multiple and changing identities (Massey, 2005); through this reading I examined whether it was possible to read Kerala as a place and what could be faithfully represented as reality. Place may be explained with reference to 'space' and although space is often considered a more abstract phenomenon than place, their meanings often merge (Tuan, 1977). Place is seen as a more emotive phenomenon; when a space is given some meaning by people they become attached in some way and it becomes a place to them. My research investigated whether (or not), and how, the participants attached to physical and metaphysical aspects of Kerala during the visit and how this influenced their learning.

I examined the potential influences of Kerala's location on learning in this era of time-space compression and the significance of the physical and psychological global position of India and the UK on the participants' assumptions and learning during the visit. My earlier research about participants' perceptions about Kerala prior and post-visit (Hoult, 2011) indicated that the participants initially perceived India as a distant and 'developing country' where the participants would experience poverty. These were perceptions of difference. Perceptions post-visit were almost entirely more positive about Kerala and, unsurprisingly, indicated a more nuanced perception of place and global positioning.

'Colonial signature'

An idea I explore in my research concerns our 'colonial signature'. By this I mean the cluster of signifiers that are indicative of India as a colonial project. These comprise the words, symbols, products or other images that participants identified in India which provide some connection for them between India and 'home'. I use the term signature deliberately because it suggests something that is personal and unique rather than suggesting any generalised or collective experiential outcomes of a group. It was the mix of unique knowledge, previous experiences and underpinning values which potentially developed these physical and metaphysical artefacts to become their 'colonial signature'. Written signatures denote authenticity. They signify the 'real' person and our 'colonial signature' suggests that we and places are 'written' through with colonialism. These signatures potentially provoke reflection and readjustment of perceptions about place and Self, but they can also dupe and provide unreliable readings that become barriers to learning. Some of these signatures are rare, such as my sighting of a Royal Enfield motorcycle in India. Such a sighting may be meaningless to others, but was significant to me and evoked perhaps nostalgic thoughts of British motorcycles of the 1950s/60s. Alternatively, the signature might appear more ubiquitously such as seeing a sign for a global brand or the use of English language in India: however, all were subject to our individual interpretations.

With all 'colonial signatures' there was a need to problematise the colonial/postcolonial/neo-colonial connotations in what is an apparently post-colonial and globalised era. This was illustrated during my visit to Tamil Nadu where I was served Tetley tea. My immediate reaction was one of horror on seeing the use of an English brand in the country where that tea might possibly have been grown. It was only upon closer inspection of the product that I found that Tetley tea, a brand strongly associated with the UK, is now a part of the Indian global corporation Tata. This incident caused me to reconsider my approach to branding and globalisation and provided a timely reminder to suspend initial judgements after such a signature moment. On further reflection, perhaps I operated a double standard in viewing an Indian global brand more favourably than a British one. This drew me to question whether nationality was significant, or even relevant, in the global economy and perhaps indicated a tendency towards some personal colonial 'haunting' (Frosh, 2013) in operating a double standard. This exercise, however, indicated to me the potential power of the signature in influencing my thinking and strengthened my interest in it.

I investigated how the 'colonial signature' aided or hindered the intercultural learning opportunities provided by the visit. One's 'colonial signature' may be a significant means for participants to relate their experiences in India to 'home' and also influenced the nature

of the relationships that they made. As such the signature potentially provided a conduit for participants' personal and professional epistemologies to change. The nature of the signature, such as the Tetley tea example, could also be highly revealing about the individual's thinking and assumptions they make about a wide range of issues. Locating the visit overseas and not, say, to another culture within the UK, potentially enabled the reflection and learning to be deeper partly due to the nature of personal 'colonial signatures' that emerged through such intercultural provocations which are underpinned by the global power differentials between the 'centred-majority' and excentricised-majority'.

1.7 Language and Terminology

My use of English

I investigate the theoretical significance of language in my post-structuralist research and argue that language is culturally determined (chapter five). I was sensitive to my language and nationality being that of the previous colonial rulers of India and that my research was some 60-plus years after independence. The English language has a contentious and complex history in India, growing in status and use as a consequence of British colonialism and the associated 'civilisation' and education of the Indian people (Viswanathan, 1987). Understandably, it was discouraged by Gandhi and Nehru and yet it was the language used in the country's first constitution, and still retains an official status.

Underneath the modern Indian education system is a foundation built during British rule that diminished the traditional and ancient Vedic, Buddhist and Islamic education, which were some of the earliest forms of education known to global society. The shift in power and emphasis from a more trade-orientated East India Company to overall British governmental rule in the early nineteenth century brought considerable changes to India's education systems. Over 180 years ago Lord Macaulay, first Law Member of the Governor-General of India's Council, proposed a 'Western' education system beyond that of the existing 'Oriental education'. It included establishing English medium universities and schools as Indian languages were "incomplete, inefficient and lacking scientific vocabulary" (Sharma and Sharma, 2000, p. 81) whereas the English language was regarded as "pre-eminent even amongst the languages of the West" (ibid, p. 80). This not only paved the way for the wide-spread use of the English language across British India, but also the imperial

devaluing of ancient educational philosophies and promotion of 'centre-minority' philosophies through colonial educational reform (Sen, 2005).

The State of Kerala was a post-independence political construction prior to which the geographical area it now covers was formed of three political areas: the principalities of Travancore and Cochin, and the Malabar district of the Madras presidency of British India. It is arguable that the linguistic unity around the local language of Malayalam helped form the state of Kerala (Kannan, 2000). Furthermore, it is the use of regional, Dravidian-based languages in the southern Indian states that marks a difference between them and northern India where Hindi is the dominant language and, consequentially, Hindi is only taught as an additional modern language, along with English, in Keralan state schools.

As various forms of business English are spoken almost globally it is unsurprising that English is commonly used in Kerala notwithstanding its imperial heritage and neo-colonial connotations. This has created, for many Keralites, potential differences between what Bhabha (1994/2004, p. xx) terms the "language lived" and the "language learned" and the meaning of what it is "to survive, to produce, to labor [sic] and to create, within a world-system whose major economic impulses and cultural investments are pointed in a direction away from you, your country or your people" (ibid). Such a tension is significant as Wa Thiong'o (1986, p. 4) explains: "the choice of language and the use to which language is put is central to a people's definition of themselves".

The Indian north-south language and cultural divide, along with wider global economic factors, has meant that Gandhi's wishes for Hindi to be the unifying language of India and to remove the need for English have never been met. Article 343(1) of the Indian Constitution states that although Hindi is deemed the official language of the union, English remains an additional language for official purposes despite the intention of it only lasting 15 years after independence. Kerala, along with other Indian states, however, decided in 1991 to revert to local name places rather than use the Anglicised terms developed under British rule.

The 'centred-minority' and 'excentricised-majority'

Striving for appropriate terminology to describe the state of 'development' of countries such as India and the UK was challenging as I wished to avoid what De Lissovoy (2010, p. 283) calls the "hallmark of imperialism and colonialism" through a process that creates "partitions and divisions of the world". I was therefore sensitive to the gross simplification involved in reading the state of a country's development as a simple coherent phenomenon and in

dividing the countries of the world into binaries such as rich/poor. Holliday (2011, p. 2-3) identified this problem which involved “insurmountable dangers of falling into the same trap of overgeneralization and othering that is being addressed”. I was aware of the danger that any terminology that I used might become a simple binary that intimated a ‘them and us’ context which would become similarly entrapped.

I rejected terms such as First, Second and Third World to represent the ‘Western’ world, the Soviet Block and the rest of the world respectively. The implied hierarchy within such terms affirms the Eurocentric primacy of the ‘First World’ and the construction of the Third World has led Spivak to call this imperialist “epistemic violence” (Andreotti, 2007, p. 69) as it “obfuscate[s] the construction and naturalisation of Western dominance and supremacy” (ibid) and removes all traces of the pre-imperial history in these places.

A classification of global ‘north’ and ‘south’ is widely used to delineate relatively between the more economically developed countries in the ‘global north’ and the more southerly countries that tend to be less economically developed. Confusion may occur due to the inclusion of southern countries such as South Africa, Australia and New Zealand in the ‘global north’ group and the terms do not explicitly recognise the power dimensions inherent between these two groups.

Alternative terms to global north and south are ‘minority’ and ‘majority’ world. The term majority in this sense is related to a range of measures such as population and land mass to provide a collective term for those countries with relatively lower economic development. In doing so the terms seem to subvert the binaried power in that the term emphasises the majority world countries are indeed that and not a deficit of the economically richer minority world. I say ‘seems to’ because ultimately the power in this binary remains, and to ignore this would fall into Holliday’s (2011, p. 3) trap where the use of such terms “creates a seductive ease which could paper over the complexity” and risk “global othering”.

In acknowledging the power dimensions implicit within a post-structuralist reading of any binary, Holliday (2011, p. 12) uses the terms “Centre West” and “Periphery” which defines their relationship “as one of imposing and taking meaning within an unequal global order”. He recognises that although these terms are “psychological concepts” they do relate to global geographies in that they are associated with the “West and non-West” (ibid). These terms appeal to me in that they articulate the inherent power dimensions between them, not only economically, but also with regard to Eurocentric epistemological power.

In attempting to indicate the power within a minority of the countries over the majority of other countries, I adapted Holliday’s terms and combined them with minority/majority to develop ‘centred-minority’ and ‘excentricised-majority’. I use the terms ‘centred’ and

'excentricised' firstly to illustrate that such terms represent a process, rather than something that is natural or innate, in representing the centre and periphery (or that which is ex-centric). Secondly the term 'excentricised' is used instead of periphery to make ironic reference to the performance of 'Orientalism' by the West on such countries through a desire to name and position. In using these terms performatively, I recognise the need to be constantly reflexive throughout my work and to ensure there is legitimacy to use such terms through my ethical approach to my studies such that the irony of the terms 'centred-minority (hereafter 'CM') and 'excentricised-majority' (hereafter 'ECM') are not lost.

Furthermore there are considerable academic and political hegemonies across 'CM' countries that enable such a term to be cautiously used as a "process of constitution of identity; it thus refers to a position or positioning, to a place, or placing" (ibid, p. 3). Being of the 'CM' is a social construction of reality as perceived by individuals through their various socio-political lenses. To be of the 'CM' then is both "being subjected to a process...and by imagining oneself in the fantasy frame of belonging to a specific culture" (ibid, p. 4). In using such terms I, like Yeğonoğlu, use my terms cautiously and in attempting to convey some of their controversy use them only within inverted commas. Furthermore in creating such terms, I acknowledge that any general terms ignore the smaller scale dimensions of poverty and wealth within each region and neglect to reference a range of other dimensions that influence our sense of Self/Other such as gender, class and nationality. Yeğonoğlu (1998, p. 2) reminds us that being part of the 'CM' or 'ECM' also "differentiates" us as well as "homogonizes" us and thus there are further hidden complexities within these terms.

1.8 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis comprises sixteen chapters, which are summarised below:

Chapter one

In chapter one I outlined the nature of my research including forming the research aims and enquiry foci. I highlighted the significance of three research themes of intercultural learning, place and pedagogy and introduced my postcolonial epistemology and post-structuralist ontology. I outlined the significance of my research and discussed two specific contributions to knowledge that my thesis develops and finally explored the complex nature of language and terminology used in my research.

Chapter two

The second chapter introduces my research context and the influences which coloured my thinking. It is divided into two parts to reflexively consider

1. the influences upon my perceptions of Kerala including that of 'fiction', and
2. Kerala as our site of learning including an outline of the 2014 visit and the complexities of representing Kerala as place.

Chapters three and four

These two chapters explore, firstly, my postcolonial epistemology that helped me to understand notions of power and representation and, secondly, the three research themes; namely, intercultural learning, place, and pedagogy, all of which I introduced earlier in this chapter.

Chapter five

Chapter five develops my research methodology. 'CM' epistemology is a product either directly or indirectly of Enlightenment thinking which itself has been shown to be a colonial project (Spivak, 1993/2009). This is not simply a matter of thinking, but in the way a thesis is valued and in its stylistic construction. I took a post-structuralist position which recognised this colonial dimension which also allowed me to work between the binary of 'fact' and 'fiction' in a search for a faithful representation of reality. I regarded language as highly significant in my considerations of representation and I review the extent to which we can read the 'Worldliness' (Said, 1978/2003) of a text in considering intercultural learning.

In chapter five I also problematise the relationship between ourselves and others arguing that the Self is a construction of the Other. Reading ourselves in this manner reveals blurred and permeable boundaries which enable fluid constructions of the Self to emerge. I also highlight the importance of power within the ontological and epistemological frameworks of my research and how this is a factor in intercultural engagements.

Chapter six

I develop a 'Critical Ethnography of Pedagogy' method to collect my data in chapter six. This reflexive method influenced by feminism was used as a textual analytical tool to analyse participants' learning throughout the visit and their return 'home', particularly

through their written reflections, learning journals and interview transcripts as well as more 'fictional' accounts of intercultural learning.

Chapter seven

Chapter seven is the first of my data analysis chapters within which I consider the intercultural learning of three 'CM' characters in three contemporary films. The characters all travel to India and, in their idiosyncratic ways, learn about themselves as well as the Other. It is the process of intercultural learning as well as the changes in the characters' worldviews that I focus upon and then use my analysis to deepen my understanding of the participants' intercultural learning in the following chapters.

Chapters eight to fourteen

In these chapters I present seven participant narratives, chosen for reasons explained in chapter six, from the data presented in the appendices. Each chapter focuses on a participant's narrative of intercultural learning which I explore using a range of analytical levels that aimed to protect the 'wholeness' of the participants' stories and to enable their learning to emerge. Using this approach allowed me to avoid using dislocated extracts from the data which, in turn, risked representing learning in potentially unfaithful ways, and instead has allowed the rich, holistic interconnectedness of the participants' learning to be expressed. The narratives emerge as reflexive dialogues between the participants' data and my analysis. The process of analysing then enabled me to access the intercultural learning at the deepest level possible to give a thick description of intercultural learning from the visit that showed the interconnectedness of the participants' narratives with each other, with theory and of the influences of me, as teacher and researcher, on their learning.

Chapter fifteen

I draw my findings together in chapter fifteen linking the narratives to my enquiry foci through a range of themes that emerged during my analysis. From this process I developed a diagrammatic representation of intercultural learning identified within the thesis which summarises my findings.

Chapter sixteen

The conclusions chapter draws together my thinking developed in my thesis about my ontological and epistemological frameworks and theoretical lenses that I used. I review my learning from my research including the 'latitude and longitude of learning' and 'colonial signatures' and outline nine significant outcomes of the research. I identify implications for practice and future research opportunities and end with a personal epilogue about the significance of the thesis to me.

Chapter 2 Research Context

2.1 Introduction

In this contextual chapter I explore my perceptions of Kerala as the main research setting and the way my perceptions developed, likening this to Mezirow's notion of transformative learning as a "continuous effort to negotiate contested meanings" (2000, p. 3). Said, using Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks* tells us:

[t]he starting point of critical elaboration is the consciousness of what one really is... 'knowing thyself' as a product of the historical process to date, which has deposited in you an infinity of traces, without leaving an inventory (1978/2003, p. 25).

In this subjective, interpretive research my influence is significant, and I have taken a reflexive approach in exploring my own influences guided by Holliday who noted:

[i]t would, therefore, be a mistake to deny who I am and what my own ideological pre-occupations are, and to realize, and capitalize on the fact that I am an interactant in the area I am researching in one way or another (2005, p. 305).

I reflexively draw on a range of personal influences: teaching, childhood, fiction and previous visits to South India. As researcher and teacher, thinking reflexively by deconstructing experiences and acknowledging colonial influences, has aided my aspiration towards a postcolonial positioning. This was important: my teaching role was inextricably entwined with that of researcher and it had some bearing on the participants' experiences and the way that they constructed them. My influences also affected my approach to research methodology and methods which in turn influenced my analysis and research outcomes.

2.2 Motivations for and Influences on my research

Teaching

Teaching secondary geography from the inception of England's National Curriculum involved a strongly positivist, prescriptive curriculum, articulated through the dominance of

'fact-giving' texts (Morgan and Lambert, 2005). Its positivist nature perhaps seemed 'natural' to me having studied previously for BSc and MSc degrees in Geography and related sciences and local empirical fieldwork furthered this perception as well as promoted the significance of place to geographical study. Place influenced my research, albeit with a more nuanced understanding informed by Massey's (2005) post-structuralist approach to place and a wholly qualitative approach.

As a geography teacher educator, I provide a space for students to develop their own ideologies of teaching. My university teaching particularly has been underpinned by notions of the reflective practitioner (Schön, 1983) and participants' reflections about their experiences form a significant part of my data. My teaching and reading authors like Massey have challenged my earlier epistemology to consider subjective interpretations of reality where hypothesis testing is anathema and perceptions are to the fore. For Massey multiple interpretations of the world transcend 'simple' structures and instead focus on the 'grey' areas between binaries, where power dimensions emerge, and where a search for an immutable truth becomes futile. Developing such approaches in this research led me to search for the wider influences that affected my subjective interpretations of intercultural learning.

Family/childhood⁶

I recall from an early age listening to my father's tales of India. He was a post-graduate Art student who became conscripted to the British Army during World War II and for some of the time was stationed in India. He was both intrigued by Indian cultures and appalled by the attitudes of the resident British Raj to Indians and the British troops, perhaps illustrating colonial power relationships to both race and class in the 1940s. It is now that I reflect upon my memories of these tales and the cultural artefacts around my childhood home and wonder if these were the seeds for my interest in the world, to study geography and to travel. It is also reasonable to suggest, having an older parent born in 1914, around the zenith of the British Empire, that my own engagement with India has a stronger overtly colonial legacy (albeit critical) compared to many who, like me, were born over twenty years after India's independence.

This legacy resonated with Hicks' (2006) model of the 'extended present' that highlights the influence of historical personal narratives on informing one's future and one's descendants' futures. To exemplify, in addition to my father's first-hand experiences of colonial India, he

⁶ Extracts from this section formed part of a lecture given at the University of Kerala (Hoult, 2014).

was named after an uncle who managed Kenyan forestry plantations. My great-grandfather, born in mid-Victorian times, ran a northern textile business that would undoubtedly have utilised ‘Lancashire cotton’⁷ grown in India. Frosh (2013) calls such personally disturbing influences our ‘hauntings’ which interested me as it highlights the potential for such influences to structure our idiosyncratic dispositions towards intercultural learning. Such influences may arise from our response to previous and formative experiences linked to our worldview, which in turn is arguably a product of ‘CM’ ontology and epistemology and which may inform our ‘latitude and longitude of learning’.

My childhood remembrances of the media representation of the post-colonial sub-continent were of struggle and hardship. I recalled the famines in Bangladesh in the 1970s, the military attack in 1984 on the Golden Temple in Amritsar which arguably led to the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi later that year. Her son, Rajiv, succeeded her and was also assassinated in 1989. I also recalled, and later taught as a case study, the terrible gas leaks in Bhopal that maimed thousands of locals. The representation of post-colonial India in the news seemed to present India as a much more dangerous and perilous place than that described in ‘fictional’ accounts of the same. These accounts had strong colonial overtones associated with their historical settings and the way that Indians were portrayed (figure 2.1).



Figure 2.1 Montage of personal ‘Indian’ childhood influences (in clockwise direction from top-left: It Ain’t ‘Alf Hot Mum; Carry On Up the Khyber; A Passage to India; Gandhi; Jewel in the Crown).

⁷ Lest this example seems to only encapsulate Victorian Britain, I am currently a purchaser of ‘Yorkshire Tea’.

In referring to my childhood recollections I grew to appreciate the media's "legitimizing role in the production of social consensus" (Darder, 2002, p. 18). Comedy series such as *It Ain't 'Alf Hot Mum* (1974/2010) set in World War II portrayed Indians as lazy, simple servants to the British army and also mocked the British officer class. On reflection, *Carry on up the Khyber* (1968) portrayed Indians more sympathetically, albeit stereotypically, illustrating the wider social strata of Indian society. Here Indians appeared intent on defeating the British and reclaiming India with chimes of the Indian Mutiny, or First War of Independence of 1857 depending on where one's sympathies lie. Later in my childhood, Jim O'Brian and Christopher Morahan's adaptation of Paul Scott's *The Jewel in the Crown* (1984/2009) and David Lean's adaptation of E.M. Forster's *A Passage to India* (1984) were dramatised with more complex relationships developed between Indians and the British with decidedly sympathetic portrayals of Indians, particularly in the latter case. Finally Richard Attenborough's *Gandhi* (1982) illustrated the harsh emotional detachment of certain members of the British, for example in the depiction of the shooting of civilians at the Jalianwala Bagh Massacre of 1919, and the brutal treatment of Gandhi's peaceful protest underpinned by his philosophy of 'satyagraha' or 'truth-force'. In all cases the supremacy of the British white upper class with apparently 'natural' superiority (Darder, 2002) was unquestioned by the colonialists, and often by the colonised too, which concurred with my father's views of colonial India.

Further 'fictional' influences

As I grew older my knowledge of India developed, in part at least, due to reading novels and watching films with an Indian context. Figure 2.2 illustrates some of the more contemporary influences upon my understanding of India and intercultural learning. In addition to the 'CM' film characters I analysed in chapter seven as an element of my data, twentieth century British authors such as E.M. Forster's (1924/2005) *A Passage to India* and Rudyard Kipling's (1901/1994) *Kim* exposed the merits and problems of the British in India. Later novels such as Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981/2006) and Kiran Desai's (2007) *The Inheritance of Loss* explored postcolonial and cultural change in India and Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* (1997) explored love across class divides in Kerala.

My growing understanding of the influence of 'fiction' upon my perceptions of a 'real' place led me to consider the role of fiction in my learning alongside the participants' perceptions and that discussed in academic publications. To exclude certain texts would seem to diminish my examination of Keralan culture and learning expressed by intercultural

travellers which I considered supportive to my understanding of the participants' intercultural learning. I justify such an approach in chapter five and refer to 'fictional' accounts of visits to India by those from the 'CM' especially in three films: *The Darjeeling Limited* (2007); *Outsourced* (2006); and *Holy Smoke* (Campion, 1999) to form narratives of intercultural learning in chapter seven.



Figure 2.2 Montage of my contemporary literary and cinematic influences (in clockwise direction from top-left: 'Heat and Dust' by Ruth Pravar Ahluwalia; 'On the Road' by Jack Kerouac; 'Midnight's Children' by Salman Rushdie; 'The God of Small Things' by Arundhati Roy; 'The Inheritance of Loss' by Kiran Desai; 'Outsourced' directed by John Jeffcoat; 'Darjeeling Limited' directed by Wes Anderson; and 'Slumdog Millionaire' directed by Danny Boyle).

My realisation of the almost exclusive use of 'CM' texts in my thesis is not necessarily a self-criticism but more a realisation of its, and my own, 'CM' limitations. As I embarked on my research it was tempting to situate myself outside of the 'CM' by using 'Indian⁸' texts in order to help transcend a potential colonial overtone to my work. I acknowledge, however, that I perceived all texts through my own cultural 'CM' context within which I was located. Any reading of an 'Indian' text required careful and tentative cultural translation. After all, any text is situated which in turn adds complexities to its interpretation or in Said's words, "every literary text is some way burdened with its occasion, with the plain empirical realities from which it emerged" (Ahluwalia, 2010, p. 6). Furthermore I cannot de-centre myself and

⁸ I use inverted commas to indicate that an Indian-based text is not exclusively or purely Indian in nature.

am not the “syncretic border intellectual” (at home in both cultures) like Salman Rushdie or the “speculative border intellectual” (at home in neither culture) like Edward Said (Ibid, p. 40). Nevertheless, I carefully incorporate my reading of a limited number of Indian-published texts alongside ‘CM’ texts. In reading such texts the cultural translation through which I engaged was highly challenging, potentially resulting in misconceptions and/or simplistic theoretical readings, and as such my reading was highly tentative.

2.3 Kerala as the Place of Learning: A reflexive account

Representations of Kerala

In writing about Kerala I was aware of the potential for my ideas, developed over seven visits to South India, to misrepresent Kerala as a place of learning which then inform my personal ‘latitude and longitude of learning’. This is the only part of my thesis that specifically concerned Kerala and its people and in doing so it was perhaps more pertinent than ever to recognise the power, and tentativity required, of my authorial voice. As previously mentioned, Spivak’s (1993/2009) notion of the ‘Subaltern’s Voice’ is highly significant to postcolonial theory and I used her ideas in chapter three to develop my theoretical positioning with regards to voice overall in my thesis.

The following account of my perceptions of Kerala focused on my learning and the multiple versions of Kerala that existed in my mind. Accordingly I did not set out to write a grand Keralan narrative but considered it a reflexive means to show the way my thinking about Kerala as the site of our learning continued to develop and to illustrate certain potential ‘colonial signatures’ and an emergent ‘latitude and longitude of learning’. In doing so I revealed potential influences upon my research drawing on a range of personal reflections as well as ‘fictional’ and ‘non-fictional’ accounts of Kerala.

I aimed to avoid the danger of representing aspects of Kerala as a single stereotypical story through my privileged authorial voice. Arundhati Roy rails against such privileged power in her opening to *The God of Small Things* (1997, no page) where she quotes John Berger in writing “never again will a single story be told as though it is the only one”. Novelist Chimamanda Adichie also warns against the single story. She recounted her experiences of being positioned as a representative of all-Africa and being told singular stories about Africa by peers in the USA during her studies there. She noted that “the single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are

incomplete. They make one story become the only story” (TED lecture, 2009). This was also a potential matter of concern for the participants, as well as me, and I developed my theoretical positioning on stereotyping in chapter three within a postcolonial framework drawing particularly on Hook (2012) and Bhabha (1994/2004).

The difficulties of representing Kerala as the complex site of much of the learning considered in my thesis was illustrated by a resource I used to illustrate motorcycling in India through a montage of images (figure 2.3). To represent motorcycle use in India was no simple matter and no singular image captures this in sufficient depth without risking a single or stereotypical story; for example, of low-cost family mobility, modernity in India, apparent agency, or perhaps British nostalgia through the image of the Royal Enfield motorcycle, that I already noted was a personal ‘colonial signature’ from a once British company and which is now a successful Indian one.



Figure 2.3 The complexity of representation: motorcycles in Kerala

The complexity of representing motorcycling pales into insignificance when considering representation at a state or national scale. Kerala has certain characteristics indicated through its high social indicators that mark it as ‘different’ to other parts of India; however, to draw on Keralan-specific texts and to exclude others because they were not ‘Keralan enough’ seemed to severely limit the parameters of my work by excluding highly relevant

'other Indian' literature. Furthermore, as Khilani (2003, p. xv) says "the idea of India is not homogenous and univocal" and Kerala no more or less represents India than any other place in the sub-continent, which is a matter that I develop methodologically regarding representation in chapter five. I therefore draw on texts and film with an Indian focus that do not necessarily focus specifically on Kerala.

Previous study visits to South India

Prior to establishing postgraduate study visits I made two visits to South India. The first was with a group of colleagues who were invited to visit English-medium, Anglican church-affiliated schools and colleges to work with Indian teachers and lecturers. The invitation arose from a growing relationship between my institution and a group of schools and colleges in Kerala. The visit focussed upon English language teaching and enquiry-based learning. This visit enabled us to visit and teach at a range of venues including two teacher training colleges and a large 5-17 age range school all within proximity to the Kerala state capital Thiruvananthapuram. A reciprocal visit to the UK of five education colleagues happened the following year.

My second visit to South India in 2008 was part of a group of tutors and undergraduates on a three-week extra-curricular visit, mostly based in Tamil Nadu, focusing on a children's home supported by a UK-based charity which had historical links to my university. The children's home also provided primary education for its children who were either orphaned or, for socio-economic reasons, unable to live at home. The undergraduates taught a range of English language and artwork and part of the fees they paid for the visit was donated to the charity which paid for the construction of a local village school-room. This South Indian study visit was run for over a decade and formed the basis for a number of research publications including Scoffham and Barnes (2009) and Martin and Wyness (2013).

I developed my own study visit to Kerala for postgraduate student teachers following these experiences. Prior to the 2014 visit, which forms the empirical focus of this research, five extra-curricular short study visits were conducted. Rather than having a charitable dimension they focused on learning about Kerala's education system through visiting schools and a teacher training college which also prompted reflections about English education. I strived to build Kerala networks with an emphasis on the sharing of knowledge and established links with a local university which enabled wider and deeper connections to emerge. Through this connection we were able to share research between staff and students leading to a conference at the university in 2011 which included student

participation. The sharing of research and scholarly endeavours also furthered our relationship with the Teacher Training College and a joint journal has been published since 2012 which shares ideas between colleagues connected with the teacher training college and my own institution, including a number of published papers from previous members of study visits. It is from my notes of these previous visits that I drew in reflecting on my Keralan experiences.

Exotic experiences of Kerala

Nobel-winning Amartya Sen reported his arrival in Kerala as an “unalloyed thrill as the aircraft...descended slowly over the lush coconut vegetation, reminding me how breathtakingly beautiful this land is” (2006, p. 259). The tropical climate and vegetation is beautifully described by Arundhati Roy (1997, p. 1) who writes about the arrival of the monsoon where:

[t]he countryside turns an immodest green. Boundaries blur as tapioca fences take root and blossom. Brick walls turn mossgreen. Pepper vines snake up electric poles. Wild creepers burst through laterite banks and spill across the flooded roads.

Sen and Roy’s writing evoked perhaps exotic memories of my first arrival at a tropical hot and humid Thiruvananthapuram airport. The green swathes of coconut palms and the smaller banana trees on the fertile plain that emerged after first seeing long sandy beaches and blue sea with the high Western Ghats mountain range in the distance are still vivid in my mind. The physical geography from the air was radically different from that which was left behind in Great Britain and the ‘greenness’ of it all was a stark contrast to the aerial view of the aridity of the Middle East seen part-way through the journey. This was not the vision of dusty India expected from my father’s tales or from childhood TV!

I used Sen and Roy’s thoughts about the physicality of Kerala to illustrate its importance in my early construction of place. Gaining an understanding of place was a fundamental aspect to developing my awareness of Kerala and thus to deepening the potential for my own intercultural learning through my ‘latitude and longitude of learning’. My interpretations of the physical nature of Kerala underpinned my subjective cultural interpretations of it as a place and thus its physicality provided an important dimension for later, more fluid, nuanced readings of learning within South Indian cultures.

My perhaps tropical, exotic perceptions were augmented by the hustle and bustle of what was then a small military airport. The arrivals lounge was described as a “press of love and

eagerness” (Roy 1997, p.138) through the gathered families that had come to meet returning Keralites. This was perhaps indicative of the widely travelled nature of some Keralites, the importance of family and their global trade connections from this relatively small and densely populated Indian southern state. Kerala has a centuries-old tradition of global trade in spices not least with the East India Company which developed into an “entrepôt for trade between East and West” (Parayil, 2000, p. vii) and which now sees many Keralites working in the Middle East in a range of manual and professional roles.

Young (2003) argues that it is a defining moment for those of Caucasian heritage to be either positioned as the only white person in a room or not. Although one might reject such an essentialist reading his suggestion about experiencing what it is to be ‘the Other’ was personally powerful. I remember rare occasions as an undergraduate living in inner city Liverpool when I experienced some perceived vulnerability in certain locations and times when I was an ‘ethnic minority’, albeit as perhaps a cultural tourist and within the cultural power foundations privileged to a young, white, middle class British male. This feeling became more pertinent to me during my first visit to India. It was only after boarding our connecting flight from Qatar to Thiruvananthapuram that I realised, apart from my two colleagues, everyone on the flight was ethnically Asian. It is with some embarrassment that I recalled this moment; I would consider myself well-travelled including to northern and Southern Africa and yet my observation was essentially to do with the colour of people’s skin. Nevertheless, it struck me that I was probably travelling somewhere different to anything I had previously experienced. Even then, in the security of an aircraft, I did not experience the marginality, the lack of voice, the perception of abnormality or that more generally I live in a “world of others, a world that exists for others” (ibid, p. 1) that a postcolonial reading provides of my experience.

The exoticism of my arrival continued all the way to the hotel and beyond and in some ways remains with me still. I looked out of the car window upon the emerging and then disappearing scenes, noises and smells. I recall small shops without glass fronts, timber merchants, engineering workshops, small piles of burning rubbish, huge advertising hoardings for wedding saris and gold jewellery, temples and churches with loud music and bright lights, wandering dogs and tethered cows. The somewhat chaotic and apparently dangerous ways of driving involved lorries and buses whose size seemed to give them greater status and who were jostled by interweaving three-wheeled auto-rickshaws, numerous motorcycles, small cars and many pedestrians. Perhaps because of such differences, as well as delighting in my apparently exotic experiences, I identified commonalities that potentially became my ‘colonial signatures’ such as the traffic all drove

on the left, name badges of vehicles that bore familiar but nostalgic names of 'Leyland' as well as more contemporary global brand advertising such as 'Sony' and 'Suzuki'.

Exotic and chaotic perceptions of India are common to the arrival of many fictional characters, including those characters discussed earlier, and may be regarded as a somewhat Orientalist view of the Other. On reflection, I considered such exoticism to be an important developmental stage in my learning involving trepidation in arriving somewhere so different from that we left behind, some fear at feeling disempowered in an 'alien' environment, but equally excited and intrigued by the experiences and intercultural learning to come. The exotic did not fade for me, but equally did not become the single story of Kerala either, which is a theoretical dimension I develop in chapter three.

In some ways the exotic was subverted through strong, and sometimes overwhelming, interest in us; we became the ones who were viewed. We became an exotic, notwithstanding, or perhaps because of, the power dimensions still at play between visitors and locals. Whether this was the sight of two female students smoking, two male students swimming, others eating in cafes, looking in shops or just walking down a street; local people spoke to us in English and wanted to know who we were, where we were from and sometimes to have their photograph taken with us. Such interest troubled many of us and provoked considerable reflection. This apparently excessive enthusiasm and interest in us continued, perhaps even increased, during many of our school visits. Through our 'CM' lenses we could not fathom why we became the centre of such attention. Beyond our base location that contained a variety of tourists from across Europe as well as India, we tended to be the only non-Asian heritage people around. Was this interest as essentialised as a consequence of the colour of our skin and perhaps the status that this was granted? Did colonial power still hold such a sway? Or was it that the local cultures showed interest and deference to visitors rather than indifference, or even mistrust, or perhaps something else?

The locals' friendliness and interest in other people was remarked upon by almost all members of the study visits with which I have been involved. I am cautious to essentialise the culture of a population of approximately 39 million people and so draw on Sen (2005, p. 264) tentatively when he suggests that Keralan cultures embrace "opening the door to other people and other cultures" and through this there is a strong culture of learning from the Other including through its education system. He describes modern Keralan culture as "tolerant pluralism" (ibid) which he associates with an indigenous Hindu, Jain and Buddhist ancestry and Kerala's historical and ongoing engagement with the Other from early Syrian Christian settlers and the regular visits of Arab traders to more recent colonial times. Perhaps then the exuberant engagement with us had a local cultural significance. I did not

discount this, but the power imbalance noted in many engagements with locals in public and in schools was one that demanded considerable reflection and I consider it a feature of my 'latitude and longitude of learning'. It was a good example of the way that, without jumping to conclusions, issues provoked turbulence in our thinking, provoked questioning and reflection through personal consideration, spontaneous conversations, journal writing and through regular plenaries.

Power imbalances

The power differential through the economic difference between 'ECM' host and 'CM' visitor was huge; however, social indicators of well-being and the colonial relationship between India and the UK through the use of the English language and the cultural influence of British education in the Indian education we observed, furthered the complexity to the relationship between host and visitor.

English has a contentious history in India as discussed in chapter one. Using English language as our medium of communication during visits was an expedient exercise notwithstanding the complicated nature of the language in a post-colonial global society. It meant that our early visits were to English medium schools arranged and controlled locally. This brought benefits through access to schools, colleges and the staff and students therein, but clearly constraints about the parameters of our formal experiences.

A focus on English-medium schools meant that, troublingly, the early visits lacked meaningful engagement with non-English speaking Keralites, who mostly belonged to lower socio-economic classes where access to English language education was difficult for a range of socio-economic reasons. It appeared that our visits did not reach out to the poor sections of society which restricted the breadth of our learning about Keralan culture. Furthermore, many of the English-medium schools that we visited belonged to the Anglican Church diocese. During colonial times the rise of, particularly, Christian missionary schools arose from their "civilising mission" (De Lissovoy, 2010, p. 283) to the colonies and they promoted an English form of education which followed Macaulay's imperialist principles as well as a Christian faith. Many modern schools in Kerala have origins from these missionary schools which drew their curriculum from English education. Such colonial heritages began to sit uncomfortably with the high status that we were granted and my early surprise at the apparently traditional English literature curriculum became more understandable.

It later became apparent that all the private schools we visited had multi-faith inclusive admissions policies and included children of the three dominant Hindu, Christian and

Muslim religions in Kerala and, unlike the UK, religious education was not taught in schools. I was also challenged in my assumptions that a private education was always associated with rich parental elites. About half of the schools in Kerala are funded by private sources, charitable organizations or religious groups. Fees are charged for such schools; however, with the exception of a few international schools, fees are relatively low enabling people from a wide range of society to send their children to such establishments.

I was aware of the relatively well-known ‘fact’ that Kerala’s literacy rate rivalled many ‘CM’ nations. Kerala has had compulsory primary and secondary education as a policy for a number of decades, long before the principle of this was adopted as one of the United Nation’s Millennium Goals (for primary education). During my visits I became aware of the high levels of content knowledge in Keralan schools’ curriculum compared to the English curriculum. Teaching the curriculum was undertaken with limited classroom resources and often in didactic ways with pupil repetition and teacher questioning of pupils common until they elicited the ‘right’ answer. This concurred with wider analysis of Keralan school pedagogy which is described as “teacher-orientated and non-participatory [and] encouraging learning by rote” (George, 2006, p. 279).

The high levels of content knowledge surprised us perhaps because UK-based ITE tended to reject such pedagogic practices in favour of more interactive approaches built upon theories of the social construction of learning. I also reflected that our surprise in pupil attainment possibly exposed an erroneous assumption that associated low attainment with economically poor children who learnt in a second language in a classroom with limited resources, but whom were actually doing well at school! Such an erroneous assumption would illustrate ways that we were written through with the colonial.

The career aspirations of many of the pupils with whom we talked was also staggering; not just in that the pupils could articulate such a clear direction to their endeavours, but also in their levels of aspiration. The significance of education to the well-being of Keralites, especially women, was also cited as a key factor in the greater proportion of females in Kerala compared to males due to the acceptance of female children, low rates of infant mortality and of mothers in child birth (Sen, 2005; Rajan and Zachariah, 1998). The pedagogy employed in many Keralan schools, however, arguably leads to a “stifling of curiosity, creativity and initiative of students and teachers” (George, 2006, p. 279), and Sen (2006) linked these outcomes to the problems of finding suitably skilled young people for a modern workforce that required application of knowledge and skills rather than just content knowledge. It is perhaps one reason why Kerala’s unrivalled social indicators in India are

not matched by its economic ones and this social advancement with limited economic development has become to signify the 'Kerala Experience' (McKibben, 1996).

My reflections on Kerala education focused on the sites where much of the participants' observations and intercultural learning took place. It struck me that even in attempting to understand a phenomenon like Kerala education it was difficult to comprehend beyond the basic because I only had a 'CM' knowledge base and experience on which to draw. The need to observe and to learn through conversations without allowing my 'CM' educational assumptions to draw me to ready conclusions was important and a matter I developed further when considering intercultural learning and pedagogy in chapter four. Considering difference and discussing difference on its own terms rather than referring to my 'CM' experiences, or alternatively only focusing on similarities, was also a powerful analytical tool and I drew on Derrida's post-structuralist thinking about this in chapter five.

My learning about Kerala required me to make difficult cultural translations for it to deepen, and it struck me that through my experiences it helped me expose certain assumptions I held about Kerala, as well as gain valuable understanding about a different culture and especially educational matters which informed my 'latitude and longitude of learning'. I reflected that the level of my thinking about intercultural learning, and my personal and professional growth from the experiences, reached considerably more depth than my learning about Kerala culture probably ever could through study visits. My reflections informed my approach to future study visits and specifically to the 2014 visit on which my data collection was focused.

2.4 The 2014 visit

The 2014 visit had certain significant differences to previous visits. Firstly it was an elective Masters module called 'Intercultural Learning: A South India Study Visit' rather than being extra-curricular. Accordingly the participants understood that this course was an integral dimension to their ITE studies and required their social *and* academic engagement. It involved their attendance at two days of teaching before the visit, the completion of an intercultural learning journal during the module (appendix two), and re-immersion into the participants' placement school upon return to the UK. The participants were then required to write a reflection (appendix three) about their intercultural learning. Furthermore the elective module was open to all secondary and primary student teachers which provided a cross-phase dimension to the visit for the first time.

Through careful local negotiation the visit focused on a broader range of schools than in previous visits. Moving away from only focusing on church-affiliated schools through an important contact at the university, 'Dr Manish', helped us visit a Muslim Board school, a state Malayalam- medium school as well as four private English-medium schools. Of the private schools one was managed by a Muslim Board of Education, one by an Anglican Board, another was privately owned and the final one was an international school. Perhaps, significantly, Dr Manish had a strong cultural understanding of the 'CM' from UK and USA conference visits and his discipline of English literature. This seemed to aid our discussions about the focus of the visit and about mutually beneficial outcomes.

My attempts to aspire to greater equitability between hosts and visitors was advanced by growing the interaction between the participants and their Indian peers in sharing experiences as student teachers in supportive but unstructured situations. A focus on relationship building and of mutual learning did not disregard the economic disparity between the two groups, but through this focus I aimed to avoid the imbalance that Burr (2008, p. 6) noted during a Ghanaian study visit during which a local teacher said "when you come to us you are a visitor, when we come to you we are a resource".

Dr Manish's greater awareness of our 'CM' positioning helped me to liaise about the focus of the visit and his university role aided the development of a research dimension to our relationship. To aid mutual learning, a conference was organised that focused on education, language and culture, jointly sponsored by my institution and the local University. Local student teachers, English MA students and the visit participants were able to speak about their research projects at the conference and, through joint university funding, a publication was planned that included many of the speakers' papers. In addition, four of the 2014 participants and I have had other research papers published in a joint-funded journal developed with the teacher training college. In this way an equity was strived for that focused on the professional and academic relationship between Indian and UK-based student teachers notwithstanding the economic differentials noted earlier and that 'CM' approaches to research are globally privileged.

My teaching was informed by my scholarly endeavours associated with my thesis which highlighted the ways that my teaching and research were inextricably entwined, and is a theme I discuss later in developing my research methods. In articulating a positioning where I considered that we were written through with the colonial and that its powers were such that this needed exposure, I took the pedagogically political decision, supported by Martin and Griffiths (2012), to expose the participants to postcolonial theory. This potentially

provided them with a lens with which to consider their experiences and illustrated that my pedagogy was no neutral act, something which I explore further in chapters four and six.

In my pre-visit teaching, I argued that our influences on our perceptions of India were also not neutral. I shared my own montages of influences, some of which are included in figures 2.1 and 2.2, and asked the participants to create their own montages of conscious influences. I introduced ideas of Orientalism (Said, 1978/2003), illustrated through contemporary media such as film and advertising as well as nineteenth century narrative art (figure 2.4), and asked the participants to critique these artefacts. From the ideas of the artist having control of the narrative, up until the point of a painting's completion at least, I introduced the idea of voice and of representation, showing Adichie's (2009) TED lecture on the dangers of the single voice, and explained my difficulties in presenting something as simple as motorcycles in India through figure 2.3. Using these ideas of representation and postcolonialism we critiqued the intercultural learning of the three brothers in *The Darjeeling Limited* (2007).



Figure 2.4 An example of the exoticism of the 'Orient' in French nineteenth century art

The intercultural learning journal (appendix two), written specifically for the visit, was simultaneously a pedagogical and research tool. Participants were required to engage with their journal throughout the module, but it was an optional decision about whether to allow me to use this as anonymised research data. Following the specific questions which

enabled participants to reflect on the pre-visit components of the module, the sections related to the visit itself were open allowing daily reflection upon personally significant experiences. The journal also provided space for reflection (appendix three) upon returning 'home', prompting the participants to reflect on their experiences in order to draw out what they learnt about and the processes this involved. They were asked if their perceptions of India/Kerala remained constant from before the trip or if, and how, these had changed and ways that Kerala, as a place, may have influenced their learning. I asked if, and why, any specific images or events were prominent in their reflections, which linked to my ideas of the 'colonial signature'. At the end of the first week after our return each participant had an individual tutorial with me to discuss their reflection plans, which for some continued with email correspondence afterwards as well as a group evaluation of the visit.

Chapter 3 Theoretical Framework

3.1 Introduction

The opportunity for an international study visit to be a 'life-changing' event through deep learning is mirrored by the potential for it to become a superficial, shallow experience or conveniently forgotten once the participants returned 'home' (Weeden and Hayter, 1996; Martin, 2008). The enormity of any experience to effect such an ontological and epistemological change by overcoming 'CM' beliefs formed over a lifetime is significant and fraught with failure (Finney and Orr, 1995). Without exposure to the cultures of 'home' and 'abroad' through deeply reflective learning, the hidden assumptions of 'home' (Self) and abroad (Other) were likely to remain buried in our cultural norms with the likelihood of relatively shallow learning outcomes.

Understanding postcolonial theory, drawing on feminist Orientalism, helped me to explore intercultural learning, potentially to expose and transcend hidden colonial dimensions to our thinking in aspiring towards a postcolonial engagement with the Other. As such, postcolonial theories underpin my thesis and form its key theoretical framework. Study visits are potentially fraught with neo-colonial difficulties relating to power, voice, language and stereotyping as well as unreciprocated plundering of Indian 'knowledge'. Postcolonial theory therefore potentially provides a critique to consider not just intercultural learning, but the pedagogic processes and nature of such visits themselves.

Colonial discourse has been articulated as vital to combing "a range of differences and discriminations that informs the discursive and political practices of racial and cultural hierarchizations" (Bhabha, 1994/2004, p. 67). Postcolonialism tries to find ways to expose such discourses, which are still highly pertinent in *apparently* post-colonial times, partly through the power exerted by 'CM', neo-liberal ideology and practices and through the hidden assumptions through which we gauge and interact with the Other. Postcolonialism operates at the "interface between economic and cultural processes, placing emphasis on how cultural/epistemological assumptions frame relationships and injustices" (Andreotti, 2011, p. 13). Postcolonialism destabilises and questions power structures that are otherwise presented as normal or natural, and through this exposes such epistemologies as a product of the 'CM' and refocuses our thinking to other knowledge and ways of being from the 'ECM'.

Postcolonialism perhaps should be seen more as a process, or aspiration, than an existent state of being. The global power relationships of the 'masculine economy' (Cixous, 1975/1986) stand against a postcolonial positioning apart from on superficial levels that run the risk of celebrating *only* the Oriental exotic, or by imposing gross 'CM' assumptions in an engagement with the 'Orient'. It is perhaps through nuanced interactions that help develop a relationship with the Other, using appropriate pedagogical approaches that subvert the 'centre' of global politics, that aspirations towards postcolonialism can best be performed.

In engaging with postcolonialism, Krishnan's (2009, p. 265) cautions were salutary. He charged Postcolonial Studies as one that:

...caricatures "Enlightenment reason";...embraces nativism and identity politics;...dresses political resentments in academic language;...is a watered-down, depoliticized form of anti-colonial thinking;...is obsessed with nineteenth century colonial institutions to the neglect of current forms of political and economic domination; [and]...is a tool of Self-promoting immigrant academics.

In response, I recognised that as a 'CM' researcher enquiring into learning by those from the 'CM', within 'CM' academic parameters, that my thesis would be influenced by the Enlightenment; however, I aimed to strain from its influences by using a post-structuralist ontology, arguably developed by those from beyond the 'centre' (Ahluwalia, 2010). I used a critical feminist reading of postcolonialism as a means to engage with the (post)colonial in a manner which attempted to minimise the 'logocentric' within my writing. Such an approach recognises contemporary power dimensions at play, as well as those from our colonial heritage, which might influence the formation of exotic or stereotypical views of the Other. Such formations may be transcended in the development of deeper relationships with the Other and through this, oneself. I explore these matters throughout this chapter and highlight the significance of these areas of thought to my thesis in table 3.1.

3.2 Orientalism

Although not the first writer in this genre (e.g. Fanon 1967/2008), postcolonial theorists often cite Said's (1978/2003) text *Orientalism* which according to Williams and Chrisman (1994) inaugurated a new approach to enquiry, namely colonial discourse. Orientalism "is a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between 'the Orient' and 'the Occident'" (ibid, p. 5). It suggests a singular view of the .

Theory: Postcolonialism	Focus	Issues Addressed	Contribution to Analysis
Said (1978/83) Bhabha (1994/2004) Ashcroft (2001) Ashcroft and Ahluwalia (1999) Ahluwalia (2010) Andreotti (2011) Hook (2012) Spivak (1993/2009) Young (2003;2004) Yeğenoğlu (1998)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orientalism • Stereotyping • Worldliness • Singular/plural reading of Self/Other • Power • 'Colonial Signature' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent can participants' (and my own) understanding of South India and its people transcend a colonialist/Orientalist viewpoint? • What are the power dimensions in terms of voice, gender, choice of 'text' and 'pedagogic exposure to the 'local'? • What can be discerned from the 'text' in terms of its (post)colonial situation and context? • Can participants transcend a singular reading of (South) India and themselves? • What is, and what should be, my influence as visit co-ordinator on participants' thinking? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading texts plurally using tentative dimensions of situation and context in my postcolonial analysis • Identifying (post/neo) colonial triggers and barriers to learning • Understanding the power dimensions within these triggers and barriers • Were any signifiers identified that acted as barriers or triggers to deeper learning? • To what extent is stereotyping evident and how is it transcended? • Reflexivity – own position and influences on participants' thinking

Table 3.1 Summary of contribution of postcolonial theory

'ECM' from those in the 'Occident' or 'CM'. This binary borrows greatly from deconstruction and recognises the significant power games at play through this 'CM' hegemony although as I show later, scholars like Hook (2012), Young (2004) and Bhabha (1994/2004) argue there are difficulties with Said's approach to power and representation.

Said's Orient, as seen by the Orientalists in the 'CM', presents a singular image of an exotic, feminine 'Oriental' which is passive, lacking decision-making powers and the desire for development. The term 'Orient' became associated with the Near and Middle East in the early nineteenth century, evidenced by the poems of Victor Hugo (*Les Orientales*) which included "the staples of European Orientalist literature: pirates, pashas, sultans, spices, moustaches and dervishes" (de Botton, 2003, p. 71). Such views, despite their significant interest in rich and diverse cultures beyond Europe, were underpinned by assumptions of 'CM', cultural supremacy (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, 1999). By speaking from such a pinnacle about another's culture lies hidden power in the ability to disseminate 'expertise' about these cultures and to pronounce about the Other. Said's exposure of colonial connotations within such discourse has, according to Spivak (1993/2009), "blossomed into a garden where the marginal can speak and be spoken, even spoken for" (Young, 2003, p. 8).

Kipling's novel *Kim* (1901/1994), written around the zenith of Britain's Imperial powers, portrays Indian characters humanely, but as relatively weak of mind and body compared to the physically strong and morally upright British Army. Kipling's work with its unresolved contradictions and tensions of a love for India, and a humanity to Indians within an imperialist ideology, illustrates how empire was not merely a function of British politics but was more culturally embedded in wider society (Said, 1994). Imperialism *per se* carries "connotations of over-weening [sic] ambition and self-aggrandisement, the very antitheses of Britishness" (Williams and Chrisman, 1994, p. 1) and the colonial rhetoric illustrated by Kipling provided a moral cause for empire thus 'naturalising' the act of colonisation for British society.

The dehumanising of the colonial subject and the representation of 'CM' cultures provided the moral narrative to support 'CM' colonialism even in texts where the colonial subject is not apparently involved. Spivak (1985) deconstructs Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* illustrating how "literature provided a cultural representation of England as civilised and progressive: an idea which served to justify the economic and political project of imperialism" (Morton, 2003, p. 112). Representation of people beyond Europe is limited to Bertha, the white, Creole wife of Mr Rochester, who is apparently mad and restrained in the attic of Rochester's English country hall. While this is a singular example, Said (1994) noted

the rarity by which the arts in France and Britain resisted the idea of a weak or subordinate colonised race prevalent amongst colonial rulers.

Said proposed two forms of Orientalism (1978/2003), an imagined Latent Orientalism and a 'real', or more factual, Manifest Orientalism which influenced Bhabha's notion of Orientalism as, on one hand, a "topic of learning, discovery, practice; on the other, it is the site of dreams, images, fantasies, myths, obsession" (1994/2004, p. 102). Such contrasts and separation between the Latent and Manifest produces an ontological instability to the idea of the Orient, and the Occident (Said, 1978/2003).

After recognising these two forms of Orientalism, Said rapidly reunites them in his overall thesis on Orientalism and thus misses the opportunity to explore this instability further (Hook, 2012; Bhabha, 1994/2004). Such instability was portrayed by Bhabha (1986, p. xxvii) in his forward to Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* (1967/2008) where he describes an image of:

...post-Enlightenment man tethered to, not confronted by, his dark reflection, the shadow of colonised man, that splits his presence, distorts his outline, breaches his boundaries, repeats his action at a distance, disturbs and divides the very time of his being.

For Bhabha, theorising or postulating about the racial Other is seen as a "virtual obsession" by the coloniser in order to comprehend and make stable our knowledge of the Other (Hook, 2012, p. 160). Bhabha shows here that the way the colonial is written through us is not a simple matter of how we regard the Other, but the way that the Other is written throughout us. It is not simply "self and other but the "Other-ness" of the self" that emerges through our colonial infused ontologies (Bhabha, 1986, p. xxvii). It is the lack of a nuanced notion of Self/Other that Said is criticised about (Hook, 2012; Bhabha, 1984/2004) and is a matter I return to with regard to my post-structuralist methodology (chapter five).

A further criticism about Orientalism derives from its scope in identifying both a way of thinking about, and representing, large parts of the world. Hook (2012, p. 174) criticises Orientalism as simplifying issues through its "homogenizing frame of intelligibility over an incredibly diverse corpus of material". This criticism seems harsh, especially given the geographical emphasis that Said places upon the Near and Middle East and Anglo/Franco imperialism in the original text. Furthermore, it is the "political and cultural location" that Ashcroft and Ahluwalia (1999, p. 24) see as the original dimension that Orientalism brings to cultural theory. Hook's criticism is perhaps more historically justified in that the singular idea of Orientalism covers centuries of Imperialist interventions and he and Young (2004) are correct in that Said's rhetoric to expose Orientalism is indeed Oriental in its nature.

If Orientalism is not only an imaginary construct but also the means by which various 'CM' colonial actions have been justified and enacted, then Young (2004, p. 169) argues "how then can Said argue that the 'Orient' is just a representation, if he also wants to argue that 'Orientalism' provided the necessary knowledge for actual colonial conquest?" Said maintains that the Orient is a misrepresented construct but has not provided an alternative to this misrepresentation. Young identifies a reason for Said's alternative as:

...the general, essentialist paradigms which constitute knowledge of 'the Orient' also constitute 'the Orient' as an object in the first place - to provide an alternative to Orientalism would be to accept the existence of the very thing in dispute (2004, p. 167).

Said's intention to develop an active, political means to expose Orientalism through colonial deconstruction was highly successful and yet his avoidance of this apparently fundamental issue in Orientalism's epistemology is, for Young, the "lacuna" in Said's thinking in that his articulation of the Orient becomes Orientalist itself (ibid). A post-structuralist reading of Orientalism may see terms as 'representation' and 'misrepresentation' as an opportunity for their deconstruction and the exposure of the nuanced power relationships between the interplay of these terms. It is clear, however, that in order to provide a strong theoretical framework, further dimensions to postcolonial theory were required beyond Orientalism. Accordingly, I drew on Yeğonoğlu (1998) to develop feminist dimensions to Orientalism; Hook (2012) and Bhabha (1994/2004) in considering a psychosocial understanding of stereotyping and Cixous (1975/86) in regarding the exotic as a means towards deeper intercultural learning. Before these sections I now turn to consider notions of power and the Subaltern's Voice (Spivak, 1993/2009).

3.3 Orientalism and Power

The power of Orientalism is in those from the 'CM' or Occident who can imagine and define the Orient: they have a voice with which to pronounce about, and construct an objectified, silent Other. In other words, Orientalism's power is in its ability to make certain signifiers become the signified. Orientalism grew through the colonising of non-European countries by the imperialist might of many European countries but particularly Britain and France. Earlier, I illustrated the strong European cultural interests in the Orient and there is a significant connection between the cultural and military/political dimensions to Orientalism to an extent that "the former produced the Orient for the eventual appropriation by the latter" (Young, 2004, p. 166). Young echoes the words of William Blake, nearly two centuries

before, when he wrote “[t]he Foundation of Empire is Art and Science. Remove them or degrade them and the Empire is No More. Empire follows Art and not vice versa as Englishmen suppose” (Said, 1994, p. 12). Imperialism is therefore not restricted to military conquest but as Wa Thiong’o (1986, p. 2) describes it is “total: it has economic, political, military, cultural and psychological consequences for the people of the world today”.

The effects of Empire, described by Wa Thiong’o (1986, p. 3) as a “cultural bomb, removes the colonised people’s:

...belief in their names, in their languages, in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capacities and ultimately in themselves. It makes them see their past as one wasteland of non-achievement and it makes them want to distance themselves from that wasteland (ibid).

Such cultural destruction is exemplified in the denigration of Indian cultures by nineteenth century British imperialists who argued that their superior culture necessitated superior British rule (Morton, 2003). Imperial power was developed through political policies such as Macaulay’s Minute on Indian Education outlined in chapter one. Macaulay decreed that a true scholar of the Indian universities was one “who is learned in Locke’s Philosophy and Milton’s Poetry” and argued that “[a] single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia” (ibid, p. 113). The intention of these policies was to produce “a small circle of British loyalists but there was no reshaping of common beliefs in the society at large” (Khilnani, 2003, p. 22). The Indian political and education system, as determined by the British, produced an Indian ruling class conversant in British/European cultures speaking the English language which extracted power from wider Indian society and focused it on the colonial state (ibid).

Before imperial practice is deemed to be only of historical interest, or at least restricted to contemporary politics of the far right, Harvey (2009, p. 37) illustrates that modern ‘mainstream’ politics can still present such viewpoints exemplified by Bill Clinton’s comments about China’s accession to the World Trade Organization in “that it opened up China to the rule of law (as if China has no pre-existing body of law)”. Clinton’s comments disregard centuries of Chinese culture and illustrate the ways that ‘CM’ imperialism is conveyed through economic, political and/or military strength with a disdain for ‘ECM’ cultures and places (Bhabha, 1994/2004, p. 30). These imperialist approaches are made possible through ‘CM’ knowledge of the ‘ECM’. The more knowledge they gain the more power they have so that there becomes a “dialectic of information and control” (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, 1999, p. 69) in the search for ever more powers.

The power dimensions at play in Orientalism seem, at least superficially, to be presented as almost a binary of 'Powerful West' versus 'The Weak Rest'. Critics of this approach indicate that Orientalism supports this binary rather than benefiting from productive dynamics that deconstruction of these binaries supplies (Hook, 2012, p. 175). Said uses Foucault's ideas about power to show their strength of the 'Powerful West', whereas Foucauldian notions of power work to subvert and topple these structures of power to enable more fluid and temporary "bottom-up" forces to emerge (ibid).

The interplay between the binaries is exposed in Bhabha's (1986) tethering of the White Man to his dark reflection mentioned earlier in this chapter. Although the power lies with the coloniser, there is a degree to which energy is expended in the coloniser not being the colonised, and in repressing power resistances of the colonised to the coloniser. Furthermore, the 'CM' subject itself is riven through with, what Yeğonoğlu (1998, p. 2) calls "lines of fractures, rifts, discontinuities, and divisions". A post-structuralist reading of postcolonialism thrives on these fractures and, despite drawing heavily on Orientalism, I take a more nuanced position to power than is articulated in Said's seminal text.

The Subaltern's Voice

An important postcolonial dimension is a consideration of the voice that is privileged and the degree to which the more marginalised, or the 'Subaltern', to use Spivak's (1993/2009) term, are able to be heard. Subaltern, meaning 'subordinate', was a term given to a lower ranking British military officer and is used by Spivak to describe those peoples outside of the hegemonic power of colonialism. More generally the Subaltern term is fluid but has come to be applied to the marginalised in society or indeed societies themselves.

The Subaltern's Voice is not a new phenomenon. Said (1978/2003) refers to the nineteenth century French writer Flaubert's Egyptian travels and his dalliances with a woman, Kuchuk Hanem, of whom he writes at length extolling her virtues but never permitting her a voice. Furthermore, it is unknown if even this woman was named 'Kuchuk Hanem', which translates as 'little lady', and perhaps was a pet name given to her by Flaubert.

I referred to issues surrounding voice in my research in earlier chapters and return to this in developing my research methods (chapter six). The focus of my research on the UK-based participants' learning means that any issue about the Subaltern's voice in the research is limited, as I do not recognise the participants as the Subaltern notwithstanding the power differential between them and me and the need to represent their voice as faithfully as possible. However the Subaltern's voice is more to the fore in the nature of

study visits to the 'ECM'. There is a danger that such activities become an objectification of the Other, rather than a process that is more collaborative while still realising the cultural positioning from which one's learning takes place, which I consider further regarding decolonial pedagogy in chapter four.

3.4 Exotic Readings of the Orient

Said's notion of the Orient is built on the premise of its exotic, feminine and passive construction by those in the 'CM' (1978/2003) exemplified by Flaubert's writing about Kuchuk Hanem. Said identified Orientalism as a 'CM' means to construct the Orient which had a 'special place' in European thinking as it was seen as "the source of its civilizations and languages, its cultural contestant, and one of its deepest and most recurring images of the other" (ibid, p. 1). Such an exotic view is understandable and I alluded earlier to my own exotic, perhaps disorientated views of Kerala. To see such views of the Orient as the only reality, notwithstanding their legitimacy as a reality, is indeed likely to be charged with being exotic, romantic and patronising.

An exotic disorientation is not isolated to the East. De Botton (2003) reflects on his own 'exotic' views about his arrival in Amsterdam where even the signage evoked exotic thoughts through their colour, font and language. These sights were pleasurable as they were indicative of having arrived away from 'home' amid "the presence of another history and mindset" (ibid, p. 69) and he questions why one should be in awe of such simple things as front doors, curtain-less windows and trams. De Botton argues that our "intense reaction" (ibid, p. 78) to things foreign is understandable through certain familiarities that somehow relate them to our previous experiences, which resonates with my idea of our 'colonial signature'. He resists condemning exotic views of the Other, as to do so ignores how significant such details as trams or doorways are to us. The love of such exotica may be interpreted as an early or preliminary stage in learning about place and people with the potential for reflection upon these ideas to provoke deeper learning rather than them simply representing the delight in difference from 'home'.

The issue and complexity of the interpretation of 'exoticism' is also illustrated with reference to the play *L'Indiade* (Cixous, 1987). According to Shurmer-Smith (2001, p. 161) the play portrays "an exotic India of sumptuous costumes and drapes, swords and turbans" where "the whole theatre was Indianised, Indian food was on sale [and] scents and sounds evoked India". In critiquing Cixous' play, Spivak (1993/2009 p. 159) questions her understanding of postcolonialism and argues that the play could encourage "a kind of inspired, too admiring

ethnography and a romanticising historiography”. Re-creating such apparently Orientalist reverie of flamboyant aspects of India, while seemingly ignoring the plundering of its peoples and resources, does appear colonialist and potentially provides a superficial and singular reading of India.

Cixous’ writing is always playful, enabling her to produce poetical academic writing, poetry and plays that transcend the binary of academic and fictional writing. Her approach rejects the phallogocentric and embraces the creative approaches described above for *l’Indiade*. Cixous sees theatre as one might a religion, with mystery and secret rites, that reveal meanings to our actions and history (Alexandrescu, 1999). This exoticism therefore potentially enables deeper revelations to be exposed. Furthermore in enacting plays the audience is the interpreter of the play that are the “dreams and destinies of another people of another continent” and which transform the “real into poetic metaphor” (ibid, p. 268-269). The theatrical experience is not one to faithfully represent others’ reality, but to give it expression through the metaphor that is created on stage. This expression is situated in the present even though it articulates issues of the past. It is an ‘epic’ with mystery and complexity and provides a multiple and uncertain story for the audience/interpreter to behold. Thus the exotic becomes a means to potentially access deeper interpretations about place and people. Cixous’ approach can subvert readings of the exotic and help provide a plural and tentative interpretation of place and people through a range of creative genres. In doing so it helps reduce what Seth (2004, p. 97) calls the “presumptions of epistemic privilege” moving it away from a ‘CM’ view that derives from singular reasoning.

3.5 Towards a feminist Orientalism

Feminine and exotic perceptions of the ‘East’ are key elements of Orientalism and it is therefore perhaps of greater surprise that, despite Said’s focus on explaining the Orient in these terms, he did not develop a gendered argument within *Orientalism* despite recognising that this argument existed. A “racial and sexual” consideration of the colonised is demanded by Bhabha (1994/2004, p. 96); such a sexualised dimension should not be an additional dimension to Orientalism, but rather be considered in its own equal right (Yeğenoğlu, 1998). Without a feminist critique of Orientalism there risks a perpetuation of sexualised Oriental perceptions because the deconstruction of power goes no further than that of Orient and Occident.

It is the sexualised portrayal of the Orient by various Occidental artists and poets that provide a metaphysical place for sexualised language and imagery which went beyond the

confines of what was deemed appropriate in 'CM' society. An erotic Orient exposes and legitimises discussion that is, in effect, a projection of 'CM' sexuality that was culturally prohibited (Holliday, 2011).

The matter of 'CM' societal sexual suppression is illustrated skilfully by Gilbert and Gubar (1979/2000) in their consideration of Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*. I indicated earlier how English literature is arguably associated with imperialism and illustrated this using Spivak's (1985) criticism of *Jane Eyre* in which the only non-English character, Bertha, the Creole wife of Mr Rochester, is confined to the attic of his English country house due to her apparent madness. The representation of Bertha is undeniably problematic; however, Gilbert and Gubar's feminist argument draws on psychoanalytic theories and presents a much more sympathetic picture of Brontë's character development of Bertha. They argue that the pressures of a 'masculine' Victorian English society that caused such reactions in the fictitious Bertha provided different, but similarly constrictive, pressures on female authors such as Charlotte Brontë. The sensibilities of society were such that Brontë was unable to present a character like Jane Eyre in any strongly emotive or sexualised way; however, Gilbert and Gubar argue that creativity cannot be suppressed and as such there emerges an emotive, sexualised side to Jane Eyre in the form of 'mad' Bertha which was more acceptable to 'CM' society.

The feminist argument regarding *Jane Eyre* is positioned colonially in Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966/2000). Her novel develops a strong colonial, as well as feminist narrative through her prequel to *Jane Eyre* which portrays life in the Caribbean between Rochester, a colonial sugar trader, and his new wife, Bertha. Their early romance, enacted within the apparently relative cultural freedom of the Caribbean, diminishes as Rochester's aloofness and masculine performance of an emotionally clipped, upper class, Victorian gentleman grows. This is mirrored by the openness and passion of his wife. Her apparent 'madness' can be understood as growing desperation and being repelled against Rochester's aloofness and lack of empathy as well as the cultural dislocation that must surely have been felt by her character in exchanging life in the Caribbean for one in upper class, Victorian, rural England.

While Spivak's (1985) criticism of Charlotte Brontë is still valid, my point is that a purely postcolonial reading regarding power is not sufficient and that a more nuanced consideration of gender and sexuality exposes a richer and deeper consideration of Orientalism which writers like Yeğenoğlu (1998) and Lewis (1996) have developed. Reading this issue as not only colonial but as gendered too, illustrates the importance of a psychosocial approach in the consideration of the motives of the Self within wider societal

pressures. It is also apparent that Said's lack of consideration of gender/sexuality prevented him from investigating aspects which Bhabha and others focused upon later (Yeğenoğlu, 1998).

Yeğenoğlu's (1998) consideration of the treatment of the veil provides a strong insight into a gendered Orientalism. Taking this issue literally, her argument illustrates how in the past the harem was beyond the limits of 'CM' males bent on understanding and experiencing the Orient as fully as possible. The veil, in this sense, becomes a sexualised fantasy situated in the harem and the only insight into this was through the reports of 'CM' women who were permitted access to it. I consider the veil metaphorically too. Our intercultural understanding is masked by a veil of culture and gender. It is deepened when we learn what is behind the veil, not in a proprietarily, voyeuristic manner, but as a means of understanding and building relationships with the Other through cultural translations; a key dimension to intercultural learning that avoids stereotyping and generating misconceptions.

3.6 Stereotyping and the 'colonial signature'

It is certainly possible that participants on a short study visit may develop highly nuanced understandings regarding the complexity of the cultures with which they interact. It is also quite possible that they develop misconceptions, or at least articulate ideas about culture that are grossly simplified, both of which help inform their worldviews. Certain values-based questions arise about who is to 'judge' whether an idea is just over-simplified, or a stereotype, or if it demonstrates deep understanding. Bhabha (1994/2004) argues that in considering the process of stereotyping rather than its outcomes, we focus upon the ways that colonial discourse is developed and maintained which removes the temptation to test stereotyping through normalised judgements. Such a judgement risks reifying stereotypes and presents them as singular and whole, rather than as multiple and fragmented views which create considerable anxiety in the colonial mind (Hook, 2012). In addition, gaining understanding of the process of stereotyping, perhaps more than its outcomes, may assist me in understanding the learning processes of visit participants and whether a fixed, singular story was avoided in our understanding of the Other *and* ourselves.

Adichie's view that stereotypes are not necessarily wrong, but they suffer from the representation of reality through a single story (2009), conflicts with Bhabha's (1994/2004) position that a stereotype is not merely a simplification, but more a distorted or flawed representation of reality. Either way the repetition of the single story, if perpetuated, becomes, according to Bhabha (1994/2004, p. 107), an "arrested fixated form of

representation". Fixity is described neatly by Hook (2012, p. 161) as a "buttoning down" of the Other such that difference is normalised through essentialising the Other, but which causes anxiety in the coloniser's mind. The aim of fixity is to ensure a separation between coloniser and the colonised through an apparent purity of thinking about race or culture which is not contaminated by the Other.

Notions of purity stem from what Bhabha (1994/2004, p. 74) calls the "myth of historical origination" where one's race or culture has primacy over others. It is easy to imagine the instability of such knowledge given the potential for counter arguments to be either heard or experienced and thus infiltrate its apparent purity. This instability is the cause of the coloniser's anxiety and requires the coloniser to repetitively magnify difference in order for it to appear real, to such extents that the coloniser reaches levels of "disorder, degeneracy and [becomes] daemonic" (ibid, p. 94).

Bhabha (1994/2004, pp. 94-95) argues that stereotyping is "a form of knowledge and identification that vacillates between what is 'in place', already known, and something that must be anxiously repeated". Such paradoxical thinking, with seemingly stable and unstable independent dimensions to the generation of knowledge suggests such thinking draws beyond our cognitive consciousness and is also a function of our "unconscious functionality" (Hook, 2012, p. 162). Hook argues that without an understanding of the unconscious play around "desire, anxiety and fantasy" within the coloniser and the colonised, then we will not grasp their related postcolonial dynamics of "power and resistance" (ibid, p. 160). This is what Bhabha calls 'ambivalence'. He argues that the strength of ambivalence provides the 'currency' of colonial stereotyping and enables it to be repeated to give an appearance of truth but which is always over-excessive and beyond what may be proven by experience or by logical construction.

Bhabha's use of ambivalence illustrates his use of psychoanalysis enabling the study of colonial discourse at the scale of, and within, the Self. In this he shows similarities in his approach to Fanon and a significant departure from Said's thinking. A second, and related, difference is that Bhabha considers the *processes* of colonial discourse and differentiates himself from Said whom he argues focuses solely on its content (Hook, 2012).

Stereotyping for Bhabha is not just one of a singular essentialist representation of the Other. It should be read with regard to the "multifarious processes of subjectivity" (Hook, 2012, p. 165) and it reveals significant matters about the Self. Our thinking can be revealed in our use of metonyms and metaphors to articulate the stereotype. Metonyms⁹ and metaphors

⁹ The term used to describe our substitution of a related or connected term which often uses whole/part links. For example in education we might talk about a 'school says' when clearly this term, which infers the

provide a substitutive term that enables the stereotype to be represented by drawing upon its features that are emphasised and which leads to its further essentialisation. The original feature of the stereotype is then displaced in the case of the metonym, and condensed in the case of metaphor, and illustrates at an unconscious level the process of essentialisation (Hook, 2012).

Our own 'hauntings' come to bear on the way we represent what we might begin to fixate upon and what is so disturbing that we disavow it. The process links to my ideas of the 'colonial signature', but I want to argue that this is not necessarily a negative process that is a barrier to learning, as there is the potential for this event, or object, to become a critical turning point of learning through reflexively reviewing the reasons for the significance of the 'colonial signature' to our learning.

The 'colonial signature'

I briefly outlined my idea of the 'colonial signature' in chapter one. It is a personally significant signifier of language, symbols, products or other images that acts, through some two-way connection between the 'ECM' and 'home' as a conduit or inhibitor, and at times simultaneously both, to our intercultural learning. The term 'signature' is used deliberately as something that is personal and unique rather than suggesting any generalised or collective experiential outcome. The 'colonial signature' denotes writing; it suggests that we and places are 'written' through with some form of colonialism and therefore, gives an insight into the ways colonialism is potentially written through us in the 'CM'.

For those of us from the 'CM' there is almost undoubtedly a former colonial and/or a neo-colonial relationship with the 'ECM'. For the British this is arguably strong in our relationship with India with whom our colonial, trading and intercultural relationship spans well over three centuries: a matter which may also potentially emerge in our 'latitude and longitude of learning'. A 'colonial signature' is the mix of one's unique knowledge, previous experiences and underpinning values (our life histories) which provoke these physical and metaphysical artefacts to become our individual 'colonial signature'. For some this may evoke links to a former colonial time, whereas for others it may provide a link to globalisation and the neo-colonisation of multinational corporations.

whole institution, substitutes for probably an individual such as the headteacher through which the latter term is displaced. Hook (2012) differentiates metonyms as a means to highlight the realism often linked to something physical (like a school) from the more poetic use of metaphors.

The 'colonial signature' has some resonance with Said's idea of the 'Median Category'. He outlines how the Median Category occurs when:

[s]omething patently foreign and distant acquires, for one reason or another, a status more rather than less familiar. One tends to stop judging things either as completely novel or as completely well-known: a new median category emerges that allows one to see new things, things seen for the first time, as versions of a previously known thing (Said, 1978, pp. 58-59).

Said's Median Category does not resonate with de Botton's exotic experiences with certain signifiers in Amsterdam discussed earlier, and is referential to previous constructions of knowledge or being, rather than being seen as a matter of difference as Derrida (1967/2001) would advocate. He verges on psychoanalysis in his view of the Median Category as something we use:

...not so much a way of receiving new information as it is a method of controlling what seems to be a threat to some established view of things.... The threat is muted, familiar values impose themselves, and in the end the mind reduces the pressure upon it by accommodating things to itself as either 'original' or 'repetitious (Said, 1978, pp. 58-59).

Said did not elaborate further upon his theories underpinning his Median Category and it has been left to scholars like Bhabha (1994/2004) and Hook (2012) to indicate the conscious and unconscious dimensions to the Median Category who both view this in terms of stereotyping. Bhabha (1994/2004, p. 73) develops Said's Median Category writing that our fixing of the strange onto what is more familiar is a repetitious process that "vacillates between delight and fear", which links to the psychoanalytical term of 'fetish'. Fetish¹⁰ derives from the fear of some form of catastrophic loss that Bhabha relates to the potential for experiences to significantly challenge some people's worldview.

Fetish as a way to understand how stereotyping occurs helps see the Median Category and potentially the 'colonial signature' as a device of fixity which Hook (2012, p. 179) describes as "keeping anxiety at bay and protecting a narcissistic orientation to pleasure or subjectivity". A fetish may be an object, activity or experience. It occurs, according to

¹⁰ It is not my intention to deviate in order to discuss psychoanalysis in detail; however, I find reference to terms such as fetish useful. Fetish is seen by Freud as a result of a trauma experienced during the sexual maturation of boys linked to the realisation of the difference of the female body and particularly the lack of penis which causes the realisation of the catastrophic potential for castration (Hook, 2012). I reject the biological essentialism of Freud; however, the more metaphorical consideration of loss by Lacan (Bailly, 2009) is more appropriate to a post-structurally informed thesis and thus the idea of fetish, especially in Bhabha's use of it, is useful.

Bhabha, through the need to focus upon the construction of some form of knowledge because of a pressing need linked to a moment in history. These moments that come to our attention are a function of “difference, defence, fixation and hierarchization” (Bhabha, 1984/2004, p. 73) which thus exposes the power of the colonial within us.

The fetish is distinguished from disavowal which is seen as a more extreme psychological defensive response to external experiences. These experiences are seen as traumatic as they provoke “recognition-yet-denial” (Hook, 2012, p. 179) of the phenomenon resulting in apparently no change in the individual. The lack of change suggests a fixity to thinking with other ideas pushed beyond a conscious periphery and which concurs with Andreotti’s (2013) vision of the ‘home’ ‘disposition towards difference’ examined in chapter four.

I am rather more hopeful for the ‘colonial signature’ than Said, Bhabha and Hook’s view of the Median Category notwithstanding the potential for a colonial signature to become stereotypical. Such a ‘colonial signature’ could be underpinned by fetish, fixity and anxiety which thus dupes and provides unreliable readings that may prove to be barriers to deeper learning in the longer term. However, in a culture of reflective tentativity where we reflexively consider the formulation of our ‘colonial signatures’ they potentially become a means to consider the way we develop our thinking, why particular signatures were of significance and if, and how, we refer to ‘home’ during this process. Our signatures are perhaps seen as a milestone along the route of intercultural learning which become significant prompts to enhance our thinking through reflexivity and reflection. Our signatures potentially provide a conduit for readjustments to our perceptions of Self/Other and epistemological and perhaps ontological change.

I now turn to consider my research themes set within my postcolonial epistemology that I regard as significant factors that may influence intercultural learning, namely intercultural learning itself, place and pedagogy.

Chapter 4 Research Themes

4.1 Introduction

To *some* degree we live in political, and to a lesser extent, economic, post-colonial times; however, as Wa Thiong'o (1986) argues, 'decolonising the mind' is an ongoing struggle, a matter which Sharp (2009) also discusses. Research about 'CM' study visits to the 'ECM' indicates that they often fail to expose 'CM' epistemologies that underpin our thinking (Martin and Griffiths, 2012), and thus any ensuing intercultural learning tends to lack an awakening about the extent to which we are written through with the colonial. Without an exposure to our colonial traits it seems difficult for intercultural learning to reveal and then challenge our worldviews. I liken this process to transformational learning, should this challenge cause an epistemological change in the learner (Mezirow, 2000).

In this chapter I consider the significance to my research of my three research themes of *intercultural learning, place* and *pedagogy* which are summarised in table 4.1. Intercultural learning is "complex, holistic and deeply personal" (Hicks, 2006, p. 100) and its setting (place), and the pedagogies used are interpreted by individuals as a consequence of their psychosocial 'hauntings'. In developing my argument around the complexity of intercultural learning I articulate the dispositions towards learning that promote an awareness of our worldviews (Andreotti, 2011; 2013). By drawing on theories of transformative learning (Mezirow, 2000) and critical cosmopolitanism (Holliday, 2011; Delanty, 2009) I provide a framework through which to consider deeper learning through our engagement with the Other.

The intercultural context of learning, and more pertinently the participants' perceptions about where learning happens in relation to its global setting, refers to my second research theme of 'Place'. I develop my idea around the 'latitude and longitude of learning' and use post-structuralist theories of place drawing on Massey (1994; 2005) to argue that our perceptions of a place's global setting and its global interconnectedness creates bridges and barriers towards deeper learning about Self/Other.

My third research theme of 'Pedagogy' influences individuals' perceptions of people and place and provides the potential for experiences to be transformative to our personal and/or professional selves. The pedagogies that promote transformative learning and particularly de-colonial pedagogy (De Lissovoy, 2010) are considered as a means to expose the hidden

assumptions that we make about life and the world through culturally buried and apparently 'natural' thoughts.

4.2 Intercultural Learning

Critical Cosmopolitanism

Our social actions and decisions happen in complex situations where their outcomes are uncertain but often have global determining factors (Delanty, 2009); however, our psychosocial interpretations of these factors mean that we all consider matters differently albeit within dominant cultural paradigms. A cosmopolitan orientation towards our social actions and decision making provide a means to express and interpret our world experiences which in doing so connects theories of globalisation to those of social and political theory (ibid).

The cosmopolitan experience and interpretation of the Other through the re-interpretation of the Self is called the Cosmopolitan Imagination (ibid). This imagination is provoked during "moments of openness" to develop a new relationship between Self/Other in a world setting (ibid p. 53). An Imaginative Cosmopolitanism develops an approach that brings sociological empirical research together with a cosmopolitan philosophy which therefore develops both a worldview and a means to analyse the critical imagination that views:

...the world in terms of its immanent possibilities for self-transformation and which can be realized only¹¹ by taking the cosmopolitan perspective of the other as well as global principles of justice (ibid, p. 3).

A cosmopolitan imagination has the potential to provide a base on which to consider our changing views about Self/Other in the context of intercultural learning as well as indicating a means by which transformative learning takes place. One's imagination is significant in an intercultural setting as the ability to imagine other viewpoints is a significant dimension to transformative learning (Mezirow, 2000). Delanty (2009, p. 7) identifies four social orientations that enable a 'cosmopolitan imagining'¹² to be developed.

¹¹ Delanty argues that Cosmopolitanism is the 'only' way to achieve such outcomes and while I recognise its significant role I would always stress the plurality of means to achieve any outcome.

¹²I prefer the term 'cosmopolitan imagining' for methodological reasons that emphasises the process rather than presenting something as an entity with the potential for this to be read as fixed.

Theories	Focus	Issues Addressed	Contribution to Analysis
1. Intercultural Learning Levinas (1972/2006) Delanty (2006;2009) Holliday (2011) Meyer <i>et al</i> (2008) Mezirow (2000) Andreotti (2007/2010/2013) Scoffham and Barnes (2009) Martin and Griffiths (2012) Martin and Whybrow (2013) Hicks (2006) Weeden and Hayter (1996) Rogers and Tough (1992)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transformative Learning • Critical Cosmopolitanism • Dispositions towards difference • Threshold Concepts • Intercultural Learning: cognitive, affective and existential domains • Shallow/deep learning • Triggers to learning • Learning Spaces • Cultural baggage/Third Space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are participants able to 'make the familiar strange' and avoid neo-essentialist readings of India as a place and its people? • How does experiential inter-cultural learning in the field (and my own co-ordination of it) influence participants' understanding of South India and themselves professionally and personally? • What are the significant conceptual/affective leaps needed to deepen and develop one's thinking? • Can a critical cosmopolitanism emerge from this learning? • Do participants understand their own humanity through the humanity given to others? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of personal, significant threshold concepts potentially linked to 'colonial signatures' • Reflexivity: influence of Self on participants' thinking • The significance of a pedagogy focussed on relationships to reading with a (post)colonial lens • Indications of 4 dimensions of a critical cosmopolitanism • Perceptions of personal and professional change
2. Place Agnew (1987) Creswell (2004) Massey (1994; 2005) Harvey (2009)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place and its position in the World • Place as process • Place that lacks impermeable, metaphysical boundaries • Latitude and Longitude of Learning • Place as social construction situated between Self/Other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is Kerala perceived as a place within a global context and how does my co-ordination of the visit influence these perceptions? • What is the significance of place and its global interconnectedness on one's learning? • How does place influence one's understanding of the Other and, as a result, Oneself? • What is the significance of being culturally/geographically away from 'home' on one's learning? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The significance of understanding place as a global setting in textual analysis • Reflexivity: my thinking on the place as seen by the participants • The significance of the latitude and longitude of place on intercultural learning and understanding of the Self/Other
3. Intercultural Pedagogy Levinas (1972/2006) Freire (1992/2004 and 1998) Darder (2002) Lissovoy (2010) Andreotti (2011) Hicks (2006)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Humanism of the Other • Teachers as cultural workers: pedagogy as political act • Pedagogy of Hope • Decolonial Pedagogy (pedagogy of Love) • Importance of relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can a study visit utilise decolonial pedagogies to develop participants' understanding of Self/Other? • What influences do my thinking and actions related to decolonial pedagogy have on participants' thinking? • How can a focus on relationship building within the visit promote a decolonial pedagogy? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indications of participants articulating global power positions in their learning and relating to the Other • My influences on pedagogy and participants' thinking • Participants articulation of a postcolonial position to the Other • Participants indicating significance of relationships in their intercultural learning

Table 4.1 Summary of the contribution of the research themes

A cosmopolitan orientation

1. stresses cultural difference and pluralisation,
2. occurs in the context of global-local relations,
3. thinks beyond established borders, and
4. involves the reinvention of political community around global ethics.

There is considerable resonance between the dimensions of 'cosmopolitan imagining', the three research themes of intercultural learning, place and pedagogy and transformative learning. The cosmopolitan orientation recognises the importance of plurality, fluid boundaries and an openness to change which all chime with Andreotti's (2013) 'dispositions towards difference' and Massey's (1994/2005) progressive views of place which I consider later. Delanty's fourth dimension of 'cosmopolitan imagining' highlights the significance of pedagogy in challenging us to expose hidden ideologies and re-orientate our thinking towards the political community and global ethics; pedagogy is never a neutral act and nor are its outcomes.

The emphasis on the ability to think beyond borders helps alleviate a problem that Delanty identifies with much of sociological study in its emphasis on the nation which Holliday (2011) argues provides a crude scale on which to essentialise about human characteristics and traits. In contrast, 'cosmopolitan imagining' has the potential to transcend the danger of national identities dictating our worldview in a search for a more global scale of intercultural communication and transformation (ibid). A nationally dominant 'neo-essentialist' viewpoint freezes our views about the culture, and cultural differences, of Self/Other producing a process of potentially nationalistic othering through defining the Other through a "grossly simplistic exaggerated and homogenous, imagined, single culture" (Holliday, 2011, p. 5). A tension emerges by using the nation, or state, as a simple, uncritical unit in which to group an apparently single culture.

At least two related cautions emerged by drawing on the universality inherent in cosmopolitanism. Cosmopolitanism has a classical heritage and was developed by Kant during the Enlightenment into a universal view of humankind (Harvey, 2009). Earlier I highlighted the Eurocentric arrogance that made European philosophy and culture supreme and that ignored the plurality of cultures beyond its own. This resonates with the philosophy of imperial cultures (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, 1999) and as such any use of cosmopolitanism has to be treated with caution in relation to my postcolonial theoretical framework. However, it is important to recognise that contemporary *critical* cosmopolitanism differs considerably from Kantian 'classical cosmopolitanism' while still acknowledging the role that Kant played in the inspiration for more contemporary cosmopolitanism (Harvey, 2009). A critical

cosmopolitanism draws more from critical social theory (Delanty, 2006) which deliberately draws on global thinking about critical cosmopolitanism. It promotes epistemological pluralities that are prompted when thinking extends beyond 'ECM' boundaries and in doing so helps these boundaries become more epistemologically and ontologically permeable.

The second potential problem regarded the universal claims of cosmopolitanism with the post-structuralist ontology of this thesis. In recognising that relative universalities 'exist', I read any apparent universality through my cultural lenses rather than in absolute terms, which provides the opportunity for a more interpretive and critical cosmopolitan consideration of sociology to emerge (Delanty, 2009, p. 53). Such a cautious regard of universalism through the recognition of my own cultural lenses would seem to help provide a suitable theoretical means through which to examine intercultural learning and the potential to demonstrate 'cosmopolitan imagining'.

Transformative Learning

I explore theories of transformative learning in order to elaborate upon what is meant by a transformation and the extent to which this may provoke change in ourselves, before the significance of my research's intercultural setting draws the theoretical focus towards intercultural learning. A focus on transformative learning does not negate the value of other forms of 'informative learning' (Kegan, 2000), which may be highly significant to individuals. The context of this research, however, suggested that transformative learning was important because it potentially exposed, through epistemological change, the extent to which we are written through with the colonial.

In drawing upon transformative learning theories it is important to recognise that transformative learning is contextualised within 'CM' cultures through its underlying beliefs in social justice and "faith in informed free human choice" and draws upon the Enlightenment in assuming that "self-understanding" leads to "self-emancipation" (ibid, p. xiv). This is not to solely position transformative learning as a 'CM' phenomenon, but it is to recognise its cultural and linguistic association with such 'CM' philosophies which I problematised earlier regarding cosmopolitanism.

Transformative learning has become a rather ill-focussed and ubiquitous term being used to describe any change that a learner demonstrates (Kegan, 2000) or a deepening of any learning through reflection (Brookfield, 2000). This contrasts with transformative learning theory developed by Mezirow since the late 1970s who considered it to be "a dialectic in which understanding and action interact to produce an altered state of being" (Mezirow,

2000, p. xi). Mezirow explains that transformations in learning often arose from some disorientating cognitive predicament which caused the learner to evaluate existing assumptions that the predicament exposed. Such a transformational shift in learning is beyond merely knowing more content or deepening one's understanding of an issue which leaves our existing values and beliefs untouched, something which is called 'First Order Learning' by Sterling (2001).

Mezirow acknowledges Bruner's (1996) four 'modes of making meaning' akin to a constructivist learning process onto which he adds a fifth dimension to recognise transformative learning. The modes are

1. establishing, shaping, and maintaining inter-subjectivity,
2. relating events, speech and behaviours to the action taken,
3. constructing of particulars in a normative context,
4. making propositions which ultimately enable de-contextualised meaning, and
5. becoming critically aware of one's own tacit assumptions and expectations and those of others and assessing their relevance for making an interpretation (2000, p. 4).

Mezirow suggests a broadening and deepening of one's learning with the potential for thinking to be justified. This is similar to notions of informative learning (Kegan, 2000) in that it changes what we know, but it is only when learners develop an awareness of own, and others' "tacit assumptions" (Mezirow, 2000, p. 4), and how these inform the way we interpret the world, that learners develop an understanding of their own learning processes which Sterling calls 'Second Order Learning' (2001). This exposure of our assumptions provides the foundation for learning to become potentially transformative. Transformative learning changes "how we know" (Kegan, 2000, p. 50) and occurs through the exposure and critique of our epistemology. Transformative learning is a 'Third Order Learning' (Stirling, 2001, p.15) in that it provides us with a deep understanding of "alternative worldviews". This is not a simple rejection, or even reforming, of existing knowledge in preference for something new but an 'evolutionary' way of thinking that arises from the "subordination of once-ruling capacities to the dominion of more complex capacities" (Kegan, 2000, p. 60).

The changes in our epistemological positioning through reflection enable our beliefs and values to become more faithful to our reconstructed thinking and/or to provide a basis on which to direct our actions. It is significant that transformational learning is not recognised as such without also change in our actions. This is why Brookfield (2000) is insistent in differentiating between reflection, which similarly produces an exposure of our assumptions

and epistemology through “ideological critique”, and transformative learning which also causes the learner’s actions to change. Transformative learning is thus not only seeing new perspectives in life but living them (Mezirow, 2000).

Exposing assumptions and ‘threshold concepts’

‘CM’ cultures arguably deny their ideological underpinning (Holliday, 2011) inherent in our “tacit assumptions” (Mezirow, 2000, p. 4) and thus consider ‘CM’ ways of thinking to be normal or natural. This can lead to the demonisation of a cultural Other which has strong resonance with ideas of stereotyping (Hook, 2012). Hook’s consideration of stereotyping seems to almost dismiss the revelation of our own cultural assumptions through our relationship with the Other. To be able to reveal tacit ideological assumptions in our ‘CM’ thinking is significant, however, with regard to transformative learning or the development of ‘cosmopolitan imagining’. After all:

[i]t is at the level of discourse that individuals are able to negotiate, make sense of and practise culture; and it is within this process that imaginations about culture are generated and ideology is both experienced and manufactured (Holliday, 2011, p. 1).

The exposure of our ‘CM’ assumptions about the Other, which may include the recognition of the ideologies from which we make such assumptions, is identified as an important desired outcome of study visits (Martin and Griffiths, 2012). The space, or place, where such assumptions and ideologies are revealed is likened to a “conceptual gateway or portal” by Land *et al* (2008, p. x) who highlight that such revelations become “troublesome knowledge” (Meyer and Land, 2003, p. 1) as they provoke us to contest existing thinking. Such a contestation may situate us in a difficult coping position called “liminality” (Land *et al*, 2003, p. x) which, for reasons explained later, I prefer to call a ‘liminal place’. Within this ‘liminal place’ we may reconceptualise an issue which may be transformative and is likely to be irreversible. Our reconceptualisation of an issue, therefore, significantly affects the way we consider an issue and is known as a ‘threshold concept’ (Meyer and Land, 2003). We may, however, remain with existing values or beliefs when our thinking does not move beyond the ‘portal’ and our assumptions and ideologies remain unaltered or, in other words, transformative learning does not occur.

Epistemological changes through learning

The seven 'Learning Spaces' developed by Andreotti (2010) help illustrate different approaches to global learning. The learning indicated from space one to seven spaces increasingly illustrates how our thinking can support 'cosmopolitan imagining' and potentially transformative learning. The first learning space highlights thinking that is singular, certain and fixed and there is no hint of this being a 'liminal place' for learning. The conditions for a 'cosmopolitan imagination' to emerge are absent, suggesting a 'concrete' worldview where the development of knowledge would be 'first order' and focused on acquiring content knowledge.

The second and third learning spaces firstly recognise the contradictory nature of our thinking, which may be likened to Meyer and Land's (2003) 'troublesome knowledge' and which recognise the lens(es) through which we form our worldview based on our epistemological assumptions. An epistemological exposure provides the platform for reflection akin to a 'liminal place' and suggests a plurality of thinking not seen earlier. Multiple perspectives build on this plurality and emerge along with their underpinning assumptions in the fifth learning space. It is here that the potential for transformative learning and a 'cosmopolitan imagining' emerges, associated with fluidity and a lack of fixed boundaries, which also highlights where the learner begins to identify different solutions to issues in different contexts: that is to say, learning becomes contextualised. Contextualised learning that highlights a plurality of thinking suggests an ability to read issues in terms of local to global relationships, which perhaps hints at an emerging 'latitude and longitude of learning', and to begin to read issues with more fluid boundaries akin to 'cosmopolitan imagining'.

The sixth and seventh spaces are indicative of learners able to embrace complexity and conflicting opinion and who understand that our responses are highly contextualised and change as situations alter. Andreotti emphasises the social construction of "provisional meaning" (ibid, p. 16) and the deepening of analysis that occurs. These learning spaces seem to concur with her epistemological position where "knowledge, learning, reality and identities [are] socially constructed, fluid, open to negotiation and always provisional" (ibid, p. 6) and which seem to concur with my post-structuralist methodology that I discuss in the following chapter.

Dispositions towards learning about difference

In *Taking Minds to Other Places* alongside “hearts, bodies and spirits”, Andreotti (2013, p. 12) identifies four ‘dispositions towards difference’:

1. **House** staying at ‘home’ and defending borders, a siege-like mentality in being fixed in one’s thinking and unwilling to move.
2. **Caravan** bringing your ‘home’ with you when you travel in projecting one’s worldview as that of everybody else with a singular truth and hierarchical differences.
3. **Tent** a willingness to step out of the comfort of one’s ‘home’, but is an attempt to bring all worlds into one’s own world through a fusion of perspectives and projection of sameness.
4. **Backpack** being taught by, and being exposed to, the world through being at ‘home’ in a plural and undefined world with a partial and provisional frame of reference (ibid, p. 12).

Dispositions are akin to our temperaments and also indicate an inclination or positioning towards something. They do not bring with them certain and expected behaviours but inform our thinking, which itself is a function of our socio-cultural contexts (ibid). The travelling nature of these terms are metaphorical and indicative of the travel our minds, hearts and spirits are willing and able to make in our encounters with difference. The three ‘travelling dispositions’ are helpful in considering intercultural learning through the notion of personal disposition towards learning.

There is some suggestion about the fluidity of the four dispositions in the phrase “disposition *towards* difference”, perhaps indicating some form of ephemeral inclination or positioning towards learning rather than an essentialised or fixed reading of them. Our tendency to perform one disposition above another is partly a consequence of our perception about the learning environment and the nature of the ‘new’ knowledge as well as the ‘haunting’ with which we bring. If we assume there is the potential for one to perform across a range of dispositions, it promotes the significance of appropriate pedagogy to promote more open dispositions and to reduce the risk of retreat ‘home’ should an experience be perceived to be too traumatic.

Andreotti (2013, p. 13) links her three travelling dispositions to particular worldviews which are objectivist ethnocentrism (Caravan), relativist ethnorealism (Tent), and pluralist existentialism (Backpack). A constructive and open, rather than defensive, response to new experiences also concurs with Bruner’s (1990, p.30) views on open-mindedness as construing “knowledge and values from multiple perspectives without loss of commitments

to one's own values". This also resonates with Fredrickson's (2004) 'broaden and build theory' where an open disposition helps expand one's attention, broadens the range of our repertoires, enhances relationships and promotes creativity. A pluralist view also seems to concur with the open, fluid dimensions of 'cosmopolitan imagining' discussed earlier and hints at transformative intercultural learning with existential dimensions through the development of open and inclusive frames of reference. I turn now to consider intercultural learning through study visits in the light of my exploration of epistemological change and our dispositions towards learning.

*Intercultural Learning from study visits*¹³

I draw upon critiques of intercultural learning, particularly regarding study visits to the 'ECM', to develop an understanding of intercultural learning and the potential for this learning to be transformative. The papers I draw upon mostly focus on international study visits to the 'ECM'; namely, The Gambia (Weeden and Hayter, 1998; Martin, 2008; Martin and Wyness, 2013) and India (Scoffham and Barnes, 2009; Martin and Wyness, 2013). I also tentatively draw on classroom-based global futures learning (e.g. Rogers, 1998; Scoffham, 2013), but I am cautious about its applicability because of its sedentary nature and lack of physical encounter with the Other.

In considering the changing nature of learning experiences during study visits Weeden and Hayter's (1998) 'phases of engagement' identifies three chronological phases: disorientation, coping, and equilibrium, which extend to differing lengths of time depending upon the individual concerned and how s/he reacted to intercultural experiences. Such temporal individuality is valuable in any modelling of learning, but I reject the linear implications about learning in these three phases and also the stable, or even fixed, implications of the final 'equilibrium' phase. Accordingly, I use the term 'immersion' relating to the overseas intercultural experiences and Martin's (2008) term 'consolidation' to consider the return to one's 'home' culture to structure the following section, in addition to considering dimensions of power within intercultural learning.

¹³ Intercultural learning seeks to expose the hidden cultural assumptions about ontology, epistemology and, within this, the way we relate to the Self/Other. In focusing upon these themes in my literature I recognise there is a related body of knowledge regarding intercultural learning associated with language teaching that is neglected, as I regard the classroom skills often considered in such literature as less relevant to my learning context.

Immersion

The potential for one's arrival in the 'ECM' after a long journey to provoke a degree of "disorientation, uncertainty and insecurity" (Weeden and Hayter, 1998, p. 117) is indicative of Weeden and Hayter's (1998) initial 'disorientation phase'. Given the lack of perceived effects on learners' belief systems in other international visits (Finney and Orr, 1995), the disorientation phase is important in provoking the questioning of assumptions with the potential to review attitudes and beliefs. Weeden and Hayter (1998) do not indicate the potential dangers of excessive disorientation which may result in a refusal to engage with the opportunities available: in effect, a refusal or inability to learn where the 'fixity' identified by Bhabha (1994/2004) prevails. Such a fixity is associated with stereotyping which Martin and Griffiths (2012) warn may be reinforced by study visits rather than shaken if attention is not given to greater theoretical awareness of power and representation. The potential of withdrawal from learning is noticed *throughout* the study visit by Scoffham and Barnes (2009) by some of their students who seemed unaffected by their experiences. They suggest that these students found the experiences too disturbing to their existing worldview and caused "denial or paralysis responses" (ibid, p. 267). This chimes with Andreotti's (2013) 'home' disposition and is likely to produce more shallow content learning about place/people, associated with Andreotti's (2010) 'learning space one' rather than a re-consideration of the Self/Other through deeper learning.

This paralysis or retreat is echoed by Rogers and Tough (1992) who noted students' discomfort at emotional and existential levels through their exposure to the uncertainty about global futures during undergraduate studies which led Scoffham (2013, p. 42), in a separate study, to call students with similar responses "deniers" leading to a paralysis rather than an empowerment to make future choices and take action. It seems significant that Rogers and Tough noted that the retreat from cognitive exposure was triggered by emotional and existential experiential responses, and a lack of recognition of these dimensions to our learning may well become limiting factors to developing deeper dimensions to intercultural learning.

Weeden and Hayter's (1998) second or 'coping phase' moves from disorientation to one where the students were able to negotiate the simple daily demands of life for themselves, often through reflection about issues encountered during their daily activities. The literature, in various ways, suggests that through reflection we position ourselves in a new space (or place) which Brock *et al* (2006) calls a 'displacement space' which presents physical, metaphysical and affective challenges within which we may begin to regard matters

differently. Such a space resonates with a 'liminal place' within which 'threshold concepts' develop (Meyer and Land, 2003).

The learning explored by Brock *et al* (2006) seems more redolent with disorientation, rather than the coping stage described by Weeden and Hayter. As a consequence of problematising one's experiential response through reflection and perhaps reflexivity, it seems more likely that one would move back and forth from disorientation to coping which is recognised by Scoffham and Barnes (2009) rather than it being a single chronological shift suggested by Weeden and Hayter. In these psychological spaces, it is possible that we hold conflicting notions simultaneously which has the potential to either cause paralysis or provide an opportunity for transformative learning. Such a 'liminality' resonates with Festinger's (1957) notion of 'cognitive dissonance'. Scoffham and Barnes observed that their students' experiences seemed to differ greatly from that which was expected and their thinking began to contain two conflicting ideas (the cognitive dissonance) which resulted in new thoughts about the experience. Festinger suggested that the human condition wishes to reduce the dissonance and thus creates new meaning from the situation by either discarding one of the experiences or constructing meaning from a combination of both the expectation of the experience and the experience itself, which is reflected in Scoffham and Barnes' (2009) findings.

In order to explain extreme situations of dissonance, Scoffham and Barnes (2009, p. 267) cite Gardner's (1999) evocative metaphor from basketball of the "full court press" when a team surrounds an individual opposing player to get the ball. It is understandable how the "full court press" of a challenging intercultural experience may cause one to reconfigure thinking often formed over many years. As such, these experiences have the potential to be considerable transformative drivers through an epochal exposure of assumptions that underpin our thinking. I infer from this that what constitutes a 'full court press' is idiosyncratic depending on personal 'hauntings' and related dispositions towards learning stimulated by the experience. Such a significant shift would suggest a disposition akin to Andreotti's (2013) 'tent' or 'backpack' and someone able to occupy higher 'learning spaces' (Andreotti, 2010) which could enable a 'cosmopolitan imagination' to emerge and transformational learning to occur.

The transformative potential of learning about global issues to alter one's way of life personally and/or professionally was observed by Rogers and Tough (1992). They note, however, that the potential for transformation is only realised if certain cognitive and emotional barriers to learning are overcome. Rogers (1998) identified five distinct but

frequently interlinked dimensions to her students' learning about global futures (figure 4.1) which illustrate the possibility of epistemological change and ensuring action.

The significance of the affective domain is highlighted in this research which is often a neglected dimension of global futures pedagogy (Hicks, 2006); however, to separate it from the cognitive dimension, despite the recognition of their interconnectedness, still seems to over-simplify the holistic and deeply personal learning that Hick's identified. This was echoed by Scoffham and Barnes (2009) who applauded the recognition of feelings in the learning process, but challenged the suggested sequential nature of the five dimensions and indicated that it was the emotional trigger of the intercultural experience that was the apparent learning stimulus rather than an initial cognate response. The emotional dimension within transformative learning is highlighted by Mezirow (2000) who argues that it is not only the assumptions that support our thinking that are exposed in such learning, but also those that are the foundation for our emotions too.

Figure 4.1 Dimensions to learning about global futures (Rogers, 1998)

1. **Cognitive** learning new facts, ideas and concepts; being asked to step outside of their usual and spatial and temporal orientations sometimes led to resistance. Students also felt cognitively overwhelmed, confused and pessimistic about world problems.
2. **Affective** the emotional dimension occurs when 'knowing' moves from being detached to something that is personal with elements such as grieving as a response to global threats such as climate change. Emotional dimensions should be accepted as part of the learning process.
3. **Existential** learning can lead to 'soul searching' through questioning of personal values, life purposes, faith and ways of living. In wishing to find an answer to the issues they learnt about they faced a reconstruction of their own sense of Self.
4. **Empowerment** if the existential issues can be positively resolved learners can begin to sense personal empowerment through a growing sense of responsibility and commitment to 'do' something. Students needed to envision positive future scenarios where individuals/groups have 'made a difference'.
5. **Action** Assuming that the student has resolved issues raised through the first four dimensions of learning, they are able to take informed personal, social, and political choices and action can occur.

(Hicks, 2006, pp. 100-101)

In recognising the strengths of Rogers' (1998) five dimensions of learning, Scoffham and Barnes incorporate the cognitive, emotional, existential and empowerment dimensions into their own model of deep learning (figure 4.2). These aspects are all part of the deep learning that ensues from the 'cognitive disturbance' that derives from the original experiences

deemed powerful by the individual. Integral to this model is also the potential for learners to return to their original thinking akin to a 'home' disposition and learning space one (Andreotti, 2010; 2013) through a retreat of their thinking. Conversely, deeper learning is achievable through students envisaging alternative futures, which concurs with higher level learning spaces, a 'Backpack' disposition (Andreotti, 2010; 2013), dimensions of the cosmopolitan imagination (Delanty, 2009) and with the potential for such learning to be transformative.

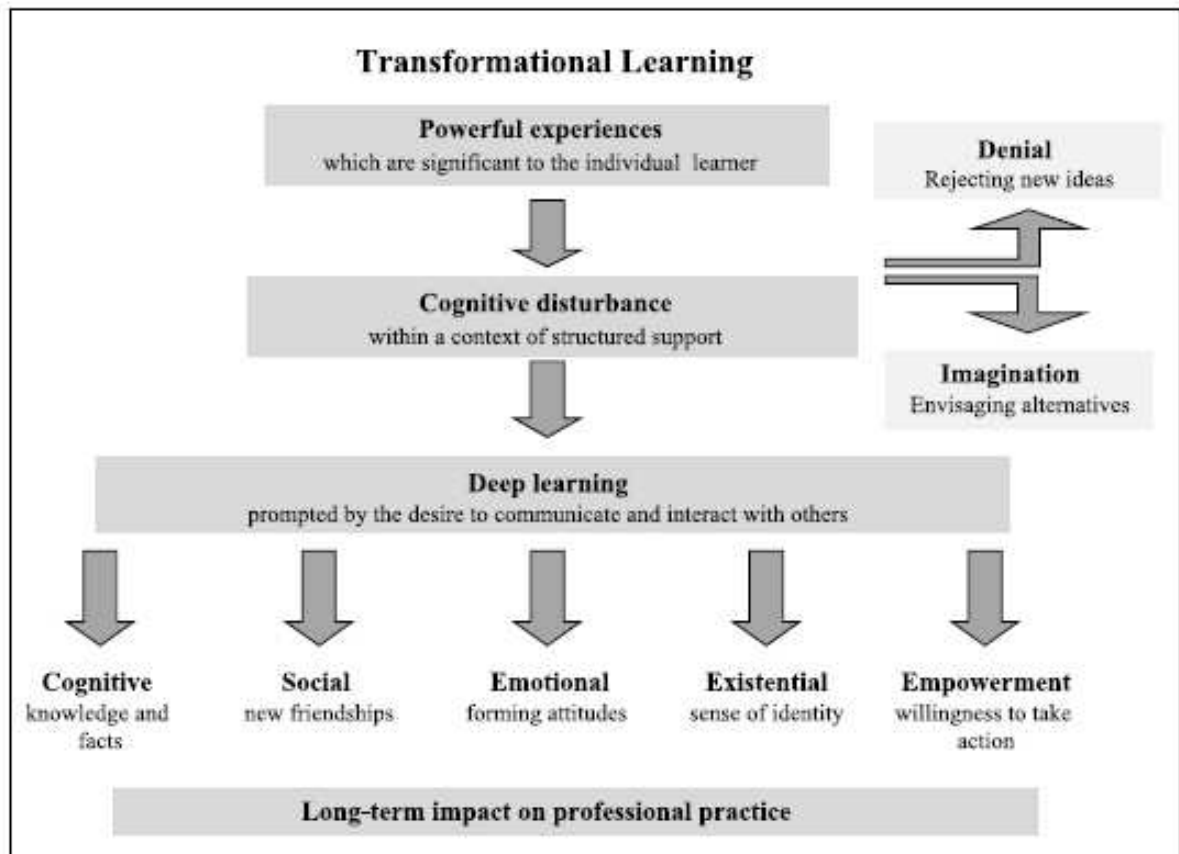


Figure 4.2 Transformational learning (from Scoffham and Barnes, 2009, p. 268)

A cyclical 'three awakenings' model to learning about global issues was developed by Rogers (1992) (figure 4.3) which indicates a deepening of learning from the initial engagement to developing further knowledge (the 'awakening of the mind'), to a more empathetic position for global futures ('awakening of the heart'), which led through one's growing duty and allegiance to the Other in an 'awakening of the soul'. Mezirow (2000, p. 6) explains that "learning through soul" is where the "socioemotional" and "intellectual" converge. In the 'three awakenings' model, learning becomes potentially deeper and possibly transformative. The existential dimension to learning led to personal action which came through a sense of power and hope (Hicks, 2006, p. 102). The cyclical nature of this model perhaps implies that the outcomes of actions and hope lead to further, and future,

engagement with learning over a medium or longer term, a finding that concurs with Scoffham and Barnes' (2009).

Hope was also noted by Scoffham and Barnes (2009) as a somewhat counter-intuitive outcome of some of their students' learning when faced with challenging personal encounters with bereaved survivors of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, and others who were in need of urgent and critical medical support. They found that hope emerged through the students' perceptions about making positive differences to these locals through physical encounters with them. The encounters provoked an emotional and charitable response, reminiscent of the deeply ethical and visceral engagement with the Other's 'face' which prompts a call for justice discussed by Levinas (1972/2006).

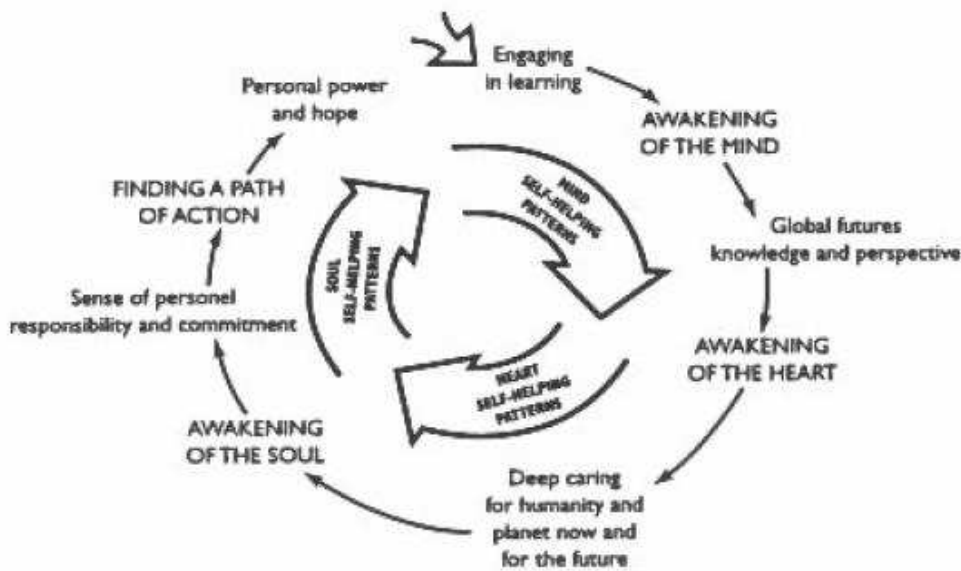


Figure 4.3 The 'three awakenings' model (from Hicks, 2006, p. 102)

There is a danger that such charitable acts, however, salve students' consciences of further 'troublesome knowledge' (Meyer and Land, 2003) and thus produce shallow outcomes from the experience that expound the neo-colonial power inherent in 'donor-recipient' relationship (Martin and Wyness, 2013). Martin and Griffiths (2012) rightly argue that without recognition of postcolonial theory, intercultural learning is likely to exclude an appreciation of global power dynamics that are opaque without the use of such a critical lens. It is highly probable though that even with such a theoretical understanding, a reflective or reflexive reaction to experiencing poverty draws from beyond the cognitive into emotional and perhaps existential domains. Such a response is affected by a tension

between the compassion to the local context and a theoretical awareness of global power and inequality with links to 'cognitive dissonance' and 'liminality'.

Donor-recipient relationships raise more general issues of power between host and visitor. Martin and Wyness (2013) indicated that resource imbalances between Indian hosts and UK visitors did not necessarily mean relationships were similarly imbalanced. They noted that the long-term relationship between host and visitors was unequal but that this did not restrict its outcomes "from being mutually beneficial" (ibid, pp. 28-29). They argued however, that notions of mutuality needed constant scrutiny in order to avoid unintended relational outcomes that could lead to visits becoming neo-colonial explorations. Martin and Griffiths (2012) argue that key to ensuring the global power dynamics of visits are understood is to ensure that such visits are academic courses, which resonates with the approach taken in the 2014 visit.

Consolidation

The varied outcomes of international study visits are categorised by Weeden and Hayter's (1996) third phase of their model. In this 'equilibrium phase' the individual student's reaction to their experiences can become either

- **Quasi-equilibrium** a comfort zone where there is isolation from the environment,
- **Dis-equilibrium** intense dis-comfort and possible abandonment of the experience,
- **Stable-equilibrium** accommodation is achieved which incorporates both cultures (1996, p. 117).

The first suggested outcome suggests superficial, or even misconstrued, outcomes where the environment is seen from a distance rather than fully experienced with participants retreating from the complexity of 'troublesome knowledge' and not recognising potential 'threshold concept' (Meyer and Land, 2003) moments or spaces. This resonates with Andreotti's (2013) 'Caravan' disposition.

The second outcome resonates with inhibition where one rejects opportunities to learn, perhaps through a 'home' disposition (Andreotti, 2013) or that, perhaps, a temporary disturbance in one's worldview is re-affirmed once the learner returns 'home'. 'Home' in this case is perceived as the same left behind before the visit. It is only in the third outcome that deeper learning occurs where learners are able to live with the ambiguity and complexity presented by the experience and in doing so challenge aspects of their existing epistemology. This final outcome is akin to the pluralities identified in Andreotti's (2013)

'Backpack' disposition and the traits of a 'cosmopolitan imagining'. What is lacking in these outcomes is an acknowledgement of the potential empowerment and action associated with deeper learning that is identified by Rogers and Tough (1992) and Scoffham and Barnes (2009) and redolent of transformative learning.

In summarising, it is clear that an emotional and existential dimension to learning is evident in the literature as a significant driver, or threshold to cross, in order to access deeper, and potentially transformative, learning. It suggests that in order to develop deeper learning from an experience, attention should therefore be given to the 'heart' and 'spirit/soul' as well as the mind. Deeper learning is redolent of a 'cosmopolitan imagining' and potentially transformative learning through a change in 'how one lives' by action-based outcomes to this learning. I argued earlier that while we might have a dominant disposition towards learning, this is not fixed. Deeper learning, akin to Andreotti's (2010) seventh space, means that our learning becomes fluid and, similarly, not fixed and potentially becomes a contentment of, but not a complacent 'not knowing' as one uncovers further layers of complexity and deeper understanding of Self/Other.

Two further dimensions, firstly, regarding where the learning happens and, secondly, the nature of the experience, are important factors in determining the nature of learning and it is to the influences of first place and then pedagogy that I now turn.

4.3 Place: towards a 'latitude and longitude of learning'¹⁴

Learning about the Self/Other is influenced by our perceptions of where they, and we, are situated globally. The way we perceive places and their interconnectedness has an influence upon these perceptions of Self/Other which informs our 'latitude and longitude of learning'. In considering 'place' I use Agnew's (1987) three dimensions of place, namely location, locale and sense of place to structure the following discussion.

The location of place

A place's location is an apparently fixed and simple concept with a particular latitude and longitude which denotes its global position. In human temporal terms this fixity appears real and it is perhaps tempting to also see our perceptions of place as similarly static. In geological timescales the transitory nature of a place's location is evident. What is now India

¹⁴ Aspects of this section have been included in Hoult (2015)

slowly 'floated' as a tectonic plate towards, and then 'collided' with, the rest of what is now Asia, forming the Himalayas. Massey (2005) uses the geological mobility of places in arguing that we should resist fixed or reactionary meanings. In learning about the Other, I argue that fixity is a potential barrier to deeper learning and that to read a place more plurally and fluidly are advantageous to deeper learning.

The influence of a place's global location in determining our perception of it is also significant to intercultural learning. It is likely that there will be a range of views about 'what parts of the world are like' but it is the potential to develop our thinking beyond simple binaries, such as rich/poor, west/east, developed/developing and in seeing the interdependence of places, that the nuances of local-global interconnections emerge in our learning which, as I show later, is a feature of our 'latitude and longitude of learning'. Such a plural outcome begins to resonate with an aspect of the 'cosmopolitan imagining' through its acknowledgement of the importance of "global-local relations" (Delanty, 2009, p. 7) which moves our consideration of place from purely its location to its locale or the "material setting for social relations" (Creswell, 2004, p. 7).

The locale of place

The locale of place is explored partly through its physical setting and is a significant dimension to developing our understanding of place. The influence of the environment on our thoughts, emotions and actions seem akin to the old ideology of environmental determinism which has "been espoused and rebuked, refined and restated for thousands of years" (Bonnett, 2008, p. 32). Historically, environmental determinism seems evident when monsoonal changes appear to have influenced the shift in settlements eastwards in the Ganges 3,500 years ago (Gupta, 2007).

If taken to extremes, environmental determinism can be used to support racist or colonial ideologies (Bonnett, 2008); however, the natural dimensions of place may still influence a place's perceived identity. This is determined by individuals' responses to it through its evoking of certain 'hauntings' in this setting, whether this be the sublime landscape of the Lake District to Wordsworth, or the response to the Keralan tropical vegetation by Sen (2006) noted in chapter two. In both cases the environment has become a significant feature of these places, but it seems too narrow to focus on the environment as the sole, or most significant, determinant of societal activities and to separate nature and society into cause and effect is too simplistic a response. The notion that the fundamental form and functions of a place derive from its environmental conditions is still important, however, on which to

think about the more nuanced, cultural, subjective interpretations of place that are a product of our 'hauntings' which those cultures evoke. In understanding place, the role, development and functions of its people are fundamental to understanding place "within which people conduct their lives as individuals, as men or women, as white or black, straight or gay" (Creswell, 2004, p. 7).

A sense of place

The concept of locale enables a more interpretational and plural sense of place to be developed through the complexities and multiple meanings of the social relations that a subjective and emotional consideration brings. These pluralities resonate with Andreotti's (2013) 'Backpack' disposition and dimensions of 'cosmopolitan imagining'. Developing a subjective sense of place would seem an appropriate approach given the emotional dimension which it involves and yet this does not always mean that such interpretations are free from a singular search for accuracy or truth. Moloney writing during the British rule of India explains:

I have described South India as I myself saw it; the thoughts about South India, which I have set down, are the thoughts that have passed through my own mind. Others may have seen South India more extensively and more accurately than I have seen it; others may have thought about South India more intelligently than I have'... My explanation is of the spirit in which I have written. I have striven to avoid alike aggressive superiority and effusive sympathy....I do not think that the accidents of race, religion, social position have ever influenced...my likes or dislikes (1926, p. vii).

Moloney seems aware of different readings of place that are potentially more accurate or deeper than his own rather than just accepting their differences. This may result in a rejection of his points leading to a better understanding of the 'truth' about South India. He asserts that his interpretations are his own, but perhaps searches for objectivity by attempting to avoid both "excessive" imperialist values and colonial guilt in his representation. Said highlights the Orientalist tendency for apparent field observations to be "constructed discursively" (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, 1999, p. 26) and it is clear that despite Moloney's interests in South India, his thinking is more representative of Andreotti's (2013) 'Caravan' disposition than anything more plural.

The idea of multiple identities of place is developed by Massey (1994, p. 152). Her exemplification of a "walk down Kilburn High Road" illustrates its multiple identities and

although it may have its own character “it is absolutely not a seamless, coherent identity, a single sense of place which everyone shares” (ibid, p. 153). She calls for a progressive sense of place that enables us to develop ideas of geographical difference and identity while retaining a cautious “rootedness¹⁵” of place. She questions, however, how we may develop a local sense of place in this era of time-space compression where places are interpreted through their complex global interrelationships (ibid).

Increases in our international experiences and the speed by which they happen, present a changing temporal, as well as spatial dimension, to understanding place and the Other. These experiences may be physical, or through social media, but they all influence the ways we make sense of a place’s uniqueness. The time-space compression is unequal for those involved and such disparities cause Massey (1994) to question whether the power of our mobility causes the disempowerment of others which is affected by factors such as gender, race, and capital, in economic and cultural forms.

Place and the understanding of the nuances that cumulatively form a local sense of a place can be problematical due to globalization resulting in a potential ‘placelessness’ (Relph, 1976). Massey (1994) questions to what extent such placelessness is a ‘CM’ construct through our different global experiences of people and place which in the past was a relationship of colonised and coloniser, and now is represented in the unequal nature of geographical and economic development.

A separate phenomena, but with a similar outcome, is the potential danger of the ‘exotic’ experience of place that confronts us in ‘alien’ environments like Kerala, which Krishnakumar (2010) neatly explains stimulates “[f]ive Senses and a Million experiences!” This experience could cause ‘place blindness’ to more subtle differences or similarities through a blanket ‘Othering’ process akin to Orientalism. This blindness is less of a cognitive dissonance and more a potential problem of the exotic ‘spell’ of a place producing a superficial reading of difference unless, as I argued earlier, it is a transitory stage towards a deeper reflexive understanding.

A consequence of the changing way with which we relate to place, as well as the change in places themselves, is a potentially growing insecurity about place (Massey 1994). One consequence of this insecurity is to hold onto apparently fixed notions of place/people which, in extreme cases, can result in nationalistic tendencies or a “romanticised escapism” (ibid, p. 151) and is similar to the danger of nostalgic views of place by Harvey (1989). Both

¹⁵ The metaphor of being ‘rooted’ to a place implies certain immobile and natural dimensions. Perhaps the transitory and fabricated implications within ‘anchored’ is a more appropriate metaphor to help avoid our attachment to, and notions of, place becoming a permanent and natural fixity.

nostalgia and romanticism relate to my notion of the 'colonial signature' through preconceptions of place, perhaps bound in 'CM' values and assumptions about the 'ECM'. I argue, however, that nostalgia or romanticism are not necessarily problematic unless our thinking becomes fixed within these themes rather than them providing a critical base on which to (re)construct our perceptions of place/people.

Fixed nostalgia or romanticised notions of place suggest a regressive or reactionary relationship to place. Massey (1994) actively resists this move while recognising a human basic desire to be attached to place. She develops a progressive sense of place that enables us to retain our ideas of place as geographically different from other places, with a unique identity, but is aware of the difficulties in developing a local sense of place in a global era. In order to develop a "global sense of the local [or] a global sense of place" (1994, p. 156) she developed four principles about place:

1. Places are not static. If places are conceptualised by the social interactions which tie them together then these interactions themselves are not motionless and frozen in time. Understanding place is a process.
2. Places do not have simple boundaries. Defining place comes from considering linkages to the 'outside' which become part of what constitutes the place rather than seeing these influences simply in terms of a vulnerable penetration into a place.
3. Places do not have single, unique identities; they are full of internal conflicts.
4. None of the above denies the importance of a place's uniqueness. The specificity of place is continually reproduced, but does not result from a long internalized history (ibid).

The plural epistemology of Andreotti's (2013) 'backpack' disposition and that within 'cosmopolitan imagining' concur with Massey's views of place, and any renegotiation of understanding either needs an initial plural disposition, or sufficient persuasion, to reconsider initial views and move from fixed certainties to something more ephemeral and fragile. Massey's principles provide an approach to place that, like Orientalism¹⁶ itself, is the "product of circumstances that are fundamental, indeed radically fractious" (Said, 2003, p. xii) and reading place as having simultaneously multiple identities that are constantly changing presents "ontological instability; each identity is made up of human effort, partly affirmation, partly identification of the other" (ibid).

¹⁶ I acknowledge that I am comparing Massey's 'real' places with the 'imagined' ones of Said.

The 'latitude and longitude of learning'

Martin (2008, p. 64) argues that “knowledge is socially, culturally and historically framed”. The place of that knowledge production is significant as it the physical and metaphysical manifestation of these phenomena. This leads to personal perceptions of place and its global interconnectedness associated with a “global sense of the local” (Massey, 1994, p. 156) which through complex psychosocial negotiations become our personal ‘latitude and longitude of learning’ which as at least three interrelated dimensions:

1. Our global perception of place brings ‘hauntings’ to bear on the way we interpret and learn in an unfamiliar place.
2. Learning is situated spatially and temporally in a globally interrelated setting.
3. Global travelling to the place of learning is influential upon learning.

The significance of plural and open dispositions to learning, which are constitutive of ‘cosmopolitan imagining’, is that they provide a potential for travellers to re-conceptualise their notions of a place through their experiences and perhaps regard place similarly to Massey (1994) outlined earlier. Such a shift in thinking about people/place is perhaps a ‘threshold concept’ (Meyer and Land, 2003) with the potential for deep learning to ensue about the relationship between the Self and Other. In contrast, an apparently objective view of place akin to Moloney (1926) seems to limit one’s learning to the deepening of content and gathering experiences rather than it challenging our “global sense of the local” (Massey, 1994, p. 156), or more deeply, our ontological sense of being. The way we construct the global meaning of place, including its location, is thus a potential bridge or barrier to deeper learning about Self/Other and a feature of the ‘latitude and longitude of learning’.

Notwithstanding the importance of the uniqueness of place, its global interconnectedness promotes questions about how such connections form, which Massey (2005, p. 181) calls the “politics of connectivity”. Understanding the reasons for, and the nature of these connections seems to be important to developing a richer ‘latitude and longitude of learning’ where we may explore its underpinning dimensions of power. Massey argues that understanding such connections that stress “the imaginative awareness of others” promotes a spatial “outwardlookingness” (ibid) that suggests a connection between the plural thinking about place associated with an appreciation of global interconnectivity and an awareness of the Other.

The situated nature of learning intimates we resist simplistic notions of the ‘global citizen’ which hide ‘CM’ epistemological assumptions behind such terms (Martin and Griffiths,

2012). Rather the development of a 'latitude and longitude of learning' helps expose one's epistemology as culturally determined and not a globally natural phenomenon. Such positioning negates absolute epistemological universalities but sees matters as culturally determined in specific contexts. Regarding knowledge and learning as situated helps promote the argument that the Self is socially constructed with implications of greater permeability between Self and the Other, their mutual influence and with the opportunity to change (ibid). The link between people and place has parallels with Said's (1978/2003) 'Worldliness of the text'. Through the text we read the world and the text's global place in the world (Ahluwalia, 2010). Learners' 'worldliness' is gained through their articulation of the significance of place in their learning and their global positioning espoused in their writing through their epistemology and consideration of the Other. The situatedness of this learning may mean it appears somewhat ephemeral and any apparently deep learning may be hurriedly submerged upon return 'home' through a global repositioning of our thinking and an overwhelming re-immersion into the dominant cultural paradigms of the 'CM'.

The final dimension to the 'latitude and longitude of learning' regards the influence of global travel itself. De Botton (2003) recounts Huysman's character, the 'Duc de Esseintes', in the novel *A Rebours*. The Duc's anticipation of his travels was so great that he declined the need to travel for fear of disappointment and the complications of travelling! Instead he preferred to read books about his destination "to travel so wonderfully sitting in a chair" (ibid, p. 11). It is faithful to declare that much can be learnt about Self/Other through reading; however, the lack of the 'complications' experienced during travel reduces the potential for 'cognitive dissonance' or 'liminality' through engagement with the Other. It is arguably easier to retain familiar meanings when confronted with a text-based issue by rejecting it and remaining in an unaltered 'home'. Said likens the static thinker as a potentate with only a singular place to cognitively defend, whereas the traveller relinquishes his/her customary dwelling "to live in the new rhythms and rituals" of place and "abandons fixed positions all the time" (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, 1999, p. 26) in a similar manner to Andreotti's (2010; 2013) higher 'learning spaces' and the 'Backpacker' disposition.

This is not to dismiss the powers of digesting a text which may be highly formative, but it is to emphasise the significance of travel to heighten our experience which with careful reflection and reflexivity potentially leads to deeper learning. The deeper nature of learning through travel is heightened, according to Said, through the crossing of boundaries which reveals the "true heterogeneity, the true complexity and the wonder of life" (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, 1999, p. 26). This learning has the potential to change the way we see 'home' globally through experiences and epistemological and ontological shifts in thinking which is an important dimension of the 'latitude and longitude of learning'.

The complications of travelling to other parts of the world are immersed in the experience and become part of the learning. The need for mosquito repellent, different cuisine, clothing and public transport are all visceral experiences and evoke difference to the traveller which in turn can provoke reflective learning. It is also arguably emotionally harder, but clearly not impossible, to turn away from a physical encounter with a 'face' (Levinas 1972/2006) and eschew the potential learning than one can dismiss ideas in a classroom or a text.

The global re-positioning of body and mind through travelling to the 'ECM' from the 'CM' is significant to our learning. Travelling between places is likened to travelling between collections of life narratives (Massey, 2005) which, through reflection, we allow certain narratives to be inserted into our own life stories. It is this potential to recognise the plurality of place and its global interconnectedness, through its multiple narratives, that is so redolent with the deep and open disposition towards learning and 'cosmopolitan imagining'.

Being away from 'home' physically and metaphysically, and experiencing a different place/people suggests a greater vulnerability than 'home'-based learning. This relative vulnerability, and the visceral experience of complexity and 'cognitive dissonance' through various encounters with the Other, has the potential for a rejection of potential learning just as we can discard a book; however, the distance from 'home' is of significance. One cannot just discard the study experience and travel 'home', even if one would wish to, and it is hard to disentangle one's mind from an experience when outside the dominant cultural paradigms and comforts of 'home'. Intercultural 'lived' experiences stand out in our memory partly because of their global positioning and have the potential to become significant parts of our life stories, perhaps more easily than a classroom-based lesson or reading a text. The challenge of intercultural learning, moreover, is to embed the learning deeply such that it informs epistemological and, perhaps, ontological futures once we have returned 'home' rather than providing content knowledge which, at its worst, augments existing anecdotal repertoires.

The significance of returning 'home' seems important; however, few of those cited in this chapter write explicitly about our re-immersion in 'home cultures' in establishing the depth of our learning and the way this learning persists with us to become embedded and long-term. In considering this matter I turn to literary criticism.

Rushdie, in his analysis of Fleming's film, *The Wizard of Oz* (1939/1990), writes about the "unhousing" (1992, p. 33) of the main character, Dorothy, after her intercultural learning in Oz and her return to Kansas. Dorothy returns from the multi-coloured Oz to the black and white Kansas. Rushdie argues that the film "teaches us in the least didactic way possible to build on what we have, to make the best of ourselves" (ibid, p. 56) and asks is it true that

Dorothy has not learnt from her visit to Oz and that she accepts her old life back 'home'. 'Home' certainly is represented as it was in the opening parts of the film and yet he argues that Dorothy's return to Kansas provokes the realisation that:

...there is no longer any such place as home: except, of course, for the home we make, or the homes that are made for us, in Oz: which is anywhere, and everywhere, except the place from which we began' (ibid, p. 57).

It is Dorothy that has changed and thus also her perceptions of Kansas. Dorothy's learning from her time in Oz remains with her and while the colonial sham of the wizard, an imperial immigrant and ruler in Oz, is revealed in the flourish of a curtain, Dorothy is able to believe in herself as she emerges into a 'new' world (Rushdie, 1992).

Intercultural experiences that provoke deep learning beyond the cognitive have the potential to change our perceptions of 'home' through a reimagined Self and Other constructed on deeper formations of place and people that relate to global power dimensions. Changes in thinking and actions intimate a postcolonial change from within the 'CM', and, as I show in chapter five, destabilising the power of the 'centre' is a highly significant phenomenon in post-structuralist thinking.

Learning about place as a filter between learning about Self/Other has already begun to raise other significant issues about the nature of the intercultural experiences which are, themselves, related to the pedagogical approaches utilised in study visits to which I now turn in considering the third theoretical lens of the thesis; namely, intercultural pedagogy.

4.4 Intercultural Pedagogy: Towards the 'decolonial'?

Introduction

In chapter one, I introduced the political nature of pedagogy and argued that it has the potential to reveal relational power dimensions and to develop a criticality that may enable learners to expose and challenge assumptions in our thinking that in turn lead to possible epistemological and ontological shifts. A pedagogy for intercultural learning should recognise the importance of relationships in our engagement with the 'Other'. The construction of these relationships, which extend beyond the cognate to emotional and existential dimensions, should be built upon hope (Freire, P. 1992) and humility. Hope emerges from the 'liberation' that springs from an awareness of the ways that we are written

through with the colonial. Such an awareness is potentially exposed by an education for 'critical consciousness', seeing the role of teacher as that of a 'cultural worker' (Freire, P. 2003; 2005) which potentially turns to an understanding of the postcolonial possibilities in our relationships between Self and Other. This new relationship forms through a developing humility towards the Other taught through a "decolonial curriculum" and a "pedagogy of lovingness" (De Lissovoy, 2010, p. 279).

'Learning to unlearn' privilege

A fundamental dimension of intercultural pedagogy that is informed by postcolonial theory is the recognition of the power and privilege of the 'CM'. Spivak's deconstructive approach to postcolonialism is explored by Andreotti (2007, pp.74-76) who identifies four dimensions to Spivak's "ethical relation to the other". These themes, which expose a Eurocentric power and privilege and may inform an intercultural pedagogy are

1. 'negotiation from within',
2. 'be scrupulously vigilant in relation to their complicities',
3. 'unlearn privilege and learn to learn from below', and
4. 'working without guarantees'.

Her argument stems from the deconstructive questioning of the subject which requires 'CM' thinking to constantly question the privilege of the subject's power bases through a "persistent critique of hegemonic discourse" (ibid, p. 74). This complements her second point which demands that we constantly and reflexively review our positioning and influences upon the research through our complicit colonial relationship, and in exposing this, help identify assumptions or misconceptions in our thinking.

Spivak's notion of learning to unlearn our privilege or 'learning from below' (referring to learning from the subaltern) is a significant pedagogic challenge to anyone from the 'CM' enquiring about or within the 'ECM' world. Learning to unlearn is a process that Kapoor (2004, p. 75) argues exposes the prejudices and habits of mind of those in the 'CM' related to race, gender, class, "academic elitism and ethnocentrism". Furthermore, it prevents thinking that those from the 'CM' should be positioned as superior and enables us to unlearn such 'CM' dominant epistemologies that compel a wish to teach or improve the 'ECM' Other. Unlearning privilege challenges the power of the 'centre', exposes the fallacy of its 'purity' and supremacy and its implicit assumptions and prejudices within our thinking.

Spivak emphasises the need to learn how to learn which provides the means to learn from, and develop an ethical relationship with, the subaltern. Spivak writes that it requires the 'CM' to perform a:

...suspension of belief that one is indispensable, better or culturally superior; it is refraining from thinking that the Third World is in trouble and that one has the solution; it is resisting the temptation of projecting oneself or one's world on the Other' (Andreotti, 2007, p. 76).

'Unlearning' is challenging, perhaps not more so in intercultural contexts than for Spivak's fourth point about our potential projection of ourselves or our world onto the Other. She highlights the need for us to become aware of 'human wrongs' rather than promoting human rights which tend to "promote the righting of wrongs as the burden of the fittest" (ibid) which reads the 'CM' in a paternalistic, almost Darwinian manner. Without such reflexive scrutiny, education is likely to be a reproductive process that maintains, or evens strengthens, the hegemonic powerful grip of the 'centre'.

The first three of Spivak's dimensions promote educational processes and outcomes that lead to her fourth proposition: 'working without guarantee'. That is, they are open through the apparently never-ending deconstructive process that leads to multiple, cautious readings. Through this process we can also determine the limits of our knowledge which could lead to a confidence in not-knowing; not from a superficial engagement with a matter, but through deep consideration of the multiple and changing dimensions to it that demand inconclusive, plural and tentative outcomes that transcend the certainty of "ethnocentrism, essentialism, reversed racism and orientalism" (ibid). Education then is not a process that seeks mastery with masculine colonialist traits, but of a more humble, nuanced positioning that celebrates tentativity, plurality and 'not knowing' through a deeply considered uncertainty.

Andreotti (2011) constructs a similar pedagogical approach, building on Spivak's 'unlearning' through a four-point conceptual framework:

1. **Learning to unlearn** stemming from an initial realisation that our worldview of what is 'right' comes from a positioning that is a construction of our social, historical and cultural world and that we carry certain 'cultural baggage' that shapes our learning.
2. **Learning to listen** enables us to recognise the influences our 'CM' thinking has upon the world and to be open to new interpretations of worldviews while still thinking about how our 'cultural baggage' shapes our thinking and how our engagement with the Other shapes our sense of Self.

3. **Learning to learn** the process by which we enable new perspectives to influence our worldview and to recognise what we do not know. It enables new perspectives to develop through ‘seeing through other eyes’ (ibid, p. 230) without trying to appropriate the other within oneself or vice versa. Through crossing cultural boundaries and engaging with new cultural experiences we may allow our ‘cultural baggage’ to be reshaped.
4. **Learning to reach out** we are able to incorporate our learning into our own context and in our relationship with the Other while still reflecting on “ways of being, thinking, doing, knowing and relating” (ibid). The outcomes of our engagement with the Other are unpredictable through mutual teaching and learning that this contact with difference potentially brings. Our learning comes from reaching out with “respect and accountability in the complex and uncomfortable intercultural space where identities, power and ideas are negotiated” (ibid).

The four dimensions are regarded by Andreotti to be cyclical with our initial ‘learning to unlearn’ exposing our worldviews, leading to opportunities to listen and then learn before reframing our worldviews through an adjusted view of Self/Other. Such a developmental process is perhaps visualised better as a spiral of ever deepening understanding of Self/Other and the significance of reflexivity is not to be underestimated in this process. Martin and Griffith’s (2012, p. 922) argue that such learning becomes possible if we become troubled by existing worldviews through the ‘displacement spaces’ of Brock *et al* (2006) discussed earlier that “disrupt and resist: the notion of a single story; essential ideas about self and identity; forms of colonialism and imperialism; and neo-liberal conceptualisations of care.” Furthermore they argue that pedagogic approaches should enable such spaces to emerge as part of pre-visit preparation to help avoid any disavowal of experiences during the visit due to a paralysis in learning.

Ideas of recognising and then reshaping our ‘cultural baggage’ chime with the idea of a cultural ‘third space’ which we are able to enter should we successfully ‘learn to unlearn’ (Andreotti, 2007). This space between the cultures of the Self/Other enables a cosmopolitan imagination to develop (Delanty, 2009) or through ‘hybridity’ (Bhabha, 1994/2004) participants engage in an intercultural dialogue and step beyond their ‘home’ culture to meet the Other in this ‘Third Space’. The change in our performance of Self when engaging with Others may be to such an extent that it may appear that our ‘cultural baggage’, or indeed cultural inhibitions, are reshaped or that we become a hybrid of these cultures in the longer term. Holliday (2011) is more cautious about such a phenomenon, arguing that we perform multiple versions of ourselves in different contexts which does not necessarily mean our ‘cultural baggage’ is reshaped or that a certain hybridity is performed,

more that we choose to perform differently in different contexts and the more skilful communicators are able to conceal certain aspects of their baggage.

Pedagogy of Hope and Teachers as Cultural Workers

Encounters with the Other stimulate us in more ways than simply the cognitive, although Hicks (2006) indicates that many teachers of global issues are not equipped to deal with emotional and existential dimensions that emerge through their teaching. Freire, in arguing that he knows with his whole body “with feelings, with passion and also with reason”, highlights the false divide between learning and feeling (Darder, 2002, p. 94). A sustained focus on the cognitive dimension, without due regard to emotional aspects of learning, risks learning being limited to the first stage of Rogers’ (1998) model and ignores the pedagogic approaches that embrace the emotional dimensions to learning that enable learners to understand their feelings towards the world (Hicks, 2006).

A significant ethical question emerges about such a pedagogy and education. What is the right of the teacher to present, or expose, a class to global challenges? (Hicks, 2006, p. 108). Hicks’ students on a global futures course were reported to be mostly highly optimistic, perhaps unrealistic, about life because of their limited world/life experience and knowledge. In one way the course needed to remove the innocent comfort resulting from a lack of knowledge about life globally so that deeper learning could happen. As such, Hicks notes “the real betrayal would be not to awaken them to the human/global condition” (ibid). He argues there is a need for our hearts to be wrenched in order for empathy and compassion to emerge. Empowering the learner thus requires a combination of cognitive and affective (or head and heart) to be immersed in the learning in order to empower students to help them emerge with hope for the future.

Paulo Freire (1992) takes these ideas to a deeper level arguing that hope is an ontological condition of human existence and its improvement. Without hope and our ability to dream the present status will remain, suppressing optimism for the future. Hope, combined with dreaming, chimes with a ‘cosmopolitan imagining’ and, particularly Delanty’s (2009) points about the reinvention of political community around global ethics and the recognition that relationships are local and global situated. There is further congruence with postcolonially infused, intercultural learning through Freire’s argument that change can be recognised when we are able to write our own histories (Darder, 2002) through the growing awareness and voice of histories and cultures beyond the Eurocentric that intercultural learning potentially brings.

A focus on hope emanates from Freire's radical visions to fight poverty and oppressive power in order to overthrow the brutal forces that emanate from the consequences of capitalism (Darder, 2002). Freire's pedagogy is not one of societal or economic reproduction that leads to more failure for the marginalised, but is a means to fight global poverty and oppression (Macedo and Freire, A. 2006). Education, to Freire, is a political act which advocates change where teachers should demonstrate a "permanent commitment and fidelity to a global project of emancipation, a commitment and fidelity born of a profound love for the world and for people" (Darder, 2002, p. 88). His approach to achieve this was to develop people's literacies arguing that literacy skills with the text, or "reading the word", are inseparable from "reading the world" (Macedo and Freire, A. 2006), which chimes in a pedagogical manner to Said's 'worldliness' of the text. His approach to literacy was a means of political emancipation enabling learners to see themselves as cultural makers and to realise their political literacy and consciousness from an emancipatory "humanizing pedagogy" (ibid, p. xi). Teachers are thus cultural workers who aid the construction of the world within which we live.

The potential for a pedagogy to fail in its emancipatory endeavours though is real. Freire warns against romantic notions that bring an apparent voice to students but ignore matters of power. A pedagogy should have due regard to students' societal positioning and have political action as an outcome that aims to remove oppression and the structures that support it (Macedo and Freire, A. 2006). Our reflection, Paulo Freire argues, should not veer towards a singular critique of society without consideration of the Self and individual agency. Our political agency derives from the development of our critical consciousness, which stems from our reflection upon our experiences and which sees learning as significant to our ontology (Darder, 2002).

Emancipatory pedagogy firstly requires a recognition of the power within its own process; that is the power of the teacher. Paulo Freire argues that it is not possible for the teacher to give away her/his power but rather s/he should use power critically to support emancipation (ibid). This does not directly empower our students, but supports them to empower themselves through developing appropriate pedagogies that enable the conditions for dialogue, which help nurture students singularly and as part of a group.

Freire sees dialogue as:

...critical reflection and action which nurtures students' curiosity and imagination toward a greater critical capacity to confront dialectically the content of their study and the task of constructing new knowledge. This process of problem-posing serves to enliven, motivate, and reinforce creativity and the "emergence of critical

consciousness” in the learning process as students grapple to understand the past, present and future in making sense of the world (Darder, 2002, p. 102).

Dialogue is differentiated from debate in that it is not competitive but more a co-constructed development of understanding and, as such, goes beyond inconsequential conversations. Dialogue is supported by the teacher’s careful listening which Paulo Freire (2005, p. 111) describes as “talking with” rather than “talking to” students. He sees this as a critical dimension in their critical reflective development which in turn leads to political action. Dialogue prevents students’ reflection from remaining isolated and helps build a community around learning with awareness of the need for wider political agency. It helps students to problematise their experiences in order to find new ways of thinking and being at individual and societal levels. Freire argues that the process of learning and meaning-making provokes our potential to consider ourselves as “subjects in our world” (Darder, 2002, p. 92) and our growing understanding of global matters develops our “conscience of the world [that] engenders conscience of the self, and of others in the world, and with the world” (Freire, P. 2004, p. 72).

‘Decolonial Pedagogy’

A curriculum that explicitly identifies the “cultural violence” of Eurocentric power which promotes “coexistence” and “kindredness” through a “pedagogy of lovingness” is argued for by De Lissovoy (2010, p. 279). Such a pedagogy rails against cultural domination through an anticolonial agenda which draws on postcolonial theory extending into ways of knowing and being. In short, a transformative intercultural pedagogy. De Lissovoy’s pedagogy places high regard on relationships with the Other which he argues to be matters of our ontology (ibid). In this way he concurs with the significance of the encounter portrayed by Levinas (1972/2006). In a similar way Martin and Griffiths (2012, p. 921) argue that intercultural experiences should not be seen as an ‘encounter’ with the Other, but rather “a postcolonial space for learning that focuses on negotiation and discussion and in which participants think dialogically rather than dually”. Relationships form through our recognition of the interconnected and interdependent world in which we live, which is encouraged through processes such as globalisation and the time-space compression. Our interconnectedness does not mean a simple recognition of difference, but uses this to imagine a relationship starting from an “ethical, political, and spiritual foundation for a genuine opening” built less on an “egalitarian reciprocity” but more on a “radical receptivity of being” (De Lissovoy, 2010, p. 284). In this way relationships can aspire to transcend ‘CM’ supremacy by realising the Eurocentric and oppressive nature of ‘CM’ thinking. The

relationship is similar to Freire's ideas where, through hope, "alliances across difference can be forged" (Darder, 2002, p. 30) and we begin to expose the extent to which the 'CM' is written through with the colonial.

A porosity between Self/Other opens up the potential for an open relationship beyond the privileges that Spivak warns we must unlearn. An ethically-based relationship respects difference in the Other and is the precursor to kindredness which develops from a cosmopolitan orientation (Delanty, 2009). De Lissovoy drawing on Apiah (2006) argues that cosmopolitanism highlights the need for the "negotiation of differences within this global multiculturalism [which] should reject a priori judgements about essential and universal human truths" (2010, p. 281). In this way difference is treated with respect and becomes a key dimension to our relationship with the Other, a matter echoed by Martin and Griffiths (2012, p. 923) who argue "it is possible to feel connected through difference when one aims not to resolve those differences, but to understand them."

In recognising difference, and in developing a critical pedagogy with a focus on global commonalities as a form of community, De Lissovoy reminds us we should acknowledge the cultural violence of the Eurocentric colonial project, including the way this constructs and positions us from the 'CM' and why places are politically and culturally construed as either 'peripheral' or 'central'. In doing so, our pedagogy challenges the sources of power implicit in the 'centre' and recognises history and culture from the 'periphery' which is incorporated in the curriculum. Such a project is far more than teaching about distant places and cultures or even changing our views about such places; it means destabilising the dominant history and reveals Bhabha's (1994/2004) notion that the coloniser is a product of the colonial project. A decolonial pedagogy does not reject such a history but uses this to de-centre its supremacy, building a pedagogic relationship through difference which, I argue, is articulated through our humility and which is built upon relationships and interconnectedness.

In order to aspire towards the decolonial, De Lissovoy's "pedagogy of lovingness" (2010, p. 288) goes beyond caring, which has postcolonial paternalistic connotations (Martin and Griffiths, 2012), by focusing on our cultural differences while growing a community that extends beyond the local or national scale to engage in developing a global community. He argues that this global community has to recognise the destructiveness of neo-colonial forces to relationships, and thus a pedagogy of lovingness has to negate such domination not just moderate its effects. In order to achieve this, those of us from positions of dominance from the 'centre' should be "taught an attitude of listening, respect, and

cautiousness” (De Lissovoy, 2010, p. 290) which concurs with Andreotti’s (2011) development of this into learning to listen, to learn and to reach out.

A pedagogy of lovingness evokes Freire’s ideas of ‘armed love’ with its implicit orientation to action. De Lissovoy, however, argues that while this may be an outcome for a pedagogy of lovingness there needs to be significant developments in our “kindredness” which imply “complex conversation between differences” (2010, p. 289). Such conversations are founded on our humility and are affected by our ‘disposition towards difference’ (Andreotti, 2013), and help expose the interconnected nature of our lives—experienced and imagined—that come before any political actions. As such, it concurs with my critique of Freire’s pedagogy and takes a more nuanced positioning to learning which strongly highlights the importance of relationship with the Other which, I argue, is developed through a pedagogy that humbles us and enables us to imagine different personal and global futures.

From considering my research epistemology in the previous chapter, and my research themes in this one, I now turn to consider my research ontology in the following methodology chapter.

Chapter 5 Methodology

5.1 Introduction

Initially my thoughts about interpretation focused on two issues: what was it that I was interpreting and what methods would be available to undertake my research. Of greater significance, I realised later, was that my methodology, as Montaigne argued, needed to “interpret interpretations more than to interpret things” (Derrida, 1967/2001, p. 351). How I undertook my research, based on my ontological and epistemological positioning, was hugely significant as this strongly influenced “the way it is known” (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, 1999, p. 60). Derrida’s reference to Montaigne provoked my thinking about the ways to consider my ontological and epistemological research positioning. It transported me to a potentially deeper reflective/reflexive domain and, in some ways, clarified matters considerably while adding complexity and problematising my research approach in others.

In developing my methodology it dawned on me that what I had to interpret was language or, more accurately, the signifiers of words and images. Significantly, for my research, as I showed earlier, these signifiers were in the colonial language of English. It also meant that my research was a ‘translation’, metaphorically, as it crossed cultural divides but also literally, as neither I, nor the participants, spoke the local Malayalam language. Language, however, was more fundamentally important to my research’s theoretical underpinning than just to its ethics or methodological limitations:

...language and its symbolic analogues exercise the most crucial determinations in our social relations, our thought processes, and our understanding of who and what we are (Belsey, 2002, p. 6).

Implicit to all these matters of language is power. Power in terms of who has a voice in the research, and also in the translation, which is “never neutral” and “cannot therefore avoid political issues, or questions of its own links to current forms of power” (Young, 2003, p. 140).

A second revelation came through an apparently simple conversation which helped crystallise my research ontology. The matter arose through a discussion during an earlier visit to South India about our base location at the tourist resort of Kovalam. It was noted by a colleague that although this location enabled good access to amenities, it was not representative of the ‘real India’. This elicited reflections about whose right it was to claim greater degrees of reality but, more fundamentally, whether a real India existed or not. I

realised later that my reflections borrowed heavily from post-structuralism. The sense of place that one develops about Kovalam is one of difference; difference to our other expectations and experiences of places in India, but it is no more or less representative of a 'real India' than elsewhere in India. This is not to denounce reality but to caution against claims to articulate it through creating a hierarchical approach to our experiences and thus privileging one place over another. I, no more or less than anyone else, can speak, or write about, the 'real true India' from the representations with which we have to play.

This chapter explores the two main themes of language and claims to truth and reality in section 5.4, and in doing so develops my ontological positioning within post-structuralism summarised in table 5.1. Within both themes is the implicit dimension of text and power which is developed further in section 5.7. In the development of my use of post-structuralism, I justify and explain the role of 'fiction' which is interwoven with 'non-fictional' readings of India.

Initially, I consider two key ontological and epistemological issues. The first is post-structuralism's relationship to postcolonialism in Section 5.2 which illustrates the close relationship between the ontology of this thesis and its epistemological framework. I argue that it is too simplistic to consider the latter as a sub-set of the former despite their close relationship.

Ontology	Issues Addressed	Contribution to Analysis
Post-structuralism Belsey (2002) Derrida (1967/2001;1992) Spivak (1993/2009) Said (1978/2003) Ahluwalia (2010) Bhabha (1994/2004) Cixous (1975/1986) Butler (1990) Frosh (2015)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subjectivity and reflexivity • Not searching for immutable truth • Anti-essentialism • The 'manyness' of reality-plural readings • Working between binaries (e.g. Self/Other) • Invasion of the 'Self-same' • Subject as 'CM' and male construction: aspiring to transcend Logocentricism • Self as psychosocial subject 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attention given to a faithful representation of perceived realities that are not privileged rather than a search for an immutable truth • Attention focussed on the complexities between the binaries such as 'CM'/'ECM' and 'fact'/'fiction' which are never finally defined or fixed • Acknowledgement that searching for such realities lies only in language and specifically the 'worldliness' of the text; beyond language cannot be articulated, however this does not mean it does not exist • Using feminist approaches to minimise the 'CM' Logocentricism within the research whilst recognising my position as a male living and writing in the 'CM' • Regarding constructions of the Self in relation to the Other as psychosocially constructed

Table 5.1 Summary of research ontology

The second issue is the difficulties of the relationship between colonialism and the Enlightenment; the foundation of 'CM' academic thought within which this thesis is situated. Although I took a post-structuralist position in this thesis, which deconstructed the 'colonial' within us in a search for a post-colonial understanding, the thesis' ontology alongside its structure and style potentially remain firmly tethered, to paraphrase Bhabha (1986), to 'CM' academia.

5.2 Post-Structural and Postcolonial Relationships

Earlier, I highlighted tensions between Orientalism and post-structuralism in Orientalism's failure to expose the potentially powerful dimensions that play between the binaries of Orient and Occident. Later postcolonial theorists, such as Spivak (1993/2009) and Bhabha (1994/2004), position their thinking more theoretically within post-structuralism which again illustrates the complex and intimate relationship that postcolonialism has with post-structuralism.

The relationship between the 'two posts' may, alternatively, be 'flipped' to see the role that colonialism played in the development of post-structuralism. Ahluwalia suggests that the lack of recognition of a colonial location to the development of post-structuralist philosophy is a "repressed colonial question" (2010, p. 4). Consideration of this question reveals the significance of the colonial Franco-Algerian war of the 1950s to the development of contemporary French philosophy (Dutton, 2010). To suggest postcolonialism is a by-product of post-structuralism therefore disregards a complexity in both their epistemological developments.

Proposing the significance of the colonial experiences during the Algerian War of Independence on post-structuralist philosophers such as Derrida and Cixous significantly moves the location of post-structuralism away from the 'CM' to the 'ECM' (Ahluwalia, 2010). This is not to say that post-structuralism and postcolonialism are the same despite many similarities: an important dimension to post-modernism is the deconstruction of European 'logocentric' cultures which has strong resonance with postcolonialism's deconstruction of colonial narratives (ibid). Ahluwalia (2010, p. 3) summarises their differences well:

[p]ostcolonialism is a counter-discourse that seeks to disrupt the cultural hegemony of the West, challenging imperialism in all its various guises, whereas post-structuralism and postmodernism are counter discourses against modernism that have emerged within modernism itself.

An implicit agency within postcolonial theory emerges in Ahluwalia's thinking, which concurs with my use of it as a theoretical lens; however, post-structuralism is criticised for its lack of agency due to its apparently endless deconstruction of the subject, which is a matter I return to later in section 5.4.

5.3 Colonialism and the Enlightenment

Post-Structuralism is an important ontological position for me, not solely for its positioning on reality and truth, but also for its relationship with Enlightenment philosophies. In taking a post-structuralist positioning, I *attempt* to distance myself from Enlightenment thinking due to its colonial overtones. In chapter three, I argued that underpinning British colonialism was a moral hegemonic argument that enabled "a belief that the other is being 'civilised', educated and improved through its contact with the West" (Holliday, 2011, p. 79). Part of this colonial 'trick' was to portray the 'ECM' as feeble and passive, requiring the paternal rule of the 'CM', which was evident in a range of literature and art as much as political rhetoric that advanced colonialist economic growth.

The argument that underpins the colonial hegemony runs deep in 'CM' cultures through Enlightenment philosophies (Spivak, 1999). In her deliberate 'misreading' of Kant, Spivak 'traces the imperialist determinants that underwrite his theory of the human subject in *The Critique of Judgement*' (Morton, 2003, p. 114). Kant argues that we, as humans, are moral beings only to the extent that we can 'cognise' ourselves (ibid, p. 115). He proposes that humans overcome this through rational thinking and an aesthetical appreciation of the cultural sublime that overcomes "unpresentable concepts such as the infinite and death" (ibid). The key issue for Spivak is the lack of consideration of those who do not have access to the culture or morals described by Kant (ibid).

It is not necessarily the philosophy *per se* that is highly problematical, but the exclusivity, and perhaps the manner, in which culture is perceived with the lack of even an acknowledgement of other peoples and their cultures. European culture here seems to be a highly singular representation of all that was worthy in eighteenth and nineteenth century Europe, becoming a "protective enclosure" (Said, 1993/4, p. xiv) to the detriment of other cultures. It is within this 'protective enclosure' where the argument for the 'moral subject' is made and the philosophies of Kant promote the 'civilising' imperial agenda of the West (Morton, 2003).

Wider issues about Enlightenment philosophies and colonialism were missed, or ignored, according to Said, who argued that when philosophers:

...conduct their discussions of Locke, Hume, and empiricism without ever taking into account that there is an explicit connection in these classic writers between their "philosophic" doctrines and racial theory, justifications of slavery, or arguments for colonial exploitation (1978/2003, p. 13).

It is perhaps for this reason that certain postcolonial writers resist approaches that are overtly influenced by the Enlightenment characterised by Humanism which places the human individual as its focus of thinking. Humanism is criticised for its lack of consideration of the ways that society/culture operates in its construction of the individual rather than the individual being a fully autonomous person (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia 1999). Fanon's vision of a new humanism in the 1950s rejected Enlightenment humanism that underpinned a French colonial system which promoted the colonies as geographic extensions of the mother country (Ahluwalia, 2010). Similar arguments are articulated about the humanism evident in Said's writing. This drew on Fanon's ideas to develop a postcolonialism for the latter part of the last century (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, 1999) producing a humanism that was "not of the Enlightenment so much as oppositional, not homogenising so much as liberation, not theoretical so much as 'worldly'"(ibid, p. 25).

There is a danger that any ontological/epistemological approach within a 'CM' thesis risks using the same colonialist apparatus that it, in my case at least, wishes to criticise. Young asks "[h]ow does any form of knowledge - including Orientalism - escape the terms of Orientalism's critique" (2004, p. 171). In considering this question, it would be crudely simplistic to argue that a post-structuralist approach written by a 'CM' male in his forties, within the parameters of 'CM' academia, could ignore, or transcend, Enlightenment thinking.

My argument focuses more upon the criticism about the lack of consideration of the Other within Enlightenment thinking and seeks to expose a colonial heritage of 'CM' academia within which my thesis is situated. As Young (2004, p. 158) argues, it is not a "critique of colonialism in opposition to European culture but rather...the extent to which they are already deeply implicated within each other." Attempts to "decolonize European thought" (ibid) is a research aspiration, but instead of unrealistically aiming to release myself from Enlightenment 'tethering' I look to stretch its 'leash' as much as possible. I now turn to my second key theme of language in the research and in doing so consider my positioning with regard to fundamentals of the Enlightenment: truth and reality.

5.4 Language and Text: in search of truth and reality?¹⁷

Language and meaning

In my search for understanding it is tempting to interpret the data I have to find meanings behind these words but these spaces, according to Derrida (1992), are empty. Language is not the expression of ideas that are beyond the words we use; instead, ideas “are the effects of the meanings we learn and reproduce” (Belsey, 2002, p. 7). That is to say language, and therefore meaning, is culturally determined. Language becomes the intermediary between humans and our world but in doing so language becomes our world. These ideas concur with de Saussure who suggested, a century ago, that meaning was not dependent on references to the world (ibid). Meaning is not determined by reference then but to difference, which inverts the views of earlier Enlightenment humanists. Such difference is interpreted by the words we use; west is defined by not being east, or the coloniser is defined by not being colonised. Language that is culturally determined is not ours to own or preserve. One only has to see the changes to the new editions of the Oxford English Dictionary to see how new words are introduced and meanings may alter. It is, perhaps, one of the reasons, in addition to the effects of his Jewish Algerian heritage, why Derrida mused “I only have one language, yet it is not mine” (1998, p. 2). The lack of ownership of language perhaps enables the meaning of words to be more fluid culturally, geographically and chronologically. It is the acceptance of these changes more widely that enables words and meaning to change; “what, after all, do great poets, philosophers, and scientists do, but change our vocabulary?” (Belsey, 2002, p. 5).

Deconstruction takes two parts: the first stage of deconstruction subverts the hierarchy of the binary by giving greater value to the subordinated term. This act does not itself subvert the power of the dominant term as it leaves the binary relationship as unproblematical. A second action, known as ‘displacement’, is required to divide the binaried structure. Displacement moves the subordinate part of the binary into the centre of its dominant partner and in this move the dependency of the dominant term on its subordinate partner emerges (Yeğenoğlu, 1998). Deconstruction does not end in revealing the immutable truth. There is nothing behind the text, and all texts have multiple meanings or *différance* which are fluid. *Différance* is a constant process which allows for understanding to be made in terms of its difference from its binary oppositions (Derrida, 1992). Derrida argues that if the

¹⁷ Extracts from this section formed part of a paper given at the University of Kerala, January 2014 (Hoult 2014).

word, or signifier, appears different from another one, it also defers its meaning. This constant deferral means any striving for an essential understanding becomes futile as there will always be other readings of this.

One of the frequent criticisms of post-structuralism is that the never-ending deconstruction philosophically removes the agency from the subject which was a fundamental dimension of Enlightenment Humanism. Yeğenoğlu argues that a deconstruction of the subject that decentres it does not lead to perpetual deferral of meaning due to “its final annihilation” (1998, p. 3) but rather, as Spivak argues, it challenges the primacy and privilege of the subject (Andreotti, 2007). The existence of the subject enables agency that comes from Spivak’s idea of “negotiation from within” (ibid, p. 74) which leads to further understanding though constant questioning of the subject’s privilege. The agency available through post-structuralism has become apparent through a range of writers associated with cultural theory and critical theory genres, and through which new readings of gender and sexuality studies, postcolonial and race studies emerged (Butler, 1990/2006). This thesis, in its search for potential agency using a post-structuralist ontology, aimed to mirror that described by Butler no matter how situated and provisional my findings were.

The world of the text

It is important to recognise that in considering the ‘text’ it would be simplistic to see this as purely the written published word. In the notes to *Acts of Literature*, Derrida recalls “what I call ‘text’ implies all the structures called ‘real’, ‘economic,’ ‘historical,’ socio-institutional, in short: all possible referents” (1992, p. 16). The text is seen plurally and encompasses a wide range of phenomena; the translator’s notes to the same text elaborate:

...it does not mean the things that we usually consider to be outside texts do not exist but there is nothing that completely escapes the general properties of textuality, différance etc.- that is, as Derrida goes onto explain, “no natural presence”... can be known “in itself” (ibid, p. 102).

In attempting to understand phenomena, therefore, “all reality has the structure of a differential trace, and that one cannot refer to this ‘real’ except in an interpretive experience” (ibid, p. 16). The notion of text is seen therefore in its totality and not as a means to read some other “more real reality” (ibid, p. 77).

To situate a text in its ‘real’ culture, geography and politics seems to contradict Derrida’s strict adherence to the text alone despite his plea to read a ‘text’ plurally. It is, however, this

lack of 'worldliness' that Said criticises in post-structuralists like Derrida who "hide that very ambivalence that give energy to the disruptive assertions of these thinkers" (Ahluwalia, 2010, p. 6). Ahluwalia goes some way to alleviate the former issue by arguing that if we subvert the deconstructive process by working backwards and commence by asking where it is intellectually located in the world, we learn that post-structuralist thinking is a "product of lived experiences" (2010, p. 8). Young makes a similar argument in locating post-structuralism, not in the heated intellectual debates of Paris in the late 1960s, but in the Franco-Algerian Wars of Independence (Ahluwalia, 2010). This exposes a potential latitude and longitude to post-structuralism, notwithstanding the difficulties in suggesting the origin of anything in post-structuralist terms; however, as Ahluwalia continues, this question is more about "the contingent circumstances that gave rise to a certain critical constellation of border intellectuals arising out of the colonial condition" (ibid, p. 10) and thus not about finding any centre or origin to the writing.

Said's notion of the 'worldliness' of a text illustrates the importance he places on materiality, the lack of which creates a text as a:

[s]elf-consuming artefact; idealized, essentialized, instead of remaining the special kind of cultural object it is with a causation, persistence, durability and social presence quite its own (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, 2001, p. 16).

By treating the text as a product of its 'worldliness' in this thesis, it enabled me to read the text *and* its author(s) as cultural products and a function of power from whence they came. The text, in all its plurality, is my data whether this is the published word, that written by participants or more fictional accounts of intercultural learning.

Truth and reality

In using postcolonial deconstruction specifically and post-structuralist readings more generally, I make no claim to being able to represent an immutable truth or that it necessarily gets nearer than other forms of research to reality. Belsey explains that:

[i]f language is differential rather than referential, if we owe our ideas of things to difference which are the effect of language in the first instance, then we can never be certain that what we say about the world in language or, indeed, in any other signifying system is true (2002, p. 70).

The complexities of this uncertainty that post-structuralism urges, which extends to the celebration of 'unknowing', is illustrated by reference to Said:

[i]f all representations are embedded in the language, culture and institutions of the representer then we must be prepared to accept the fact that a representation is eo ipso¹⁸ implicated, intertwined, embedded, interwoven with a great many other things besides the 'truth' which is itself a representation (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, 1999, p. 71).

Truth was not the aim, or product, of my research, but in developing my arguments, and in analysing the various available data, the matter became more one about what I can faithfully recount. In articulating my thoughts, I do not lay claim to a singular reality but that is not to say that reality does not exist. In recognising my need for accountability and transparency in my research, I endeavour to find and represent as faithful a reality as possible and in doing so recognise that for others different, but nevertheless faithful, realities exist that are neither privileged nor derided in relation to my own interpretations. As such, it is important to recognise that my articulation of reality should not essentialise or attribute meanings associated with large-scale and/or fixed cultural traditions (Bhabha, 1994/2004). My findings were situated and contextualised and needed to be tentative and speculative in their nature.

In considering notions of truth and reality I find Gandhi's mainly¹⁹ non-'CM' and pluralistic view of the changing complexities of the world to be helpful. He argues:

[t]he world is changing every moment, and is therefore unreal, it has no permanent existence. But though it is constantly changing, it has something about it which persists and it is therefore to that extent real. I have therefore no objection to calling it real or unreal (Singh, 2009, p. 109).

Gandhi calls such an existence the "manyness of reality" (ibid). This multiple reality is not at odds with deconstruction although I acknowledge tensions in juxtaposing different ontological traditions. We embrace multiple meanings whilst in no way claiming that one reality is definitive. Gandhi goes further though, and suggests that although we may strive for truth it is unobtainable to mortals. He writes in his autobiography, subtitled *The Story of my experiments with Truth*:

[t]ruth is the sovereign principle, which includes numerous other principles. The truth is not only truthfulness in word, but truthfulness in thought also, and not only the

¹⁸ *Eo ipso* meaning here 'by the thing itself'

¹⁹ I refer to Gandhi's 'mainly non-'Western' approach' in acknowledgement to his 'Western' influences including English legal education.

relative truth of our conception, but the Absolute Truth, the Eternal Principle that is God (Gandhi, 1927/2010, p. xiii).

Truth is God on one level seems an essentialist statement and draws parallels with Belsey (2002, p. 43) who uses the opening paragraph of Barthes' *S/Z* (1970) to expose the "absurd" "grand claims of structuralism" of Buddhist traditions that see the world through a single bean. My thinking departs from Belsey and Barthes here in that these claims seem to ignore potentially poetically and mystically rich interpretations of the Buddhists' representation of a whole landscape in a bean. This is something that I do not want to lose in using deconstruction. The notion of truth puts Gandhi at odds with 'CM', postmodern and secular philosophy. The proposal, however, that we are not able to access truth but should strive for as faithful a representation of reality as possible has strong resonance with my ontological positioning in my research.

Although Gandhi's spiritual lens differs greatly from the post-structuralist/postcolonialist authors that I have cited so far, a notion that there is something beyond what can be found and articulated is an important area of congruence, whether this be a spiritual dimension or something that transcends language²⁰, such as Lacan's notion of the pre-language 'Real' (Bailly, 2009) or, more poetically, in Cixous' (1976/1986) view of love that goes beyond the limits of expression through language. Understanding what we can articulate (and what we cannot) about our interpretation of reality is of significance to my research approach and I now turn to explore the potential for 'fiction' as an additional form of data within this research through working between the 'factual'/'fictional' binary.

5.5 Between the 'Factual/Fictional' Binary

If my research is not claiming to represent an immutable truth or a singular reality then it raises the question: is it possible to include 'fiction' as complementary to my empirical data? In his deferral of meaning and playfulness with language, Derrida's deconstruction provides a plurality of readings and a value placed in such plurality that a scientific approach would not. In using fictional texts alongside more 'factual' accounts, I agree with Richardson, who argues that literary writing "violates a major pretension of science: the single unambiguous voice" (Richardson, L. 1997, p. 15). Furthermore, Derrida noted about autobiography that we present a 'story' and within this "we'd have trouble not spotting but separating out historical narrative, literary fiction and philosophical reflexion" (Derrida, 1992, p. 35).

²⁰ Clearly these two positions are not necessarily mutually exclusive

Richardson and Lockridge (2004) develop an interdisciplinary approach in *Travels with Ernest: Crossing the Literary Sociological Divide*. As professors of Sociology and English Literature respectively, they combine thoughts about their mutual travels in a text that presents their individual narratives and then combines them through written reflective/reflexive discussions. The text presents creative writing and sociological approaches with equal claims to faithfully represent their experiences. Such interweaving of narratives about experiences is of particular interest to me with its implicit reference to developing a plural, tentative constructed sense of place and to the imaginations that are important to postcolonial representations of the Other through 'cosmopolitan imagining' that I articulated earlier.

The use of 'fictional' texts

Using 'fictional' texts potentially further illuminated and enriched my qualitative empirical data. Arundhati Roy's writing illustrates the false binary and rather arbitrary divide between 'fact' and 'fiction'. Her novel, *The God of Small Things* (1997) has been followed by a series of powerful polemics about power and democracy in post-socialist India. It would seem strange to refer to certain texts and not to others written by the same author because of an apparent fictional/factual divide. Furthermore, my contextual writing in chapter two illustrated a richness in using 'fictional' and 'non-fictional' texts that developed my perceptions of India and of intercultural learning in India. To theoretically exclude 'fiction' would diminish an examination of those from the 'CM's' engagement with India, which I see as a supportive element to my understanding of the key elements of this thesis and as such are interwoven into my data analysis chapters. This is congruent with post-structuralism's disregard of a text's central premise and that the world is not different from the text in that the world is also "textually constructed" (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, 2001, p. 18).

5.6 Self as Other

The Humanism of the Enlightenment saw the Self, or subject, as a highly centred and autonomous individual. This is a contentious issue for post-structuralism which rejects the individual certainty of the Enlightenment which suppresses the Other and is a product of colonial thinking which continues into modernity (Yeğonoğlu, 1998). Before criticism of the autonomous subject is seen as a purely (post)modern phenomenon, Hegel indicated that "the subject is constructed by a mediation through the other" (ibid, p. 6). Unlike post-structuralist critiques, however, the Other is identified through comparison to the subject

rather than seeing its difference. In other words, Hegel sees the Other by reference not difference—an approach which Derrida inverted nearly two centuries later—and which is succinctly summarised by Yeğenoğlu: ‘[i]f the Hegelian economy works by making the subject recognise himself in the other, Derridean deconstruction makes the subject recognise the other in himself or herself’ (1998, p. 9).

Lacan’s post-structuralist considerations of the Self, or subject, also invert Enlightenment certainty. In Lacanian terms the subject is “an effect of language, of the movement of the signifier” (Yeğenoğlu, 1998, p. 7). The subject then is defined by its relationship to language which is seen as a highly significant Other. In using a language of the Other the Subject/Other boundary is blurred through the internalisation²¹ of language. Language is culturally determined through the signification that pervades our environments, and thus to use language we become ‘organisms-in-culture’ through using this most significant Other²² (Bailly, 2009).

A deconstruction of the subject in terms of its philosophical construction reveals it as a ‘CM’ and male construction (Yeğenoğlu, 1998) and shows “its illusory Self-production is a denial of relationality, complexity and dependence on the other” (ibid, pp. 7-8). The construction of the subject that is relational to the Other, with an acknowledged co-dependence, is philosophically hopeful to me in my research that examines learning about the Other and how this changes the Self.

A second philosophical hope emerges from deconstruction’s two-step process of reversal and displacement. It is this second displacement that shakes the subject as the central philosophical structure and identifies the invasion of the Self-same within the Other. As Yeğenoğlu (1998 p. 8) puts it: “the aim of shaking the structure itself is possible only where the other and otherness is located in the heart of the subject”. Otherwise the centre, or subject, remains intact. The subject here is fluid, not fixed, and with the potential to change, which highlights the potential agency of post-structuralism, especially by being aware of the differences and ‘tensions’ between Self/Other (Yeğenoğlu, 1998).

²¹ I use this term to indicate that language is more than that we speak. Lacan sees the unconscious as well as the conscious to be formed by language.

²² In referring to earlier parts of the chapter, I acknowledge the role of Derrida in my thinking and also that Derrida critiqued Lacanian literary analysis (Frosh 2012); however, in this broad post-structuralist argument about the cultural determination of language there is congruence.

Physical engagement with the Other

Understanding the Other, and through this oneself, has a significant moral dimension perhaps no more so than in the thinking of Levinas (1972/2006). He argues that our understanding of the Other through a face-to-face encounter with difference is a fundamental ethical dimension to the construction of the Self, and indicates the importance of existentialism in the changing construction of Self. This physical encounter may trigger ethical and/or moral dilemmas that challenge our constructions of Self/Other through this relationship, and evokes a deep ethical and compassionate response which is so significant that it transcends our ontology. It literally becomes us.

At an ontological level, Levinas' philosophy of ethics develops a *Humanism of the Other* (1972/2006) in arguing that the Self is a construct of the Other. This is not a blurring of the boundaries between Self/Other, as post-structuralist theorists would recognise, but more that the:

...other is already me, not assimilated as "part" of me but inassimilable as that which interrupts my own continuity and makes impossible an "autonomous" self at some distance from an "autonomous" other (Butler, 2012, p. 28).

It is understandable from this fluid construction of Self/Other why post-structuralists such as Butler draw upon Levinas; however, his Humanism draws on the phenomenology of Husserl and Heidegger. Levinas ultimately rejects philosophies that de-humanised the human (Cohen, 2006, p. xxxii) and it is for this dissonance that I draw on his work and particularly Butler's use of Levinas. His philosophy, as with Butler's, is immersed in the Judaic tradition and thus it is important to note that this moral positioning to the Other is not formed through a more Christian-focussed 'Love thy neighbour as oneself' but more an ethic that is 'to love thy neighbour *is* oneself' (ibid, p. xxvii). Such a 'moral transcendence' again provides a significantly distinct divide between Levinas and phenomenology (Morgan, 2011).

Levinas argues that the philosophy of the Other, and our moral obligation to the Other, is deeper than our cultural recognition of our ontology and thus our obligation to the Other becomes the primacy of our being (Cohen, 2006, p. xxx). Our moral obligation to the Other is at its greatest through the face-to-face meeting with the Other. This is no casual encounter and Butler (2012) highlights that Levinas did not consider all encounters to involve a 'face'.

When the encounter with the 'face' does trigger a deep response that constitutes ourselves we are morally obliged through a visceral response to their suffering which becomes "the

superlative priority of the other person” (Cohen, 2006, p. xxvi). This meeting becomes an ethical experience and demands justice for the Other (ibid). This existential response resonates with the development of ‘cosmopolitan imagining’ and elements of intercultural learning (Scoffham and Barnes, 2009).

Psychosocial readings

Research that is faithful to the experiences of the Self that maintains its wholeness observes the minutest dimensions of life within larger and wider social structures (Walford, 2001). In order that my research helped me to understand, I read the intercultural experiences of the Self through a psychosocial lens that recognises an individual’s agency within wider cultural societal powers. It is not sufficient to assume that the expression of learning by the Self is merely a function of the “outer world” and a psychosocial reading of their learning allows learning to be understood within the context of the relationships between both “inner” and “outer” worlds (Hollway and Jefferson, 2000 p. 4).

A critical cosmopolitan moment of change occurs when one society, or individual, is influenced by another. Larger scale influences such as ‘CM’ industrial and political neo-colonialism may merit a sociological methodology and yet, as I have shown with the phenomena of stereotyping and with the fluid and permeable boundaries between Self/Other, we are a “subject of psychology, through [which] social forces are constantly running through this supposed individual’s personal subjectivity” (Frosh, 2015, no page). The Self, however, as Hook (2012) has shown about stereotyping, is also “saturated with fantasies, passages of desire and ‘realities’ that are made invisible by the ideology of ‘individual-social’ differentiation” (ibid).

A tension emerges between the ‘psycho’ and the social which ‘CM’ academic disciplinary boundaries do nothing to dispel. Psychosocial studies attempt to fill this disciplinary vacuum. Frosh (2015, no page) explains that:

[t]he psychosocial in its most radical formulation, offers a critical approach to the fragmentation of social, political and personal experience in conceptualisations of the human subject.

Such an approach is not without its risks. Said’s attempts to transgress beyond his ‘home’ of literary criticism into other disciplinary areas was met with considerable criticisms within the various ‘silos’ of expertise within which he ‘trespassed’ (Young, 2004). Frosh continues:

there is no firm division between the 'psycho' and the 'social', despite the institutional power of academic disciplines (psychology, sociology) that are built precisely on the reiteration of that division. The critical task of psychosocial studies is therefore to find ways to articulate the intricate entwining of social and psychological forces in order to clarify the workings of power and make apparent the forces that run through psychosocial experience (2015, no page).

A psychosocial approach to my research enables the meeting point within oneself of the macro- and micro-cultural scales of influence to be explored. This is congruent with a critical ethnographic approach developed in the next chapter which acknowledges the cultures within which we live and highlights the social nature of our world.

5.7 Power and the Text

'CM' academic writing and power

In considering notions of truth and reality I recognised the power dimensions at play, not least in the 'CM's' fascination with truth. Foucault argued that "the will to truth characterised the Western episteme once the subject of enunciation...came to predominate over the enunciation itself" (Ashcroft, 2001, p. 122). The nature of one's discipline is significant in terms of how 'truth is considered'. As Young (2004, p. 166) argues:

Orientalism demonstrates...the deep complicity of academic forms of knowledge with institutions of power... [and]... the detailed texture of cultural domination of an academic discipline...is nothing less than a science of imperialism.

I have shown throughout this chapter that although I aim to strain at the Enlightenment 'leash' my ontological and epistemological enculturation provides a 'tether'. Implicated within this are the more 'traditional' disciplines of anthropology, history and geography and I briefly outlined in chapter two the positivist heritage of geography from which I have departed. To briefly exemplify, I have written elsewhere that my 'home' discipline of Geography was arguably "engaged in both cultural and military endeavours through our intellectual curiosity of the Other and the colonial surveying and mapping of countries" (Hoult, 2015, p. 232). Even 'new' disciplines such as postcolonial studies are implicated for the charges made against it by Krishnan (2009) in which he considers it a 'CM' historical obsession and a means to extend research activity or perhaps colonise research in the 'ECM'. I cannot change, and should not mask, the colonial heritage of the disciplines from

where I draw my literature, but by recognising such a colonial lineage within my work I reduce its power.

In chapter three I indicated the postcolonial importance of the 'right to signify' (Bhabha 1994/2004, p. 3) and Spivak's (1993/2009) notion of the 'Subaltern' regarding the voice of the marginalised. What is of methodological issue here, was the nature of the publications I used to formulate my thinking. I reflexively considered the nature of literature used in my thesis in chapter two arguing that it was desirable to extend my reading beyond the 'CM', but that such an endeavour risked incorporating shallow readings due to the complexities of the cultural translations required to read such a text. Consequentially, perhaps a significant majority of the texts I drew upon were published in the 'CM'. Even where authors with significant non-'CM' dimensions to their lives were cited they have tended to occupy positions in 'ivy-league' universities such as Said, Bhabha and Spivak, notwithstanding their attempts to subvert traditional 'CM' styles of academic writing and transcend disciplinary boundaries. Spivak provides a nuanced position to this arguing that all spaces are contaminated in some form or other and therefore nobody can argue from a 'pure' unpolluted position. In her deconstructive approach she promotes a "negotiation from within" that challenges 'CM' cultural establishments but does not reject them outright (Andreotti, 2007, p. 74). My approach similarly attempts to deconstruct 'CM' constructions of power from within.

Much of my thinking within this chapter may be linked to the question posed by Young (2004) about how one may write about the postcolonial from a position within the 'centre' without merely reproducing the colonialism of 'CM' power. I problematised this considerable matter with regard to my ontological and epistemological positioning within this research; however, the style of representing such thinking also demands consideration.

I recognise the significance of the written word in representing my thinking and the lack of other means of representation used, such as the visual arts or film, which would challenge the hegemonic privilege bestowed upon the written word by the 'CM'. To write in a style that conformed to 'CM' academic expectations would potentially repeat the logocentricism that I aspired to epistemologically transcend; and yet this is the tradition to which I have been enculturated to such an extent to it becoming 'normal'. To collude with 'CM' forms of writing without at least acknowledging its logocentric, powerful place within the 'CM' would limit the depth of my work.

I was drawn to Cixous' poetical academic writing that aimed to transcend the logocentric. Her writing is seen as a place:

...which is not economically or politically indebted to all the vileness and compromise. That is not obliged to reproduce the system. That is writing. If there is a somewhere else that can escape the infernal repetition, it lies in that direction, where it writes itself, where it dreams, where it invents new worlds (Sellers, 1994, p. xxix).

This suggests writing with its own energy where the writer is lost, not perhaps in a death of the author as Barthes (1977) would have it, but more writing that performs for itself rather than expressing, or being an extension of the ego of the author which would otherwise extol the privilege of the masculine hegemony of the logo- or phallogocentric.

My writing in this thesis is not an attempt to write in Cixousian terms. I would find this hard given my positioning, but it is significant that her approach offers “a ‘passageway to a new relationship between Self and Other in which both coexist” (Sellers, 1994, p. 40). Such a relationship between Self/Other dispels the danger of seeing the Other in oppositional terms and I may, at least, peer down the passageway from my positioning to view the more poetical or mystical ‘unknowns’ within Gandhi’s ‘manyness of reality’ (Singh, 2009, p. 109), without tying absolute or essentialised meaning to these phenomena, and being confident in my uncertainty that a more poetical reading of reality provides. I turn now to consider methods underpinned by my ontology with which to imaginatively engage with my data.

Chapter 6 Methods: Critical ethnography of pedagogy

6.1 Introduction

A postcolonial epistemology set within a post-structuralist ontology challenged me to develop research methods that at least aspired to the postcolonial. Holliday (2011, p. xi) challenged me to find “alternative, more creative methods which dig beneath the surface - to find the hidden and counter-cultures of the Periphery with which to shake the Centre image.” This provoked me to develop a critical ethnography method of data collection influenced by feminist theory that required strong reflexivity.

As a method, I do not intend to explore critical ethnography’s epistemology at great length, but rather explain and justify my approach to ensure that in using critical ethnography it complemented, rather than jarred, with my post-structuralist and postcolonial positioning. This was particularly so in terms of its claims to truth, and considerations of representation. In adopting a post-structuralist position the ‘crisis of legitimation’ (Denzin, 2000) caused by scientific and postmodernist criticisms of ethnographic truth claims was of minimal concern to me. My research did not seek to be reliable or generalizable in other settings and I celebrated, rather than was troubled by, relativistic uncertainties that are prevalent in postmodern approaches.

Ethnography in educational research

My ethnography focused upon the participants’ perceptions of learning performed during the entirety of the intercultural learning module that I taught which focused on the 2014 visit. The research was mostly conducted over the duration of the group’s formal ‘lifetime’ from the beginning of the academic module in January 2014 to its conclusion with the submission of an academic reflection some six weeks later. The participants worked together intensively for three weeks including three days of pre-visit teaching, 12 days in India (including travel), four days in their UK school upon return and final reflective tutorials.

Ethnography has been used considerably as an educational research method (e.g. Mills and Morton, 2013; Pole and Morrison, 2003 and Walford, 2001) and more specifically to research teaching and learning exemplified by Woods’ *Researching the Art of Teaching* (1996) and Armstrong’s *Closely Observed Children* (1980). Armstrong’s research focused on the class that he taught using his observation, documentation and analysis of pupil

activity, relationships and their evidence of learning. His role as teacher and researcher was similar to mine albeit in a school setting with children.

My research was undertaken through direct experiences with the participant group whom I taught while simultaneously performing as a researcher, observing and recording their performances of intercultural learning, for the duration of the academic module. I was immersed and influential in the field using a range of data collection methods over a significant period of time. My positioning concurred with Pole and Morrison's view of ethnography as research that is:

...based on the first-hand experience of social action within a discrete location, in which the objective is to collect data which will convey the subjective reality of the lived experiences of those who inhabit that location (2003, p. 16).

Although I questioned the perhaps simplistic notion of conveying subjective reality in terms of whose reality it is and how this is expressed, Pole and Morrison's views presented a basis for considering an ethnographic approach to my data collection. I used five characteristics of ethnography developed by the same authors in table 6.1 to help establish my research positioning and which further illustrates why I deemed an ethnographic approach appropriate in this context.

A significant characteristic of ethnography is that of the 'participant-observer' which describes the researcher's immersion in the field usually for a significant period of time (Lichtman, 2006). My decision to use ethnography was influenced by the inextricably entwined roles that I performed as teacher and researcher through my immersion in the field. I used the term 'pedagogical ethnography' in recognising the significance of the teaching and learning process to at least four important dimensions to the research:

1. My relationship with the participants which was founded and developed through pedagogy during participation in the intercultural learning module which I designed and taught.
2. Intercultural pedagogy influenced my thinking and practice as one of my research themes.
3. The focus on pedagogy by many of the participants through their observations during the school visits, throughout the visit, which potentially influenced their intercultural learning.
4. Pedagogic practice informed the research process and outcomes through the design and use of learning journals, conducting regular plenaries and assessing their academic reflections.

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>My research approach</i>
A focus on a discrete location, event or setting	My immersion in the teaching and research field alongside the participants and its discrete location in Kerala and in the pre and post visit sessions in the UK University which covered the full duration of the intercultural learning module.
A concern with a full range of social behaviour within the location, event or setting	My focus on the participants' 'social behaviours' towards intercultural learning in the field from within the research setting: I was not a distant voyeur of their learning. I use a 'psychosocial' lens to look at the micro and macro dimensions to the participants' experiences.
The use of a range of different research methods where the emphasis is on understanding social behaviour from inside the discrete location, event or setting	My research methods are wholly qualitative, and are taken from within the research setting and focus upon understanding the learning performed, and articulated, by the participants through my observation and journal records, analysis of participants' journals and critical reflective writing and later individual interviews.
An emphasis on data and analysis which moves from detailed description to the identification of concepts and theories which are grounded in the data collected within the location, event or setting	A 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973) will be developed to provide in-depth description of the data that emerges from the research setting. The thick description draws on reflexivity, theoretical and fictional influences and empirical data.
An emphasis on rigorous or thorough research, where the complexities of the discrete event, location or setting are of greater importance than overarching trends or generalisation	A 'thick description' provides the basis for the complexities of the research and research process to emerge bringing accountability and transparency. Generalisations beyond the research setting are not sought.

Table 6.1 Characteristics of ethnography linked to my research approach

<i>Methods</i>	<i>Issues Addressed</i>	<i>Contribution to Analysis</i>
<p><i>Main method: Critical Ethnography</i></p> <p>Pole and Morrison (2003) Carspecken (1996) Brewer (2000) Denzin (1997 and 2000) Cohen <i>et al</i> (2011) Hollway and Jefferson (2000)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethnography as educational research immersed in the field • Research as a political act/change agent • Power and Oppression • Student teachers as participants • Wholeness of the Person • Reflexivity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethnography as participant/observer immersed in the field exposes my inextricably linked roles of teacher and researcher • The agency of my teaching develops a de facto political dimension to my research: I write for the students not of them • Recognition and mitigation of power dynamics within the research leads to involving the student teachers as participants of the research and supports co-construction of meaning through the research • Regard is taken for the significance of my influences upon the research setting, process and interpretation of realities that produce the research outcomes • Regard to faithfully represent the wholeness of participants through the research process • Recognise the importance of micro and macro cultural influences upon the Self
<p><i>Selection and Application of methods (1): Reflective writing</i></p> <p>Schön (1983) Moon (1999) Wellington and Austin (1996) Alterio (2004) Crème (2005)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection in/on action • Reflection axiomatic with deep learning • Creating meaning through writing • The influence of audience on writing • Narrative/biographical writing—writing oneself through intercultural learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflecting during/upon experiences as part of learning leading to deep learning through complex, open reflections that recognise macro cultural and political factors as well as local matters and that do not jump to conclusions • Journal writing goes beyond recording and is a means to construing the world through consideration of personal theories: ‘we write meaning’ • Writing partly a product of audience which is balanced against the significance of relationships in the research • Importance of representing the wholeness of the participants from their reflective writing (and interviews)
<p><i>Selection and Application of methods (2): Interviews</i></p> <p>Brewer (2000) Hammersley (1998) Holliday (2007 and 2011) Hollway and Jefferson (2000) West (1996) Merrill and West (2009) Cohen <i>et al</i> (2011)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal means to express intercultural learning • Unstructured interviews • Relationships and power dynamics • Co-construction of meaning • Wholeness of people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews a means for participants to express spoken personal narratives of intercultural learning • Intention on enabling the wholeness of the interviewee to emerge through such narratives • Open, unstructured interviews became ‘conversations with a purpose’ intended to support co-construction of meaning and minimise power dynamics • Significance of the relationship between interviewer and interviewee in ethnographic approaches—a relationship built on trust and emotional reciprocity • Timing and venue of interviews also minimised power dynamics with the intention of participants being able to articulate their learning beyond academic confines of other forms of data collection

<p><i>Operational Accountability and Transparency</i></p> <p>Atkinson (2008) Brewer (2000) Denzin (1997) Holliday (2007 and 2011) Cohen <i>et al</i> (2011) West (2001) Altheide and Johnson ()</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thick Description • Making the familiar strange • Bracketing • Voices in research • Verisimilitude • Validity as reflexive accounting and Ethnographic imagination • Ethical considerations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presenting the data I collect provides the means for a thick description to be developed; the data itself does not constitute the thick description but allows a deep analysis to potentially develop which, when combined with the data, becomes the thick description • Showing one's workings—being explicit in bracketing, making the familiar strange • Ultimately I speak for myself in my research while remaining faithful to the voices I hear through my work • Verisimilitude through presenting my research with as much depth of thought, reflexivity and faithfulness to my perceptions of the participants' experiences in full • The ethics of 'CM' style and focused research in a non-'CM' setting: attempting to avoid the 'colonial trap' and navigating the nuanced relationship between teacher and researcher • Issues of participant anonymity
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Table 6.2 Summary of research methods

Moreover, as the teacher I had an intention to help all involved in the visit, including myself, to expose epistemological assumptions. This political intention did not initially extend to my actions as researcher; however, it was difficult, if not undesirable, to separate my roles as teacher and researcher. There was an inevitable overlap between my thinking at unconscious, if not conscious, levels in these two roles and my actions exemplified during group plenaries that provided simultaneous opportunities for teaching and research.

At least two important issues emerged through these reflections related to the nuanced relationship between teacher and researcher. Firstly, the power dimensions potentially at play between a researcher who was also the participants' teacher and secondly, the related influence that I had upon the research field and the participants' thinking and actions. My research became *de facto* political in its outcomes if not its initial intentions.

In the rest of this chapter I outline why critical ethnography was pertinent to my research and discuss the influences of feminist theory and reflexivity upon it. I then turn to discuss the practicalities of my 'pedagogical ethnography' more specifically and discuss two main data collection methods of journal writing and interviewing in more detail. Finally, I outline the need for accountability and transparency and how rigour was maintained within my work and summarise the ethical considerations of my research all of which is summarised in table 6.2.

6.2 Critical Ethnography

Critical ethnography is explicit about the political act of research that aims to disturb our thinking. It is distinguished from more traditional forms of ethnography that "describe what is" by asking "what could be", indicating that critical ethnography goes beyond describing cultures and challenges the *status quo* (Stephens, 2009, p. 52). Critical ethnography is positioned within critical theory (Cohen *et al*, 2011) which seems largely congruent with my postcolonial and post-structuralist positioning in my research. Denzin (1997) shows how theories of the social are also theories of writing which themselves are forms of interpretive ethnography. This concurred with my research ontology that focused upon the text and its worldliness, or to use Denzin's words, to "locate the social inside the text" (1997, p. xii). In developing a critical ethnography, Carspecken (1996, pp. 6-7) identified five characteristics of critical research which are

1. it should be used within cultural and social criticism: it supports efforts for change,
2. certain societal groups are privileged over others,

3. oppression is most forcefully reproduced when oppressed groups see their situation as inevitable, natural or necessary,
4. oppression has many faces and all forms should be studied and challenged, and
5. that 'mainstream' research practices can (albeit unwittingly) be part of the oppression.

Critical ethnography intends to expose matters of "oppression and inequality in society" within which is an explicit dimension of participant emancipation (ibid, p. 243). I read the exposure of hidden or 'natural' (colonial) ontological and epistemological assumptions as an emancipatory act, and acknowledged that the research process aided this emancipation through the participants' reflections and interviews which potentially provoked further exposure or critique of 'CM' hidden assumptions.

I applaud such possible outcomes and, accordingly, I wrote *for* the participants in this respect rather than simply about their learning (Denzin, 1997). I use the word 'applaud' carefully. An exposure of our assumptions was an explicit dimension of my teaching but not of my initial research intentions. I realised the delicate balance that I performed between the activism of the visit and the reflexivity of my research. Such research is, however, not a neutral activity and the political dimensions within its processes were recognised and shared with all participants.

My nuanced performance of teacher and researcher exposed further power dimensions between me and the participants. My research was not conducted with participants at the margins of society with little cultural or educational capital, but I was aware of the power differential between me, as their teacher, and the participants who, despite their graduate status, were significantly younger than me and engaged in a visit that potentially exposed unknown vulnerabilities.

Feminist theory provides a means to counter patriarchal and logocentric research where the researcher neglects to consider how the research story develops (Merrill and West, 2009) by questioning her/his "privileged position" (Brewer, 2000, p. 128). A feminist influenced approach provides a theoretical means for the researcher's story to be part of the dialogue between researcher and participants which, in turn, enables the narratives of the researcher and participants to be interwoven. By enabling the researcher to be an active part of the dialogue enables a reflexive articulation of how s/he developed during the research process to emerge (ibid).

Through my feminist-influenced critical ethnography I made strong attempts to involve participants in the learning and the research processes, and later in publication of *our*

learning, rather than merely doing research *on* them²³. The biographical research process outlined by Merrill and West (2009) often used interview methods which became a conversation with the biographical dimensions of the researcher discussed alongside that of the participant, which provided them with an initial voice in the research and aspired to be mutually empowering. My reflexivity discussed in the next section was a similar attempt to empower the participants following Brewer's (2000) requirement that a feminist-influenced approach should take a reflexive account of gender.

Reflexivity

My thinking about critical ethnography included the growing awareness of the influences I had upon the participants and, secondly, the limitations of what, and for whom, I may speak, which revealed my research to be what Giddens (1991) termed, a "reflexive project of the self" (Cohen et al, 2011, p. 17). My reflexivity developed my narrative alongside those of the participants and helped minimise, but not remove, hierarchical elements of the research as well as avoiding obscuring my research presence in this process. Furthermore, the need to be "hyper self-reflexive" (Andreotti, 2007, p. 75) promoted self-awareness of implicit colonial assumptions which remain without a reflexive consideration. Such reflexivity is associated with the intercultural pedagogies discussed in chapter four and the need to unlearn our privileges, to listen, and then learn to learn (Andreotti, 2011).

Developing researcher reflexivity is "a powerful and natural resource to be used to understand others' life histories" (West, 1996, p. 19) and is a significant means by which postmodern ethnography has argued its research relevance and enabled data to be tentatively and critically treated (Brewer, 2000). There were at least three reasons why reflexivity was important in my research:

1. The post-structuralist ontological positioning of this research, as well as the narrative style linked to this, meant that I wrote in the first person. There was no hidden researcher pretending to be objective and I was explicit in my research aims to reflexively identify the ways my actions influenced participants' thinking. I was not a neutral researcher and a reflexive account of my research motives and thinking was important structurally and ethically in developing my thick description and in faithfully representing the participants through the narratives.

²³ In chapter two I noted the publication of participants' papers alongside Indian peers in a journal and a forthcoming publication from the 2014 university conference.

2. As the visit coordinator, my influence on the participants' experience in the preparation for, during, and immediately after the visit was significant. I cannot faithfully separate my role as teacher from that as researcher and thus to deem this pedagogical influence irrelevant would seem to remove a vital dimension which potentially affected the research outcomes. A reflexive dimension acknowledged my pedagogical influences and was included in my thick description of data and analysis.
3. The participants' reflections and journals that formed significant elements of my data were also assessed academic submissions. As the academic assessor of these submissions there was a significant power dimension between me and the participants which was strictly beyond the research but may have influenced their writing. A reflexive consideration of the power within this relationship was important and again formed part of the thick description.

Without my reflexivity, the research would have pretended to be a detached, perhaps objective piece of research which ignored my biography as something irrelevant to the research and the thinking of the participants which would have presented the participants' voices as their own. Such an approach, according to Merrill and West (2009, p. 31) "present...fictions of the 'truth' while denying the interests, privilege and power of the researcher". A reflexive approach enabled me to consider the influences of myself upon the research including the research findings and as such it:

...illuminate[s] the complex interplay of self and others, psyche and culture, agency and structure, reality and representation, present, past and future, in individual lives and across diverse contexts (West, 2001, p. 29).

My reflexivity aimed to present a complexity that distorted the centrality of the researcher's Self, removing any certain identities and blurring the boundaries between Self/Other; in order to achieve this I used "lived biography as the starting place for critical ethnography" (Denzin, 1997, p. 168).

6.3 Methods

The duration of my research was short-term, albeit for the whole period of the intercultural learning module, yet my methods had to enable participants to indicate how their thinking had changed (if at all) over this period as a consequence of the visit. West (1996, p. 10) illustrates in his own adult biographical research how his methods changed to become "largely unstructured, open-ended, diverse and intensively reflexive". This approach

enabled his participants to potentially express a wide range of thinking over time as the relationship with the researcher built and their confidence in the researcher, and the research process, grew. In this unstructured approach the participants were able to speak authentically and it provided them with the possibility of authorship and agency. I sought similar methods for my own research.

My ethnographic immersion in the field enabled me to make my own reflective observations from conversations, observations and the regular plenaries held during the visit. The participants' relationship with me was almost entirely short-term²⁴; however, I perceived a growing intensity in this relationship, and between one another, that possibly derived from factors including their reliance upon me as visit organiser; regarding me as someone who was experienced in visiting Kerala; possible participant vulnerabilities due to their geographical and cultural distance from 'home'; but, probably, most of all the mutual engagement and construction of learning and our understanding of ourselves and as a group.

The significance of relationships suggested to me that methods that incorporated the co-construction of understanding about intercultural learning were likely to enable the participants' to articulate their perceptions in as open and deep a manner as possible. These factors influenced me to develop an intercultural learning journal that enabled participants to record and develop their thinking over the duration of the module and which was used during the visit at the regular plenaries and as the basis for later reflective writing. In addition, I also interviewed consenting participants in an unstructured manner after the end of the module to discuss their perceptions of intercultural learning.

In summary, the available data which I deemed appropriate to collect were

1. participants' research journals (appendix two);
2. participants' academic reflective writing about their learning from the visit (appendix three);
3. unstructured interviews with participants conducted after completion of the module and the return of their academic writing and journals (appendix four); and which occasionally included a follow-up email (appendix five) and an unstructured interview with my colleague, Scott, who participated in the visit (appendix four) and an email dialogue with Dr Manish, the Keralan co-ordinator of the visit (appendix five);

²⁴ The main exception being one participant who was also taught by me on another teacher education module.

4. my research journal (appendix six) comprising notes and photographs of observations made during the visit, including planned plenaries with the group of participants.

Figure 6.1 summarises how these data relate to my enquiry foci. In choosing these methods it was important to use various means of data collection that helped develop a reflexive dialogue, between me and the participants, about their intercultural learning. This dialogue, which emanated from the relationship built during the academic module, had the potential to further develop our intercultural learning and appealed to me through links to feminist theory and ideas of agency emanating from research (West, 1996).

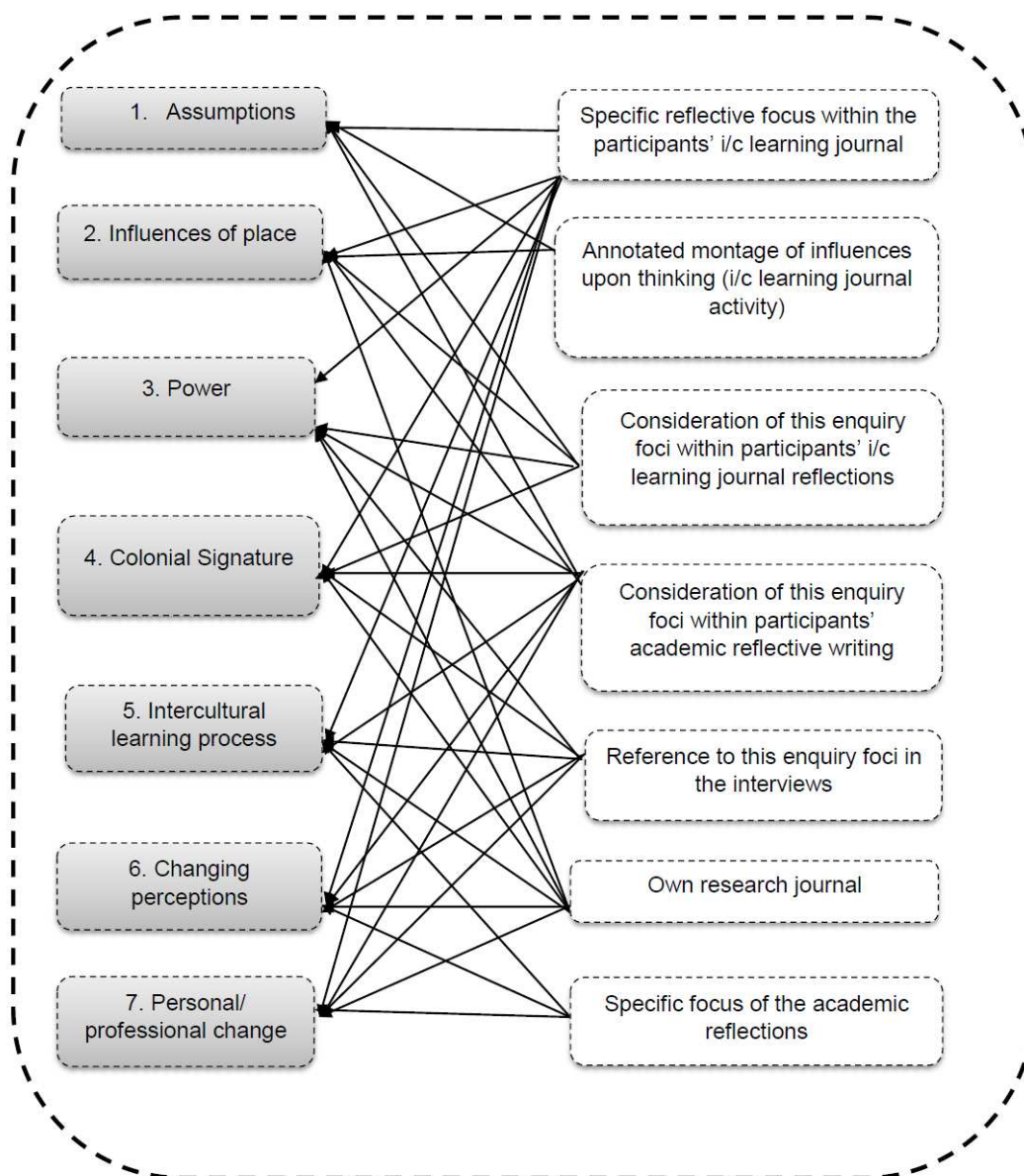


Figure 6.1 Available data (in white) and how they link to the enquiry foci (in grey)

It would have been simplistic to consider that the participants' articulation of their learning was not affected by the medium through which they spoke and the various power dimensions at play. This ranged from academic autobiographical writing and interviews to much more informal plenaries and spontaneous conversations. Given the power dimensions inherent within such representations of learning it seemed simplistic to regard these stories as necessarily "telling it like it is" (Hollway and Jefferson, 2000, p. 2). Participants were likely to have been aware of the ways they wished to be represented (Denzin, 1997) and would write, or speak with an audience in mind (Alterio, 2004). The participants' articulation of intercultural learning could have become an 'acceptable face' that hid more inner and private thinking (Crème, 2005); however, the significance of relationships formed during the visit, with the focus on co-construction of learning with participants, was important and, consequently, I deemed their representations of intercultural learning as *authentic as possible* given the difficulties of power and audience.

Furthermore, in helping develop authenticity and responding to matters raised by Alterio and Crème, I attempted to develop 'safe' spaces to express this learning which, in borrowing from Land *et al* (2008), I call a 'liminal place'. This was both a physical and metaphysical entity intended to allow our 'troublesome knowledge' to 'brew' in safety. Physically, our 'liminal place' was the quietness of the hotel; and, through the plenaries and journals supported by careful pedagogic scaffolding, participants could write and speak as freely as possible about the intercultural experiences that mattered to them. I turn now to consider reflective writing and interviews as my main methods of data collection.

Reflective Writing

Reflection is a frequently used means in contemporary UK ITE to develop, and articulate one's learning (Furlong, 2003) which has grown since ideas of the reflective practitioner (Schön, 1983) became highly popular in professional learning contexts. The participants' familiarity with reflection potentially helped their engagement with my research tools.

My thinking about the learning articulated in the intercultural learning journal in many ways remains consistent with that articulated in a joint paper I wrote about student teachers' reflective writing in learning journals. We wrote that journal writing was:

a means by which students' personal theories can be made visible and reconstructed. The process of reforming personal theories is viewed by Claxton (1984) as representing learning. We believe no practical activity is approached without some underpinning theory (Carr and Kemmis, 1986). Usher and Bryant

(1987) view the relationship between theory and practice as dialectical rather than merely applicative, which we see as a potential weakness of Schön's work. This is not to suggest that the knowledge developed through reflection replaces bodies of theoretical knowledge for the students, but is used as a guide to develop deeper insights into personal situated theories to support their practice (Hoult and Carpenter, 2007, p. 12).

Being able to articulate matters that may be implicit is a significant challenge for reflective writing and suggests the need for a relevant vocabulary to articulate one's thinking which may or may not include reference to theoretical literature. I inferred from this that providing pre-visit teaching, which helped participants to consider not only their pre-conceptions about India but began to explore postcolonial theory, offered a language to express thinking and a theoretical basis to critique our engagement and learning in Kerala.

Reflective writing is not simply a means to record thinking but also a way of developing knowledge as we write our own narratives, which simultaneously involves our constructions of past and future (Cooper, 1991). Developing deep reflection was an important means to enable me to access the participants' thoughts about their intercultural learning. In arguing that reflection is axiomatic to deep learning, I tentatively linked theories of reflective practice to intercultural learning in terms of the depth of engagement of the learner related to the depth of reflection (table 6.3) based on the five orientations to reflective practice developed by Wellington and Austin (1996) in order to highlight the link between reflection and intercultural learning and to support my analysis of reflection in the participants' data.

Reflecting on a concrete experience and our thinking about it can be simultaneous, akin to Schön's (1983) 'reflection in action' but which is later developed by our written 'reflection on action'. It is important therefore that any analyses of reflective writing are read as a:

...window to their construing and resist temptations to measure them in any way but to use them as an agenda for open ended discussions which invite the students to develop their understandings (Hoult and Carpenter, 2007, p. 14).

As such, my readings of the participants' intercultural learning were tentative and faithful to the contexts within which they were articulated.

Participant Interviews

Interviews were conducted as a final act in my data collection after the completion of the intercultural learning module and the return of the participants' academic reflective writing.

Face-to-face interviews were offered to all 14 participants, 12 of whom participated, and to my colleague, Scott, who co-led the visit while, due to our locational and time differences, I engaged in an email dialogue with the visit's Indian host, Dr Manish. The interviews were offered to be conducted in an appropriate place of the participants' choosing, which was usually their placement school where the interviewee was potentially at ease though environmental and social/professional familiarity and where the context of, at least, their professional learning could be perhaps exposed more readily.

<i>Reflective orientation</i>	<i>Defining the Orientation</i>	<i>Intercultural Translation</i>
Immediate	Emphasis upon pleasant survival. Tendency to focus on immediate demands of the task in hand, pedagogy often eclectic, but shallow	How to move from 'Disorientation' to 'Coping' with the experience without problematizing matters
Technical	Emphasis upon development and perfection of teaching methodology and deficient delivery of prescribed results	How to cope in order to learn about content knowledge
Deliberate	Emphasis upon discovery, assignment and assessment of personal meaning within an educational setting. Accept given ends but negotiate the process	Reflection develops broader questions about matters such as wealth generation and poverty
Dialectic	Emphasis upon political emancipation, questioning educational ends, content and means. Tendency to focus on political and social issues. Pedagogy involves continual questioning, revision and internal validation, stressing empowerment and personal responsibility	Deep questioning and reflection about social justice and global inequalities linked to postcolonial theories
Transpersonal	Emphasis upon inner self-development and relationship of internal to external self	Transformational learning through exposure and problematizing of existing epistemology linked to personal ontologies

Table 6.3: Orientations to reflective practice (after Wellington and Austin 1996)

The interviews were intended to provide a verbal means to discuss the process and outcomes of intercultural learning. Interviewing was intended to provide an alternative means for participants to articulate, and also build, their understanding about intercultural learning beyond the already completed academic writing. In conducting interviews, I recognised the opportunity to move my work, albeit temporarily, from the dominance of the

written word so privileged in 'CM' discourse²⁵. Interviewees' names were anonymised and they were sent the transcript to which they were asked to confirm if it was a faithful record of the conversation and that I may use it for research (appendix one).

Ethnographic practice includes a wide range of interview approaches, but in aiming to "explore the perspectives of the people concerned" tends to be open ended (Hammersley, 1998, p. 35). My interviews were no exception and I aimed to focus on what the interviewees were saying, rather than what I expected them to say, or fragmenting their comments into unrepresentative 'sound bites' (Cohen *et al*, 2011). My interviews tended towards "conversations with a purpose" (Brewer, 2000, p. 67) with an open and emotional engagement encouraged within the conversation. Such an approach was redolent of feminist influenced interviewing practice that recognised the significance of longer-term relationships between interviewer and interviewee based on "trust and emotional reciprocity" (ibid, p. 69) and that generated authentic narratives of intercultural learning from the conversations. My interview style was not one of "detachment and role distance" (ibid) and was consequential of a relationship built over the duration of the module and particularly the mutual field experiences. I did not pretend to be unknowledgeable about aspects of Kerala: to do so would have been disingenuous, but I was clear to model 'making the familiar strange' in my own learning process.

I cannot faithfully claim that my interviews were conducted within an equal power relationship between interviewer and subject as feminist theory would promote, but can emphasise the co-construction of meaning through the interview where participants were just that—not "respondents" or "objects" that feminist theory would abhor (ibid). It furthered my claim that the participants' reflections were as authentic representations of their learning as possible.

In interviewing after the completion of the intercultural learning module, I attempted to minimise the power dimensions between me and the participants such that I had no further direct influence over their endeavours to become qualified teachers²⁶. This also helped minimise, but not remove, the 'interviewer effect' (Denscombe, 1998) in the potential for such power dimensions to elicit distorted responses that focused on what I would prefer to hear rather than their more faithful accounts of intercultural learning.

²⁵ I note the temporality of this as the interviews, which were recorded, were then transcribed into the written word in order to undertake analysis of them.

²⁶ In the case of the one student teacher, whom I had taught prior to the visit and which would usually then involve me observing that student teach in school, I arranged for another colleague to undertake this.

My interviews used open questions intended to illicit a conversation about intercultural learning where interviewees could develop their own themes using their own words. There was no interview schedule of pre-determined questions but invitees to the interview were informed in writing that I wanted to talk about the visit and their related learning. This focused on three related matters: the ways that the participants learnt from the module; what they learnt about, including themselves; and any lasting dimensions from the visit that they considered remained as influences upon themselves.

Anonymity

Initially, I assumed I would be able to assure all participants' of full anonymity through the use of pseudonyms. The strong relationships, however, within the participant group led me to consider that anonymity within the participant group was not fully possible in the probably unlikely event that a participant should read my thesis. This was because participants could probably recognise their peers, despite my use of pseudonyms, through my reference to a particular act or comment which they witnessed.

Furthermore, a participant may be recognised in my thesis by a university colleague. Although colleagues were not witness to the visit except my colleague, Scott, a small number were aware of the participants and could potentially recognise someone through reference to the participants' subject discipline. There were potentially six disciplines which might have exposed a participant and the same number of colleagues with such knowledge. To avoid this exposure I made general reference to the arts/humanities/sciences where possible and only referred to a participant's discipline if I regarded that it illuminated my analysis. In the light of these two matters regarding anonymity, further written permissions were sought from all participants to reflect these two matters (appendix one).

6.4 Research Rigour: Accountability and transparency

Introduction

My post-structuralist approach emphasised the significance of context and situation to the research process and outcomes. The 'same' research undertaken by a different researcher and/or in a different setting and/or with different participants would produce different results. My work is not able to be replicated in this respect or its findings able to be made general,

because any universalities are highly tentative as shown by my careful use of critical cosmopolitanism (chapter four). I sought to ensure that my research was faithful to the participants' experiences, but this is not the same as arguing that it was reliable. Instead, I sought rigorous research through strong accountability and transparency with regard to the participants, myself and to 'CM' research.

My accountability was developed through

1. careful consideration throughout my research of my ontology and epistemology (chapters three to five);
2. deep consideration of how I represented the wholeness of the person in analysing the participants' experiences while remaining faithful to their perceptions of intercultural learning and retaining their anonymity (chapters six to fourteen);
3. my reflexivity in representing my conscious influences faithfully in order to present my work as authentic and to seek verisimilitude (chapters two, six, and seven to fourteen); and
4. a 'thick description' of collected data, developed in the next section, that enabled deep analysis which itself was a function of my reflexivity and helped achieve faithful representation.

My transparency was developed through

1. careful ontological linking and articulation of my research methods through which I ensured that a critical ethnography and my specific methods were appropriate and enabled data to be presented clearly and coherently (chapter six and seven to fourteen, appendices two to four); and
2. being explicit, in the next section, about the approaches I took in presenting and analysing data; namely, by 'bracketing' and 'making the familiar strange' and about how I approached writing the narratives in section 6.6.

In the rest of this section I outline the development of my 'thick description' and the process by which data was analysed. I then consider matters of voice within my research arguing that ultimately it is my voice that was singularly heard before I turn to a final dimension of rigour: that of seeking verisimilitude or, in other words, the qualities of the research that satisfy the reader that it appears to be 'true' (Denzin, 1994).

Thick Description

Thick description, developed by Geertz in the 1970s, is now a somewhat familiar research term with many interpretations, sometimes which demean Geertz's original textual approach (Atkinson *et al*, 2008). A thick description provided an in-depth and detailed attempt to represent cultures from the inside through a subjective saturation by "taking in the phenomena described, the intentions and meanings that organize them, and their subsequent evolution or processing" (Brewer, 2000, p. 39). The data that I deemed ethical to collect, and that potentially held the key to rich and deep analysis of the participants' intercultural learning, are indicated in figure 6.2 along with their sources (in brackets). The data itself did not constitute the thick description but allowed a deep analysis to potentially develop which, when combined with the data, became the thick description (Holliday, 2007).

Thick description is associated with ethnography in its many guises from naturalistic to humanistic. The postmodern critique of ethnography dismisses the esteem of the ethnographer, through her/his access and position, which enables a thick description to be developed. This 'crisis of representation' (Denzin, 1997) does not seem particularly relevant to my research, which does not seek to privilege my position or to diminish other interpretations of the same data; however, I do distinguish my thick descriptions from more superficial descriptions that remain at a 'factual' reporting level and which are "independent of intentions or circumstances" (ibid, p. 39).

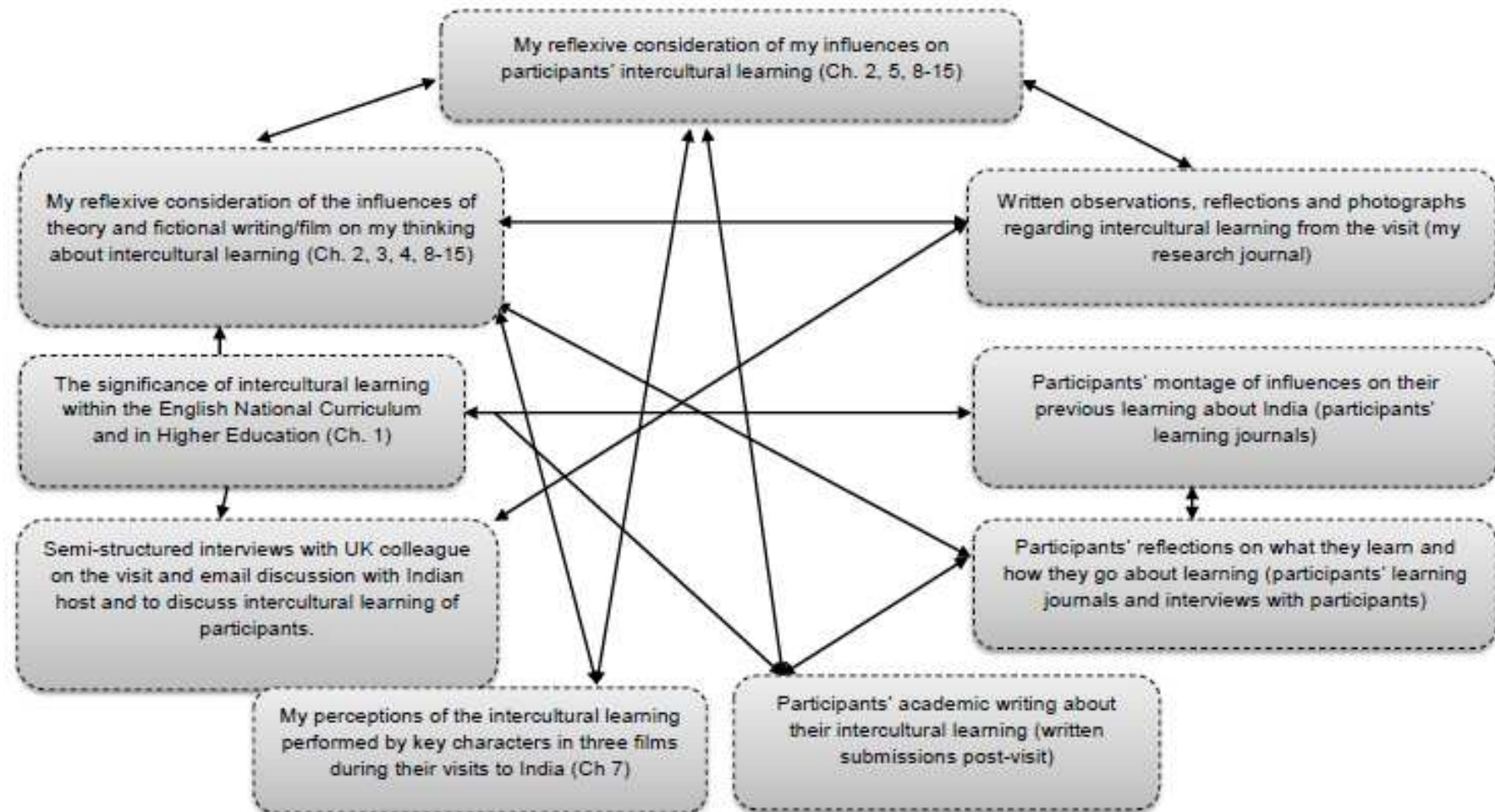
Holliday (2011) highlights three important dimensions to the development of the thick description, which I used to guide my data analysis. These are bracketing, making the familiar strange, and being faithful to the data. Aspects of these three approaches have already been argued, especially with the complexities of faithful representation and the need to retain the wholeness of the person through my data collection and analysis.

'Making the familiar strange' requires researchers to position themselves in all situations as people who need to interpret cultures by first exposing prejudices or assumptions, potentially being made by themselves and without making early judgements, through a process that involves "holding up everything for scrutiny accounting for every action and seeing how they speak and write...as integral to the whole" (Holliday, 2007, p. 20). This is what C. Wright Mills deemed a 'sociological imagination' (ibid). I attempted to achieve this through my reflexivity, which scrutinised matters and aimed to expose ideologies and power that were explicit, or implicit, within the research which might cause premature conclusions that ultimately are simplistic and/or shallow in their thinking. Holliday (2011) suggests the sociological imagination is evoked when we attempt to view phenomena through the eyes of those from the 'ECM' rather than our usual powerful gaze from the 'CM'

Making the familiar strange is associated with bracketing, developed within phenomenology around a century ago. Bracketing attempts to side-line researchers' prejudices and assumptions which assist them in not arriving at easy, or convenient conclusions that provide expected answers founded on the researcher's original premises. The notion of bracketing, perhaps initially, seems somewhat alien to an ethnographic approach due to its apparent need for the researcher to, at least, suspend the 'auto' dimensions of the research; however, in concurring with Lichtman (2006), taking a reflexive approach to research that acknowledges bracketing can expose prejudices and assumptions which 'gateway' the opportunity for the research to reach deeper and more meaningful conclusions. Accordingly, I used bracketing cautiously and consciously regarded my interpretations for hidden assumptions and values and resisted quick conclusions that would potentially diminish the depth of the study and the authenticity of the participants' experiences.

Within thick descriptions it is important that the parameters of the research setting are explicit (Holliday, 2007). It is important, though, for me to recognise the influences of, and therefore the inclusion of, other research dimensions within my thick description, such as, the preparatory sessions in university prior to the visit, government policy about internationalisation of the curriculum, as well as the immediate time after the visit when participants were re-immersed in their placement schools after which they submitted their reflections about their learning. In figure 6.2, I include all these factors in boxes with dotted boundaries to indicate the permeable boundaries between all these dimensions within my research.

Figure 6.2 Building a Thick Description of Intercultural Learning (indicating source(s) of data in brackets)



Voice(s)—Singular or Plural?

I have shown that it would be foolish to attempt to silence myself within this reflexive research where I write about the participants' thinking regarding their experiences articulated through their own writing and interview comments. Such a combination of data and interpretation is called a "double hermeneutic process" (Cohen *et al*, 2011, p. 540); however, my research takes this one stage further in that the participants' experiences are partly a response to the stimuli I provided through the visit, albeit in an open and fluid manner.

In my research, a number of voices are potentially heard within the data such as those of the participants, Indian host and UK colleague; however, these voices are only 'heard' by me and the voices presented in the narratives ultimately are mine, despite my commitment to faithful representation.

My singular voice that speaks within this thesis is influenced by wider society and the aspects of which I am consciously aware, which I reflexively considered in chapter two, as well as those which subconsciously drive and divert my thinking throughout this work. This is not to suggest I suddenly adopted critical realism, but rather saw these texts within their 'worldly' setting and as psychosocial functions of the participants' responses to the visit and research process.

Just as a postcolonialist approach should not deem to speak for the 'subaltern', the voice I present from my data is my own in that it is my interpretation of collected data presented as a reflexive dialogue with each participant. I find Holliday's justification of this helpful in his writing about the voice that emanates from his data:

...I speak only for myself, as someone who has worked with and learnt from them. All the examples I cite from my own personal experience speak to me in a similar way to the voices of my interviewees. The only systematicity in the way I have collected and used the data is that it resonates with what I feel is important in connection with my theme. In this sense I am writing from only my position, from my own experience as an educator....with a particular biography, training, and socialization. This means that the examples from my own experience are written as personal narratives that incorporate the voices of others as I have interpreted them (Holliday, 2005, p. 306).

Holliday neatly divides this singular voice into five dimensions of narrative-based research (figure 6.3) and I have indicated where these dimensions of my voice can be found within this thesis. He describes how the first three voices correspond to data, whereas voice four

is more a data commentary, and voice five is the final research argument. All five voices are constituents of thick description which will be the principle means by which I tentatively draw themes from my research.

<p>1st Voice The personal narrative that stimulates the research (Ch. 2)</p>
<p>2nd Voice The Data- including the first voice (Appendix 3 and 4)</p>
<p>3rd Voice Commentary upon the data at the time of collection (Ch. 7 to 14)</p>
<p>4th Voice Comments on the first three voices at the time of writing (Ch. 7 to 14)</p>
<p>5th Voice Draws the argument together and speaks for the whole research (Ch. 15 and 16)</p>

Figure 6.3 Five Voices within Narrative Research (from Holliday, 2005, p. 38)

Rigour: In search of verisimilitude

In considering the rigour of my critical pedagogical ethnography, I find West's quote about auto/biography helpful:

[r]ather than an absence of rigour, or truth, such auto/biographical methods ask much of the researcher, in terms of self-awareness, social and emotional intelligence, sensitivity, integrity, courage and openness. Whole people and whole processes are restored to the text (2001, p. 34).

Restoring the 'wholeness' of a person to the text is something that many research approaches would eschew and, although it is a bold claim, it is certainly a realistic aspiration of a psychosocial reading of critical ethnography. In this process the role of the researcher is crucial in revealing the autobiography that influences the research process and outcomes.

The significance of West's point arises from the depth and breadth that is needed from the researcher in order to achieve the restorative project of the wholeness of the person to the research. The rigour of the research emerges through the manner which the data is analysed and interconnections are drawn between the original 'fragments' of data that 'speak' to the researcher (Holliday, 2005). I aimed to achieve this through the depth, breadth and interconnections made through my thick description.

Holliday (2005, p. 308) reminds us that "strategic rigour" is needed to support the construction of the thick description. The development of the thick description is not bound by the more conventional dimensions to 'good' data collection such as validity, reliability

and replicability (West, 2001); such dimensions to research would seem to inhibit my reflexive critical ethnography. My choice of phenomena on which to focus within my thick description, and the ways I chose to represent these phenomena, are fallible and ultimately it is my creation through my voice, or as West (2001, p. 39) puts it, a “work of fiction, a representation of experience rather than in some way constituting the experience itself”. However, my aim was that my thick description and analysis of these data, set within in-depth ontological and epistemological frameworks, exposed the rigour of my approach. This was a “moral commitment” (ibid) to faithful representation and provided reassurance to the outcomes of the research (Brewer, 2000). As Bruner (1986) notes, the ‘validity’ of research through the “authenticity and integrity of the material...become more a matter of aesthetics and verisimilitude” (West, 2001, p. 39); or its appearance of being true rather than it providing an immutable truth.

Verisimilitude is an important ‘solution’ to the issue of what replaced validity and reliability in post-structuralist research (Denzin, 1997). Denzin reads verisimilitude as the “ability to reproduce (simulate) and map the real” (ibid, p. 10). He argues verisimilitude can always be challenged as it does not prove truth, but that this challenge itself is a political act in that the “text is always a site of political struggle over the real and its meanings” (ibid, p. 12). I intended, within my research, that a high degree of verisimilitude was developed through enabling the reader “to imaginatively feel their way into the experiences that are being described” (ibid, p. 12) and also through the deceptively simple task that Holliday requires of “showing our workings” (2007, p. 42). This was a key means of articulating the subjectivities of my research from my ontological and epistemological positioning through to choice of methods, data collection, analysis and summarising.

In further articulating the transparency and accountability of my approach, I concur with Altheide and Johnson’s (1994) view that all data is perspectival and so the perspective of the ethnographer in deciphering this data is equally as important as that of the participants. They call such a process “validity as reflexive accounting” and identify five dimensions to this (Brewer, 2000, pp. 49-50). A ‘validity as reflexive accounting’ has some considerable compatibility with six ethnographic guidelines developed by Brewer (2000) in his ‘Ethnographic Imagination’ that challenges the researcher to read data imaginatively, when providing the data with ‘authority’, while remaining faithful to representing people’s perspectives. In order to develop a transparency of approach and be accountable for my research actions, table 6.4 combines Altheide and Johnson’s and Brewer’s works. It illustrates where these dimensions are developed within my research to help clarify my research process, reach a deep level of analysis, and to ensure its outcomes are faithful to the participants’ viewpoints. In short, to gain verisimilitude.

<i>Practice</i>	<i>Response within this Thesis</i>
The relationship between what is observed and the larger cultural contexts within which the observations are made	Contextualisation (Ch. 2) Psychosocial Approach (Ch. 5) Influences of the Enlightenment on research (Ch. 5) Reflexivity (Ch. 2, 7 to 16)
The relationship between the observed, observer and the setting/field	Research filters of Self, Place and Pedagogy (Ch. 2 and 4) Pedagogical Ethnography (Ch. 6)
Identify and justify features of the topic that are and are not being addressed in the research	Identification of theoretical lens of intercultural learning, place and pedagogy (Ch. 4)
Identify theoretical framework and values/political dimensions to the work	Post-structuralist ontology (Ch. 5) Postcolonial epistemology (Ch. 3) Pedagogical ethnography (Ch. 6) Personal/professional context (Ch. 2)
Establish integrity of researcher/author experiences during all stages of the research	Personal/professional context (Ch. 2) Outline of research process (Ch. 6) Reflexivity throughout the research (Ch. 2,7 to 16)
Matters of representation and authorial style to articulate the description and interpretations	Representation and style (Ch. 5) Thick Description (Ch. 6)
Establish authority of the data (problems, categorization, expose the data to allow the reader access, make own considerations, power relation etc)	Thick Description (Ch. 6) Data analysis (Ch. 7 to 14) Power relationships (Ch. 3, 5, 6)
Show complexity of the data (avoid simple 'fits'), include 'negative' cases that do not fit patterns, show multiplicity/contradictory descriptions and analysis of participants, stress contextual influences	Thick Description (Ch. 6) Data analysis (Ch. 7-14) Summary of Outcomes (Ch.15-16)

Table 6.4 Accountability and transparency within pedagogical ethnography (adapted from 'Altheide and Johnson's 'Validity as Reflexive Accounting' and Brewer's 'Ethnographic Imagination' both in Brewer (2000, pp. 50-54).

6.5 Ethical Considerations

Three broad themes regarding the ethics of research are provided by Cohen *et al* (2011): consent, confidentiality, and outcomes and, while I accept these, there is a danger that constraining one's ethical focus only to factors related to these terms then becomes a "deontological concern" (Hammersley, 2009, p. 212). I broadened my ethical considerations to consider 'CM' research conducted partly in the 'ECM', my multiple and simultaneous roles of teacher and researcher and preserving the integrity and wholeness of the participants' learning through my writing. The ethics of my research are integral to its process and outcomes and thus I have concerned myself with ethical matters throughout my thesis. It is also faithful to add that the nature of my research was not fully determined at its onset, and thus the ethical dimensions to my work developed alongside that of the research design and should not be read as a discrete dimension to the research (*ibid*). The following eight points constitute a short summary of the ethical issues explored throughout my work:

1. My research, completed within 'CM' parameters of academic writing, recognised the influence of the Enlightenment on 'CM' research and attempted to 'strain at its leash' (Bhabha, 1986) through my post-structuralist ontology. I focused upon the learning from those from the 'CM' in intercultural contexts. There was a danger in using an 'ECM' setting for field-data collection for use in 'CM'-based research so that it became a neo-colonial activity, which Spivak calls "information retrieval" (Andreotti, 2007, p. 72). At an operational level a means to counter this came through the co-construction of meaning between participants and their Keralan peers, through the university-based conference and discussions with Keralite student teachers. Furthermore, there was a clear intention of the intercultural module to expose 'CM' assumptions in our thinking with the potential to change our worldviews. I argue this is a moral act as well as a political one (chapters four and six) and through this process it concurred with Spivak's notion of unlearning our privileges and learning to learn from below (Andreotti, 2007, p. 75).
2. My dual role as teacher and researcher were inextricably entwined and both influenced the research process. I cannot faithfully separate out these two dimensions of my work and, furthermore, see such splitting as undesirable within a post-structuralist ontology. My research was my subjective interpretation of learning that focused on the wholeness of the person and, as such, my involvement with the research process was treated in the same whole manner. My research was a *de facto* political act, as my fieldwork happened in parallel with my teaching of theories of postcolonialism and intercultural learning with

a view to revealing our 'CM', or colonially infused worldview assumptions (chapters five and six).

3. My research approach included the members of the visit as participants to, rather than subjects of, my research, albeit not on equal terms to myself. Relationships were deemed paramount within my research, not merely as a means to develop rich data but as an ethical stance between fellow intercultural learners and with our engagement with our Keralite peers (chapter six).
4. Power differentials within my research have been acknowledged and minimised where possible, but certain power dimensions remain, such as the 'CM' traditions of academic research that privileges writing and the economic relationships between UK and Indian peers. Finally, the relationship between the participants and myself, as their teacher, has power dimensions implicit within this, and my reflexivity is a significant means to firstly recognise, and then reduce these (chapter five and six). In recognising these factors through my reflexivity and my post-structuralist approach, I utilised Spivak's idea of "negotiation from within" (Andreotti, 2007, p. 74), the need for "hyper self-reflexivity" (ibid, p. 75) and the recognition of outcomes that embrace "complexity, uncertainty, contingency and difference" (ibid, p. 76) that are fundamental to an ethical relationship with the Other.
5. There is one voice within the research which is mine (Holliday, 2005); however, a fundamental aspect of the verisimilitude of my research is the representation of participants' voices as faithfully as possible such that their perceived experiences, which are in turn analysed by myself, are embraced through the thesis (chapters six to fourteen).
6. Participants were assured that I took all steps to retain their anonymity through using pseudonyms and making limited reference to easily distinguishable features such as someone's subject discipline. For this reason, photographs of participants were not included in my thesis. The participants were aware of minor limitations of anonymity within the participant group due to the potential of other participants reading my thesis and recognising actions or comments that they attribute to an individual participant. Participants were also aware of the limited potential that one of their university tutors may read my thesis and recognise a participant whom they taught. To minimise any of

these small breeches of anonymity, easily distinguishable attributes were avoided and guarded use of participants' details were used only when this information illuminated my analysis (chapters eight to fourteen).

7. Interviews of my UK colleague, Scott, and of the participants were all conducted on their 'home' territory of either a university office or classroom in their school placement setting, respectively. The interviews occurred after the completion of the module to minimise the participants' perceptions of the influence of me, as teacher, upon their comments and, specifically, of my assessment of the participants' academic writing. I was aware that the interviews (as well as reflections) potentially would include delicate matters regarding personal revelations. The interviewees were not vulnerable adults, but, as Larkin (2009) explains, particular care was important during the research process because of the potentially vulnerable situations they had inhabited during the visit and beyond. The interviews were conducted with sensitivity and respect and were the culmination of the relationship between me and the participants occurring after the completion of the module. Transcripts of the interviews were shared with the interviewee and agreed, a process deemed sound ethical practice (e.g. Denscombe, 1998). Written permissions were granted before the interviews, and any other materials, such as individual emails to me, were used in the research. As such, all interviewees were able to withdraw their transcript, and that of their academic reflections, from the research if they so wished, an option which protected their 'rights' (Aldridge, 2014) within the research and ensured such control rested with them. Transcripts of all interviews will be kept until the completion of the research and then destroyed alongside original electronic/tape recordings of the interviews (chapter six).
8. Throughout my thesis I use the term 'faithful' to indicate my ethical approach to my research ontology, epistemology, 'thick description' including the participants' voices and representing the 'wholeness' of these people and finally my reflexivity. I use such a term instead of being 'truthful' to these elements of my work in keeping with my post-structuralist methodology.

6.6 Approaches to data analysis

Introduction

My analysis of intercultural learning can be divided into two broad parts. The first part, in chapter seven, analysed the intercultural learning performed by three 'CM' characters in three films, namely Francis Whitman in *The Darjeeling Limited* (2007); Todd Dempsy in *Outsourced* (2006) and Ruth Barron in *Holy Smoke* (1999). I used my analysis of these characters' intercultural learning to then juxtapose it with my analysis of the participants' narratives of intercultural learning in chapters eight to fourteen that formed the second part, and majority, of my data. The participants' stories emerged from their reflections (see appendix three) written within three weeks of their return from India. These reflections drew upon, and included as an appendix, their intercultural learning journals written over the duration of the intercultural module (pre/during/post visit) and the interviews (appendix four) conducted three to four months after the end of the intercultural learning module.

The three films and the participants' raw data amounted to a considerable mass of data. These data presented me with a challenge to identify and justify the most appropriate way to analyse and represent it in order to access intercultural learning at the deepest level possible. Through developing a thick description (figure 6.2) explained earlier, I aimed to develop a detailed, in-depth representation of cultures from the inside by thoroughly immersing myself in the data, looking for underlying epistemologies and ontologies and observing how ideas in the data had developed.

Representing and analysing intercultural learning

It was tempting to structure my analysis by taking each of the enquiry foci outlined in chapter one (summarised in figure 6.4) and analysing the data accordingly. This would have presented a myriad of extracts of film character and participant voices, chosen by me, in relation to each foci. Such a highly structured approach, however, seemed to rail against a post-structuralist methodology. Furthermore, in losing the wholeness of the film characters' and participants' narratives it would have diminished the potential for my analysis to expose any rich, holistic, interconnectedness between each individual's account of intercultural learning. Accordingly, I focused on the narratives as a whole in an attempt to represent their intercultural learning as faithfully as possible and thus diminished the risk of fragmenting their stories or using them out of context.

In developing my interpretation of intercultural learning in the data I analysed the stories of intercultural learning using five layers which were to

1. Interpret the intercultural learning expressed in the narratives.
2. Consider to what extent (if at all) the film characters' intercultural learning related to the intercultural learning of other characters in these films. I then juxtaposed their intercultural learning against individual participant's intercultural learning expressed in their narratives and then related the particular participant's intercultural learning to that of their peers' intercultural learning.
3. Reflexively consider to what extent my teaching and research had influenced the participants' learning²⁷.
4. Identify where participants' reference to theory linked or extended that discussed in chapters three and four.
5. And, finally, to relate each narrative to the eight foci of my research in forming my research findings.

1. **Assumptions** The way that assumptions about South India informed the participants' intercultural learning.
2. **Influence of place** The extent to which the participants' perceptions of place influenced their experiences and intercultural outcomes and developed their personal 'latitude and longitude of learning'.
3. **Power** The ways that participants recognised matters of power through their intercultural learning through their articulation of postcolonial theory and the ways that they considered this helped or hindered their intercultural learning.
4. **Colonial signature** The potential significance of our colonial signatures linked to ideas of learning triggers/barriers and what was their significance (if any) in developing and deepening, or hindering intercultural learning.
5. **Intercultural learning process** The ways that Participants perceived they learnt through their intercultural engagement linked to their perceived dispositions, assumptions about India, the pedagogical process and their intercultural experiences.
6. **Changing perceptions** What the participants claimed to be new perceptions about India and 'home' and the relationships between the two with the potential for changes in worldviews to emerge.
7. **Personal and professional change** What were the shifts (if any) in my own and participants' personal and professional ontology/epistemology and how did these relate to the foci above?

Figure 6.4 Summary of enquiry foci

²⁷ layers three and four did not relate to the intercultural learning performed by the film characters.

The five layers complemented each other in enabling me to develop a thick description from my data analysis. This is not to say that I sequentially analysed each narrative in such a five-point structured manner, but I interwove the analytical layers within my analysis and then presented each story, within which I attempted to develop a reflexive dialogue between me and the participant's story.

By presenting narratives that attempted to respect the whole nature of someone's intercultural learning, as well as identifying the five layers of analysis, I revealed the steps in my analysis which Holliday beguilingly simply puts as 'showing the workings' (2007, p. 42). This aided my attempt to show verisimilitude which included reflexively considering my own role in the participants' learning and how my positioning influenced my interpretation of their learning. Secondly, the narratives' focus on intercultural learning were not restricted to the foci of my research and thus I was able to potentially identify unexpected perspectives on the learning process and its outcomes.

Choice and nature of the narratives

All the film characters' and the participants' narratives contributed in some form to my data analysis. My decision to focus on a particular story in full, and not on others, was based on the extent to which each narrative provided a unique contribution to my understanding of intercultural learning. When a full narrative did not significantly provide further illumination to my understanding of intercultural learning, which had not already been explored in a previous story, it was excluded from the sequence of narratives presented in this section; however, the raw data for each participant was included in the appendices as I still referred to it at times. Three of a potential six characters were chosen from the three films and seven of the fourteen participants' stories were developed into a sequence of narratives, with the others incorporated into other narratives, where appropriate, in a similar way to how Dr Manish's comments were also woven into the text.

Editing the narratives helped me to present my analysis without significant repetition. Each film character and participant, however, provided, at the least, certain unique glimpses of intercultural learning for me, and I incorporated salient elements of their stories, including those whose full narratives were excluded, into other participants' stories. Drawing on other participants' viewpoints within another's narrative helped me show where aspects of their learning concurred, or not, with others' learning. In doing so, it removed misconceptions that may have arisen as to whether a singular narrative represented all of her/his peers, or, alternatively, that it was a lone voice speaking about her/his learning.

It is possible to criticise this approach in that it appeared to fragment aspects of the narratives, especially of those whose full stories were excluded. This is something I aimed to avoid. I argued earlier in my thesis that the Self is not an isolated or singular entity, but a construction that involves our relationship with the Other. Through careful integration to another's narrative, and with due care to the context and situation about which the film character or participants were speaking, I attempted to faithfully represent an individual's intercultural learning in conjunction with others. In this way the process of careful integration augmented the story of intercultural learning rather than fragmented it. Additionally, I was able to expose how aspects of learning, including my own, were co-constructed between me and the participants which helped to enrich the reflexive dialogue between us.

It is evident in the following narratives that some vary in length. The narratives of the film characters are shorter than those of the participants, mainly because I did not have the same written data from which to draw and to quote in my analysis. Some participants' narratives are longer than others by including references to others' viewpoints within another's narrative. This was particularly so in Deborah's narrative, which raised a number of pertinent points for me, and was further extended by a follow-up email exchange after the interview. Where I identified unique dimensions to intercultural learning I dwelt on this in my analysis, as I did where it became clear that aspects of my teaching or research seemed to influence the narrative and which required some reflexive considerations. Both factors also resulted in some narratives being longer than others. This is particularly so in the spiritual learning articulated in Alice's narrative and also in Becky's narrative that explored her reconnections with her family as a consequence of her intercultural learning. This is not to say that I only focused on aspects of deeper learning in the following narratives, but also considered at length some possible reasons why some participants did not necessarily reach deep levels within their learning.

The collected richness of the narratives demonstrated aspects of the thick description (figure 6.2) including the interconnectedness of the film characters' and the participants' narratives with each other, with theory, and with the influences of me, as teacher and researcher, on the participants' learning. The narratives tended to focus broadly on two of my enquiry foci; namely, the intercultural learning process (foci five) and the personal and professional changes that were identified from their visit (foci seven). The participants explored these areas by reflecting on their experiences and drawing on pertinent theory to support their understanding. This broad focus was unsurprising as it was the directed focus for the participants' reflection. The participants' narratives, however, show how they related their learning to a broad range of personal, professional and theoretical positions related to, but beyond, a singular account of intercultural learning and its outcomes. Having

experienced the same visit it might have been expected that participants' narratives held strong similarities. The lack of similarity in the stories, even when recounting the same experience, was a significant outcome in itself and concurred with Scoffham and Barnes' (2009) findings.

Identifying themes and sequencing the narratives

I sequenced the narratives beginning with the film characters in chapter seven and then the participants from chapter eight onwards, as I initially, at least, used the former to deepen my understanding of the latter. In both chapters, I focussed initially on narratives that emphasised the process of learning and then moved to consider those who emphasised personal and/or professional changes. This is not to say that I only portrayed either process or outcome in each narrative as this would be to fragment the stories and diminish an interconnectedness of the process and outcomes of intercultural learning. In a similar manner, I did not make a divide in the narratives between personal and professional outcomes from the visit. To divide the personal from the professional seemed to be a rather arbitrary division, and somewhat artificial, given the rich interwoven personal and professional narratives that reflected a rich interplay between these two dimensions of our being, especially for a specific study visit that comprised entirely of emerging educational professionals.

Within the richness of the narratives, certain themes began to emerge from my analysis and I used these to identify titles and sub-headings within each narrative and, accordingly, these headings are unique to each of the narratives to which I now turn.

Chapter 7 Intercultural learning in film

8.1 Introduction

My analysis of fictional depictions of intercultural experiences by those from the 'CM' in India helped strengthen my understanding of intercultural learning. In order to deepen my analysis of intercultural learning, I focused predominantly on three characters: Ruth in *Holy Smoke* (directed by Jane Campion); Todd in *Outsourced* (directed by John Jeffcoat); and Francis in *The Darjeeling Limited* (directed by Wes Anderson). As with the participants, I also draw at times on other characters from these films where doing so deepened my understanding of intercultural learning.

All three films were chosen because of their focus on intercultural engagements by those from the 'CM' in India and because of certain key similarities to my own positioning. All three directors of the films were from the 'CM', being either from the USA (John Jeffcoat and Wes Anderson) or from New Zealand (Jane Campion). In a similar manner to which the intercultural learning was predominantly located in India for the participants, the three films were all shot on Indian locations: *Holy Smoke* in Delhi and Pushkar; *Outsourced* in Mumbai; and *The Darjeeling Limited* in Jodhpur, Rajasthan.

The three 'fictional' film characters that I focus upon are all from either the USA or Australia, but whom, arguably have sufficient commonalities with the participants through their 'CM' exploration of intercultural learning in India to makes their stories relevant to my understanding in this thesis. In addition, the characters can broadly be considered to be of similar age, class, ethnic origin and are both male and female.

It is highly likely that the anticipated audiences of these three films was considered to be mostly 'CM' and were thus written with this in mind which is a caution for my own intercultural reading within these films. My positioning and those of the participants, however, led me to accept these three films but to reject others such as David Lean's *A Passage to India* (1985) and John Madden's *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel* (2012) where either the positioning of the director and/or the characters was less congruent with my own or that of the participants.

From my analysis of the characters in the following sections, I tentatively draw on certain themes that later helped me to consider the participants' intercultural learning in later chapters.

8.2 Todd: The importance of relationships and intercultural translators

John Jeffcoat's film *Outsourced* (2006) tells the story of Todd, a North American who travels to India on business to establish a call centre and who grows to understand that in order to do this he needs to learn about Indian culture and that relationships were important to aid his learning. Unlike the other two films, *Outsourced* predominantly focuses on Todd's relationship with the workers he manages in India over the few weeks he was there. Unlike the characters in *The Darjeeling Limited*, Todd is helped with the initial, perhaps overwhelming times in India by the deputy manager of the call centre, Puro.

Having a host like Puro seems to be a significant aid to Todd's acclimatisation in India. He is warmly welcomed and guided firmly, but with great respect and with a gentle manner, on where to stay, to go, and about local cultures. Puro insists he stays with a local family and the inquisitiveness of Todd's hostess, and the huge quantities of food and drink he is offered, seem an initial burden to him compared to his preferred anonymity of, and choice of food in, a hotel. As time passes, the intimacy of his family setting during relaxation time, and his relationship with Puro during work, enable Todd to have a safer immersion into local cultures and help him to learn, even though many aspects of daily life seem bewildering. His bewilderment is no more so than the daily routine he watches of a tray of food being placed on the top of the tall garden wall of the house where he is lodging, which divides it from more impoverished housing. The tray is removed and returns empty later. He begins to copy this practice thus saving himself from requiring to eat the huge breakfast which he is always served and his tray is also reliably returned.

The bewilderment of intercultural daily life becomes more stressful for Todd in the workplace where hard American business targets take their toll on Todd's well-being. He also quickly learns that an apparently common language is culturally determined and numerous misunderstandings occur from English language misconceptions. He sees an advertisement in a local newspaper for an American style fast-food restaurant in Mumbai, and in a spontaneous attempt to reconnect with a familiar culture he hails a taxi to take him on the long journey there. He found the potentially safe, comforting place of the fast-food restaurant to be Indian in its culture, but fortuitously meets a fellow American who advises Todd not to resist India but to give in to it. This spontaneous act, and resulting connection with a fellow American, seems to assuage Todd's anxieties and he soon heeds the American's comments during the religious festival of Holi (figure 7.1).

Holi marks the changing of the seasons partly by throwing coloured powders at apparently anyone in range. Todd is not aware of Holi and misses Puro's note warning him not to venture onto the streets. Todd is alarmed when he is pelted with powder, but this triggers

his exuberant involvement alongside his cultural guide, Puro, whom he meets and thereafter he seems to embrace the intercultural challenges that daily life throws at him.



Figure 7.1 (l. to r.) Todd, Puro and Asha: Outsourced

Todd could have retreated from this apparently wild public festival; however, during Holi some agency seems to emerge in him. It seems to be triggered by the moral support that Puro provides on the streets and Todd's trust in Puro as a cultural guide. It is the first time that Todd enthusiastically engages with Indian culture and perhaps, significantly, it emerges through the apparently exotic celebrations of Holi where he surrenders interculturally to the smells, colours and noise of the festival. He immerses himself into the unknown and embraces difference.

Puro enables Todd to understand aspects of Indian culture and through this, and his meeting with the American, he became more comfortable in daily living in India. However, it was only when he was aided by Asha, a fellow call centre worker, who is adept in understanding Todd's cultural difficulties that he is able to begin to understand and empathise more deeply with Indian cultures and she with American ones. She acts as a cultural translator for Todd and he is so impressed by her that he says 'she can do anything'. Asha is polite and engaging with Todd, but more challenging than Puro of Todd's misconceptions and her ability to challenge enables him to learn more deeply.

Asha and Todd seem to have a different relationship around power than have Todd and Puro. Puro is to become the call centre manager and is deferential to Todd in the workplace. His forthcoming marriage is dependent on his ascent to call centre manager status. Asha's relationship with Todd focuses outside the workplace and the dynamics differ, not least because of a sexual frisson, but also because Asha can be more critical of Todd. Their growing relationship and intimacy appears to be open and authentic, perhaps because it is away from the power dynamics of work, and perhaps because Asha is already engaged to be married. She seems to manage the level of intimacy of the relationship and performs an

apparent 'local-scale power' despite Todd being the manager and representing the masculine economy of the corporate world.

Asha helps Todd understand societal pressures of her being seen in public with him when she was already engaged to be married. Todd, in turn, becomes more understanding of the call centre workers' cultures and more confident in relating to other locals, such that one evening he accepts an invitation by a small boy to climb over the garden wall of the house where he is lodging. The boy takes Todd along narrow alleyways to his home where the family provide a meal for Todd to thank him for the regular breakfast trays of food. Todd's connection with local people means that when a flood deluged the call centre and power was lost he was able to draw on the boy's father, a black market electrician to provide back-up power for the call centre from street lighting.

The reciprocal nature of Todd and Asha's learning seems to deepen each other's intercultural understanding. The two-way process of Todd and Asha's relationship is revealed when Asha, who is struck by his comment that she could do anything, talks about her renewed confidence to struggle against social and parental pressures that she feels as a young, educated Indian woman with middle class parents. Todd, until that point, was unaware of the enormity of his comments about Asha. Their relationship has unexpected consequences and the film closes with uncertainty about Todd and Asha's future. He resigns from his job with the American company as a result of their abandonment of the Indian call centre in favour of a cheaper, outsourced venture in China which is to be managed by the newly married, Puro. Todd shows loyalty to the Indian workers, perhaps suggesting that he values his intercultural relationships more than his corporate identity. He returns unemployed to Seattle and it is uncertain whether he and Asha continue their relationship.

8.3 Francis: Barriers and triggers to learning

Francis, a North American, in Wes Anderson's *The Darjeeling Limited* (2007), has a desire to travel to India in order to seek spiritual enlightenment and to reconnect with his mother who has joined a religious retreat in the Himalayas. He tasks his assistant, Brendan, to organise a journey across India by train (The Darjeeling Limited) for himself and his adult brothers, Peter and Jack, (figure 7.2) following the death of their father and Francis' near-death motorcycle accident from which he is still recovering. Francis shares the spiritual dimension to the tour but hides his intention to find their mother from his brothers.

The brothers travel heavily laden with many suitcases that belonged to their father. Francis' schedule for the visit is highly prescriptive and tightly organised by Brendan and includes stopping at pre-determined places and with pre-arranged spiritual rituals and meditations to enable all three brothers to find spiritual enlightenment. It fails. Francis sacks Brendan who does not have the local cultural understanding that enabled Puro to help Todd in *Outsourced*. Francis' expectation of spiritual change is firstly not shared by his brothers, which causes tensions between them. He mistrusts their commitment to the journey such that he tries to remove Peter and Jack's passports to prevent them from quitting from the trip. Moreover, Francis' determination for change, and specifically spiritual enlightenment, through pre-arranged activities that only involve the siblings means he shies away from immersing himself in local cultures, especially after a shoe-shine boy steals his expensive shoe. His inflexibility means that other opportunities for potential learning are lost. He looks to blame others like Brendan for his own spiritual shortcomings and ultimately the tour risks becoming a controlled and prescriptive visit with shallow outcomes.

Francis' tour seems to be underpinned by a 'CM' materialism that seeks to make a commodity of spiritual enlightenment and takes little regard of local people or their cultures. Francis' trip may not overtly resist local cultures like Todd in *Outsourced* but perhaps, like the Enlightenment, he disregards them and his values remain unaltered by the visit.



Figure 7.2 (l. to r.) Jack, Peter and Francis: *The Darjeeling Limited*

Although Francis' spiritual quest fails, he remains steadfastly focused on his schedule and ultimately locating his mother, and he reveals this intention to his brothers who are not pleased by his secretiveness. Francis is also provoked by his 'hauntings' (Frosh, 2013) of his father's death through Peter's inherited shoes, belt and glasses, which Francis contests

should be his, and by wondering why their mother did not attend the funeral. Peter seems more occupied on acquiring mementoes, such as a venomous snake and Jack is intent on seducing Rita, the train stewardess, whom Francis nicknames 'Sweet-lime' from the drinks she serves. Francis' naming of 'Sweet-lime' is perhaps redolent of Flaubert's possible act on 'Kuchuk Hanem', and both Peter and Jack's actions seem to be underpinned by a masculine and colonialist desire to possess the exotic.

The mutual mistrust, conflicting agendas of the tour and the often unspoken paternal 'haunting' means that the brothers' relationship during the journey is highly tested, ultimately resulting in them fighting and being required to dismount from the train at a rural halt. They spend the night in the arid countryside and, perhaps, the fear of the exotic unknown wildlife draws them together and they spend a peaceful, contemplative evening around a fire. Furthermore, the fixed, even laminated, agenda of the trip is blown away in a gust of wind and afterwards deeper opportunities for the discovery of place and Self become available through spontaneous experiences, no more so than when the brothers attempt to save three boys who were drowning in a river. They save two, but the third dies and this triggers a different, deeper, less acquisitive engagement for the brothers, initially through their engagement with the villagers where the boys lived, but later between themselves. It perhaps becomes their 'colonial signature'.

The brothers spend some time in the village and attend the boy's funeral as esteemed guests. The simplicity of the boy's funeral and the quiet, sustained focus of the villagers on death, grieving and mourning is juxtaposed with a flashback to when Francis diverted the limousine on the way to their father's funeral to retrieve his classic Porsche car. Such displacement activities, which are mirrored in India through the brothers' search for the familiarity in power adapters and to possess the exotic, are replaced with a quiet, calm focus on the present and the death of the little boy. The time spent quietly in the village with the locals is perhaps the first sustained time the brothers spend with others and enables them to deepen their understanding of local culture and perhaps of themselves. Francis' 'colonial signature' does not result in a simplistic trans-cultural comparison of death but, through quiet reflection and connecting with local people, it develops an open, fluid response to their experiences which is somewhat alien to the first part of their journey.

The brothers decide to return 'home' after successfully seeking their mother, and travel on local buses to the airport, which is far removed from their earlier culturally disconnected train journey. The deepening of the brothers' learning throughout the film is mirrored by their loss of suitcases and trinkets along their journey, particularly in the final scenes where they run to board a train and discard their father's baggage in doing so. This strikes a

metaphorical accord with Andreotti's (2011) principles of 'learning to unlearn' which involves reshaping our cultural baggage but also at a more intimate 'psycho' level. The film ends with the brothers preparing to return to the USA and there is no indication of how their learning potentially translates to 'home', unlike my final film character.

8.4 Ruth: How intercultural learning develops upon returning 'home'

The significance of the return 'home' to our intercultural learning is portrayed in Jane Campion's film *Holy Smoke* (1999). Campion's film tells the story of a young female Australian, Ruth, who experiences a spiritual awakening and an ensuing desire to 'do good' as a consequence of a trip to India where she meets, and subsequently follows, a religious guru. Her family is so shocked at this news that her mother flies to India to persuade Ruth to return 'home' by falsely convincing her that her father is terminally ill. Almost the entire film focuses on Ruth's experiences after her reluctant return 'home'. Her family's shock at Ruth's transformation causes them to hire an American 'deprogrammer', P.J. Walters, to return Ruth to 'normality' from the 'holy smoke' that apparently had descended around her.

Campion's story might seem somewhat improbable; however, it is Ruth's experience post-visit and especially her mutual learning with P.J. that are of interest to me. Ruth is highly resistant to P.J.'s attempts to convince her of the falsity of her guru's teaching, especially after the duplicitous nature of her return 'home'. Her spirituality is articulated through a passionate and exotic portrayal of the teachings of her guru, whereas P.J.'s approach to 'deprogramming' strongly resembled a 'Western' guru. He is vain and his 'macho' need to control people through his performance of the expert 'deprogrammer' suggests a deeply 'CM', masculine ontology that had to conquer alternative epistemologies rather than allow them to live mutually. He attempts to dominate and suppress Ruth through controlling her daily routines, environment and the removal of her personal effects, including her Indian artefacts. Her family had replaced an Indian guru for an American one, albeit with apparently different ontologies. P.J. became the personification of the dominance of 'CM' meta-culture on our thinking and ways of being, which reads the 'East' in such terms as exotic and dangerous, notwithstanding the dangers of such essentialist readings eloquently argued in *Orientalism* (Said, 1978/1983).

Far from P.J.'s attempts working, his developing relationship with Ruth reveals a reversal of power as he becomes besotted by her as she resists his deprogramming. He falls in love with the exotic and erotic uncertainty and beauty of Ruth who subverts his masculine power



Figure 7.3 P.J. and Ruth: Holy Smoke

and authority. The intense, intimate, and yet at times hostile relationship between Ruth and P.J. provokes them to learn in an open and plural manner from initially fixed but opposing positions of macho 'West' and spiritual 'East'. It is their relationship and ensuing learning that seems to unlock them from their fixed and superficial, binaried positioning.

P.J. revealed to Ruth that he was haunted by his own experiences of India. His own 'holy smoke' was brutally dispersed which seemed to act as a trigger which caused him to dismiss all-things Indian as mere smoke and drove him to attempt to do the same for others. His approach to removing Ruth's 'holy smoke' is harsh; however, she plays upon his ego and vanity, ultimately breaking his masculine, expert 'CM' guru status. To his surprise, P.J. is transformed and the ghost of his own Indian experiences are exorcised. His singular view of life, perhaps indicative of his 'macho' posturing, is diminished in favour of a more tentative, family orientated man who writes novels dwelling more in the murky, perhaps smoky, world of possibility rather than certainty.

P.J.'s learning happens in parallel with Ruth's. He reveals an apparent deficit in Ruth's spiritual learning, asking her what it meant to be good to which she has no answer. Her Indian transformation does not translate to the 'CM' where tangible outcomes are required to show meaning to this learning. She is unable to illustrate any ways that she had been good to others which causes her to reconsider her learning as a sham and as a trigger for her to reconstruct her notions of 'doing good'. Both P.J.'s and Ruth's learning is no deprogramming. Rather, it is a review of their current positioning due to the mutual provocation of their relationship which causes an ontological repositioning at a deeper and more nuanced level. The Indian experiences are not removed but become part of their plural experiences which, through provocation and reflection, caused them to reconsider

their ways of thinking and being. It is the 'home'-based reflections that allow Ruth and P.J. to reconstruct their Indian experiences, and themselves, within the dominant 'CM' culture. It is important to note that she, and P.J., both needed someone, or something, at 'home' to provoke them to reflect deeply about their learning and to perhaps expose the smoke that surrounded them.

Ruth and P.J.'s learning reconstructs their views of family and life. Ruth sees, perhaps for the first time, the superficiality and sham of her family's life, which ultimately she rejects in favour of her relationship with P.J. They both expose each other's 'hauntings' and through this know each other more deeply. Their relationship is consequently open and authentic, whereas Ruth comes to see her family as, perhaps unknowingly, enveloped by their own smoke of (perhaps 'Western') superficiality, duplicity and materialism.

Campion's film has no Hollywood romantic happy ending, and both Ruth and P.J. go their separate ways, although they keep in close correspondence. P.J. returns to the USA while Ruth returns to India with her mother to both work for an Indian animal charity, and she forms a relationship with an Indian co-worker. Her Orientalist holy smoke is removed and her notions of 'doing good' manifest themselves where she has agency but, perhaps significantly, with animals, who could be read interculturally much more easily than people in India.

7.5 Significance of the films to intercultural learning

I drew the following ideas and themes from the three films that were then used to supplement my analysis of the participants' narratives of intercultural learning in later chapters. Todd's intercultural experiences in *Outsourced* (2006) highlight the significance of local relationships and particularly the importance of a cultural translator to help develop the visitor's confidence and to deepen intercultural learning. It seems important to the deepening of understanding for the relationship to be open, honest and to have mutuality in that both parties seek an understanding of the Other and, as such, are aware of the intercultural complexities of learning. Furthermore, to aid deeper learning there needs to be an acceptance of difference and this should not be superficially referenced to 'home'.

Outsourced also shares a theme with *The Darjeeling Limited* (2007) in that if opportunities from unexpected encounters with the Other are seized upon (like Todd's experiences with the Holi festival and Francis' experiences with the drowning boys) they may act as triggers that enhance intercultural learning. The learning appears to deepen through the close relationships that ensue from the experience with locals and/or fellow travellers and they potentially become reflexive 'colonial signatures'.

The loss of Francis' laminated itinerary, and his acceptance of this, was the starting point for the brothers' intercultural learning. It was Francis' relinquishing of apparent control, just as it was for Todd in giving into, rather than resisting India, that enabled their learning to deepen. Allowing one's experiential trajectory to alter due to unexpected events or encounters suggests that a prescriptive schedule (and pedagogy) for study visits, or at least strictly adhering to one, may miss opportunities to deepen intercultural learning.

In *Holy Smoke* (1999) a number of potentially significant themes are developed. The first was the struggle between contested ontologies and epistemologies that were linked to the influences of dominant meta-cultures. Secondly, the potential importance of triggers to learning, again, emerged and that the same trigger affects people's learning in different ways and at different timescales. Finally, the difficulty of trying to translate learning across cultures is explored in Ruth's attempts to explain what 'doing good' means. Her inability to articulate her learning through the intercultural 'smoke' is frustrating before she generates agency, and something more tangible emerges for her and P.J. in different ways and at a range of timescales.

I now turn to analyse the participants' narratives in chapters eight to fourteen, including using the themes I developed from the three films, in order to aid my consideration of the participants' intercultural learning.

Chapter 8 Eve: Modelling intercultural learning and teaching ‘New India’

8.1 Recognising personal influences

Eve performed as a quieter member of the group, perhaps initially because she was the only participant to be on the ‘School Direct’ PGCE pathway rather than following the university-based PGCE, and therefore knew none of the participants or the courses with which they were engaged. She formed friendships well, especially with Maggie, and they often talked at length about their experiences during and after the visit had concluded. Eve was a thoughtful contributor to the group plenaries and happy to be tentative in expressing her ideas. She approached her reflection in a similar manner linking this to postcolonial theory, asking through its title: “[c]an we ever escape a colonial approach to travel and research in the ‘non-west?’”(Reflection, p. 33). Her lengthy reflection on this matter ultimately provided her with a model of intercultural learning, that was perhaps indicative of her approach to learning and which itself appeared to be influenced by her specialist subject of geography. She expressed the personal significance of her discipline in the introduction of her reflection, writing that her way of seeing was strongly influenced by her “geographical lens” (ibid). She also reflected upon her teaching of a module called ‘New India’ which she presented at the university conference, to which I return in detail later.

Eve had not travelled beyond the ‘CM’ before and her pre-visit expectations of Kerala as a place (figure 8.2) were fairly undeveloped although she thought that as a geographer she was “open-minded to difference” (LJ, p. 10). Her perceptions were of difference in comparison to ‘home’ in terms of the weather, food, a perceived lack of “home comforts” and possibly the level of poverty. She anticipated a “chalk and talk” didactic pedagogy in the schools, with large classes and limited resources (LJ, p. 5). More widely, she drew on a range of sources to consider her ideas about India, including her teaching about ‘New India’ at school and watching films like *Slumdog Millionaire* and the Indian film *Om Shanti Om*. She saw India as a country of diverse religions, thinking about its colonial past and of iconic buildings like the Taj Mahal (LJ, p. 6). Her geographical influences were perhaps evident in her identification of key Indian development indicators, including gender disparity. She was aware of rural to urban migration, the growth of slum areas in cities and also of globalisation and its effects on the country, presenting a binary between a traditional

versus a 'new' India, evident in new cities like Bangalore (LJ, P7). Eve's exploration of theory helped her develop her argument about whether intercultural study visits could ever transcend the colonial using a range of postcolonial authors, including Martin and Griffiths (2012), Sharp (2009), Andreotti (2006), Young (2003), Ashcroft and Ahluwalia (2001) and Said (1985). Many of these authors were included in the bibliography I provided to participants illustrating my influences on their learning but, significantly, all with additional references to wider theory and with different stories to tell. Eve's short but thoughtful consideration of postcolonial theory illustrated her understanding that "[p]ost-colonial [sic] theory supports the view that the west is still maintaining superiority over the east, albeit in more discreet forms" (Reflection, p. 34) and, with reference to Foucault, argued that a power dimension is at play within this relationship that creates and maintains "cultural supremacy" (ibid). Her sound understanding of postcolonial theory provided a basis upon which to consider intercultural learning and its potential to challenge dominant 'CM' discourse. She wrote:

[i]ntercultural learning can be seen as a possible solution to paternalistic research methods, instead maintaining a form of mutual respect and understanding through...“reciprocity, mutuality and equality” (Martin and Griffiths 2010 p. 2). They extend this to suggest that intercultural study visits challenge “...dominant, stereotypical discourses” (Martin and Griffiths 2010 p. 2) offering an alternative relationship between the north and south (Reflection, p. 35).

8.2 Modelling intercultural learning: towards bewilderment

In formulating her own model of intercultural learning (figure 8.2), Eve highlighted that intercultural learning challenged learners at cognitive, emotional and existential levels, referring to Scoffham and Barnes' (2009), and compared her own learning to that in their paper in that it challenged her preconceptions and enabled her to question her own identity (Reflection, p. 37). She was less convinced by Weeden and Hayter's (1996) three phases of 'disorientation, coping and equilibrium' and in particular the apparent implicit notions of stability, a linear learning process and the idea of finite outcomes. Her critique of this, and her understanding of intercultural learning from a range of authors, enabled her to develop her own model of intercultural learning, which she formed over a number of days of reflection in her journal during the visit, and composed in her reflection. Eve wrote about her model:

I do not believe that you ever truly reach stable equilibrium, as to do this would be to accept the complexities that surround you, and suggests an end point to the learning process. Learning interculturally should be considered a cyclical journey. How can you accept such multifaceted and fluid complexities in an ever changing world? The diagram therefore shows the sense of bewilderment to be the overarching aim of intercultural understanding. It can be suggested that once you reach bewilderment it leads you to question your preconceptions, which in turn forces you to question the 'self' and the 'other'. It is not until you have experienced these learning triggers however, that bewilderment can take place, and without bewilderment, there is little chance of long-term impact on which to reflect (Reflection, p. 36).

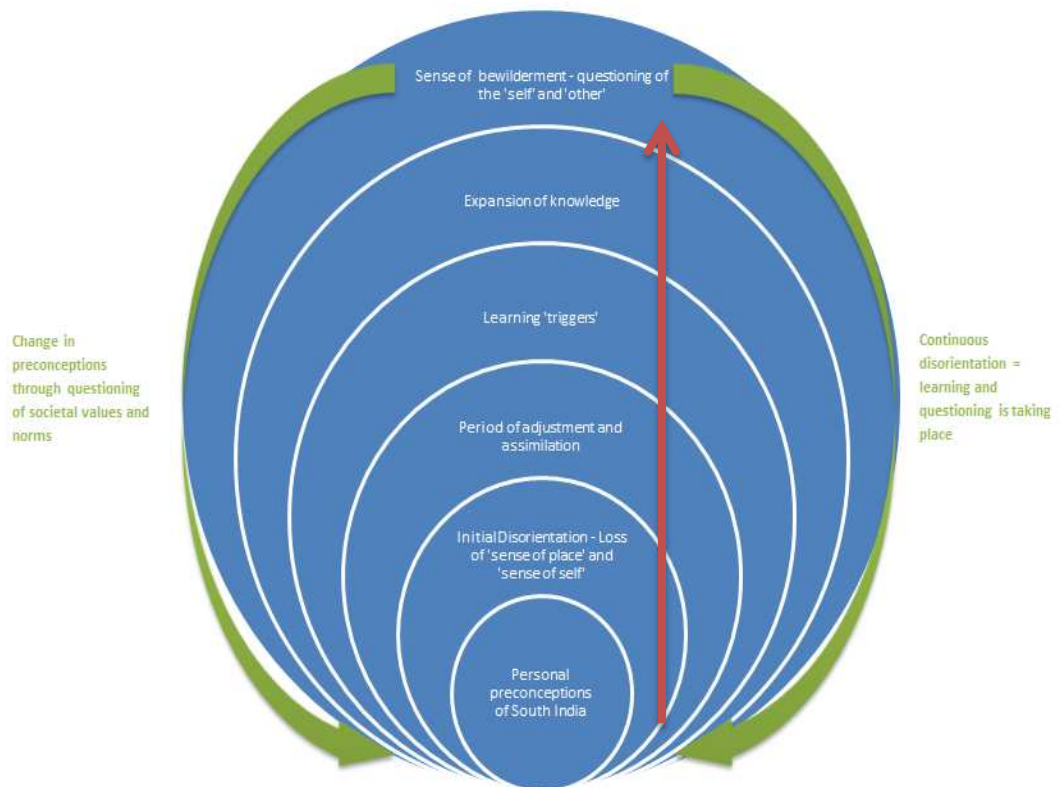


Figure 8.2 Eve's model of intercultural learning

Eve's ability to theorise about her own learning through reflection and critiquing others' work, showed an impressive depth of understanding of the learning process and theory and a confidence in articulating this. Paradoxically, her confidence came from being able to express her own lack of confidence in relation to a personal trigger to her learning. She articulated a positioning that perhaps was in constant flux and never-ending. She confirmed

later in her interview, two months after submitting her reflection, how she did not like the implied finality to learning in some models saying:

... cos even now trying to explain how it's affected me is really difficult. And now I'm thinking about it and prompting my thoughts again I'm completely bewildered by it, to be honest (Interview, p. 137/4-6).

The cyclical and unstable nature of Eve's model and her reference to learning triggers producing bewilderment was exemplified in her reflection:

I never imagined a personal trigger for me would be something as simple as shopping in the alleyways of Kovalam. My thoughts were conflicted over something so simple; bartering. Is bartering a reinforcement of colonialism or is refusing to barter actually reinforcing paternalistic behaviours and the west's perceived "responsibility for the south" (Andreotti 2006 p. 7). I felt uncomfortable when other members of the group bartered over 100 rupees (£1) off of [sic] a pair of trousers; something which I perceived to be the influence of consumerism within our culture. In doing this was I respecting the 'other' or was I indeed undermining their ability to trade on a level playing ground. I would refuse to barter over 100 rupees and would happily pay the price; but is this in fact worse? Was I being more colonial than if I had of [sic] bartered? Something so simple really played on my mind, and still does (Reflection, p. 37).

Eve found personal triggers to be significant in her learning and thus in her model. She explained later in her interview:

I think when I felt like I'd maybe worked something out in my head ... and something else, like another trigger would come in and it would just confuse me again. I'd be back to the start. I'd be building on what I'd already learnt (Interview, p. 147/14-16).

I inferred Eve's comment that she would be 'back to the start' as a consequence of a trigger to mean the start of a new learning cycle rather than an absolute return to the beginning. I think she understood this when she noted above that she would be building on previous learning in her revised thinking.

Eve's understanding of postcolonial theory engendered almost an apparent personal 'stalemate' position regarding bartering where no action was possible without some criticism. It was this 'bewilderment' from a trigger that clearly showed the difficult feelings and thoughts that intercultural learning can provoke and was similarly felt by some

participants, such as Elizabeth, about postcolonial theory itself. Eve later said in her interview that she felt so uncomfortable during her peers' bartering that if she could not "happily just pay the money...I would just completely draw myself out of the situation" (Interview, p. 138/25-26).

She again said that she was not sure why she felt so uncomfortable about bartering; however, her questioning revealed a depth of understanding and a plurality of thinking underpinned by postcolonial theory. The depth of learning for Eve, came from her 'bewilderment' and the ensuing reflection. Despite the uncomfortable nature of the trigger that provoked the thoughts and feelings she said:

I think it's really powerful though having that bewilderment and not necessarily knowing. And I think that might be what people are really scared of... because we maybe aren't used to being outside our comfort zone and being bewildered by things like that (Interview, p. 137/22-25).

Eve displayed a deep confidence in her bewilderment and she was able to stay with her thoughts and feelings in such a way that it enabled her to ask a series of questions about her positioning. Her questioning helped deepen her thinking and resonated with Merryfield's (2000) argument about the need for reflection in order to learn in a global setting. Eve's reflection perhaps enabled her to respond to later triggers with further confidence in 'not knowing'. The deepening of her thinking seemed to come through her understanding of her personal process of intercultural learning which informed her model and also a theoretical base of postcolonial theory on which to scrutinise triggers and ensuing 'bewilderment'. Her tentativity and 'not knowing' jarred with a module she had taught at school entitled 'New India' to which I now turn in considering the legacy of Eve's learning.

8.3 Teaching about 'New India'

Eve had taught a Key Stage 3 Geography unit of work at school called 'New India' which was drawn from a Royal Geographical Society educational resource. The term related to India's emergence as a global economic power and it was with some surprise that such a term was unfamiliar with her Keralan peers when she talked about her practice at the university conference during the visit. It was perhaps her first revelation of an Indian story being written by an author from the 'CM'. This was somewhat ironic, as Eve explained of the module "[t]he overarching message was that we should not judge a country by the preconceptions we are fed through representations in the media (Reflection, p. 39).

She reflected the:

...term 'New India' may well have been constructed by the Royal Geographical Society in the west, by the west. It was our idea of what Indian people perceive their own country to be like, not what they actually think or feel (ibid).

It caused Eve to question her inherent assumptions in teaching the module and, more widely, on her role as a geography teacher. She highlighted the importance of her pedagogic approach writing:

[e]xpanding pupils' worldviews to include different spaces, forms of living and ways of knowing and being is perhaps the most significant thing that geography teachers can achieve." (Andreotti 2013), but this must be done with the sensitivity and true representation that it deserves, being sure not to reinforce stereotypes and label countries as something they are not (ibid).

At a professional level, the visit and Eve's reading of postcolonial theory caused her to question the way a country was represented and by whom. The visit also exposed considerable personal uncertainty about what it is to be British and about British culture (LJ, p. 22). She quoted Martin (2012, p. 8) in her reflection:

...as educators, relational understanding challenges our single stories and, as such, suggests we listen, relate to and learn from multiple perspectives. It requires that we foster our own self-awareness and open-mindedness about difference before working with students to foster theirs (Reflection, p. 40).

Eve's comments perhaps hinted at a need to 'unlearn our learning' (Andreotti, 2011) and consider reflexive approaches to teaching about the Other. Upon her return 'home' she reviewed the module and felt "uncomfortable" about the task, her pupils' responses and her lack of challenge to these. She wrote:

[r]eading..some of the student's ideas about how India should develop as a nation now sits very uncomfortably with me. It is something which I did not really address at the time, but now that my understanding of the Keralan people, and understanding of postcolonial theory has developed, I feel I am able to challenge those binary classifications that the students had of India as 'poor', 'dirty' and 'helpless' (Reflection, p. 39).

Eve considered her discipline to be a factor in the way she engaged with Kerala. The outcomes of the visit for Eve translated directly into her classroom pedagogy, unlike many of her peers, notwithstanding some participants like Deborah and Maggie's reflections about differentiation and assessment. Laura was the other participant whose 'early years' pedagogy was challenged after witnessing apparently successful rote learning in Kerala. This approach was alien to the ways she was being taught to teach in the UK and it provoked her to reflect about pedagogy during the visit and upon her return.

Eve became aware of the dangers of presenting a single story, especially about a place of which she knew little and talked about the need to enable pupils to:

...see the complexities of different countries, even within a country, within a town and within a district, you know how different it is, how complicated it is. I think, just getting students to realise that it's not all the same (Interview, p. 131/32-24).

She returned from Kerala with a more nuanced understanding of poverty and development in South India noting "I expected to see more evidence of poverty" and also understood this was not necessarily indicative of the rest of India (LJ, p. 23). Her notions of an arid India were challenged by the tropical climate and vegetation of Kerala (ibid) and her concerns about gender inequality were lessened after her engagement with staff and students at the university, but she did notice a rural/urban difference in female emancipation (ibid).

Further to the danger of simplifying and homogenising, Eve began to question the way that school geography can classify large parts of the world through terms like "Less Economically Developed Country" that, unhelpfully, give places a single label with which they may be judged (Reflection, p. 34). Her questioning of this resonated with my own, in chapter one, in recognising the way the 'CM' creates "partitions and divisions of the world" (De Lissovoy, 2010, p. 283) and it is just as important for me to recognise my disciplinary influences as it was for Eve.

Eve, like many of her peers, found her return to school troubling. She reflected that her pre-visit assumptions about a "chalk and talk" pedagogy (LJ, p. 23) were correct but were premised on this being wholly negative. It perhaps highlighted the importance of pre-visit preparation to aid intercultural learning—a factor identified by Dr Manish as significant to enable participants to understand the "culturally unfamiliar" during the visit (email, 20.2.15). Eve's post-visit opinions of Kerala were generally more positive than her pre-visit ones of India and this, perhaps, caused her to question, particularly, professional aspects of life at 'home'. She observed high levels of literacies in Kerala, which "appear[ed] to be superior to equivalent aged students in [her] school" (LJ, p. 23). She did not adopt such practice across cultures but, instead, began to question the appropriateness of UK-dominant

pedagogies. She also contrasted the levels of pupils' respect for their teachers which was common amongst the participants but, significantly, also questioned more fundamentally:

...whether the aims of my subject – Geography – are misguided. I am now very unsure how I am going to teach certain aspects of the curriculum without seeing it as a way of the UK maintaining its economic superiority over 'developing nations' (Martin and Wyness 2013) (Reflection, p. 40).

Her uncertainty about how, and what, to teach chimed with Deborah's comments about her return to school, which I consider in the next chapter, although for Eve this was at a disciplinary, epistemological level. Eve was not left professionally marooned without agency through her postcolonial exposure to power and representation, and she summed up her revised approach to teaching after considering what she could contribute in return for the hospitality and kindness that she received in Kerala. She wrote:

[w]e must change the superior perspective of the mind that we as the 'west' have and "retrace the itinerary of our prejudices and learning habits" (Kapoor 2004 cited in Andreotti 2006 p. 7). We must work towards fully discarding the socially constructed "West and the Rest" (Martin and Griffiths 2012 p. 910) through our travels, research and teaching (ibid).

In concluding her reflections, Eve considered that the visit enabled "mutual learning from both an eastern and western perspective" that helped "de-colonise our minds [however] the minds of the people we met had perhaps not fully forgotten and still see the 'West' as a superior entity". As such the visit was not completely successful in "escaping a colonial approach to travel, education and research" but that it came "incredibly close" (ibid).

Eve's epistemological change exposed the power structures inherent between the 'CM' and 'ECM' parts of the world. Her acceptance of bewilderment as an important part of intercultural learning, and her confidence to remain within this state, seemed to be important parts of her learning and were fundamental to her modelling of it, and were, perhaps, a reason why she was deemed to be more relaxed since her return (Interview, p. 136). Ultimately, the visit for Eve caused her to evaluate her pedagogy and the epistemology that underpins her discipline and to ensure that her future teaching within the 'CM', where her agency could be actualised, exposed the power structures at play within it.

Chapter 9 Deborah: On the process of intercultural learning and intangible learning

9.1 Reading culture

From the beginning, Deborah seemed to read culture in plural terms citing early anthropologist, Edward Tylor, in her reflection who articulated culture as “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man [sic] as a member of society” (Reflection, p. 25). Such a broad view of culture perhaps already positioned Deborah as one with, or aspiring to, a plural worldview. Deborah presented as a calm presence in the group and gave many thoughtful comments in the plenaries and other conversations which revealed a considerable cultural knowledge of India. She often ‘bounced’ ideas around with her friend, Elizabeth, that showed a deep consideration of her learning as well as a willingness to articulate it including sharing her ‘not knowing’ or bewilderment about matters at times.

She identified her future profession of teaching in a global context as a heightened reason to consider intercultural learning, writing after the visit:

[i]n an increasingly global society, intercultural learning is integral if we are to succeed not just as an economy but also as citizens of the world. As a teacher, it is important to learn, and teach, intercultural competency to create a society of acceptance and understanding, as well as the ability to communicate freely with individuals from cultures beyond our own (ibid).

Deborah was explicit that intercultural learning is important for teachers to integrate into their practice with a social mission towards societal acceptance and understanding of cultures beyond one’s own. She recognised teaching as a cultural agent of change. This professional dimension to Deborah’s intercultural learning was not unique and other participants saw the benefits of wider acceptance and understanding at both personal and professional levels, but she was rare in placing her learning as a teacher in a global context, perhaps already hinting at the significance of the ‘latitude and longitude of learning’ and her rhetoric, at least again, suggests the aspiration for plurality and highlighting the significance of her intercultural learning to teaching.

9.2 The significance of previous travel experiences

Deborah and Holly were the only participants to have revealed that they had visited Asia before; with Slater, Alice, Maggie and Elizabeth also revealing they had visited other 'ECM' parts of the world. Deborah reflected that her learning process in Thailand had been similar to the way she approached India highlighting the importance of local people to her learning, but that her learning there did not reach the same depths as in India. This was perhaps because of the focus of the visit and our access to educational establishments, identified by our host, Dr Manish, as a factor that promoted the participants' learning (email 20.2.15). Deborah also summarised that as a consequence of previous experiences of cultural "shock and change" (Interview, p. 119/8-9) she was able to overcome this more quickly in India with the potential for her to access deeper learning thereafter. This was not a universal feature of those more widely travelled and considerable discomfort was felt over a longer period particularly by Alice, as her narrative reveals later, and also by Holly who reflected that she struggled to understand what was happening and so learn positively (Reflection, not appended).

Perhaps one of the features of both Deborah and Holly's previous experiences was that they had an additional Asian reference point beyond 'home'; however, for Holly 'home' was partly in the Middle East as well as the UK. The danger of this, for some learners, might be that s/he tried to 'fit' Indian experiences into their existing thinking about the 'ECM'; however, this did not ultimately seem to be the case for Deborah and the majority of those with previous experiences in the 'ECM'.

Deborah's preconceptions about India indicated her expectations about:

...the role of women to be domestic, to see the upholding of traditions, less commercialism, to see more poverty and less materialistic values and to see less technology and luxury objects (Reflection, p. 29).

She identified the difference between Thailand and India by focusing on their respective relationship with the UK including colonial dimensions saying:

[t]he impact of colonial history is implicit in my expectations of Kerala as seen in the journal (W/b 13 Jan) in response to how I anticipate Kerala will be different from 'home' (ibid).

Despite her articulation about the differences between Thailand and India after the visit, perhaps aspects of her previous travels did influence her expectations of India as well as her wider knowledge of Indian culture. She reflected on these initial premises writing:

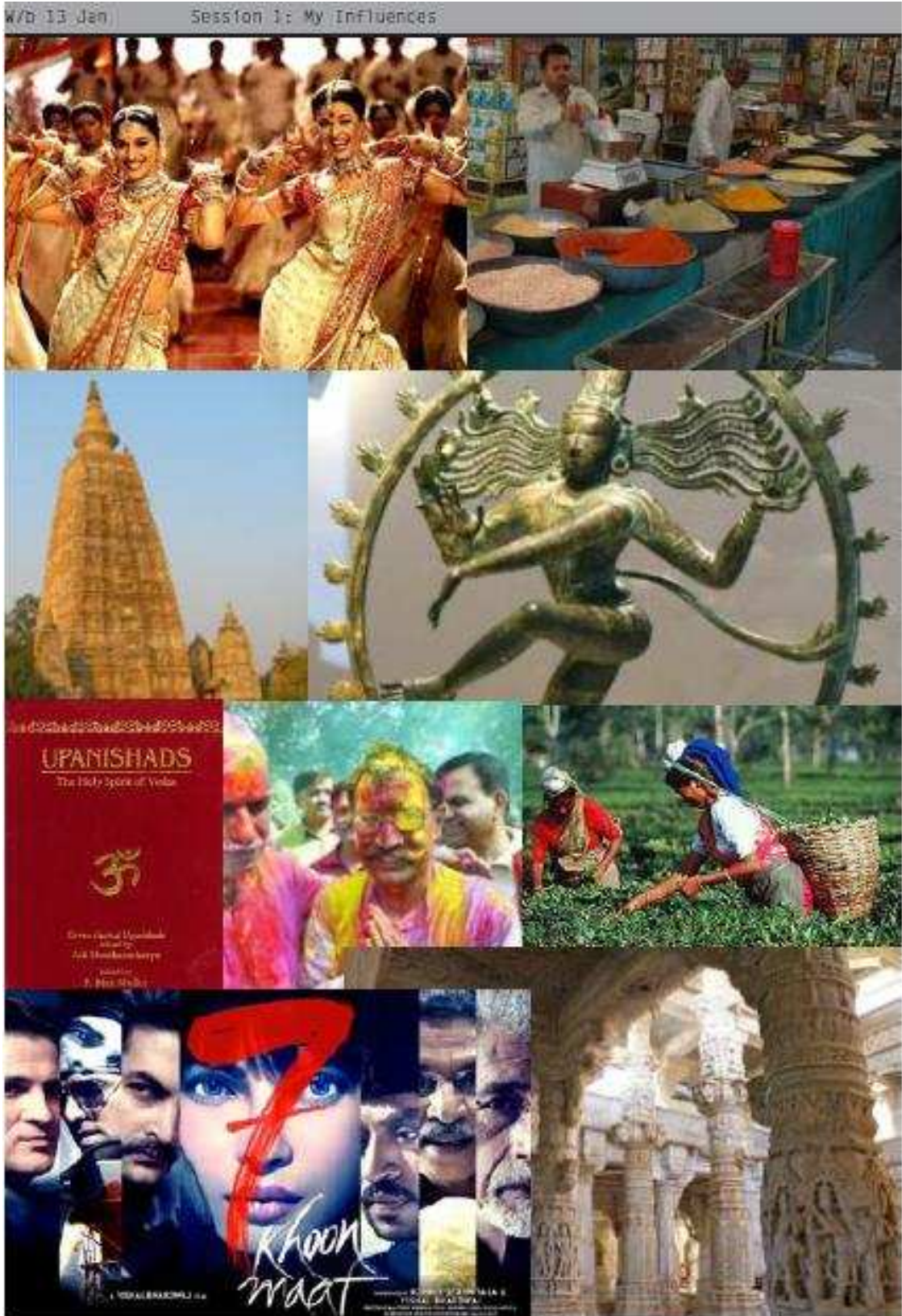


Figure 9.1 Deborah's montage of influences

[a]lthough many of my expectations did come to fruition, many of my points do project an idealised image of India; my predictions suggest a country untouched by the west, preserved, with innocence maintained (ibid).

Deborah also alluded to a colonial 'haunting' in her expectations, admitting "I am a victim of my colonial past" (ibid). She illustrated a global positioning in her thinking by suggesting her thinking took "a paternal responsibility and almost superiority in terms of wealth and material gain" compared to the "child-like status of the south" (ibid). Deborah was not alone in having a colonial 'haunting'. Holly was aware of the colonial history of the English language in India and wrote that she thought she needed to converse in a language other than English in order to communicate interculturally (Reflection, not appended). Holly used her multilingualism that was a feature of 'home' being in a range of international settings to learn Malayalam in order to emotionally engage with the locals. In expressing this desire to converse with locals, Holly highlighted a feature of Deborah's learning: the powerful nature of conversation.

9.3 Powerful conversations and their colonial undertones

Deborah was particularly clear about the importance of spontaneous conversations she had in Thailand and India in developing her knowledge and understanding of local cultures. These conversations were not restricted to those conducted during our arranged visits to schools and colleges, but included talking to people that the participants met in the streets, beach and shops during 'free' time. Deborah was one of the earliest participants to consider the value of intercultural conversations after a walk, where she saw locals gathered, helped 'crystallise' her thinking. She wrote:

[t]his caused me to reassess my perspective and my expectations shifted because I realised culture is about people, intercultural learning is learning to immerse and engage with people. In this case the learning was observing the experience of others, but the stages in my learning process were the same, I reflected on the experience, and my perspective altered. In this case, it was my subjective lens, as well as my meaning structures that were altered. I stopped looking at India as objects, buildings and stories, and began to see it as human (Reflection, p. 31).

It was a similar development in understanding that enabled Todd to deepen his appreciation of local culture in *Outsourced* (2006) through his interaction with Puro and then Asha. Initially, Deborah had read Kerala culture through her understanding of the "Hindu

pantheon, mythology, architecture and sculpture” (ibid) and her modesty often hid a depth of cultural understanding about these areas. It was perhaps revealing then, that she moved from a knowledgeable positioning to one of apparently significantly less capital, and perhaps vulnerability, in realising the importance of talking to people in developing her intercultural learning. Talking to local people became a significant feature of her time in Kerala and deepened her understanding of the intercultural learning process. She prioritised conversation above observation and understood that conversation was co-constructed:

She reflected:

[w]hen I consider how I learned from communication and engagement, I realise my learning was triggered by how others responded to me during interaction and discussion. I would argue that this links strongly to...how we create worlds and position ourselves within them. It is through our engagement with our surroundings that we judge where to position ourselves within it (Reflection, p. 31).

Deborah’s approach seemed redolent with the way Todd learnt to learn in *Outsourced* (2006) that I outlined in chapter seven. Through conversation and trust of locals like Puro and Asha, Todd moved from a commanding position as call centre manager to one where he conversed and learnt with locals through a relationship built on mutual respect and, which potentially, made him more vulnerable than his previously distant role as manager. Deborah did the same but perhaps her knowledge of India, as well as her previous intercultural travels, enabled her to reach such a positioning more quickly. What is clear is that they both understood the need to ‘unlearn their privileges’ in order to deepen their learning (Andreotti, 2011). It is also important to recognise the significance of the planned engagements during the visit in the participants’ learning. The schools we visited were partly a pragmatic function of ease of access but they were also chosen to enable, in the words of Dr Manish, the participants to “interact meaningfully” (email, 20.2.15).

Deborah’s comments revealed an emerging understanding of the significance of place to learning. To her, place, as a product of its people and their surroundings, was significant in positioning herself and reading its cultures. Furthermore, as already indicated, Deborah’s reading of India had a colonial dimension suggesting that to her, place and culture had geo-historical dimensions.

It was through Deborah’s interaction with Keralites that she began to appreciate the extent to which the geo-historical dimensions of place were underpinned by notions of power and politics and to which later she deepened her understanding by reading postcolonial theory. She reflected:

[o]n engaging with the people of Kerala, I realised the impact colonialism had truly had on India. Although it is a country that is proud of its wealth of traditions, the impact of European residence is explicit. The temporary celebrity status we received highlights how Britain has left a mark on the country. Locals frequently asked for photographs, they wanted to be seen with white Europeans, they wanted to shake our hands, students in the schools would surround us frantically asking for autographs. Through conversing with the locals we found out more about the reasons for this disconcerting admiration: they believed us to be superior for our wealth, our science, mathematics. They believed English to be the language of Maths and Science, and in the schools we visited children were taught the majority of subjects in English. We were told being seen with a white European raised status in the community, we heard the same stories repeatedly: A surreal regard for the once coloniser (Reflection, p. 30).

Deborah also indicated that the ways this “surreal regard” was performed was “disorientating and constructed a barrier between them, and us” (ibid) which reminded me of the way Todd was originally positioned by locals as the important call centre manager and also myself and Scott as visit leaders. Despite such barriers, Deborah worked hard to learn and said “through engaging with the community I constructed understanding...and revised my meaning structures” (ibid), perhaps recognising her existing colonisation of the mind and the need to reconsider existing assumptions in order to deepen her learning.

Deborah’s understanding of Indian culture was perhaps greater than others on the visit, as previously explained, and thus her appreciation of the pre-colonial rich culture that was diminished by colonial hegemony was possibly stronger than for some of her peers. Slater, for example, was surprised to hear some Indian students explaining the detrimental effects of Empire (Interview, not appended). The experiences she recounts above were also highlighted by many participants. She found postcolonial theory helpful in reading the power dynamics that possibly underpinned the exchanges with many locals; however, hinted at the ‘latitude and longitude of her learning’ as well as the significance of her visceral experiences in revealing:

[r]eading about post-colonial theory does not have the impact of experiencing a post-colonial landscape, and engaging in an uncomfortable discourse between north and south (Reflection, p. 30).

Uncomfortable discourses were recounted by many participants, including Nancy (chapter ten) and Alice (chapter twelve), about their experiences of a begging woman which became significant parts of their stories.

Deborah also identified the importance of reflection about her engagement with people and realised that it was not only her understanding of culture, but also a clear understanding of the learning process, that changed. This was indicative of the way Deborah theorised about her learning, drawing on ideas of intercultural competence and underpinning this with postcolonial theory to support her reflection upon return to the UK.

She quoted Taylor (1994) writing:

[i]t is through a learning process inclusive of critical reflection, seeking out new skills and knowledge, action and discourse that the stranger interprets the meaning of his or her experiences and develops intercultural competence (ibid, p. 26).

She questioned "the subjective lens through which individuals see the world" and asked "[w]hat alters how we interact with new environments and interpret the experiences within them?" (ibid). She theorised about her learning, writing:

[i]n the initial stages of a host culture, the intercultural experience is new and exciting, and it is when this veil of exotic mystery lifts that culture-shock kicks in (Taylor, 1994). When first immersing oneself in a host culture, an individual cannot explain their experiences through the meaning perspectives of the home culture, which Taylor (1994) describes as a challenge facing many individuals who are not aware of how their pre-disposition influences their interpretation of experiences. It is this dilemma that can lead to feelings of guilt and shame as the individual enters a reflective state and challenge the validity of their world-view (Taylor, 1994) (ibid).

Deborah's theoretical understanding of how postcolonial theory could explain intercultural experiences was strong and she criticised herself more severely than some of her peers as a result. However she was unusual in not using the word 'guilt' to describe her own feelings and thoughts about Kerala. It was, perhaps, her theorisation about her preconceptions and the macro-influences of geo-politics that enabled her to articulate her positioning in different ways to some of her peers. Deborah recognised the challenge of confronting the validity of one's existing worldview, which was something identified as a feature of the participants' learning by Dr Manish who wrote that the participants "learn an immense lot about a drastically different weltanschauung" (or worldview) but added that "this learning may be seriously fragmented" (email, 20.2.15). The difficulty of discovering alternative worldviews perhaps influenced Deborah's focus on the process of intercultural learning and gaining competence in meeting the 'stranger'. As a teacher, she recognised the importance of intercultural learning and her writing provided a scaffold to support such learning.

9.4 Ways of seeing: disciplinary influences?

There is one further dimension to Deborah's learning that seemed an important influence upon her learning: her disciplinary specialism. In her reflection Deborah wrote:

[a]s an artist, I have always been inspired by culture, and fascinated by the complexity of India. I have studied the cultures of Japan, America and India as part of my degree leading me to see Kerala through a lens constructed from previous study (ibid, p. 30).

I have alluded to Deborah's experiences being a factor in the way she learnt about India and herself. It was only after the interviews were concluded that I thought that Deborah's discipline of Art, which she shared with her friend Elizabeth, was not only a possible factor in *what* they knew but also influenced the *way* they interpreted their experiences. The significance of art to both participants was evident at the university conference where, instead of presenting their UK-based research, they re-drafted their presentation to focus upon art education in England including sharing images of their own, and their pupils' practice. In an email correspondence²⁸, Deborah and Elizabeth were keen to highlight the significance of art as a factor in the way they learnt.

Deborah wrote:

...it's important to see art as language and even if we cannot read, speak, write we all understand visual language. We have communicated through pictures since the beginning of time, and in fact it is our architecture, art and symbols, in my opinion, that can say more about history and a culture than just language by the definition we generally accept.

I think images break the barriers of language, many aspects are universally understood. Gestures and body language are commonly understood without words because this is visual language.

In terms of the images we used in the presentation their impact was due to the fact the visual language is so human. There's not always a need for translation although of course we have unique symbols within culture. But the art we showed, it broke down the language and cultural barrier, because art...brings people together in

²⁸ In a follow up to the interview I asked them: 'what you thought about your art (such as the images you showed at the conference) as a means to cut through this language barrier and, in effect, go beyond language in connecting with people?'

mutual understanding. They could see what the objects were, they could see what the children had learned how to do, the skill involved, the colours, the detail, and this surpasses anything we could say. I think because everyone, whether they realise it or not, are expert visual linguists, we learn more through visual communication than we know (email, 1.5.14).

Elizabeth's response was independent to Deborah's but concurred with much of what she said. She asserted that while:

...human expression connects us... I think the visual arts make that connection much easier. The visual arts can connect people across time and across cultures; in the sense that we can still understand what fascinated Da Vinci, even when we cannot read his words or speak to him.

This potential for art to ease cultural barriers, according to Elizabeth, perhaps helped her and Deborah integrate into Keralan culture. She wrote:

[w]e already felt a connection to the people through their art, their frescos, their temple architecture, etc, from the smallest section of text to the signs on the side of a road - there is a visual vernacular that you can relate to and in a small way interpret a culture through (email, 1.5.14).

Elizabeth's reference to road signs reminded me of de Botton's (2003) reaction to similar signage in Amsterdam and the personal importance of tiny details that go unnoticed by others. Her expression of these idiosyncratic connections articulated a means by which the 'colonial signature' may develop. The suggestion of a cultural connection is not to suggest that difference and one's cultural heritage were ignored, but that signifiers of culture were recognised by Deborah and Elizabeth which perhaps were not read by other participants. They did not suggest, however, that this way of seeing was unique to those trained in art, but perhaps it was the significance of their immersion, and practice of the discipline over time, that provided them with this particular way of seeing. They articulated the influence of their subject deeply and, although I am tentative about some cultural signifiers transcending culture and becoming universally understood, I think the influence of art was significant to their learning.

This is not to say that each participant's discipline was the dominant factor in the way they read, and were able to engage with, Kerala. Nor do I intend to suggest that everyone is similarly influenced by their discipline. In the case of Deborah and Elizabeth, art was a significant means with which to engage with their Keralan peers through some commonality

that was beyond language, even if the later expression about the process was in the written word. Other participants perhaps saw India through a dominant paradigm into which their subject discipline fitted and/or their experiences influenced their view of their discipline, as in Eve's case with geography. Laura's scientific background, at least initially, influenced the way she looked for "black and white" (Interview, p. 219/21) certainties, but realised that after time in an intercultural setting this was not possible. Furthermore, she thought that her revelation that we did not necessarily have to seek such certainty in our thinking remained with her after the visit, saying "I am more reflective and I think I am a bit more forgiving when I teach, to think actually there are different styles and it's not necessarily right or wrong" (ibid, p. 223/11-13). It seemed, however, that it was only the artists who considered their way of seeing as a means to transcend language and cultural barriers and who had a disciplinary intuition to help put this into practice.

At the end of the visit, Deborah was not able to express any changes to her worldview despite her considerable enthusiastic immersion into, and reflection on, Kerala culture. Her inability to articulate change was despite, or perhaps because of, the personal and possibly heightened way of seeing Kerala that she argued transcended language barriers. It was only upon returning 'home' that she was able to reflect on her learning and possible changes began to emerge.

9.5 Returning 'home': intangible learning?

Deborah reflected on her re-immersion into 'home' and particularly into her UK placement school:

...the transformation of my perspective became truly apparent... reintegration is an important stage in the learning process that I found to be more disorientating, and therefore, the most challenging step of my intercultural learning (Reflection, p. 31).

Dr Manish recognised the potential of the visit to provoke the participants to reconsider 'home', writing that the visit enabled them to "look at the sociocultural entity that was their homeland from a distance, and see aspects of it they...might not have seen so far" (email, 20.2.15). I took the decision that participants should be re-immersed into their placement school as part of the module as I thought it would help them consider their intercultural learning in the dominant culture of their teaching practice. The immersion into the placement challenged some participants in particular. Later in her interview Deborah described the first week back in the UK as "very, very difficult" (Interview, p. 121/7) and said, about her performance as a student teacher, "I don't know how to do this anymore!

What am I going to do?!” (ibid, p. 122/7). She was not alone in recognising the disorientation of the return ‘home’ and, in her case, an apparent de-skilling as a consequence of her Keralan experiences. Elizabeth described her return as both “horrible” (Interview, p. 156/13) and “weird” (ibid, p. 143/31) hinting at a continuation of this sensation, and perhaps her learning, by adding in her interview “[i]t’s a bit weird now” (ibid). This was supported by Eve who said: “I remember not being able to necessarily communicate how I was feeling cos I was still trying to take it all in” (Interview, p. 134/29-30) and she questioned how easy it was to reintegrate into one’s ‘home’ culture.

Deborah said of her experience: “I found the trip to be profoundly meaningful and I did feel my sense of self and how I experience UK culture had changed” (Reflection, p. 31). She explained the complicated re-positioning she undertook to contemplate her learning which might also help explain some of the difficulties experienced by her peers:

...one must also consider the subjective position and the post-colonial influence that effected [sic] how we were treated within the host culture, on returning to the UK, it was a case of returning to being ‘normal’, so I had to adjust my positioning within the environment from home, to host, and back to home (ibid, p. 32).

Deborah identified that upon her return to the UK she became more aware of the stresses the English education system puts pupils under with its focus on attainment and she had developed greater concern for her pupils’ well-being, expecting higher outcomes of them and seeing them holistically as children with lives beyond the classroom (ibid). Despite this change, which perhaps hints at quite significant changes in professional ideology, Deborah did not articulate specific dimensions about her learning in her reflection. She wrote:

I learned about Indian culture and about myself throughout the trip in an intangible way. It is feasible that I cannot explain my experiences through the perspective of my home culture as suggested by Taylor (1994) (ibid).

Deborah highlighted the difficulty of translating and explaining one’s intercultural learning through the language/culture of ‘home’. This is not to say that intercultural learning did not occur and Deborah’s insight into her own process of intercultural learning within a postcolonial theoretical context probably negates her claim to the process of learning at least being ‘intangible’.

Deborah’s difficulty in articulating her learning upon arriving ‘home’ is redolent with the intercultural learning of Ruth and P.J. in *Holy Smoke* (1999). Ruth’s Orientalist positivity chimed with many of the participants’ positive views about aspects of India during and immediately after the visit, but which for some, changed over time once back ‘home’.

It needed the American, P.J. Walters, hired to harshly bring Ruth back to 'normality' by removing her 'holy smoke' to provoke her deeper learning. Many of the participants' accounts of their post-visit learning, not least Deborah's, concur with Ruth's experiences, not just in the difficulty of articulating one's learning but also in the significance of a person or event that prompted their thinking. The re-immersion into their placement school was difficult for many participants, and for Maggie felt like a "slap in the face" (Interview, p. 205/12). The highly regulated routines of UK schools, along with the often technical rationalist nature of pedagogy, could make the experience seem highly controlling to someone who has recently experienced a different educational approach and who, perhaps, was still in their own Keralan 'holy smoke'. In addition, the apparent indifference of some UK school colleagues who perhaps read the participants' experiences as exotic, but ultimately irrelevant, alienated participants like Elizabeth (Interview, p. 156).

I liken P.J.'s attempts to control Ruth's thinking and actions to the ways a dominant culture can play on one's thinking during the re-immersion into 'home'. P.J.'s attempts to dominate and suppress Ruth's learning failed, but the intense, intimate, and, yet at times, hostile relationship between Ruth and P.J. provoked them to learn in an open and plural manner from initially fixed but opposing positions. The re-immersion of the participants to 'home' with the significant provocations such as school and reading theory, seems to have been highly significant to many of them.

Many participants recognised the importance to their learning of engaging with theory through their professional investigation, and each other, in helping form their thinking after returning 'home'. To illustrate, Jane talked about the way that despite reflection during the visit it was upon her return to the UK that her experiences meant so much more to her and deepened her learning. She said:

...it was when I got home that I had to start explaining it to people and I had to start saying what was happening and then I had to write my [reflection], obviously. And that's where it all came into like, "wow" (Interview, p. 228/32-35).

I have to agree with her. My worldview was transformed by reading postcolonial theory which informed the way I developed the pedagogy of the visit and my own understanding of the participants' learning. I considered my engagement with postcolonial theory a personal 'threshold concept' (Meyer and Land, 2003) as I could not regard intercultural exchanges, or view the 'CM' or 'ECM' in the same light as before I understood the influences of power upon these exchanges.

An engagement with theory once back 'home' caused participants to reconsider their learning and to deepen their thinking, partly through reading matters more plurally when

considering Indian experiences when re-immersed in their 'CM' cultures. Such cross-cultural reflection, however, is turbulent and the strength of being able to hold contradictory ideas whilst re-immersing oneself in a dominant culture, which is now being challenged, is important in enabling one's learning to deepen and not be suppressed or abandoned.

P.J.'s learning happened in parallel with Ruth's, albeit occurring over a much longer period and it is certainly possible that the participants' intercultural learning will continue to occur way beyond the parameters of my research period. Their apparently Orientalist holy smoke was removed and their learning manifested itself, as with many of the participants' stories, in unexpected but tangible ways after their return 'home'.

It was only during the interview with Deborah, two months after the submission of her reflection, that she was able to identify further dimensions to her learning. It is possible that the spoken format of the interview, as opposed to the earlier written reflection, meant that different dimensions of learning emerged through these different media. The additional time in the UK during which further reflection about learning was possible, and once the initial disorientation or smoke had dissipated, seemed to be a factor in the discourse of a number of participants' interviews. Maggie said in her interview that for herself, Eve, Mark and Jane the visit was "something that we haven't really stopped thinking about. It's always there and I think it always will be in a way" (Interview, p. 212/1-2). She added that her thinking had changed as a consequence of her continued reflection saying:

I think I've realised that we, in the UK, still do a lot of things right. I think I was very harsh and judgemental on the UK when I came back. But, I think, we don't give enough credit to India and to just other cultures in general in how they do things and I think they need a lot more recognition in some ways. But, yeah, there's a lot of differences which I found difficult to grasp (Interview, p. 204/31-32).

Despite Deborah reiterating the intangible nature of her learning, saying "I think my view, my perspective has changed in a way that you can't really put your finger on" (Interview, p. 122/23-24), she was able to identify changes to her professional practice and specifically to the way she differentiated her lessons (ibid, p. 113). She also highlighted that she disliked the nature of assessment in school saying that there was too much of it. Significantly, she indicated that this idea was present before the visit and that experiencing a different educational approach formulated, or allowed, her argument to be voiced (Interview, p. 114). In this sense the visit provided a space and time that provoked and/or crystallised some latent or even unconscious ideas to emerge into her conscious mind and for that to be articulated. This is a theme to which I return later with other participants' stories.

Finally, Deborah identified the desire to teach overseas saying:

[y]ou look at everything a little bit differently, I think. Makes you think about leaving the country...With [my partner] being Greek, we've thought about moving away, moving back to Greece in a few years' time once I'm fully qualified and stuff and getting out. Just because you start to realise how education is seen and treated and you think "well, why am I here when I could be somewhere else where it's different?"(Interview, p. 122/30-35).

Deborah was adamant that her potential emigration was a product of the visit, citing her realisation of the different attitudes of children in schools as a key factor in forming her idea (Interview, p. 122). This outcome was not therefore a result of a provocation or crystallisation of a latent idea, but something that emerged as a consequence of the visit. A consequence perhaps of increased confidence at dealing and living with difference, but also a result of critiquing 'home' in the light of this difference. It was a view of 'home' where a dominant educational culture did not sit so easily with Deborah's revised views of education. Deborah perhaps was different to some participants having a non-UK partner, but she was not alone in consideration of an alternative location to live and teach as a consequence of the visit, as Elizabeth's and Jane's stories will show. Deeper aspects of Deborah's learning may still emerge and her perceived difficulty, despite her eloquence, to articulate her learning outcomes suggested that her intercultural learning was far from intangible and something which has provided her with an alternative worldview and a more critical professional view of 'home'.

Chapter 10 Nancy: Emotional triggers and learning about gender

10.1 Seeking confirmation of assumptions and emotional numbness

Nancy, along with her fellow primary specialist Alice, was a sociology graduate and used her existing theoretical understanding of gender, which she acknowledged was an influence to her learning (LJ, p. 6), to explore her experiences during and after the visit. She admitted that prior to the visit she:

...held an almost ignorant view that 'third world countries' would be a challenging place to visit, due to the physical and emotional effects of the heat and the extreme poverty I visualised. I also had a belief that women in Eastern countries were held in poor regard by the society, were second class citizens and that many women would be uneducated and/ or politically unaware (Reflection, p. 88).

She was one of the few participants who identified physical factors, like climate, as a challenge whereas reference to poverty was much more common. Nancy reflected that:

[i]n the initial stages of my trip I found myself seeking out images, scenes or even conversations between men and women (that I could not understand from the language, only the intonation) to try to confirm the single story I had imbedded in my mind (ibid).

Nancy's initial response seemed to contradict Deborah's perception of quickly overcoming early culture shock outlined earlier. Nancy had not travelled beyond Europe before, but she was able to move beyond her attempts to fit her experiences into her existing worldview and preconceptions about India and she reflected: "this single story I started with turned out to be something that, with time, my experiences, images and reflections changed or even completely dismissed" (ibid). Through reflection, and then theorising about her experiences, Nancy ultimately arrived at a more nuanced position about her experiences which she called 'my truth' (Reflection, p. 93).

Nancy identified an initial numbness to her experiences. She wrote:

[m]y first two days in Kerala were, without question, the days that Scoffham and Barnes (2009) might categorise as my 'denial' days or as Weeden and Hayter (1996) may describe it as the 'disorientation' phase. I saw beautiful sights and amazing things, and although they were all such "powerful experiences" (Scoffham

and Barnes, 2009: 268) I am not sure I saw them for what they were at this stage. Our second day in India was a worrying one for me. This was the day we saw a lady begging on the street carrying a new born baby. Prior to actually seeing her, and having her constantly following you and begging with baby in arm, I would have assumed that this would have been a big trigger for me emotionally. I was obviously moved by the situation but by the same token felt somewhat removed from where I was at this stage. This really worried me. I discussed my sense of numbness often over the first two days with my roommate, with some concern. I knew that this trip should be an important shift in 'something' in my life and I wanted it to have an effect on me. But I felt like the whole trip, and my very existence in India, was very abstract at this point. It felt as if everyone else was there but I was watching it all happen from a safe place, akin to Weeden and Hayter (1996) 'disorientation phase' (Reflection, p. 92).

Nancy's apparent cognitive and/or emotional distancing from the begging woman and baby were perhaps a product of the challenge they presented to her. This encounter happened during an early excursion to Kanyakumari, the southern tip of India, to help familiarise the group with southern Kerala. It was a relatively rare occurrence to experience begging during the visit and perhaps because of this, and that it happened only on the second day of the visit, it had a lasting impression on many of the participants. A begging woman, however, seemed to be highly congruent with Nancy's expectations of poverty and gender inequality in India and thus I tended to think her response was probably more a tension between her cognitive worldview and her emotional response to the immediate situation. Her numbness helped maintain her worldview at that moment through cognitive domination over her emotions. It epitomised a 'CM' Enlightenment style of thinking which suppressed her emotions and suggested her approach was more redolent of Andreotti's (2013) 'home' disposition towards difference rather than the 'caravan' which she perceived as her dominant disposition (LJ, p. 10). Her numbness to the begging woman was as much a response as those participants that were visibly upset by this trigger, such as Alice (chapter twelve).

Nancy also wrote with almost certainty that the visit was to be personally important to her and there seemed to be a tension between Nancy's numbness and her expectation about the "shift in something" as a consequence of her experiences. Her desire for meaningful change was redolent with Francis' highly prescriptive desire to find spiritual enlightenment in *The Darjeeling Limited* (2007). At this point in her learning, Nancy perhaps experienced the tensions, like Francis, borne of her expectation of change. Her expression of this experience was aided by turning to theories of intercultural learning and later to her views

about gender, just as Deborah reviewed ideas of intercultural competence to articulate her experiences.

10.2 Brass band welcome: a 'colonial signature'?

It was the following day, which was the first school visit, that was a second trigger for Nancy and many of her peers but one that she responded to in a considerably different way than her previous numbness. She reflected:

[o]ur first school visit was, I believe, the real turning point for me in my journey. My journey to what, I am still unsure...It had a greater impact on me than any other aspect of the trip and what is so important, upon reflection, is that it took me by complete surprise. Upon arrival at the school we were greeted by the schools brass band which started to play the minute we arrived. Music is already a big emotional trigger for me and has been throughout my life but my reaction to this particular time caught me totally unawares. I stepped off the coach and the moment I looked at the band I was totally overcome by emotion and for the next few hours I could not stop crying. I am not an overly emotional person and usual deal with situations through an organised, systematic and disciplined framework. Therefore my crying in itself was overwhelming to me which only sought to add to the emotion I was already feeling about the situation. I think I was overwhelmed by so much of what was happening and by my mere presence in India that this was the release. Perhaps I had inflicted upon myself some kind of mental block or 'denial' phase. I believe I may have been, unknowingly, rejecting the culture (Reflection, p. 92).

Nancy's response escaped the Enlightenment's suppression of her emotions through this different engagement with the Other. It is possible that the musical dimension to this welcome, an existing emotional trigger for Nancy, had a greater impact upon her compared to her peers, but she did note of herself that she was not a particularly emotional person. Both Becky (Interview, p. 167) and Jane (ibid, p. 234) remarked upon Nancy's response indicating that they both shared her feelings. It is also possible that Nancy's response was cumulative, resulting from her previous numbness which may have been, as she suggests, a result of cultural denial.

Nancy highlighted the significance of music as a trigger and possibly it was its unspoken nature that may have taken her beyond a defensive realm of language that enabled her to respond emotionally to the situation. Perhaps the pressure of the two triggers, along with the wider dimensions of difference experienced in India, finally broke through Nancy's

defences just as the extreme event of the drowning boy did for Francis in *The Darjeeling Limited* (2007). Until this point perhaps she had tried to control her response to experiences through an emotional suppression and after she stopped crying she was able to engage with the experience cognitively *and* emotionally. In short, she was able to learn more deeply.

Nancy reflected about her response:

I believe that a large part of my emotion came from the fact that these people, people that knew nothing about us really, would put in such an extraordinary effort to make us feel welcome. In actual fact I felt like we were royalty. My crying did eventually change to what I can only really describe as pure elation. What we witnessed in this first school may have raised many questions about worthiness and respect with me...but predominantly I was amazed by the children: their academic level, their kindness and their enthusiasm for learning (Reflection, p. 92).

Two significant points emerged from the day at the first school. Nancy's experiences led her to revise her preconceptions about female emancipation in India, to which I return shortly. The second was the way that the huge welcome provoked many participants to later read this in terms of postcolonial theory and it is to their stories about this that I now turn in order to contextualise Nancy's narrative.

Reflective provocations of the brass band

The brass band welcome surprised many participants and caused them to reflect upon its enormity. Jane reflected upon these matters in her reflection and interview writing:

[e]veryone was happy to see us and we were treated like very important people. It felt like the welcome we would give if the royal family came to our school or town in the UK that is the only comparison I can think of (Reflection, p. 70).

Maggie added:

[n]ot only was I shocked, but I was confused as to why they believed we deserved such kindness and required such high esteem. This was the first instance which made me query our colonial status within India and whether we still hold and are placed upon a superior pedestal (Reflection, p. 62).

Using terms like 'royalty' or 'celebrity' was not restricted to Jane and Maggie; Deborah (Reflection, p. 30); Eve (Reflection, p. 38); and Nancy (Reflection, p. 92) all used similar terms to describe their welcome at this school. Maggie said later in her interview that such

a welcome was “massively overwhelming” (Interview, p. 210) and similar terms were used by participants like Mark and Laura (Reflections not appended) to describe the event.

Maggie said that the welcome at the school provoked²⁹ many participants to question: “[w]hy were they doing this for us? Why were they treating us like celebrities?” (Interview, p. 288/31-32). Jane was more direct in asking: ‘[i]s it because of our nationality or the colour of our skin? Or both?’ (Reflection, p. 70). I resist the immediate jump to Jane’s grand scale causational factors; however, her thinking reminded me of similar thoughts I expressed about previous welcome events in chapter two.

Nancy had indicated in her journal, before travelling, that “our colonial heritage” is “hugely influential to today’s society” (LJ, p. 9). She questioned, after the visit to the first school, why was so much respect given to representatives of a country that in the past colonised India (LJ, p. 16). For many participants the shock of a brass band welcome perhaps provoked them to consider their experiences, and especially the way they were treated, in terms of the influences of ‘CM’ power on thinking and actions in some of the people they met. Upon the participants’ return to the UK, and their reading and writing for their reflection, they began to consider this directly in relation to postcolonial theory as discussed earlier. Despite me raising the idea that the grand welcome was indicative of local hospitality rather than of colonial relationships this was not countenanced by participants as the dominant factor behind such a welcome.

Nancy was more reticent about reading the brass band welcome in postcolonial terms in her reflection, despite her questioning of it in her journal during the visit. Jane summed up the views of some, like Mark and Becky, saying in her interview that she thought that the “English, as white people...have a lot of power over there” (Interview, p. 229/35) adding that she thought that the school perceived that the group brought “status and respect” (ibid, p. 230/18-19) to the school through the visit.

The status that Jane articulated exposed the apparent ingrained colonial attitude of some of our Indian hosts experienced in the first, and many of the school visits. Jane summarised her surprise about this apparent colonial hegemony indicated by the nature of the receptions:

²⁹ I use the term provoke or provocation as opposed to a metaphor such as ‘catalyst’ with respect to something that caused a reaction in a participant. Our responses to a provocation are varied and unpredictable depending on the provocation and the participants, whereas the chemical reaction caused by a catalyst has a more predictable outcome.

I learnt an awful lot about the colonialist mind set that inhabit us as westerners naturally, but also that there is a colonial mind set that exists within the people I met on the trip. This is not something I was expecting (Reflection, p. 71).

10.3 Female Emancipation

The first school was typical of many that we visited in that the classrooms of often 50 pupils had rows of segregated boys and girls. Nancy acknowledged that her: “prior images of Indian gender roles not only manifested itself in my view of how women would be portrayed or treated but also on how girls would be educated” (Reflection, p. 93). She was candid in expressing “how wrong I was!” (ibid). After the “pure elation” of the welcome she observed a number of lessons and she felt that the classroom segregation was relatively insignificant, finding the girls to whom she spoke about education “refreshing and awe inspiring” and “enthusiastic about their academic future and keen to achieve” (ibid).

Nancy used her sociological discipline to theorise about gender. She argued that:

...gender is a social construct...and I therefore do not find it difficult to believe that gender does hold a hierarchy because society has created one. Along with gender being a social construct, Raewyn Connell (1987) suggests that gender holds within it a hierarchy that is not only socially constructed but is widely socially accepted and performed. This was, without question, the view that I had of gender roles in Eastern countries (ibid, p. 91).

Nancy’s argument for gender hierarchy was strong, and her perhaps Orientalist, initial views of the role of women in the ‘ECM’ were quickly challenged through the Keralan educational visits. She noted in her reflection:

[e]ven writing it now, I could weep at my own ignorance. In such a short trip to India I saw time after time women working in shops to support their families; strong, intelligent women working towards becoming teachers; respected, influential women teaching the next generation and at the conference on intercultural learning I saw bright, politically aware, educated women talking so eloquently about the struggles of their country and how they can and are trying to overcome their current environmental and economic issues (ibid, p. 91).

Nancy had prided herself on “being open minded and not judging something until [she had] seen it” but reflected that she had a “damaging and dangerous view of gender roles in

'Eastern' countries" and had, without realising, essentialised her story of gender about India, if not all of the 'East', saying "[h]ow little I knew and how much I claimed to" (ibid). Nancy was aware that many of the girls with whom she spoke would not necessarily achieve their career aspirations, not least due to the cost of higher education fees, and yet she was left with positive hopes for these young people because of their hard work and general "work ethic" (ibid, p. 93). I concurred with her point, however, I was left wondering about how Nancy framed her thinking about this given the first trigger of the begging lady and baby that she experienced. It is faithful to say that the many positive experiences of girls and young women with apparent agency outnumbered those girls and women that the participants met who lacked such capital, but a gender hierarchy was not simply class restricted or a function of education.

The greater numbers of women with apparent agency that the participants encountered during the visit was partly a function of the visit's focus on educational establishments, although at the first school Maggie observed that the principal was "female but it was all the male Directors who were speaking to us and she would rarely get a chance to speak" (Interview, p. 209/3-4). Trainee teachers and MA students, plus their tutors at a university conference, tend to occupy certain strata of society and Nancy mostly experienced the agency of the Keralan middle classes, albeit with additional examples from shopkeepers et. al. The difficulties of Keralan female emancipation are exposed by Ammu Joseph (2002) in her essay *Fool's Paradise?* She articulates a complex situation where female education is strong; however, family restrictions for young women are high and mobility is restricted.

Nancy's thinking about the role of women in Kerala certainly deepened and became more nuanced as well as positive in outlook, but in doing so perhaps she lost sight of the economically poor in her reflection and the overall lens of class, as well as gender, in considering these issues. Interestingly, this was not the case on leaving Kerala where she referred to poverty and the begging woman in her journal as the greatest learning point of her visit (LJ, p. 22).

Nancy risked presenting a singularly opposite view of female emancipation to the one prior to the visit, but one still with some inherently essentialised dimensions. This is not necessarily to criticise her conclusions, but to highlight the difficulties of cultural learning through lenses that are opaque or unknown and over a short period of time. This difficulty was anticipated as an outcome by Dr Manish who indicated the visit would provide an "exposure" to Kerala with participants gleaning "disconnected but very revealing information" (email, 20.2.15). I sense that Nancy was, however, well aware of her learning not necessarily reaching all aspects of issues regarding gender in a short stay in India. She

likened her learning to that of Andreotti's (2013) 'caravan', calling herself a 'home bird' (Reflection, p. 93) perhaps hinting at her ontology having remained untouched by the visit.

Nancy was faithful in concluding that she had deepened her thinking beyond a single reading of gender specifically and more widely of Kerala, and only her basic pre-visit assumptions about Kerala, like transport and road safety, remained unchanged (LJ, p. 25). She also described her views about English education, after her return, as "fluid" (ibid), writing that everything she "believed to be good traits of a teacher, learner and school [had] been challenged" (LJ, p. 26) by the visit. This differed from her previously firm views about 'good' education practice and the need for "engagement, making learning relevant and kinaesthetic learning" (ibid). Upon her return to school Nancy identified her need to practice teaching using different pedagogic methods before she could consider how she might have changed professionally. More widely, she compared the lack of professional trust of teachers in the UK compared to the teachers in the Keralan schools she visited and said this left her demoralised (LJ, p. 27), which seemed to concur with Mark's perceptions about the lack of teacher well-being in the UK.

Perhaps, as a consequence of her fluid readings of English education and her reading of gender theorists like Butler (1990), I was interested that Nancy coined the term 'my truth' to describe what she experienced in Kerala. She wrote:

[t]his 'truth' may not be the real Kerala (I make this distinction purposefully as I am in no doubt that Kerala, even towns in Kerala, are a very different place from the other states, cities and towns in India) but it is the truth of what I saw. Over the 10 days I saw and experienced: children, willing to learn and to progress themselves with the help and support of attentive and supportive teachers and family members; shop owners and people on the streets and in bars being kind, friendly and jovial; people who seemingly had nothing enjoying themselves and not pandering to their situation; and I saw women, so many bright, intelligent, politically aware, enthusiastic and creative women, in so many different roles. My beliefs in the world now are different. My views on gender roles around the world have been thrown into disrepair and my views on the whole education system in Britain have been questioned. Maybe I am not a whole new person, fundamentally changed to the core, but my experiences in Kerala will stay with me for life (Reflection, p. 93).

Perhaps Nancy's 'truth' was a little less post-structurally influenced than I initially thought. She argued that she had faithfully represented what she witnessed in Kerala, which I regard as real as any other person's faithful representation. The significance of Nancy's 'truth',

however, lies more in that she was aware that her 'truth' was only a small sample of Kerala, let alone India and that her comments should be tempered with tentativity. Given this tentativity the danger of her essentialising about female emancipation lessens; however, her disregard of more negative examples of women's agency, such as the side-lining of the female principal at the first school, or the begging woman and baby, meant that her comments tended to focus on her favourable experiences, and less on the negative ones. It led me to consider that all of her observations about women came after the 'pure elation' of her emotional release due to the brass band and which I began to consider as a potential 'colonial signature' for Nancy. The positivity with which certain participants viewed the social situations in Kerala seemed to be broadly related to their pre-visit assumptions about Kerala and, more specifically, to their expectations of difference from the UK. It led me to reflect on an experience when participants were confronted with a school that surprised them in its *similarities* to their own UK placements. It was such similarities that perhaps provoked them mostly *not* to consider it in their reflective writing.

10.4 Overcoming Colonial Attitudes and a further 'colonial signature'?

The first school visit troubled many participants, but perhaps from this early experience they then formed an expectation of the reception at subsequent schools. Although this assumption was mostly borne out, the experience at the second school further disrupted the participants' thinking and 'thick mists' descended upon their apparent clarity about Keralan schools.

Alice described the nature of the majority of the schools that the participants visited as having "dusty floors and bare walls" (Reflection, p. 20) and, although she thought later this was a disparaging comment, it did describe faithfully the physical appearance of many of the classrooms we visited. The second school was different. From the discussions in the subsequent evening plenary the *shock of the familiar* at the second school was considerable for many participants. They remarked upon how each classroom had poster displays, including pupils' work, electronic projection equipment, and tables and chairs in group formation. It was redolent of the UK classrooms where the participants had been recently engaged in teaching practice. In addition, the school had its own art studios, music workshops, library and large swimming pool, and Scott and I reflected that its facilities were rather superior to any state secondary school we had visited in the UK. The school had boarding facilities and included children from the USA, Netherlands, and South Korea as well as Indian children of parents who could afford the very high school fees.

There was no brass band to welcome the participants, and Nancy remarked it was “very, very different” (LJ, p. 17) to the welcome at the previous school; however, the principal was cordial and confident in her welcome. All the senior teachers we met were female and there were no financial directors who controlled our visit, unlike our previous experience. There did not seem a need at this school for the principal to put on a ‘show’ for us, unlike the previous school, and she soon provided us with two members of her teaching staff who were charged with showing us around the school. It provoked Nancy to remark in her journal after “feeling uncomfortable” about the previous welcome she questioned “why did I feel that [this] school did not do enough to welcome us?” (LJ, p. 17)

The whole school followed the International Baccalaureate curriculum³⁰. The primary-phase participants commented that the lessons they saw were redolent of the way that they had been taught to teach in the UK, and the content of the secondary lessons focused on American poet, Robert Frost, and The Allied Forces’ D-Day landings in World War II. The observed content of the curriculum was perhaps the most significantly tangible aspect of the ‘CM’ that we witnessed.

The participants’ shock from the school was considerable and yet, surprisingly, I did not note any reference to it in the participants’ reflections and few referred to it, although often briefly, during their interview. Laura was one of the few to discuss the school and said that she was surprised by it and described her visit as a “barrier [to] and a movement” (Interview, p. 219/31) in her thinking. She said it:

...stopped all the thoughts I’d started developing and then made me look at them in a different way because it was different from the first school. I had all these ideas from the first school and then those ideas were sort of cut off and then I had to sort of re-think (ibid, /32-24).

Laura had previously said that at the second school they “maybe did things more like the way we did” (Interview, p. 217/28) but far from relishing these similarities she reflected “actually, maybe this isn’t right” and that “everything was blown out of the window” (ibid, /23) by her visit there. Jane was aware of the different economic strata that the pupils of the second school belonged to compared to the previous one. She said:

³⁰ It is arguable that the International Baccalaureate, and its associated student-focused pedagogy, was also a ‘CM’ product; however, this is a more complex matter as it is a global concern being offered to over one million pupils in approximately 150 countries and it is not a matter to which I wish to deviate within this thesis.

[w]hen we visited the School that was like a 'shocker' because there were obviously children that were from more privileged backgrounds; they didn't just really care that we were there (Interview, p. 235/18-20).

The apparent indifference of the pupils to our presence was only noticeable in comparison to the other Keralan schools we visited and I noted that pupils answered my questions well and the primary phase pupils engaged fully in an assembly that the participants and I led. The difference between the reception at this school and the others we visited is that, by and large, the school got on with its daily activities and we duly observed these. The 'celebrity' or 'royal' welcome was absent. This could have been for a number of reasons, such as familiarity with other international visitors, including parents of pupils. My sense was, however, that this school did not harbour the same colonial legacy that was perhaps evident in the way that the participants were treated in the other schools that we visited. The teachers, including some European linguists, were confident about their practice and both staff and pupils were based in a highly resourced establishment with high expectations of its teachers and pupils. We were welcomed much more on equal terms which was more akin to the experiences of our engagement at the university later in the week.

The second school perhaps became an Indian anomaly for the participants. Perhaps it was one thing to be shocked by a begging woman, or by the wild reception at a school, and another to be confronted with a very well-resourced school with rich pupils who, in the upper school at least, were rather indifferent to the participants' presence. The affluence of the school did not form part of the participants' articulated preconceptions or early constructions of meaning about Kerala or its education. There seemed to be something unexamined about the school by the participants; not in its workings as these were rightly or wrongly compared to practice in England, but in the lack of examination by many of the participants in their response to what was apparently familiar but in a different country. The participants that did refer to it in the interviews tended to make quick comparisons to 'home' without using a significant critical filter. In this way the shock of the apparently familiar became as much of a 'colonial signature' as that of the begging woman or the brass band for others. The ability to make the unfamiliar strange was an emerging strength of the participants' thinking during the visit. It was identified as a feature of the participants' learning by Dr Manish (email, 20.2.15) who remarked that participants would learn "things new and strange with greater tolerance and from a more intellectual plane". Making the familiar strange in India, however, seemed much more challenging, resulting in the second school becoming an unexamined 'colonial signature' for many.

Chapter 11 Fay: Representation and Cosmopolitanism

11.1 Orientalism and 'CM' fiction

Fay had a strong interest in English literature, it being the basis of her undergraduate study and a significant aspect of her professional practice which she shared with Rachel, her room-mate during the visit. She presented as a quieter member of the group in the plenaries, however it was clear from the conversations that she had with me and Scott, plus the attention she gave her journal during 'free time', that she was thoughtful about her intercultural experiences. From the start of Fay and Rachel's journals and reflections they both indicated the importance of literature, film and the media upon their preconceptions of India.

Figure 11.1 illustrates Fay's montage of personal influences (LJ, p. 19-20) including personal friendship, and a range of contemporary fictional influences from 'Indian' writers, Amitav Ghosh (2004) and Arundhati Roy (1998), to Danny Boyle's (2008) *Slumdog Millionaire* and Kipling's (1894) *Jungle Book*. She also cited her Indian influences as TV, including cookery documentaries as well as her awareness of religion and culture, including Bollywood. Fay was unusual in identifying colonial and neo-colonial dimensions to her montage of influences about India that perhaps reflected her existing understanding of postcolonial theory which she had used to inform her undergraduate dissertation. She reflected further on her pre-conceptions about India:

"I considered my existing ideas of India and through doing so realised that what I had were a collection of mostly Westernised stories of another culture. These included novels written about parts of India by Western authors, films produced by Western film companies and television documentaries presented by Western presenters....I noticed that although these Western representations showed different areas of India, and were therefore not all alike, they did have some similarities. I perceived India to be a country of two halves, a country defined by its natural beauty but afflicted with inconceivable poverty" (Reflection, p. 84).

Fay's perceptions of India struck some similarities with those of Kipling, about a century before, with a beautiful country being 'home' to people who experience huge poverty and, as Kipling would probably have added, lack agency. She also alluded to fears about personal safety in India having been warned about this by friends and family (Reflection,

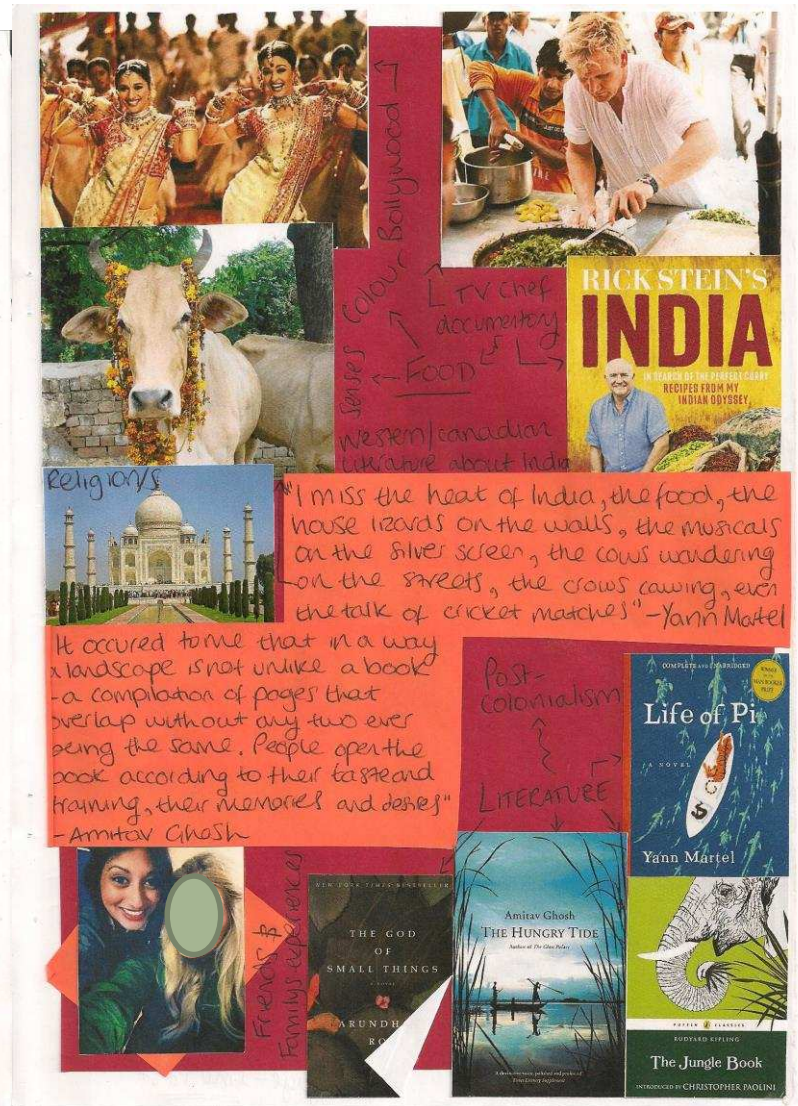
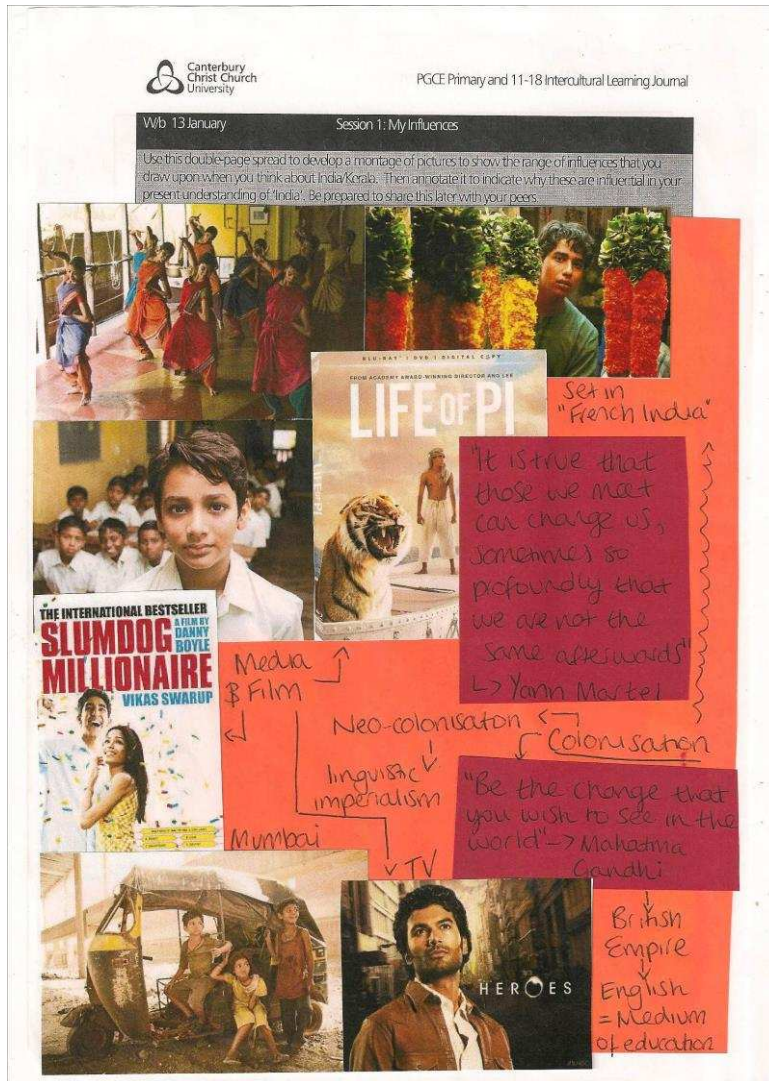


Figure 11.1 Fay's montage of influences

p. 84). These fears perhaps echo the unfortunate experiences of Adela Quested, the young English woman newly arrived in colonial India in Forster's (1924/2005) *A Passage to India* as well as more recent news from India about the gang rape of a young Indian woman in Delhi which was referred to by both Rachel (Reflection, p. 77) and Jane (Interview, p. 237). Despite Fay's theoretical understanding of the colonial undertones of her Indian influences, her attitudes to India and its people expressed in her early writing were perhaps tainted with Orientalism which were further revealed in her reflections on representing her intercultural experiences. I do not necessarily criticise Fay for this, but expose this to help articulate her positioning and how this changed during her intercultural experiences.

11.2 The Single Story: responsibilities for representation

Fay's preconceptions of India exposed some Orientalist tendencies and despite these, or perhaps because of them, she was explicit in her endeavours to avoid developing a single story about her Indian experiences. Both she and Rachel drew upon Adichie's (2009) TED lecture in aspiring beyond a single reading of India. Rachel alluded to this danger in her reflection, writing:

[i]f we watch Slumdog Millionaire (2008) and take that as an absolute representation of the whole of India, we are making an assumption of an entire nation based on one image, disregarding thousands of years [sic] worth of people and history" (Reflection, p. 73).

The focus of Fay's reflection meant she: "actively acknowledged [her] preconceptions of India and the dangers related to, what Adichie terms, the proposed 'single story' of a nation (Adichie, 2009)" and in doing so Fay argued that it helped deepen her learning (Reflection, p. 80). She said of her preconceptions: "I was incredibly aware that these were just one or two 'stories' of India and that Kerala would have many more stories, undiscovered and untold stories, for us to explore" (ibid). The "undiscovered" nature of these stories perhaps revealed an old colonial mindset, almost redolent of the imperialist explorer hunting down 'new' stories, but it could just be inaccurate language on Fay's part when she should have indicated these to be personal discoveries.

Fay continued that like Adichie:

I too believe that Western literature is incredibly influential in forming our preconceptions about a country. However, in the modern age Western 'stories' of

other cultures are conveyed through the media, photography, film and television as well as through literature. With this in mind, I aimed to acknowledge all of my preconceived ideas of India, to set these aside and to allow myself to be immersed in the untold 'stories' of Kerala (Reflection, p. 81).

Fay argued that by “actively working away from [her] preconceptions of the culture” as a consequence of her awareness of the danger of representing India or Kerala with a single story, she was “able to immerse [her]self in the culture of Kerala with a lot more ease than... originally thought possible” (ibid). She was also aware that learning would potentially be enhanced by developing a fluid positioning in terms of her learning and Self and in referring to Andreotti (2010) she wrote:

[i]f we can recognise 'knowledge, learning, reality and identities as socially constructed, fluid, open to negotiation and always provisional' (Andreotti, 2010, p6) then we allow our identity and understanding to be reconstructed by transformational experiences (Reflection, p. 80).

The way Fay set aside her preconceptions and recognised the benefits to learning from a fluid and provisional positioning was similar to Holly's approach to learning. Holly described a careful process by which she 'stepped back' from an experience saying that trying to forget her preconceptions helped her learn (Interview, p. 179). Where she differed from Fay was her perception that she could approach this with a 'blank canvas' (Interview, p. 180) saying that when she was “in the 'there and the now' everything was forgotten” (Interview, p. 181/1) apart from the experience itself to such an extent that in "strange situations" (ibid, p. 180/32) it became "just part of learning" (ibid/34). I am cautious about Holly's claim to approach learning with a blank canvas and prefer the honesty of Fay who recognised her assumptions and attempts to put them aside.

Fay's reflection quickly covered her early time during the visit for which she used, perhaps rather uncritically, Weeden and Hayter's (1996) phases model to describe her disorientation and coping in Kerala. She perceived that she reached some stable equilibrium within six days through a significant change in her disposition. She wrote by then:

I had relinquished the control I habitually require over my environment and was getting used to accepting that we could have no expectations of what would await us at any of the schools...This meant that I was able to relax into the experience

and that I had not only set aside my preconceptions but also my personal attributes that did not lend themselves to my intercultural learning journey (Reflection, p. 81).

'Letting go' seemed to be a pivotal decision for Fay not only in relinquishing control, but also in realising the significance of this to her intercultural learning. Becoming more ready to accept the unexpected from an experience seemed to be a significant matter in enabling Fay to deepen her learning and was redolent with the way that Francis' learning deepened in *The Darjeeling Limited* (2007) after his schedule for his spiritual learning trip across India blew away. It was perhaps Fay's relaxation that allowed her to take a more fluid and provisional positioning that she suggested earlier and also to engage more fully with those she met during the visit within the group and with Keralites. Fay argued about the significance of these interactions to her learning, writing:

I believe that appreciating the interconnectivity between people of all cultures is of vital importance when undertaking an intercultural learning study visit. These feelings of 'patronising, well-meaning pity' can be detrimental to this kind of visit and the valuable transformational learning that can take place (Reflection, p. 82).

Fay's appreciation of the need for 'interconnectivity' for intercultural learning resembles Deborah's argument about the importance of conversations with locals and helps bring multiple perspectives to one's intercultural learning, which may result in the plurality and tentativity that Fay recognised as important.

She recognised the care required in avoiding "colonial nostalgia" (Reflection, p. 85) in the visitor-host relationship that is potentially underpinned by the visitor finding out how they can help the host, which positions the host as an object of study. This is something that I aimed to avoid in the visit through emphasising mutual learning through interactions with peers, including the university conference. Fay commented though:

[a]t times I actually felt that the inversion of this was happening – I felt as though we were the 'Other' that was the object to be examined and scrutinised. It went against our explorative and inquisitive, or some might say ex-colonial, nature to allow ourselves to be spectators and often the spectated (ibid).

Rachel articulated the same experience writing "we were gawped at, pointed at, and taken pictures of" and argued this became "the Indian 'single story' of white British people" (Reflection, p. 75). Fay's response to personal 'Othering' concurred with many participants' views already discussed in Nancy's narrative. Fay takes this further, however, in linking a

reluctance to become the object of study to a colonial 'haunting'. Her consideration of objectification caused her to reflect on what the participants represented rather than what others considered them to be representing. She reflected that "we must reject our own single story" (Reflection, p. 86) arguing that:

[i]t is our responsibility to represent ourselves and to challenge the stereotypes connected to us as much as it is to challenge the stereotypes that exist of others in our own minds. In doing so, we establish our personal identities as something that is flexible, changeable and most importantly something we can continually evolve. In acknowledging 'our identity as something that is a social construction this allows for a more fluid, relational notion of self and opens up the possibility of change' (Martin & Griffiths, 2012, p920). This allows us space to complete the incomplete stereotypes related to ourselves and the existing 'stories' we innately relate to others. This possibility of change allowed me to accept, yet work away from, colonial heritages and the nostalgia related to this, advancing my social identity" (Reflection, p. 86).

Fay's positioning revealed an earnest representational responsibility focused on removing stereotyping that perhaps hinted at a colonial paternalism. By assuming responsibility for the Other's potentially stereotypical perceptions of the group, the group would inevitably speak for the 'Subaltern' as the stereotyping by the Other was mostly assumed. These assumptions were probably mostly made from experiences during some of the school visits where some participants felt like 'royalty', described in Nancy's narrative and with some spontaneous encounters in public described above by Rachel. Conversely, the visits to the teacher training college and university had, through design, considerably more time for discussion to help remove stereotyped views where student teachers could sit and discuss their mutual practices as entrants to the teaching profession and about their lives in the UK and Kerala.

Despite the colonial flavour to some of Fay's responsibilities she argued that challenging stereotyping would create distance from her colonial heritage. She firmly rejected the single story of ourselves as much as the one we may develop of the Other. By revealing the stories we tell others about ourselves, as well as being critical about those we develop of the Other, it potentially revealed assumptions about the Self/Other that could challenge stereotyping and enabled Fay to emerge with a more plural and fluid perception of Self that was capable of change.

She argued, using Adichie (2009), that this plural view that had rejected the single story was a type of 'paradise' (Reflection, p. 84) writing:

... 'paradise' becomes the new cultural environment we immerse ourselves in which allows us to learn interculturally about ourselves, allowing us to embrace all that is positive and constructive. This 'paradise' becomes the renewed open mindedness that we learn to use and appreciate in our everyday lives, challenging the single stories that surround us in the Western world. A world that is mediated and dictated by the media, popular culture and its representations of the rest of the world. Within this world we can now 'regain a kind of paradise' (ibid).

In aspiring towards her 'paradise' Fay realised the need to question every text, be it 'fiction' or 'non-fiction', and to be cautious in reaching conclusions; a process which was familiar to her through her English literature discipline and which she recognised was promoted by the structure of the intercultural learning journal (ibid). Perhaps less within her disciplinary comfort zone was a recognition that her critique needed to extend to place (LJ, p. 23) and that through this critique it enabled us to challenge perceptions and to find ways to overcome them. She declared that this practice enabled her to learn "more authentically" and to become aware of our "baggage". Without undertaking this practice she identified the risk that our assumptions about place become "self-fulfilling or self-confirmed" (LJ, p. 23). Fay's "positive and constructive" approach to connecting with the Other hinted at a new place where intercultural learning occurs and it is not coincidental that Fay later used the lens of Cosmopolitanism to focus on ways of learning in the latter part of her reflection.

11.3 Towards a Cosmopolitanism

In aspiring to a place of 'paradise' the place of Fay's intercultural learning was one where she looked to be constructive and to firstly recognise, and then set aside her assumptions writing that "I attempted to acknowledge and set aside my metaphorical baggage in order to see beyond my unconscious expectations and further the growth of my professional practice" (Reflection, p.87). Fay's acknowledgement and setting aside of her personal 'baggage' struck a chord with the deepening of the brothers' learning in *The Darjeeling Limited* (2007) metaphorically expressed through their loss of suitcases and trinkets along their journey. It also resonated with Andreotti's (2011) principles of 'learning to unlearn' which involves reshaping our 'cultural baggage'.

Fay continued:

...in creating an intercultural space for deep learning, I had almost unconsciously bought into the values of cosmopolitanism. Due to the reality that 'the origins of cosmopolitanism lie in an essentially moral view of the individual as having allegiances to the wider world' (Delanty, 2006, p. 26), I seemed to impulsively form the view that we should endeavor to constantly exchange ideas and knowledge on a global scale. Delanty explains this phenomena as the instant when 'new relations between self, other and world develop in moments of openness' (Delanty, 2006, p. 27). It was my renewed sense of open-mindedness, impartiality and plurality that allowed me to see beyond cultural relativism. Although I still possess distinct ideas against countries aiming for Westernised standards of education, I believe that there must be a global dimension to our progression. How are we to evolve on an international level if we do not share and recognise the diversity of attitudes and values in not only our local community but also our global community? 'Cosmopolitanism thus concerns the multiple ways the local and the national is redefined as a result of interaction with the global' (Delanty, 2006, p. 36) and this advocates that redefinition and reinvention should be encouraged if we are to develop a responsibility to one another on a world-wide level" (Reflection, pp. 86-87).

Although Fay did not explicitly reference a cosmopolitan imagination, her use of Delanty (2006) as well as Adichie's ideas of 'paradise' suggest that she, at least, aspires towards some form of 'cosmopolitan imagining' and which in turn reinvigorated her qualities of "open-mindedness, impartiality and plurality". In doing so Fay's thoughtful approach, stemming from her early recognition of, and challenge to, her initial perceptions of the Other, not only was a feature of the way she learnt but also an outcome of her intercultural experience.

In a spirit of hope Fay looked towards commonalities rather than difference in making connections with the Other and thinking plurally. She wrote that in:

...establishing connections and similarities between ourselves and the people of Kerala, rather than identifying the differences, we work away from the idea of the single story and towards plurality (Reflection, p. 82).

Fay was right in asserting that there were similarities to be found, especially at a professional level, between the Keralan student teachers and the participants in matters

such as planning lessons and managing pupil behaviour alluded to in other participants' narratives. The connections at a professional level potentially crossed national divides and I recall the visit to the Teacher Training College, in particular, where Keralan student teachers and their UK counterparts had lengthy discussions about life as a student teacher that involved exchanging lesson plans, pictures of resources they had made and assignments they had undertaken during their training. In the short-term, the student teachers at the College (and University) both provided an intercultural translation for the participants over two days that enabled a deeper understanding of place and culture to develop in a similar way that Puro and Asha did for Todd in *Outsourced* (2006). It was perhaps the peer-based, and mutual, professional, focused nature of these conversations that enabled participants like Fay to consider these engagements at a global scale during moments of openness.

Despite Fay's considerable depth of thought about the Cosmopolitan dimension to her engagement with Keralites I cannot concur with her association between difference and the single story; the danger of the single story is that it is often stereotypical but it is wrong to assume that identifying difference is always a stereotype and perhaps revealed an assumption that difference equated to deficit. Furthermore, the risk in focusing quickly on similarity at the potential expense of difference was to remove an acknowledgement of the power dimension within the relationship. An appreciation of the power dynamics that underpinned the relationship would potentially lead to further complexity and plurality in thinking rather than rushing to identify similarities.

Fay summarised her understanding about the process of intercultural learning, which in many areas also became significant outcomes for her. She affirmed her renewed focus on similarity over difference and the search for plurality in her thinking (Reflection, p.87) and added:

[m]y understanding of Orientalism and post-colonial theory informed my experiences in Kerala and allowed me to immerse myself in the culture, learning more about myself both on a professional and personal level. I learnt that it is all too easy to replicate a visitor-host relationship where the exchange of knowledge is involved and that additional care and attention should be paid so as not to recreate an adverse connection between nations. Additionally, I altered my beliefs related to Cosmopolitanism both during and after the study trip to Kerala. This consisted of me coming to the decision that, without the exchange of ideas on an international level, we are at risk of restricting our progression and development in the education

profession. Likewise, the act of sharing thoughts and information on a global scale could benefit us all personally in terms of emotional, existential and cognitive growth. I am now able to relinquish my natural desire for control, something I believe only powerful intercultural learning could have attained. Since returning to the UK I can recognise that I have undoubtedly evolved, equally individually and professionally, to a place or 'paradise' (Adichie, 2009) where I feel increasingly confident in my own identity and values" (ibid).

Fay was not explicit in her reflection about any particular aspects of her learning that had influenced her professional practice and she was the only participant who did not volunteer for a later interview which was the time when many participants, like Deborah, were able to identify more tangible dimensions to their learning. Fay's final comments about perceiving that she had "evolved" perhaps indicated a deep understanding that change was happening and through this she had an increased confidence perhaps because of her renewed understanding of her Self and her "identity and values". Fay's renewed understanding presumably developed through her exposure of, and subsequent challenge to, the assumptions she made about the Other, and herself in an intercultural setting. Perhaps a deeper understanding of Self enabled her to resist the need to control matters which she declared had remained with her on returning 'home'.

At a personal, and arguably deeper, level Fay was able to articulate a revised worldview that built on cosmopolitanism and looked for mutual learning at an international scale. Her 'cosmopolitan imagining' became a feature of her 'latitude and longitude of learning'. This was underpinned by her exposure of the colonial dimensions to her initial assumptions about place and by challenging them it helped her identify the 'baggage' with which we engage with the Other. Although she was reticent about the power dimensions that underpin intercultural learning in the 'ECM' by those from the 'CM', she wanted to connect strongly with the Keralites she met, to share information and strive to identify similarity as a means to develop a positive "visitor-host relationship". Fay articulated a significant change in explaining her revised worldview built upon a 'cosmopolitan imagining'. She identified the benefits of global connections to our mutual learning and recognised the moral act in thinking at a global scale to share knowledge with the potential for this worldview to inform personal and professional dimensions of future life.

Chapter 12 Alice: Spiritual learning

12.1 Spiritual Learning

The visit provoked Alice to use her faith as a means to connect with cultural Others and through this she led fellow participants into new intercultural experiences. Alice, a primary specialist and sociology graduate, was a quieter member of the group who expressed her ideas tentatively and calmly with apparent care so as not to offend others. She used her faith to seek guidance in her reflection about troubling matters and this led her to lead the group at some points during the visit. This process of her spiritual learning seemed to emerge after a significant trigger for many participants that involved a begging woman with a baby, not least Nancy. This incident subsequently caused Alice to re-consider her practice related to her faith back 'home'.

Alice's spiritual connection was performed by her during a visit to the third school on our schedule: an Anglican church affiliated school with a small attached convent. At the end of the day we were offered tea by two nuns and the principal of the school. At the end of tea, one of the nuns said a prayer for us in Malayalam. Alice asked if she could respond to this prayer. It transpired later that Alice was a practising Christian who involved prayer in her reflection on our actions from the troubling experiences encountered during our visit asking "Lord, what do I do here?" (Interview, p. 99/26-27) Alice spoke the prayer in English with apparent ease asking for the school, its pupils, staff and the nuns to be blessed by God:

...I really wanted to pray for them because it was something I felt we had in common. A similarity that I knew...I really felt [the nun] was praying in a language that I didn't understand but I understood, if that makes any sense without sounding too weird? (Interview, p. 103/32-35).

Reading this in one 'CM' rational, secular manner might suggest that Alice's perceived connection through an unknown language perhaps romanticised the prayer or context within which it was spoken and projected her own values upon it. Spivak (1994) warns about the need to avoid projection in 'unlearning our privileges'. Rationally, Alice could not have known the nature of the prayer, but it is reasonable to assume it had a spiritual/existential underpinning and perhaps because of this she felt an affinity with the nun's words and deed to such an extent that she wanted to respond. She said:

...I hear many prayers like a lot of the time and sometimes they're not in a language I understand and it doesn't always compel me to speak up; it doesn't, I don't often

– sometimes I switch off. Certainly in Africa when they were praying in a language I didn't understand, I wouldn't always engage with it. But in that moment, I really engaged with what she was saying without knowing what she was saying and I just knew ... I wanted to give something back, I wanted to respond to her prayer (Interview, p. 104/21-22).

Read in an alternative manner, the prayers perhaps showed the potential for connections to transcend language which in this situation was through a shared faith or “a God across cultures”, as Alice explained (ibid/32). This possible transcendence has some similarities with the more secular influence that the brass band music had on Nancy, or how their artistic discipline affected Deborah and Elizabeth's ways of seeing. Alice reflected upon the prayer saying:

... I said [a prayer] that [the nun] could understand too so that she could know how grateful we were and just that actually we're not that different. I mean there is that common humanity between us...like...it's just all these complications and complexities and certainly there shouldn't be any domination or supremacy of one culture over the other or one people over the other and I wanted her to realise that we didn't think that too (ibid/23-28).

I am happy to accept the potentially deep connection through prayer that those of us with spiritual/religious faith have, but it is not the role of my analysis to enquire into this. The point I want to focus on was Alice's desire to reach out and connect with the Other which in this case was through prayer. The significance for intercultural learning was that this connection crossed certain cultural boundaries, was made despite language differences and was enabled by identifying a commonality which led Alice to think about similarities. Alice's intentions were well received and perhaps gave her confidence to attempt future intercultural connections. Difference did not seem to be dismissed with colonial disregard, but a deeper connection at a spiritual level was sought that aimed, in secular terms, towards a 'cosmopolitan imagining' and in this way she differed from Fay's approach to seeking similarity with the Other.

Alice further reflected about connecting with the nun writing that the prayer was a trigger for “transformative learning” (Reflection, p. 21) and:

[y]et, rather than create cognitive dissonance as suggested by Scoffham & Barnes' (2009) model, this experience brought clarity where I was previously disorientated and confused. As she prayed, irrespective of the language barrier, I felt ease and comfort. For within the uncertainty and cultural difference, I could recognise a commonality that surpassed our two cultures; God (ibid).

And added:

[w]hen I thought there was nothing I could give in exchange to a culture so rich and generous, I could engage with our commonality, and pray for them in return. Although out of my comfort zone, I felt a 'hope and positivity' (Scoffham and Barnes, 2010). There was something about two cultures praying for one another that surpassed all notions of cultural supremacy and difference (Reflection, p. 22).

Through prayer Alice connected with the nun and perhaps distanced herself from colonial power imbalances through a mutual faith, although it should not be forgotten that Christian missionary work has a colonial history (De Lissovoy, 2010). In the immediacy of this connection, wider notions of power were perhaps lost. The nun was physically and spirituality at 'home' with prayer being the articulation of her ontology. Alice, as a practising Christian, was familiar, and perhaps more comfortable, with prayer than others in the group but would probably defer to the knowledge and experience of a nun. Alice also positions herself as subordinate, or at least embarrassed, in that she noted there was little at that moment that she could give in return to the welcome and experience we had received at the school, perhaps conflating it with her wider Keralan cultural experience to date, that was culturally "so rich and generous" (ibid), including the brass band welcome of the first school which affected many participants.

The connection through prayer surpasses the potential cultural impasse of the two national cultures, despite the materialistic and wider power differences between India and the UK, perhaps in a stronger way than that possible between Keralite and UK-based student teachers mentioned in Fay's narrative. Alice theorised on her spiritual connection writing:

I feel I had accomplished what Bhabha (1994) terms as the 'third space'; in which we both left our cultural baggage behind and engaged in a space where 'new ideas, meaning and understandings' could emerge (Martin & Wyness, 2013:16) (Reflection, p. 22).

She later said:

...it was almost like we'd transcended the culture, just cultures in general, without any separation because actually what we were ...all being joined together in silence and all being in a circle together, experiencing was something that was culture-less like it didn't have a culture (Interview, p. 107/32-35).

I read spirituality and faith as being inextricably entwined with our psychosocial cultures and regarded Alice's prayer being informed by her 'CM' interpretation of her faith. Alice's recognition of 'cultural baggage' reminded me of Fay's similar recognition of her own

'baggage' and her determination to set this aside when connecting with the Other in a similar way to the brothers in *The Darjeeling Limited* (2007). In this light, I cannot accept that Alice left her 'cultural baggage' entirely behind, but any cultural inhibitions were surpassed by her desire to engage which might suggest that the idea of reshaping our 'cultural baggage', even for the moment of the prayer, were more realistic.

Alice's prayer was perhaps one of the first occasions where participants began to act in ways they would not 'normally' do in the UK, after which there were other expressions of this by participants which suggest some form of 'reshaping of cultural baggage' was beginning to emerge within the group. At a spiritual level, Alice said that she felt the prayer "definitely wasn't from me...I felt as if God was telling me to do it...is the only way I can describe it" (Interview, p. 103/20-21). The connection was made through Alice, and not by her, and she had willed this through prayer saying that she prayed to God "[u]se me rather than me being the observer. I don't want to observe, I want to get involved" (Interview, p. 103/13-14).

Alice argued that the nun's prayer was the provocation for her transformative learning as it was accompanied by an epistemological change; however, it seemed to provoke, in this instance, an existential investigation of something already present. It perhaps did not cause an epistemological shift, but did provoke Alice to reflect deeply about her faith. The prayer that connected Alice and the nun could initially be read as similar to Said's 'Median Category' (1978/2003) in that it focused on similarity and provided homogeneity for Alice rather than dissonance. I regarded her prayer, however, not as the initial trigger to deeper learning that Alice spoke about, but rather a point where a response by Alice was possible after she reached "clarity" (Reflection, p. 21) about an earlier incident that caused significant 'cognitive dissonance' (Festinger, 1957) for Alice and many of her peers.

12.2 Responses to Begging: A 'colonial signature'?

Alice, like the brothers in *The Darjeeling Limited* (2007), revealed that it was her response to seeing a local in difficulty, the same begging young woman with a small baby that deeply affected Nancy, that triggered her later spiritual response at the church school. Alice said:

I really did struggle with the woman begging. I think just a horrendous amount of guilt not knowing... and all the rest of the journey I was just wrestling with my head thinking "Well should I have done something?" And then I was thinking of all the stages at which..."How far can money go?" And "Would money have actually helped or would money have actually been a burden?" (Interview, p. 101/1-5)

Alice's 'wrestling' about the woman begging has similarities with the way that Eve thought about haggling (chapter eight) and which helped her produce her intercultural learning model. Alice wrote about this experience at length:

...a story of a poor woman begging a white girl to either take or feed her baby, may cause an emotional reaction. However, being the white girl being begged by the young Indian woman is a very different experience. Some experiences of culture cannot be taught but need to be experienced. And only when experienced, can transformative learning occur. Encountering this woman, [was]... 'a powerful emotional trigger that causes conflict and dissonance'...I wrestled with questions, to which the lack of any answers caused me to cease reflection. Sharing the questions I was battling with the group helped tackle my internal turmoil... I began questioning the validity of her poverty and my ignorance as westerner; thinking my money was the solution to her problems... I was trying to operate in, and 'take responsibility for' a culture wherein the issue was greater than my shallow comprehension understood (Martin & Wyness, 2013). I was now questioning my Christian faith, asking where God was in her situation...My learning was representative of Rogers and Tough (1996) 'existential dimension' to learning; whereby one questions their values, life purpose and meaning. I feel this emphasises the complexity of the learning process, and how it utilises more than just intellectual learning (knowledge and facts). The reflection process was helpful, and although I felt supported by the group, this powerful emotional experience, did not, as Scoffham & Barnes (2009) recognise, result in transformative learning immediately (Reflection, p. 21).

The visceral experience of begging challenged many participants, not least Alice. She noted that for transformation to occur some things need to be experienced rather than just taught. For all the economic and cultural capital that the participants had this experienced seemed to paralyse us all, including me. Alice's vulnerability perhaps was shown by calling herself a 'girl' and the beggar a 'woman', although they were probably of similar ages. Her apparent powerlessness manifested itself through the performed 'numbness' to the beggar's plight in that instance, but the overall power relationship was perhaps understood by Alice's prefixing 'girl' with 'white'. This scenario encapsulated the micro-scale vulnerabilities and compared to the macro-scale power relationships at play in these intercultural engagements and the tensions therein. This apparent paralysis of power, also seen in Todd's relationship with Asha to a smaller degree in *Outsourced* (2006) is a function of place and the 'latitude and longitude of learning'.

Alice's questioning was deep, including consideration of 'CM' responses to poverty and the colonialist trap of presenting one's self as saviour; however, she did not articulate the 'CM' role in the woman's poverty, but did question where was God. Such existential dimensions to learning (Rogers and Tough 1996; Scoffham and Barnes 2009) showed a depth in the response to the situation and a willingness to articulate such matters in journals and subsequent reflection. It perhaps illustrated the importance of the journal and providing opportunity to reflect, during and after the visit, in deepening participants' learning.

Alice spoke of her "horrendous amount of guilt" (Interview, p. 101/1) to describe her response to the begging woman. 'Guilt' was used by four other participants Elizabeth (Reflection, p. 47); Becky (Interview, p. 165/8); Deborah (ibid, p. 118/16); and Eve (ibid, p. 129/15) and 'ashamed' was used four participants: Becky (Interview, p. 173/24); Rachel (Reflection, p. 75); Nancy (ibid, p. 91); and Maggie (ibid, p. 61) to describe their feelings at various points during the study visit. The early trigger of the begging woman was recognised as such by nearly half the group (Alice, Becky, Elizabeth, Nancy, Slater and Maggie). The use of 'guilt' and 'ashamed' may be read colonially or neo-colonially for many participants. Alice talked about a "we" when considering the "bigger picture" of poverty and that there were "a lot of things we need to change before poverty is sorted out and before situations like that stop occurring" (Interview, p. 101/10-11). I did not necessarily read the 'we' in these circumstances as solely regarding the 'CM'. She may have been referring to the church in this instance, but clearly a responsibility was felt, and a need for agency was expressed, in relation to the poverty found in part of the 'ECM' which could be read critically through a postcolonial theoretical lens.

For Alice, her thinking about this was also exacerbated by a spiritual guilt stemming from her lack of action, which conflicted with her faith from which she had a "duty" to act to her "brothers and sisters" (Interview p102/8). In referring to brothers and sisters, Alice perhaps avoided the colonial overtones associated with our duty. The desire to 'give something back' or to 'act' was common amongst a number of participants at this point in the study visit following personal encounters with poverty, perhaps reflecting a donor-recipient relationship, although Slater was relatively less touched having experienced significant poverty during previous travels (Interview, not appended). Maggie, also well-travelled, had a different response saying:

I think that was quite a hard moment for a lot of people....Just how intense the poverty was there was quite hard to deal with...it was our personal choice not to give her money but it was – you know that grappling decision in your head. So that was quite difficult (Interview, p. 210/34-35).

Participants' desire to respond was matched by an understanding of the difficulties to achieve this in a relationship associated with economic disparity, but also in a setting where participants were culturally uncomfortable and unconfident. It again illustrated the significance of place and the emergence of a 'latitude and longitude of learning'. The participants' reflections upon their encounter with the begging woman were mostly nuanced and nobody decided to give her a few rupees on the spur of the moment, perhaps guided by my initial response. Alice articulated her strong feelings of guilt about what was going to happen to the woman and her baby and articulated her perception of each participant as a "white, rich person getting off into their truck", saying "[d]on't touch me, I'm gonna go" (Interview, p. 101/26). Such a perception was "too uncomfortable" (ibid, /32) and Alice's:

...heart was telling [her] to....take a leap and bridge the gap but this confusion of "What to do I'm in a culture I don't understand but what I'd do in the UK may be totally useless here or inappropriate (ibid, /33-35).

Alice's reading of Andreotti's (2007) considerations of Spivak's contributions to education helped her understand the wider dimensions of the violence on which 'CM' privilege is constructed and the dangers of salving one's conscious through small scale charitable donations.

The decision not to give a few rupees was perhaps more a function of a cultural freezing in a new environment through not knowing how to act for many of the participants, although Becky compared the plight of beggars to those in the UK saying:

I was thinking "Why are we all getting really upset about a woman begging in India when people beg in Canterbury and London and nobody gives a toss, basically?" They don't care at all. And it's although we have these Western/Eastern post-colonial type views, kind of thing. Why do we feel bad when we go to India and we see the poor when we've got people living in the same deprivation in our own country and nobody cares? (Interview, p. 174/1-6).

Becky perhaps projected her feelings onto her peers in expecting nobody to worry about begging in the UK. She showed a lack of awareness of the differences in state intervention with relatively extreme poverty in the UK and India, despite reading the situation postcolonially in terms of a West/East or Donor/Recipient relationship. The incident of the begging woman drew Becky's mind to reference apparently comparative situations in the UK rather than dwelling on the difference (or *différance*) as Derrida (1992) advises. In doing so, the begging woman perhaps became a Median Category or 'colonial signature' for Becky and a possible barrier to deeper learning.

The participants' reflections to the begging woman, after they all refused to give her money, showed considerable difference. The response to the 'same' experience illustrated how participants reacted differently to a common stimulus which was also found by Scoffham and Barnes (2009) and supports the notion of how our dispositions, or the learning spaces (Andreotti 2010) we inhabit affect our learning.

Alice's spiritual response meant she saw the begging woman and baby as:

...my brothers and sisters just as much as the next person. In God's eyes there are no cultural boundaries so why in my mind did I put one there and why did I see her as anything less than a brother or sister in need? (Interview, p. 102/8-9)

This spiritual connection and the upset at not being equipped to respond in the immediate instance of the encounter with the begging woman and baby chimes with Levinas' (1972/2006) idea of the 'face' becoming a moral imperative to act. It was perhaps the same reason that compelled the hugely experienced TV news reporter, Jon Snow, to take care of a baby girl he was handed by her father in a 'transit room' between Israel and Gaza during the recent war. He wrote:

[w]e shared no common language, it had just seemed inevitable that as the only other able-bodied human in this absurd transit room, I should care for the baby. I know not their story....But holding this girl baby connected me again to the wardfuls [sic] of small children so brutally smashed by this odious war (Snow, 2014).

Perhaps Snow's experience of being in hugely difficult circumstances as a reporter combined with his ability to engage with stories beyond the façade of objective reporting compelled and enabled him to act. He looked after the baby girl while her father negotiated with Israeli border agents although he was not aware that he would need to care for the baby for a short period of time. The point is he responded and in doing so it evoked a larger scale reflection upon the humanitarian atrocities of that war.

We did not know if the Indian woman's offering of the baby was to show their mutual plight, provoke more sympathy, or even to give the baby to one of the participants, or something else. This was a visceral engagement with the Other that challenged Alice at a spiritual level as to her response. It was over in an instance. Unlike Jon Snow, her inability to act, along with the remainder of the group, caused her emotional pain and provoked considerable reflection. She had encountered poverty before in West Africa and perhaps it was not only the situation of the begging woman that caused her upset and her inability to respond at that point in the visit but also the West African 'haunting'. It was clear from the encounter that it left her upset but she noted later:

...by the end of the week we were more comfortable in telling people "No I do not want that..No actually I can't give you money for that" and you kind of build up a bit of hardness, don't you. In a way to cope, I think (ibid, p. 102/29-31).

This is not to say that the thought about the begging woman dissipated. It was a trigger point and Alice noted that her decision to say the prayer at the church school:

...stemmed a lot from what happened with the woman. Because I'd been praying a lot, just questioning like "Why is there those situations and you know you've made it possible for me to come out here. What do you want me to do?" (Interview, p. 103/11-14).

Alice's spiritual learning process was understandably slow. Clarity emerged for her during the nun's prayer at the church school but was provoked by the earlier experience of the beggar and her subsequent reflections. She adjusted her 'cultural baggage' to say the prayer earlier in the study visit, and used the metaphor of the brothers' discarding of physical baggage in *The Darjeeling Limited* (2007) to highlight the removal of her peers' 'cultural baggage' during the study visit:

I certainly felt as the week was going on it was like the picture in the film we were just letting go of the suitcase as the week went on and I would have loved to see how far along the train line we got before they were all gone (Interview, p. 108/7-9).

Perhaps the removal of 'cultural baggage' and a growing confidence enabled Alice to lead the participants into responding to various cultural performances at our visit to the Teacher Training College towards the end of the visit. She rehearsed a 'choir' of participants to sing a psalm at the College. I sensed also that Alice's primary education background, as well as her faith, helped develop the choir and perhaps it was indicative that the four participants who did not join the choir were all secondary specialists where singing is a limited dimension to learning compared to the primary phase.

Alice's ability to stay with the uncertainty in her consideration of her response to the begging woman led her to say the prayer on behalf of the group. Her emergent leadership became explicit in training her 'choir'. A collective sense of being able to culturally respond to the Keralan performances, as well as Alice's leadership and pedagogical skills, led many of the participants to join her choir in a way they did not foresee at the start of the visit. Rachel, for example, talked about the mastery required before one considered oneself a singer in the UK, and thus denied being a singer when asked; however, she participated in the choir (Interview, not appended) and Elizabeth summarised the participants' varied involvement saying "we do it because we're affected by where we are" (Interview, p.157/37).

The breaking down of possibly fixed or, at least, essentialist views of India were mirrored by the breaking down of participants' inhibitions within ten days in India. This was probably a function of their familiarity with one another but this did not necessarily explain the participants' ability to engage beyond the group. The cultural act of the choir was perhaps again indicative of Andreotti's (2010) learning spaces where actions demonstrated that certain cultural traits or baggage were altered, albeit on a temporary basis. Being able to act in different ways was perhaps indicative of being able to think in different ways provoked by the triggers of certain encounters and events and ensuing reflection on the part of the participants.

Alice related her spiritual learning to postcolonial theory and intercultural learning theories upon her return 'home'. Begging did not become a Median Category for Alice but it did become her 'colonial signature' in a positive manner. From her experience came an insight into her own faith and a way forward. It did not stop at the prayer, which could easily then be criticised as a move that, at a secular level, did everything to help Alice feel good and nothing much more despite her reflection and theorising about the matter.

After her return 'home' Alice said:

...my faith is stronger because I've questioned a lot and questioning does happen in England, certainly, but it's a lot stronger and coming back from Kerala one thing I've really got involved in is with the homeless community in Canterbury but not to any charity or anything else but just to sit and talk to them. And that's really been triggered by Kerala ... Because, the fact that it's the harbouring...because before I'd think "No, no I'm not ... what if? Asking the same questions as I did about the beggar. "What if they spend my money on this?" Well, if you get them a bacon roll each and sit down and talk to them as if they're human rather than just walking past them and judging them before you've even .. then maybe you'll find out. So that's what I've done. And there's three guys who I know by name and they know me (Interview, pp. 106/36- 107/5).

And:

I'm more comfortable within this culture to do something because I have done something rather than walk past them like I have before and I did in Kerala. But certainly it's given me less of a tolerance towards my attitude of – I'm less likely to just question now "should I or shouldn't I?" Because I know how guilty I felt in Kerala and I also know that that wasn't enough (Interview, p. 107/16-20).

12.3 Provocative Learning

The response to the begging woman and her baby was a provocation to Alice. It could have become a fixed anecdote about an experience that, despite causing pain or even emotional turmoil, essentialised poverty in the 'ECM' world or did not consider the experience in terms of power and agency. For Alice, it was not a barrier to learning but a provocation that led her to question her faith and to act differently upon her return to the UK.

She connected viscerally with homeless people in Canterbury for the rest of her time as a student there, using names of the homeless people to deepen that connection which goes beyond her fleeting engagement with the nameless woman and her baby. Perhaps it is significant that she was able to act in the UK, whereas she felt incapable of doing so in India. An immediate response to the begging woman—an experience that was over within seconds—was probably unlikely apart from to utter a few apologetic words or to give a few rupees to the woman. Many participants spoke to the woman but nobody gave her money and there are clearly dangers of any charitable response reinforcing the donor/recipient mind-set. For Alice, this was a matter of faith and one that she failed to meet in her high expectations, contrasting her inaction to that of Jesus saying:

...if Jesus was here would he have said "well, I don't actually know, if she spends the money on that..." (laughter) And He wouldn't have he would have just dealt with the practicality there and then (Interview, p. 102/12-13).

What that intercultural learning experience seemed to trigger for Alice was clarity, a day or two later, through the prayer at the church school and a much later response upon her return 'home'. This UK reaction was partly a function of the time delay in the response to the experience which gives time for reflection but also a feature of the greater cultural agency that participants surely have in the UK. Through re-immersion into their English placement school, and reflection and theorising about postcolonial theory and intercultural learning, participants like Alice performed differently after they returned 'home'. The change is not perhaps the epistemological shift associated with transformative learning, but more a change in action or agency linked to some existing idea or positioning that was provoked. This provocative learning for Alice was the challenge to her existing faith by an ephemeral experience through which personal agency emerged.

Personal reflection from experiences, and later theorising, led Alice to perform differently upon returning 'home'. She supported some of the more marginal in society at a visceral level connecting on humanitarian grounds as well as having had her faith re-confirmed. At one level she simply reinforced a donor-recipient relationship within the 'CM' through her

benevolence. What she did arguably went beyond this. She bought food, sat and talked with homeless people and in doing so connected at a humanitarian level that aspired towards a 'cosmopolitan imagining'. In performing actions within a postcolonial theoretical framework to those in the 'CM', Alice began to show an alternative approach to aspects of her life from an existential dimension to her learning that few others identified.

Chapter 13 Elizabeth: Intercultural learning and well-being

13.1 Dispositions towards learning

Elizabeth was an enthusiastic and vocal member of the group who engaged wholeheartedly with the study visit experience. I remarked a little into my interview with her about how she seemed in her “element” in India and that her “energy and enthusiasm” appeared to enthuse other participants (Interview, p. 2152/34). She said in response that: “it wasn’t [just] the enthusiasm just about being there it was...the enthusiasm in making the most of the time I had” (Interview, p. 153/9-10). Elizabeth was a relatively older member of the group with a long-standing desire to visit India (Interview, p. 158) which was perhaps a factor in her desire to maximise her Keralan experiences. She said later though:

I think what your life situations are when you go have a huge impact. Because I don't think I was in the same position as other people. I think there were other people there who had quite settled lives; people that they missed and people like that. I was quite lucky not to have any of that; I was like, “Yeah, let's go!” But, you know, go back a year and I wouldn't have been able to do that and I probably would have been less affected by it and it's such a blessing that I wasn't in that position (Interview, p. 158/25-30).

Her suggestion that her circumstances affected her potential to learn illustrated the potential for context/situation to influence our disposition towards learning. Elizabeth compared her own learning disposition with Andreotti's (2013) dispositions towards difference saying that “I didn't realise I was a backpacker, I thought I was a sort of caravaner” (Interview, p. 158/21-22). Her thoughts illustrated the way that the Self is influential upon learning, how the Self (or at least perceptions of the Self) may alter in different situations, and how expectations of the Self may differ from the experience.

Early in her learning journal Elizabeth's montage of personal influences (figure 13.1) revealed a complex array of British imperialism, Gandhi, Indian mythology, literary influences from Kipling and Wilkie Collins to Orwell and more contemporary novels such as *Life of Pi* (Martel, 2001). She perhaps juxtaposed her existing cultural understanding

Figure 13.1 Elizabeth's montage of influences



of India in the context of postcolonial theory with what might emerge from her visit writing:

...I wanted "to immerse myself in the culture of Kerala"...positively relishing the prospect of change and its ability to help me learn about myself and the world. Having already been exposed to the basic tenets of postcolonialism, I was even at this early point, displaying some awareness of these theories on what I hoped to learn. I aimed at using the trip to step back from and ultimately find new insights on my 'home' culture (Reflection, p. 46).

Elizabeth's early awareness of postcolonialism perhaps suggested the importance of discussing this with participants pre-visit and the need to support the participants' early reflection about their experiences. In preparation for the visit other participants seemed more focused on learning about particular aspects of Keralan education or wider culture and thus Elizabeth was unusual in considering her own positioning and notions of 'home' at this early point.

13.2 The Self and well-being

Elizabeth performed with eloquence and confidence in the evening plenaries. When it came to my interview with her she was a little unsure about how to express her thoughts, saying early during our conversation: "I don't know - it's put me on the spot" (Interview, p. 142/21). Her reticence was perhaps less a function of her nervousness and more that she considered her learning, like Deborah's, to be "positive but intangible" (Reflection, p. 46) to her sense of Self.

A changing sense of Self underpinned much of Elizabeth's explorations in her reflections. She considered her positive outcomes of the visit in her reflection, writing "how much more happy [sic] I felt within myself and towards others since returning, and how I kept smiling when I thought about the experience" (ibid). Elizabeth was not alone in articulating feelings of happiness resulting from the visit. Increased happiness or well-being was also identified in Kerala by Mark (Interview, not appended) and, over a longer period, by Deborah (Interview, p. 121) and many others indicated the apparent happiness of the people they met in Kerala. An outcome from Mark's respectful and measured engagement with teachers in Kerala, in particular, highlighted the professional well-being of the Keralan teachers compared to those in his own placement school (Reflection, not appended).

Elizabeth referred to the many photographs she took as evidence of the happiness she felt, saying:

...when I was out in India, I did feel – both [Deborah] and I – just looking at the pictures as well and you can see the joy, you can see the joy. And it was so nice – even though a couple of weeks later it was, “Urgh God, England!” – but ‘the joy’, and you think, “What was doing that, what was it about that?” (Interview, pp. 150/35-151/2).

She also appreciated the way her friendly disposition was received in India saying:

I loved the fact that when I went over there, that little part of me worked really well. I loved those genuine moments between teachers. I’ve got photos of me, holding hands with Indian lady teachers I’ve never met before. It’s just lovely (Interview, p. 149/8-10).

The significance of meeting such apparently happy people and forming even short-term relationships seemed to provoke a response in many participants, including Elizabeth, which became the springboard for the development of her ideas of well-being. It was not only the Keralites’ happiness *per se* that was of such significance, but also the way that this perceived happiness seemed to aid and even deepen the connections with the participants. Conversely, it was the deep sadness around the death of the drowned little boy that brought about the relationship between the people of his village and the three brothers in *The Darjeeling Limited* (2007). The death of the little boy and the subsequent invitation to attend his funeral became a turning point to the brothers’ well-being and learning. It was perhaps the calm, quiet way that the villagers dealt with death and mourning, including the way the brothers became respected integral parts of the funeral, that helped their well-being. It was clearly not the happiness of the locals that aided the brothers’ well-being, but more so the ways that the locals respectfully connected with them.

Elizabeth’s articulation of well-being seemed to emerge particularly post-visit, when immersed in her UK school, where she recognised the lesser respect afforded to her as a teacher and to her experiences (Interview, p. 156) although it was in reference to the Keralite’s well-being that she mainly focused upon. She thought reflexively about well-being and intercultural learning in her reflection which she introduced, writing:

[m]y own experience of intercultural learning...was hugely positive, improving my sense of well-being and deeply affecting my attitudes towards myself and my sense of my own progress. When I returned, I questioned my role in that

outcome. I have come to believe that understanding how people adapt to the experience of the unknown provides a huge insight into the learning process itself, which is relevant to me as a student teacher. The experience also made me question the connections that could be made between intercultural learning and subjective well-being, and how the two theoretical frameworks worked together (Reflection, p. 42).

In linking well-being to intercultural learning Elizabeth considered ideas of plurality, openness, and adaptability that are characteristics of Andreotti's (2013) 'Backpacker' disposition, in her reflection, writing:

[p]eople with high levels of subjective well-being have "an increased preference for variety" and "a greater willingness to accept difference" (cited in Scoffham and Barnes, 2011, p540). To some extent this suggests to me that high levels of well-being enable learners to make the most of intercultural learning experiences (ibid, pp. 43-44).

An influence upon Elizabeth's thinking about her learning that led to greater well-being was Taylor's (1994) ideas of a "continuous cycle of stress-adaptation-growth" (ibid, p. 44). Unlike Deborah who used this paper to help consider the overall process of intercultural learning in her reflection, Elizabeth focused more specifically on the process of personal growth. She cited the work of Kzaim and Ruben (1988) as a basis to reflect on her own development writing that:

[t]hey stress the significance of the constant flux between equilibrium and disequilibrium in which intercultural learning takes place...[a]lthough... there are arguments that say that prolonged stress can make learning harder, both my own experience and the theoretical positions explored here suggest that responding to challenge is fundamental to how we learn and grow as people. Within this approach, it is the growth which comes from experiential learning, rather than its success, that defines it (Reflection, p. 44).

The example of the begging woman explored earlier illustrated how participants responded differently to the same stimulus. Elizabeth provided a further example recalling several of the female participants' confrontation with a public toilet at Kanyakumari. In addition to providing me with an idea of the participants' reactions to experiences to which I was not aware, it also was a further point of stress which preceded the engagement with the begging woman. Elizabeth empathised with the other participants' anxieties about the hygiene of the public toilets but added "[y]ou have to feel it's not a problem" (Interview, p. 147/2) in referring to previous experiences of

unsavoury sanitation at UK festivals. Elizabeth rightly argued that our ability to adapt to stressful situations was partly a product of our previous experiences (or lack of them), but her example also illustrated that it is not sufficient to have had an experience such as going to festivals; it required one to adapt such that the once stressful experiences became acceptable.

She argued that our ability to adapt, linked to the cycle of stress-adaptation-growth, affected the quality of learning. She added that she felt attuned to this idea:

...perhaps because it does not deal with intercultural learning as a problem to be manoeuvred, but as a natural cycle of challenge to be overcome. To me, it offers a solution to the permanence and inescapability suggested in postcolonial theory; viewing it as part of a cycle of stress, that is to be adapted to and progressed beyond (Reflection, p. 45).

Elizabeth was not alone in reading postcolonial theory as lacking agency. She was clear, however, that she did not dismiss postcolonial thinking but argued that by considering intercultural competence it provided “a way to progress with it.” (Ibid, p. 45). She wrote in concluding her reflection: “[u]ltimately, I feel that in the case of intercultural learning, theory works best retrospectively to analyse a process which little can prepare you for” (Reflection, p. 48) and:

I am glad to have been mindful of [Postcolonial Theory] when learning interculturally, to be aware of the need to be sensitive to how different cultures interact, but my appreciation of its application is somewhat keener on my return. At times, the ‘permanent impression’ of imperialism hung heavily on me, and made me doubt the way I thought and felt during the trip (Ibid, p. 49).

I rather applaud the way that notions of power and imperial legacies caused doubt for Elizabeth and it indicates her reflective approach to her experiences even if it did ‘hang heavy’ at times. She, along with many of the participants, identified the post-visit period as the time for theoretical reading saying “I didn’t read any Edward Said until I was half way through the [reflection] and I thought, “That’s a shame. I wish I’d read that earlier!” (Interview, p. 151/14-15) The learning that she alluded to would suggest that the academic dimension of the module perhaps focused Elizabeth’s engagement with theory. Furthermore, for Elizabeth, the post-visit period was a highly significant period where experience and theories were interrogated and meaning was made for her, and, if the reflections are reliable indicators of this, also for many of the other participants.

13.3 A changing Self?

Elizabeth revealed in the interview that ideas of 'well-being' or happiness were not new to her and that she had previously engaged with the work on happiness of Buddhist, Matthieu Ricard, after previously facing some personally difficult times. Elizabeth saw this engagement as "something in the head to grow" (Interview, p. 150/35) and these ideas re-emerged as a result of her intercultural experiences. A similar emergence occurred with Alice's faith after the provocation of the begging woman. In a similar way, Elizabeth's realisation was slow but, unlike Alice, it was not apparently a result of a singular trigger: she wrote "I find it hard to pinpoint afterwards what it was about my intercultural experience that had made me feel so much better" (Reflection, p. 47). Rather Elizabeth's well-being emerged from the whole intercultural experience linked to her disposition and focus on reconsidering herself.

Elizabeth reinforced her positioning about the importance of the Self in her intercultural learning, writing:

...the literature review and my own experiences and reflections suggest to me that it is the way the learner deals with the challenge of the unknown that defines their learning. By considering the role of the 'self' we move towards a fuller understanding of the learning process (Reflection, p. 48).

Her learning was perhaps less of a transformation and more of an intercultural provocation that caused some latent understanding of well-being and happiness to emerge, and through reflection for this to be linked to higher levels of intercultural learning. She was, perhaps, surprised about the depth of her reflection and learning: not because she felt that the visit was a superficial experience, but more about her own ability to learn. She said "I feel like I've got more potential than I've perhaps ever realised because, you know, I'm quite hard on myself sometimes" (Interview, p. 149/2).

Her personal development of well-being contrasted with Mark's comparison of his perceptions of the well-being of the teaching staff in his placement school with those he met in Kerala. Mark returned to school to be met by the pressures of accountability in the English education system which had resulted in a local authority inspection of teaching at the school after it had recently been subject to an Ofsted inspection. He regarded the unhappiness of staff, and the stress of the inspection to be the opposite of his perceptions of the teachers whom he met in Kerala (Reflection, not appended).

The significance of Mark's intercultural experiences had begun to fade by the time I interviewed him, despite an initially enhanced sense of personal and professional

confidence that he felt upon his return (Interview, not appended). This contrasted with Elizabeth who wrote “my life priorities had changed and my ability to visualise distant goals to progress towards had improved” (Reflection p. 47). Mark’s cross-cultural comparison of well-being, rather than Elizabeth’s development of personal well-being linked to intercultural learning, seemed to leave him lacking agency. It was perhaps Mark’s comparative focus rather than a deep consideration of his own learning that removed certain opportunities to access agency upon his return. His focus on the lack of professional well-being at his school was pertinent, but not a matter over which he had much influence. Mark’s lack of agency was perhaps also, counter-intuitively, linked to his apparently open, non-judgemental engagement in intercultural settings. He explained to me this was a cognitive approach from his degree where he was taught to express opinions only if he could support them. As Kerala was new to Mark he considered that he did not have weight to support assertions and so he would not have an opinion about the matter (Interview, not appended). Such an approach possibly masked certain assumptions that consequently remained unchallenged that inhibited the depth of Mark’s learning, whereas Elizabeth explored her learning theoretically and searched for agency at this level as well as in her outcomes.

Elizabeth explained about the visit and her changed aspirations “you don’t even realise half the dreams you have until you do things like that” (Interview, p. 160/22-23) which had partly manifested in a desire to teach overseas. In a similar manner to Deborah, Elizabeth’s learning may well have seemed intangible, but after re-immersing herself into the UK she was able to identify a concrete aspiration as well as her enhanced sense of well-being.

She explained about her wish to teach in an international school, saying:

[i]t’s not like I’m going to just go and lord it up in Sri Lanka or something it’s just about actually teaching. It goes back to that point, I think, about the wellbeing. And if you don’t think big and follow your dreams then how can you do all that stuff later in life? (Interview, p. 160/36-161/1).

The wish to teach overseas was also an intended outcome of the study visit for Deborah as discussed earlier and by Alice (Interview, p. 106) and Maggie (Interview, p. 212). Additionally, Jane identified the visit as pivotal in her decision to work in inner city East London rather than in more affluent parts of the city, writing:

I like the idea of going to teach - especially after going to India... children that are from deprived areas and that don’t necessarily have the best backgrounds and help to teach them. You know, those that don’t necessarily have the best

start in life which is what the kids in India had – some of them come from very poor backgrounds (Interview, p. 233/31-35).

Jane's intention to teach in London was not new; it was that her experiences from the visit "just emphasised things" (ibid, p. 234/7) and, again, seemed to be a provocation, in this case to increase her desire to work with children in more marginal societal positions. In Jane's case, her sense of 'doing good' became tangible in a similar way to Ruth in *Holy Smoke* (1999) who eventually found agency with an animal charity work in India. Jane's agency came within the cultural security of the UK, albeit teaching many whose cultures at least drew heavily from Afghanistan.

In Elizabeth's case her desire to teach overseas in somewhere like Sri Lanka would probably take her out of her area of dominant cultural agency. Perhaps it was significant therefore, that she indicated she wished to work in an international school where, based on her experiences of the visit, there would be familiarity with the curriculum and pedagogy. Elizabeth described her intentions to teach internationally as "selfish" (Interview, p. 160/30) because her decision was related to her well-being and, perhaps, because her intentions focused on an international school with connotations of it serving an economic elite. Nevertheless, a tangible outcome of her aspiration would be the education of children. Such an aspiration may be contrasted with Slater's post-visit aspiration to maximise his opportunities of things such as skydiving and scuba diving (Interview, not appended) with less obvious tangible benefits to others.

I reflected whether Elizabeth's well-being was something shared between participants and hosts or could it be seen as a neo-colonial emotional 'feeding' from the warm welcome and apparent happiness of the people we had met? I recalled numerous photographs of smiling, interacting participants and their similarly smiling Keralan peers and reflected on the warmth and respect that participants had showed to their hosts, how they built relationships with them and reflected deeply about the inherent power relationships at play during the visit. Participants like Elizabeth had an enhanced sense of well-being built upon her perceptions of the happiness of the people with whom she interacted in Kerala. Elizabeth and other participants were also factors in the positive nature of this experience which came from the relationships that had been forged throughout the visit. I grew to regard the participants' enhanced well-being less of a neo-colonial grab of happiness and more of a sometimes troubling (re)emergence of the importance of our well-being from the experiences of another culture. Beyond this, the participants' decisions about how this renewed perception of well-being manifested itself influenced the potential for this to benefit others; in Elizabeth's case, it was in

professional contexts in locations where she had sufficient agency to enable this to happen.

Chapter 14 Becky: Family reconnections

14.1 Overcoming early fears

Becky remarked about the study visit during the interview saying: “it was scary. Scary as anything! I loved it – I loved every minute of it” (Interview, p. 164/7). Her comment perhaps encapsulates her initial fear of entering the unknown arena of long-distance travelling and immersing oneself in unknown cultures without access to the people from whom she would usually seek support. She explained her love/scary binary of emotions:

...I've never been abroad on my own – I've only ever been with my Mum so that was a bit scary. And I'm not a very independent person either, really, but I like to have people around me all the time who I know, who I can rely on. I like to know they're there. Then I thought, “OK I actually I need to do this for me 'cos I need to gain my independence” (Interview, p. 163/22-25).

Becky's early reference to her mother in this instance, and her wider family later, were to be a recurring feature of her conversations during the visit, but I was not aware until later how significant the visit experiences were to her and how this led to a renewed appreciation of, and engagement with, her family. She drew on her granddad and partner as well as films, including *Jai Ho* (Khan, 2014) in articulating her pre-visit assumptions about India (LJ, p.6). These assumptions focused on food (curry), housing (slums) and transport (long trains) and population. She made reference to poverty and the differentials between rich and poor people, that women were treated as “second class citizens” and that there were many children and that children worked for a living. She also noted the “colourful” nature of India expressed in dance and culture (ibid).

Becky was away from those to whom she normally turned for support, which included her partner whom she mentioned regularly during the visit. She acknowledged that she found the early part of the visit daunting. She recalled: “the first couple of days I was a bit of a mess and I think I needed that to be able to deal with it in my way and then I managed to overcome it” (Interview, p. 164/8-10). Her emotional outpouring focused on her early fears of the visit and some of her experiences of local poverty. She was able to overcome these fears and engage more deeply with the visit through peer support (Interview, p. 164) in talking about their experiences and how they dealt with them.

14.2 Emotional triggers and reflections about 'home'

Despite Becky's amazement at her experiences and the people she met, some of her early experiences led her to question matters of wealth and materialism. She was shocked to learn that the hotel workers slept in the hotel foyer at night and reflected:

...we've got beds, why haven't you got a bed? And then it got me thinking. I went to bed that night, and I was really missing home anyway, and I just thought well we have so much, just so, so much. And we live in a world where money is everything and people don't realise how lucky they are (Interview, p. 164/21-24).

She reflected a little later that "everything overwhelmed me" (Interview, p. 165/7) and used words like "happy and friendly and vibrant and wonderful" (ibid) to describe her experiences. She added though:

...yet I felt guilty because I missed home and I missed my computer and I missed my phone and I missed all these things. I was arguing with this in my head, like I don't need technology and yet I miss it. It's not like I can't live without it (Interview, p. 165/8-10).

It was unclear exactly to what Becky referred when she mentioned 'home' although it probably referred to her partner rather than wider family at this stage. I sensed her guilt was related more to her material, technical possessions rather than missing people and it was possible that her feelings of material loss became a tangible and acceptable substitute for her family, which may have been too upsetting to contemplate and/or articulate. Her focus on technology was perhaps increased because this was related to her subject specialism and thus was of heightened professional, as well as personal, importance. The expression of loss may also have been a means to express fear about being so far from 'home' and immersed in a strange culture. She articulated several times about missing her family and she also reminisced about her early childhood before her parents divorced. She wrote later in her reflection:

I was becoming ever uneasy with the experiences I had growing up as I could resonate with this completely although on different terms. Frosh (2013) talks of 'hauntings', which in this case, became my memories of life. Although I had managed to achieve in life, going to university and now in the process of completing a PGCE course, I became very critical of my own family. Having had parents who divorced when I was just 5 years old, it became the norm for me to hear the constant arguments between my parents and not having my father around for the proportion of my life. But then, even with my mother present, due

to her re-marrying and having a new family with her new partner, my half-brothers always seemed to be prioritised over my other brothers and sister as well as myself. This led to my brothers and sister leaving home soon after the second marriage, without the support of family around them, leaving with low career aspirations, relying on government benefit support. With this in mind, they are all now happy but this left me 'alone' working out life on my own within this disjointed family unit (Reflection, p. 54).

I was grateful to how candid Becky was about her personal circumstances and it caused me to reflect that the participants' candidacy emerged through factors such as trust and pedagogical structures. The trust was between participants and me, built throughout the visit and the relative privacy of the journal, and reflection provided pedagogical structures to support participants' open reflections.

Becky's comments were illustrative of how the visit affected the participants in multiple and unexpected ways which resonates with Scoffham and Barnes' (2009) findings. She used Weeden and Hayter's (1996) terms "coping" and "disorientations" (Reflection, p. 55) to describe her childhood experiences and she remarked that she had worked hard at school and reached university to finally achieve an "equilibrium" (ibid) without family support. She reflected that the group's discussion of these terms led to the "experience in India pulling up raw emotions which I had managed to keep away in the UK" (ibid).

The experiences in Kerala also caused Slater to reflect upon his family situation at 'home'. He reflected that perhaps, counter-intuitively, his family's instability enabled him to stabilise himself in Kerala. He said:

I think because I had something that wasn't stable at home, I was quite happy to stabilise myself in another situation where I could actually latch onto something and really put myself into another situation as opposed to looking back at what happened (Interview, p. 250/29-31).

Slater's indication that his personal situation affected his intercultural engagement concurred with Elizabeth's views. He was a more experienced traveller than Becky and did not express any fears about the visit; rather he seemed to relish the learning opportunities. This was not the case for Becky, but perhaps once she overcame the initial shock of being so far from 'home' without her family or usual support, a process which was aided by reflection with her peers, the trigger of family support provoked deep reflection into a private and singular matter which became a key focus for Becky throughout the visit.

14.3 Support and family significance

Becky described the “welcome, hospitality and kindness of not only the teachers, but every single pupil” as “magnificent” and once she felt able to cope with the experience she began to consider what would be the corresponding welcome for overseas visitors to the UK (Reflection, p. 53). Perhaps it was this, as well as participants’ talk about “disorientation” and “coping” that caused her to reflect about ‘home’. She wrote about the conversations she had with teachers and pupils in the schools we visited realising that:

...it was not only the schools responsibility for the pupils to act as they had...but also the families. The family’s level of support for the pupils to strive to do well, and become well-rounded human beings, to me was overwhelming...with immediate reflection being made back to my own upbringing. I began to ponder the...position I would be in now, should I have had the support of my family during my education that was so apparent here (ibid).

I am cautious of sharing Becky’s universal optimism for the well-being of the children we met during the visit and we clearly were not in a position to understand family support beyond the messages we heard from the people with whom we talked during the visit that focused mostly on educational establishments. The enthusiasm of many of the pupils to meet the participants and to talk about their school and career aspirations proved positive with many of the participants. And this, along with the apparently caring and friendly approach of the teachers that we met, seemed to have been influential to the various positive ideas about Keralan education and well-being expressed by participants like Deborah, Nancy, Elizabeth, and Mark, discussed earlier.

In addition to the comparison of Keralan and UK children through personal experiences, perhaps the participants also drew consciously or unconsciously on wider research in forming their opinions. UNICEF (2007) reported that UK children’s subjective well-being ranked twentieth out of twenty-one ‘rich’ countries with the lack of time that parents devote to their children seen as being an important dimension of this low ranking. This was mirrored more recently by a Children’s Society report that indicated that teenager’s happiness in the UK is low with family problems being cited as a causational factor (Richardson, H. 2013).

Keralan student teachers also talked to the participants about their perception of UK family breakdown and Maggie reflected:

[t]he [Keralan] trainee teachers seemed particularly concerned at the rise of broken families in the UK. They believed that family is the central support system and is vital in upholding values and morals – therefore key in respecting education (Reflection, p. 64).

Perhaps the Keralan student teachers' questions provoked further thinking about this matter for some participants. In other instances, personal encounters furthered the optimism about family support in Kerala and Becky recounted a spontaneous conversation she had with a shopkeeper writing:

[o]ne family I met working in a shop...[led]...to a very in depth and lengthy conversation...They told me of their experiences growing up without an education with both adults being completely illiterate due to their families being unable to afford education when they were growing up. Although this saddened me, it was so pleasing to hear that because of this, when they went on to have children, they wanted them to have the best education possible so they work very long hours in order for this to happen. During this conversation I was becoming so proud of these people I had only just met, thinking that all parents should be like this (Reflection, p. 54).

Becky's pride in people she had just met hinted at a jump to judge the situation and I am perturbed by the possible underlying paternalistic, or unconscious colonial assumptions that evokes pride in family support provided by people who have little materialistically. Becky was not alone in using the word 'proud' but was singular in how she used the term to describe her own feelings towards certain Keralites. It seemed to be her direct comparison to 'home' and her perception of personal lack of family support that provoked her pride of the Keralites. She also felt anger towards her own family during the early stages of the visit; however, after a few days she reflected:

I found myself reflecting on my life, considering what the future may bring and how I would like my children to have the support and best out of their life that I never had. The obviousness of family life and support from every person I had met during the study trip, made me feel as if I was not only entitled to this too, but also, although not necessarily it being my fault my past had happened as it had, that it was now my place to try and fix it (Reflection, p. 55).

It was the support of "every person" that enabled Becky to move from a position of fear to one of reflection and it was the support from peers and the Keralan role models she encountered that were in stark contrast to 'home'. This contrast, and the personal issues it provoked, perhaps provided Becky with a rapid, if painful, conduit to compare Kerala

and 'home' and an early binary of 'unsupportive home' and 'supportive Kerala' emerged. Such a comparative trigger was dangerous. 'Home' appeared to be a dark place lacking support whereas the family support in Kerala seems to verge on an essentialised, or even romanticised idea of people and place in a similar way to Nancy's views about female emancipation. I likened this binary to the one that Ruth considered in *Holy Smoke* (1999) but which, conversely, led her to reject most of her family and to eventually return to India with her mother.

The rapid, rather binaried, and single reading of Kerala to 'home' provided Becky (and Ruth) with potential agency. This was unusual amongst the participants during the visit and probably only Alice was able to show actual agency during the visit to any great extent, as discussed earlier. Becky seemed to gain agency from the Keralan role models that she witnessed, her peer support and, similarly, from the pedagogic structure of the visit. Through a realisation of potential agency she began, like Ruth, to imagine that her life could be different (ibid). Agency was also identified as a potential outcome of intercultural learning by (Scoffham and Barnes, 2009) and later in the interview Becky revealed how her potential agency had already been actualised.

The persuasiveness of Becky's positive perceptions about Kerala was sufficiently strong for her not to deviate from this when confronted later in the visit with an apparently contradictory image: that of the stick (or cane) seen in some of the classrooms that we visited. The participants discussed this matter during one of the evening plenaries and Becky, in particular, was perturbed and visibly upset by it. Such discussions illustrated the importance of the plenaries in enabling participants to discuss matters that were potentially troubling to them and in a calm and safe environment. Dr Manish, our host, recognised the importance of a "non-challenging environment" (email, 20.2.15) as an important means to enable participant learning and while the plenaries were potentially challenging they were always intended to be supportive to the participants through careful and respectful dialogue built on Freirian principles.

The participants later talked to their peers at the Teacher Training College and were told corporal punishment was illegal in India, but that they were aware that it still happened occasionally which concurred with the findings of an Overseas Development Institute report (BBC, 2010).

Becky wrote:

[t]he other trigger, though not a positive one at the time, was the presence and admittance of some of the Keralan teachers that they used the stick on the front

of the desk to 'hit' the children to inform discipline...Although painful to hear, the friendliness and love of all the teachers still allowed me to accept their values (Reflection, p. 55).

Becky was happy to accept the use of the stick as a non-contact form of behaviour management and her thinking on this was swayed by the “friendliness and love” (ibid) of the teachers she met and saw practise. In this way, the possible ‘colonial signature’ of the stick that potentially provided her with an easy comparison to recent historical practice in UK schools did not gain value in her thinking. It is perhaps significant that the sighting of the stick in schools, but which was never seen used, happened over half-way through the visit and as such was ‘sandwiched’ with positive experiences in schools and during ‘free’ time. Ideas of the stick, however, were not ‘airbrushed’ away by Becky, like Nancy possibly did with the begging woman experienced early in the visit, but rather they added to the complexity of what was perhaps initially a rather singular story about children’s well-being in Keralan schools.

The perception of the friendliness of the teachers we met can only have been gained from the times we visited the schools during the visit and yet the significance of this was highlighted by many participants. For three participants; Becky, Maggie and Slater, it triggered thinking about their family. For others, like Deborah and Elizabeth, it was a trigger to alter their own professional futures. Becky was surprised by the way that later in the visit she was less judgemental of experiences, such as about the stick seen in schools. She reflected:

[t]his relates Andreotti (2013) as I became so accepting of situations- the tent disposition- which I wouldn't have dared to before the study visit. I found myself, for the first time in my life, craving that support from my family that hadn't been present for much of my life (Reflection, p. 55).

Becky’s growing openness and plurality seemed to pleasantly surprise her, in a similar way to Elizabeth’s personal comparison to Andreotti’s dispositions towards difference. Becky’s increasingly open disposition coincided with reflections about ‘home’, the need for family support and, as noted before, the potential for personal agency to emerge.

Upon return to the UK and re-immersion into her placement school Becky wrote:

I spent the next few days in the UK school, observing relationships between pupils and teachers and conversing with some pupils about home life and how they felt supported throughout life. Through some of these conversations, it was evident to me that some of these pupils craved the same thing I did, support

from their family. After 3 days of debating the matter, trying to come to terms with my thoughts in my own mind, I found some courage to make contact with the family that I had felt let down by so long ago (ibid).

Becky talked at length in her interview about the steps she had taken to re-engage with her family and particularly her mother. She recounted the early awkwardness of the initial phone call and then the surprise of receiving a return call some days later saying that they talked for hours (Interview, p. 171). She said:

[m]y relationship now with my Mum is incredible. I said to her after the trip “I just ... I need to talk to you – I need to get this out in the open and get over it. Because I need my Mum in my life. So many people don’t have a Mum and I’ve got you. And, OK we don’t get on all the time but you’re still my Mum. And I still need you there and I still need to be there for you.” I feel that every week now. Whereas before, I think last year I saw her three times in the whole year (Interview, pp. 168/34-169/2).

The outcomes for Becky were personal and triggered by rather positive and, perhaps, a singular reading of Keralan children’s well-being which (a little like Nancy’s view of female emancipation) may be underpinned by a paternalistic or colonial view of well-being linked to poverty. Like Alice, her desire for agency was achieved shortly upon returning to the UK through a will to effect change in her own family relationships. Becky became more future focused rather than regarding the past as a barrier and her singular reading of ‘home’ was changed, although potentially this moved to a more positive but still singular reading of her family.

In my interview with Becky I noticed and acknowledged a confidence and buoyancy about her that I had not witnessed before. She said:

I feel I wasn’t a happy person before I went to India because I didn’t have my family around me and I relied on technology and I didn’t go out a lot... [was] there all the time with me because he was like my stability, kind of thing. And now I just think...I was thinking now I should be happy. I have everything. I have a house, I have a bed, and I have food. I’m now on my second uni degree and I’ve had everything given to me growing up. I haven’t had the relationships; but I’ve had everything given to me. And I should be so grateful for that. Then, it just made me think, actually, that I should be really happy and it made me a more positive person which in turn – seeing these families and things – made me

realise I need people around me. I need these relationships (Interview, p. 170/8-17).

Becky's learning was not necessarily articulated at the theoretical depth of some other participants as measured by the academic outcome of her reflection; and her learning was not underpinned by a deep consideration of postcolonial theory. The provocation of apparently supportive families in Kerala, however, resulted in a number of highly significant outcomes for her. She grew from a singular reading of Kerala and family to include some more complex dimensions and, while a singularity possibly remained, her views became significantly more positive. She was surprised that she identified with Andreotti's (2013) 'tent' disposition towards difference. Her appreciation of existing material possessions became apparent during the visit and later and, more significantly, her realisation of the gap in her life that materialism had covered over—that of relationships—appeared to be a personally deep point of learning. The agency that came from the Keralan role models, and her subsequent reflection and her peer support, enabled Becky to re-connect with her family and become a happier person.

Chapter 15 Findings from the Narratives

15.1 Introduction

The richness and diversity that emerged from the narratives in chapters seven to fourteen provided idiosyncratic stories about intercultural learning that revealed an array of provocations to my thinking about intercultural learning. In this chapter I consider these narratives in relation to the seven enquiry foci I established in chapter one, which is the fifth dimension to my data analysis, outlined in section 6.6. Certain themes emerged from my analysis which are summarised in figure 15.1 and which I expand upon in the remainder of the chapter. In accordance with the nature of the enquiry foci the figure illustrates the permeability of, and the interconnectivity between, the enquiry foci. In the following section I consider the enquiry foci in turn before summarising my findings in diagrammatic form in section 15.3.

15.2 Findings related to the Enquiry Foci

Enquiry Foci 1 and 2. Assumptions and Influence of Place

The participants' pre-visit assumptions about India drew consciously from current affairs, history, novels and film and occasionally from friendship with Indian nationals. Such a plurality of sources revealed the way that perceptions of India were constructed from 'fiction' and 'non-fictional' sources; however, the nature of these sources did not seem to particularly influence the nature of intercultural learning. Pre-visit assumptions regarded place on the grand scale of India *per se* rather than specifically Kerala and sometimes were essentialist in nature. Comments seemed to present a rather fixed view of India, which contrasts with a more fluid sense of place depicted by Massey (1994), and focussed on its physical geography, British colonial rule, the 'traditional' role of women, poverty and education which was often regarded as traditional using didactic pedagogies.

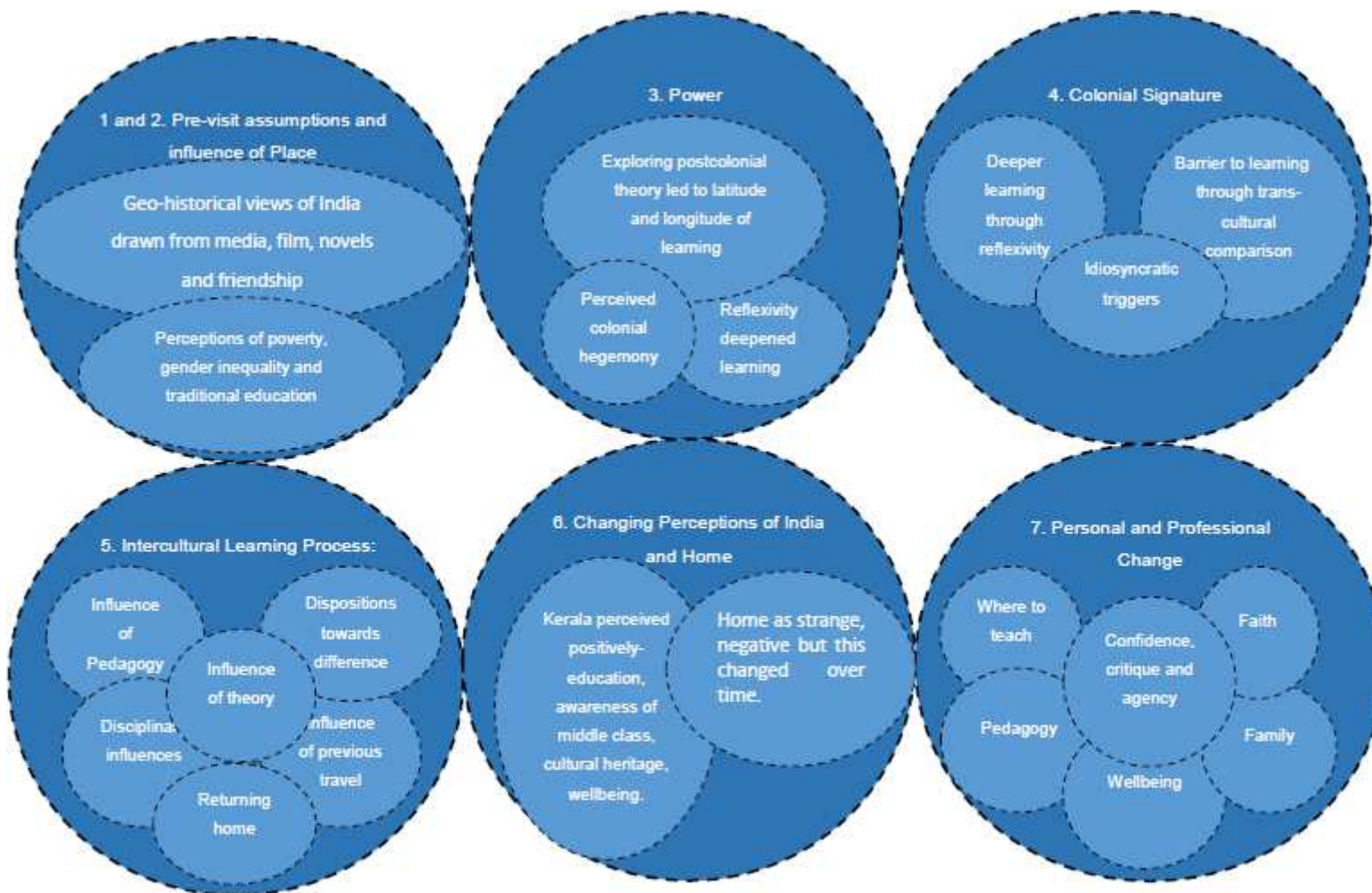


Figure 15.1 Findings linked to Enquiry Foci

Wider knowledge about India and ways of 'seeing' India varied considerably and some participants, such as Deborah, Fay and Eve, drew on their academic studies and/or professional practice to identify their pre-visit assumptions about India. In many cases the colonial dimension to Anglo-Indian relationships was read historically prior to the visit and while most were aware of the negative dimensions of Empire, this was not initially a universally held view.

The challenges experienced during the visit disrupted a more stable, and probably exotic sense of place, which in many cases enabled learners to begin to create more nuanced, fluid and contemporary ideas of India and especially of Kerala. An emergent sense of place was more complex than before and tended to reduce in scale (i.e. to focus more on Kerala than India). Views of Kerala often became much more positive and hopeful at both individual and societal scales, which concurred with Scoffham and Barnes' (2009) findings. Kerala emerged as a place of female emancipation, well-being and education (see enquiry foci six for further details), notwithstanding some significant experiences during the visit of poverty that countered such hopefulness.

The narratives about Kerala as a place developed in a range of ways. All were characterised by an understanding of postcolonial theory, albeit at varying levels and how the 'ECM' was represented by the 'CM'. In this way Kerala was explored as an example of the 'ECM' and at times was used as a means for considerable personal reflexivity after encountering the Other, to which I return below.

Narratives that tended to comment on Kerala as a place *per se* tended to lack extensive reflexivity. These narratives developed rather positive and singular Keralan stories; they did not present an exotic or passive place and people, rather the stories illustrated examples of agency such as female emancipation. Of significance, however, was the way some narratives, such as Nancy's, excluded counter-evidence to what became a rather singular story of place tinged perhaps with a certain Orientalist romanticism.

Narratives revealed a deeper consideration of Self in relation to the Other when they drew on small-scale experiences without broadening their commentary about Kerala within a global setting. Eve's narrative illustrates this where she reflexively responded to bartering, while referring to colonialism and her economic wealth. Many of these reflections demonstrate an understanding of the global power dimensions between 'CM' and 'ECM' worlds at experiential, and later at theoretical, levels which aided the emergence of a more sophisticated 'latitude and longitude of learning'. Where a postcolonial, theoretical understanding was less developed, or learning was not globally contextualised, it tended to

lead to rather simplified trans-cultural comparisons between India and 'home', such as in the happiness of Keralites. Such comparisons potentially created a binary between economically poor, but happy Kerala and economically rich, but unhappy UK. There was near universal surprise about the apparent Keralites' happiness which perhaps exposed an unconscious pre-visit assumption that relative economic poverty equated to unhappiness. My critique here is not to diminish participants' learning: the journals indicated how their understanding about aspects of place developed during their visit; rather, it reminded me how deeply the colonial is ingrained in us all and of the importance to regard our mutual learning as a process rather than reading comments as final or fixed.

Enquiry Foci Three: Power

Participants moved from reading colonialism as a historical feature of Anglo-Indian relationships to incorporate a greater postcolonial understanding of modern relationships through exploring the power dynamics inherent in their encounters with the Other. Despite being able to theorise the locals' high regard for the participants (which was mostly read as a contemporary, colonial hegemony), there remained a tension in many of the narratives between the relationships made at an individual level and views expressed about power at 'CM' and 'ECM' scales.

In certain local circumstances a paralysis was revealed in the narratives which caused an emotional and/or cultural inability to act, such as in responses to begging or the request to perform 'British' culture. Expressions of 'guilt' or feeling 'ashamed' were common which were perhaps indicative of an early paternalistic/colonialist positioning linked to donor/recipient relationships.

Guilt was perhaps felt because an emerging, cognitive understanding of postcolonial theory (at the time at least) did not necessarily provide emotional and/or existential support through individual encounters with the Other that authors such as Hook (2012) may provide. At times the intercultural encounters caused paralysis and an *apparent* inversion of global power was evident in some narratives. I regard such paralysis in the narratives, however, more a feature of a cultural/emotional inability to act within the context they were positioned rather than of local power.

Similarly to cultural paralysis, participants were perturbed about not being able to 'give something back' in response to received gifts. A gift from the Other became troublesome possibly because of the way it exposed pre-visit assumptions to be erroneous about poor

Indians who perhaps lacked agency. During the early part of the visit especially, it is possible that these paternalistic/colonial assumptions were being retained and the gifts humbled those participants, rather than challenged their initial premises about Keralites, which would have required careful consideration of existing worldviews. It also stimulated uncomfortable cross-cultural comparison through perceptions of British indifference to the Other should they be the hosts of intercultural learners.

The experiences of the Other provoked such emotional, and for some existential, discomfort that it was perhaps too challenging for many to hold their early uncertainty for long and they arrived at a probably faithful, but singular, theme of colonial hegemony as a reason for the high status with which they were regarded. Eve's theorising about her bewilderment is a notable exception to this. It did not cause upset resulting in her discarding her ideas, but was harnessed in her journal into deepening her learning and developing her model of intercultural learning.

Enquiry Foci Four: 'colonial signature'

Various important triggers were evident in the narratives which became 'colonial signatures' but, significantly, in idiosyncratic ways. Some triggers were high in emotional, and for some existential, magnitude, but low in their occurrence. This is exemplified powerfully in Francis' response to the drowned boy, but also illustrated in Nancy's response to the band. Triggers that were of lower order magnitude, but that occurred more frequently, were still significant illustrated by Elizabeth's responses to well-being.

Where triggers resulted in rather uncomplicated, transcultural comparisons they became 'colonial signatures'. In such cases, the Self was left reflexively unexamined and singular readings were made of the experience through limited reflection. These 'colonial signatures' equated strongly to Said's (1978/2003) Median Category, perhaps exemplified most by Becky's comparison to begging in India and the UK which illustrated how reaching quick conclusions, rather than dwelling on the possible factors that influence our thinking, limited the opportunities for deeper learning.

The depth of reflection seems to be highly significant to the development of the 'colonial signature'. An unexamined trigger, such as the participants' almost universal lack of consideration of the affluent school in their reflections was a noteworthy signature, but became a barrier to learning rather than something that could potentially transport the learner to deeper understandings of place or people.

Narratives with reflexive responses to triggers revealed how reflexivity enabled deeper learning through a reconsideration of Self/Other. Reflexivity seemed important in deconstructing the power and colonial dimensions that were implicit in existing assumptions about the Other as well as the Self. Furthermore, where a language was accessed through some form of theoretical or philosophical underpinning, it enabled deeper learning to occur such as Alice's faith or Fay's cosmopolitanism.

Enquiry Foci Five: Intercultural learning process

I identified five themes regarding the intercultural learning process and influences upon it that revealed a range of personal and pedagogical factors that helped shape intercultural experiences and outcomes. The themes are interrelated; however, for ease of expression and clarity I consider them in turn:

i. Pedagogy and relationships

The bewilderment outlined by Eve, and experienced by many, was probably resultant of simultaneously holding conflicting ideas akin to Meyer and Land's (2003) 'troublesome knowledge'. These ideas included the unsettling of recently firm 'CM' knowledge such as that regarding the place of didactic pedagogy in schools. The 'safe' and open space of the journal, and respectful co-construction of knowledge in the plenary sessions, supported participants' confidence to dwell in uncertainty rather than retreat to Andreotti's (2013) 'home' position. Such pedagogic processes contrasted sharply with the laminated schedule of Francis' approach to spiritual learning in *The Darjeeling Limited* (2007). Without reflection and, more significantly, reflexivity, learning was confined to gaining new experiences rather than challenging any pre-conceptions about Self or the Other. Where participants were reflexive, it helped reveal personal assumptions and underlying values. Such revelations meant that worldviews and notions of Self/Other were able to be reconsidered, but without such consideration viewpoints were likely to remain unaltered, such as in Mark's case whose outcomes were akin to those found by Merryfield (2000) with qualified teachers. I regard the intercultural outcomes for many of the participants to be deeper than those reported by Merryfield for a range of reasons, including the approaches to pedagogy which related to Andreotti's (2011) postcolonial pedagogical conceptual framework and the decolonial pedagogy of De Lissovoy (2010).

Experiences such as the privilege bestowed upon participants in most schools became troublesome features of the visit and needed appropriate pedagogies to support insight into such matters as part of deepening intercultural learning. A reflective, and for some a reflexive, culture was generated within the group, supported by the 'safety' of the journal and plenaries. This pedagogy modelled, and perhaps legitimised, a humble approach to co-construction of learning in the safe 'liminal place' of the hotel, that engendered trust between group members and without attempting to arrive at conclusions. Such approaches provided a scaffold to promote provisionality in thinking through pedagogically modelling of uncertainty, emphasising 'question asking' rather than 'question answering' and "talking with" not "talking to" (Freire, P. 2005, p. 111). At best the journal provided a scaffold, which, when combined with other factors, enabled learning in higher order 'Learning Spaces' (Andreotti, 2010) to develop. Its open structure during the visit enabled a focus on areas of personal interest and allowed idiosyncratic approaches to intercultural learning to develop such as Elizabeth's puzzlement with her growth in well-being.

Elizabeth was notably rare in indicating that her journal entries, particularly what she omitted, were affected by its academic assessment. Nevertheless, the frequency and detail of journal entries by the majority of participants was indicative of a tool they found useful to consider intercultural learning. The journal's structure was constructed to support post-visit academic reflection and it provided a scaffold to enable participants to explain their intercultural learning after returning 'home', which was revealed as an important element of the learning process.

The significance of plenaries also related to the importance of conversation to learning, which was highlighted by Deborah. The earlier Keralan experiences led to focused conversations during the college visit and university conference at the end of the visit. It was here where participants perhaps recognised their strongest professional connections: their Keralan student peers. The peer conversations on topics of mutual interest enabled participants to hear the voice of the Other who became cultural translators in a similar manner to Asha in *Outsourced* (2006) and, to my own, with Dr Manish whose cultural translation provided a strong support for reflection and reflexivity regarding our experiences. Discussions about bewildering matters, such as teacher well-being, revealed how powerful the dominant 'CM' voice had been to the participants' establishment of 'truths' about such matters. Such revelations seemed to create a connection through difference but that also recognised a fellowship through the mutual endeavours of learning to teach.

ii. Discipline

The participants' graduate discipline seemed to have some influence over their thinking and ways of seeing the world. This is not to say that one's subject was a determining factor in the way that participants read and/or engaged with Kerala and/or themselves but there were many varied examples of how a discipline did have some influence upon learning. This included a means to attempt to transcend language through art by Deborah and Elizabeth, use of subject-related theory to help understand experiences by Nancy, and confidence to be immersed in fiction as a means to understanding reality by Fay. It was clear that certain disciplinary influences promoted plurality of thought and reflection, whereas others perhaps influenced a need for more certainty and even proof. Some of these disciplinary approaches were able to support deeper intercultural learning, but others seemed to potentially inhibit the fluid and tentative nature of deeper intercultural learning or at least were something that needed to be overcome.

iii. Previous travel to the 'ECM'

Previous travel to the 'ECM' seemed to be a factor in the ability to overcome any early 'culture shock' of Kerala. Previous experience of the 'ECM' seems to have mostly been an aid to plural understanding of cultures beyond 'home' and especially cultures that challenged the 'norms' of those experienced in the 'CM'. This is not to identify such experience as a determining factor to deeper intercultural learning outcomes; others were clearly able to read culture plurally and also avoid the rush to conclusions. Rather, previous experience tended to help learners to plurally read experiences and dwell more confidently in uncertainty more readily, which was perhaps significant to their overall learning from a short visit. This resonated with my own growing confidence in my ability to dwell in uncertainty from various South Indian study visits, particularly when combined with theoretical exploration of reflection and post-structuralism.

A caveat to the helpfulness of previous travel was the potential to simply compare the Keralan culture to other 'ECM' experiences which risked essentialising the experience and rushing to conclusions based on previous premises. Previous international experiences were perhaps therefore more a factor that helped influence dispositions toward their learning.

iv. Dispositions towards intercultural learning and reading Self/Other

Participants embraced Andreotti's (2013) short paper about 'dispositions towards difference' in considering their own approaches to their intercultural learning. Of those that articulated their own disposition, many were surprised about how relatively open they had become to learning about difference from their intercultural experiences. There may be a range of reasons for the participants' surprising openness towards difference, but I regard the pedagogy used, and the relationships that developed, as significant drivers of such openness underpinned by a willingness to learn influenced by the visit being part of an academic course and all shaped by the effect of being so far away from 'home'.

Associated with these developments was the potential to cope with ambiguity of meaning and dwell in uncertainty, which at times involved simultaneously holding complex and contrasting ideas which challenged existing worldviews. This is exemplified by Nancy's pre-visit assumptions about gender equality in the 'Orient' and the way her views changed over an emotionally gruelling period, notwithstanding the essentialism that tinged her later views. Such an ability or awareness was not universally shared, although progress was seen even by those who initially wished to regard matters with more certainty. Participants' dispositions towards ambiguity were also challenged. It was significant that in the case of Fay's intercultural learning, it was only when she felt able to resist attempting to control her environment that her intercultural learning was able to deepen, rather like the way Todd's learning developed after he stopped resisting India and embraced it.

Alice and Fay were also explicitly aware of the 'cultural baggage' with which they travelled, linking this to the 'real' baggage carried by the brothers in *The Darjeeling Limited* (2007). Fay linked setting aside of 'cultural baggage' to theories of 'Cosmopolitanism' (Delanty, 2006) whereas Alice related this to Bhabha's (1994/2004) 'Third Space' indicating that her 'cultural baggage' was left behind when entering this new intercultural space. Both participants read the need to identify and move beyond our cultural assumptions in order to engage more deeply with the Other, which resonates with Andreotti's (2011) postcolonial pedagogic framework and the need to unlearn our privileges.

'Cultural baggage' has some resonance with the way our experiences influence our dispositions. I used Frosh's (2013) idea of 'hauntings' to explain the way conscious or unconscious responses to experiences influence the way we respond to new situations. At a personal level, Becky alluded to her childhood hauntings, whereas many others identified colonial hauntings that manifest in the ways we regard Self and the Other.

v. Theory

At the global scale, participants used postcolonial theory to identify the ways that the 'CM' may subvert the 'ECM' and regard the latter as an exotic and passive global presence. They moved from regarding colonialism as a historical feature to understanding the ways that postcolonial theory helps explain aspects of their encounters with the Other.

Postcolonial theory provided a framework to examine theories of intercultural learning. I was aware of my influence upon participants' theoretical understanding through my pedagogy and assessment of their academic, critical reflection, supported by a comprehensive bibliography. However, a minority of participants drew further to explain their thinking, such as Fay (cosmopolitanism), Elizabeth (well-being), and Nancy (gender). Deeper theoretical understanding was not essential to identify significant personal and/or professional changes; however, it provided a language with which to articulate a complexity to their intercultural learning, including positioning this globally. I associated this with a richer, personal 'latitude and longitude of learning'.

Postcolonial theory provided a strong basis to develop a 'latitude and longitude of learning' and understanding the power dynamics between 'CM' and 'ECM'. Other dominant drivers of power, however, such as gender, were considered with less nuance, being rather optimistically portrayed, such as by Nancy, and often were not considered at all.

Enquiry Foci Six: Changing perceptions

a) Perceptions of Kerala

As noted earlier it was universal amongst the participants that their perceptions about India became more nuanced and positive as a consequence of the visit. There were at least five main themes that emerged from the narratives:

- i. Increased appreciation for Keralan education, particularly societal respect for teachers, levels of pupil attainment, pupil behaviour and qualities of teaching that used relatively few resources.
- ii. Relative economic well-being of many of the people with whom the participants interacted. These were mainly teachers and college/university lecturers plus their students. A new awareness of the Keralan 'middle class' contrasted with the poverty encountered in public spaces.
- iii. Friendliness and happiness of Keralites.

- iv. Keralites' optimism for future career opportunities and well-being particularly of the school pupils and student teachers.
- v. Local pride in the Keralan traditional cultures and expressions of this through song and dance.
- vi. Gender equality particularly related to work/career aspiration.

The participants' positive perceptions were perhaps a function of Kerala's strong socio-political focus on education but, perhaps more fundamentally, they were perhaps surprised to find an economic 'middle class' in Kerala, which, like the UK, included education professionals. At times, the very positive reflections about India seemed to be tinged with a pride that these people had 'done so much with so little,' which was perhaps most redolent of Becky's narrative that revealed certain assumptions about development and intimated a paternalistic stance without due regard for power dynamics implicit within postcolonial theory. Essentialism mixed with a lack of recognition of power dynamics are the ingredients for Orientalism, however, a majority of participants did not necessarily aim to 'dig' deeper into the cultures of Kerala but understood their comments to be narrow, subjective, cultural interpretations of both Kerala and the UK. They used their interpretations to reflexively consider their own epistemologies and ontologies in more depth, often successfully using postcolonial theory linked to intercultural learning to reconsider their sense of Self from a reinterpretation of 'home'.

b) Perceptions of 'Home'

The return 'home' provoked reflections about varied personal and professional matters; however, some participants seemed to find the return relatively less troubling than others and adapted to cultural norms of 'home' relatively easily. For others, notably Deborah, Elizabeth and Eve, 'home' became a complex and problematical terrain where the shock of the once familiar was difficult to manage, perhaps in a similar way to Ruth's troublesome relationship with her family on returning to Australia. Tentatively, it appears that those participants whose return was more troubling tended to be more reflexive and developed deeper theoretical dimensions to their learning. This is not to declare that significant outcomes were the sole domain of reflexive and deeper theorists, as illustrated by Becky's personally significant outcomes.

The positivity of Kerala was often mirrored by an early negativity towards 'home' after returning to the UK. This initial contrast, voiced by the participants, reminded me of

Dorothy's multi-coloured exotic perceptions of the Other in *The Wizard of Oz* (Fleming, 1939/1990) compared to the monochrome of 'home', a place they thought they knew well. They were probably physically and mentally tired, separated from the support of the participant group and re-immersed in their placement school, probably without the fanfare welcome received many times during the visit.

The multi-coloured perceptions of Kerala and the monochrome ones of England began to merge with time upon returning 'home'. Perceptions of Kerala and English cultures became more nuanced with a greater balance of 'good' and 'bad' points. The location of 'home' remained the same but perhaps it now had a greater global positioning which aided participants' 'latitude and longitude of learning'. Some of those returning 'home' at least were different people from before the visit and thus perceptions of 'home' for them altered too.

Enquiry Foci Seven: Personal and professional change

An initial difficulty in articulating intercultural learning was voiced in many narratives which became tangible with time and appropriate scaffolding, notwithstanding the complex intercultural translation required to express this learning. The narratives revealed a range of outcomes, which were often provocations of existing ideas that the visit had raised to conscious significance and I tentatively organised these outcomes into six categories below.

Significantly, but not surprisingly, the outcomes of intercultural learning varied considerably in all narratives. The participants described outcomes *per se*, revealing a complex interrelationship between personal and professional dimensions of learning. In turning to the themes it is important to note that they are not universally significant, but are features of learning in one or more of the narratives which I deemed important outcomes of intercultural learning.

i. Agency, confidence and critique

The crossing of cultural boundaries by returning 'home' was an important dimension to deepening intercultural learning although, initially, it generated bewilderment for some, especially those who thought reflexively about their experiences. It revealed further, the socio-cultural construction of society and challenged a reconsideration of the Self for some, and eventually resulted in change and related actions for many.

Agency was an important idiosyncratic outcome in many narratives which, in almost all cases, emerged after returning 'home'. The early intangible nature of learning illustrated the cultural translation required to consider one's learning, and agency only seemed able to develop once learning became tangible. Such learning became explicit through reflection over varied timescales prompted by the academic reflection and interviews. Agency also emerged at 'home' due to the cultural, economic and professional capital being predominantly home-based. Some of the narratives suggested the participants became agents of postcolonial change from within the 'CM'. They were aware of the power dynamics about representation and marginalisation and strove to change matters such as helping the homeless (Alice), teaching about distant places (Eve), and gaining employment teaching in more economically deprived parts of London (Jane). This was mirrored in film by Ruth's charitable work.

The agency indicated in some narratives resonated with Andreotti's (2011, p. 230) fourth pedagogical conceptual point "learning to reach out". Reaching out occurred at a range of scales from the intimate and personal to professional. Other outcomes were less evidently associated with 'reaching out', or were aspirational, but may be the precursors for future associated acts such as overseas teaching. In fewer cases, usually linked to less reflexive narratives, the outcomes of intercultural learning were related to matters such as pedagogic criticisms or to personal endeavours which illustrated individual change but lacked any social dimensions associated with Andreotti's concept.

The ability to act at 'home' contrasted sharply with the paralysis experienced at times in India. Agency in India was much rarer and best illustrated by the outcomes of Alice's wrestling with her faith. Unlike her peers, she already had a religiously-inflected ontology and it enabled her to act quickly, but not as quickly as she desired. Significantly, her agency emerged with her peers where she had cultural capital and 'knew what to do' and which continued upon returning 'home' when relating to the marginalised in society.

The theoretical, reflective and, at times, reflexive exploration of experiences enabled participants to be able to read the world postcolonially, including recognising contemporary global power dimensions which underpin significant global inequality. Their ability to critique every day experiences in such a way, when combined with the confidence that apparently ensued from successfully engaging with the visit, seemed to provide the participants with a deeper, professional ability to question, not to take matters as given and to be confident with uncertainty.

ii. Where to teach

A minority of participants such as Alice, Deborah and Elizabeth declared their intention to teach abroad as a consequence of their experiences and Jane identified the visit as pivotal in her decision to teach in inner London. Their intentions emerged for different reasons related to personal circumstances, reinvigorated confidence and a desire to professionally engage with those positioned more marginally within the 'CM'. Such choices related to emerging notions that a profession may be regarded differently in other cultures and, more deeply, perhaps ontologically what it is to be a teacher. Such visioning of the future illustrated the development of plural thinking from the visit which was also reflected in a changed sense of Self with the agency to envisage personal/professional futures differently than before the visit.

iii. Pedagogy

The influence of the visit on participants' views about pedagogy ranged from rather focused aspects of UK practice to much more fundamental reviews of disciplinary epistemology. Such influences could be significant to participants' practice in the longer-term rather than them being ephemeral professional changes. The Keralan education focus on curriculum content and the apparent success of teaching using didactic pedagogies, provoked participants to challenge and then reconsider their usual UK pedagogies, notwithstanding the difficult cultural translation needed to make such comparison. Some participants, such as Deborah, were more critical of the emphasis on assessing children while others, like Nancy, described how her certainty about pedagogical approaches had been shaken by the visit.

At a disciplinary level, Eve was shocked that her teaching about India may have potentially reinforced pupils' misconceptions and, more fundamentally, that her discipline of geography potentially supported colonialist worldviews. Her pedagogic approach to teaching about place was upset through her new understanding of the complexity of place and of postcolonial theory and how to teach this without stereotyping and/or creating a single story of that place.

iv. Well-being

Many participants remarked about the happiness of the people that they encountered in Kerala and how this became a lasting memory of their visit. Some, like Elizabeth, noted that

they felt happier from their encounters with the Other. Such happiness struck a chord with the hope felt by the student teachers' in Scoffham and Barnes' research (2009) and which Rogers (1994) linked to existential 'soul searching'.

Elizabeth and Mark, in particular, reflected upon well-being in different ways which generated hope and agency for one but not the other. Elizabeth considered her personal well-being as a consequence of the visit, whereas Mark contrasted the well-being found in school with the lack of it in his UK placement school.

Elizabeth's reflexive articulation of the growth of her well-being as a consequence of the visit incorporated theories of well-being which she linked to postcolonialism and through this developed personal agency. She was enthused by locals' apparent well-being and indicated that she desired her life to be different in the future. She found her experiences to be deep, being one of three to express a spiritual/existential dimension to their learning, and perhaps, consequently, was troubled that her personal well-being and a desire to teach abroad seemed selfish.

Mark's focus on professional well-being was less hopeful as he compared the apparent well-being of the Keralan teachers he encountered with the professional pressures in his UK school. He apparently lacked the agency articulated by others perhaps mostly due to his large scale trans-cultural comparison of well-being; he was, after all, unable to alter the nature of the English teaching profession. Furthermore, his lack of agency was perhaps counter-intuitively linked to his apparent openness with which he approached his learning. This possibly masked certain assumptions that consequently remained unchallenged that ultimately inhibited the depth of his learning and any reflexive dimensions within it.

v. Family

Notions of well-being were linked by Becky, Maggie and Slater to the support that the Keralan pupils and student teachers with whom they met apparently received from their families. In a similar manner to the way female emancipation was considered by Nancy, in particular, the idea of family was viewed rather uncritically and, while participants' views were not wrong, the rather positive views of family caused Maggie to appreciate her family more and for Becky and Slater to reflect on family difficulties. For Becky, in particular, the visit was deeply provocative moving her to reconsider the importance of family and caused her to reconnect with her mother, both of which were indicative of the unforeseen outcomes of the visit expressed in many narratives. It contrasted with the destruction of Ruth's family

due to their inability to cope with her changes, but which ultimately led her and her mother to a closer relationship separate from the rest of her family.

vi. Faith

Alice, Elizabeth and Fay articulated an existential or spiritual dimension to the visit, although possibly others may well have shared 'soul searching' more privately. These spiritual dimensions emerged, rather than being sought as Francis did for his brothers. For Alice, in particular, her questioning of her faith was associated with her 'colonial signature' of begging. Her ability to remain troubled through lengthy reflection/reflexivity about her Christianity provided a foundation upon which to build her deeply considered reflections and to guide her actions in India, including the development of her agency which went further upon her return to the UK.

15.3 Representing Intercultural Learning

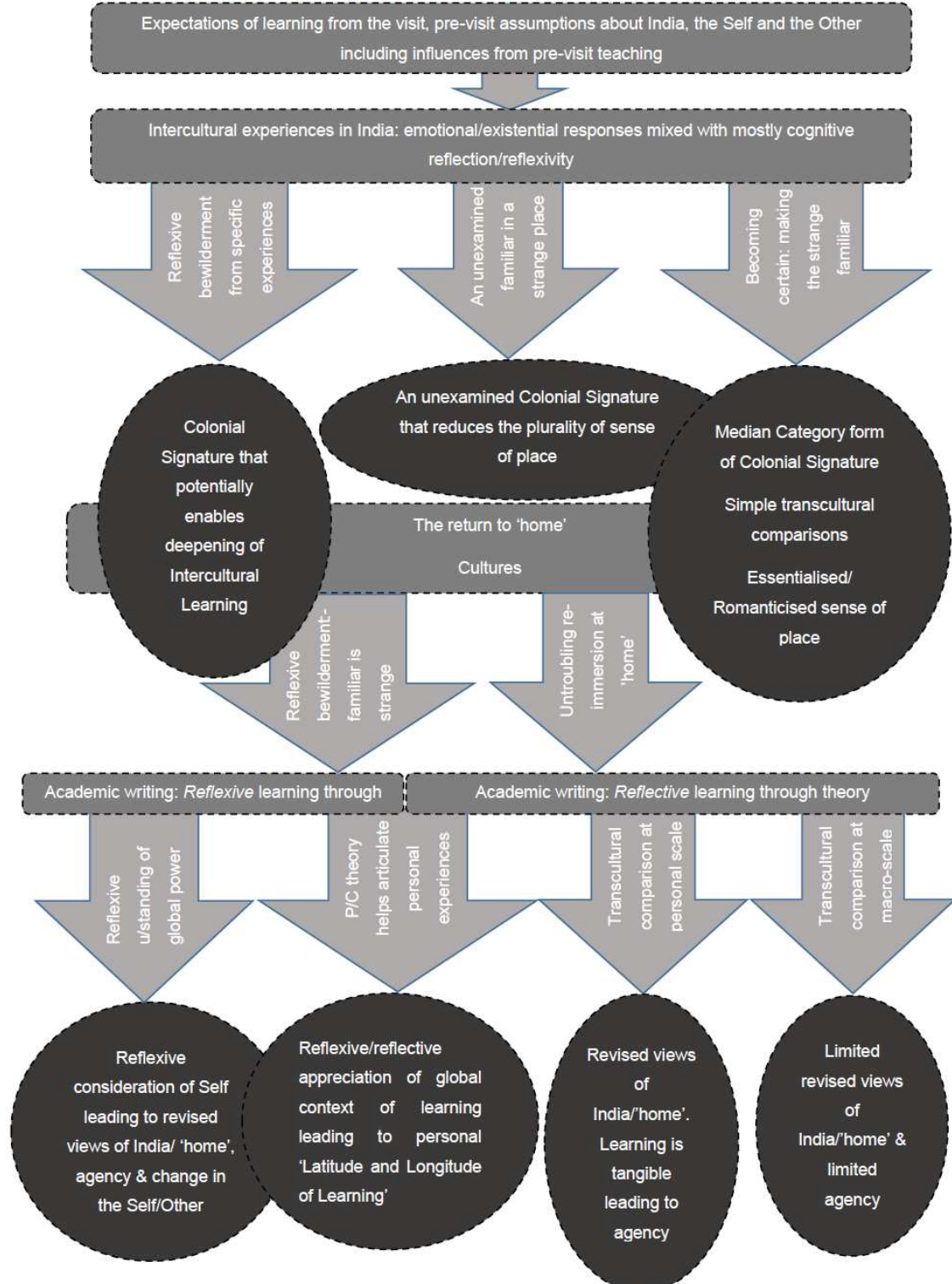
From my findings, I was able to represent the complex process and diverse outcomes of intercultural learning diagrammatically in figure 15.2³¹. It charts intercultural learning from the commencement of the intercultural module to its completion, which I differentiate from the commencement and termination of intercultural learning that, in its grandest scale, is over a lifetime. The diagram deliberately does not indicate timescales as this would detract from the individual nature of the learning process; however, significant fixed points are indicated such as the return 'home' and the requirement to undertake further reflection once there.

Without detracting from the individuality of intercultural learning it expresses the intercultural learning process, highlighting the significance of 'colonial signatures' that become barriers and/or bridges to deeper intercultural learning, depending on the extent to which reflexivity is a dimension of the intercultural learning process. Reflexivity is shown as a significant determining factor to the depth of learning outcomes, including a reformed sense of Self/Other and, in combination with theoretical appreciation of postcolonialism, this leads to a richly developed 'latitude and longitude of learning'. Conversely, transcultural comparisons that lack such theoretical/reflexive consideration are associated with a more

³¹ Intercultural learning processes are indicated by arrows whereas defined points during the process are indicated by boxes and outcomes in ovals. Lines are dotted to show the permeable and interconnected nature of intercultural learning.

limited 'latitude and longitude of learning' with limited change evident in the Self. From my findings, and this diagrammatic representation of intercultural learning, I turn now to my theoretical conclusions in the following chapter.

Figure 15.2 Reaching deeper intercultural learning



Chapter 16 Conclusions

16.1 Introduction

My conclusions, set within the context of my 'CM' positioning as a teacher/researcher, review my post-structural ontological positioning and how my postcolonial epistemology and the three research themes of intercultural learning, place and pedagogy informed my work including the way it helped expose paradoxes, surprises and limitations. Within this I highlight the significance of the 'colonial signature' and the 'latitude and longitude of learning' to my research and through this identify two 'threshold concepts' (Meyer and Land, 2003) of *postcolonial theory* and *reflexivity*, without which deeper intercultural learning seemed inaccessible. I use my conclusions to tentatively identify nine significant outcomes to my thesis in section 16.3 and identify implications for practice and possible future research. Not wishing to end my thesis on perhaps a rather 'dry' note, I close with an epilogue where I reflect on my learning.

16.2 Theoretical Conclusions

Post-structuralism: Straining at the Enlightenment 'leash'

I approached my research through post-structuralism as a means to investigate how engagement with the Other may aspire to the postcolonial and also to strain from the 'Enlightenment leash' (Bhabha, 1986) that was revealed as my epistemological and ontological foundation. It allowed me to engage deeply with my research with a confident uncertainty in order to further my understanding of intercultural learning without attempting to generalise conclusions beyond the study parameters.

Post-structuralism's disinterest in an immutable truth enabled me to argue that 'fictional' representations of intercultural learning were viable data alongside my empirical research. Such an approach furthered my ontological positioning and deepened my understanding in my thesis accordingly. A symbiotic, rather than linear, relationship emerged between 'fictional' and empirical data in a similar way to Richardson and Lockridge's (2004) sociological and literary approach to their travels. The 'fictional' film narratives helped

deepen my understanding of the participants' intercultural learning and vice versa and enabled themes like relationships, 'colonial signatures' and 'home' to formulate. In this way tensions between my 'fictional' consideration of intercultural learning and that of the participants' learning were mostly avoided; rather the ability to study 'fictional' intercultural learning repeatedly worked rather like re-reading participants' interview transcripts in deepening my understanding of intercultural learning. Consideration of the film characters helped expose certain metaphors for learning that may have remained invisible in the participants' transcripts such as the discarded baggage of the three brothers in *The Darjeeling Limited* (Anderson, 2007). Furthermore, involving literary criticism within my theoretical analysis, such as by Rushdie (1992), aided my conception of 'home' and Gilbert and Gubar (1979/2000) helped deepen my exploration of a more feminist postcolonial theory.

A further problematical binary inherent with Said's work is that of the Orient and Occident. As a researcher I did not obfuscate my perceived need to delineate countries such as India from those such as the UK, and while this retained my ethical and honest approach to my research, it presented a considerable challenge. My ironic use of 'excentricised' within the performative term 'ECM' as the counterpart to 'CM' and the explicit reference to the power of the centre challenged Said's binary. I recognised, however, that I strained, rather than broke the power of this binary and my exploration of this was ultimately less successful than my working between the 'fictional'/'factual' binary explained above. I, like Yeğenoğlu (1998), could finally do no more than to use single quotation marks around such terms as 'CM' and 'ECM' to indicate some of the controversy in using them, however, such limitations did not necessarily restrict my wider use of postcolonial theory to which I now turn in more detail.

Postcolonial Theory: A 'threshold concept'

My post-structuralist ontology was complemented by the thesis' postcolonial epistemology. Yeğenoğlu's (1998) feminist Orientalism provided a complementary lens to Said's original work, which was furthered through a psychosocial reading that drew especially on Hook (2012) and Bhabha (1994/2004). My approach enabled me to consider influences on intercultural learning that drew on phenomena from an intra-personal scale to macro-societal factors including fantasy, stereotyping, hauntings and global power which went beyond Said's original views expressed in *Orientalism* (1978/2003).

Postcolonial theory has been fundamental to my thinking about how those from the 'CM' engage in intercultural learning in an 'ECM' setting. What became apparent was the importance of postcolonial theory to the participants' understanding of intercultural learning within a global context which helped form their 'latitude and longitude of learning'. It enabled me to grasp the significance of power that is inherent in intercultural engagements with the 'ECM' Other to such an extent that I have come to regard an understanding of postcolonial theory as a 'threshold concept' (Meyer and Land, 2003) to enable deeper intercultural learning. I am cautious about absolutism, but within this research setting, and without a firm understanding of postcolonial theory, deeper learning was inaccessible due to the limited global power dimensions with which such learning was articulated. Where postcolonial theory was not explicitly available such as for Ruth in *Holy Smoke* (Campion, 1999), her inarticulacy about the power of 'CM' cultures and the significance of her intercultural experiences left her angry and frustrated after returning 'home'.

Postcolonial theory not only provided a language to articulate an unease at an apparent status which was very significant to intercultural learning, but also provoked thinking about an issue in a current global context that otherwise might be granted only historical status. As such, it was an important dimension to developing a personal 'latitude and longitude of learning' as well as deepening learning associated with 'colonial signatures'.

Certain epistemological limitations inherent within postcolonial theory were discussed in chapter three which are illustrated by the challenge of, and complexity in, my attempt to subvert the binary between 'Orient' and 'Occident'. The participants' use of postcolonial theory presented a means to reflexively consider an engagement with the Other; however, in some cases, such as for Elizabeth, the apparent endless deconstruction led to perceptions of a lack of agency in that engagement. It was perhaps such a negative sensation that caused me to highlight my *aspiration* to a postcolonial engagement in my thesis, and to read postcolonialism as a process rather than an entity to be achieved or worse still mastered!

Furthermore there is some danger that notions of power remain rather abstract within broad interpretations of postcolonial theory and thus are not associated with certain actions or positioning, however, a reflective/reflexive account such as that required of the participants helped reduce this risk as it provoked a contemporary and theoretical account of learning.

Postcolonial theory dominated the theoretical considerations in the participants' reflections often to the detriment of using other related lenses such as gender or class with which to consider power dynamics within the intercultural engagements. Some participants'

outcomes surprisingly neglected additional lenses —especially gender— even when these issues had been indicated to be personally important dimensions to the process of intercultural learning. Such additional macro-scale complexities, as well as more micro-scale factors that potentially influenced the intercultural engagements such as Francis' response to death, exposed the messiness of reality experienced in the field. Such complexities were not able to be explained by a singular lens afforded by postcolonial theory as noted by a minority of participants such as Alice. Her thoughts in particular illustrated the extent to which theory extends our thinking but also limits it. Such an apparent paradox provoked me to reflexively consider the epistemological limitations of my research throughout my conclusions, often provoked by the thoughts and findings of the participants.

Place: 'Latitude and longitude of learning'

I had no firm preconceptions about how a 'latitude and longitude of learning' might develop apart from theorising that as a psychosocial construction it would be personally unique. The findings revealed that Keralan perceptions of place were significant to the outcomes for the participants. The trigger from the surprise of the 'experienced', as opposed to the 'expected', Kerala shocked in a range of ways with mostly very positive views of Kerala emerging. At one level, transcultural comparisons of Kerala and the UK became representations of the 'ECM' and 'CM' respectively to form a 'latitude and longitude of learning' constructed initially around a straightforward 'rich/poor' binary (arguably an Orientalist construction) but which developed with further reflection.

Participants' perceptions of Kerala were challenged through the Keralite's apparent agency indicated through female emancipation, academic achievement in school, and career aspirations in a similar way to film characters, such as Todd's reappraisal of India and Indians from his work-related relationships in *Outsourced* (Jeffcoat, 2006). Orientalist assumptions about the Other were exposed through such agency, which also challenged worldviews and began to create a more nuanced 'latitude and longitude of learning' that questioned personal agency situated within the apparent Oriental passivity of the 'ECM'. The challenge of that experienced as opposed to that expected by the participants did not contest the rich/poor binary that still underpinned the surprise expressed in the 'unhappy/happy' perceptions that emerged of Kerala and the UK. Similar surprise about the 'unhappy/happy' binary was also evident in the brothers' perceptions of India/Indians in *The Darjeeling Limited* (Anderson, 2007), and which I consider are at least tinged with an Oriental romanticism.

Contrary to theoretical concerns about regarding the Other as exotic, I considered that an exotic sense of place was not necessarily detrimental to understanding the Other as long as the exoticism was seen as such and that it should not become the 'single story' of that place. As I noted earlier a theoretical limitation of Said's *Orientalism* (1978/2003) according to Bhabha (1994/2004) and Hook (2012) is its dalliance with, rather than an embrace of, psychoanalytical theory. In using a psychosocial approach it was possible to argue that the participants' romantic Orientalism of Kerala, and the three brothers' reappraisal of the Indian villagers whom they met, exposed a fantasy that was more of a latent Orientalism rather than anything that was manifest (Said, 1978/2003). This fantasy, projected onto the locals, built upon the idea of spiritual or philosophical amelioration of economic hardship that assuaged a colonial guilt linked to a growing awareness that regarded 'CM' power as a causal dimension to such hardship. Any counter-evidence that potentially developed the story beyond its singularity was disavowed consciously, or unconsciously, to maintain Bhabha's "arrested fixated form of representation" (1994/2004 p. 107). Bhabha associated such fixity with stereotyping which was used here to support an increasingly fragile worldview that vacillated between pre-visit expectations of India and 'new' thinking from the experiences and reflection during the visit.

I was surprised at the extent to which the development of the 'latitude and longitude of learning' became a theoretical activity for the participants rather than something solely based on experiential reflection. However, rather than refer to a form of environmental determinism to consider factors in intercultural learning, reference was made particularly to postcolonial theory to explain intercultural experiences underpinned by a growing awareness of global power dynamics which helped explain some, but not all, of the messiness of reality.

The reflection and reflexivity provoked by the emergent tensions between apparent individual agency of the Other and the perceived economic differential between Kerala and 'home' enabled global connections to emerge to deepen the 'latitude and longitude of learning'. Perhaps, counterintuitively, deeper understanding of global power came from personal reflexivity made after provocative, individual and local encounters with the Other which became a paradoxical outcome of the research.

Encounters, such as with begging, for the participants, or the drowning boys, for Francis and his brothers, chimed with Levinas' (1972/2006) ideas of the 'face' which demands justice for those encountered but, in less instantaneous and shocking circumstances, the connection with Keralite student teachers was also a provocation to respond. The peer

relationship provided the opportunity for a 'cosmopolitan imagining' to emerge. It was here that local relations provided a cultural translation that began to be contextualised globally and where, once epistemological certainties became context/place specific as thinking transcended national borders, connections were made through professional commonalities. A final element to 'cosmopolitan imagining'— that of reinterpreted politics with a global ethical dimension— drew me to a further important factor in the 'latitude and longitude of learning'; namely, that of 'home' where agency predominantly emerged.

When the return 'home' was problematic, it suggested the complexities of the cultural translation required to articulate intercultural learning were appreciated and I tentatively associated such problematising with a deeper 'latitude and longitude of learning'. Where a reconceptualisation of 'home' was associated with agency, learning went beyond simple transcultural comparison to become more of a reflexive consideration of Self/Other but, significantly, for the 'latitude and longitude of learning' within a deepened understanding of contemporary global power and its colonial heritage.

The imperial awareness illustrated in many participants' montages showed their conscious, geo-historically infused, pre-visit perceptions of India which I expect would have been less evident should the visit have been to many other parts of the 'ECM'. It supported my earlier point about the significance of situation and context to my research and its outcomes. The former colonial relationship influenced the UK-based participants' engagement with India, probably in a different way to the film characters from Australia and the USA, but their expression of some colonial understanding was far from detrimental to an understanding about modern India. Rather, the troubling revelation that the colonial legacy of Anglo-Indian relationships remained alive in the colonial hegemony they perceived through their encounters with the Other, brought feelings of guilt and an existing colonial understanding into modern focus that provided a strong impetus to theorise about these troubling experiences. These experiences and feelings chimed with my own during and after my visits to India over the last eight years as a teacher and provoked me to think more deeply about such matters and eventually to undertake this research.

Whatever the participants, and I, represented seemed to be culturally privileged by the Other. The informally encountered Keralites would have had no knowledge of our nationality, which led me to conclude that the status granted to us was primarily due to a representation of us as the English-speaking 'CM' rather than as British. The bestowed privilege was more a function of contemporary global power than a colonial 'haunting' although, of course, I recognise the interconnection of these phenomena and the reduced

emphasis on the colonial inheritance contrasted with the participants' own colonial 'hauntings'.

The colonial hegemonic stimulus provoked considerable theorising that developed a 'latitude and longitude of learning' underpinned by notions of contemporary global power with a colonial heritage. Rather than this be a fixed view of place, such a 'latitude and longitude of learning' became more a theoretical way to engage with matters that viewed the connections between places and people as fluid, and with more permeable boundaries, which chimed with Massey's "global sense of the local" (1994, p. 156).

Intercultural Learning: 'colonial signatures' and the 'threshold concept' of reflexivity

My findings identified a series of triggers to intercultural learning that exposed a tension between the immediate experience and an emergent and transitional 'latitude and longitude of learning' that increasingly was aware of global power whose exposure was aided through postcolonial theory. It perhaps illustrated a theoretical limitation of postcolonial theory, or at least tensions between cognitive/theoretical and emotional and/or existential responses to an experience. Some of the participants' responses to the brass band and the brothers' reaction to the drowning boys and consequential funeral illustrated these tensions. It is possible that intercultural learning developed within a simultaneous Orientalist approach to an immediate encounter, whilst beginning to reform perceptions of 'home' and to recognise the postcolonial dimensions, or at least unequal power dynamics within such experiences. Tensions from 'troublesome knowledge' (Meyer and Land, 2003) required considerable coping strategies which enabled participants to contain anxieties rather than retreating to a 'home' position (Andreotti, 2013). Perhaps these tensions provoked many participants to theoretically explain their encounters with the Other rather quickly in terms of global power. Such explanations were developed further on returning 'home' through academic theoretical considerations of postcolonialism.

The triggers or 'colonial signatures' were a significant element within my findings, whether they were significant, single events or elements of experiences that were repeated numerous times. The 'colonial signatures' were often more hopeful than Said's (1978/2003) idea of the Median Category, although there were at least two forms of 'colonial signature' where it formed a barrier to deeper learning. The first was a signature that provoked limited reflection and rather simple transcultural comparisons, and where the Self and notions of the Other remained unexamined such as Becky's response to begging.

The second signature that was a barrier to learning related to an unexamined trigger from experiences that were disavowed, perhaps as a result of the experience challenging worldviews. The visit to the affluent school represented the shock of the familiar in the 'wrong' place becoming a form of 'place blindness' which was disavowed possibly as it became too difficult a concept to hold through the ensuing bewilderment it provoked to, perhaps, transitional worldviews. This was not the 'place blindness' I considered in chapter four due to an overwhelming experience of exotica, but more the opposite due to encountering a place perceived as an 'un-exotic familiar'. It became a surprising outcome of my research and was perhaps also linked to the theoretical emphasis placed on difference within my research and the participants' similar scholarly and reflexive thinking.

Congruent thinking between me and the participants perhaps highlighted a limitation of my research associated with the tight entwinement between my simultaneous roles of teacher and researcher. Arguably my theoretical teaching influenced the participants' thinking largely to the extent to which my own thinking extended in certain ways such as making the familiar strange and a non-judgemental engagement with difference. However, it is clear that the participants' theoretical engagement that supported their academic reflections also drew on theoretical ideas beyond those I used such as intercultural competence and well-being that went beyond ideas I ventured such as the 'colonial signature'.

'Colonial signatures' with reflexive responses to triggers revealed how reflexivity enabled deeper learning through a reconsideration of Self/Other. It was the reflexive dimension within the response to a 'colonial signature' that enabled some apparently pivotal, personal experiences to provoke changes in worldviews and led eventually to agency. It happened at the scale of the Self but in relation to the Other. Reflexivity seemed important in deconstructing the power and colonial dimensions that were implicit in existing assumptions about the Other as well as the Self. I came to regard reflexivity as a further 'threshold concept' (Meyer and Land, 2003) to the deepening of intercultural learning and also to my own research. Through a reflexive approach to intercultural encounters and, more broadly, in relation to theory it potentially exposed the assumptions that underpin beliefs at a range of scales that then allowed personal 'cultural baggage' to be set aside during intercultural engagements. More fundamentally, reflexivity led to a potential reconsideration of Self and worldview and to consider my own positioning as a 'CM' researcher through this process.

Researcher reflexivity was fundamental to the success of the process and outcomes of my research. This is not to conclude that reflexivity was fundamental to enabling participants to think and act differently; less reflexive narratives still illustrated significant change. The

change associated with a reflexive consideration of intercultural learning, however, focused more on the Self in relation to the Other. It was a means to access deeper learning and it is at this level that a non-reflexive consideration of learning failed to operate.

There appeared to be a significant relationship between my 'threshold concepts' (Meyer and Land, 2003) of postcolonial theory and reflexivity. It seemed that deeper intercultural learning occurred when reflexive thinking was provided with an epistemological or ontological framework within which it could be reviewed and a language with which to articulate it. It was only then that learning became tangible and agency was possible. Postcolonial theory was the dominant means for such learning to be articulated and deepened.

The deepest reflexivity was associated with those who could hold uncertainty and conflicting ideas simultaneously whilst dealing with what was, for many, an emotionally, or even existentially, challenging event. The emotional and/or existential response to the event seemed to be an important factor in deepening intercultural learning which concurred with the findings of Rogers and Tough (1996) in the classroom and Scoffham and Barnes (2009) in the field. In my findings, I alluded to a range of influences on the process of intercultural learning and am cautious about promoting the primacy of any one of them; however, such deep learning seemed to be achieved by those who were able to perform with an open, fluid disposition towards difference (Andreotti, 2010; 2013). Such a disposition was more important than other influences on learning, such as previous international travel experience or one's discipline, but this is not to dismiss these factors as irrelevant or non-contributory to such open dispositions.

The deepening of my own reflexive findings was no exception to that outlined above. It was perhaps my growing knowledge of theories of learning from intercultural experiences; however, that complemented my postcolonial epistemology that supported the deepening of my research. Without reference to such theory I may well not have acknowledged the importance of emotions and existential elements to such learning, including my own as a researcher, or indeed the significance of gender, or class as additional lenses to regard the power dynamics of these intercultural engagements. Furthermore as a researcher from the 'CM' it was my post-structural ontology that provoked a deeper reflexive consider of my capital and privileges as well as the limitations inherent in the power dynamics of the research compared to treating this only as a postcolonial epistemological matter, not least in my attempts to strain at the Enlightenment leash throughout the work.

The outcomes of intercultural learning, as well as for my research, were varied, unpredictable and idiosyncratic. I do not regard the outcomes articulated in the findings as final and further longitudinal research would be required to consider how these may change. It is possible to read the outcomes as transformative since epistemological changes were evident in the findings. Such changes included many reformed worldviews informed by postcolonial theory, and at a more local scale, changes at personal/professional levels from relinquishing control through to individual aspects of pedagogy and questioning of disciplinary epistemology. The significance of some of the outcomes that could not be considered transformative in the Mezirow (2000) sense led me to think of the intercultural outcomes as a result of provocative learning, especially as many of the changes identified were a consequence of triggers to existing, perhaps latent, ideas such as one's faith or well-being.

Linking the 'latitude and longitude of learning' to the 'colonial signature'

By considering the 'latitude and longitude of learning' as a feature associated with spatial understanding and the 'colonial signature' as more temporal, it is possible to begin to relate these two ideas as a means to develop my thinking about intercultural learning and the temporal and spatial dimensions therein. In developing a greater temporal dimension to such understanding within a postcolonial epistemology I am reminded of criticisms of Said's *Orientalism* (1978/2003) for the lack of its temporality (Hook, 2012).

The 'latitude and longitude of learning' provided more of a breadth to understanding intercultural learning through the way that the locality, or the place, of learning became contextualised globally. Such breadth complemented the greater depth provided by the 'colonial signature' and the temporal dimension to intercultural learning inherent in the colonial relationship that underpinned the intercultural engagement. Figure 16.1 shows this relationship graphically.

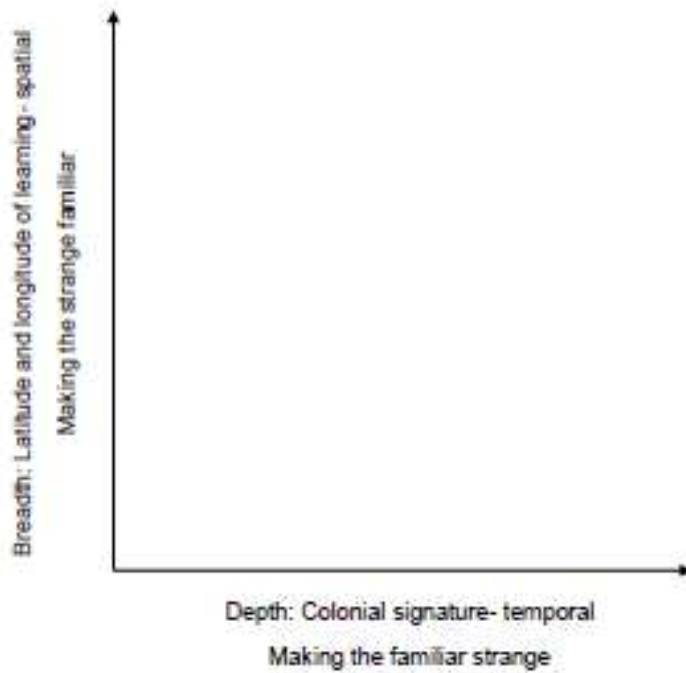


Figure 16.1 Temporal and spatial dimensions to intercultural learning

It was the depth associated with temporal considerations of intercultural learning that was perhaps the hardest for the participants to develop often through the process of *making the familiar strange* without which the signature was likely to be redolent of Said's (1978/2003) Median Category. Contrary to this the 'latitude and longitude of learning' was enhanced through the process of *making the strange familiar* often through theorisation about global power structures evident in the places of learning. Bringing the notions of familiarity and strangeness together within temporal and spatial dimensions provides a means to deepen understanding about the colonial dimensions to intercultural learning. Furthermore it enabled a theoretical outcomes of my thesis to recognise and combine temporal and spatial dimensions to intercultural learning.

Pedagogy

The *de facto* political act of my research was mirrored by a more deliberate, political dimension to my teaching which became mutually supportive acts, not least seen in the plenaries and the participants' reflective writing. *Not* to teach the participants, and to allow them 'freedom' to analyse their Keralan experiences unsupported, would have been a

political act; an act that reinforced the cultural hegemony that surrounds the power of the 'CM' and reinforced the pedagogic need pre-, during, and post-visit to consider matters of postcolonialism and representation as well as intercultural learning (Martin and Griffiths, 2012).

My pedagogy aspired to expose the colonial that is written through us and looked to enable worldviews to change. It borrowed heavily from the ideas of "kindredness" through a decolonial "pedagogy of lovingness" of De Lissovoy (2010, p. 279) and from Andreotti's (2011, p. 230). pedagogic framework that highlighted the importance of 'learning to unlearn', 'learning to listen', 'learning to learn', and 'learning to reach out'. Two associated pedagogic features emerge from the findings and from theory: the significance of dialogue and of reflexivity. The need to be hyper-reflexive (Andreotti, 2007) built on Spivak's need for us to be "scrupulously vigilant in relation to [our] complicities" (ibid, p. 74) and thus a pedagogy that helped expose the way we are written through with the colonial, through our assumptions and worldviews, was vital to deeper intercultural learning.

The development of a 'liminal place' and the modelling of open, tentative and fluid approaches in reflecting on, and being reflexive about, experiences was an aid to deepening intercultural learning and promoting a reflective/reflexive group culture indicative of discussions in the plenaries and by the participants' engagement with the journal. The intention in the plenaries was to promote dialogue with purpose, in Freirian ways, that sought to develop the criticality of the participants and further the culture of reflection and reflexivity within the group.

Conversations between the participants, and the participants and the Other, were also encouraged to be dialogues with purpose built on Freirian principles. Participants deemed these conversations important to enabling intercultural learning and they also seemed significant to Todd's learning in *Outsourced* (Jeffcoat, 2006). The learning from the peer conversations was perhaps indicative of "learning to listen" (Andreotti, 2011, p. 230) where 'CM' thinking was exposed as such and not a global 'natural' phenomenon. The learning from these interactions was also perhaps the embryonic stages of "learning to learn" (ibid) where ideas about education and, more broadly about life, were heard from the Other and valued. Such learning is also associated with the 'cultural baggage' some participants explicitly argued they put aside in their thinking and perhaps began to "see through other eyes", a feature of Andreotti's (2011) "learning to learn" (ibid). The possibility for this to happen was almost certainly strengthened through the mutual endeavours of learning to be a teacher with which the Keralan and UK-based participants were engaged.

The intercultural peer conversations between participants and Keralan students provided cultural translations about matters and established a relationship between fellow professionals of similar ages, at the beginning of their careers, that overcame their different educational cultures and enabled alternative notions of being a teacher to emerge. The conversations seemed to enable connections, no matter how ephemeral, which developed “kindredness” (De Lissovoy, 2010, p. 279) that transcended national boundaries and focussed on plural, professional ways of being akin to critical cosmopolitanism (Delanty, 2009). The possible ephemeral nature of the relationship contrasted with the longevity of its effects and promoted notions of “coexistence” (De Lissovoy, 2010, p. 279) through respectfully regarding different ways of being as appropriate in different, global, cultural contexts. Paradoxically through these micro-scale relationships, the participants began to theorise about the more macro-scale cultural dimensions that might underpin them, such as postcolonialism, and through this an understanding of the ‘latitude and longitude of their learning’ deepened.

Finally it should not be discounted that the effects of the distance from ‘home’ and the relinquishing of its cultural norms perhaps, counterintuitively, provided the opportunity, with pedagogic and group scaffolding, to perform more openly than at ‘home’ with an associated greater ‘disposition towards difference’ (Andreotti, 2013). The return ‘home’ was a re-enculturation into societal and professional norms, and the provocation and structure of the journal and academic written reflection provided an impetus to continue the dialogue with purpose between group members and the Self through the written reflections. It illustrated the importance of the academic dimension of the visit to the depth of the participants’ intercultural learning which concurred with the thinking of Martin and Griffiths (2012).

I now turn to summarise my conclusions and to consider some recommendations for practice and future research before ending my thesis with my epilogue reflecting on my learning.

16.3 Summary, recommendations for practice and future research

Summary

I recognise a certain irony related to the methodological nature of this thesis that I wish to summarise in my conclusions. It contrasts somewhat to the thesis in which I aimed for

tentativity, and where uncertainty and 'not-knowing' were valued; however, there are nine interconnected dimensions that I wish to highlight as key research outcomes:

Firstly, assumptions about Kerala became more positive; however, they tended to lack the nuanced dimensions in comparison to personal reflexivity and rather veered towards a single, if rather positive, story about Keralan culture that may have been influenced by an Orientalist fantasy.

Secondly, an understanding of Postcolonial Theory was highly significant to understanding the global dimensions of power that underpinned a personal 'latitude and longitude of learning' and a 'cosmopolitan imagining'.

A third outcome relates to reflexivity, which was a highly significant dimension to intercultural learning, leading to an exposure of assumptions and a reconsideration of Self and the Other through which 'colonial signatures' deepened learning rather than acted as a barrier and through which worldviews changed. Conversations seemed key to helping deepen intercultural learning and the role of Keralites, who acted as 'cultural translators', was highly significant.

Fourthly, pedagogical approaches that were used pre-, during, and post-visit, aided intercultural learning through an aspiration to the 'decolonial' and by providing a safe 'liminal place' to hold conflicting ideas while resisting making easy conclusions.

My fifth key outcome relates to the shock of the familiar in an unfamiliar setting which seemed more complex and difficult to include within intercultural learning than the shock of the unfamiliar in this setting which was incorporated into altered worldviews more readily.

However, the once familiarity of 'home' seemed strange upon returning from the visit, particularly for those who engaged reflexively with the visit. The re-immersion into dominant 'home' cultures is therefore a significant dimension to the intercultural learning process and forms my sixth key outcome.

The seventh key outcome I identified highlights that for intercultural learning to become tangible, it required cultural translation through further reflection/reflexivity after returning 'home' supported by pedagogic scaffolding.

My eighth outcome found that intercultural learning is idiosyncratic and unpredictable. It may be transformative to some in that learners demonstrate epistemological change, but more often the outcomes of intercultural learning were more likely to be a consequence of

provocative learning caused by the provocation, by an experience to an existing dimension, perhaps latent, within the participant.

Finally for intercultural learning to move beyond the intangible, and to generate agency, a language was needed which linked to a theoretical or philosophical framework. Agency came once learning was articulated but, significantly, within realms where cultural and/or economic capital prevailed, which in most cases was at 'home'.

Recommendations for practice

These recommendations are written with the context of study visits from the 'CM' to the 'ECM' in mind and in the policy arena of secondary school development education and the internationalisation of higher education.

The nature of the visit challenged neo-liberal notions of the primacy of economic gain from the internationalisation agenda and focused more on deepening international awareness through a 'cultural internationalisation' (Harris, 2008). Furthermore, as an example of the practice of embracing an international agenda in ITE, the visit illustrates how ITE in England may reach beyond more technical-rationalist forms of learning to teach (Stewart, 2008). By overcoming the constraints within ITE outlined by Holden and Hicks (2007) such an endeavour enables future teachers to have a richer sense of Self and the Other, through which they are able to consider matters of development education more deeply.

It was striking how my exploration of intercultural pedagogies resonated with the four points of Bourn's (2015, pp. 102-119) 'pedagogical framework of Development Education' outlined in chapter one. His view that a "global outlook" (ibid) was more of a process than an outcome concurred with my findings about the way a theoretically-infused 'latitude and longitude of learning' provided a means to read the world and to deepen learning. Furthermore, his second and third points regarding recognising "power and inequality" and a "belief in social justice" (ibid) resonated with De Lissovoy's (2010) 'decolonial pedagogy' and I associated his final point regarding "reflection, dialogue, personal and social transformation" (ibid) with elements of Andreotti's (2011, p. 230) pedagogical framework especially "learning to reach out".

Where perhaps my conclusions go further than Bourn (2015), and which resonate more fully with De Lissovoy (2010) and Andreotti (2011) is in the importance of relationships and reflexivity to enable deeper learning. De Lissovoy's (2010, p. 279) ideas of "kindredness", associated with Freirian principles of love and respect for the Other, seemed appropriate to

a study visit that aspired towards a postcolonial engagement with the Other. Such a co-constructed pedagogy looked to deepen relationships and to unlearn our existing learning before different forms of learning could commence (Andreotti, 2011). Other forms of pedagogy that looked to master knowledge, or find proof, would have provided superficial transcultural comparisons that did nothing to challenge the 'CM' hegemony.

The deeper learning from the visit was evident in those who were willing and able to be strongly reflexive, and who were thus able to consider their personal role in the intercultural learning experience and review the Self, in respect to the Other, as an outcome to their learning. A focus on Self/Other was more successful in identifying change and generating agency than where transcultural comparisons formed significant parts of the learning process.

At a more pragmatic level, to enable the peer relationships to form, it was important that the visit gained access to educational institutions which Dr Manish, our host, provided. His understanding of the UK group, perhaps from his time spent in the UK and USA and his academic focus on English language, helped us immensely from his willingness and ability to act at times as a cultural translator. That is not to say that he provided a definitive answer to questions we had, but his tentativity and understanding of the cultural translation that our thinking required to consider such matters was very powerful to deepen our experiences and learning.

Future research

Future research stemming from my thesis could develop in at least three different ways. Firstly, a longitudinal study of intercultural learning with the same participants would enable a consideration of the influences of the visit on the continuing professional development of participants. Such research could focus initially on how and why their perceptions of change and agency continued to influence their actions and worldview, or to what extent these changed and/or diminished with time and the reasons for this.

Secondly, and with careful cultural translation, the Keralan student teachers encountered during study visits could be involved in the research more through data collection methods, such as a short journal and interviews, to enable them to articulate their own intercultural learning from engaging with the UK study visit participants in their college/university. I would anticipate that such research could be jointly developed with colleagues at the teacher training college and university aided through our existing relationships and publications.

Thirdly, I would be interested in considering the extent to which a 'latitude and longitude of learning' is discernible in different cultural locations and how perceptions of place influence learning.

16.4 Epilogue: Reflections on my learning

My research has been personally and academically deeply influential at a range of levels. I had led numerous student teacher study visits to India prior to the 2014 visit. However, that particular visit—in conjunction with associated critical reading, analysis and reflexivity—challenged me in various new ways and led me to read the world differently. It has been personally and professionally transformative.

Post-structuralism's emphasis on tentativity released me from searching for an immutable truth and has been powerful, enabling me to dwell in the uncertainty that my reading, reflexivity and data, (including 'fictional' accounts of intercultural learning), provided. Working between binaries and recognising the power that lies within this space has been empowering and has challenged me to stretch the colonial 'tether' to which Bhabha (1986) evocatively alludes. Postcolonial theory reveals 'CM' assumptions that applaud the 'natural' logic and cognitive privilege of the Enlightenment to be socio-cultural constructions. Such a revelation enabled me to question myself, and to approach all I do in a spirit of 'learning to unlearn' before I could begin to learn in different ways (Andreotti, 2011). Aspects of the findings concurred with my reflections about Kerala and intercultural learning outlined in chapter two. They also challenged me to deepen my thinking about the process of intercultural learning and the ways that learning influences Self, our relations with the Other, and how we conduct our lives thereafter.

I developed an enhanced 'latitude and longitude of learning' that grew from regarding Kerala as a different place from 'home' to understanding similarities too. From regarding these places at a local scale, my theoretical understanding enhanced my understanding of the global interconnectedness between the two places, seen most strongly through professional/academic connections in a move towards a 'cosmopolitan imagining'.

My intercultural learning exposed inherent colonial attitudes; more than I expected, but in drawing my findings from the narratives, and in forming these conclusions, it has provoked me further to aspire to a postcolonial engagement not only with the Other, but through a continued reflexive reconsideration of myself.

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Aspiring to a postcolonial engagement with the Other: an investigation into student teachers' intercultural learning from a South Indian study visit.

Appendices

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Appendix One: Permissions Template

I confirm that the transcript is a faithful representation of the interview conducted between myself and Simon Hault. I agree to its contents being used as research data alongside that of my PIES and Intercultural Learning Journal. I also agree to its use in future publications and research presentations.

I understand that all attempts will be made to assure my anonymity including the use of pseudonyms and being cautious in revealing the subject specialism of participants. I am aware, however, that it may be possible for actions or comments of mine that are included in any thesis or published work to be recognised by a member of the 2014 study visit group or possibly by my Curriculum or Professional Studies Tutor at CCCU tutor.

Signed

Date:

Appendix Two: Intercultural Learning Journal

(with written spaces for participants' writing removed)

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the 'Intercultural Learning: South India' Enhanced Studies Module. We hope that the experiences over January will be highly memorable and believe that your intercultural learning has the potential to be transformative to you as a teacher and person not just in the short-term during the visit but throughout your lifetime.

The preparation sessions in Canterbury are partly to finalise details and to ensure everyone is secure about travel arrangements and expectations of the module. The taught sessions will also prepare you by asking you to consider your expectations about India/Kerala and its education and also to think about your influences in responding to these questions. Intercultural learning during the study visit is a process of engaging with the 'Other' and considering the learning that ensues from this engagement and growing relationship.

By the 'Other' we mean that which is culturally different from yourself and it is important to recognise that our learning about the 'Other' also triggers learning about ourselves with the potential for both to be deep and transformative. We say this is *potential* learning because it is not a certainty. At times we may retreat behind our 'defences' and block out experiences, or deny their difference which challenges the way think about the world. Other preparatory sessions will help with this by considering the intercultural learning process evident in Wes Anderson's film 'The Darjeeling Limited' as well as through academic texts and papers which will also draw upon theories of Transformative Learning. Finally we will look at postcolonial theory to consider possible ways that we in the 'West' look and think through our constructions of the 'Other' in a process called Orientalism (Said 1978). After the study visit to south India you will be placed in a UK school to re-immersing yourself in the English education system and to reflect on your learning and the ways (if any) it has provoked you to think and act differently.

We would like you to keep an intercultural learning journal which will form the basis for your research notes for your professional investigation. We hope that you enjoy the module and look forward to experiencing south India and the rest of the module with you.

USING THE JOURNAL

You will be asked to write in your journal as part of each university session and daily during your study visit in Kerala and afterwards in a UK school. Pre-and post visit entries are structured with open, but specific, questions whereas reflections during the study visit itself are entirely open for you to respond to the most significant aspects of your learning that day. Your writing will not only *record* your thinking about daily experiences, but through this reflective process we believe it will deepen your understanding of issues. This is not a suggestion that you reach meaningful conclusions for each reflective piece, but rather use your reflections to ask further questions to direct and deepen your future enquiry. Your journal will be submitted as part of your professional investigation and as such be assessed using Level 7 assessment criteria.

THE KERALAN DAYS

The first two days in Kerala will be spent relaxing and finding out about local cultures before we begin visiting schools and colleges. We will visit the schools, which will all be in south Kerala, as one group and during these visits you will be able to meet with teachers at the school as well as to observe lessons. It is suggested that you develop a focus for your time in school that are either very classroom focused such as the curriculum for a specific subject, the ways that children are taught, the role of questioning by teachers or consider education more widely such as the importance of education to pupils, or the changing nature of Keralan education. There will be time in the evenings for relaxation and reflection about the day and it is during this time that we would like you to talk to the group about your shared experiences and to write your journal entry. In doing this it will probably provoke you to want to ask more questions and we urge you to do this in following observations and when you meet fellow student teachers and other students at the teacher training college and university.

UK-BASED SCHOOL DAYS

The Enhanced Studies module includes two-weeks where the majority of time is school-based. You will have an additional four days in a UK school where you will attend during normal school hours. We suggest you focus on three things during your time in school. Firstly use any observation and/or meeting time to consider your south Indian observations in the light of being re-immersed into a UK school culture and secondly review your journal entries and consider your intercultural learning now that you are re-immersed in a UK school setting. You will find in the UK-based school days part of the journal that there are some guiding questions to help you to reflect on your experiences. Please consider all these questions but do not feel that you need to consider them in turn or complete one before commencing another. The third focus

for your UK-based school days in to begin to draft your Professional Investigation which you will find more details of at the back of this journal.

W/b 13 Jan	Session 1: Introduction: Your Views
<p>Welcome to the Intercultural Learning: South India Study Visit Module Option. Please consider your initial responses to the following 7 questions and note your responses either in prose, mind maps or other diagrammatic form in the space below/overleaf. There are no correct/incorrect responses- please write freely according to your own thoughts.</p>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What are the purposes of education?2. What motivates children to learn?3. What are the characteristics of an 'outstanding' lesson?4. How do pupils learn best?5. What do you think restricts pupils' learning?6. In what ways (if any) do you anticipate that Kerala as a place will be similar/different to 'home'.7. In what ways (if any) do you anticipate the Keralan education that you will experience will be similar/different to your existing experiences of English education?	

W/b 13 January	Session 1: My Influences
<p>Use this double-page spread to develop a montage of pictures to show the range of influences that you draw upon when you think about India/Kerala. Then annotate it to indicate why these are influential in your present understanding of 'India'. Be prepared to share this later with your peers.</p>	

W/b 13 January	Session 2: Intercultural Learning in Film
<p>Use this page to reflect upon the three brothers' learning in Wes Andersons' film Darjeeling Limited. How do you think their views about India/Indians and the ways they compare and connect these views to 'home' help and/or hinder their learning? In responding to this consider their own dispositions, how they relate to others, and the way they engage with different experiences in India.</p>	

W/b 13 Jan	Session 3: Postcolonial Theories
<p>To what extent are we in the 'West' influenced by our colonial heritage (for example in our cultures practices, actions, and politics) at personal and wider levels? How might this affect the ways we see India as a place?</p>	

W/b 13 January

Session 4 Intercultural Learning

In considering Vanessa de Oliveira Andreotti's 'Disposition Towards Difference', which of the dispositions best describes you? Do you think that you may 'perform' other dispositions at times? What might prevent you or provoke you to 'perform' differently and why?

W/b 13 January

Session 4 Intercultural Learning (Continued)

If we accept there is a certain 'Disorientation' to intercultural learning (which may be significant in reforming our thinking), how best can we support one another in 'living with this uncertainty' and enabling us to learn about matters as deeply as possible without 'denying these experiences' or jumping to easy, or generalised conclusions?

Remind yourself why you chose this Enhanced Studies Module by considering the following prompting questions:

1. What do you want to learn from your Study Visit?
2. What strengths will you bring to the groups' learning?
3. And also what do you think will be most challenging to you as a learner? Why?

South India Day 1 Friday 17th January 2014 : Arrival

Briefly outline the significant experience(s) of the day.

What questions do these experiences raise with regards to intercultural learning? What further questions do you want to ask as a result of your reflections?

South India Day 2 Saturday 18th January 2014 : Cultural Excursion

Briefly outline the significant experience(s) of the day.

What questions do these experiences raise with regards to intercultural learning? What further questions do you want to ask as a result of your reflections?

South India Day 3 Sunday 19th January 2014: Cultural Excursion

Briefly outline the significant experience(s) of the day.

What questions do these experiences raise with regards to intercultural learning? What further questions do you want to ask as a result of your reflections?

South India Day 4: Monday 20th January 2014 School Visit

Briefly outline the significant experience(s) of the day.

What questions do these experiences raise with regards to intercultural learning? What further questions do you want to ask as a result of your reflections?

South India Day 5 Tuesday 21st January 2014: School Visit

Briefly outline the significant experience(s) of the day.

What questions do these experiences raise with regards to intercultural learning? What further questions do you want to ask as a result of your reflections?

South India Day 6 Wednesday 22nd January 2014 : Conference Welcome and School Visit

Briefly outline the significant experience(s) of the day.

What questions do these experiences raise with regards to intercultural learning? What further questions do you want to ask as a result of your reflections?

South India Day 7 Thursday 23rd January 2014: Student Conference

Briefly outline the significant experience(s) of the day.

What questions do these experiences raise with regards to intercultural learning? What further questions do you want to ask as a result of your reflections?

South India Day 8 Friday 24th January 2014: Model School/Teacher Training College Visit

Briefly outline the significant experience(s) of the day.

What questions do these experiences raise with regards to intercultural learning? What further questions do you want to ask as a result of your reflections?

South India Day 9 Saturday 25th January 2014 : Independent Learning

Briefly outline the significant experience(s) of the last day of the study visit in south India.

What questions do these experiences raise with regards to intercultural learning? What further questions do you want to ask as a result of your reflections?

South India Day 10 Sunday 26th January 2014 Return Travel: Something for the flight....

Refer to your journal and photos. What have been the greatest learning points of the visit for you and why?

Take one example from above. Explain your learning process.....in other words, how did you learn? What helped and hindered this process?

w/b 27 January

Welcome 'Home'! UK School Days

Over the next few days refer to the following questions and reflect on them now that you are re-immersed into the English education system. You should engage with all questions but do not feel that you have to consider them sequentially or complete one before beginning another.

Refer to your journal and photos. Which aspects of your experiences in Kerala have confirmed your preconceptions of India/Kerala and which aspects have challenged them and why? To what extent do our perceptions of a place alter the way we learn about it and its people?

W/b 27 January

UK School Day

Refer to your journal and photos. Were there any images, events or people that stick out in your mind as significant to you? (for example it might be a conversation with an Indian student or someone on the study visit or something simple like an advert of a type of transport). Consider one example and explain in what ways did this help and/or hinder your learning about differences and similarities between Kerala and the UK?

W/b 27 January

UK School Day

Refer to your notes that considered the following 7 questions at the start of this module:

1. *What is the purpose of education?*
2. *What motivates children to learn?*
3. *What are the characteristics of an excellent teacher?*
4. *What are the characteristics of an excellent learner?*
5. *How do pupils learn best?*
6. *What do you think restricts pupils' learning?*
7. *In what ways (if any) do you anticipate that the Kerala education that you will experience will be similar/different to your existing experiences of English education?*

Use your time in the UK school to reflect on the similarities and/or differences in your views about these seven questions upon return to the UK.

W/b 27 January

UK School Day

In what ways (if any) do you think your learning experiences from Enhanced Studies might change the way you **act** professionally and/or personally? Why?

W/b 27 January

UK School Day

In what ways (if any) will your learning experiences during Enhanced Studies change the way you **think and feel** personally and/or professionally? Why?

Additional Pages for notes/sketches etc

The Professional Investigation:

Title: *'With reference to theory, and your study visit journal, write a 3,000 word reflective account of your intercultural learning during the study visit'.*

Your learning journal must be appended as a reflective account of your learning and as such constitutes 1,000 words towards the overall word count of the investigation. There is *no* need to write a methodology as part of the 3,000 words.

This investigation may highlight a particular area of content that your reflections may have focussed upon but should indicate:

- 1) Ways that you learnt interculturally;
- 2) What you learnt;
- 3) How your learning may have helped you consider the (post)colonial issues exposed through your experiences and reflections as a consequence of the study visit.
- 4) Ways that your learning will, or already has, influenced your personal and/or professional thinking and actions.

Finally we would like to use your entries in your intercultural learning journal and your professional investigation (PIES) as data in research and possible publication about intercultural learning. We believe that your thinking will be valuable in helping us to understand this learning process and the value of study visits and would be grateful if you consent below to us using this. Your anonymity is fully assured.

I, (insert name) consent to my intercultural learning journal and professional investigation being used as research data by Simon Houlton and [Scott] and understand that my anonymity is fully assured. I understand that data may be used as part of published dissemination of research findings. Anonymised and coded copies of the data will be secured at CCCU for a maximum of 5 years and destroyed thereafter.

Signed Date

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Appendix Three: Participants' Critical Reflections

The following papers in Appendix 3 form the directly referenced submissions of the Participants' critical reflections upon their intercultural learning. In the few cases where reflections were not directly referenced these are excluded as a means to make the appendices more manageable, however, these reflections are available on request. In the following reflections all text is included as submitted by the participant but lists of references and appendices are removed to reduce the size of these appendices, reduce repetition and maintain anonymity. The sequence of critical reflections mirrors that of the interview transcripts (Appendix 4) which are placed in chronological order that the interviews were conducted.

The following extract from the Learning Journal (Appendix B p210) is included to give an outline of the general guidance provided for the critical reflection.

Title: 'With reference to theory, and your study visit journal, write a 3,000 word reflective account of your intercultural learning during the study visit'.

Your learning journal must be appended as a reflective account of your learning and as such constitutes 1,000 words towards the overall word count of the investigation. There is no need to write a methodology as part of the 3,000 words.

This investigation may highlight a particular area of content that your reflections may have focussed upon but should indicate:

- 1) *Ways that you learnt interculturally;*
- 2) *What you learnt;*
- 3) *How your learning may have helped you consider the (post)colonial issues exposed through your experiences and reflections as a consequence of the study visit.*
- 4) *Ways that your learning will, or already has, influenced your personal and/or professional thinking and actions.*

Each participant was given a pseudonym to protect her/his anonymity. All participants were given the opportunity to choose their own name and where this did not happen I chose names for participants to reflect their gender and the broadly 'Western' and Judeo-Christian heritage of their actual names. The names of all other people are redacted to protect their anonymity. I have redacted names of institutions or places if I considered that revealing that name would lead to revealing the identity of either the institution/place or person. A more nuanced position was taken with regard to the subject discipline of the participants. Where

I deemed this irrelevant to the point being made in the interview the subject is redacted to protect their anonymity, however, where I deemed the subject to be significant to the point being made it remains in the text. In the latter case all other attempts are made to retain anonymity despite revealing subject identities.

'Alice': Intercultural Learning: Critical Reflection

Introduction

The aim of this study is to give a reflective account of my learning journey during an intercultural study visit to South India, Kerala. In order to engage with this question, this study will identify two different frameworks within the literature which attempt to theorise intercultural learning; post-colonial theory, and models of intercultural learning. Post-colonial theory is best described as a set of debates which 'interrogate North-South modes of thought, representations and power relations, as well as their effects on identities, social relations, politics and the distributions of labour and wealth within the world' (Andreotti 2007b; 3). More specific to intercultural learning and study visits, post-colonial theory is concerned with the dynamics of the interaction between visitors from the global North and the Southern 'other' (Andreotti, 2013, Said, 1985). Both strands of literature represent different but, as I hope to demonstrate, not exclusive ways of interpreting learning within an intercultural context.

The aim of this study is to demonstrate that no single framework used to understand intercultural learning can fully encompass the complexity of the learning journey. Drawing upon personal reflections, I hope to demonstrate that my learning journey is one best understood when a combination of multiple theories are employed and reflected upon. This study will discuss the significant impact the visit has had upon my professional practice as a primary school teacher and on me personally.

In order to give my study focus, I will seek to answer the following questions;

- 1) How does my positioning as a Western student affect the way that I learn about the Keralan educational system?
- 2) To what extent did being in a different cultural setting affect my ability to learn and how did I learn?
- 3) How has the study visit impacted my professional and personal thinking and actions?

In terms of methodology, this study has adopted a qualitative, reflective and ethnographic approach to researching intercultural learning (Bryan et al, 2010).

Literature Review

There has been an increasing awareness that teachers and those in education need to become better educated about global issues and matters of global citizenship (Holden and Hicks, 2007). In order for children to gain a more authentic understanding of global concerns, and a 'global education' concerning the increasingly cosmopolitan world in which

they live, it has been argued that ITET (Initial Teacher Education Training) must facilitate the learning of trainee teachers, responding to research showing a lack of knowledge in this area (Bourne, 2014;9; Martin & Griffiths, 2010). This has resulted in a number of educational initiatives (Bourne, 2014;11). This paper will specifically discuss the area of intercultural study visits, whereby trainee teachers actively engage with a different culture. Study visits aim to improve knowledge and understanding of 'the other', and correct the often corrupt and stereotypical images that have formed as a result of narrow depictions within western media and education (Said, 1993; 21; Holden and Hicks, 2007).

Intercultural study visits have received mixed appraisal within the literature. Few dispute the value of intercultural experiences for teachers, however the nature and consequence of interaction between those from the global North and those visited in the South, evokes varying opinions about their merits and value. The literature on intercultural learning is vast. Therefore I have focussed on two main themes; the post-colonial theoretical dimension to intercultural learning, and models of intercultural learning.

Postcolonial theory in Intercultural Learning.

Postcolonial theory maintains that North-South interaction cannot be looked at without reference to the colonial past and the historic, imperialist dimension to relationships (Kapoor, 2004). Said (1993) speaks of the 'residue of imperialism' to describe the way colonial thinking of the past is traceable within our thinking and present interaction (Said, 1993:21). Often, this is a very subtle process and is disguised by a lie that positions colonialism as a thing of the past. Accordingly, 'we' think and act, ignorant of the influence of colonial-thinking upon our interaction with the 'other' (Said, 1985). The literature refers to 'colonial thinking' as thinking dominated by the belief in 'cultural supremacy' and consequently an 'inferior other' (Andreotti, 2007:70).

Martin & Griffiths (2012) argue that the intercultural learning that arises from north-south study visits is often compromised by a pre-existing, internalised, dominant discourse of the 'other' possessed by the students. This dominant discourse, influence by the media, defines 'the other' as lacking relative to the west. Consequently, learning is carried out within an 'aid' framework whereby interaction with the 'other' is defined by pity (Martin & Griffiths, 2012). Such interaction fails to account for the plethora of alternative stories and opportunities for learning about a culture; thus the participant often leaves with a narrow and unrepresentative understanding of the 'other' (Martin, 2008). Many argue that rather than increase knowledge of the south, study visits serve to reinforce and reproduce negative, simplistic stereotypes. Consequently 'frozen narratives' continue to be

perpetuated through the singular stories study participants tell when they return (Said, 1985; Martin & Wyness, 2013).

Post-colonial theorists, such as Martin (2008) discuss our 'positioning' as westerners and query the validity and ethics of study visits. She questions whether attempts from the North to produce knowledge about the global south can ever be truly representative, considering the issues of power and representation that underlie many intercultural learning programmes (Martin, 2008; Andreotti, 2010). Andreotti, (2007) maintains that even in our attempt to be 'pure and authentic', we often rely heavily upon our own limited experiences from which we then make 'gross generalisations... assuming cultural solidarity among a heterogeneous people' (Andreotti, 2007:71). As a result, we homogenise whole nations, dimming the vibrancy of cultural richness to a single story of pity and poverty (Martin & Griffiths, 2012).

Post-colonial theory has been described as 'a destructive rather than constructive theory'; deconstructing experiences and texts to 'reveal the hegemonic discourses' but not offering any 'actionable alternatives' (Martin & Wyness, 2013:16). However, Andreotti (2007b) argues that intercultural study-visits can be of value, but only when there is an educational agenda which engages critically with the experience; she calls this 'critical literacy' (2007b:7). Drawing upon the work of Spivak, Andreotti (2007b) emphasises the process of 'unlearning privilege', also discussed by Kapoor (2004). 'Unlearning privilege' is the ability to 'retrace the itinerary of our prejudices' i.e. to recognise the colonial thoughts within our being that position us as 'better', and in light of this, 'refrain from always wanting to correct, teach, theorise, develop, colonise, use, record, inscribe [and] enlighten' (Kapoor, 2004:641). Similar concepts, such as 'learning to learn from below' and 'learning to live with uncertainty' require the participant to resist projecting 'our local and culturally bound assumptions about reality and knowledge', as if 'natural and universal', onto the 'other' (Andreotti, 2010:15-17). Bhabha (1994) uses the term 'third space' to describe the point in which individuals succeed in 'unlearning [their] privilege'. It is a place in which both parties step outside of their cultural spaces and into a third space in which 'new meaning, ideas and understandings can emerge' (Martin & Wyness 2013;16).

Evidently, within Postcolonial theory, there is an emphasis on the need for a prior knowledge of 'post-colonial ideas, a critical socio-cultural pedagogy, and an explicit consideration of the nature of knowledge and knowledge production' in order for individuals to reflect on experiences and observations meaningfully (Martin & Griffiths, 2012; 919).

Models of intercultural learning

The 'emotional response' to study visits is something that western forms of thinking, arguably a legacy of the Enlightenment, tend to give low status to (Scoffham & Barnes, 2009:298). Post-colonial theory appears sceptical of studies adopting an emotional approach to understanding intercultural learning, favouring a more cognitive, critical, and distanced approach to emotional responses.

Nevertheless, Scoffham & Barnes (2009), looking at the experiences of students' visits to India, unapologetically place great emphasis on emotion and the powerful transformative dimension emotion brings to learning, in ways that maintaining a distanced, detached and purely cognitive approach to responses would not allow (Scoffham & Barnes, 2009).

Their ethnographic research found that visits create conflict and 'dissonance' within individuals at a 'cognitive, emotional and existential level' which results in transformative learning (Scoffham & Barnes, 2009:257). Their model of transformative learning begins with a powerful experience of significance to the individual. This evokes emotions which trigger 'cognitive disturbance'. Scoffham & Barnes (2009) argue that given the correct structured support, the individual can work through their cognitive disturbance, and experience deep learning; learning that is all of five things; cognitive, social, emotional, existential, and empowerment (Scoffham & Barnes, 2009:268). When deep learning occurs there is long term impact on professional practice (Scoffham & Barnes, 2009). This classification of deep learning correlates with Rogers and Tough's (1996) account which recognises learning as a complex process; not just a cognitive process, but involving heart and soul. In contrast to the view within post-colonial theory, such findings suggest feelings are an unavoidably valuable part of any intercultural learning process, and a valuable way of analysing one's inter-cultural learning journey.

Perhaps the problem with emotional responses, is that they remain emotional and study participants do not reflect in order to deepen their learning and become more critical. Accordingly, attempts have been made to conceptualise responses to facilitate deeper reflection. Weeden & Hayter's (2013) 'three-phase model of engagement' outlines phases through which students proceed during a study visit. Commencing the visit, the individual feels disoriented and uncertain. They proceed through the 'coping stage'; constructing frameworks of reference and drawing upon 'cultural similarities', eventually arriving at the stage where 'accommodation is achieved which incorporates both cultures; the stable equilibrium' (Weeden & Hayter, 2013:117). This final phase resonates with Andreotti's (2010) description of learning space seven, whereby interaction with a different culture is enabled by the recognition for the need to 'negotiate', listen and learn the various socially

constructed meanings within differing contexts; and being comfortable with this level of uncertainty (Andreotti, 2010:16).

Personal Reflection.

How does my positioning as a student from the West affect the way that I learn about the Keralan educational system?

“...dusty floors and bare walls disguising hidden treasures”.

My initial reaction when confronted by the dusty floors, bare walls and cramped children on wooden benches was to assume conditions of poverty, therefore lower educational opportunities (see journal:17). Here I was engaging in what Andreotti (2007;71) terms as ‘gross generalisations’ about the [REDACTED] school its children, based on my limited experience. My ‘positioning’ as a Western student, was placing the UK’s style of teaching as the pinnacle of good education and judging what I was seeing accordingly (Martin, 2008). I was unintentionally processing images I was seeing within an ‘aid’ framework (Martin & Griffiths, 2012). This framework of reference blinded me to a consideration of alternative stories.

In reality, the “dusty floors and bare walls” were not “disguising” anything, but rather my ‘positioning’ as western student, heavy-laden with my western preconceptions of how a classroom should look, blinded me to the plethora of alternative ‘stories’ and ‘treasures’ within the classroom (Martin, 2008). Talking to the students and teachers about their hobbies, aspirations and work, I was forced to reconsider my presumptions and was reminded of the dangers of a single story. Alternative stories were told about the high value placed on education in India, the outstanding standards of work, and high career aspirations amongst children; all things I consider treasures within an educational setting.

Reflecting upon my interaction, I was deeply critical of how quickly and sub-consciously my assumptions had formed; I had thoughtlessly ‘projected’ my world and ‘culturally bound assumptions’ onto the ‘other’ and judged how the ‘other’ fared accordingly (Andreotti,2010:17). Thus acting contrary to Spivak’s concept of ‘unlearning privilege’ (Kapoor, 2004). Had I not have had the chance to engage with the children and teachers, I would have left with an unchallenged, misrepresentative view of the ‘other’ which would have, as Martin (2008) fears, been replicated in the stories I returned to the UK with.

Upon having that interaction, my previous understanding of good teaching is now in a state of flux (see journal:4-5) , whereby I am continually re-establishing my principles and values (see journal:25&28). Irrespective of colourful walls and interactive white boards, the children

were achieving and engaged in their learning. The high standard of work and my discussions with the children evidenced this. I now recognise the dangers of viewing the 'other' within an 'aid' framework, for there exists a colonial tendency to assume there is nothing we can learn from the inferior 'other'; which prevents any mutual relationship of exchange from occurring (Martin & Wyness, 2013).

To what extent did being in a different cultural setting affect my ability to learn and how did I learn?

"... A God across Cultures..."

When immersed in another culture 'deep changes are likely to occur' (Scoffham & Barnes 2009:263). For example; a story of a poor woman begging a white girl to either take or feed her baby, may cause an emotional reaction. However, being the white girl being begged by the young Indian woman is a very different experience. Some experiences of culture cannot be taught but need to be experienced. And only when experienced, can transformative learning occur. Encountering this woman, is what Scoffham & Barnes (2009) termed 'a powerful emotional trigger that causes conflict and dissonance' (Scoffham & Barnes, 2009:257). All bus journey back I wrestled with questions, to which the lack of any answers caused me to cease reflection. Sharing the questions I was battling with the group helped tackle my internal turmoil, as advised by Scoffham & Barnes (2009). I began questioning the validity of her poverty and my ignorance as westerner; thinking my money was the solution to her problems (see journal:14). I was trying to operate in, and 'take responsibility for' a culture wherein the issue was greater than my shallow comprehension understood (Martin & Wyness, 2013). I was now questioning my Christian faith, asking where God was in her situation (see journal:14). My learning was representative of Rogers and Tough (1996) 'existential dimension' to learning; whereby one questions their values, life purpose and meaning. I feel this emphasises the complexity of the learning process, and how it utilises more than just intellectual learning (knowledge and facts). The reflection process was helpful, and although I felt supported by the group, this powerful emotional experience, did not, as Scoffham & Barnes (2009) recognise, result in transformative learning immediately.

It was not until Day 5 of the visit at the [REDACTED] School that transformative learning occurred; triggered by a simple prayer that one of the nuns prayed. This was a powerful experience of significance. Yet, rather than create cognitive dissonance as suggested by Scoffham & Barnes (2009) model, *this* experience brought clarity where I was

previously disorientated and confused. As she prayed, irrespective of the language barrier, I felt ease and comfort. For within the uncertainty and cultural difference, I could recognise a commonality that surpassed our two cultures; God. At this point I feel I had accomplished what Bhabha(1994) terms as the 'third space'; in which we both left our cultural baggage behind and engaged in a space where 'new ideas, meaning and understandings' could emerge (Martin & Wyness, 2013;16). When I thought there was nothing I could give in exchange to a culture so rich and generous, I could engage with our commonality, and pray for them in return. Although out of my comfort zone, I felt a 'hope and positivity' (Scoffham and Barnes, 2010). There was something about two cultures praying for one another that surpassed all notions of cultural supremacy and difference.

Reflecting on models of intercultural learning, I had proceeded what Weeden & Hayter (2013) term the 'disorientation' phase and entered abruptly into the 'stable equilibrium phase' whereby an accommodation [was] achieved which incorporated both cultures' (Weeden & Hayter, 2013;117). No longer was I seeking 'absolute answers' to every question that had previously caused disorientation and confusion. Instead, I found myself comfortable with uncertainty and 'the process of becoming', made possible by my ability to 'relate to' 'connect with' and 'negotiate' meaning with people who were different from me in unfamiliar contexts (Andreotti, 2010:18-19). Therefore, if only for this moment, I feel I occupied what Andreotti (2010) terms as 'learning space seven' (2010:16).

To what extent has the study visit had an impact upon my professional and personal thinking and actions?

"teaching opportunities in India and Uganda!"...

The influence of the study visit on my personal and professional thinking became particularly apparent when attending a teaching recruitment fair at the university shortly after returning. I was drawn to a stand priding itself on the statement "teaching opportunities in India and Uganda". I was informed that this company pride themselves in offering newly qualified teachers (NQT's) to "firstly observe the teaching styles in Uganda and India and then advise and correct the way 'they' teach by showing them the British style of teaching". Explicit in the values of the company was an imperialist belief that the UK teaches in ways that are superior to the 'other' (Bourne, 2014). Equally as damaging, the company was underwritten by what Said (1993) refers to as 'colonial residue'; whereby intercultural interaction is 'always wanting to correct, teach, theorise, develop, colonise, use, record, inscribe, enlighten' the other (Kapoor, 2004:641).

Upon leaving the event, I recognised how deeply the visit to India has affected both my conscious and subconscious thought-processes, to the extent that I naturally began to be

critical of the North-South interaction being encouraged and the motives and power-relations implicit in the organisation. Previously, my interpretation of this intervention would have been a benevolent attempt to encourage equality within education globally. However, on return I felt disheartened that the richness and diversity of a country was reduced to a colonial focus on their education system, judged against UK standards; assuming our 'cultural supremacy'.

Conclusion

My study visit to India has ended, but my understanding about my assumptions, attitudes and values, has been greatly challenged, and remains in a state of flux. Conversations and activities that I once engaged in mindlessly now invite critical reflection and provoke opportunities to re-visit my learning journey in India.

I have become critically aware of my thought processes that are underwritten by a colonial past; a past that I had not considered, prior to the study. The study visit has equipped me with an ability to challenge my assumptions and thoughts, prompting me to 'retrace the itinerary of my prejudices' and reflect upon power relations that subconsciously infiltrate my thinking (Spivak, 2002 in Kapoor, 2004:641). I have learnt that mutuality between cultures is always possible, but entirely dependent upon both parties 'leaving behind their cultural baggage' and entering a 'third space', only then can disorientation and prejudice cease to exist (Bhabha,1994).

From my experience, post-colonial theory has some merit in analysing intercultural learning, however my emotional responses, when reflected upon, heightened my learning experience. For although not always following the linear structure, depicted by models of intercultural learning, powerful experiences and resulting emotions encourage an intimacy with a culture, that maintaining a purely cognitive approach to responses, does not allow.

Intercultural Learning within the Literature.

This study aimed to reflect what the literature fails to reflect; the complexity of the learning process, the weighing up of ideas, and the tensions of often holding multiple perceptions that may be simultaneously contradictory. This study has attempted to frame my reflection with reference to both post-colonial theory and models of intercultural learning. However, no learning experience can be neatly summarised according to one body of thought. The complexity of unique experiences requires an engagement with multiple theories, which I hope to have demonstrated.

Finally, although literature rightly often focuses on the learning in the field, it fails to consider in any detail the thought processes and the contradictions that arise from a visit once the participant has returned. If learning is truly transformative, this will continue to impact participants *beyond* interaction within the field, as is evident in my reflection, and will influence their teaching practice; which is the principle aim of the visit. Accordingly, the literature would greatly benefit from more research in this area.

'Deborah': Intercultural Learning: A Critical Reflection

Introduction

"Culture, or civilization, taken in its broad, ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society."

Tylor, Edward, 1920, p.1

In an increasingly global society, intercultural learning is integral if we are to succeed not just as an economy but also as citizens of the world. As a teacher, it is important to learn, and teach, intercultural competency to create a society of acceptance and understanding, as well as the ability to communicate freely with individuals from cultures beyond our own. I have always found culture fascinating, and it was the opportunity to be immersed within a culture that contrasted with mine, which drove me to partake in the study visit Kerala. One could describe experiencing the culture of South India as overwhelming. A collection of experiences that are difficult to comprehend and communicate to others, that I believe, have changed me personally and professionally. What intrigued me was the range of responses within the peer group to both the micro and macro aspects of the visit and the deeper impact the visit had on some, but not all, of the students.

On returning to the UK, I felt disorientated, and began to look retrospectively. At this point I began to consider the subjective lens through which individuals see the world. What alters how we interact with new environments and interpret the experiences within them? Can I trust my interpretations of these experiences through my subjective lens?

To answer these questions I will look into the plight of the 'stranger', their disposition, their subjective view, perceived growth and how postcolonial theory gives insight into the perceptions of the 'stranger'. I will also look into theories of how we learn on a sojourn. I will then compare my experiences with the literature through qualitative and interpretive study by incorporating observations, discussions, and experiences from both India and the UK.

Literature Review

Taylor (1994) discusses the relevance of Transformation Theory in the process of intercultural learning. He argues that transformation causes an individual to view the world from a perspective that conflicts with their values and belief systems. The stranger within a host culture develops cultural competence, an all-encompassing view of world, through

successfully working through their experiences using a process that is learned, rather than natural (Taylor, 1994).

Taylor (1994) highlights the three dimensions of perspective transformation: Pre-condition to change, process and outcome. Taylor (1994) suggests transformative learning can explain how expectations construed through cultural conceptions influence how we compose meaning. The transformative process is progressive; it guides our understanding, responses and interactions (Taylor, 1994).

Transformative theory is mainly used to explain the process that takes place when an individual experiences a personal crisis, but parallels can be drawn between this experience of crisis and culture-shock (Taylor, 1994). Transformative theory concerns the individual's experience of disorientation, followed by the need to adapt to regain equilibrium. Taylor (1994) turns to Mezirow's (1978, 1981, 1991, cited in Taylor, 1994) ten phases for perspective transformation, which include; disorientation, self-examination, assessment of assumptions, negotiation, and reintegration. The outcome dimension concerns the changes in an individual's meaning structures. In intercultural terms, this includes one's ability to empathise with people of other cultures, and the ability to perform the appropriate social behaviour in a host culture almost sub-consciously (Taylor, 1994).

In the initial stages of a host culture, the intercultural experience is new and exciting, and it is when this veil of exotic mystery lifts that culture-shock kicks in (Taylor, 1994). When first immersing oneself in a host culture, an individual cannot explain their experiences through the meaning perspectives of the home culture, which Taylor (1994) describes as a challenge facing many individuals who are not aware of how their pre-disposition influences their interpretation of experiences. It is this dilemma that can lead to feelings of guilt and shame as the individual enters a reflective state and challenge the validity of their world-view (Taylor, 1994).

"It is through a learning process inclusive of critical reflection, seeking out new skills and knowledge, action and discourse that the stranger interprets the meaning of his or her experiences and develops intercultural competence"

Taylor, 1994, p.403

Continuing to focus on the plight of the stranger, Coffey (2013) discusses strangerhood as a disposition that reconstructs our relationship with our surroundings in a way, which is comparable to Taylor's (1994) discussion of Transformative Learning. Something that is shared in the literature is this concept of subjective culture. Coffey (2013) describes this

subjectivity as personal experience within a culture. He argues that the sojourn is often a “self-imposed exile” (Coffey, 2013, p.273). I bring this text to the argument, because it contains enlightening samples of interviews with sojourners.

‘Sue’, discusses how learning a foreign language was an opportunity for her to travel, and describes the experience as something that sets you apart from others. She continues to divulge how living further away from school than her friends, also set her apart. What Coffey (2013) highlights here, is how Sue separates herself from her native culture, already subconsciously defining herself as a stranger. ‘Glenda’ describes her intercultural experiences, explaining moments of belonging and not belonging, and a cyclic removal and reconstruction of barriers between her and the host culture as she flipped between similarities and differences. ‘Glenda’ describes, not being able to communicate the real you, and being more accepting of people because they are new to you. She states that being different gives freedom. As with ‘Sue’, she is defining herself as a stranger. Another interesting point to highlight here; is Glenda’s misery in returning, and not feeling accepted. Coffey (2013) concludes

“Individuals construct worlds and position themselves in relation to these worlds” (Coffey, 2013, p.278).

Martin and Griffiths (2012) in their research into teacher development on study visits from the UK to Gambia and India, discuss the role of post-colonial theory in the interpretations of the stranger. Postcolonial Theory reflects a hierarchy created by the West, with the historical coloniser, the north, at the top and the colonised, the south, below (Martin et al. 2012). Adichie, in her TED talk from 2009 (cited in Martin et al, 2012), implies some of the issues the postcolonial perspective presents:

“...She felt sorry for me before she even saw me. Her default position toward me, as an African, was kind of patronising, well-meaning pity...”

(Martin et al. 2012, p.3)

As Martin and Griffiths (2012) state, this paternal positioning that is common in the west, implies an avoidance of the implications of colonialism. They go on to argue that a shift in focus is needed if we are to challenge the child-like status with which southern countries are treated. The focus within the paper is the interim findings from a one-week trip to Gambia. The trip was fieldwork based with participants engaging with members of the host culture to provoke reflection on various issues relating to Gambia. What is illuminating here, is the interactions of a Geography teacher with members of the host culture described in

the reflective journal of a UK principle investigator (Martin et. al. 2012). The investigator observed the teacher buying two young boys a bag of rice, despite being warned about the implications of acting like a European tourist (Martin et al. 2012). The geography teacher reinforced the colonial relationship by acting out the paternal role (Martin et al. 2012). A research consultant, concurring with comments on colonial reinforcement, later discussed the same incident, describing it as the opposite of what the young Gambians needed (Martin et al. 2012). It comes to light in the paper, that the teacher had missed crucial pre-visit sessions and had missed a few of the fieldwork days, and this could have effected how he positioned himself in the Gambia.

Milstein (2005) describes our subjectivity as a stranger not just in terms of one's interpretations and how they learn, but an individual's perceptions of their transformation. Milstein (2005) claims that many who sojourn find the experience "profoundly meaningful" (Milstein, 2005, p.217), transforming their sense of self and how they experience their culture and life. Milstein (2005) discusses Bennett's model for intercultural sensitivity, which shares a likeess with Transformative Theory (Taylor, 1994) with a series of phases from denial, defence and minimisation (ethnocentric) to acceptance, adaptation and integration (ethnorelativism). Evidentially, Bennett's theory (1993, 2004, cited in Milstein, 2005) is directly related to intercultural learning unlike transformative learning (Taylor, 1994), which applies to any disorientating event. Milstein (2005) goes on to include intercultural Transformation Theory, sharing the view of Taylor (1994). Milstein describes each event during a sojourn as an "experiential lesson" (Milstein, 2005, p.221) implying the importance of interaction and communication that is highlighted throughout the literature,

"A sojourner must constantly adjust, through trial and error, many of the cues by which she or he formally guide decisions and interactions."

(Milstein, 2005, p.221)

Self-efficacy could explain why people of the same level of skill respond differently to the same challenges as self-belief affects an individual's ability to adapt and control anxiety (Milstein, 2005). From Taylor (1994), Martin and Griffiths (2012), and Milstein (2005) it is clear that the ability to adapt and regain equilibrium is essential for intercultural enhancement. The paper focuses on self-efficacy in communication, another integral factor

in intercultural learning on which Taylor (1994), Martin and Griffiths (2012), and Milstein (2005) agree,

“Learning to communicate with another culture is more than a verbal language, it’s understanding non-verbal codes.”

(Milstein, 2005, p. 224).

An interesting point Milstein (2005) makes from this, is that adapting to intercultural experiences reduces anxiety and increases communication, leading to higher self-efficacy.

Milstein (2005) found that the majority of candidates perceived an increase in self-efficacy, but there was no correlation between perceived difficulty and challenges within the experience and the belief in self-improvement. What Milstein (2005) did find, was that the majority of participants had a relatively high perception of self-efficacy before the trip. This could imply that it takes a certain amount of confidence to embark on a sojourn or, the data could be distorted on the principle that it was retrieved retrospectively. However, Milstein’s paper, serves as a reminder of the importance of how individuals interpret and perceive not only the host culture through a subjective lens, but also how individuals perceive their own enhancement and learning.

Critical Reflection

The impact of colonial history is implicit in my expectations of Kerala as seen in the journal (W/b 13 Jan) in response to how I anticipate Kerala will be different from ‘home’. I expected the role of women to be domestic, to see the upholding of traditions, less commercialism, to see more poverty and less materialistic values. Although many of my expectations did come to fruition, many of my points do project an idealised image of India; my predictions suggest a country untouched by the west, preserved, with innocence maintained. Other expectations included less technology and luxury objects which reflects that I am a victim of my colonial past, I am suggesting a paternal responsibility and almost superiority in terms of wealth and material gain. This links directly to Martin and Griffiths (2012) comment on paternal positioning and the child-like status of the south.

Shops for tourists represent the idealised India that I had succumbed to, brimming with Hindu sculptures, silks, tea and rugs. One shop contained colonial Victorian style objects

(Intercultural Learning Journal Sunday 19th January, images), which was a peculiar experience that placed colonial history at the forefront.

On engaging with the people of Kerala, I realised the impact colonialism had truly had on India. Although it is a country that is proud of its wealth of traditions, the impact of European residence is explicit. The temporary celebrity status we received highlights how Britain has left a mark on the country. Locals frequently asked for photographs, they wanted to be seen with white Europeans, they wanted to shake our hands, students in the schools would surround us frantically asking for autographs. Through conversing with the locals we found out more about the reasons for this disconcerting admiration: they believed us to be superior for our wealth, our science, mathematics. They believed English to be the language of Maths and Science, and in the schools we visited children were taught the majority of subjects in English. We were told being seen with a white European raised status in the community, we heard the same stories repeatedly: A surreal regard for the once coloniser.

Reading about post-colonial theory does not have the impact of experiencing a post-colonial landscape, and engaging in an uncomfortable discourse between north and south. It was through communication that I truly understood the enduring effects of colonialism. As discussed by much of the literature, there was a process of transformation and a feeling of 'strangerhood'. The overwhelming response of the locals to the presence of white Europeans, was disorientating and constructed a barrier between them, and us. Through engaging with the community I constructed understanding. I created meaning from my experiences and revised my meaning structures. This is just one example of how I learned through interaction, reflection and change.

I have been abroad many times, venturing to Europe, America and Asia. As an artist, I have always been inspired by culture, and fascinated by the complexity of India. I have studied the cultures of Japan, America and India as part of my degree leading me to see Kerala through a lens constructed from previous study. I had studied the Hindu pantheon, mythology, architecture and sculpture and it was through this lens that I interpreted the first few days of the trip. One of the most significant moments in my transformation, was simply, seeing the locals gathered together on the beach (Intercultural Journal, Saturday 18th January). This caused me to reassess my perspective and my expectations shifted because

I realised culture is about people, intercultural learning is learning to immerse and engage with people. In this case the learning was observing the experience of others, but the stages in my learning process were the same, I reflected on the experience, and my perspective altered. In this case, it was my subjective lens, as well as my meaning structures that were altered. I stopped looking at India as objects, buildings and stories, and began to see it as human.

As Milstein (2005) suggests is common, I found the trip to be profoundly meaningful and I did feel my sense of self and how I experience UK culture had changed. Through conversations with teachers, pupils and the locals in India, I learned about the values of the people, including the value of education. Students seemed incredibly happy, spoke of high aspirations and a love of school. However, as Taylor (1994) reminds us, the initial stages of the intercultural experience are new and exciting, which I feel distorted my view as the stranger. Another point worthy of noting, as seen in the reflections from Wednesday 22nd January, is that many of us did not feel we were seeing a true representation of Indian teaching. It wasn't just a new and exciting experience for us, but also for the schools we visited. What we learned about school was learned through interaction rather than observing lessons. For example, repeatedly throughout the journal, I refer to conversations I had with locals, students and teachers, it was discourse that promoted investigation, reflection and transformation. A particular point of enquiry for me, was how much of the curriculum in Kerala schools involved Indian literature and history, I discussed it time and time again with students, who responded with a perplexed expression. When I consider how I learned from communication and engagement, I realise my learning was triggered by how others responded to me during interaction and discussion. I would argue that this links strongly to Coffey's (2013) statement concerning how we create worlds and position ourselves within them. It is through our engagement with our surroundings that we judge where to position ourselves within it.

It was on the returning to schools in the UK, that the transformation of my perspective became truly apparent. As both Taylor (1994) and (Coffey, 2013) suggest, reintegration is an important stage in the learning process that I found to be more disorientating, and therefore, the most challenging step of my intercultural learning. However, I do feel that in India the initial new and exciting stage did not fade, and we were not immersed for long enough to experience the culture-shock that follows, which lead to a feeling of returning to reality upon going back into UK schools. I think this reflects how subjective our interpretations are, and to an extent we have to remind ourselves that learning

experientially, will always be based on a subjective interpretation of events. Once again, I come back to how learning was reinforced by engagement and interaction; it was conversations with students and teachers in UK schools that reinforced my transformation. A key example is my interactions with students because the way I view them has changed (Journal W/b 27th January), I have found a new sense of concern over their wellbeing. I compared the responses of students in the UK with those of South India and it raised concern within me, because UK children are under huge amounts of pressure due to the focus on assessment and grades, most do not communicate an enjoyment of school, and they do not seem as happy. However, one must also consider the subjective position and the post-colonial influence that effected how we were treated within the host culture, on returning to the UK, it was a case of returning to being 'normal', so I had to adjust my positioning within the environment from home, to host, and back to home.

Conclusion

As discussed in the literature, intercultural learning is experiential. When I consider how I learned, it was through engagement and communication. I positioned myself through reflection on the responses of the host culture to me as the stranger. Intercultural learning is therefore, a personal journey of transformation. My learning was influenced by my predisposition, as discussed by the literature and postcolonial theory. What we learn and how we learn is all relative to our personal experiences and perspective schemes as they develop throughout our lives, before and during the intercultural experience. As subjective as my learning may have been, I do think the way I experience my culture and my perspective has been transformed through the processes discussed by Taylor (1994) and Milstein (2005). I learned about Indian culture and about myself throughout the trip in an intangible way. It is feasible that I cannot explain my experiences through the perspective of my home culture as suggested by Taylor (1994). The way I perceive the children in UK schools has changed, in that I value them as children, and consider all aspects of their lives rather than just seeing them as students. From my experiences in Indian schools, I would want to incorporate more about wellbeing and happiness into my teaching. The happiness of pupils has grown in importance for me, particularly considering the pressure on them in terms of attainment. I also expect more from UK pupils because I was overwhelmed by my time with the Indian students. Personally, I am questioning my role in my environment and culture. In this paper I have focused on the subjectivity and personal interpretation of experiences, how I learned from them, and the importance of interaction. To continue the research further, one could compare the predispositions and experiences of sojourners

through gathering interpretative and qualitative data to conclude if my experiences apply to others and indicate how subjective intercultural learning is.

'Eve': Intercultural Learning: A critical reflection

Can we ever escape a colonial approach to travel and research in the 'non-west'?

"To travel between places is to move between collections of trajectories and to reinsert yourself into the ones to which you relate" (Massey 2005 p.260): how easy this is to do however, is another matter entirely. Intercultural learning makes you question everything for which you could previously relate and makes Massey's suggestion of the ease at which one reinserts themselves into routine at 'home' a statement to question. It is precisely these differing 'collections of trajectories' between the 'west' and the 'non-west' that make me question the common discourse of UK society and the way in which my outlook on life may have been moulded by a dominant culture.

My reflections throughout this essay are heavily influenced by my position as a trainee geography teacher (School Direct PGCE 11-18) and the way in which I see people and places through a geographical lens. These thoughts have been challenged throughout an overwhelming 10 day intercultural study visit to Kerala, South India. Both intercultural learning and post-colonial theory have heavily influenced my thinking during the study visit and through my ongoing reflections on return to the UK.

This essay shall aim to unpick the following key questions:

1. Can we ever escape a colonial approach to travel and research in the 'non-west'?
2. How has intercultural learning influenced me personally and professionally as a secondary geography teacher?

My reflections will focus heavily on specific triggers that forced me outside of my comfort zone, together with the ability to reflect on my teaching of the KS3 'New India' module whilst in Kerala. This reflection of my teaching came about through a presentation that I made at an International Conference at the University of ██████ 'Bridging the gap; language education and culture.' I shall aim to tackle some of the bigger questions I now have about the 'other' and the ways in which this experience has without a doubt affected me both personally and professionally in the long term.

Methodology

Using a qualitative approach to my research, I made observations within the classroom setting as well as reflecting on the interactions I had with the people and the environment every day. All reflections were kept daily in the form of an intercultural learning journal. I understand that I bring my own subjectivity to this research and thus, it can be deemed interpretative ethnography. Research was conducted over 10 days with 2 days of cultural excursions, visits to 4 primary/secondary schools in Kerala, an international conference at the University of ██████, and meetings with ITT trainees at ██████ Teacher Training Institute, ██████. Added to this, more informal reflections were made during 'free time' in and around the resort of Kovalam, as well as when travelling between locations.

Post-colonialism: History and context

According to Young (2003) post-colonialism means "...turning the world upside down" (Young 2003 p.2) and looking at the world from a non-western perspective. Post-colonial theory supports the view that the west is still maintaining superiority over the east, albeit in more discreet forms. It is the term referring to the ongoing "...cultural and political impact of European conquest upon colonised societies" (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia 2001 p.15) not only in the past but also the present.

Edward Said (1985) - an early post-colonial theorist - suggested that sets of representations about the non-west are created by the west in order to maintain power and superiority through the binaries of 'them' and 'us', seeking understanding of how knowledge of 'the other' is constructed. This power relationship is something for which Michael Foucault also supports and extends to provide the notion of "cultural supremacy" whereby the west dictates superiority over the 'non-west'.

Andreotti (2006) suggests "Postcolonialism addresses the risks of homogenisation, oversimplified categorisations of oppressor/oppressed (and their inversions), romanticisations of the South and 'identity politics' (that can be power-seeking and excluding)" (Andreotti 2006 p.6). Do we therefore risk continued homogenisation of different places through binary classification? I believe this is particularly evident within Geography where terms such as 'More Economically Developed Countries' and 'Less Economically Developed Countries' are still used to categorise the so-called development gap. We need to overcome the use of economic data alone to tell a story about a country and look deeper into what truly represents it. Martin (2012) suggests that we are improving our representation of places on the local scale, however "...at a global scale the 'single story' continues to dominate" (Martin 2012 p.4)

Intercultural learning: a solution to the postcolonial?

“Over the last decade, intercultural visits have become an increasingly common feature of teacher education courses” (Scoffham and Barnes 2009 p.258), and are now seen as a means to raise student teachers awareness of personal preconceptions and colonial influences. To what extent are intercultural visits successful in breaching the colonial however, is very much up for debate.

“Intercultural learning is literally about how people learn from each other through cross-cultural interaction and dialogue” (Frameworks for Intercultural Learning 2014), something for which UNESCO (2006) suggest is a dynamic and evolving concept. Intercultural learning can be seen as a possible solution to paternalistic research methods, instead maintaining a form of mutual respect and understanding through what Martin and Griffiths (2010) term “reciprocity, mutuality and equality” (Martin and Griffiths 2010 p.2). They extend this to suggest that intercultural study visits challenge “...dominant, stereotypical discourses” (Martin and Griffiths 2010 p.2) offering an alternative relationship between the north and south. These dominant stereotypes are represented in news reports, literature and films created by the west, and this is quite often what forms our opinions and imaginations of other people and places. This narrow representation of places outside of the west is what Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie terms “the single story” (Adichie 2009).

An intercultural study visit conducted by Scoffham and Barnes (2009) to India is a very useful experience to compare my learning to. They suggested transformative learning experiences that students experienced on a “...cognitive, emotional and existential level” (Scoffham and Barnes 2009 p.257) were incredibly valuable. The aim was for students to challenge their own preconceptions and to question their own identities, something which certainly reverberates with me. Sharp (2009) suggests a way in which this is achieved successfully is through the “decolonisation of the mind” (Sharp 2009 p.5), stating it is a difficult process.

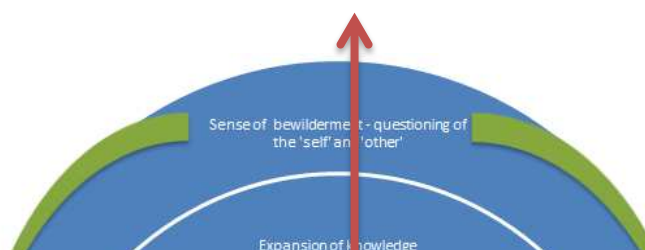
Weeden and Hayter (1996) also conducted a PGCE visit to The Gambia. Their aim was to assess whether the learning experiences could have a lasting effect on students’ lives or whether it was “...just more savannah” (Weeden and Hayter 1996 p.120), something I am sure Finney and Orr (1995) would agree with given they noted a severe lack of change in attitudes.

They identified three main phases of learning engagement; disorientation, coping and equilibrium. The term equilibrium can be rather misleading as it presupposes a stable equilibrium where one can completely comprehend the complexities of 'culture shock'. I would like to suggest that this movement from disorientation through to coping and equilibrium does certainly happen, but the journey to that point and after equilibrium is far more complex than Weeden and Hayter make out (See diagram below). I do not believe that you ever truly reach stable equilibrium, as to do this would be to accept the complexities that surround you, and suggests an end point to the learning process. Learning interculturally should be considered a cyclical journey. How can you accept such multifaceted and fluid complexities in an ever changing world? The diagram therefore shows the sense of bewilderment to be the overarching aim of intercultural understanding. It can be suggested that once you reach bewilderment it leads you to question your preconceptions, which in turn forces you to question the 'self' and the 'other'. It is not until you have experienced these learning triggers however, that bewilderment can take place, and without bewilderment, there is little chance of long-term impact on which to reflect.

In my opinion Weeden and Hayter suggest an orderly fashion of learning, and the way in which I learnt was certainly not orderly, if anything it was messy and it is still confusing since returning to the UK and trying to comprehend my experiences when trying to integrate back into routine and the 'norm' at 'home'.

How has intercultural learning influenced me personally and professionally as a secondary geography teacher?

"It has been said that there are two kinds of white people: those who have never found themselves in a situation where the majority of people around them are not white, and those who have been the only white person in the room" (Young 2003 p.1). This statement rings incredibly true when I reflect upon the moment that I walked into the waiting area to board the plane from Dubai to Trivandrum. Despite the multicultural nature of the UK, this was the first time in my life that I have experienced the feeling of being an obvious minority within a public space. It really hit me for the first time just how different an experience travelling outside of Europe or North America would be. I had become the unusual; the exotic; the 'other'.



(See Learning Journal p.28)

I never imagined a personal trigger for me would be something as simple as shopping in the alleyways of Kovalam. My thoughts were conflicted over something so simple; bartering. Is bartering a reinforcement of colonialism or is refusing to barter actually reinforcing paternalistic behaviours and the west's perceived "responsibility for the south" (Andreotti 2006 p.7). I felt uncomfortable when other members of the group bartered over 100 rupees (£1) off of a pair of trousers; something which I perceived to be the influence of consumerism within our culture. In doing this was I respecting the 'other' or was I indeed undermining their ability to trade on a level playing ground. I would refuse to barter over 100 rupees and would happily pay the price; but is this in fact worse? Was I being more colonial than if I had of bartered? Something so simple really played on my mind, and still does.

"So they went ahead and plugged their smelly paradise – 'God's Own Country' they called it in their brochures – because they knew, those clever Hotel People, that smelliness, like other people's poverty, was merely a matter of getting used to. A question of discipline. Of Rigour and Air- conditioning. Nothing more" (Roy 1996 in Nair 2002 p.219).

This particular extract hit me when reading it, for it reminded me of a conversation I had with a local gentleman in a restaurant in Kovalam one evening. He was not only a practicing Christian, but also a Muslim and Hindu, which influenced our discussion of the term “Gods own country”. I had experienced students saying “Gods own country” to me, but with a wry smile and a giggle; something which made me slightly suspicious. The gentleman told me that his friend made up the slogan to promote Kerala. For me Arundhati Roy’s description confirms that a trick might have been played. I felt a little disappointed at the perceived falseness; had I been sucked into a ‘smelly paradise’ by a slogan used in a brochure aiming to target people like me; a white westerner. Perhaps the slogan was created to attract tourists to western style hotels and arguably not to experience the real Kerala. Was this a discreet form of globalisation placing its powers on Kerala, influencing Kerala to develop and compete in a global market for capitalist gains? It seems to emphasise the ongoing battle between globalisation and loss of culture and traditions and, as a lecturer at the international conference said “one man’s food is another man’s poison”.

I have never been so overwhelmed by such kind, warm-hearted and generous people, and with a fear of cliché – it really did restore my faith in humanity. At every school we visited we were treated with great respect, but it was almost too much, as if we were royalty. This brought up some confusing thoughts; were some Keralans holding us up on a colonial pedestal because of where we come from, or even because of our skin colour? Whilst on a school visit to ██████████ School, we were asked to contribute a song or a dance during the intercultural exchange. It was very saddening when we could not think of anything of any quality that represents our culture. Being applauded on stage as ‘prestigious’ guests and not being able to contribute in any way really did make me feel like a hypocrite; why on earth did I deserve this treatment? It lead me to question what is Britishness, what is our identity, and has multiculturalism caused the identity of our culture to become very foggy?

“Location and development of geography, like history, inescapably mark it (both philosophically and institutionally) as a Western-colonial science” (Blunt and McEwan 2002 p.9). That is, the way we represent the world from our point of view, and the way in which I teach my students about the world may indeed re-emphasise the colonial. One simple visual change to the way I represent the world on the map could make all the difference in challenging student’s perceptions.

I was drawn to Martin and Griffiths (2010) case study of a trainee Geography teacher, Nigel, on their north-south study trip. They suggested that Nigel was treating the Gambia as a simple geography case study, adding that “In the UK, traditional teaching about the geography of distant places and development issues tends to focus on what is ‘lacking’”

(Marin and Griffiths 2010 p.13). I was concerned about seeing Kerala as another case study. In trying to 'decolonise my mind', I also tried to leave my geographical mind behind. Whilst I cannot deny that a geographical perspective has its benefits, it could also have been a hindrance given that my preconceptions of India came about through the use of social indicators, the study of the development gap and globalisation.

"Why were students not aware of the term 'New India'? Is it another term constructed in the west by the west?" (Learning Journal p.19)

During the study visit we were given the opportunity to present at an International Conference at the University of [REDACTED]. My presentation focussed on the teaching of the module 'New India'. I was concerned about the sensitivity of the topic, and daunted as I was presenting to an Indian audience. The overarching message was that we should not judge a country by the preconceptions we are fed through representations in the media. Reading back on some of the student's ideas about how India should develop as a nation now sits very uncomfortably with me. It is something which I did not really address at the time, but now that my understanding of the Keralan people, and understanding of postcolonial theory has developed, I feel I am able to challenge those binary classifications that the students had of India as 'poor', 'dirty' and 'helpless'.

I was keen to ask whether anyone at the conference was aware of the term 'New India' and what their feelings of globalisation are. Speaking up like this over a microphone is something which is very much outside of my comfort zone, but for some reason I felt safe and unjudged by everyone who was there, something I do not always feel when trying to contribute to discussion at 'home'. My question met an uncomfortable silence. It hit me that perhaps then this term 'New India' may well have been constructed by the Royal Geographical Society in the west, by the west. It was our idea of what Indian people perceive their own country to be like, not what they actually think or feel.

Had I been manipulated and been led by my assumptions? It certainly forced me to reflect and highlighted for me the importance of exactly how I transfer knowledge to my students. "Expanding pupils' worldviews to include different spaces, forms of living and ways of knowing and being is perhaps the most significant thing that geography teachers can achieve." (Andreotti 2013), but this must be done with the sensitivity and true representation that it deserves, being sure not to reinforce stereotypes and label countries as something they are not. Being fully aware of the "Danger of the single story" (Ardiche 2009)

As Martin (2012) states so succinctly; "...as educators, relational understanding challenges our single stories and, as such, suggests we listen, relate to and learn from multiple perspectives. It requires that we foster our own self-awareness and open-mindedness about difference before working with students to foster theirs." (Martin 2012 p.8)

Conclusions

Whilst eating my traditional Keralan lunch off of a banana leaf at a school in the hills of Kerala, a gentleman named Vahab said to me "every experience is a learning experience". This is something which truly resonates for this intercultural learning experience has not only challenged me by taking me outside of my comfort zone but it has also taught me a huge amount about myself as a person, and as a teacher.

It has opened up some huge questions that have bewildered me, and even to this very day I am trying to make sense of them. On return to the UK I felt considerable discomfort in trying to understand the UK education system, the lack of student respect and in particular whether the aims of my subject – Geography – are misguided. I am now very unsure how I am going to teach certain aspects of the curriculum without seeing it as a way of the UK maintaining its economic superiority over 'developing nations' (Martin and Wyness 2013). I have realised that if I do not teach this subject in the correct manner, then I could be continually providing false representations to the students that I teach. This is something that should not be taken lightly.

What it has confirmed is the importance that intercultural study visits have in removing the colonial barriers and enhancing mutual learning from both an eastern and western perspective. It was an incredibly powerful opportunity in which to break the preconceptions that I had as an individual, and to see the world from a different perspective. Whilst I do not feel that we were fully successful in escaping a 'colonial approach to travel, education and research in the 'non-west', I feel that we came incredibly close. Whilst we could de-colonise our minds, the minds of the people we met had perhaps not fully forgotten and still see the 'West' as a superior entity. This opportunity to see the world through a differing lens is one that should be spread to as many trainee teachers as possible, for I believe it will inspire teachers to transfer a differing perspective to their students; one I would be ignorant of had I not undertaken this journey.

I have been truly overwhelmed by the unbelievable cultures and traditions that Keralans have, and have certainly found it very difficult to explain to people at home exactly what I have experienced. There were countless times where I was left wondering what I can

contribute in return for the kindness that I received. I believe we have a lot to learn from the Keralans, in order to restore our cultures, traditions and morals. I am going to have great difficulty teaching about the positives of globalisation with the words “ones man’s food is another man’s poison” echoing in my mind. We must change the superior perspective of the mind that we as the ‘west’ have and “retrace the itinerary of our prejudices and learning habits” (Kapoor 2004 cited in Andreotti 2006 p.7). We must work towards fully discarding the socially constructed “West and the Rest” (Martin and Griffiths 2012 p.910) through our travels, research and teaching.

'Elizabeth': Intercultural Learning: A Critical Reflection

1. How do theories of subjective well-being illustrate how the 'self' influences intercultural learning?
2. How do my readings of postcolonial theory influence interpretations of intercultural learning?
3. To what extent do my own experiences and reflections reflect the theoretical positions explored in previous questions?

Introduction:

Intercultural learning experiences involve leaving what is familiar and travelling to immerse yourself in the unknown. Adapting to a new cultural context affects everyone differently and intercultural learning theories explore potential influences on this process and its outcomes. My own experience of intercultural learning on a PGCE study trip to South India was hugely positive, improving my sense of well-being and deeply affecting my attitudes towards myself and my sense of my own progress. When I returned, I questioned my role in that outcome. I have come to believe that understanding how people adapt to the experience of the unknown provides a huge insight into the learning process itself, which is relevant to me as a student teacher. The experience also made me question the connections that could be made between intercultural learning and subjective well-being, and how the two theoretical frameworks worked together.

This investigation is framed by this experience to focus on the influence of the learner, or 'self', on intercultural learning. Specifically, on how subjective well-being theories can further our understanding of the significance of the 'self' in intercultural learning. The combined literature on intercultural learning and subjective well-being is too vast and varied for this small scale study. Instead, it is based on my readings of some of the key concepts in these topics; using a qualitative, interpretative approach to the literature to make my own conclusions. Taken very broadly, there are two major themes running through the literature on intercultural learning that consider the role of the self. One which focuses on the qualities that the learner possesses, and another that considers learner qualities in terms of how they grow and progress. Through these two intercultural learning themes, this investigation examines how subjective well-being theories can be used to further our understanding.

My experience of and reflections upon intercultural learning, which are attached as an appendix, have been fundamental to this investigation. This immersion into another culture, although brief, and re-immersion into the UK makes this study ethnographic, enabling me to use my own experience as research. Being able to reflexively analyse this trip and how it has influenced my interpretation of the question is vital to its integrity. Reflexivity is also

important in terms of considering how my readings of postcolonial theory, my own positions towards the 'other' culture, underwrite any conclusions I make.

Literature Review:

Dispositions to intercultural learning

Understanding the learner is a central component of understanding learning. A significant proportion of intercultural learning theories suggest that certain characteristics enable some learners to be more open and adaptable to the change inherent in this process than others. In this debate, the work of Andreotti (2013) is significant for analysing these 'dispositions towards difference', and linking particular characteristics with a learner's ability to engage interculturally. By looking at the characteristics described in them, we can begin to see correlations between them and those used to understand subjective well-being, or the scientific study of happiness.

In Andreotti's theory, a learner's ability to embrace the experience of intercultural learning can be categorised into three travelling types (the backpacker, the tent and the caravan) and one that stays at home. Each type of learner is determined by their 'frame of reference' or context, which Andreotti claims they can never truly escape, only recognise and try to transcend. In this way, her work builds on a key postcolonial assertion that imperialism never ended but has "permanently altered the conscious of our time" (Said, 2003, p xvi). In *Orientalism*, Said (1978) claimed that European perceptions of the 'other' cultures, and the history of our interaction with them, would always have to be navigated around. Andreotti's theory suggests that different types of learners are more able or willing to do this than others.

The type most disposed to difference and most able to engage with intercultural learning is the 'backpacker' type, who is "at home in a plural and undefined world" (2013). This characteristic can be seen in the literature on subjective well-being too; as both a cause and a consequence of high levels of positive emotion. Fredrickson's 'Broaden and Build Theory' uses empirical data to support the scientific benefits of happiness on our thinking. People with high levels of subjective well-being have "an increased preference for variety" and "a greater willingness to accept difference" (cited in Scoffham and Barnes, 2011, p540). To some extent this suggests to me that high levels of well-being enable learners to make the most of intercultural learning experiences.

Citing Goswami's (2004) work on the inhibiting effects of negative emotions on learning, Scoffham and Barnes (2011) explore the opposite side of this equation too. Goswami's studies suggest that the hormonal responses to prolonged exposure to fear and stress make dealing with social judgements and challenges harder, thoughts are interrupted and remembering information is harder. Referring back to Andreotti, the categories of learner least able to engage with intercultural learning are those that either refuse to travel or do so as a 'caravan' type. These types are both described as responding to a "perceived/real context of siege", reacting to feelings of fear and danger (Andreotti, 2013, p13) that come from intercultural experience. If intercultural learners of this type feel threatened or stressed by the experience, it follows that they will be unable to engage fully and make the most of it. Also, if these types of learners feel threatened by change and are unable to see a different view of the world, it could lead to the suggestion that they may be more inclined to stress the perceived differences between East and West and preserve traditional postcolonial divisions between the 'self' and the 'other'.

Intercultural challenge and growth.

Another major school of thought in intercultural learning theories, exemplified by Kim and Ruben's work (1988), considers intercultural learning in terms of personal growth. Intercultural transformation and intercultural competency theories consider this type of learning as a "continuous cycle of stress-adaptation-growth" (Taylor, 1994, p393). They stress the significance of the constant flux between equilibrium and disequilibrium in which intercultural learning takes place, referring back to Piaget's influential models on cognitive development. Although, as we have seen, there are arguments that say that prolonged stress can make learning harder, both my own experience and the theoretical positions explored here suggest that responding to challenge is fundamental to how we learn and grow as people. Within this approach, it is the growth which comes from experiential learning, rather than its success, that defines it.

These theories believe that ability of each learner to successfully deal with this alternating cycle of stress, adaptation and growth has a significant influence on the quality and outcomes of their learning. I feel more inclined towards this area of the argument, perhaps because it does not deal with intercultural learning as a problem to be manoeuvred, but as a natural cycle of challenge to be overcome. To me, it offers a solution to the permanence and inescapability suggested in postcolonial theory; viewing it as part of a cycle of stress, that is to be adapted to and progressed beyond. Although technically very similar to Andreotti and Said's view of limiting 'frames' and how we learn to transcend them, the tone

of intercultural transformation theory feels more hopeful to me because it offers an approach to learning as adaptation to any challenge, even that of postcolonial theory. These theories do not undermine the relevance of postcolonial thought on our experience, but offer a way to progress with it.

Personal growth is also described as a factor in the level of one's subjective sense of well-being. Ryff (1989) conducted a comprehensive study of different theories of subjective well-being and attempted to pull them together through interpretations of her own data research. Her work developed a number of categories through which to study subjective well-being as the positive presence of certain criteria rather than the absence of negative influences. Although some of her findings have been disputed by other writers since, her classification of different aspects of the 'alternative formulation' on subjective well-being remains relevant. In her consideration of the wider literature of what contributes to someone's sense of their own well-being, "continued personal growth and self-actualisation is a prominent theme" (Ryff, 1989, p1071). She goes on to support this by referring to Csikszentmihayi's (1997) work on the positive mental associations we make with periods in our life of personal growth. She relates it to one's "openness to experience" (Ryff, 1989, p1071), suggesting that our ability to deal with the unknown, and move through the cycle of stress-adaptation-growth that comes with it, influences our sense of our own well-being.

The notion of challenge and its successful negotiation can also be seen running through a number of Ryff's 'dimensions' on subjective well-being. While personal growth could be viewed as a challenge enough, Ryff's notes that one's sense of "environmental mastery" and one's feelings of "autonomy" are both factors that influence how people perceive their own levels of happiness. The former is described as an individual's "ability to choose or create environments", and the latter as the individual having an "internal locus of evaluation, whereby one does not need to look to others for approval" (Ryff, 1989, p1071), but can master his or her own world without recourse to others. These 'dimensions' all point to the sort of outcome resulting from the confrontation of challenge, by adapting to stress and growing through it. While these concepts fit easily within a framework of intercultural learning as adaptation and growth, they provide new insights into these theories too. These more detailed classifications of personal growth and response to challenge, borrowed from subjective well-being theories, could prove useful in further research into the influence of personal growth on the role of the 'self' in intercultural learning.

Critical Reflection:

When asked to reflect on how this intercultural learning trip had effected me on my return I stated that it had contributed something “positive but intangible” to my sense of myself (appendix p27). I described how much more happy I felt within my self and towards others since returning, and how I kept smiling when I thought about the experience (appendix p26). Although this investigation is only a reflexive and subjective account of the literature and the trip, I believe my own research collected in a short ethnographic study supports the need for further investigation into the links between intercultural learning and subjective well-being.

Dispositions to intercultural learning

When Andreotti was introduced to me before the trip, having had nothing to base intercultural theory on, I accepted her four theoretical categories (Andreotti, 2013) without serious consideration (appendix, p10). Upon my return, I find these four theoretical categories too simplistic to be truly representative. I now feel that these ‘dispositions towards difference’ are most useful when seen as points upon a much more complex spectrum. Andreotti does concede that these traveller types can change, which hints there is more to this than these basic classifications, but they are still useful as conceptual tools. Ultimately, I feel that none of the theory behind intercultural learning truly could have prepared me for its experience, but that it does allow us to analyse and understand our experiences better afterwards.

Although I had my initial doubts (appendix, p10), retrospectively I can see that early on in the trip I was displaying some ‘backpacker’ characteristics (Andreotti, 2013). On the flight there I that I wanted “to immerse myself in the culture of Kerala” (appendix, p12), positively relishing the prospect of change and its ability to help me learn about myself and the world. Having already been exposed to the basic tenets of postcolonialism, I was even at this early point, displaying some awareness of these theories on what I hoped to learn. I aimed at using the trip to step back from and ultimately find new insights on my ‘home’ culture.

At this point, a postcolonial perspective would question how much I was able to ever step back from a British perspective to understand another culture. In some ways I did not at all; I stayed in a hotel and I failed to learn their language when I was there. Was it due to this, or to my own postcolonial preconceptions about India, that I was shocked by the range of languages learnt by the children at schools I visited there (appendix pp16, 17, 18, 24)? The dominance of our language and evidence of our culture is evident and this troubled me initially, in light of my readings of postcolonial theory. I also heard contrasting views of the

British when I was in Kerala speaking to a few of the local people I met (appendix 13 & 15). Yet, as my understanding settles after the trip, I begin to question my ability to go beyond my own perspective in another way, one less based on guilt. We were treated as “distinguished guests” (appendix p18) on all our official visits, regardless of how we felt about it. We doubted the motives of those who treated us so well, out of postcolonial guilt and feelings of unworthiness, but there was little we could have said to them to treat us otherwise. I believed them when they said they were honoured to have our visit. I was honoured to be a part of that visit. I feel that post-colonial theory can lead us to descend into a spiral of guilt, not all necessarily warranted.

Intercultural challenge and growth

In the review previously, I described how much more my own opinions leant towards those that understood intercultural learning as a process of growth through challenge, like Kim and Ruben’s (1988). This comes out of my own experience in which I understand my own learning and growth as coming from “culture shock” (appendix p22). This term predates Kim and Ruben, but is integral to their model of stress-adaptation-growth. In my reflections I find it hard to pinpoint afterwards what it was about my intercultural experience that had made me feel so much better, and yet I refer back to dealing with the shock of the new and overcoming the challenge it presents (appendix 22). Although this data can only represent the view of one learner on this trip, one of infinite trips made interculturally, it does connect to theories of learning through equilibrium/disequilibrium. The concept that a state of flux between different comfort zones is how we learn is central to many leading pedagogies and cognitive psychologies, but it also links to our understanding of what makes us happy. As seen in the review, successfully growing through challenge is an indicator of both positive intercultural engagement and of subjective well-being.

When asked to consider what effect this intercultural learning may have, my own data points to it having made a deep impression. I felt my life priorities had changed and my ability to visualise distant goals to progress towards had improved (appendix p 27). This subjective data supports claims of the beneficial nature of intercultural learning. This renewed vision of personal growth and altered attitudes and feelings towards change work within concepts for understanding what it is about this trip that made me feel so much better off in terms of well-being. They are also indicators that I engaged with the experience enough for it to effect a deep learning.

I find it is easier to understand my own postcolonial perspective through comparing it to my peers on the trip using this model for learning as stress, adaptation and growth. The triggers of stress in each of us on the trip were different, and the way we dealt with them varied too. At one point, poor facilities prompted emotions of sadness and empathy in others that barely registered with me (appendix p14). This was not because I am a cold or callous. My own 'frames of reference' as Andreotti (2013) would describe them, or my 'positioning' as Said (1978) would say, were such that I did not notice the poor facilities in the same way and I dealt with them differently. While one's own triggers are not always so easy to recognise or describe, I learnt about my own perspective by being able to compare it with others in a similar situation.

Conclusion:

"Good things go to your heart - bad things go in one ear and out the other."

(Our tour guide in the Thanumalayam Temple, Tamil Nadu - Appendix p14)

Both the literature review and my own experiences and reflections suggest to me that it is the way the learner deals with the challenge of the unknown that defines their learning. By considering the role of the 'self' we move towards a fuller understanding of the learning process, no less in intercultural styles of learning than in others. Ultimately, I feel that in the case of intercultural learning, theory works best retrospectively to analyse a process which little can prepare you for.

My subjective reflections in my journal on intercultural experience suggest that there is a connection between successful intercultural engagement and subjective well-being. The selected readings I have made of the literature from both fields of thought also suggest that there is grounds for more detailed data collection and research on how the two are interrelated. If it follows that if those who are most able to engage successfully interculturally are those most adaptable to change and growth through challenge, both regarded as contributed to higher levels of subjective well-being, then this connection deserves more in-depth investigation in the future.

During this investigation, even before the intercultural trip itself, an awareness of postcolonial theory has been a factor on the interpretations I have been able to make. Just as with intercultural learning theory, postcolonial theory is much more relevant when you have visited another culture, and can only be dimly appreciated beforehand. I am glad to have been mindful of it when learning interculturally, to be aware of the need to be sensitive

to how different cultures interact, but my appreciation of its application is somewhat keener on my return. At times, the 'permanent impression' of imperialism hung heavily on me, and made me doubt the way I thought and felt during the trip. My own subjective, retrospective interpretations of the experience; how I have learnt and the hugely beneficial impact it has had on my subjective sense of well-being, prove to me that the postcolonial lens is just one way of viewing intercultural learning theory, which does not necessarily have the biggest influence on its outcome.

'Becky' Critical Reflection: Intercultural Learning: The values and support of the family

Introduction

This essay will look at how intercultural learning can affect a person's life in such a small amount of time whilst on a study visit to Kerala, India. It shall also look at the differences and similarities of family support in regards to schools visited whilst in Kerala and a technology college in south east England. In order to do this I will look at what is meant by the term intercultural learning with emphasis on the interpretation from Andreotti (2010, 2013) and Scoffham and Barnes (2009). I will also look at the importance of learning interculturality and the differences and similarities of the family support in the schools within the study. I shall then look at how and what I have learnt interculturality in terms of the study visit during the visits to the school as well as free time and then upon the immersion back into a UK school upon return. This shall be done through a critical reflection and talk about the journey I faced when dealing with the support and values of my own family.

Within the essay, four key questions arose which shall be looked at analytically through the literature review and critical reflection and answered which are:

What is intercultural learning?

Is intercultural learning important in allowing it to assist in our lives?

Is family support and values the same multi-culturally?

Can such a short study visit impact on the life of a person?

Literature Review

Introduction

The aims of this literature review are to consider the three questions and critically examine the literature based around the topics in detail within this report:

What is intercultural Learning?

What is the journey of learning interculturality?

Why is the journey of intercultural learning so important?

Following on from this, the issues of family support in the Keralan schools visited whilst on the study trip along with family support in a technology college in south east England will also be discussed. The report will discuss whether the questions raised can have an impact on the schools and their learning from one another and focus on the differences and similarities of viewpoint recognised within the schools.

Main Literature Review

The term intercultural learning is one that comes with many definitions and interpretations. Andreotti (2013) reports that 'Expanding pupils' worldviews to include different spaces, forms of living and ways of knowing and being' allows for intercultural learning to take place. Scoffham and Barnes both support this and extend this view by stating 'it gives them the opportunity to stand outside their customary assumptions and perceptions... achieve[ing] the depth and permanence through their emotional and existential impact' (Scoffham and Barnes 1996) allowing for people to 'operate effectively in different worlds' (Andreotti 2010, P12) forming relationships which will extend and expand knowledge, learning and understanding. Intercultural learning then becomes not only general, and something that can be taught, but personal as the depth of understanding deepens.

The concept of intercultural understanding looks to challenge preconceptions formed by sources such as literature, news and films as well as promoting cultural awareness. With this in mind, some sources still encourage this learning and understanding to occur. The Walt Disney film, Pocahontas, for example, states 'if you walk the footsteps of a stranger, you'll learn things you never knew', allowing for the audience to question preconceptions allowing for intercultural learning to occur, even on a small scale, whilst presenting a film aimed at children delivering a preconception of another culture. Although not precisely the Indian culture as being talked about in this essay, many children grow up with the preconception that Indians, to use the generalised term, are indeed as presented. This view of learning is also visible in the 'Phases of engagement model', set out by Weener and Hayter (1996), consisting of three phases of learning: 'Disorientation, Coping and Equilibrium'. This learning allows people to 'question their own values' (Scoffham and Barnes, 2009) and provide 'a sense of self-worth and identity' (Hicks, 2006 as cited in Scoffham and Barnes 2009).

Furthermore, the learning being undertaken is not only learning of culture, facts and figures but also moral and social, 'recognising multiple perspectives and [leaving] underlying assumptions behind them'. (Andreotti 2010 P17). This type of learning dates back centuries, as many religious scriptures and tapestries record, with great teachers preaching good morals and people coming to listen and learn from them. This conveyance can cover

every topic being from different foods and ways of teaching in schools to more personal topics; in this case, family values and support.

Many religions are practised in India, and in fact within Kerala itself, with the three prominent being Hindu, Muslim and Christianity. Although the number of schools visited during the study trip was limited, these religions were all evident, with the family values and support being strong in each school. Hindu's believe that Bishma said, 'The worship of mother, father and preceptor (teacher) is the most important thing according to me' (Mahabharata, Santi Parva, Section CVIII) which is also supported by Christianity and Islam also. This demonstrates that the idea and belief of family values and support has been around for centuries meaning the bond of the family is ever strong in Kerala. Hui and Triandiz (1986) used family to represent a collectivist society allowing for 'a sense of harmony, interdependence and concern for others' (Hui and Triandiz 1986, P244) with the 'Indian family [being] considered strong, stable, close, resilient and enduring' (Mullatti 1995; Shangle 1995 as cited in Net Industries- Indian family values 2014).

Similarly, many of the families at the school within the UK are supportive. However, the school is considerably more multi-cultural than the ones visited whilst in India. Some of the families, from observation, don't support their children through school, either because they were never educated and find the comprehension of it to difficult or they have lost the trust in the education system in the UK. Within the school many of the pupils come from a Roma Gypsy background. A secondary head teacher comments in a government document, 'They are very self-sufficient, and not trustful of routes society provides for progression' (Improving the outcomes for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils: final report) which was evident within the school in some cases, but not all although this does not mean they are not supportive outside the education system as Roma Gypsies are a very tight and supportive inclusive community. But on the other hand, the Nepalese population within the school are highly supportive both at home and at school as found through conversations with teachers.

Literature Review Conclusion

The review concludes that intercultural learning should be taught and experienced by people in order to gain a better insight into the world to rid of the preconceptions and prejudice faced by many today. The intercultural learning of family values and support is evidently, different between the schools visited in Kerala and the school being compared in south east England. With this difference and the similarities in mind, it opens doorways for learning to occur on both sides, no matter the difficulty this learning may bring. After all, intercultural understanding is 'part of a general education and learning to live in a complex

society' (Byram and Doyé, 1999, p.142). Although written for primary foreign languages, the statement is still relevant to the topic, which, with the world and in particular the Keralan and English schools being looked at here, is of great importance.

Critical Reflection- what and how I learnt

Throughout the visits to the schools in Kerala many questions were raised from the beginning. The welcome, hospitality and kindness of not only the teachers, but every single pupil we had the opportunity of meeting and conversing with in every school was magnificent. Through personal recollection of my days at both primary and secondary school, it was of course courteous to greet visitors to the school and make them feel welcome by introducing yourself and wishing them a pleasant visit but that was the extent to what I was taught. It felt, as I used my preconceptions and knowledge of the world as I knew it at the time, as if we were to effect, royal. Although this experience was a great one, it did make me question whether some pupils, or in fact, some people in England would have bestowed this welcome back should the visit have been reversed.

Following on from this, conversations with both students and staff at all the schools visited, relayed that not it was not only the schools responsibility for the pupils to act as they had (and I believe do all the time), but also the families. The family's level of support for the pupils to strive to do well, and become well-rounded human beings, to me was overwhelming. I made sure to make note of this to allow for further reflection within the trip (Appendix A, p16), with immediate reflection being made back to my own upbringing. I began to ponder the thought of the position I would be in now, should I have had the support of my family during my education that was so apparent here. This led to the same thought regarding many of the pupils in the school back in UK which I was comparing the study too (Appendix A, p5). How can we motivate parents to be interested in their children's education allowing them to gain the best outcome from life striving for the better instead of settling for the same fate as their own, as my parents had wanted me to do and from experience so had many from the school back in the UK.

As the week progressed, and more school visits occurred, the realisation of how the pupils and teachers had been brought up with respect and dignity was becoming ever stronger. Although I expected this to be the case before the visit, with preconceptions being met (P5, Appendix A), I did not comprehend how much so this would be. The want to create a better life not only for themselves, but their families and other people was staggering. I found myself becoming confused by this, wondering if western civilisation had got something wrong somewhere. This feeling relates to Weeden and Hayter's (1996) phase of

'disorientation'. Of course there are many people within the western community who are like this too, but the contrast was amazing. From the experience of the school I was contrasting the visit to, I found that there a number of pupils in the UK school were not like this, thinking of school as a mandatory place to go, having little or no respect for their teachers and peers with their ambition in life to use the benefit system available in the UK rather than striving to become someone better (Appendix A, p5). Although it is the teachers and schools place to try and change this mind-set, it became evident that without family support this has proven difficult in a number of cases within the school. I wondered whether the support would improve in the UK school if education became not only mandatory but also fee-paying, ensuring parents needed to work to be able to give their child(ren) a good education as so many families that I had the opportunity to meet in Kerala work incredibly long days to ensure their children get the best education possible.

One family I met working in a shop during the 'free time' we were able to have whilst on the study visit, became very interested in the visit leading to a very in depth and lengthy conversation (Appendix A, p24). They told me of their experiences growing up without an education with both adults being completely illiterate due to their families being unable to afford education when they were growing up. Although this saddened me, it was so pleasing to hear that because of this, when they went on to have children, they wanted them to have the best education possible so they work very long hours in order for this to happen. During this conversation I was becoming so proud of these people I had only just met, thinking that all parents should be like this.

Upon reflection of all these experiences however, I was becoming ever uneasy with the experiences I had growing up as I could resonate with this completely although on different terms. Frosh (2013) talks of 'hauntings', which in this case, became my memories of life. Although I had managed to achieve in life, going to university and now in the process of completing a PGCE course, I became very critical of my own family. Having had parents who divorced when I was just 5 years old, it became the norm for me to hear the constant arguments between my parents and not having my father around for the proportion of my life. But then, even with my mother present, due to her re-marrying and having a new family with her new partner, my half-brothers always seemed to be prioritised over my other brothers and sister as well as myself. This led to my brothers and sister leaving home soon after the second marriage, without the support of family around them, leaving with low career aspirations, relying on government benefit support. With this in mind, they are all now happy but this left me 'alone' working out life on my own within this disjointed family unit.

In a way, much of my life in the UK whilst living in the family home, resonated with the 'disorientation/coping' phase as mentioned by Weeden and Hayter (1994), leading to the experience in India pulling up raw emotions which I had managed to keep away in the UK. The anger at my family allowing me to go through life before leaving home, just coping, having to 'fend' for myself and being noticed only when they needed a babysitter became ever so real after the first couple of visits to schools. Although not neglected in the way of the being fed and clothed, the emotional neglect and lack of physical emotion was always there. Although this occurred, thankfully due to such inspiring teachers, I was able to thrive at school, making it my haven allowing me to succeed without the support of the family. Once I had moved out of the family home, I managed to conceal these memories and emotions away not allowing them to affect me, in effect reaching the 'equilibrium' (Weeden and Hayter, 1996) stage of my life at that time.

Although this anger at my family became strong at the beginning of the study trip, I found myself reflecting on my life, considering what the future may bring and how I would like my children to have the support and best out of their life that I never had. The obviousness of family life and support from every person I had met during the study trip, made me feel as if I was not only entitled to this too, but also, although not necessarily it being my fault my past had happened as it had, that it was now my place to try and fix it. The other trigger, though not a positive one at the time, was the presence and admittance of some of the Keralan teachers that they used the stick on the front of the desk to 'hit' the children to inform discipline (Appendix A, p20). Although painful to hear, the friendliness and love of all the teachers still allowed me to accept their values. This relates Andreotti (2013) as I became so accepting of situations- the tent disposition- which I wouldn't have dared to before the study visit. I found myself, for the first time in my life, craving that support from my family that hadn't been present for much of my life.

Upon return to the UK, I found myself back in the 'disorientation' phase, not understanding my thoughts once again as things went back to 'normal' so suddenly. This is something that Wayden and Hayter (1996) do not discuss, leaving the feeling of uneasiness as I had not anticipated this. Something that felt so easy to do whilst on the study trip, wanting to get back in contact with my family, suddenly became one of the most difficult things in the world. I spent the next few days in the UK school, observing relationships between pupils and teachers and conversing with some pupils about home life and how they felt supported throughout life. Through some these conversations, it was evident to me that some of these pupils craved the same thing I did, support from their family. After 3 days of debating the

matter, trying to come to terms with my thoughts in my own mind, I found some courage to make contact with the family that I had felt let down by so long ago.

Although originally awkward, the phone call became easier as I explained to my mum's family that the past was not the issue anymore and that I wanted to start a new relationship with support from both sides allowing for a better future, which we both agreed upon. Although early days in the rebuild of this relationship, it has begun well, with me learning that people should be there to support each other throughout their lives, which will allow me to do the same when I go on to have a family of my own and progress through life. I also wrote my father a letter explaining the same things, but am yet to hear a reply from this, with hope that a relationship can be formed one day with him too.

Some may question how this learning can be intercultural, but living in the world of diversity we do today, perceptions and preconceptions and in fact conceptions can be changed and noticed due to the actions of others. Personally, I feel my learning is due to the culture I witnessed whilst being in India showing me a better way of life with the family and hope that this learning will never cease through contacts and hopefully more visits.

Conclusion

The four key questions raised in the introduction of this essay have been answered through the literature review and the critical reflection. Intercultural learning has been established as unlearning preconceptions and relearning through experience and immersion into another culture. The importance of this learning is advantageous for both parties with new lessons, understandings and acceptance being given for different cultures, ways of life and viewpoints (Appendix A, P.20).

One limitation of this essay was the word limitation, meaning that some information could not have been presented in as much depth as could have been possible. The other limitation was that the study trip was only 10 days in length, meaning anything learnt, no matter the how big or small was still limited due to this and intercultural learning never stops meaning full understanding and learning will never cease.

The questions posed at the beginning of the essay have been answered with my life being changed quite dramatically from the experience. This experience will also aid my teaching and development by assisting those who may not have as much family support in order to gain their full potential out of life and by becoming more accepting of personal situations without prejudgement (Appendix A, p26). It will also help me to aid those who have

preconceptions that may not be overly correct or may be of a negative viewpoint to search for the 'real' viewpoint.

'Maggie': 'Intercultural Learning: A Critical Reflection on whether culture is needed for the survival of education and to what extent postcolonialism is inherent within cultural study visits.'

Nothing could have fully prepared me for the personal and professional journey that I experienced during our 10 day study visit to Kerala, South India. The trip created periods of intensive deep thinking and communication which led me to question the fundamentals of our society and draw on realisations that challenged and highlighted the insecurities of my own preconceptions and inhibitions.

This essay will focus on an area which predominantly affected me throughout the duration of the trip and continues to do so – the question of whether the UK has lost its identity and culture and if this is consequently having a detrimental effect on today's English education system and the value which people place on it. My experience in India left me feeling envious of their rich culture and heritage. I could not help but associate this pride and their intrinsic cultural values with the respect and admiration that they have for education. I will also delve into a couple of key questions which I have felt deserve further reflection since returning to 'normal' life in the UK:

1. How did being part of a supported study visit enable me to learn?
2. Did the very essence of this life changing visit inherently possess a postcolonialist approach?

The term postcolonialism is a theory explored by various scholars surrounding the argument that the West still holds a colonial position over the East, be it through the mind or more neoliberalist motives such as industry, economy and politics. It is thanks to my journey during this intercultural learning visit that I have come to understand and critique this theory more clearly and relate my own experiences to some of these postcolonial arguments.

"Intercultural learning is literally about how people learn from each other through cross-cultural interaction and dialogue." (<http://www.gpml.org.uk/relationships/>) I believe it is through this sort of learning that people can truly discover and can ultimately re-think the potentially dangerous single story that they may have restricted a certain culture, people or idea to. (Chimamanda Adichie, 2009)

Literature Review - To what extent is postcolonialism inherent within cultural study visits?

According to scholars such as Ashcroft and Griffiths, Postcolonial studies is a growing area of discussion and ranges into spheres of globalisation and economics. The idea that we in the 'West' continue to maintain a colonialist position above the 'East' is something which I have never truly grappled with before this trip and it was not until I began to reassess some of my preconceptions in terms of positional superiority philosophies that I began to question why. Why were we being treated with such undeserved respect and admiration?

Edward Said was a pioneer in the initial ideology behind postcolonialism and created the notion of Orientalism and the Us-and-Them binary social relation construct. "...Orientalism depends for its strategy on this flexible positional superiority, which puts the Westerner in a whole series of possible relationships with the Orient without ever losing him the relative upper hand." (Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader, P. Williams et al, p132) This portrays the idea that the West remains in a superior position due to the psychological and mind colonisation that is suppressed on to the East. By labelling countries as 'Third World' or 'Underdeveloped', we are immediately placing ourselves on to a pedestal of supremacy on which we can distribute control, power and authority – a geopolitical homogeneity if you will. With this in mind, I agree with Said - by identifying countries as poor and backward we are restricting the development that these countries could potentially make.

Michael Foucault advances Said's Orientalist theory with his idea of the relationship between power and knowledge. He indicates that by claiming to have knowledge of the 'Orient', the 'Occident' could use this supposed knowledge to label and control the East. For me personally, I can definitely say that these labels which have and continue to be placed on India, led me to have very unjust preconceptions, the majority of which have rightfully been altered since my visit. However, in accordance to Dennis Porter, I do believe that Said has over-generalised some of his historical findings and leaves a dangerous hole in his theory surrounding counter-hegemonic arguments and thoughts.

Frantz Fanon makes a crucial argument for the reason as to why the East themselves place us into a superior position. Fanon stated that colonialism purposefully endeavoured to brainwash the minds of the natives' so they would believe that they would fall into disrepair if the settlers were to leave. (Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader, P. Williams et al, p37) I believe this is still true to a certain extent - that there remains an indoctrinated idea in the minds of many once colonised countries that the West holds the

power and resources to create and maintain civilised and protected societies. This mutual positional fixing may take generations and generations to finally balance out.

Much of this literature can be related back to intercultural study visits themselves and can explore whether, with all their positive benefits and life changing experiences, they may actually contribute to postcolonialism. It is important to understand that much of postcolonialist theory is about deconstructing your own ideas in order to view the world from an outside view and result in transformative learning.

“...Bhaba argues that often individuals occupy their own cultural space... and that this can provide a barrier to understanding each other” (Focus Global Partnerships as Sites for Mutual Learning, F. Martin and L. Wyness, p16) He goes on to claim that people need to find a ‘Third Space’ where they can conduct this outside learning. Denis Porter also agrees with this concept - he stated the need for mutual counter-hegemonic dialogue so that each party involved can transform the proposed truth known to them into a more flexible and provisional idea. Although some things may feel completely against existing knowledge, beliefs and values, it is vital to try and maintain an open mind and accept opportunities of immersion. I believe, this combined with the support of the group, can help you move through the stages of disorientation, coping and into proposed equilibrium. I found that because I had embraced this transition it resulted in me being catapulted back in to disorientation when I returned. Nevertheless, I believe it is of great importance to realise that Bhabas’ and Porters’ arguments should not be interpreted as the only way in which learning can take place.

After some reflection I do personally believe that these types of intercultural study trips, including ours, do intrinsically possess a postcolonial angle. This is not to say by any means that they are not invaluable and positively life changing experiences. “...progressive intellectuals representing themselves as the ‘saviours of marginality’ ... end up reproducing the same power relations that they seek to put an end to.” (An Ethical Engagement with the Other, V. Andreotti, p3) Ultimately, I believe these trips are invaluable opportunities in developing the minds of people, they allow a person to not just study a particular culture but to actually challenge and re-evaluate their own culture of ideologies. They provide “well-intentioned aims of enabling participants to become ‘global citizens’” (Power and representation F. Martin & H. Griffiths, p916). Giving trainee teachers this learning opportunity could equip them to teach future generations and raise new minds of acceptance and equality within a multicultural society which so desperately needs this input.

The very fact we embarked on this intercultural study trip meant that we were ultimately going to study the local people, their culture and their education systems. “What this unwittingly does is to position the Other as an object of study, and thus recreates aspects of the colonial mission.” (Focus Global Partnerships, F. Martin and L. Wyness, p37) Can we truly ever get away from creating this colonialist positioning? Would there be any question of colonialism if a group of Indian people came to study people in the UK? I do not feel there would be to the same extent.

Research Methodology

I will begin this section by briefly outlining the research methodology that I used throughout the trip and since I returned. It is important to understand that much of my research is drawn from an ethnographic approach and is of a qualitative and highly interpretive nature. This in turn means my research is coming from a personal standpoint and therefore will be of a subjective manner resulted from an immersion into another culture and life. As a result, it is vital to stress that my own conclusions made during the remainder of this essay are time and place specific and should not be thought to be generalising claims. My research data itself mainly consists of materials such as photos, videos, shared dialogue and my personal intercultural journal which I kept for the duration of the trip. I feel it is also necessary to acknowledge the fact that some of our experiences during this trip may not be truly representational of a typical day at school in India. This is due to the fact that some schools clearly, and thoughtfully, prepared days for our visits and may have, on some occasions, conducted things so that we saw what they thought we would want to see.

Critical Reflection

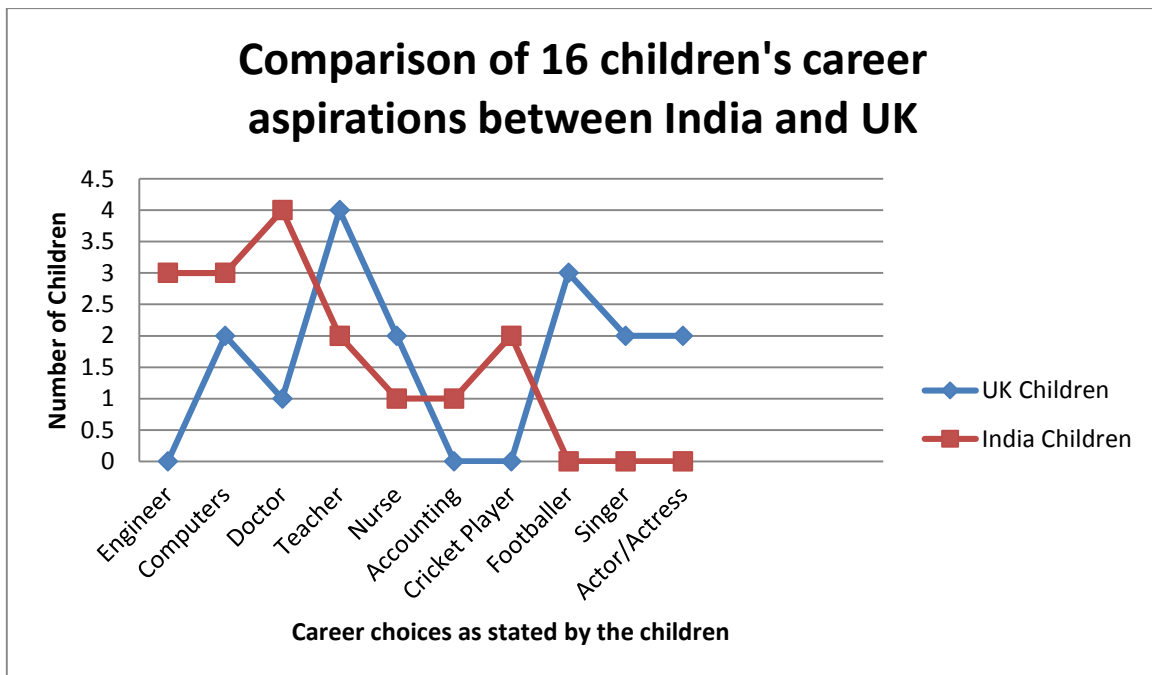
“The influence of culture on beliefs about education, the value of education...cannot be overestimated.” (www.education.com/print/impact-culture-education) I left the UK expecting to see a greater level of respect and value for education but I was not prepared for the true extent that we witnessed during our time in India. It was an overwhelmingly humbling and eye opening experience which left me feeling confused, ashamed, inspired and determined to change things all at the same time. What struck me the most and what I wish to delve deeper into was the awe-inspiring presence of culture, tradition and shared common values that seemed so prominent in India and which ultimately highlighted the lack of such elements of society within the UK. This made me question the bigger picture of whether culture may be a necessary ingredient in maintaining high levels of regard for education. “...cultural attitudes have a big impact on pupils’ attitudes to learning.” (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/642501.stm>) I believe this sort of statement can only

really be understood if people take the time and consideration to question their own culture. It is only through this learning to unlearn process where the deepest understanding can occur and is something which we all tried to establish during the trip.

The concept of culture and what it involves is something too big to really come to terms with within a short assignment but I can definitely say that India left me overwhelmed, envious and in awe of their culture and the pride that India naturally seemed to possess. It was something I had never experienced before, from young children to teenagers to working adults, everyone we met knew their culture and took joy in sharing it. I, along with the rest of the group, found ourselves decidedly ashamed that we had nothing to offer in terms of a cultural performance when we were asked if we would contribute to a show a school had prepared for us. It made us question the mere existence of a culture or identity within the UK. However, by the end of the trip, once we had surpassed stages of disorientation and coping, we forgot our Western fears of embarrassment and performed a short song during the last cultural show which, had again, been prepared especially for us. Not only did India's vibrant culture come across in terms of music, dance and other forms of art but also through shared values and morals which, from interactions with local people, seemed to centre on the family unit.

From day one of our school visits I was shocked and almost uncomfortable by the level of respect all the staff and children gave us. We were met by marching bands, led on stage in front of the whole school where the children sang to us and said prayers; we were given roses and were made unique guests at their specially prepared cultural show. (Intercultural Learning Journal, p25) Not only was I shocked, but I was confused as to why they believed we deserved such kindness and required such high esteem. This was the first instance which made me query our colonial status within India and whether we still hold and are placed upon a superior pedestal and are therefore adhering to postcolonialism as Andreotti argued in her Thinkpiece. On a different level, I was more impressed and overwhelmed by the respect that the children all seemed to have for their teachers and their education. In the majority of schools that we visited, I asked a selection of the children what they wanted to do when they grew up. The responses were staggering and were some of the polar opposite answers that I collected when I asked the same question to children in the UK. Children as young as 8 or 9 in India seemed clear that they wanted to become an engineer, a doctor, a teacher, a computer engineer and so on. The vast majority of career aspirations that these students were striving for were heavily academic based and would require intense study, a requirement that I believe very few of these students would struggle with.

There were only 2 answers out of 16 children who chose the fame route, and even then it was specified to a desire to become a professional cricket player. When I presented the same question to children in the UK on my return, the responses were the opposite, with the majority wanting to follow fame in one way or another and the minority wanting to pursue a career in something more academic or skills based. (See below graph I created) After thinking about reasons why this might be, nearly every single aspect returned to the same larger distinction – culture and society.



During our visit to the first school, I asked one of the young teachers why the children have so much respect for their education. His answer was simple – “It all starts at home.” (Teacher, ██████████ School) This made me realise a sad truth about the state of society as a whole in the UK and that many of our children no longer view education as a means to a better life or even as a tool for the mere enjoyment of learning. Sadly, much of society in the UK, and the West in general it could be argued, now only view education as something compulsory that they have to do and nothing else. When talking to the trainee teachers at the ████████ Teacher Training College, it was even more evident that the UK may be falling into a broken society. Countries that in the past have been labelled as developing and third world nations are now viewing us a country that needs to change and a county that needs help. The trainee teachers seemed particularly concerned at the rise of broken families in the UK. They believed that family is the central support system and is vital in

upholding values and morals – therefore key in respecting education. I agree that this is becoming an issue, not regarding broken families as such, but the lack of support in the home.

I believe the UK has shifted into an individualistic society where people are taught to look out for number one and have lost touch with collective morals, only to be led by the support system that they know – the media and materialistic fulfilments. India on the other hand showed life within a collectivist society where people appear more together and united. I strongly believe that India is doing a lot of things right which the UK may have lost its way from. I personally have learnt a lot from India and hope to carry it with me throughout my professional and personal life. Nevertheless, it is going to extremes which I think is potentially dangerous – the UK is at one extreme and I argue India is the other extreme to our present society and education. I would like to think that by finding a balance between both could result in a positive change but unfortunately I cannot help but believe that no changes will be made to society in the UK, and therefore education, until tragic circumstances force things to begin again.

Conclusion

Whenever people have asked me ‘how was India?’, I constantly find myself struggling to find the words to describe the experience and I am not sure I could ever make people understand how truly life changing and inspirational the journey was. I feel my personal trip reflection in my learning journal is the closest I could potentially get. (see Intercultural Learning Journal, p39-40) This feeling of ineffability has made me even more thankful for being part of such a supportive group. By having the group around me and making close friends during the trip meant that we could support each other, help one another question things and bounce new learning around. I have no doubt in my mind that the whole group environment and shared ethos made the trip even more memorable in terms of learning and just the fact that we all shared these incredible experiences together.

I have been lucky enough in my life to have been able to travel quite extensively but I can safely say that this has been the most amazing trip I have ever had the honour to be a part of. I could never have expected to be so touched and humbled by the people we met who were some of the kindest most welcoming people I’ve ever had the pleasure to meet. The assault on my senses and my inner feelings that India imposed on me will be something I will never forget and will always try to hold on to.

I felt more disorientated and lost on my return to the UK and I genuinely think the trip has changed me in ways I never imagined it could have done. It made me realise uncomfortable truths about the UK and how much we have to learn and how far from a literal developed nation we really are. However, at the same time, I became thankful for what we do have in the UK and I definitely felt a greater appreciation for my family and the sense that whatever may be happening at home, my family and I are still so lucky. I am almost positive that the people we met and interacted with in India will have no idea of how much they inspired us and changed us. The trip itself was so well organised and the people who were involved, students, tutors, the locals, children and staff all made this experience what it was – an indescribable life altering and life capturing journey. With these feelings and the renewed/created desire to pursue this learning in my own professional career, I can't help but put less and less focus on the worry of whether we have been maintaining postcolonialism. Surely these intercultural study trips could just be the beginning of reducing the gap of historical colonial power and balance being restored? Whatever the outcome, my personal journey during the intercultural study trip to South India has been truly momentous, an experience I could never have dreamed of and something which will stay with me forever.

“Only by respecting the language, culture and knowledge of the learner can we together build literate, schooled and educated societies, where lifelong learning is the norm.”
(UNESCO – Education and Diversity, p5)

'Jane': Intercultural Learning from Study Visits: Colonial Ghosts and Imperialist Hauntings

Introduction

'Local and national issues, events and trends can only be understood if set in the wider global context' (Holden and Hicks, 2006, p.23), this statement demonstrates the importance of learning from other cultures in order to better understand our own society. We live in an increasingly global world and intercultural learning is key to enabling us to live in this world. Intercultural learning is defined as 'The process of becoming more aware of and better understanding one's own culture and other cultures around the world.' (British Council, 2003).

Citizenship has emerged recently within the national curriculum and pupils need to learn about 'the world as a global community, and the political, economic, environmental and social implications of this' (DfEE, 1999, p.14), it is a vital part of teaching now. The effective delivery of this teaching in schools depends on the understanding, ability and motivation of student teachers to help pupils make global connections. As a teacher of MFL I also have a personal interest in different cultures and within teaching it is the duty of an MFL specialist to make pupils aware of the culture the language they are learning. This is why I feel that learning from different cultures is so important.

With this in mind the focus of this essay will be to explore intercultural learning, what it is, how it is effectively done, the factors that affect it and what effects it has had on me as a trainee teacher. This essay will in particular concentrate on the colonial issues that affect learning from different cultures.

The findings in this essay are from an intercultural learning trip I went on to a region of South India called Kerala. I was there for 10 days and I was there as part of a group of 16. We stayed in a touristic resort and travelled each day to see different schools to see the Indian education system and talk to pupils and teachers.

As a result of the trip I will aim to reflect upon and answer the following questions:

1. What did I learn in Kerala?
2. How did I learn whilst in Kerala?

3. How did colonial issues affect my learning?

A journal was used during the time abroad for reflections which is what my data is based on. It is non-quantitative and interpretative therefore I have conducted a qualitative, reflexive ethnographic study.

Literature review

The aim of this literature review is to consider and critically examine the issues surrounding the last two questions posed in the introduction:

- How did I learn whilst in Kerala?
- How did colonial issues affect my learning?

Martin and Griffiths argue that intercultural learning requires multiple perspectives, however, they do not specify what kind of perspectives are needed and why they are required. In order to learn effectively whilst on an intercultural learning experience there is an argument that perspectives are not needed and that in fact they hinder the Participant from having a clear mind, it could be argued if there are multiple perspectives intercultural learning cannot take place.

Martin and Griffiths also say it can be argued that opening up to questioning one's beliefs and assumptions about the world means opening up to uncertainty which can create discomfort which has implications for the course pedagogy. However, Weedon and Hayter have established three phases that people experience whilst abroad; the disorientation phase, the coping phase and the equilibrium phase. This suggests that in order for any kind of learning to take place there has to be discomfort and uncertainty first for then the learner to move onto the coping phase and deeper learning to take place. This argument is the opposite of what is being argued by Martin and Griffiths because they are suggesting that the minute you feel uncomfortable it provides difficulties for the learning process.

There has been research into a 'third space' (Bhabha, 1994), he stated that individuals occupy their own cultural space and it is only by stepping out of this space into the space between them and someone from a different culture, that learning can take place. New meanings and understandings can emerge in this space. This argument means that learning cannot take place in any other way, there needs to be somewhere where all prejudices and beliefs can be left behind. This theory makes sense as the aim of intercultural learning is to learn from people and a culture that is very different from your own and there needs to be no conflict from different areas to do this. However, in contrast to this, one could argue that comparing what you are seeing with what you know already is

a form of learning. The process of comparison is a form of learning because it enables the person to use what they already know to see differences. It could also be argued that if the learner cannot see the differences between the two cultures (by comparing them) then it cannot go onto understand the differences and acquire a deeper learning.

Colonialism started a process of global inequality and opened up a large socio economic gap between for the first and third world which continues today. Spivak suggests that in this era western interests are projected as the world's interests and the rest of the world just accepts them. Therefore because of this, colonialism is either ignored or placed in the past so we think it is over and does not affect the present. This statement implies that colonialism affects everyday life and from that we can assume that it affects the way people are thought about that belong to former colonies. As Spivak states that western interests are made out to be those of the whole world this is clearly a new form of colonisation; western thinking is superior to that of other cultures, it is now a psychological form of colonisation. Therefore it can be argued that intercultural learning cannot happen unless certain processes take place for example what Sharp calls decolonisation of the mind. This is a logical step for this type of learning and is in agreement with Bhabha's theory of a third space where no prejudices are present.

Eurocentrism hinders intercultural learning because 'people are encouraged to think that they live in the centre of the world and that they have a responsibility to help the rest' (Andreotti, 2007, p.70) and that 'people from other parts of the world are not fully global' (Spivak, 2003, p.622). This theory indicates that the responsibility people from the North feel for the underdeveloped South is something they bring along with them when visiting. This is a problem because they think people from different cultures need their help and automatically makes them think they are superior. Martin and Griffiths state, 'The notion of aid, responsibility, and poverty alleviation retain the other as an object of benevolence' (Martin and Griffiths, 2011, p.912), this places the other as reliant on western help. No learning can take place whilst there is an inequality. For intercultural learning to happen both parties have to be seen and more importantly thought of as equal and with old imperialistic views that the other needs help this cannot happen. This stems from the view that if a culture is inferior to someone, then they have nothing to learn from them, that they need help and they have nothing to offer back. The term eurocentrism makes sense in an intercultural learning context because in western culture it is seen that they are the best at everything, and with this thinking there's no need to learn from anyone else because they have it all. There is no willingness to learn.

There is also a danger that instead of wiping out certain views some study trips, without the proper support and reflection for participants, can reinforce stereotypes that are held. Martin reports that there is continuing evidence that overseas experiences are reinforcing rather than challenge stereotypes and inequalities. Images of the hierarchical west remain deepseated and unchallenged without support from knowledgeable others and opportunities for regular reflection. Without support or mentoring participants cannot engage in reflection that will lead them to examine and readjust their beliefs and attitudes. This argument is a very strong one because when reflecting, views can be challenged and explored and this is when attitudes are most likely to change and learning can take place. Reflection is a very important process in intercultural learning and without it there would be no analysing and no opportunity for opinions and beliefs to change. However, it is not only during the trip that stereotypes can be kept or changed, it is in the aftermath of the trip that is a crucial time because on return to the native country the Elizabethan truly reflect on what they have seen abroad. It is at this time that there needs to be lots of support and even more opportunities to reflect individually and as a group. If the participant simply goes back to normal life and has not been given the proper instruments to analyse what they are seeing around them and relate it back to their intercultural experience then there is a real possibility that they will simply go back to their old views and the trip will not have made an impact on them at all.

Critical reflection

In order to reflect appropriately the context of the intercultural trip must be set out. Kerala is a relatively wealthy region of India compared to the rest of the country, it has the highest literacy rate in the country and the highest life expectancy at almost 77 years. Although the aim of the trip was intercultural learning, information to bear in mind is that there is a lot more money in this region and better quality of life than found in other third world countries. The activities we did need to be addressed too, it was an educational trip so a lot of the learning took place in schools and universities. We stayed in a touristic resort, this may cause a slight problem in the reflection because we also took on the part of a tourist in this trip and it can be argued that no intercultural learning can take place if one assumes the position of a tourist because it is automatically seen as superior.

The findings from my observations (recorded in my intercultural learning journal) lay out what I learnt during this trip. The first day visiting a school epitomised the welcome we received in India; a band at reception to welcome us, a whole school assembly where we were clapped on stage and thanked for choosing the school. Everyone was happy to see us and we were treated like very important people. It felt like the welcome we would give if

the royal family came to our school or town in the UK, that is the only comparison I can think of. This gives an idea of the prestige that was placed upon us and I came to the conclusion in my journal that it was because where we come from, 'Why were we treated like royalty? Is it because of our nationality or the colour of our skin? Or both?' (Intercultural Learning Journal, p.16). I mentioned to someone in the group that we were not even qualified teachers yet so it seemed ridiculous that we were being treated as superiors when we do not have qualified teacher status. Our welcome and treatment in India, in the schools specifically, is the biggest learning point from the trip. That the colour of skin still has a big significance in India and it goes back to the colonial period when white people were the superior race.

This in turn demonstrates the obstacles we had to overcome to learn from our trip. Although I did learn a lot from the way we were treated, what I saw was in fact not a reality of Indian schools and Indian life because they effectively put on a show for us. On the second day we were taken to a gift shop and I noted, 'Why we were taken to an expensive shop, was it because they assumed we were rich?' (Intercultural Learning Journal, p.15) implying the image those particular Indian people had of us. This is crucial in showing the prestige the Indian people placed upon us, however to learn effectively I had to constantly fight to see behind what was put in front of us because it seemed like they wanted to impress us. I discovered that in order to make any sense of what I was encountering every day constant discussion and reflection with the group helped me and allowed me to learn from this amazing different culture I was experiencing. I analysed what I saw every day and this was how I learnt effectively during the trip. I constantly questioned what I was seeing and posed the question why. This enabled deep learning because I was always looking for reasons behind every single action, movement and word said. Martin and Griffiths states that there needs to be a space for negotiation and discussion to enable intercultural learning. It needs to be a space in which 'questions of history, power and domination are not excluded but, instead, raised and openly discussed' (Martin, 2008, p.62), this is to avoid any stereotypes and beliefs being left unchallenged. This happened with the fellow members of my group and the Indian people I met in schools and this really helped me to learn from their culture. This was the most effective way I learnt during the trip.

As mentioned in the first part of this essay, we stayed in a touristic resort relatively far away from the schools we visited. This was to allow us to withdraw each day from what we had done and seen so we could reflect on it individually and as a group in a calm, comfortable environment. As Martin stated, reflection is an important part of the intercultural learning process and this was how I was able to learn so much from the trip. But with this comes a

predicament because by staying in a touristic resort we assumed the role of a tourist so the question arises; how much can be learnt if you are assuming a role of superiority as noted in my journal, 'Because we are staying in a touristic place will this help or hinder my reflections and learning?' (Intercultural Learning Journal, p.13). There is a question as to if the reflections I made were from a person that had completely immersed themselves in a different culture, or a touristic point of view from the outside. This is an example of colonial issues affecting learning; it was felt that our free time should not be spent living with Indian people because we wanted to be in an environment that was more familiar, meaning we thought our habits and regimes were more effective and better than theirs. This is the mind set behind colonialism. This is one of the ways colonial issues affected my learning during the trip. The data is all from my intercultural learning journal and as they are my own opinions and observations from what I have seen and conversations or meetings I have had with various people. Therefore it may not be wholly reliable because there may be a bias in my findings.

The results from my data show that colonial issues surrounded the intercultural learning that was taking place during this trip. The observations I made are made right from the beginning of my intercultural learning journal, demonstrating that this was something that struck me instantly and was a big presence throughout the trip. In my journal I constantly refer to the special treatment given to us because of where we had come from and how we looked.

Conclusion

The biggest finding from this reflection is the fact that issues of colonialism and imperialistic views have a big effect on intercultural learning. Without the proper strategies to deal with these issues, efficient and competent learning cannot take place. This was demonstrated by my observations recorded in my intercultural learning journal, I was noted down quite a lot about the treatment we received as westerners, we were seen as special guests because of who we are and who we represent. Therefore in answer to the question I posed in my introduction of what I learnt in Kerala, is I learnt an awful lot about the colonialist mind set that inhabit us as westerners naturally, but also that there is a colonial mind set that exists within the people I met on the trip. This is not something I was expecting. Reflection was a huge part of the learning process whilst in Kerala and is the answer to the other question in the introduction of how I learnt in Kerala. There was also a lot of support from the leaders of the group and the others in group, to be able to discuss what we had seen and also to share any worries or fears we might have had. The learning that happened whilst in Kerala has had quite large implications on me personally and professionally. On a

personal level, I was very overwhelmed with the welcome we were given (cultural programmes in particular) and this led me to question what sort of welcome there would be for visitors back in the UK if colonial attitudes and stereotypes would appear towards them. I do not think that we would show the same welcome and these attitudes would creep out. This left me feeling very embarrassed at this realisation. As a result I will now make more of an effort to remember the welcome we received in Kerala and do that for other people I come into contact with who visit the schools I work in, I would also encourage the same from the pupils. The behaviour I saw in the schools and the nice welcoming nature of Indian people in general made me really question the behaviour I see in UK secondary schools, where it stems from, and why it is so bad in UK secondary schools. This experience has led me to have higher expectations of the pupils I teach in the classroom not only in terms of behaviour but also in the amount and level of work they do. As further research I would like to go on a study trip to another area of India to compare the findings with this area and see if colonial tendencies come through there too and to what extent.

'Rachel': Intercultural Learning: A Critical Reflection

The way in which we learn and process new information is a recurring topic in the world of education. This is an especially prominent theme in intercultural learning; when faced with a situation that will not only teach a person about a completely new culture and identity, but that will also heighten their knowledge of their own culture, a different type of learning needs to take place. The preparation for the study trip to Kerala was largely based around what we would each like to learn from the experience, and how this learning process would take place. Films such as *The Darjeeling Limited* (2007)- in which three brothers initiate changes in their lives from their learning in India- demonstrate the difference between simple understanding or learning, and the type of learning that has a significant impact on us and wills us to change the way in which we think. This is also known as transformative learning where 'To make meaning means to make sense of an experience' (Mezirow, 1990). In this way we are able to foster cross cultural learning and apply it to our own lives in order to learn from and because of our experiences, as opposed to simply having those experiences. This investigation will explore how we process new information about a place and its people based on our pre-existing ideas, and how this then forms the foundation for transformative learning to take place.

This is an interpretive and subjective study based on contextual learning both in and outside of the classroom. The research is qualitative, reflexive, and ethnographic, conducted in Kerala, India across a number of settings. I will be linking my field research with theory relating to learning, understanding, and postcolonialism in order to establish a firm connection between existing theory and live, authentic experience.

Literature review and reflection: learning about a place and its story

There is a small section of the Intercultural Learning Journals dedicated to our individual existing knowledge of India (Journal, 2014, pp.6-7). Considering that there were no members of the group who had ever visited India, our preconceptions were largely dictated by popular culture and mass media. One of the great advantages of our technological advances is that we know so much more about so much more; unfortunately, this is also our greatest downfall. Popular culture- especially film and television- caters for the demand of its audience and, as such, presents a narrow view of much of the world around us. For example, if we watch *Slumdog Millionaire* (2008) and take that as an absolute representation of the whole of India, we are making an assumption of an entire nation based on one image, disregarding thousands of years worth of people and history. Chimamanda

Adichie calls this phenomenon ‘the danger of a single story’ (2009). She explains that when we only see one aspect of a multifaceted ‘story’, we are bound to misunderstand and misrepresent that story. Of course, the media is vital in shaping our understanding of the world. As Piaget’s theory of assimilation and accommodation dictates, we base our understanding of the world on external stimuli that we then use to shape our existing knowledge or to create a completely new version of our comprehension (Piaget, 1954). Therefore, my own preconceptions of India- based on *A Little Princess*, *Jungle Book*, *Life of Pi*, Indian poetry and so on- are not only perfectly acceptable, but it is also reasonable for me to frame my expectations upon them; providing that these expectations are malleable and that I am willing to assimilate and accommodate (Piaget, 1954) new information without hesitation. Adichie supports this notion suggesting that ‘the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete’ (2009), implying that the most appropriate response is to discover as many stories as possible to fully understand, and to allow that understanding to continually evolve around new information.

This notion was quite prevalent in my experience of India. Prior to the study visit I had my own expectations and preconceptions probably based- rather embarrassingly- on one or two single stories I had been presented with on multiple occasions in the media. In my mind India *should be* exotic, beautiful, thrilling and possibly a little dangerous, especially if you are a woman. Religion and family should be at the heart of the Indian lifestyle, there are strict rules pertaining to those areas, and severe punishments for the rules that are not met. The men are probably valued higher than the women, meaning they have jobs while their wives probably stay home to nurse their children. Note my phrasing there; ‘*should be*’. I have specifically used this phrase as this was how I viewed what was to come; these ideas being based on film, television, the news, and my other travels to foreign countries. I was well aware of my preconceptions and the danger that they may be no more than ‘single stories’. What I did not expect was that the Keralans had their own ‘single stories’ of us.

In Arundhati Roy’s *The God of Small Things*, the arrival of family members at the airport is described as a momentous event; ‘The Arrivals Lounge was a press of love and eagerness...Their families had come to meet them. From all over Kerala...They were all there’ (Roy, 1998, p.138). This is almost an exact replica of our arrival. There were hundreds of Keralans in multicoloured saris and dhotis pressed up against the railing to greet the arrivals and there was a genuine excitement in the air, broken only by our slow procession past them. While our Indian tour guide proudly shook each of our hands we were gawped at, pointed at, and taken pictures of; this was the first display of the Indian

'single story' of white British people. I should really be ashamed that this surprised me; however, similar to Adichie's suggestion about America in her own experience (2009), to me Britain has such a familiar reputation that it seemed strange that 'outsiders' would not have a 'correct' depiction of what a British person is.

PGCE tutor Paul Weeden suggests about intercultural study that 'during an intense experience like this there will always be learning but that opportunities have to be taken as they arise and outcomes cannot be predicted' (Weeden, 1996). Seeing and understanding that the Keralans had their own perceptions of white British people could have been an observation, or it could have been a learning curve. I unconsciously made it the latter for myself; I took the opportunity and throughout the remainder of my time in Kerala I built upon this in my own mind to comprehend such an obscure phenomenon. In doing this, I had unknowingly participated in Weeden and Hayter's 'Phases of engagement model' (1996) (see Appendix 2). This model outlines how we interpret information and how this changes as we become more comfortable with a new culture; in a way this is very similar to Piaget's ideas of schemas, accommodation and assimilation (1954). The model seemed to me to be quite accurate, however Weeden and Hayter seem to have overestimated how prescriptive the time we spend in each phase should be. For example; in the case above, I had seen a behaviour with which I was unfamiliar and began constructing a new schema to accommodate this unfamiliarity in an almost desperate drive to understand the situation. I seemed to progress through the engagement model at a much quicker rate, moving between the 'Disorientation' phase to the 'Coping' phase within the space of an hour or so.

This model has strong links with Scoffham and Barnes's theory of transformational learning (2009) (see Appendix 3). Discomfort and unease with oneself and one's surroundings leads to an identity crisis in a sense, in which the person in question struggles to create adequate understanding to regain a 'normal' level of comfort. Both models reflect this in their efforts to explain why and how we learn from intercultural experiences. A 'Powerful Experience' leading to 'Cognitive Disturbance' (Scoffham and Barnes, 2009) would relate directly to the 'Disorientation' phase of Weeden and Hayter's model (1996). 'Imagination' would lead to 'Coping', while 'Denial' would lead to postponement, and so on. Therefore, it would be fair to say that these models cannot be seen as mutually exclusive, and are both accurate depictions of how our anxiety in a new environment leads to us learning from it.

Scoffham and Barnes have dissected their model, relating it to individual methods of 'coping' in unfamiliar circumstances, noting that it demonstrates a 'complex holistic process involving not only the mind but also the heart and soul' (Scoffham and Barnes, 2009). This

demonstrates just how personal a learning journey is, and though I am not sure that every experience would touch your 'heart and soul', each member of our group would have taken something unique from each experience having met it differently, and having brought with our own individual preconceptions.

This does seem to be quite a sensitive and optimistic view of the 'power' of intercultural learning, especially when compared with the views of Finney and Orr (1995) who suggest;

'without political and social contextualization, neither the provision of information nor cross-cultural experiences are likely to change [these] prejudices and misunderstandings into more informed and realistic perspectives'

(Finney and Orr, 1995 cited in Martin, 2008)

Of course, Finney and Orr are not saying that transformational learning does not occur, but that the process is much more complex than experiencing an event and then comprehending it in your own mind to reach a conclusion. Martin concurs, stating that 'reflection on experience will only enable so much learning to take place. What is also required is meta-reflection on [our] core beliefs and assumptions' (Martin, 2008). These views expressing the difficulty involved in achieving 'deep' or transformative learning do resonate with me to some extent. How can our 'sense of identity' or 'willingness to take action' (Rogers and Tough, 1996) transform without our fundamental values being considered? How can we make sense of a society and allow that understanding to change our professional or personal practice unless we have related them to their social and historical context? Even Weeden implies this in his conclusion, asking himself whether his trip to Gambia was 'the experience of a lifetime' or 'just more savannah' (Weeden, 1996). Unless he actively chooses to understand his experiences in context, perhaps his trip will become to him just another trip instead of the life defining experience he expected it to be. World travel is so much more accessible in our current society that intercultural learning is becoming more common; how can we differentiate between basic understanding and actual transformative learning? If we compare this approach to Adichie's 'Single Story' theory and to Piaget's idea of constantly evolving schemas, it is almost as if Finney, Orr, and Martin are underestimating our ability to adapt and understand. I believe that there is a medium in this battle; for our learning to actually change our attitudes we do need to understand situations on a deeper level through contextual background, however I do not believe that this needs to be as rigid and prescriptive as Finney, Orr, and Martin imply.

Of course, our learning in the case of this study trip is restricted in the sense that exactly what it is we are learning is quite difficult to define. Alongside the personalisation of learning

as explained by Scoffham and Barnes above, there is not a clear distinction as to the boundaries of that learning; we did not learn about 'education in India', 'Keralan culture', or even 'people from Kerala'. What we actually studied were a small number of teachers and pupils in a small number of schools, and a relatively small group of salespeople and business owners. Therefore we learned about 'education in India in five different schools', 'Keralan culture from the perspective of those Keralans with whom we came into contact', and 'people from Kerala who each have their own identity, views and opinions'. My point here is that our learning cannot and should not be generalised to encapsulate one group of people despite our inherent need to create schemas (Piaget, 1954) and to find 'Equilibrium' (Weeden and Hayter, 1996) that will have a 'long-term impact on [our] professional practice' (Scoffham and Barnes, 2009).

This can be epitomised by our expectations of India. These were challenged multiple times in different ways, and in order for these expectations to revolutionize, we required either social or historical context and were still unable to apply this new understanding any further than the small proportion of what it was we were attempting to 'unpick'. For example, my expectation of the 'place' of women in India was challenged and continues to evolve even since I have returned to Britain. As a result of poor media coverage and horrifying news stories- the rape in New Delhi, for example- my opinion (much like the other women in the group) was that women are not well respected in India, that they are seen as 'wife' and 'mother' as opposed to 'person', and that their role in life is to 'belong' to their husband and children. This negative view has been fuelled by one consistent 'single story' that is presented to Western people so often and in so many different formats that it is now something we expect to hear about Indian women; we expect to hear how dangerous India is for women and how so many women are desperate to flee. Even in fiction that explores love, such as Roy's *The God of Small Things*, there is a consistent underlying theme of the sexual dangers women face in everyday life in India; for example, the doctor who is described as 'Kottayam's leading Paediatrician and Feeler-up of Mothers' (Roy, 1998, p.131), demonstrating how women are seen as objects that can be traded in for favours. My first issue with this expectation is that unfortunately women are subjected to power struggles and difficulties all over the world, not just in India. My second issue is that from my experiences talking to and learning from the women I encountered, I was wrong.

Dr Singh of Mahant Darshan Das Mahila College states that 'The worth of a civilization can be judged from the position that it gives to women' (2000). This is such a powerful statement and provides a rich base upon which we can expand our 'single story' of women in India. In pre-colonial times India was a matrilineal society; colonial influences- and according to

Dr Singh (2000) religious, specifically Muslim, influences- changed the position of women in society, subverting their role and diminishing their 'value'. There are three religions practiced in Kerala; Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity with 56.2% of Keralans identifying as Hindus (Census India, 2001). There appears to be a direct link between religion and the way in which women are seen in society; for example, Muslim women wearing a veil is symbolic of their husbands' protection as well as their power over them (Yeğenoğlu, 1998). We can infer from this that whilst men protect their wives, there is an obvious and very much alive power struggle with women seen as 'weaker'. Hinduism seems to take the complete opposite stance; women in Hinduism are celebrated, so much so that there are goddesses to whom Hindus pray as well as gods. During a tour of a Hindu temple, it was explained to us that men and women have equal 'worth' and different duties to fulfil based on the models set by the gods and goddesses (Hindu Priest, 2014). There is one god in particular- Jupiter- for example, who teaches Hindus to worship those around them in the following order; Mother, Father, Teacher, god (Hindu Priest, 2014). This positive emphasis on women in Hinduism appears to be reflected in society. The majority of the teaching staff we met were women, and one Headteacher even insisted that women are more naturally suited to teaching due to 'nature and god' (Keralan Headteacher, 2014). Furthermore, it would seem that though the women in Kerala appeared to have less responsibility (the majority rode behind a male driver on motorcycles rather than owning one themselves, for example), they are provided for on a basis of respect as opposed to power. There still does seem to be a barrier between the genders, however I feel a more extensive exploration into this would require further research.

I have broadened my 'single story' of women in India allowing me create a fuller and more accurate picture in my mind, and to move into Weeden and Hayter's 'Phase 3' (1996). This greater understanding has led to a higher appreciation of and respect for the women in Kerala, taking me into a deep 'Emotional' learning stage in Scoffham and Barnes's theory of transformational learning (1996). However, this can only be applied to my knowledge of the women I met and those that they know; I cannot now assume that women across India, or even just across Kerala, are well respected and well treated. This short example of reflexive research shows that I expanded my existing knowledge of women in India and this was shaped by my own investigation into religious context; therefore demonstrating how the theories of transformational learning discussed above each have valuable aspects to them, and using them together creates a fuller picture of how my intercultural learning took place.

Conclusion

The most significant learning outcome of this investigation for me is that it is impossible to relay a learning experience such as this trip in only 3,000 words. My own intercultural learning has become transformative; I want to explore further into other cultures and into different perceptions of them. Adichie's notion of a 'single story' fascinates me as it can easily be applied to any situation and it allows for personal growth. I have found that the theories of intercultural learning used in this investigation have strong relations to Piaget's work on the development of conceptual learning. This does not only support the theories and provide them with a firm basis, it also shows the relationship between learning about a new culture as an adult, and learning about your own as a child. This approach implies you would attempt to do this with an open mind and without any prior assumptions clouding your judgement, or by allowing your previous knowledge to be reshaped. This is, of course, what I believe Adichie is showing in her 'Single Story'.

This investigation could be furthered through the use of interviews and discussions with other members of the group to examine how they learned, if their learning has changed the way in which they think, and the differences between their preconceptions of Kerala and their actual experiences.

The exploration of the theories used in this investigation will assist my professional practice in teaching students about other cultures. I now understand how and why we can so easily either walk away from an experience taking very little from it, or allow it to affect us in such a way that it changes our way of thinking. This is so vital in intercultural learning and will help reshape my thinking of how to present literature from other cultures to my students.

'Fay': Intercultural Learning: A Critical Reflection on the Subversion of Lone Narratives

The Empowerment of Intercultural Learning: An Introduction

Intercultural learning can transform the way we think and feel existentially, emotionally and socially, both personally and professionally. As a member of the teaching profession, this transformational learning can have a huge impact on my continuing professional development. If we can recognise 'knowledge, learning, reality and identities as socially constructed, fluid, open to negotiation and always provisional' (Andreotti, 2010, p6) then we allow our identity and understanding to be reconstructed by transformational experiences. These experiences can come in the form of contact with ideas, circumstances and cultures that challenge our pre-existing beliefs and values. The study trip to Kerala provided an opportunity for this intercultural and transformational learning to take place.

The focus of this critical reflection is the way in which I actively acknowledged my preconceptions of India and the dangers related to, what Adichie terms, the proposed 'single story' of a nation (Adichie, 2009). This reflection will discuss how this attitude helped me further my deeper learning which served to impact on my professional and personal practice. Moreover, this essay will consider how an understanding of Said's ideas related to Orientalism (Said, 2003, p22) and the postcolonial theory related to India informed my experiences and learning during the Kerala study trip. Finally, I will assess how my values relating to Cosmopolitanism developed and altered during the study trip and in the weeks that followed my return.

The Danger of a Singular Narrative of India

Prior to embarking on the study trip to Kerala, I considered my existing ideas of India and through doing so realised that what I had were a collection of mostly Westernised stories of another culture. These included novels written about parts of India by Western authors, films produced by Western film companies and television documentaries presented by Western presenters. This prompted me to consider what Adichie calls 'the danger of the single story' (Adichie, 2009). I noticed that although these Western representations showed different areas of India, and were therefore not all alike, they did have some similarities. I perceived India to be a country of two halves, a country defined by its natural beauty but afflicted with inconceivable poverty. However, I was incredibly aware that these were just one or two 'stories' of India and that Kerala would have many more stories, undiscovered and untold stories, for us to explore. It is interesting that Adichie believes that the 'single

story of Africa ultimately comes... from Western literature' (Adichie, 2009). I too believe that Western literature is incredibly influential in forming our preconceptions about a country. However, in the modern age Western 'stories' of other cultures are conveyed through the media, photography, film and television as well as through literature. With this in mind, I aimed to acknowledge all of my preconceived ideas of India, to set these aside and to allow myself to be immersed in the untold 'stories' of Kerala.

As a result of my awareness of the singular narratives of India, and that I was actively working away from preconceptions of the culture, I was able to immerse myself in the culture of Kerala with a lot more ease than I originally thought possible. This consequently altered what Weeden and Hayter call the 'dynamics of engagement' (Weeden & Hayter, 1996, p 117) of my experience. In accepting the metaphorical baggage I would inevitably bring with me as my existing perceptions of India, I was able to reach the second phase of engagement by day two. This involved absorbing myself during the cultural excursions and learning how to 'cope' in this new environment. However, I realised that these phases are a process of transition and that you can go back and forth between them on a daily, if not hourly, basis. It was clear that I reverted back to the first phase upon our arrival at the first school we visited. This was mainly due to the overwhelming and unexpectedly generous welcome we received which set me back to a stage of 'disorientation characterised by uncertainty and insecurity in the face of the unfamiliar' (Weeden & Hayter, 1996, p117). Nevertheless, I managed to settle quiet quickly in to the third phase of engagement by day six whilst we were visiting schools by reaching a 'stable equilibrium' where 'uncertainty is accepted, differences are acknowledged and the unexpected is expected' (Weeden & Hayter, 1996, p118). At this point in the study trip I had relinquished the control I habitually require over my environment and was getting used to accepting that we could have no expectations of what would await us at any of the schools and that we had no oversight over the reception we received upon our arrival. This meant that I was able to relax into the experience and that I had not only set aside my preconceptions but also my personal attributes that did not lend themselves to my intercultural learning journey.

In addition to this, I became aware of the ripple effect of Western stories of India and particularly those portrayed by the media. If individuals are given a selective story of a culture or country this would instinctively change the way these individuals think about, and ultimately relate to, people of that culture. An example of this effect would be when Adichie speaks about her American roommate, describing her 'default position' towards her as:

'A kind of patronising, well-meaning pity. My roommate had a single story of Africa: a single story of catastrophe. In this single story there was no possibility of Africans being similar to her in any way, no possibility of feelings more complex than pity, no possibility of a connection as human equals' (Adichie, 2009).

I believe that appreciating the interconnectivity between people of all cultures is of vital importance when undertaking an intercultural learning study visit. These feelings of 'patronising, well-meaning pity' can be detrimental to this kind of visit and the valuable transformational learning that can take place. In establishing connections and similarities between ourselves and the people of Kerala, rather than identifying the differences, we work away from the idea of the single story and towards plurality.

In light of this, I found establishing parallels and links conducive to processing the powerful experiences I encountered during the study trip. Scoffham and Barnes classify powerful experiences as 'situations which conflict strongly with our expectations challenge us to generate new thinking' (Scoffham & Barnes, 2009, p267). Although I attempted to discard my expectations upon embarking on this trip, inevitably some did remain. While I gradually let go of these expectations as the days progressed, the initial powerful experiences such as the boat trip on arrival and the visit to the Hindu Temple challenged my expectations and generated an abundance of new ideas and questions. Some of these powerful experiences developed into what Scoffham and Barnes term 'cognitive disturbance'. They identify that it is these 'out-of-culture/out-of-comfort-zone experiences which permeate the India study visit as providing precisely this kind of powerful transformational force' (Scoffham & Barnes, 2009, p267) that creates opportunities for deeper learning. Personally, this consisted of primarily deep existential learning and deep emotional learning. I learnt a lot about my own identity through relating to the people and culture of Kerala and finding connections between what I already knew and my first-hand experiences. To go even further, I learnt a lot emotionally, above all I was aware of the way I was forming attitudes towards Kerala, the people we met and the places we visited. I realised that, because I was continually searching for the similarities and the ways in which we could relate to one another, I found common ground between our two cultures that served as an intercultural or 'Third' space (Martin & Wyness, 2013, p16). The creation of this intercultural space demonstrates how I consciously worked away from the idea of the single story because 'it makes our recognition of our equal humanity difficult. It emphasizes how we are different rather than how we are similar' (Adichie, 2009). Deep learning is dependent on the way we process our

experiences and cognitive disturbances, and affects the intercultural learning we develop during the trip. Scoffham and Barnes ascertain that deep learning occurs when:

'We make extensive links between [our] own lives and the new ideas [we] are encountering and search for their wider meaning. It is also linked to increased self-confidence, enhanced self-esteem and a predisposition to take action' (Scoffham & Barnes, 2009, p267).

I believe that, by finding the parallels between my experiences of the West and my experiences in Kerala, I have learnt existentially and emotionally. I am not only confident in my identity and values but I feel empowered to take small actions in my personal and professional life to support the plurality and diversity of culture and, most importantly on a personal level, the plurality of thoughts and ideas.

Furthermore, Adichie identifies that the creation of a single story originates from showing 'people as one thing, as only one thing, over and over again, and that is what they become' (Adichie, 2009). This echoes some of the ideas around Orientalism established by Said, particularly when he writes that:

'The Orient is an idea that has a history and a tradition of thought, imagery, and vocabulary that have given it reality and presence in and for the West' (Said, 2003, p22).

It is clear that this 'thought, imagery, and vocabulary' about the 'Orient' has shown this culture and its people in one way only and this has then established a single story of this culture in the minds of people in the West. It is interesting that Adichie highlights the importance of who is telling a story, above all if they are a part of creating a single story. She identifies that 'power is the ability not just to tell the story of another person, but to make it the definitive story of that person' (Adichie, 2009). I agree that authors, producers and the media in the West have exactly this 'power' to portray a selective story about a person, country or culture. Said also emphasises this idea when he discusses the creation of 'a widely influential model of the Oriental woman; she never spoke of herself, she never represented her emotions, presence, or history. He spoke for and represented her' (Said, 2003, p24). The creator of this single story of the 'Orient' was a foreign, relatively wealthy man who possessed the power to tell the story of another person and to make it the conclusive story of that culture.

Taking this into consideration, I was incredibly careful not to make sweeping statements or generalisations about my experiences in Kerala. This was supported by the structure of the intercultural learning journal which encouraged us to consider questions that opened up our thoughts and minds rather than attempting to come to conclusions about our experiences, which is often the natural process in an educational setting. This reflects my notion of education, particularly applicable within my teaching subject English, that we should be asking questions of the texts we read – both fiction and non-fiction. It is not always possible, or even appropriate, to come to one definitive conclusion. I relate to Adichie's belief that 'when we reject the single story, when we realize that there is never a single story about any place, we regain a kind of paradise' (Adichie, 2009). This 'paradise' becomes the new cultural environment we immerse ourselves in which allows us to learn interculturally about ourselves, allowing us to embrace all that is positive and constructive. This 'paradise' becomes the renewed open mindedness that we learn to use and appreciate in our everyday lives, challenging the single stories that surround us in the Western world. A world that is mediated and dictated by the media, popular culture and its representations of the rest of the world. Within this world we can now 'regain a kind of paradise'.

A Move towards Cosmopolitanism

One of the 'single stories' of India, that is commonly thought of in the West, is a story of economic poverty. This has been reinforced by the media and the film industry time and time again. In fact, when I told my friends and family I would be going to India their response was clearly based on the perceptions popular culture has planted in their minds. I had comments ranging from how much I would hate it because of poverty and sanitation issues to how it is a dangerous place and I must make an additional effort to 'stay safe'. It is impossible to conduct a study visit of India without remembering the impact the British Empire had on India. I believe there is a connection between post-colonial India and the portrayal of the country in the West. Martin and Griffiths highlight how 'a persistent focus on economic poverty does nothing to value the richness of culture, history, and society' (Martin & Griffiths, 2012, p908). It is exactly these elements that my friends and family, at least initially, failed to comprehend as they were blinded by the idea of poverty and deprivation. It is certainly true that:

'Our attention is naturally drawn to the most obvious difference, that of inequality in the world today, without necessarily understanding the influence of the past, (that is, the former colonial relationship between the UK and Southern countries)' (Martin & Griffiths, 2012, p909).

However, gaining an awareness of the impacts of the past helps us to work away from these kind of judgements. Acknowledging that, because of the post-colonial connection between Britain and India, there are likely to be imbalanced comparisons between the two countries. Martin and Griffiths state that ‘the ‘story’ that continues to be told about developing countries today is one which compares them (unfavorably) with the Western standard and as a result alternative cultures ... continue to be relegated to the margins and devalued’ (Martin & Griffiths, 2012, p910). It is inappropriate to use Western standards as a marker for other countries and creates unrepresentative and marginalising ‘stories’ that merely demonstrate a colonial nostalgia.

Taking this into account, whilst visiting schools, I was very careful about the way I approached situations. I was wary not to make judgements about the schools or the system of education and this allowed me to learn much more intuitively. As the style of the education system in Kerala is reminiscent of the one the British colonisers introduced, it is still relatively similar to the education system in England today. However, I felt incredibly uncomfortable when the board of governors at the [REDACTED] school in Thiruvananthapuram asked us to compare schools in England to their school. I believe that it is unfair to make a comparison between the schools in one country and the schools in another as there are so many contextual and cultural factors that influence what works well in one place, so that the exact same idea may not work in another situation. When the board of governors asked us for our thoughts and advice I felt the presence of the colonial heritage of India. This not only made me feel both professionally and personally uncomfortable, but it also made me want to highlight to them that our education system is not the standard they need to aspire to and that we were not there as a perfect example of what education should be. This conversation emphasised the relationship between ourselves as the visitors and the senior leadership team of the school as our hosts. There are potential risks of colonial nostalgia involved in this delicate relationship, particularly when the visitor wants to know how they can help the host and what they can learn about the host or vice versa. Martin and Wyness discuss that ‘what this unwittingly does is to position the ‘Other’ as an object of study, and thus recreates aspects of the colonial mission’ (Martin & Wyness, 2013, p37). At times I actually felt that the inversion of this was happening – I felt as though we were the ‘Other’ that was the object to be examined and scrutinised. It went against our explorative and inquisitive, or some might say ex-colonial, nature to allow ourselves to be spectators and often the spectated. The consequences of this were profound experiences of teaching styles, pastoral attitudes and pupil etiquette in Keralan schools.

Moreover, I begun to understand how we must reject our own single story. Rather than acting and behaving in a way that reinforces stereotypes, we need to be aware of other people's perceptions of us. We must communicate our own unique story through the way we conduct ourselves and the conversations we have with the people we come in contact with. Adichie articulates that:

'The single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story' (Adichie, 2009).

It is our responsibility to represent ourselves and to challenge the stereotypes connected to us as much as it is to challenge the stereotypes that exist of others in our own minds. In doing so, we establish our personal identities as something that is flexible, changeable and most importantly something we can continually evolve. In acknowledging 'our identity as something that is a social construction this allows for a more fluid, relational notion of self and opens up the possibility of change' (Martin & Griffiths, 2012, p920). This allows us space to complete the incomplete stereotypes related to ourselves and the existing 'stories' we innately relate to others. This possibility of change allowed me to accept, yet work away from, colonial heritages and the nostalgia related to this, advancing my social identity.

Moving forward from the idea of a colonial nostalgia, we idealistically move towards the concept of cosmopolitanism. Having researched this notion before embarking on the study trip, I was not entirely sure what this meant to me and how I could develop my familiarity with this belief. What I found was that, in creating an intercultural space for deep learning, I had almost unconsciously bought into the values of cosmopolitanism. Due to the reality that 'the origins of cosmopolitanism lie in an essentially moral view of the individual as having allegiances to the wider world' (Delanty, 2006, p26), I seemed to impulsively form the view that we should endeavor to constantly exchange ideas and knowledge on a global scale. Delanty explains this phenomena as the instant when 'new relations between self, other and world develop in moments of openness' (Delanty, 2006, p27). It was my renewed sense of open-mindedness, impartiality and plurality that allowed me to see beyond cultural relativism. Although I still possess distinct ideas against countries aiming for Westernised standards of education, I believe that there must be a global dimension to our progression. How are we to evolve on an international level if we do not share and recognise the diversity of attitudes and values in not only our local community but also our global community?

'Cosmopolitanism thus concerns the multiple ways the local and the national is redefined as a result of interaction with the global' (Delanty, 2006, p36) and this advocates that redefinition and reinvention should be encouraged if we are to develop a responsibility to one another on a world-wide level.

Subverting Single Stories: A Conclusion

To conclude, I explored the way in which film, literature and the media serve to reinforce the single narrative of India and how this influenced my own existing ideas of the country. I also discussed how I attempted to acknowledge and set aside my metaphorical baggage in order to see beyond my unconscious expectations and further the growth of my professional practice. This includes my renewed capability to search for similarities and positives rather than differences and this means I am working away from Adichie's concept of the 'single story' and towards plurality. Furthermore, my understanding of Orientalism and post-colonial theory informed my experiences in Kerala and allowed me to immerse myself in the culture, learning more about myself both on a professional and personal level. I learnt that it is all too easy to replicate a visitor-host relationship where the exchange of knowledge is involved and that additional care and attention should be paid so as not to recreate an adverse connection between nations. Additionally, I altered my beliefs related to Cosmopolitanism both during and after the study trip to Kerala. This consisted of me coming to the decision that, without the exchange of ideas on an international level, we are at risk of restricting our progression and development in the education profession. Likewise, the act of sharing thoughts and information on a global scale could benefit us all personally in terms of emotional, existential and cognitive growth. I am now able to relinquish my natural desire for control, something I believe only powerful intercultural learning could have attained. Since returning to the UK I can recognise that I have undoubtedly evolved, equally individually and professionally, to a place or 'paradise' (Adichie, 2009) where I feel increasingly confident in my own identity and values.

'Nancy': Intercultural learning: A critical reflection.

The danger of a single story.

This essay will critically reflect on my journey into intercultural learning through my trip to Kerala, South India. I had never travelled outside of the EU previously, although this did not stunt my interest in other countries (particularly India), including their education system and the way the people of the country play out the roles of gender. Throughout the essay I will focus largely on the single story many Westerners have of the East, and the dangers of viewing the East as a singular area that is impoverished and passive (Said: 1978). It will put forward arguments from academics that suggest there are differing ways of relating to, immersing oneself in and confronting the feelings of, being in different countries and cultures. I will also pay reference to gender and the images and assumptions we have and make of how gender roles are played out in 'third world' countries. It will also follow my personal journey from the single story I started out with of India to the, although still confused, very different picture I now have. I will also discuss the, although slightly distorted, picture that I now hold about gender roles performed in Kerala.

Before travelling to India I held an almost ignorant view that 'third world countries' would be a challenging place to visit, due to the physical and emotional effects of the heat and the extreme poverty I visualised. I also had a belief that women in Eastern countries were held in poor regard by the society, were second class citizens and that many women would be uneducated and/ or politically unaware. In the initial stages of my trip I found myself seeking out images, scenes or even conversations between men and women (that I could not understand from the language only the intonation) to try to confirm the single story I had imbedded in my mind. However, this single story I started with turned out to be something that, with time, my experiences, images and reflections changed or even completely dismissed. I will first critically assess the relevant literature on intercultural learning and the single story and then use the literature to analyse my own journey. The four dispositions of travelling (Andreotti: 2013) and Scoffham and Barnes' (2009) transformational learning template will be used as a guide to discuss how, through "cognitive, affective and performative characteristics" (V. Andreotti; 2013), I went through these phases and behavioural patterns.

Jerry Johnson's '*Crossing Borders: Confronting History*' (2000) discusses tourists "pretending to experience the host culture fully" (203: 2000). He postulates that tourists, although sometimes visiting difficult or non-modern places, never become fully 'changed' and therefore can never experience a life-lesson. He maintains that tourists are surrounded by cultural safeguards such as hotels, tourist monuments and sites that preserve their

psychological and cultural comfort; “their ethnocentric comfort zone remains untouched” (203: 2000). Johnson does, however, suggest that in a non-tourist, intercultural setting there are two stages to intercultural learning, these are ‘desolation’ and ‘resocialization’. Johnson (2000) postulates that ‘desolation’ is where a person can submerge themselves in a culture. This would, arguably, remove the ‘tourist’ label from a person therefore allowing them to discover and immerse themselves in a culture, permitting them to “acknowledge the end of a sort of cultural monopoly, be it illusory or real...” (Johnson; 55: 2000). The second stage suggested by Johnson (2000) to a non-tourist, intercultural setting is ‘resocialization’. He proposes that ‘resocialization’ is not a natural phase, making it possible for people to actively reject the culture by surrounding themselves with the comforts of home. However, if a person wishes to fully embrace a culture they must “seek resocialization” (Johnson; 203: 2000). Johnson’s (2000) argument, although allowing for both an unconscious and almost forced state of immersion in a different culture, does not seem to acknowledge the effects that this type of cultural learning can have on a tourist. In fact, his argument almost outwardly denies that tourists can have any type of life-changing experiences from intercultural travel.

Vanessa Andreotti’s *‘Taking minds to other places’* (2013) takes a, seemingly, very different view to Johnson (2000). Andreotti (2013) postulates that there are four dispositions of travelling, these are represented by: a fenced house, a caravan, a tent and a back pack. Johnson and Andreotti’s arguments are then, arguably, coming from completely differing starting points. Johnson (2000) is suggesting that tourism itself cannot allow for any type of immersion in a new culture, whereas Andreotti (2013) uses her four dispositions to discuss travelling to another culture and how people cope with this (travelling, debatably, suggests tourism). Johnson’s argument then seems slightly more radical and disappointingly (as I feel very changed from my own ‘tourist’ experience in India) judgemental. What is life changing to one may be a mere drop in the water to another, but to imply (or nearly outwardly state) that one cannot be changed by a tourist journey is somewhat lacking in foresight.

In contrast to Johnson (2000) Andreotti’s (2013) dispositions, seemingly, allow for different phases of immersion to occur, even as a tourist. Each disposition suggests how much or how deeply a culture affects you through “a different scope of possibilities for recognition and engagement...” (V. Andreotti; 2013). The fenced house is posed by Andreotti (2013) as the defence of territory and unwillingness to leave the safety of home or engage with another culture due to a defence of territory. The next phase is the caravan disposition. This, Andreotti (2013) suggests, is the willingness to travel but only if we can “look at the

world outside through the window of our frames of reference” (13: 2013). This would suggest that travelling but with our home comforts. This disposition, postulates Andreotti, is the safest for a tourist/ traveller as it allows for an engagement with a situation or culture whilst still feeling the security of home. The tent disposition is the penultimate stage of travelling. It keeps unwanted and unpleasant things out but allows us to step outside of our comforts and still allow others to be invited into our tent. This phase resonates with Johnson’s (2000) ‘desolation’ phase, as it allows for partial immersion into another culture. The closest stage to total immersion in another culture, and closest to Johnson’s (2000) ‘resocialization’, is what Andreotti (2013) terms the back pack disposition. This phase is formed from a willingness to engage and immerse ourselves in the unfamiliar and potentially scary.

Both Andreotti (2013) and Johnson (2000) write about the relationship an individual has with themselves whilst experiencing a new and different culture while travelling. However, it could be argued that the relationship a Western individual has with Eastern culture is intrinsically linked to the unequal relationship between the West and, its historical domination over, the East (Said, E; 1994).

“Your personal mythology- that infrastructure that informs your life- doesn’t exist in a vacuum; it’s surrounded by the overarching stories of our culture. Those larger cultural stories are rooted in areas of activity in society that are interconnected but distinct, areas represented by political, religious, economic, aesthetic, intellectual and relational pursuits” (Michaels, F. S; 2011: 8)

Michaels (2011) postulates that our views, stories and mythologies exist due to influences from our own larger culture. These stories shape our views of places, people, countries and cultures. Can these stories and prior cultural stigma ever really be changed by immersing oneself in another culture? Johnson’s (2000) term ‘resocialization’ seems apt if one was to ever overcome the stories and influences that, Michaels (2011) argues, are mythologies that inform your life. Michaels’ (2011) suggestion that “consciously and unconsciously, you live by your mythology”, arguably, then supports Johnson’s proposal that as a tourist you can never be fully changed, or have a life changing experience, as a tourist because the mythologies cannot be over-come if one doesn’t experience the ‘true’ culture. If this is the case, then there is surely a real danger of Westerners never being able to overcome the ‘single-story’ formed of many areas in the East since post-colonial times.

Edward Said (2004) discusses the ways in which representations of the ‘orient’ are “misrepresented and misinterpreted” (2004: 1). He speaks of orientalism as a product of

circumstance (these could be seen as similar to Michael's stories and mythologies). Stories or misrepresentations are built up over time and formulate what Chimamanda Adichie names, in her 2009 speech for TED, as 'the single story'. Adichie (2009) speaks of the dangers of the single story, and the unintended consequence of literature, films and stories, on people's views and images. The dangers Adichie (2009) speaks of ring so true with me and my experience in India. I am thrilled that I was able to visit India, for a brief a time as it was, as I was able to re-evaluate and reassess the 'single story' that I had formed previously of India. This re-evaluation could not be more prevalent than my view of gender in 'Eastern countries'.

Masculinity, gender hierarchy and gender-role socialization are subjects that I have studied and been intrigued by throughout the three years of my degree in Sociology. As a strong believer in gender equality, although prior to my visit to India I would never have judged people from other cultures for having a gender bias, I am ashamed to say that I had (a fairly strong) belief that the gender role of men and women in 'Eastern' countries was fairly set in stone and placed women primarily as second class citizens. I believe, after extensive reading on the subject, that gender is a social construct (an argument that is influenced by theorists such as Raewyn Connell: 1987 and Judith Butler: 1990) and I therefore do not find it difficult to believe that gender does hold a hierarchy because society has created one. Along with gender being a social construct, Raewyn Connell (1987) suggests that gender holds within it a hierarchy that is not only socially constructed but is widely socially accepted and performed. This was, without question, the view that I had of gender roles in Eastern countries. The gender hierarchy is being constantly challenged by the West but you hear story after story of how 'Eastern' cultures treat women and I, although I (wrongly it would seem) pride myself on being open minded and not judging something until I have seen it for myself, bought into the story. Even writing it now, I could weep at my own ignorance. In such a short trip to India I saw time after time women working in shops to support their families; strong, intelligent women working towards becoming teachers; respected, influential women teaching the next generation and at the conference on intercultural learning I saw bright, politically aware, educated women talking so eloquently about the struggles of their country and how they can and are trying to overcome their current environmental and economic issues. If nothing else I write proves how dangerous a 'single story' can be, this should surely be enough? I went to India with a, now on reflection, damaging and dangerous view of gender roles in 'Eastern' countries. How little I knew and how I much I claimed to.

My first two days in Kerala were, without question, the days that Scoffham and Barnes (2009) might categorise as my 'denial' days or as Weeden and Hayter (1996) may describe it as the 'disorientation' phase. I saw beautiful sights and amazing things, and although they were all such "powerful experiences" (Scoffham and Barnes; 2009: 268) I am not sure I saw them for what they were at this stage. Our second day in India was a worrying one for me. This was the day we saw a lady begging on the street carrying a new born baby. Prior to actually seeing her, and having her constantly following you and begging with baby in arm, I would have assumed that this would have been a big trigger for me emotionally. I was obviously moved by the situation but by the same token felt somewhat removed from where I was at this stage. This really worried me. I discussed my sense of numbness often over the first two days with my roommate, with some concern. I knew that this trip should be an important shift in 'something' in my life and I wanted it to have an effect on me. But I felt like the whole trip, and my very existence in India, was very abstract at this point. It felt as if everyone else was there but I was watching it all happen from a safe place, akin to Weeden and Hayter (1996) 'disorientation phase'.

Our first school visit was, I believe, the real turning point for me in my journey. My journey to what, I am still unsure, but I am fully aware that it was a journey none-the-less. It had a greater impact on me than any other aspect of the trip and what is so important, upon reflection, is that it took me by complete surprise. Upon arrival at the [REDACTED] school we were greeted by the schools brass band which started to play the minute we arrived. Music is already a big emotional trigger for me and has been throughout my life but my reaction to this particular time caught me totally unawares. I stepped off the coach and the moment I looked at the band I was totally overcome by emotion and for the next few hours I could not stop crying. I am not an overly emotional person and usual deal with situations through an organised, systematic and disciplined framework. Therefore my crying in itself was overwhelming to me which only sought to add to the emotion I was already feeling about the situation. I think I was overwhelmed by so much of what was happening and by my mere presence in India that this was the release. Perhaps I had inflicted upon myself some kind of mental block or 'denial' phase. I believe I may have been, unknowingly, rejecting the culture (Johnson: 2000). I believe that a large part of my emotion came from the fact that these people, people that knew nothing about us really, would put in such an extraordinary effort to make us feel welcome. In actual fact I felt like we were royalty. My crying did eventually changed to what I can only really describe as pure elation. What we witnessed in this first school may have raised many questions about worthiness and respect with me (see appendix A ; 16), but predominantly I was amazed by the children: their academic level, their kindness and their enthusiasm for learning.

My prior images of Indian gender roles not only manifested itself in my view of how women would be portrayed or treated but also on how girls would be educated. Again, how wrong I was! Yes, I saw segregation in the form of girls and boys on different sides of the classroom, but the effects of this (if in fact there were any) were minute. The girls I spoke to were enthusiastic about their academic future and keen to achieve. This, in relation to the way many girls in the UK would react to questions about their education, was refreshing and awe inspiring. We were told by a teacher that many of the children in the school aspire to be in high powered and well respected jobs but that many would not achieve this dream due to a lack of money to continue their education. As saddening as this was to hear I felt that, regardless of the fact they may not achieve their dream job, these children were destined to achieve as they worked hard and had an amazing work ethic. Can we really say that about children in the UK? It is saddening that children (and adults) in the UK really have so much, yet we value so little. I may have only been a tourist in this country but the effect it has had on me is long lasting, once again going to prove that Johnson's (2000) belief that tourists never become fully 'changed' is wrong.

I am very much a 'home' bird and like to surround myself with the comforts of home, and I absolutely continued this throughout my trip (I suppose this would mean I am of a 'caravan disposition' (Andreotti: 2013)), but I really believe that this did not hinder my trip or my experiences in any way. I believe I challenged myself daily in Kerala to express how I felt and not just what I thought. This shift in "cognitive, affective and performative characteristics" (V. Andreotti; 2013), I believe, is what allowed me level of reflection I have achieved. Reaching this deeper level of learning (Scoffham and Barnes; 2009) allowed me to see past 'the single story' I had of India and move towards, what I can only really describe as, 'my truth'. This 'truth' may not be the real Kerala (I make this distinction purposefully as I am in no doubt that Kerala, even towns in Kerala, are a very different place from the other states, cities and towns in India) but it is the truth of what I saw. Over the 10 days I saw and experienced: children, willing to learn and to progress themselves with the help and support of attentive and supportive teachers and family members; shop owners and people on the streets and in bars being kind, friendly and jovial; people who seemingly had nothing enjoying themselves and not pandering to their situation; and I saw women, so many bright, intelligent, politically aware, enthusiastic and creative women, in so many different roles. My beliefs in the world now are different. My views on gender roles around the world have been thrown into disrepair and my views on the whole education system in Britain have been questioned. Maybe I am not a whole new person, fundamentally changed to the core, but my experiences in Kerala will stay with me for life. Scoffham and Barnes wrote: "It would have been perfectly possible to have taught the students about India without ever leaving

the UK” (2009: 262). It may be possible to teach people about the economic state, the environmental struggles and the beliefs of states, even individual towns, in India, but there was a deeper learning from this trip that could never be taught in a classroom.

Appendix Four: Interview Transcripts

The following transcripts are taken from 13 interviews with my co-tutor and 12 of the 14 participants who accepted the invitation to be interviewed. Only transcripts from which I took direct quotations were included as a means to reduce the size of these appendices, however, all transcripts are available on request. The transcripts are sequenced in the chronological order they were undertaken between April and June 2014 to enable any progression in my thinking to be reflected from the cumulative process of interviewing.

Anonymity is treated the same as in appendix 2. All interviewees were given the same pseudonyms as for the critical reflections (see appendix 2) and other people or places mentioned are redacted. The subject discipline of participants is only mentioned where this is relevant to the points being raised.

On rare occasions where it was not possible to discern the comments made on the tape this is represented by four question marks. My comments are denoted by my initial 'S' and for each participant by their pseudonym.

Transcript lines were numbered in order to identify the parts of the interview from where quotations were taken when used in the main body of my thesis. At times the participants make reference to their critical reflections called PIES (Professional Investigation for Enhanced Studies). This is the term used for the academic critical reflections the participants submitted as part of the module.

1 *Interview with 'Alice': 22nd April 2014 at her placement school*

2

3

4 S: OK, well, if we start out .. I'll put the tape there, [Alice], but we'll just forget it's there and
5 just make this a conversation really about the trip and learning and that sort of thing. If you
6 don't mind, just saying who you are.

7

8 Alice: Yeah. I'm [Alice].

9

10 S: You were involved with intercultural studies.

11

12 Alice: Yeap. And I was a pupil on the team ... a student on the team on the trip to Kerala.

13

14 S: Thanks very much for talking to me about that. And what I really wanted to do was pick
15 up aspects of the trip and particularly those important things in terms of your learning and
16 also maybe to talk about what happened when you got back in terms of if there were any
17 factors that you found there that were ... or if you just got back into the same swing of
18 things or if there were differences and so on. So it really is just a brief kind of conversation
19 but the intention of timing it at this point is that the Module is all done and dusted and you've
20 got your assignment back and hopefully it's just a conversation about the points that you've
21 raised over the course of your investigation and journal and so on. So, I think you started
22 talking about the dusty floors and the assumptions that you made about that and you went
23 through a whole piece of spiritual learning and re-engagement and so on. And so it's over
24 to you and I'll just prompt with queries or questions as we go along, if that's OK with you?

25

26 Alice: Yeah, yeah. The dusty floors thing for me was so much wealth could be hidden in
27 what didn't seem like much. I was annoyed with myself quite a lot really for making
28 presumptions.

29

30 S: Yeah, well we all do it, don't we?

31

32 Alice: Yeah but you feel sorry for them and that's not how it should be. Especially when
33 beneath - behind - the dusty floors and bare walls they actually have so much more than I
34 feel we have here.

35

36 S: In what sort of ways, do you think?

37

1 Alice: Certainly in the relationship between the pupil and the child. I think the difference is
2 phenomenal really.

3 S: You say pupil and child ... do you mean pupil and teacher?
4

5 Alice: Yeah. Pupil and teacher. I think it's so different. There's a respect there but there's
6 a willingness to engage from the pupil and there was no effort, really, on behalf of the
7 teacher to try and make them engage. They are engaged and then it's from there where
8 do you go. I didn't see any misbehaviour really. The children were all really engaged. I
9 looked around the classroom when I got back and I just thought "Goodness me, I feel
10 overwhelmed in this UK classroom – with all these colours." And this classroom is an
11 example.
12

13 S: It's really vibrant, isn't it?
14

15 Alice: Yeah .. vibrant and every trick of the trade really to try and get the kids engaged.
16 To try and almost bribe them into a willingness to learn and there was no bribery needed
17 over there... over in India.
18

19 S: Yes. In my mind these are incredibly stimulating posters.
20

21 Alice: Yes, things hanging from the wall, every visual aid under the sun and yet every
22 behaviour management technique under the sun and it just wasn't there and yet what they
23 were learning is what they needed to learn. And I remember just being overwhelmed by the
24 standard as well. Having taught Year 2 in the UK I was looking at the handwriting of the
25 Reception children in India and their handwriting was better than the Year 2s. I would say
26 Year 4 standard in handwriting....all cursive.
27

28 S: Amazing ..and they're writing in a second language. So that was quite startling right
29 from the start of the trip, was it for you?
30

31 Alice: Yeah, yeah. I think the difference - and I think I'd always fallen ... having been to
32 Africa .. fallen
33

34 S: Where were you in Africa?
35

1 Alice: Kenya - and in a really deprived area. And so I think I've fallen into the trap of
2 generalising and making gross assumptions. From one story, one picture of poverty, just
3 completely generalising that.
4

5 S: And going to a poor country – Kenya, India ... must be the same?
6 Alice: Dusty roads, beaten up trucks ... must be the same. There were many elements of
7 Kenya and India, visually, that looked quite similar but the teaching was not.
8

9 S: Do you think it was just the teaching or just a representation of a wider culture that was
10 different.
11

12 Alice: I think the culture was very different. Yes. It was. But certainly I felt the same in
13 some situations. Like when being presented with the food and thinking "Oh goodness,
14 what's this gonna taste like? I don't want to be rude. I don't want to not eat what's on my
15 plate. Do I eat what's on my plate or do I finish my plate or do I not?" There was all that
16 and that was very similar.
17

18 S: We get to almost where the simplest things we don't know what's best to do. Is that
19 something you felt quite comfortable doing, questioning all these things?
20

21 Alice: Yeah. I think I did especially in the group discussions we did.
22

23 S: In the evening plenary?
24

25 Alice: Yes. That's where I felt most able to say, "Do you know what, actually What was
26 that about? Do we do that?" Or "How are people finding asking teachers about ... asking
27 questions about things." But it wasn't to say that the teachers over there weren't
28 accommodating. They would answer any question but it's the questions that you didn't
29 want to ask. (giggle)
30

31 S: Yes. It's hard to do that. And coming back in the evenings to a different sort of space.
32

33 Alice: Yes. Especially coming back to people who came from the same type of culture as
34 you.
35

36 S: Understandings misunderstanding...questions. Yeah.

1 Alice: I think the unity in the group ... when you go over there I think you immediately
2 become 'one' purely from the fact that you're from the same university kind of makes you
3 think, "Ah you've got something really in common."
4

5 S: Do you think that would always be the case or was that something about the group?
6 Or something about what we did and how we did it?

7 Alice: I think it certainly wouldn't always be the case. I mean I've been in groups before
8 where you've all come from the same thing and there are so many tensions and people just
9 don't get along. I think it was the evening time really, I think that really pulled people
10 together.
11

12 S: That's good to know. Obviously there were differences because there was primary and
13 secondary .. different .. PGCE mostly but also School Direct... and 12 female and 2 male.
14 Lots of dimensions within that group but I agree it did seem to be ...a very - not
15 homogenous in terms of everyone agreed with everyone but we were able to talk things
16 through and maybe disagree but keep questioning.
17

18 Alice: Definitely. And I certainly found it helpful having Primary and having the secondary
19 school students who specialised in an area, I found that really helpful because they looked
20 at everything from their speciality whether they realised it or not, I think. I certainly found
21 that.
22

23 S: I think you're right.
24

25 Alice: Particularly the girls with the Arts and I found that fascinating the way they expressed
26 their feelings through art and I was just praying a lot of the time...thinking "Lord, what do I
27 do here?" Or [Eve] with her Geography and it was fascinating sitting in.
28

29 S: I think I remember that you were a sociologist -. did you draw on that, do you think?
30

31 Alice: Fascinating. Yeah, especially class. Just how did we get to this stage where one
32 culture is seen as supreme over the other? How did we get to that? How do two completely
33 different cultures try and merge and one always come out dominant.
34

35 S: I think you said in your assignment that looking at Post-Colonial theory that wasn't
36 enough for you? In terms of it had to be a range of different theories to start to make sense.

1 Alice: I don't think. Yes .. I struggled with the Post-Colonial theory because I really struggled
2 with the fact that they had to learn in English. I thought well, actually, that isn't the language
3 that you naturally speak and "Why, why do you want to know so much about our education
4 system?" Why were we honoured so much when actually I was blown away by the richness
5 of their culture and we didn't have much to offer, which was a little bit embarrassing?
6

7 S: I was going to ask you about that because you were quite instrumental in singing that
8 song for the cultural event. Did that emerge from that sort of thinking about cultural ...?
9

10 Alice: I'd like to think that although even though our country is really loosely Christian now
11 and loosely related to God, I'd like to think that something of what we stand for is still related
12 to that faith.
13

14 S: To some it might be more overt and have a deep faith and articulate that and want to
15 share that and others it might be just as a Christian culture that sort of pervades the things
16 that we do.
17

18 Alice: Definitely. But I also felt that that was something that could join the two cultures in
19 a way. Even though it was very English and it wasn't anything like they showed us.
20

21 S: Maybe the richness was in that really? Yeah. What was fascinating also was that it must
22 have been two-thirds of the group that joined in and that was a highlight of things for quite
23 a few people, I believe. And you sort of corralled everyone, if that's the right term, into that
24 song so I thought you did a lovely job of that.
25

26 Alice: I was blown away by how much they were willing to do it.
27

28 S: But your deep cultural understanding and deep faith did help, do you think?
29

30 Alice: Definitely. I wanted to give something back that was more than "Head, shoulders,
31 knees and toes". (Laughter) When they'd given us so much I could only hope to give them
32 a song that meant a lot to me. And had a deeper meaning.
33

34 S: Absolutely. You can talk about anything you want but something else you draw out in
35 your essay, which was pertinent to me. There were two things actually. One was your
36 responses to the woman and her child begging and the also the prayer at the [REDACTED]
37 School and maybe you can weave that into your thoughts.

1 Alice: Yeah. I really did struggle with the woman begging. I think just a horrendous amount
2 of guilt not knowing and all the rest of the journey I was just wrestling in my head thinking,
3 “Well, should I have done something?” And then I was thinking of all the stages at which
4 ... “How far can money go?” And “Would money have actually helped or would money
5 have actually been a burden?”

6

7 S: In that instance?

8

9 Alice: In that instance. Yeah. And then I was thinking about the bigger picture and actually
10 a lot of things we need to change before poverty is sorted out and before situations like that
11 stop occurring.

12

13 S: So, micro scale in macro dimensions. And it's all done in an instance as well.

14

15 Alice: And you feel powerless and yet at the same time in a position of power because you
16 see something that you don't see in the UK. You don't have that opportunity – you do have
17 an opportunity but it's wasn't so “wow” in the UK as it was there and then. And I just felt
18 I'm here now and I've got this opportunity to help and yet I didn't. And I just thought, “Oh
19 goodness...”

20

21 S: But you used the word ‘guilt’. Could you just explain why you felt ‘guilt’?

22

23 Alice: It was the guilt from thinking what's going to happen to that woman. What's going
24 to happen to that child? Because I've just gone on my way and I felt like it was stemming
25 from a ...(says very quietly) I can't word it .. it's almost like was the white, rich person getting
26 off into their truck. “Don't touch me, I'm just gonna go” when actually I just really would
27 have just wanted to ... that was really cultural separation right there and I felt like I wasn't
28 bridging.

29

30 S: Trying to interculturally engage .. and then it's a bit hard ... back on the bus.

31

32 Alice: Too uncomfortable and then back on the bus exactly. And there was no bridge there.
33 Whereas what my heart was telling me to do was like, you know, come on take a leap and
34 bridge the gap but this confusion of “What do I do I'm in a culture I don't understand but
35 what I'd do in the UK may be totally useless here or inappropriate or ...”

36

1 S: We talked about how we were disabled just by whether we eat a meal and complete it
2 or not and that's a really simple thing so to be initially exposed to someone begging and
3 have to think of that in an instance is so hard that you show the complexity and the turmoil
4 in that thinking really well with that ... and that was a spiritual thing for you as well?

5

6 Alice: I think so. Certainly other people felt it who would say that it wasn't necessarily
7 spiritual. I don't think you have to be spiritual to feel that guilt but certainly for me when I
8 know that .. For me - I have a duty; I feel like they're my brothers and sisters just as much
9 as the next person. In God's eyes there are no cultural boundaries so why in my mind did
10 I put one there and why did I see her as anything less than a brother or sister in need? And
11 I kinda think if Jesus was here would he have said "well, I don't actually know, if she spends
12 the money on that..." (laughter) And He wouldn't have he would have just dealt with the
13 practicality there and then. You know because God isn't just a god of ... you know there's
14 that verse in the Bible where God says "don't just pray for ???? ... I'll pray for you" to the
15 needy. Because what's the prayer going to do for their practical need, it's not enough ..
16 you know, offer them food, offer them water. I just thought, I'm praying for that lady but it
17 wasn't enough. It wasn't enough there and then.

18

19 S: This is all speculation really .. but do you think if that event had happened later in the
20 week would we have dealt with it differently?

21

22 Alice: I certainly felt different towards the end. I certainly felt more comfortable. And I think
23 I'm not (silence). I think I would have dealt with it differently because then we got back to
24 the camp and he said about how that's organised crime a lot of the time.

25

26 S: Could be.

27

28 Alice: Could be, could also not be, so maybe... I really don't know actually. A difficult
29 situation really. I certainly think by the end of the week we were more comfortable in telling
30 people "No, I do not want that". "No actually I can't give you money for that" and you kind
31 of build up a bit of a hardness, don't you, in a way to cope, I think.

32

33 S: I think it's a coping strategy. It's how to operate in a culture that's ...

34

35 Alice: If you stopped every three seconds you wouldn't get anywhere would you? So you
36 may seem as if you are showing hardness but I don't know.

37

1 S: It's hard. It's really hard. But it was something that quite a few people talked about in
2 their assignments and you talked about it in great depth and showed the difficulties with it
3 all and so on. I don't think there is an answer and I don't think there should be an answer.
4 It's personal. And if people think deeply, it can be a deeply spiritual existential type response
5 that people have and that stays with us really. And maybe we learn from that and think
6 about if there's another instance how we might react . It might be the same it might be
7 different. Another thing I was going to ask you was about .. that was a day or two after ...
8 but you led that little prayer after the Nun had said that prayer in Malayalam. Just talk about
9 that and how you felt with that.

10

11 Alice: Yeah. It stemmed a lot from what happened with the woman. Because I'd been
12 praying a lot, just questioning like "Why is there those situations and you know you've made
13 it possible for me to come out here. What do you want me to do?" Like "Use me rather
14 than me being the observer. I don't want to observe, I want to get involved." When she was
15 praying, I just knew .. I just felt so strongly that she was really praying. I couldn't work out
16 what she was saying obviously but I really felt that she was really praying for us and made
17 a difference between just a prayer, "Lord be with them", to actually really praying for us and
18 they'd spoken to us before and they'd really showed such an interest and a love for us
19 really, I think. Just a really .. they were just really lovely and so grounded in their faith.
20 And I just really felt - it definitely wasn't from me – I was so nervous about even doing it. I
21 felt as if God was telling me to do it...is the only way I can describe it.

22

23 S: Nervous in what ways?

24

25 Alice: Well, nervous .. I wasn't sure it was my place. I wasn't sure whether it might be
26 perceived as a little bit rude .. I didn't know . I didn't want them to think, "Well what she's
27 harping on about?" Do you know what I mean? I thought .. this is fairly early on .. especially
28 if there were real atheists in the group, I really didn't wanna get anyone's back up or come
29 across as "Holier than Thou". ...because that wasn't what it was, it really wasn't. I really
30 felt it didn't come from me because everything in me would be like "Just don't say it." I
31 waited until the prayer was over and it would have been very easy to just let you talk but it
32 just came out and I just said, "Simon please can I just say a prayer" and I really wanted to
33 pray for them because it was something I felt we had in common. A similarity that I knew ..
34 I really felt that she was praying in a language that I didn't understand but I understood, if
35 that makes any sense without sounding too weird?

36

1 S: No ...often it sounds weird, doesn't it? 'There were a couple of things I was going to
2 say with that .. there was the response with the group I think – certainly the response of the
3 group. I think there was – I didn't elicit any responses – but I thought it was very moving
4 for those who weren't religious – the spirituality was very moving – a very beautiful thing as
5 well that you did. In the deed as well as the action so it was a real highlight of the visit for
6 me. I've been puzzling – you talked about the cohesion and the questioning of the group
7 because things like this haven't happened before on trips and I've done quite a few now.
8 But for me it was a very special trip in lots of ways like that and the deepening of connections
9 and the spiritual dimension of learning if I can put it like that. One thing I was going to ask
10 you though – this is a different cultural thing so I'm crossing cultural areas here – but Gandhi
11 says "God is truth". My research has taken that on board so, actually I can strive for .. to
12 faithfully represent reality as much as I can but I can't achieve truth and only in Gandhi's
13 sentiment, and as I write it – "God is truth". And I wondered whether language is a barrier
14 or whether something transcended the barrier between you and the Nun in that instance.
15

16 Alice: Yeah. I really felt there was. Definitely. Definitely because I hear many prayers
17 like a lot of the time and sometimes they're not in a language I understand and it doesn't
18 always compel me to speak up; it doesn't, I don't often – sometimes I switch off. Certainly
19 in Africa when they were praying in a language I didn't understand, I wouldn't always
20 engage with it. But in that moment, I really engaged with what she was saying without
21 knowing what she was saying and I just knew ... I wanted to give something back, I wanted
22 to respond to her prayer, maybe in a different language ... well, certainly in different
23 language. But I said one that she could understand too so that she could know how grateful
24 we were and just that actually we're not that different. I mean there is that common
25 humanity between us ..like, there is. The world is divided but when you push it back we're
26 all the same .. like, we are .. it's just all these complications and complexities and certainly
27 there shouldn't be any domination or supremacy of one culture over the other or one people
28 over the other and I wanted her to realise that that we didn't think that too.
29

30 S: Yeah and I think that connection came through really well.
31

32 Alice: Like I said, a God across cultures – I mean like her God – I really felt that we were
33 on the same page.
34

35 S: Yeah absolutely. It really did seem that. And also that then connected with members
36 of our group as well. It drew them into something that I don't think they would have

1 necessarily done so you were like a conduit to a potential barrier or conduit through a
2 barrier. Maybe a bridge or something like that.

3

4 Alice: (laughter). Yeah.

5 S: You said about you felt that you should be, or could be, more than just an observer and
6 to get involved and so on and that's quite hard as we sort of talked about it ... I wondered
7 if that message could be continued once you returned to England in terms of is there a
8 message to take – that sounds a bit evangelical – but, you know, is your thinking different?
9 Do you convey ideas differently?

10

11 Alice: Certainly when ..I think when was it? (silence) .. I can't remember – oh it was in the
12 Foundation Subjects

13 S: Back at Christ Church?

14

15 Alice: Yes. When we got back and the first thing we kind of had .. certainly in the school
16 that I was in another class was doing about Turkey or something and I heard a teacher in
17 the staffroom and she was just chatting about “Oh I'll probably just shove together a few
18 slides, a few pictures and then we'll probably just try some Turkish Delight.” I thought, “Oh
19 goodness, no” It did get me thinking – and certainly this was something [REDACTED]
20 said in Geography – he said “Can we really, truly teach about somewhere if we haven't
21 been there?” And it does make you think, how much is something superficial if you haven't
22 been there and you certainly . . . I could have Googled India all I liked and I did Google
23 India a lot (laughter) and nothing could prepare me for that trip and I wouldn't have come
24 away from that computer and the Google screen who I feel I am now.

25

26 S: And the complexity of conveying those, of representing just our experiences over short
27 of 2 weeks in a tiny, tiny bit of India. And you've shown the complexity and problematized
28 a meeting over a few seconds with the woman begging, for example, or a range of other
29 things that could be there and yet with this there's a real moral dimension to the role of
30 teacher representing distant places and so on .. and that's something that [Eve]'s really
31 troubled with and she wrote a lovely piece about that. I'm talking to her on Thursday. Do
32 you think in terms of your teaching then – you wouldn't be bringing in Turkish Delight or not
33 just Turkish Delight anyway.

34

35 Alice: No, and I'd want to find out from the viewer someone who'd either been there or was
36 from there. I'd be much more inclined to look at the . to represent the similarities as well
37 between the cultures not just represent it as ‘the other’ because I think that ‘other’ is done

1 so much in teaching and it's so unhelpful because there are so many similarities as well
2 and I think part of the fact that I saw India as so different .. or we're taught about cultures
3 as being so different is part of why we're so disabled when we get there 'cos we feel like
4 they're 'an other' whereas if education taught us more about the similarities and celebrated
5 the cultural differences, just celebrated them.

6
7 S: Something to celebrate, yeah.

8
9 Alice: ...teach the similarities between us, it would have been much more helpful.

10
11 S: I think the way you said you'd look at the differences and then the similarities seemed
12 to be a very thoughtful approach. Because if we just looked at the similarities to begin with
13 we might just be in danger of stopping at that point and saying "Oh yeah they're just like us"
14 and then all those cultural assumptions would remain.

15
16 Alice: Exactly ...and then "Oh you're just like us"

17
18 S: And it's us saying that – it's our voices .. supreme, yet again..

19
20 Alice: Exactly, and therefore everyone has to be like us and that's certainly not .. you've
21 got to celebrate the differences. And celebrate them for being different but not represented
22 as 'the other', I think.

23
24 S: In terms of the complexities then of being a teacher. That's something that you feel is
25 different – are you still the same [Alice] in other ways?

26
27 Alice: Certainly, I'm more keen to teach abroad now – it's kind of made a spark .. a spark
28 within me to teach abroad and I've always wanted to but going over there has made me
29 really want to teach abroad to just understand a different way, and their way of doing things
30 as well, and become more rounded rather than just so focussed on this way of doing things.
31 (silence) I don't know... my faith is stronger because I've questioned a lot and questioning
32 does happen in England, certainly, but it's a lot stronger and coming back from Kerala one
33 thing I've really got involved in is with the homeless community in Canterbury but not to any
34 charity or anything else but just to sit and talk to them. And that's really been triggered by
35 Kerala ... Because, the fact that it's the harbouring .. because before I'd think "No, no I'm
36 not ... what if? Asking the same questions as I did about the beggar. "What if I they spend
37 my money on this?" Well, if you get them a bacon roll each and sit down and talk to them

1 as if they're human rather than just walking past them and judging them before you've even
2 .. then maybe you'll find out. So that's what I've done. And there's three guys who I know
3 by name and they know me and I'm so sad to have left Canterbury now because I won't get
4 to see them every day like I was.

5

6 S: Back to that point we're talking about that woman and her child. You said, this trip was
7 more than just observing it's getting involved and it's hard to do it there but you've come
8 back and you really are more involved which is really interesting to me, that is.

9

10 Alice: Definitely. Yeah. I felt the same pull as I felt with the lady when I walked past the
11 homeless before I went and when I came back I just thought, "Actually [Alice] you saw that
12 woman out there and you questioned it so much – why? You didn't do anything so get on
13 with it and do something. There's no excuses anymore." Do you know what I mean?

14 S: So home seems different in that respect?

15

16 Alice: Yeah. It seems different in that . I guess you can say I'm more comfortable within
17 this culture to do something because I have done something rather than walk past them
18 like I have before and I did in Kerala. But certainly it's given me less of a tolerance towards
19 my attitude of – I'm less likely to just question now "should I or shouldn't I?". Because I
20 know how guilty I felt in Kerala and I also know that that wasn't enough.

21

22 S: No ... there was a lot of conversation about that and between the "should I or shouldn't
23 I?" and all the complexities between that .. that sort of spectrum. One thing – we've been
24 going a while now and you've got plenty to do ... but just remind me, you talked about a
25 'third space' in your assignment. And that was back in Kerala where there was different
26 things going on. I wondered how you felt we got to that 'third space', if we did? It's an Homi
27 Bhabha idea isn't it and so on ... and just tell me a little bit more about that.

28

29 Alice: I think the idea of a 'third space' I felt a real affinity with really. It was the only way I
30 felt explained what I felt when I said that prayer for the woman and she prayed and I felt,
31 for the group as well as me – we all entered a 'third space' where at that moment in time
32 there wasn't any – it was almost like we'd transcended the culture, just cultures in general,
33 without any separation because actually what we were ...all being joined together in silence
34 and all being in a circle together, experiencing was something that was culture-less like it
35 didn't have a culture..

36

37 S: So beyond culture maybe?

1 Alice: Beyond it. Yes. And yeah. The 'third space' is also tied to that idea of letting go of
2 your cultural baggage isn't it? And certainly, that was something which a lot of us
3 progressed in as we went through the week. Certainly by the time we got to the Conference
4 – I can't put my finger on it – but we were more comfortable to just talk and we were more
5 comfortable in everything I think. And I don't think that was necessarily the 'third space'. I
6 mean when I spoke about the 'third space' I do really feel that it was in that moment when
7 I really felt that. I certainly felt as the week was going on it was like the picture in the film
8 we were just letting go of the suitcase as the week went on and I would have loved to see
9 how far along the train line we got before they were all gone.

10

11 S: That's a lovely idea. Whether the train line is long enough?

12

13 Alice: Yeah. Yes. Exactly.

14

15 S: No that's great. We've come to a good point ... but I just wonder in terms of once you
16 returned home - not that we can let go of our culture but we just push it and stretch it and
17 change it a little bit like you're doing with the homeless folk in Canterbury or whether it's
18 something to do with school or whatever we might be doing that in a different range of ways
19 and so on. I'm looking forward to talking to everyone else about that over the next few
20 weeks. But yeah – as I said at the beginning, I felt it was a really special trip with a special
21 group of people. And I also wanted to thank you for your involvement with that because I
22 felt you were – in a quiet sort of way – a really strong leader within that group and you
23 directed people but for some of the moments we talked about on tape here so thank you
24 very much for that.

25

26 Alice: Thank you.

27

28 S: But [Alice] are there any other things that you want to talk about now? Or whatever it
29 might be that you think "Oh"

30

31 Alice: It will be in the car driving away .. (laughter)

32

33 S: You could always email me if there's something that crops up.

34

35 Alice: Would that be OK?

36

37 S: That's absolutely fine. Yeah.

1 Alice: Yeah. (Silence)

2

3 S: Ok right. Thanks so much for your time. I'll switch the tape off now.

1 *Interview with 'Deborah': 23rd April 2014 at her Placement School*

2

3 S: OK – so, we're just sort of recapping in a way just for sake of this transcript. We've had
4 a duff tape and it stopped and so on. But you talked about the subconscious aspects of
5 learning and that you're calmer, less stressful when you're not jumping to conclusions and
6 you're saying that you're linking that back to the India trip and so on ... I'm sure we can
7 draw on that a little bit later and also about the change in the attitude and you talked about
8 your artsiness, what was it – artsy person and so on which led you to critique some
9 questions and be open with that. So, hopefully not putting words in your mouth ... but that's
10 what we were really talking about.. And the last thing that we just mentioned, maybe we
11 can just pick up from. We talked about that you focussed on people and there was a big
12 moment that changed in your head, focussed on people. Do you mind picking it up from
13 there, [Deborah]?

14

15 Deborah: It was through the conversations we had that we learned about everything really
16 and judging their reactions and the looks on their faces and how they engage with you.
17 You understand your position in their culture – that whole, weird imperialism thing - you
18 would never fully grasp that unless you fully experience how they are with you when you're
19 out there. You just can't even imagine.

20

21 S: What sort of things – when you say about being imperialistic?

22

23 Deborah: Well when they want to walk around with you and they want to shake your hand
24 and they want your autograph. And we asked lots of questions and we dug to try and find
25 out. And you got different answers from everyone; it isn't just a focussing its understanding
26 that nothing is a blanket over everything.

27

28 S: Can you just explain that a little bit more – that's really interesting?

29

30 Deborah: So you might – yes, there's this imperialist thing overshadowing places like
31 Kerala but people ... every individual person will react to it and respond to it in different
32 ways. And everyone is different whether that culture is there or not. That culture has an
33 effect on people and there is a general kind of tradition and things with the culture but the
34 responses of people are always different so it was important to engage and get those
35 responses and kind of understand how that works.

36

37 S: At an individual level.

1 Deborah: Yes.
2
3 S: And then you get a range of different ...
4
5 Deborah: So you can put it all together and try and work it out and go, “well what’s going
6 on, then?” And say, “well, he said that and they said that.” And try and put the puzzle
7 together to figure out why they were saying or doing things .. why they were doing this. And
8 me and [Elizabeth] were intrigued with the fact that they had no art education formally
9 despite how rich their culture was. And it was something that we dug for and it was only
10 from the different reactions from different people that we could put that jigsaw together and
11 go, “Right, so this is why they might not do it.” And in the end it was almost an acceptance
12 that maybe they just didn’t need it.
13
14 S: Right. Yes.
15
16 Deborah: In a way, they just didn’t need it because they were literally like, “What would we
17 do that for, really?” Most of them were like, “What?”
18
19 S: ‘Cos you were the art missionaries – which was great. Do you think you sort of moved
20 on from that?
21
22 Deborah: Yes, I think in a way we did because I think we thought they don’t need one. The
23 only thing they weren’t learning was they weren’t learning about other cultures or anything;
24 they only knew their own practices ‘cos I suppose India in a way it’s quite closed off and
25 protective of itself and the preservation of the culture that they have is probably ..
26
27 S: Heritage, isn’t it? It seems to be valued.
28
29 Deborah: Yeah. They probably don’t want to contaminate it in a way by introducing
30 anything else. But it’s definitely how people’s mannerisms, how people communicate, that’s
31 what makes the culture really. So that’s the things that you’ll never learn by just walking
32 around and never talking to someone that’s actually from the South of India.
33
34 S: Even to the extent, I remember, where we were down in the city and you four decided,
35 “No, we want to go off on our own.”
36

1 Deborah: Yeah. That was interesting. (Laughter). When we got our friend who wouldn't
2 leave. But again, we went to this silk shop and we got offered drinks and things and the
3 manager didn't leave our sides the whole time we were there. And then we asked him
4 about the imperialism thing and he said it was the language, the science and the
5 mathematics and the money and it was kind of quite odd and very old things that they
6 founded really.

7

8 S: A good question to ask, really.

9

10 Deborah: Old things, things that were not anymore and it kind of shows that imperial lingo
11 because they still think that English is still the language of maths and science and all things
12 powerful and wonderful and then you ask them about the recession and they don't know
13 what that is.

14 (Laughter) Yeah, we're in trouble! And just the way people were with each other but there
15 again it might have been because we were white British people wandering around India like
16 this (presumably makes a facial expression; laughter) that everyone was so nice to us. You
17 don't know what they would have been like on a personal basis but there's always going to
18 be that barrier.

19

20 S: Yes. Our influence that we're there and obviously had some effect.

21

22 Deborah: Like with the lessons and stuff; have we seen anything 'real' yet? You know, you
23 just don't know.

24

25 S: It's as real as real will be with us there sitting at the back of the classroom. For me, it
26 questions what does real mean then in that respect it's just as real as any other experience.

27

28 Deborah: Yes. 'Cos you'll learn from it just as much as you would if you'd sat there and
29

30

31 S: As long as you question and think about all those

32

33 Deborah: Yeah. Yeah. As long as you know that what you're seeing is not every day then
34 you'll still learn from it, I suppose.

35

1 S: Yeah. Exactly. So, in terms of what you bring from this then, you talked about the
2 professional, sort of teaching aspect. Is there just from that questioning that you've got,
3 has that changed the way you relate to other people as well?

4 Deborah: I suppose when I came back I was very floaty and calm but it didn't take long to
5 snap back to normal probably just because of everything that happened really. And when
6 I got back I was fine, I was like, "you know what, I'm going to rise above it – I don't care."
7 And I suppose that kind of stayed but I think that was kind of there anyway but sometimes
8 you need to have someone go, "Come on" and then you just go back and say, "yeah, what
9 am I worrying about that for?" But that's probably more to do with having time away than it
10 is to do with the actual experiences of the trip itself because I know I'm that kind of person
11 anyway. But you just forget that you are and then you go away for a bit and think, "Oh
12 yeah" and then you come back.

13

14 S: Sort of suspended – you're a different person almost, do you think?

15

16 Deborah: You're removed, aren't you?

17

18 S: You're re-immersed in that culture.

19

20 Deborah: And then you have a little break, and then you go back in refreshed and you're
21 "Right, let's sort this out then, do that and do this" but it's never that very long really because
22 you then give in to the normalities of life.

23

24 S: But it sounds like this sort of re-immersion that some of the more superficial things, you
25 said you sort of let go, but some of the more deeper dimensions that you talked about, in
26 terms of not jumping to conclusions, treating pupils differently and so on seem to have
27 lasted with you? Can I just ask you – what about education itself? Do you still view
28 education the same?

29

30 Deborah: No. I don't see the point of the differentiation now, a bit like "Do I need to? Is it
31 necessary? Is it a good thing to dumb things down with the kid that we don't think's as
32 bright as that one?" Or should we start them all at the same point, expect them all to be
33 the same and then differentiate with a push rather than dumb it down? I just don't dumb
34 things down now. Everyone starts off the same even if they start off at a low level – all the
35 same. And then we bring it up because I don't just want to dumb things down.

36

37 S: So you're raising expectations and so on.

1 Deborah: Yeah. Bringing everybody up rather than going, “Well, you’re not clever enough
2 to do this, so here’s yours. This is what you’re doing” (urgh – expressing annoyance)
3 Assessment, I hate assessment. (Laughter) I think that’s grown over time anyway. I think
4 India’s suddenly made it a slightly more ...

5

6 S: It’s a very different approach, isn’t it? And the outcomes are really strong.

7

8 Deborah: Yeah. So, why? It’s just too much. I think the main thing that hit me when I
9 came back, which is probably .. but also it was because everyone’s just treating me normally
10 now because I’m not in India anymore, was just kids’ attitudes towards being in school and
11 their education and stuff and how they chose their favourite subjects was completely
12 different. When you asked the kids in India it was kind of based on what career they were
13 going to do. It was like, “This is my favourite subject because it’s a sensible, favourite
14 subject to have.” Whereas when I was at [REDACTED] it was like, “Well, this used to be my
15 favourite but I don’t like my teacher anymore so now that’s my new favourite because I
16 really like my teacher in that.” So they flipped around and it all depends on who was
17 teaching them more than what the subject was. It didn’t really have anything to do with the
18 subject. It was more to do with the person who was teaching them.

19

20 S: That’s really interesting. Personality cultures rather than the longer trajectory.

21

22 Deborah: Because we’re a culture built upon individuality and “me, me, me, me ,me” rather
23 than the big group and “this is the thing that I’m going to do because it’s going to benefit my
24 family and it’ll be good for me to get this job because it’s sensible and logical. And such a
25 different thing but I think it’s probably because here it is taken for granted and there is that
26 different attitude and attitude towards the teachers and teaching and education generally is
27 more or less the opposite of what we experienced out there.

28

29 S: One thing I was going to ask you – in terms of your art, and your background – was
30 everything you recorded written, or did you use your art more for

31

32 Deborah: I don’t think we did any art at all. We read things visually. We walked around
33 and you looked at things and you could read the culture in the things with your eyes but I
34 didn’t record anything drawing-wise. Just because we never had time to pick up a pencil!
35 All the written stuff was done when we got in.

36

1 S: [Elizabeth] had a camera. She took hundreds of photos and you shared them between
2 you.

3

4 Deborah: Yes. Thousands! I think put together we had over a thousand photos in the end.
5 So we did capture everything and it was more about how we interpreted things and just
6 looking at the architecture and go looking at that compared to that. Looking at the imperial
7 architecture and Indian architecture and the change in architecture around the Palace you
8 could just pick things up because you could see them.

9

10 S: So you had that 'eye', once you've got that way of seeing the world you've always got
11 that.

12 You talked about meeting people down on the beach. Were there particular points over the
13 course of those ten days that were really important to you or triggers to learning or barriers
14 to learning?

15

16 Deborah: I think I will never forget that first day with the marching band for the rest of my
17 living days! That will stick with me. Also we hadn't had a lot of sleep the night before, which
18 didn't help the situation. But it was just the shock, you know, because it was that first
19 instance of, "Is it really like this?" It was the shock more than anything, I think. And it was
20 just very overwhelming and then you kind of got used to it and thought, "right here we go
21 again" after a couple of days but at first it was like, "I can't believe this, what's going on?!"

22

23 S: So how do you think you adjusted? 'Cos that's an important part of it.

24

25 Deborah: By crying! (Laughter). I don't know – I think you just stepped up. I think we all
26 stepped up.

27

28 S: Why?

29

30 Deborah: Because we felt we had to give something back, especially when they're going
31 on about their English guests and I'm like, "Oh I'm only trainee teacher who doesn't know
32 anything about anything!" You felt you'd got to give something 'cos they were expecting it
33 in a way and also you don't want to be left embarrassed almost.

34

35 S: Embarrassed by what?

36

37 Deborah: The fact that they're doing all this ... you've got to give something back.

1 S: And “this” being, what sort of special things?
2
3 Deborah: Yeah. Well, they’re so welcoming and going to such an effort that you think,
4 “Right, I’ve got to do something now because it’s kind of giving back, I suppose.”
5
6 S: Sort of reciprocation and so on?
7
8 Deborah: Yeah. That was the main thing. Like the first day when they asked if we wanted
9 to do anything on the talent show, we were like, “No, no way. No.” We were like, “What
10 could we possibly do?” And it was that moment of just I think everyone was a little
11 embarrassed.
12
13 S: It’s difficult, isn’t it?
14
15 Deborah: Not in like, “Oh they’ve asked us to do something!” but in a “we don’t have
16 anything to give” kind of way.
17
18 S: But by the end of the week we found that we could.
19
20 Deborah: Yes. We sang a song.
21
22 S: And a poem and a lot of people talked and so on.
23
24 Deborah: Yes. I think everyone just kind of went, “Well, we’ve got to do something now
25 because look what they’ve done for us.” And everyone just did things that I think they
26 probably wouldn’t do now that they’re back and got used to being at home. They wouldn’t
27 do it again.
28
29 S: Yeah. That’s interesting, isn’t it? So, we’re operating in a hybrid culture or something.
30
31 Deborah: It comes down to the engagement again though. If you were in that situation
32 here, that interaction wouldn’t have taken place to make you feel comfortable enough and
33 to feel in that position where you would do that. I don’t think that you’d ever feel it was OK
34 to do that here and it all comes down to that engagement again and it’s a lot about their
35 culture in contrast to ours through how they responded to us and we responded to them.
36
37 S: There was an openness to enable that response.

1 Deborah: Yeah. Yeah.
2
3 S: And I guess that was a way in to help you learn, as well.
4 Deborah: Yes. I think it was the main thing. It was what me and [Elizabeth] never stopped
5 talking about - the people we met and the conversations we had. At the meetings it was
6 always about the conversations. It was never, "oh I saw a thing" or "oh I saw this." It was
7 always "oh, I had a conversation with this child or that teacher or this or that and I said this
8 and they responded like this and then someone did this." And that was how everybody
9 learned, I think, whether they realised it or not, was through their engagement and
10 communication with people around them.
11
12 S: Yeah. Yeah. In terms of some of the theories that we looked at. In terms of – you found
13 different ones, as well....That inter-cultural competence idea- but Intercultural Learning,
14 Post-colonialism and so on. In terms of you thinking about that, did your ideas change or
15 did it seem relevant or irrelevant?
16
17 Deborah: I think when we were looking at the subjectivity and stuff that was when I started
18 to realise what a role the colonial stuff actually played. Because no matter what you do you
19 can't shake it off. And at a point you start to become aware of it but you'll never get rid of
20 it, there's part of you that's always going to give in to it because it's your culture, it's who
21 you are and there's always going to be that ...
22
23 S: The bits we don't realise.
24
25 Deborah: Yeah. Yeah. And you can't remove it completely. We're all affected by it whether
26 you like it or not. And it was quite funny 'cos I saw on the news the other day about the
27 "shanty town tours" in Africa.
28
29 S: Oh right. I didn't see that.
30
31 Deborah: And I just sat there and thought, "Oh my God." They've started doing tours
32 around a shanty town so that white people can take photographs of black people living in
33 ... it's even called "Victoria Safaris" and they pay to go around, almost like a zoo.
34
35 S: To see people living in difficult situations. It's the voyeuristic bit.
36

1 Deborah: It's awful. I just thought ... well, it just says everything really .. it really does. But
2 I don't think that would impact me as much as it did when I saw it if I hadn't done the Module
3 and experienced it and stuff and I would never dream of doing that. I mean, even in India
4 we didn't do it. We didn't go around taking photos going, "Oh look at him over there, let's
5 take a picture of him." Awful.

6
7 S: I think your take on engaging with people in an open way and learning in that way had a
8 much more respectful and honourable approach.

9
10 Deborah: Well you don't learn anything by taking a photo.

11
12 S: No, no. Absolutely. And you can, you know, create it as an object.

13
14 Deborah: I think it's that thing as well ... what I found interesting when I actually started
15 reading the Post-colonial stuff was about that kind of paternal instinct that we have where
16 we must give to charity and it all stems from guilt more than anything really. And we're the
17 ones with the money and we're happy 'cos we've got all our stuff and we must make sure
18 that these people have got stuff too. It doesn't mean – I know they haven't got the most
19 comfortable life in the world but it doesn't mean they're all miserable and they all want
20 televisions and stuff. They probably want some food. But it just seems a bit ridiculous now.
21 And then I was reading about guy in – where was it, where I was reading the paper? – The
22 Gambia ... The guy in The Gambia bought two young boys some rice.

23
24 S: Nigel, the geography teacher.

25
26 Deborah: Yeah. That stuck with me a little bit when I read that. It's the worst thing you
27 could do. And I don't think they're things I ever thought about before going on the trip and
28 when you start talking to them, you know, other people and most of them are quite happy
29 with their lives and they don't want your stuff. And they're quite happy, just leave them
30 alone. Just let them get on with it.

31
32 S: One thing, I remember you talked about going to Thailand yourself before. And do you
33 think your learning was different in India compared to Thailand? I don't want to make India
34 and Thailand sound the same but you were engaged with

35
36 Deborah: I think with Thailand the changes were more obvious because it was the first kind
37 of thing like that that I'd done but I did it in a very similar way. I didn't go into schools out

1 there but I did make friends with all the locals and spoke to the locals and went out in the
2 evenings with the locals. So I did it more or less in the same fashion so that I met people
3 in Thailand who had moved to Thailand from Burma when they were six, on their own
4 earning a pound a day from an English-owned bar, charging English prices for drinks and
5 they lived in a concrete room with a broken freezer for a wardrobe and they think it's a life
6 of luxury and I did learn a lot when I was out there but again it's a completely different
7 culture again with a completely different relationship with England and tourists. I think this
8 was a lot more in depth because I've been travelling before so that instant shock and
9 change was done because it wasn't the first time I'd seen it.

10

11 S: You'd gone through the process.

12

13 Deborah: Yeah.

14

15 S: But you recognise it as a different place. And I'm glad you said that because some
16 people say, "Well, I've been to so and so ..."

17

18 Deborah: They're completely different places. And I think because you spend so much
19 time a lot more immersed, because you get that experience of going into the schools and
20 because that shock of never going travelling before and things like that was removed, I
21 was just kind of getting on with it in a way and wasn't homesick and was quite happy. I
22 knew how to deal with being there and got on with it and, I think, the learning was much
23 deeper and I remember having a conversation with [Slater] where we couldn't put our finger
24 on how we'd changed. So we know we have, I'm sure I have, but couldn't tell you how
25 because we'd both travelled before so it was kind of a lot deeper changes.

26

27 S: Yes. You got over that Weeden and Hayter sort of thing, they talked about. You got to
28 a coping situation more easily.

29

30 Deborah: It was interesting though that the one article said that you don't actually hit culture
31 shock until you've been there a while and the holiday feeling wears off. I thought well, "did
32 the holiday feeling wear off? Had I not hit that point yet?" You know, sort of "Oh I wanna
33 go home?" (Laughter) We were all still begging to stay so maybe it was that we hadn't
34 reached that point yet on the trip.

35

36 S: Thoughtful idea, yeah. I don't know.

37

1 Deborah: Yes. We'll just have to go back for a year and then see if the culture shock hits
2 us.
3

4 S: Yeah. In one way, the research I've looked at, the trips are much longer. And this was
5 a short, quite intense trip to Kerala and then back. And it's what ...
6

7 Deborah: It's like you get a little peep and then that's it you go home.
8

9 S: Is it just a 'jolly' or does it have longer ... deeper impact.
10

11 Deborah: I think it does. But I think it's probably in a very different way to if you were out
12 there for a long time. But then I've got a friend who was out working in Mumbai for five
13 months and it made no difference to her at all so you don't know what it is that affects
14 people. And she did the thing where they sent her out into schools because she was British-
15 based. You know, she'd have days off work where they'd send her into the local schools
16 to talk to the children as part of her job but it didn't really affect her that much. So I don't
17 know whether it's the type of person.
18

19 S: Yeah. That disposition towards difference and so on that we talked about a bit.
20

21 Deborah: Yeah. It just didn't affect her in the way that it affected all of us when we were
22 there at all.
23 ([Deborah] talks to a colleague)
24 Maybe that's not what she was looking for whilst she was there and we were all psyched
25 up and ready to go and "I'm going to have an experience."
26

27 S: Yeah. Some intention, maybe. Yeah.
28

29 Deborah: We were looking for it and we found it, I suppose.
30

31 S: And I think many people did. Maybe everyone in different sorts of ways and the
32 outcomes of the PIES were varied.
33

34 Deborah: It's just all that subjectivity everyone is so different.
35

1 S: Scrutinizing representation and thinking about, “What am I looking at?” And, as you
2 say, is it ‘real’ or not and what can we claim and can I keep on questioning? So you sort of
3 immerse yourself in that complexity of model without knowing.

4

5 Deborah: I think the week we came back. I think it was in one of my readings as well. And
6 I thought, “Yeah, that’s right.” It was just saying that actually when you get back to your
7 own culture is when you have the biggest shock. And that was a very, very difficult week.

8

9 S: Could you just talk a bit about that? Talk about what you want and I know there were
10 difficulties that you might not want to raise.

11

12 Deborah: It was just going to school that was so confusing, especially ‘cos you were
13 reflecting upon what had happened. And then you start to wonder about – because you’re
14 looking respectively you start to question it a lot more. And then your memories – you have
15 to question your memory and how you think about it and how you remember it. And then
16 you go, “Well is this right or isn’t it?” or “How do we do it?” and trying to ask the students
17 the same questions I asked students in India and seeing what responses I’d get and just
18 getting used to nobody caring that you’re there. And not having loads of kids going “Woah”
19 every time you walk in a room and you’re more kind of happy and floaty and you’re going
20 “Oh, I’ve just got back from India.” And everyone’s like, “we’ve been here the whole time
21 and nothing’s changed.” And I was like, “Oh, OK.” And boom, straight back down to Planet
22 Earth, get on with it, you’ve got things to do. That’s it.

23

24 S: I think you’re right. There’s someone talks about making the familiar strange. And out
25 in India we were quite good at making the unfamiliar strange. But coming back, making
26 that familiarity strange is quite hard and you seem to have, whether you’ve done that
27 deliberately or whether it’s just happened, but your questioning of what you’re saying seems
28 to have carried on.

29

30 Deborah: A little bit, I suppose, but ..

31

32 S: But, you know, for those few days that you were back at [REDACTED].

33

34 Deborah: Yeah. I think it was ..I just remember me and [Elizabeth] going (whispers) “this
35 week is so long”

36

37 S: It was long, as well, wasn’t it?

1 Deborah: Yeah. And we were tired, as well. So that didn't help how knackered we were.
2 It was just so strange. I think you come back with a different outlook and you're with a
3 group of people who are like, "Oh yeah" together and then you come back and everyone
4 looks as miserable as you were before you went anywhere. And you're like, "Oh right ..
5 back to reality." And then you're like, "Oh yeah ..I've got to write an essay, I've got to plan
6 this and I've got to do that and I've got to start school soon." And all of a sudden, it's like
7 "Oh yeah .. I don't know how to do this anymore! What am I going to do?!" Trying to get
8 your head around everything and get back into that routine and normality and what's
9 expected of you is the hardest bit of the whole thing.

10

11 S: And holding onto the things that you ...

12

13 Deborah: I was trying to, "you know, it's going to change my life and I've got all these new
14 things I want to do and all these new things I want to be." And it's actually, "No I need to
15 get this done." It's hard to get back to normal. I think some things stick but it is that initial
16 struggle going right I've gone from this to this and then to this, which doesn't feel like this
17 anymore and it's kind of a weird situation.

18

19 S: I read this book that Salmon Rushdie talked about "The Wizard of Oz" and that idea that
20 'there's no place like home'. And, actually, when you've gone over the rainbow home,
21 when you get back, is not really the same. Well, in his view anyway.

22

23 Deborah: No. I think my view, my perspective has changed in a way that you can't really
24 put your finger on. And it is a bit murky.

25

26 S: The way you were engaging in school, you talked about the way you were dealing with
27 people, the way you were questioning. In some way, it's not a big radical change but for
28 some people it seemed to be that it made more of what might have been there before.

29

30 Deborah: Yeah. Erm... I don't know. You can't describe it. You look at everything a little
31 bit differently, I think. Makes you think about leaving the country. (Laughter) I know
32 [Elizabeth]'s already on that boat, ready to go. With ■■■■■ being ■■■■■, we've thought about
33 moving away, moving back to ■■■■■ in a few years' time once I'm fully qualified and stuff
34 and getting out. Just because you start to realise how education is seen and treated and
35 you think "well, why am I here when I could be somewhere else where it's different?"

36

1 S: Yeah. I can see your point. And is that something ... I mean, was the idea there before
2 India?
3
4 Deborah: No. I don't think I ever realised how education was in other places and the
5 difference in the attitudes of the children and the community generally. It's just very
6 different.
7
8 S: It's a pretty big dimension to chew on.
9
10 Deborah: Just the culture of education is completely different.
11
12 S: That's something that [Mark]'s talking about. I'm off to see him for a few days.
13
14 Deborah: Awh. I've still got their certificates.
15
16 S: We must have a re-grouping.
17
18 Deborah: Yeah. We keep trying to plan one but it doesn't seem to have happened so far.
19 Maybe May half-term, everyone's definitely off then.
20
21 S: They are. Yeah. Is there anything else then, really, that you want to say?
22
23 Deborah: No, that's everything, really.
24
25 S: We've gone through lots of things there. Thanks for your time.
26
27 Deborah: I'm going to go and stare at children's parents now.....
28
29 S:much appreciated. We'll turn off now.

1 *Interview with 'Eve': 24th April 2014 at her Placement School*

2

3 S: Right OK so, here we are at [REDACTED] School and talking to [Eve] about your
4 experiences of the India study visit and the learning that has ensued during and maybe
5 from there and so on and just to say that this is a recorded interview or conversation and
6 that you're happy with that?

7

8 Eve: Yes, absolutely happy.

9

10 S: OK. I'm hoping that as we continue that we'll forget the tape's there. I don't intend to
11 talk much, I'm hoping it's an opportunity to learn from you about your learning, [Mark]. In
12 terms of you, as a teacher, and really the process of learning, what helped and what
13 hindered that over the course of the India trip, during the trip and also once you got back
14 into school and so on. So that sort of sets it all up. If you're happy to just talk and I'll prompt
15 and ask questions as we go along, as necessary.

16

17 Eve: OK. Where shall I start?

18

19 S: Maybe start about the trip itself and how your learning developed over the course of that
20 trip, which I must say is documented really well in your Journal and how it formulated and
21 so on and you ended up with a lovely model of your learning, as well.

22

23 Eve: I think possibly being part of a group made a massive difference. And having that
24 security of travelling within a group. I haven't really done that much travelling before and
25 I've never been anywhere like India. I've been to North America and being a geographer
26 you kind of want to see as much of the world as possible, and so kind of going for that
27 opportunity as much as possible. But I think having that security of everyone else around
28 you, that at first you just don't know and you don't have a clue, and you just cling onto them.
29 And it's surprising how quickly you get to know everybody and how quickly you kind of sort
30 of look to each other for support and how that's actually quite powerful.

31

32 S: How did that happen, do you think? 'Cos it's not necessarily just an automatic thing, is
33 it?

34

35 Eve: The first couple of days, the pre-sessions were quite .. they were quite strange
36 because you knew you were going away. Well, I knew nobody and a lot of people had
37 paired up and I knew absolutely nobody. And it was quite daunting at first but then I think

1 everyone's in the same position. Kind of knowing that, means that you don't have so many
2 concerns because everyone's got the same worries, does that make sense? You're
3 travelling somewhere completely different – a completely different country – never been
4 anywhere like it. And I think being within a group kind of helped with a lot of that, getting
5 used to the new surroundings.

6

7 S: And beyond the initial dynamics of the group, did the group help later on or in any ways
8 or was it more an independent thing?

9

10 Eve: I think it was more an independent thing, but you share it at the same time. So you
11 kind of found people who you could reflect upon the day with. Because it was so much to
12 take in, talking about it at the end of every day really helped. But then even after our mini-
13 seminar conversations, you kind of break away and talk about it even more and go into
14 more depth about it. And I think that reflection was quite beneficial.

15

16 S: I think the conversations, all day and every day, seemed to be about our learning in a
17 way, didn't it? Different sorts of ways. Did you find you could talk to lots of people in the
18 group or did you seek out particular people to chew an idea over?

19

20 Eve: Well, I kind of, I'm one of those people who gets to know everybody – and I don't like
21 not to know people – so I knew everybody. But I think there were particular people that I
22 spoke to more than others. For example, the boys and Kathy probably, I don't know. Just
23 kind of – like a couple of evenings just sitting up really late and just talking and talking
24 about it 'cos you're just trying to get your head around in constantly. Because it's just so
25 alien just a different experience.

26

27 S: Absolutely. I mean you talked about talking to people in the group, was talking also
28 important beyond the group?

29

30 Eve: Yeah. Definitely. Because if you're out there and you've got that opportunity to talk
31 to people and to get to know them and to interact with somebody from a different culture
32 you are going to want to do that. And to have the confidence to do that, I don't think ... I
33 don't know, I felt I had a lot of confidence when I was out there and I could just go and talk
34 to people because they were so unjudging and so interested in us in the same way that we
35 were interested in talking to them and finding out about their lives.

36

37 S: So there was something about the place itself?

1 Eve: Yeah... It wasn't ever, I don't know, it didn't ever feel like we were just trying to find
2 out stuff about them. They were interested in our lives as well, I felt a little bit.

3 S: That's helpful?

4

5 Eve: Yes.

6

7 S: Why was that helpful to you? Would it have been the two way process?

8

9 Eve: Yes. Respect. General respect for each other and being on the same level as
10 somebody rather than them seeing you, for example, the post-colonialism that we were
11 talking about, rather than them seeing you as somebody who is different or in a completely
12 different world from us, Western country. Having the actual conversations, one-on-one, for
13 example, like in the Teacher Training College. Having conversations with them was a one-
14 on-one thing and there was one person with them who I managed to get quite a good
15 conversation from and found out about her life and she kind of asked me about my life. But
16 then when we were in the schools, it didn't necessarily feel like the children were treating
17 us like on the same level.

18

19 S: I think quite a few people felt that. But, I mean, were you able to learn about the schools?
20 Did you see them as real experiences?

21

22 Eve: No. No, because it was always a show. Every school you went into it was like they
23 were trying to show their best kind of – well, when we went to the [REDACTED] School and
24 we were sat in there to observe a lesson and she was teaching to us and not to the students
25 and that just felt wrong.

26

27 S: It did feel strange, didn't it? And I've chewed that over a bit and tried to think of a whole
28 range of reasons why that might be the case. Yeah.

29

30 Eve: I'm not sure, maybe that's because they're trying to replicate our education system or
31 they're trying to impress us rather than just being the lessons that they usually are. And
32 then it was really strange they would just stop their lesson, in the other schools, when you
33 walked in and allow the kids to just ... that lesson's gone. You wouldn't even know if the
34 teacher was turning up half the time ...so that lesson, that window and they would just
35 come and let them talk to us. That would never happen here. If you had a guest here or
36 a visitor here – they would be sat at the back and make as little ...

37 S: It would be very managed, wouldn't it?

1 Eve: Yeah. I think it's part of our 'stand-off' culture that we didn't want to interrupt and yet
2 that's all they wanted us to do. It was quite strange.

3 S: Why do you think that's what they wanted us to do? What might underpin that?
4

5 Eve: It could be that they wanted the children to experience talking to us. It was almost
6 like they were treating us as though we were famous which was very unnerving.
7

8 S: And that's not the first time that that's happened.
9

10 Eve: Yeah. I found that really difficult to get my head around. Like, it felt hypocritical when
11 we sat up on that stage. I felt like a hypocrite.
12

13 S: What, at that first school?
14

15 Eve: Yeah. I was like "what's this ...why do we deserve this treatment?"
16

17 S: And you're not the only person to say that.
18

19 Eve: Yeah. Very weird. Very strange.
20

21 S: .So if you – in this situation - where you're learning and you're talking to people – but you
22 feel, a tension maybe, because of this hypocrisy that maybe there. How did you deal with
23 that?. Did that affect the way you conducted yourself later in the week? Did your behaviour
24 change over the course of the trip, do you think?
25

26 Eve: I think at first – it was all quite exciting and new and it was nice to have children who
27 actually wanted to talk to you, were interested in you. But once you actually get back and
28 thought about why they were being so over the top it was quite disturbing to think that might
29 be because we were white Western. And something as simple as that. And that was quite
30
31

32 S: That essential label ..
33

34 Eve: Yeah. I found that quite uncomfortable. And then later in the week, I really was just
35 trying as hard as possible not to even be noticed in the classroom. But it just didn't happen.
36 In that rural school we went to - the model school was probably the only one where we just
37 managed to just sit at the back for the lesson but they still came.

1 S: It's really tough. And, you know, without essentialising too much, the [REDACTED]
2 School, particularly the Primary phase, they sort of expected us to be around and other
3 people, I'm sure, had been to visit. Whereas in the other schools....

4

5 Eve: They were more used to it. Yeah.

6

7 S: ...we were a real spectacle and we became the object in some ways.

8

9 Eve: And I've never been in that situation before where people see you as unusual, or
10 exotic or different. It's quite uncomfortable at times, especially when they're flocking around
11 you asking for your autograph. You're thinking "why do you want my autograph? This is
12 not right."

13

14 S: And trying to work it out in terms of cultures and all the different ways we can look at it.
15 It's hard ...

16

17 Eve: One of the schools we went into they (silence).... Oh, I can't remember the name of
18 the school again ... the rural school. And they just had a partition that was just made out
19 of wood and there was so much noise and next door there was so much noise that we could
20 barely concentrate. And all the students were just sitting there in a line, just working and
21 listening to their teacher. So diligent. That would never, ever happen. It was overwhelming
22 but in an uncomfortable way. There were moments that were really uncomfortable that
23 made you really think about why you were being treated like that but there were moments
24 that were really overwhelming in a good way when they were just being taught.

25

26 S: Were there any particular moments that were real either learning points or turning points
27 in the trip for you?

28

29 Eve: (Silence)

30

31 S: Or you might say "no" it was of a personal ...

32

33 Eve: No .. I think there were a lot of learning points. Well, there were a couple. The first
34 one being when we were asked to produce something for the Cultural Exchange and they
35 asked us if we could show them something from our culture. And we all just sat there,
36 completely dumfounded ... didn't have a clue.

37

1 S: That was in the first school?

2 Eve: That really made me question, “Why is it so easy for them to show their culture to us
3 but so difficult for us to show ours to them?” I think it showed that we were quite
4 uncomfortable with that at first, but as time went on we managed to somehow find
5 something from somewhere. And we all got ourselves in position on that stage and sang a
6 song. We’d never do back here. Never.

7

8 S: Why do you think that happened? How could you be part of a choir, in effect?

9

10 Eve: Well, the group was bonding more. So we knew each other and we trusted each other
11 and we knew that we wouldn’t be judged. So we were alright to do it, I think. Over 10 days
12 when you’re in a completely alien place you get to know people really quickly. The second
13 thing, I think, was that the audience itself – the people we were around – we knew wouldn’t
14 judge us because they would just appreciate whatever we would do for them but I also think
15 it was us almost feeling guilty because we hadn’t given back at all the whole time we’d been
16 there. And we wanted to do something. They were just giving us presents, here, there and
17 everywhere and for what reason .. you know, they were already giving up their time to go
18 there. Why did they need to give us presents and treat us so well? I think it was a few
19 things.

20

21 S: Yes. I think that comes through really well and we were doing things that, as you said,
22 we wouldn’t really ...

23

24 Eve: Outside our comfort zone..

25

26 S: Yeah. But they happened and they were appreciated.

27

28 Eve: But so many little things that I did that I wouldn’t necessarily have the confidence to
29 do back here. But now that I’ve done them I kind of think, well, little things like – well, it was
30 quite a big thing doing that presentation but even just speaking up on the microphone is
31 something I would never do normally.

32 S: Do you think those sort of things – I mean not saying that you just suddenly come back
33 to Kent and join a choir. But come back to Kent and there’s that aspect of confidence and
34 so on. Is that still with you?

35

36 Eve: I think they build you as a person. And even though they might not be with you all the
37 time or in everything. You don’t feel, “Oh, yeah, I’ve travelled the world now.” (Laughter)

1 It's not like you've had a sudden change – a complete change of confidence or anything. I
2 think it's just good to look back on and think, "Well, I can do that." And I can use it in the
3 future.

4 S: Been there, done that.

5

6 Eve: Any kind of challenge. Yeah. It's certainly given me a bug to go back again and to
7 do more and to learn more. I think it would have been really good to be able to stay there
8 longer to see what they're like .. what the school is actually like on a daily basis rather than
9 this façade that we saw.

10

11 S: Yes. We can only conjecture what it might have been.

12

13 Eve: Yes. One day it would be amazing to delve even deeper into it.

14

15 S: Do you think – I mean you said you'd not travelled to somewhere like India, you'd been
16 to North America and so on. Was the learning process, even though it was in a different
17 place, the same or was there something specific about south India that influenced the way
18 we learnt?

19

20 Eve: I think it's being in that non-Western culture which is ... You could be in North America
21 or you could be in the UK. You can go somewhere new and you have this visual map of
22 where you are and you learn about where you're going as time goes on. But because the
23 cultures are more similar it's not as hard to do whereas when you're in India it's just so
24 overwhelming, everything just amazing – different and new – the smells, the sounds, like
25 everything.

26

27 S: So you get that initial thing – but did you get beyond the smells, the sounds – or was
28 that still all magical by the time you relaxed?

29

30 Eve: It's magical but when you look at it closely and you're driving along and you see the
31 rubbish on the side of the road and things like that.

32

33 S: So you could see through it?

34

35 Eve: It's amazing and it's different but I think the reality of it is – I don't know. Have your
36 rubbish on the side of the road and just burn it – that's how you get rid of your rubbish. And
37 there's no backbone to how society is running.... something as simple as collecting your

1 litter we just take for granted here and it's just dealt with. Almost makes them more ..erm...
2 (silence) .. they do things themselves - I don't know how to put it into words ..

3

4 S: Independent or resilient?

5

6 Eve: Independent and resilient in terms of having to do everyday things. Whereas we just
7 have everything and take it for granted.

8

9 S: Yes. Yes. That makes good sense. Could you talk to me as a geography teacher going
10 there? You did your presentation at the Conference about the module that you'd taught
11 about the 'New India'. And also when I looked through your Journal I can see the geography
12 teacher coming through. Particularly, not a geography model, it's a model of learning, but
13 that seemed to be a really strong part of your Journal and thinking.

14

15 Eve: Yeah. OK. I think as a geographer you know a lot about the world – and I'm interested
16 in the world – but until you actually travel there you don't really know. I was teaching the
17 'New India' modules before I went and, I'll be honest, I didn't know much about India. That
18 much. I should do being a geography teacher but I didn't know as much as I should have
19 done.

20

21 S: I think of the things I've taught in the past and I've not been there ... there's no harm.

22

23 Eve: Yeah. And then, I think until you actually go there and you experience it you don't
24 necessarily know what a place is like and you just going off of the information you're fed
25 and then you, as a teacher, you interpret that and you try and get students to engage with
26 it. But until you actually go there you realise how different it actually can be and how many
27 different perspectives and different elements to it there are. Like the single story. Because
28 it is the single story some times. For example, we're just starting a topic on Africa and the
29 students' perceptions of Africa as a continent are just so – I don't know – just that Africa is
30 all the same and that there isn't any complexity about Africa – just stereotyping, "Oh
31 everyone who lives in Africa is poor. They have hardly any access to food or shelter or
32 sanitation." And getting them to think beyond that and see the complexities of different
33 countries, even within a country, within a town and within a district, you know how different
34 it is, how complicated it is. I think, just getting students to realise that it's not all the same.
35 So with India, I'd certainly say that I was teaching it with very little first-hand knowledge,
36 obviously, of what it's actually like so when I got back I looked at some of the assessments
37 that they'd done. They'd done some assessments on 'New India' and how would you help

1 'New Indians'. I think that whole idea of helping was very uncomfortable after I then looked
2 back and I hadn't made any comments on what they'd written. Does that makes sense?

3

4 S: Right. OK. Yes. Yes.

5

6 Eve: Some of their stereotypes and stereotypical views I hadn't really commented upon
7 but then when I looked back at it I now think "well, actually that's not necessarily true, you
8 need to be thinking a little bit more in context about this."

9

10 S: So you critique the process here about learning about India more?

11

12 Eve: Yeah. And my way of delivering it as well.

13

14 S: I think you said in your written piece that it really troubled you as a geography teacher
15 and you weren't quite sure what a geography teacher was about. I'm paraphrasing a little,
16 but ...

17

18 Eve: When we teach we teach about LEDCs, MEDCs, NICs and all these categories and
19 indicators that we use to teach about countries and I think that's quite dangerous because
20 you're almost selling a country as something that it's not.

21

22 S: Giving it a label.

23

24 Eve: Giving it a label. And it's not necessarily, that's not the case. And, I don't know, even
25 little things like giving them a world map. And the world map is this way round and this is
26 what you see it as, it's just sold as this is what a world map looks like. And now it's made
27 me think, even little things like next year if I get my own car, I'm going to get a map that's
28 different, that's upside down or whatever.

29

30 S: It's really poignant though. It might be a little thing but it's quite poignant.

31

32 Eve: Yeah. Yes.

33

34 S: "You see the world differently." And do you think that's something as a consequence of
35 going to India or is that something that was already in your mind and that ...

36

1 Eve: No .. I think .. well, I was aware that maps were presented differently 'cos I like maps
2 but I think just seeing it differently and we see the non-West as ... almost that we're superior.
3 I think that's what we're sold and what generally it's seen as. And then when you go to
4 India or a non-Western country you realise how much we have to learn from them and that
5 it's not actually as simple as that. That they shouldn't have to model themselves on a
6 Western country because actually a lot of what they do we need to learn from. I don't know.
7
8 S: Different social constructions from different groups of people in different regions in
9 different countries and those complexities don't really get under in the way we learn, I
10 guess.
11
12 Eve: Yeah. I remember being really anxious about delivering a presentation about 'New
13 India' or about India to an audience. And I was really careful about the way I did it.
14
15 S: I thought you did really well by the way.
16
17 Eve: I was really nervous about that. 'Cos there were bits I took out that I thought, "oh no,
18 they might not sit very well." And I think, cos you do need to be quite careful. And I think
19 that process of actually creating that made me realise that maybe some of the things that
20 we talk about in geography lessons aren't necessarily the right way of talking about things.
21 I don't know. But that comes from the Curriculum.
22
23 S: Yeah. Yeah. Oh, I think it does. The way that GCSEs are set up with those big labels
24 about huge chunks of the world are terms that we all buy into. Yeah.
25
26 Eve: 'New India' was a term. And none of them had ever heard of 'New India' and they
27 live in India. So, it's clearly just something that we constructed ourselves.
28
29 S: Yeah. Yeah. I think you're right. So is that the biggest learning consequence you've
30 got back here and you're immersed in [REDACTED] again? Or were there other things
31 that were really significant to you in terms of that learning process and how you put that in
32 your model and so on?
33
34 Eve: Yeah. I think it was. We landed on the Sunday night and I was back in school on
35 Monday morning.
36 S: Sorry about that! (Laughter)
37

1 Eve: It was a bit of a shock to the system but it was quite, I don't know, so much had
2 happened in that short space of time back at home, and we'd only been away for 10 days,
3 and I just had to slip back into it straight away and it was really hard to.
4

5 S: And you were back into teaching as opposed to PGCE not School Direct who were
6 having more time for ..
7

8 Eve: reflection. It made – I remember sitting at the back of the class doing an observation,
9 observing someone. I remember sitting there. I think it was on the Monday because they
10 had been kind to me saying I didn't have to teach on the Monday morning.
11

12 S: It was good of them – yeah.
13

14 Eve: Which was very good but I remember sitting there and thinking, “oh my goodness.”
15 Half of this class ... not because of the teachers, the teachers are pretty good, but because
16 the attitude of the kids themselves is just, it's quite, just a general attitude of the students
17 and the laziness in comparison to where we've been where they want to learn and they
18 have that thirst to learn. Didn't have that here.
19

20 S: I think that many people have spoken about that.
21

22 Eve: Yeah. Going from the intrigue – the students being so intrigued and interested and
23 then it's hardly batting an eyelid about where you've been or what you've been doing. Well,
24 not that they should have to but it was just quite strange to have that transition from ..
25

26 S: This is another thing that people are starting to say is they found it quite hard to articulate
27 why this is important. You want people to listen.
28

29 Eve: Yeah. I remember not being able to necessarily communicate how I was feeling cos
30 I was still trying to take it all in. But I taught a lesson about India, about Kerala, to one of
31 my Year 8 groups and they engaged really well with it and they were really interested which
32 was really nice. But it was quite strange as it was such a personal thing. To then be
33 teaching about it was quite .. I don't know .. I was really anxious about doing it 'cos it was
34 so personal, because it was something I'd experienced and I didn't want them to just
35 dismiss it as something not important.

1 S: Something really special. And, you know, so much in geography is about opening our
2 classroom and talking about them. And that was a much more complex nuance for you. It
3 wasn't about 'them' over there. It was about 'people who I've connected with'.

4

5 Eve: I tried to ... I got them to write a pen pal letter and we were talking about a school day
6 in Kerala and a school day here. All sorts of things, the climate. The geographical parts of
7 it, you know, to make it a worthwhile lesson.

8

9 S: Geographical. Yeah. As we would deem it. (laughter)

10 Eve: I then got them to do a pen pal letter and I was hoping to try to interact with schools
11 in Kerala, which I haven't had chance to do yet, but it was quite exciting 'cos they were
12 really interested. And then I did my second placement at [REDACTED] and I did some Year 13
13 lessons and in those lessons I managed to just bring in the smallest thing, like a picture that
14 I had taken of a lady in the middle of nowhere on the mobile phone, in the middle of India,
15 to challenge those pre-conceptions and it was to do with technological fix and how actually
16 mobile phones are helping with development in some countries because you don't have to
17 have all the technology associated because they are so cheap now. But just having that
18 little picture, and being able to have that personal anecdote alongside it, I noticed how they
19 went from kind of being interested to "Oh, actually she's taken this picture herself." And
20 getting some Year 13 boys interested in phones.

21

22 S: That's quite a challenge. It sounds to me that what you're saying is that connections
23 seemed to be important. Because you were connected to this – I mean not connected as
24 in that you knew who this woman was with the phone – but because you'd been there and
25 then they connected to that.

26

27 Eve: You almost have more respect as a geography teacher if you say you've been
28 somewhere and you've seen it first hand. So I kind of just have been trying to bring little
29 snippets into different lessons and it does work – not for long – but you just see that slight,
30 sudden bit of interest if you mention something that you've done personally or where you've
31 been and it makes a little bit of a difference. I can't remember what we were talking about
32 now ...

33

34 S: We'd got onto sort of coming back and Well, anything about you as a person, [Eve]?
35 And we talked about the professional dimension and you talked a little bit earlier about the
36 confidences that come with this, but are there any other ways that you see the world
37 differently or was it just the same?

1 Eve: My Mum actually said something to me the other week which was quite strange. She
2 said to me, “You’ve been a lot more chilled out since you came back. I know it’s only 10
3 days but you’ve been a lot more chilled out since you came back from India.” So I don’t
4 know if that’s because – I mean it’s only 10 days but I think it makes you kind of realise that
5 something is not the be all or end all and there’s a bigger world beyond what you’re doing
6 there and then.

7

8 S: Chilled out about everything or specifics? Just talk to me a little bit more about that ...

9

10 Eve: If you widen your perspectives on the world, it was quite daunting to kind of see the
11 world from a completely different point of view all of a sudden. I think, I don’t know ... I
12 think ... I don’t know if it was because of the challenge. Maybe I’m a little bit more relaxed
13 in terms of if there’s a challenge put in front of me I might try and do something in a relaxed
14 manner but, I don’t know. I think it was because it was such an amazing experience and
15 it’s really hard to put into words. And I found when I came back I couldn’t explain half of
16 the things. That’s why I kind of clung to [Maggie] a little bit after we came back. We’re
17 both still good friends because we both understand the experience we’ve had and we’ve
18 both said that when we’re asked about it by everyone else that it’s so hard to explain unless
19 you were there. Because to other people it just looks as though “Oh you’ve been on a ‘jolly’.
20 And you’ve had a great time.” But actually it’s when you think about the things you’ve learnt
21 and the things you’ve seen and the people you’ve spoken to that - I don’t know, it’s really
22 hard.

23

24 S: It is. And I understand that and respect that and it is very hard to try and articulate.

25

26 Eve: I think it’s also scary how quickly you can slip back into routine. Because now it’s
27 obviously getting to the serious end and there’s so much to do and it’s just one thing after
28 another, and I don’t want to forget that experience but I feel like it’s kind of (silence). I think
29 things are sticking with me in terms of perspectives of the world and how I teach but I’m so
30 stuck into the Curriculum and trying to teach the Curriculum and trying to tick the boxes and
31 do the right things at the moment.

32

33 S: Sure. It’s maybe that these other things that are – like teaching about distant places
34 slightly differently, or using photos and “This is my connection with these places.” Those
35 overt sort of things but maybe there are other things happening without you sort of realising.
36 Like the ‘chilled outness’

37

1 Eve: I think so. I think it develops you as a person and you don't realise at the time. Yeah.
2 I think it's that model was kind of created because I didn't agree with the fact that you came
3 to an equilibrium where everything had almost settled and you'd sorted your thoughts. Like
4 there was final stage to it cos even now trying to explain how it's affected me is really
5 difficult. And now I'm thinking about it and prompting my thoughts again I'm completely
6 bewildered by it, to be honest.

7

8 S: It's OK to be bewildered by it. In some ways we can almost celebrate not knowing and
9 being in an uncertain place. But your model, I thought, was really rich because of that. And
10 I loved the way it sort of fed back, it didn't just feed back one step it actually could go back
11 a series of steps and so on. There was fluidity to it and it seemed quite appropriate to the
12 learning that you've outlined in your Journal.

13

14 Eve: I think when I felt like I'd maybe worked something out in my head .. and something
15 else, like another trigger would come in and it would just confuse me again. I'd be back to
16 the start. I'd be building on what I'd already learnt.

17

18 S: We're taught in the West, aren't we, that we're constructive and logical thinkers and you
19 build this thing and then something happens, part of that foundation is pulled away and you
20 have to start again sometimes.

21

22 Eve: I think it's really powerful though having that bewilderment and not necessarily
23 knowing. And I think that might be what people are really scared of and that's why we have
24 such a logical view and tick the boxes and do all these things because we maybe aren't
25 used to being outside our comfort zone and being bewildered by things like that. I don't
26 know .. it's made me want to go to more places .. to see more places around the world, but
27 not just see them but do them in a similar way that we did and delve a little bit deeper.

28

29 S: Try and get beyond the tourist.

30

31 Eve: Yeah. Because you can go anywhere and you can see anything but unless you stay
32 there for a reasonable amount of time and do certain things that aren't touristy and you get
33 to know the people ...

34

35 S: And for me, getting to know Dr [REDACTED] there with his knowledge and insights, position such
36 that he can co-ordinate school visits; gave us access.

37

1 Eve: Definitely. Some of it sometimes, the way they treated us felt a bit superficial but
2 being able to go into that school was such an experience because you can see what it's
3 really like.

4

5 S: Yes. Well, that was real and when we're not there that's also real but it will probably be
6 a different sort of school day won't it? But you know, as you say, that thirst to travel and
7 look and question and delve into places is the bread and butter to a geographer so it's lovely
8 to hear that. So are there other things that you think "Ah these are really important,
9 significant things to me on the trip?

10

11 Eve: So many... erm... (silence). Well, I've spoken about how I felt on the stage and how
12 we had to try and present ...it's just like really simple little things. I wrote about the whole
13 bartering thing.

14

15 S: Oh you did. And how you were uncomfortable about that?

16

17 Eve: Yeah.

18

19 S: You wrote about that really thoughtfully.

20

21 Eve: I found it really uncomfortable because wherever I go I'm not really a barterer. I don't
22 really like conflict of any type and if you're arguing over the cost of something I'd kind of
23 step back. I'd rather just pay the money than I would get involved with it. And when I was
24 a group, perhaps some other members of the group would be quite happy to do that, felt
25 comfortable with doing that – I felt quite uncomfortable. So I would happily just pay the
26 money or I would just completely draw myself out of the situation and say, "I'm not doing it,
27 I'm going for a walk" or whatever. I don't know why I felt uncomfortable. And when I got
28 back I realised that actually was it worse, that I was behaving like that? Was there some
29 underlying reason behind me behaving like that in paying somebody what they want and
30 not necessarily bartering with them. Maybe treating them as equal, I don't know. I don't
31 know how to explain it.

32

33 S: I think you got to a position where it wasn't stalemate but you'd thought about it so much
34 that we get .. it stops us doing quite simple things if we're not careful. I thought you'd
35 thought about it so deeply and looked at it through a whole range of different lenses from
36 the personal connection to the Post-colonial theory dimension. You did a really good job
37 with it but I think you've shown how difficult it is and sometimes we might just, as you say,

1 walk away because we're uncomfortable but we might do that for a whole host of different
2 reasons and so on.

3

4 Eve: It's funny .. I spoke about how the group was really supportive but at the same time,
5 towards the end, there were points where I was almost struggling because there were a lot
6 of different characters. I don't know, maybe it's because we were so comfortable with one
7 another but I wanted to break away. I wanted to just not be in that minibus, not be in that
8 little kind of bubble with everyone else. I would have loved to have been able to go off and
9 do my own thing and really see how I would cope if I was only in a pair or something like
10 that.

11

12 S: That would be a good sign. I take that as a good sign and if the trip was longer then
13 maybe that would be the next stage really, wouldn't it?

14 Eve: I felt ready to do that. But I don't know if I would have felt ready to do that if I was
15 thrown in from that position.

16

17 S: No. No. I think that's a fair point. And you did your rickshaw ride and little things like
18 that.

19

20 Eve: Yeah. Yeah. That was fun.

21

22 S: Yeah the next stage might have been an immersion for a pair in a school or something.

23

24 Eve: Yeah. I felt I just wanted to do something slightly away from the group that was
25 maybe a bit more personal.

26

27 S: There was a small group of you who went off to see the elephants at the end and that
28 was an example of where people went their separate ways.

29

30 Eve: That was amazing. Being able to just be in the middle of nowhere, in a more rural
31 area. There were only four of us. That was quite amazing, actually, now that I think about
32 it. And while the elephants were amazing, I was more interested in the woman on her
33 mobile phone.

34

35 S: Oh that's where you took the ..

36

1 Eve: Yeah that's where I took that photo. 'Cos I thought, "that's brilliant, I can use that .."
2 But at the same time I felt really bad about taking a photo of a lady. She didn't see me, I
3 tried to do it really discreetly, that's why it's a bit blurry. Which is really bad because you're
4 there and you're having this experience and actually you're trying to take a photo of
5 someone because you think it might be quite good for geography.

6
7 S: Yeah. But maybe that's the thing about being a teacher – you've always got your eye
8 on something but I think it's always the way the trip has turns that we just can't anticipate.
9 So you think we're going to go and ride an elephant and actually you find a fantastic
10 photograph or I think some people have said also that "I know that you said you learnt about
11 yourself going on this trip but I really thought we were going to learn about India and so on.
12 But actually when someone engages these sort of things, I'm happy to reflect about myself
13 or whatever it might be." There's so many turns in those trips, you just can't anticipate
14 because we don't know the culture that well, really, and a whole host of other reasons that
15 turn on us and just thinking of the turmoil that one member of the group went through. And
16 we had no idea that that would have happened and how the group supported him and so
17 on. And who would have foreseen that? But I know what comfort and value he found by
18 being supported by those people. And that's just an example.
19 So what – to summarise – what are you taking from it now? Is it the process, is it being
20 there, is it just the little things that you're holding onto for example? I don't want to limit
21 your thoughts.

22
23 Eve: (Silence) Oh gosh.

24
25 S: Sorry, it's probably a difficult question.

26
27 Eve: I think ... (silence) I don't know. Being there was obviously amazing. How to explain
28 it?

29 I think it's so easy to get wrapped up in everyday life here and I think having been to
30 somewhere like that it makes me realise there are other things. I think there's other places
31 I'd like to go and there are other places I'd like to see and it's given me that thirst to travel.

32
33 S: I think that's a pretty strong outcome. You've been learning through a post-colonial lens
34 and through your own intercultural model that you developed. That's an outcome – that
35 thirst to see other places and so on. And you talked about the way that you're teaching as
36 well, which I think is probably special, is it?

37

1 Eve: I think it's in the back of my head but it's having that time to be able to put that ... and
2 I think it's the time constraints that are really frustrating because you could put all this
3 thought into everything but then you have to teach the Curriculum. But it's certainly made
4 me realise that there's more to just your routine, this way... this lifestyle in the Western
5 world.
6
7 S: I think that exposing that ... this is just not the way that everybody does things. It's a
8 Western construct or maybe an English construct, whatever level you see it, but it's just not
9 that everybody does it.
10
11 Eve: I think it might be an English construct because the way we just kind of stand off
12 situations and we are very restrained about things. I've learned to kind of just throw myself
13 in a bit more.
14
15 S: It's a really significant thing, I think.
16
17 Eve: It's definitely made me want to go and see more places and delve deeply into ...
18
19 S: Well, as you said not just be a tourist .. try and dig below that. It's quite hard to do it.
20 But it's a good aspiration to work towards. Yeah.
21 Great stuff. A good point to stop, do you think?
22
23 Eve: There's so much to say but it's really difficult to put into words.
24
25 S: Well, I think the idea of your learning, what's significant and things that once you returned
26 and things you thought about and that sort of process. So, I'm happy, as long as you're
27 happy?
28
29 Eve: Yeah (Laughter).
30
31 S: Good. OK – well, we'll switch off.

1 *Interview with 'Elizabeth': 29th April 2014 at her Placement School*

2

3 S: We'll just check if that's working but also ...

4

5 Elizabeth: The Journal obviously I took ages on – that was good, but the essay ...

6

7 S: The Journal was fantastic.

8

9 Elizabeth: I tried to write down...????

10

11 S: Very hard. Very hard. But just for the sake of the transcription, at least, we're picking
12 up the conversation and we're at ██████ School, ██████. And there's me ..

13

14 Elizabeth: And I'm [Elizabeth]

15

16 S: and Elizabeth ... This is a conversation about the India study visit and the learning that's
17 ensued during that and from that and the ways of learning, really. And we'll pick up what
18 you want to talk about, Elizabeth. It's much more about you than is it about me but I'll just
19 prompt the odd question.

20

21 Elizabeth: I don't know - it's put me on the spot.

22

23 S: This is a point for the first time in your life that you've dried up!

24

25 Elizabeth: Well, I'm always interviewing other people.

26

27 S: Yeah you see.

28

29 Elizabeth: I've never actually been interviewed before. I'm trying to be relaxed for you ...

30

31 S: So you just started to talk about your Journal, really.

32

33 Elizabeth: I like the Journal; I think I will treasure it. It was much more fun than the essay.

34

35 S: Well, they often are, aren't they?

36

1 Elizabeth: Yeah. It was nice to put – you know, ‘cos you don’t always want to put all your
2 pictures on digital means, get some sort of meaningless “like” or something like that - so it
3 was nice that you could put something a bit like a photo album, but much more meaningful
4 because you’ve got all these questions as well.
5
6 S: And I like the way that you have typed up notes with the images and so on with that and
7 then there were your hand written notes that you’d chipped in.
8
9 Elizabeth: Oh God, yes. What a mess! (Laughter)
10
11 S: It just seemed to me this was the ‘impromptu stuff’ or maybe the stuff that was done that
12 evening?
13
14 Elizabeth: Did you read any of the ‘impromptu stuff’?
15
16 S: I did. Yes.
17
18 Elizabeth: Oh God! (Laughter). What did you think?
19
20 S: I thought that was ‘real’ – well, it’s all ‘real’ – but the more spontaneous sort of dimensions
21 that you drew upon.
22
23 Elizabeth: In India ... it changes so quickly when you’re there and, you know, you go from
24 being ignorant with it all, and then you get on the plane and then those first few days it’s
25 such a big learning curve, everything’s so different. And then you come home and
26 everything’s weird!
27
28 S: Yeah. We’ll get onto that because I think you were one of the most vociferous people
29 about saying, “I’ve got home and it’s really weird.”
30
31 Elizabeth: “It is weird.” It was weird. It’s a bit weird now.
32
33 S: But not everyone was articulating that though.
34
35 Elizabeth: No. I know. Some people were like, “Oh thank God, back at Gatwick!”
36

1 S: "I'm just the same, Kent is just the same and life will just carry on." That seemed really
2 alien to what you were talking about. I'll make a note and we'll come back to that.

3

4 Elizabeth: I don't know, I think it's 'cos I enjoyed it so much and everybody else seemed to
5 be more worried about the weather and when they got back everyone was sort of - they
6 didn't know how they felt about coming back to India but it seemed to be the weather that
7 was upsetting them, whereas to me it was the way of life and everything about it, it wasn't
8 India.

9

10 S: So was it that you got accustomed to life in our little pocket of Kerala?

11

12 Elizabeth: Yes. Very quickly.

13

14 S: So why did you settle so quickly. Why?

15

16 Elizabeth: I think the sort of life I've lived - I am quite a friendly person. I like to make new
17 friends; I like to experience new cultures and I don't think my culture's the best and I've
18 always wanted to go to India. So I think I was ... to an extent maybe anything could have
19 happened out there and I would have gone "Oh, it's amazing!" It was amazing.

20

21 S: Yeah. So you were enthusiastic about it but it was the people bit that was important to
22 you?

23

24 Elizabeth: Yeah. Their attitude to life is so much nicer. I don't know, they're so much more
25 friendly. And I think you learn about yourself when you go away and you meet other people
26 that just make you look proud because they're so humble, friendly and generous and you're
27 so moany and tight and materialistic and you just think, "Oh God, can I stay here!"

28

29 S: So was that all the people you experienced in Kerala?

30

31 Elizabeth: I don't know. Maybe, I think the reason I wanted to go was the culture. I didn't
32 expect to want to enjoy the people I met there so much and the sort of attitude to it all. But
33 maybe it's just the difference of getting out ... maybe it's just a chip on my shoulder about
34 England, to be honest. I think there's an element of that.

35

36 S: And you'd travelled a bit before, hadn't you?

37

1 Elizabeth: Yeah. Nothing that far ... nothing that far away. I've done lots of Europe. Lots
2 of touristy stuff and non-touristy stuff but mainly all in Europe and Florida. I don't really like
3 places like that though. All that, "Have a nice day" and "Come to Disneyland", and all that
4 sort of stuff doesn't really do it for me anymore. And our trip to India – and I think as well,
5 it was what we were doing actually, and I hear myself saying that to people. It wasn't ... it
6 wasn't like we weren't staying in a hotel, but we weren't backpacking or anything but I don't
7 really know if I need to go backpacking. The thing that was important I got to meet all those
8 amazing school kids and, you don't realise at the time, you've just spoken at a conference
9 in India. And you're like "Wow! That's amazing!" It wasn't just India, I suppose, it was the
10 life experiences I was having while I was out there. And I think it meant a lot to all of us but
11 maybe more so than to others. I think that's fair. That's the same with everything in life.

12

13 S: Absolutely. Just speaking about the Conference. In terms of art, that you and [Deborah]
14 ... talked about, was that something you developed there and then? I meant to ask you
15 that.

16

17 Elizabeth: Erm ..I think we knew that they didn't really study it. We didn't know what the
18 situation was because from people who study art, from our perspective, India has got loads
19 of culture.

20 But it didn't make any sense, 'cos they never get taught it as such at school anyway. So I
21 think we wanted to show them how we did it, in a way that showed them how different it all
22 was. But also because we weren't sure, I mean we were the first art students that had ever
23 been on it as well. We weren't sure how relevant our contribution was going to be. We
24 thought we'd better make it good (laughter) otherwise they'll just think we're a bunch of arty
25 ????? or whatever but I think we did good and I was very proud of myself. It was good. We
26 worked well that day.

27

28 S: Yes. And you were on first, weren't you?

29

30 Elizabeth: Yeah. On first, sigh of relief! No, it was good. It was a very proud moment.
31 You've got that sort of naïve visitor hope of anything's possible really because you do things
32 that you don't get the chance to do in England, I suppose.

33

34 S: But this 'naïve visitor hope', is that indicative of your disposition do you think? Or was
35 it a completely different [Elizabeth] that was operating out there?

36

1 Elizabeth: I think I can be quite naively optimistic and also sometimes quite naively
2 pessimistic as well at the same time. If that makes any sense? Bit of a drama queen
3 (laughter).
4 S: So ???? (both talking/laughing at same time).... very quickly.
5
6 Elizabeth: Yeah. That's the right way of saying it, yeah. Absolutely
7
8 S: So how did you deepen your learning?
9
10 Elizabeth: What do you mean?
11
12 S: Well, you said you articulate your views, possibly naively and quickly. So how did you
13 get a deeper learning which clearly you've demonstrated in your Journal?
14
15 Elizabeth: I think I learn a lot about myself by comparing myself to other people. You don't
16 realise, I suppose unless you've got something very different about you physically, you don't
17 know that until you see that everybody else hasn't go that type thing. And it's the same sort
18 of thing. It's like when we saw the 'triggers' and other people seeing things that they
19 genuinely found upsetting and I hadn't even noticed.
20
21 S: Can you explain the 'triggers' just a little bit more? What do you think they were?
22
23 Elizabeth: Well there was one instance .. it was down at the river or at the coast, might
24 have been at the tip of India?
25
26 S: Cape Comorin?
27
28 Elizabeth: Yeah. That was it. And we all went to the toilet 'cos we'd been on the coach for
29 about 7 hours.
30
31 S: So one of the shorter journeys?!
32
33 Elizabeth: One of the shorter ones, yeah! And it didn't even occur to me that there were
34 toilets. I was happy to find toilets so I was happy about that. You know, you have to make
35 "do". So why's that a problem, I don't get it? And other people were crying .. they were
36 actually crying about the toilets. I didn't feel, and it sounds awful to say that, I totally respect
37 her right to do that, she's really sweet, it's an empathy she's a sweet lady and it doesn't

1 really matter what you're crying about, you're empathising with that. And that's a good
2 thing. You have to feel it's not a problem. But that instance, reminded me of all the times
3 that I've been to festivals and stuff and it made me laugh. She seemed to think that those
4 toilets didn't exist in England and I just thought, "Oh come on .. open your eyes." I said to
5 her, "What do you do at festivals?" and she said, "I've never been (to one)."

6

7 S: Yeah maybe. So there was a bit of "there and here" and "black and white?"

8

9 Elizabeth: A sort of culture difference, I guess. I don't know why I thought festivals and,
10 well, the backpacker! That's it! If you're prepared to do that, then you can change. And
11 that's what I ended up going on to write about in my essay. If you can't adapt to change
12 very well then you're probably not going to be a very happy kind of person because, I don't
13 know, I think that's kind of life. It doesn't always stay still for very long?

14

15 S: Yeah. And if you try and keep it like that ...

16

17 Elizabeth: Yeah. You end up standing out like a sore thumb as well. Because that's how
18 it works. Not that I'm particularly good at dealing with change. So it's always one thing to
19 say these things, isn't it, and quite another to live your life like that.

20

21 S: Well, it is. Yeah. The lived experiences is murky in context and so on. But maybe
22 that you recognise that change happens and others possibly don't?

23

24 Elizabeth: Yeah. I don't know if it's related but I think, for me, it's been ... I've noticed ... I
25 don't know if it's because I'm choosing a life and making my life more stable and secure in
26 many ways by doing teaching. But I seem to want to take more risks, it's really odd. I don't
27 know if it's a good thing. (Laughter) I don't know, I really don't know if it's a good thing.

28

29 S: What sort of risks?

30

31 Elizabeth: Just like I really want to move away now. I don't want to ... it's that idea of
32 change and maybe I don't deal with change as well as I want and yet I still really want to do
33 something really big.

34

35 S: So when you say move away? London?

36

1 Elizabeth: Yeah. Wey hey! No I'm thinking at least one year to save up a deposit for a
2 house, you know. Why not? See the rest of the world.

3

4 S: Is that new since going to India or has that been ticking away in your mind, sort of thing?

5 Elizabeth: Yeah. I think a little bit of me always wanted to do the travelling thing. I don't
6 want to backpack anymore. I don't want to carry my world on my back and then have to
7 come home. That's the thing I don't want to do. I don't want to have to come home cos
8 that's ???? basically. It sounds like running away, doesn't it? I'm going to run away for 6
9 months, and then I'm going to come back and then I'll have to find another job. No, no, no,
10 no. I want to go work somewhere else.

11

12 S: You want to go A certain permanency to it.

13

14 Elizabeth: At least for a year or two. You know, that's what I think anyway. But then I don't
15 know, that's what I mean by risk – little things like that. I'm always thinking I'm not ready to
16 be 100% sensible just yet. (Laughter). It's, in a way, taking sensible risks that are exciting.
17 You've got to keep interested in your life, haven't you, otherwise how boring.

18

19 S: I think you do. Yeah. Absolutely.

20

21 Elizabeth: I think it sends people crazy too if they don't follow their dreams, as well. I think
22 it makes them do silly things when they get older. Knee-jerk reactions and stuff. I mean
23 this hasn't got anything to do with India or anything but I've always thought that. You know
24 how sometimes people go mad. "Why do they behave in that way, why are they into that,
25 what are they up to?" And I think if you don't listen to what you really want to do and you
26 don't take those risks, you end up down the road and you feel a bit rubbish really.

27

28 S: Does that have something to do with how much you value and how much you're capable
29 of reflecting?

30

31 Elizabeth: Yeah. I suppose so, yes, because you can't really reflect if you don't take the
32 time out to sit down and think, "What do I want?" "What's important to me?" Yeah. You
33 might get forty years down the line before you notice ... but maybe it doesn't really matter
34 anyway.

35

36 S: As long as you do? And there's time?

37

1 Elizabeth: Yeah. I feel like I've got more potential than I've perhaps ever realised because,
2 you know, I'm quite hard on myself sometimes. But I'm quite ... India was a really good
3 experience because I felt ... like my friendly nature. I remember I went to a nightclub where
4 I lived once when I was quite young and, yes, I'd had a sherry or two and I was very friendly.
5 And I remember my sister, who took me reluctantly to this nightclub, saying, "You can't talk
6 to people round here, you can't go around the nightclub introducing yourself to people, you
7 can't do that, [Elizabeth]." And I thought, "Well, that's rubbish, what's the point." And I
8 loved the fact that when I went over there, that little part of me worked really well. I loved
9 those genuine moments between teachers. I've got photos of me, holding hands with Indian
10 lady teachers I've never met before. It's just lovely.

11

12 S: But that's connections.

13

14 Elizabeth: Yeah. So real. You can't make those connections with teachers in England.

15

16 S: They would say "no".

17

18 Elizabeth: You couldn't just hold hands ... with Mr [REDACTED], the Headteacher, and say, "I'm
19 just so happy to see you .. come on, let's hold hands for 5 minutes and walk around for a
20 bit." That would be weird. It's fine in India – everybody cares and I think how much nicer it
21 is. I think their priorities are much better. I like that. Apart from they don't do enough Art
22 in School – apart from that.

23

24 S: But the opportunities will sort that out.

25

26 Elizabeth: They will. Absolutely.

27

28 S: In your Journal. I just meant to ask you this a moment ago. The typed bits - did you
29 do that when you got home?

30

31 Elizabeth: Yes. I took the notes. There were moments when I put things in the Journal
32 and [Deborah] said, "You can't write that." And I'd go "Oh, no, no it'll be fine." And then
33 I'd read it when I got home and I thought, "Yes, you can't write that. (Laughter) That's not
34 professional enough. So re-write that – ever so slightly." And then I did kinda think that's
35 not really the idea of the Journal, is it? I tried to keep close to it.

36

37 S: What was the idea of the Journal?

1 Elizabeth: Well, it should have been just to ... well, that's the problem it's still a university
2 document. It's a bit like the Journal we get given for the PGCE. It's just like "This is a place
3 for you to reflect, but don't say anything bad. You can't say anything bad in there and
4 you've always got to link it to the Standards."

5

6 S: I know what you mean. There's always a risk, isn't there? To give it credibility and to
7 also give you guys 1000 words at least or whatever it was. But in your head ... it was still
8 a university piece as well.

9

10 Elizabeth: Yeah. It had to still be that. I think there were points where I could have easily
11 wondered off into "dear Diaryland". It was a bit silly, it did help to be given that structure.

12

13 S: Right. Your reflections were comprehensive and thoughtful and you chewed these
14 points over. And you did images, as well, to help which was great, I thought.

15

16 Elizabeth: I love the photos – they're amazing. So nice.

17

18 S: So your PIES which sort of emanated from the Journal. Tell me about this, because we
19 talked on and off about this idea of wellbeing. You spoke about happiness and wellbeing
20 being merged somehow.

21

22 Elizabeth: I think it's something that .. years ago I was having a really bad time and I was
23 introduced to TED talk and I started getting into this idea of wellbeing. And I loved the fact
24 that it was these crazy scientists in LA who were thinking about it. And there was one by a
25 Buddhist monk and he laughs about how philosophy has never been interested in
26 happiness and in fact, one of them even says that's the "messy, dirty science of happiness."
27 Like, they don't want to know about it. And I thought that was quite sad.

28

29 S: But Buddhists see life as a series of challenges and nirvana is reached ...

30

31 Elizabeth: But yeah .. like this is what he was saying, Matthieu Ricard, this is what is so
32 important to us and yet none of us have paid any attention as to what really makes us
33 happy. And certainly never do any research into how we can make ourselves happier. And
34 it didn't really help when you're actually dealing with something really rubbish/teenage
35 angst, it doesn't really do that much, but it was something in the head to grow. And when I
36 was out in India, I did feel – both [Deborah] and I – just looking at the pictures as well and
37 you can see the joy, you can see the joy. And it was so nice – even though a couple of

1 weeks later it was, “Urgh God, England!” – but ‘the joy’, and you think, “What was doing
2 that, what was it about that?” But I did have to guide it towards intercultural learning
3 somehow and I think that’s where I nearly came unstuck because I kept changing my mind,
4 I didn’t know how best to phrase it. Like sometimes I think it always works if you just go for
5 it and try. I’m glad everyone told me to keep going with what I was doing and don’t give up.
6 S: Absolutely. One thing in your PIES, I seem to remember, was talking about what doesn’t
7 really work and what’s been missing. You said about Post-colonial theory.

8
9 Elizabeth: I had to revisit it a few times but I didn’t mind it, yeah.

10
11 S: Yeah. I thought that was a really insightful point. That there was an agency with it but
12 it needed something else.

13
14 Elizabeth: Yeah. I just seemed like ... I didn’t read any Edward Said until I was half way
15 through the PIES and I thought, “That’s a shame. I wish I’d read that earlier!” (Laughter).
16 Even though I distinctly remember you telling us, “maybe give it a read before!” And I really,
17 really liked what he was saying but then it was just so depressing. There’s no way out.
18 That’s how it is. It’s almost like he was saying that it’s always going to be like that... which
19 it might be but you can’t live your life thinking things will never change. Because they
20 definitely won’t, in my opinion, you’ve got to be positive. There’s got to be a positive way
21 out of it, somehow.

22
23 S: You’ve got to be positive. There might be some people who say that because of the
24 power differential and so on we shouldn’t go to India. But we did, well obviously we did.

25
26 Elizabeth: So don’t go because we’re always going to be treated like that?

27
28 S: We’ll be treated like that but also because we’ve spent x hundreds of pounds on a plane
29 ticket that probably, although you might say definitely, our recipients/our hosts wouldn’t
30 have been able to afford. That said, I met Dr ■■■ in Harrogate, West Yorkshire .. in North
31 Yorkshire, so I don’t think these black and white statements are that helpful really.

32
33 Elizabeth: As you say, as powerful as I thought it was, I thought there was something a bit
34 too final about it. “Ah, that’s it, that’s deliberate and that’s the Eastern way it’s done.”

35
36 S: That is the criticism of Orientalism that he falls into his own trap in a way. That he
37 presents a bit of a singular story when he saying that’s the wrong thing to do.

1 Elizabeth: Yeah. So give me some vision out of that then. And that was right and in my
2 essay I went to use the stress adaptation cycle to maybe see that as a way through that.
3 And that made sense at the time.

4

5 S: So just think about the people dimension that you had, the meeting people and
6 relationships and so on. Was that a way out of Orientalism do you think?

7 Elizabeth: I think I used the fact that I'm good at being friendly and I think some people
8 aren't as comfortable with themselves to be that genuine. I don't know, that's an
9 assumption.

10

11 S: Well it is. But go with it.

12

13 Elizabeth: But, you know.... so I can remember the times, when, I know I keep saying, but
14 I was holding that woman's hand. You can see by the look on my face, I was so happy just
15 to be there. And they were so happy just to have us. And I was so happy to be there and I
16 didn't reallyit definitely counteracted it for me because I thought, "that's just genuine.
17 That's real, it doesn't matter anymore and I don't care if she's really that, you know, post-
18 colonial or imperialist thinking that we're really important people." You can think beyond
19 that and think they're just happy to have us here actually.

20

21 S: And I think there's a danger that we project Orientalism – the colonial world that we
22 know - onto these people.

23

24 Elizabeth: Yeah. That's it. As I said, it's a huge cycle where you just "oh no, it's that, oh
25 yeah." It's constantly changing itself and it's just a little bit pointless. And I just can't imagine
26 Indian people worrying about it half as much as we do. You know. So, that sort of helped.
27 And I think it's that human to human interconnectedness rather than it being about "oh, well
28 we're the imperialist scum come to gloat over you in your poverty". I wasn't bothered at all.
29 I loved being there; I loved just being a part of it and I would have happily worked at any of
30 the schools. I think it would have been a bit scary going straight to an Indian school to be
31 honest but, you know, the mood I was in I would have done it! Yeah, I was like, "I could
32 stay here forever! Who cares about PGCEs?!" I really loved it.

33

34 S: You did really seem in your element. And your energy and enthusiasm, I thought, carried
35 others with you.

36

1 Elizabeth: I hope so 'cos it just gets to the point where I'm not going to not be happy and
2 friendly just because you're bloated, feeling sick, gnat bitey, don't really care. It's not my
3 problem. It's a once in a lifetime opportunity. I've waited for over 10 years to try ... I can
4 remember being 16 saying, "Oh I really wanna go to India when I get to 18. I can't wait to
5 be 18." Ten years later still not there. That was depressing and then seeing the opportunity
6 to go before I'm 30 with you. (Laughter) And I did it, and it felt great. So, yeah, I wasn't
7 going to worry about any of that. I didn't want to be the constant "Oh she's down the pub
8 again." "Oh, look, she's got a bottle of beer." But, you know, I think that sort of carried on,
9 it wasn't the enthusiasm just about being there it was just the enthusiasm in making the
10 most of the time I had, basically. Which is something, you know, I wish I could be like that
11 every day. It doesn't happen every day.

12

13 S: It's very hard, isn't it?

14

15 Elizabeth: How can I possibly be that excited every day? I'm just tired at the moment.

16

17 S: Yeah. Busy, busy. What about any other triggers that helped you along the way? We
18 talked about the triggers for other people but were there any particular ones for you?

19

20 Elizabeth: Triggers for me? Erm .. maybe emotional.

21

22 S: Which helped or hindered your learning? Learning is an emotional thing; it's a cognitive
23 thing; it's a spiritual thing as well.

24

25 Elizabeth: Yeah. I don't know. I think I was aware but I'm sort of ...maybe helping to be
26 extra friendly to sort of facilitate any gaps that might have been there. But, I don't know,
27 I'm trying to think of the trigger for me. That's what I said in the Journal as well. I could
28 spot other people's triggers and I could spot how they weren't mine and that taught me
29 about myself. Like, I really loved being there for [Becky] 'cos I was really worried that a lot
30 of people in the group – you know, the social dynamic of it all ..I wasn't really that bothered
31 about. I'm here to meet the Indian people, to be quite honest. I'm sorry but .. and it's lovely
32 to be able to reach out in a really genuine way to someone not just because they're Indian
33 but also because they're in our group and that was important for me.

34

35 S: Yeah. I was sitting just in front of you and it was so helpful.

36

1 Elizabeth: Well, she needed it. She needed it. I don't think she wanted to go to teach
2 about it; that's quite severe that's almost like, "oh do you need to go home?" type of thing.
3 I don't know. Maybe that helped me. It's that sort of thing that helped made me realise, it's
4 sounds weird, but that made me realise that things like that maybe I would be a bit stronger
5 in than. You know, put me in another situation, and I go to jelly – you know, we've all got
6 them, haven't we? But when I was out there I didn't have as much of that. I think I was
7 more – I don't know – you can't be more nervous in a seminar. Yeah, I mean if I was asked
8 to do an assembly here – I'd just be like, "Oh can't do that!"

9

10 S: Do you think the work one or two things that people said, "oh yeah, well, we just
11 did that and no way would I have done it back here". Like you said, an assembly or reading
12 a poem out or a speaking voice at the end of a thing and saying thank you on behalf of
13 everybody which you did.

14

15 Elizabeth: Just about. I don't know – I think there are certain elements .. this Social
16 Contract that they have in India where it's not your talent, you're not allowed to be shy about
17 dancing. It's almost like this is our talent, this is our culture. And I loved that. You know
18 those girls, and I tried to talk to them and they were so shy they couldn't even look at you
19 in the eye, but if you asked them to sing they'd just sit right in front of you and just sing at
20 you and that would make me blush! "Oh my God, how did they do that?!" And yet, it's just
21 funny the way they are and I think, English people, we just think about ourselves constantly,
22 that's all we think about.

23

24 S: We've got lost.

25

26 Elizabeth: We have. And I think that's fine, we're so fixated. The reason why we didn't
27 think about it when we were there, when I was in front of the stage. You know, it's like
28 there's a whole room full of people and they want to know what you're thinking; they want
29 thanks; they want a prayer; or a song; or a hymn or whatever. You know, it doesn't occur
30 to you, "oh I'm nervous". That would just be ridiculous and really rude. So yeah. And after
31 a while we were like, "are we being rude by not helping them out?" I guess I should have
32 sung a hymn but ... I was just a bit of a kill-joy. What a meany I am! (Laughter) Never
33 mind!

34

35 S: But it's not necessarily your thing. But what you did was speak on behalf of the group
36 afterwards and that was an important dimension to step up to.

37

1 Elizabeth: And I got the group shot. Oh that was brilliant! That was good. Did I give you
2 that? Did I give you the photo of it?
3
4 S: It's on Facebook, isn't it, but, no, I haven't got it.
5
6 Elizabeth: Yeah. But I printed out copies for you and [Scott] I forgot it, didn't I, that day?
7
8 S: Now that makes sense. Because you said "oh I must give you the photograph."
9
10 Elizabeth: It must be at home, I'll make sure you've got it.
11 S: Thanks. No, that'd be great. It was a lovely image, lovely image.
12
13 Elizabeth: Ah, it was such a good holiday. It wasn't a holiday either (laughter). It was
14 lovely and when you come back and you see everyone's happy but you see they're kinda
15 jealous and they kind of don't really want to know. And you're quite happy 'cos you're just
16 going to talk at them for hours about it anyway.
17
18 S: But one thing I remember you saying that it was quite hard to articulate the experiences
19 that you've had?
20
21 Elizabeth: There's no way ... Mum laughed. We drove from Gatwick to [REDACTED] to drop
22 [Deborah] off and all the way back to [REDACTED]. And she laughed when she got back and
23 she said, "I don't think she stopped for air for about 2 hours." I was just like "... I can't wait
24 to show you this and all that." And even then I didn't feel like, I thought, she's never going
25 to cut it. And I hate it – you know when something really bad happens or when something
26 really good happens and you have to just reduce it and you feel a bit .. by it and you start
27 feeling a bit bitter and you sort of just reduce it to, "yeah it was great." You can't be bothered
28 – why should I take that amazing experience and pack it into a tiny, little mouth sized portion
29 for you just because you haven't got the attention span or interest to listen to me when I'm
30 trying to tell you what it's about? Nobody had the patience to sit through all my India photos
31 – nobody.
32 It's fine. I'll go through them myself! But then I was like, "Why would they?" A lot of those
33 photos are really boring to other people, aren't they? But it is indicative to me, you know. I
34 loved it when I put over 200 photos up of Kerala, and it's the most beautiful place that I've
35 ever been to, and the only photo that anyone made a big fuss about online was the one
36 where I had a roll-up hanging out of my mouth and I was opening a bottle of beer. That
37 was it. Everybody was focussing on that. And I just thought, "This is ridiculous." I just put

1 one photo of me in a hotel room and like “why are you more interested in that than in the
2 other stuff?” It’s a bit sad.

3

4 S: Focus on the individual. Well, I think you’re probably right. And I think if it’s people who
5 haven’t been on the trip it’s a view and they don’t know anything about Kerala or anything
6 but here’s [Elizabeth]- a [Elizabeth]- type thing!

7

8 Elizabeth: A [Elizabeth]-type thing. Yeah. (Laughter)

9

10 S: One thing I was going to ask you about and you can tell me what you think. But, going
11 home seemed quite hard. You seemed sad about leaving.

12 Elizabeth: I didn’t mind leaving, I was OK with leaving. But definitely arriving home was
13 horrible. And I don’t think it helped .. the School I was at before made a big difference to
14 the way I felt about what was going on. Because it was a Boys’ Grammar ... and I’m starting
15 to wonder if all Boys’ Grammars are a little bit – they do they think they’re the best in the
16 country! They repeatedly tell their students that they’re the best in the country regardless
17 of how much energy they’re putting into their work, as far as I’m concerned. I’ve only been
18 to two so what can I possibly tell you? But I just think that attitude at that particular School
19 didn’t really help. I came in - I don’t know if it was to do with my Journal or not – I came in
20 Monday morning, probably less than 24 hours away from India, riding that high, you know,
21 “Yeah, go to the Staff room, get myself a cuppa tea and saw one of my students - “Hi
22 Dylan.” “Ah you ... what are you doing back?” That’s actually what he said; they were the
23 first words that an English student said to me when I got back. And I was just virtually
24 speechless. It says it all. It says it all. I don’t know what the answer is. I’m not clever
25 enough to know what the big answer is about education in England and India and why those
26 children – it would never occur to them to speak to anyone like that, let alone a visitor or,
27 essentially, a teacher or member of authority. God, it’s insane. They wouldn’t have even
28 talked to each other like that let alone a teacher. It’s strikingly odd. So I think that didn’t
29 help with the transition of coming back home. Even I can remember the people in the
30 Department .. you know, I hadn’t been gone that long and I’d made a big fuss about going
31 to India and he was like, “So how was Africa?” And I was like “It was India (whispers) but
32 don’t worry about it, it’s fine” I said, “I’ve got loads of photos to show you, I haven’t sorted
33 them yet.” And he was like, “Yeah, I mean how many have you got?” And I was like, “Oh
34 about nearly a thousand!” And he was like, “Yeah well, if you reduce it to ten.” And I was
35 just like that, “Probably not going to do that ... ‘cos if you can’t sit through fifty photos or at
36 least twenty.”

37 S: Yeah. It’s just compromising.

1 Elizabeth: It's like people in England, they're quite set in their ways. And you can tell if
2 somebody wants to know. If somebody wants to know, I would condense it. You can tell
3 by the gleam in their eyes and the interest. If you're really interested then I would definitely
4 tell you. But if you're asking out of politeness then I'd rather just forget about it because I
5 think there's that element that you can't just explain it to people.

6

7 S: The depth of the learning.

8

9 Elizabeth: No, there's no way of saying it. They just wouldn't understand.

10

11 S: And as you say, we're doing things out there that we wouldn't do here. And there's
12 something going on about that. I mean, there's this idea of the third culture which I don't
13 know if I've ...

14

15 Elizabeth: So, home culture, tourist culture ...

16

17 S: There's a Keralan culture, then there's a British culture and these are big-scale things
18 but then there's something going on where we go out there and operate differently.

19

20 Elizabeth: Because we don't act like normal bunch of Keralan tourists, do we? I suppose?

21

22 S: No, I think we're different from that, I think. We're fluid – there are the touristy aspects
23 of staying in a hotel in a resort and so on.

24

25 Elizabeth: They weren't that touristy.

26

27 S: Exactly. And then you know the going to the schools and engaging and that's certainly
28 not touristy. So, a lot of activities were, I believe, much deeper and more meaningful.

29

30 Elizabeth: Definitely. No doubt. Anyone who couldn't take something deep and emotional
31 from that ...it beggars belief how anyone couldn't, I don't understand. It doesn't make any
32 sense to me.

33

34 S: But maybe that, as you say, deep and emotional dimension means that we possibly, I'm
35 making this up as I go along really, but this is what it's about these talks. But, you know,
36 having stepping up and thanking a group or whoever for singing a song or for a poem or
37 whatever it might be, we do it because we're affected by where we are.

1 Elizabeth: Yeah. Because we didn't do it at the beginning of the week, did we? We were
2 like, "Oh, no that's fine." And they're saying thank you to us and we say thank you and
3 that's fine and leave it at that. And by the end of the week, it's like "Gosh, they're so
4 amazing, aren't they and we're so mean." So, yeah. I think it definitely affected everybody
5 a little bit and you couldn't possibly explain it. I don't know whether it's ...it just seems that
6 people in England have more and are less happy. That's how it seems. It seems quite
7 standard to say that. It's almost like English people even know it. And they've no interest
8 in doing anything about it 'cos it's endemic, you know, it's everywhere. Gotta have these
9 nice new buildings, gotta have all the right technology and goldfishes (Laughter)...fancy
10 printers. No this School's got quite a good atmosphere, I think, especially compared to the
11 last one I was at. But it doesn't get you anywhere and I don't know what's wrong. I couldn't
12 put my finger on the difference between why are they so happy over there and I end up
13 being happy because we're there. And that's the hard thing to get your head around, isn't
14 it?

15

16 S: We won't know. But we can live in the bewilderment or just enjoy not knowing. But we
17 can talk about it and think about it and so on. So this idea of home being a little strange.
18 What I think people, well certainly some people went over to Kerala maybe unfamiliar and
19 strange and the thought about that but then coming home and making the familiar strange.

20

21 Elizabeth: I think that was harder to deal with. I was quite happy – I didn't realise I was a
22 backpacker, I thought I was a sort of caravaner (Laughter). And then I realised that I could
23 cope with going somewhere else basically and it was more the coming home that I found
24 very ...mmm. Because it opens your eyes to what you could be doing on the other parts
25 of the world that you haven't seen. I think what your life situations are when you go have a
26 huge impact. Because I don't think I was in the same position as other people. I think there
27 were other people there who had quite settled lives; people that they missed and people
28 like that. I was quite lucky not to have any of that; I was like, "Yeah, let's go!" But, you
29 know, go back a year and I wouldn't have been able to do that and I probably would have
30 been less affected by it and it's such a blessing that I wasn't in that position.

31

32 S: Yeah. Things come at the right time.

33

34 Elizabeth: Always at the right time. So, yeah, that did make a big difference and I suppose
35 that would make a big difference about going home. Because you've really had such an
36 amazing time getting out of that zone of what you're familiar with, and you're not too
37 bothered about what you're familiar with, and so going away was amazing. And then

1 coming back it's like, "Oh gosh, back here again." 'Cos I'm a lot older – well not a lot older
2 than most of the - but I am a bit older than all of them. And although I moved to Brighton
3 when I was eighteen I've more or less lived in Medway, which I don't particularly like, for
4 my whole life. So, I didn't really want to go to university again, I didn't really want to be
5 living with my mum when I'm thirty years old and I think that's the way it's going. But I didn't
6 want to do that!

7

8 S: How many weeks have you got?

9

10 Elizabeth: Well, I don't know. Actually, eleven, thirteen, fourteen weeks?

11

12 S: Right. Tight, tight. (Laughter)

13

14 Elizabeth: Oh my God ..only fourteen weeks till I'm thirty! (Laughter) I'm going to have a
15 nervous breakdown in my interview! But, I think that would have made a big difference.
16 You come back and it's like., "Oh God, we're here again." Not being at home – I love my
17 Mum. But, yeah, things like that. I think that makes a big difference. There's probably lots
18 of other people that got on this course and they've already done a lot of things but
19 everyone's different.

20

21 S: Yeah. And celebrate that.

22

23 Elizabeth: Yeah. And as for [Deborah]. You know, think about her situation, she was living
24 with that rather less than pleasant lady. So she went down massive, straight down. Not
25 really loving life again. But, in a way, I think that stopped her from ever getting to the high,
26 dreamy stage because it was so bad that she always thought about it whereas I've got this
27 wonderfully supportive background where I do feel that anything is possible because I've
28 got that support and so yeah, I was more than happy to dream big, basically. (Laughter).

29

30 S: And is the dream still there somewhere?

31

32 Elizabeth: The dream's still there. I get through a lot of things with all this stress of PGCE.
33 Obviously, I've come far enough now to think, "Well, I'm not giving up now." I don't care
34 what I have to do. I don't know how I'm going to get through the next eight weeks and I
35 don't really care because I'll find a way. But then you get to the point where you're just,
36 you're so tired, you can't stress anymore. You're too tired to even tell people how hard
37 everything is because you're bored of telling people 'cos nobody's got a clue so why bother.

1 You know, just save your energy. So, but yeah, I don't know how to get through the next
2 eight weeks but I do definitely want to try and get away after this. It's annoying 'cos you
3 think that it's now given myself goals which are harder to work towards. At first I just wanted
4 to get a job as an Art teacher, that seems quite easy now. Now, I want to do that but I also
5 want to do it in an [REDACTED] School and I want to travel the world and yabba yabba
6 yabba all that stuff! I like it, it's good.

7

8 S: It's raised your expectations and aspirations but it's also what you do to others as part
9 of that. I don't think, you know, it sounds almost like it's a bit "me, me, me" and I know,
10 because of the way you engaged in India, that that's not the case it's much more about
11 relationships.

12

13 Elizabeth: No. It's "me, me, me" to get me out there. But then, I think it's because, I don't
14 know .. I love the relationships I have with the students here. There are some really tough
15 crowds and I've just clicked with some of them. Although tomorrow morning we're going to
16 see if it was just a temporary change or if they still like me! But, that means so much when
17 you can click through that and find that. Teaching is what I like but I just want to see – it is
18 quite "me, me, me", I suppose actually – but I just want to see more of the world.

19

20 S: It's what you do with it that moves it beyond, I think that's what I'm trying to say.

21

22 Elizabeth: I think it just .. you know... you don't even realise half the dreams you have until
23 you do things like that, really, do you? And then you're like, "I really want to do this. What
24 have I being doing for the past ten years, why haven't I done this already? How can I get
25 back out there?" You know, that sort of thing. So, you never know, I might go over there
26 and absolutely hate it and come back and there won't be any work.

27

28 S: But you will have tried and the experience will have been fulfilling.

29

30 Elizabeth: Maybe it is selfish. But ultimately, you can only be selfish.

31

32 S: It's your life. It's what you do with that ... if it was purely about your own pleasure and
33 development then may be. But as someone who's going out to teach and go beyond that
34 ...

35

36 Elizabeth: Yeah. It's not like I'm going to just go and lord it up in Sri Lanka or something
37 it's just about actually teaching. It goes back to that point, I think, about the wellbeing. And

1 if you don't think big and follow your dreams then how can you do all that stuff later in life?
2 I don't understand all those girls who do it really young, I just think, "Oh God, what's your
3 plan, have you got a plan?" I don't think they do. But I think for me to do that well.
4
5 S: But that's not selfish, that's just focussed on futures.
6
7 Elizabeth: It's important. How can you be a really good mum or really good at whatever
8 you want to be, really, unless you've done all those really hard things.
9
10 S: Futures are long with a range of things in them.
11
12 Elizabeth: Whatever happens, who knows? And to have gone from being overeducated
13 to scratching around for rubbish jobs and to go from that to suddenly ... well through the
14 course of the PGCE but also through going to India to just suddenly be, "Well, I won't. I
15 can go anywhere." And that's really nice, I didn't expect to get that out of the PGCE.
16
17 S: Well, I'm really glad that you got that out of it. I think one thing you said, I think in your
18 PIES, was when you got home that some of the theories made sense.
19
20 Elizabeth: Much more sense, yeah. It's almost like trying to read your Highway Code
21 before you've driven a car. It just doesn't go in because what have you got to really compare
22 it to, I suppose.
23
24 S: So any future international engagements within that context ...
25
26 Elizabeth: Yeah. I do feel like that. It's ridiculous. I forget it was only ten days; I talk about
27 myself like I'm some sort of seasoned traveller. "Oh when I was in India I've only been
28 once and I only went for ten days." (Laughter)
29
30 S: Somehow you're right – it was – and that's one of the interesting things – it's a very short
31 time but yet there's something that's still there.
32
33 Elizabeth: Well, I totally agree that it was very spiritual. It meant a great deal to me. It was
34 an absolutely fantastic trip and I loved every single minute of it and I didn't want it to end.
35 (Whispers) If I don't get a job, can I come next year?
36
37 S: Helpers?

1

2 Elizabeth: Yeah. Photographers, of course, to document the journey. We'll see.

3

4 S: Is there anything else before I switch off that you want to add?

5

6 Elizabeth: No, no, it's fine by me. It was a nice little chat. I feel the sparkle a bit now!

7

8 S: Good!

1 *Interview with 'Becky': 6th May 2014 at her Placement School*

2
3 S: [Becky], thanks very much for agreeing to have this conversation and agreeing to be
4 taped. And just to clarify what I'd really like to hear from you is about your experiences with
5 the India trip and particularly the learning process. You know, how you learnt, and the sort
6 of lasting outcomes from it. I know you've submitted your PIES. And that was a very –
7 although it was an academic piece of writing – it was quite a personal piece of writing as
8 well. And you can tell me as much or as little as you feel appropriate but it's a different
9 context than an academic piece of writing. I hope we can talk about different factors about
10 this sort of trip, if that's OK? So, that's really, hopefully, as much there will be of me and
11 there'll be a chance for you to speak and I'll just chip in here and there, if that's OK?

12
13 Becky: OK ... where to start? Crickey. Erm learning processes. It was quite fortunate
14 actually because I didn't - I'd never contemplated going to another country until my brother
15 said to me, "Well, I'll pay for you to go". And as soon as he said that I was like, "OK, yeah
16 .. let's do this." And then it was like the apprehension and then I realised "I don't wanna
17 do this."

18
19 S: So was it the financial dimension that just ruled it out?

20
21 Becky: No ...well, at first it was financial because I live on my own, so it was the financial
22 side. But I've never been abroad on my own – I've only ever been with my Mum so that was
23 a bit scary. And I'm not a very independent person either, really, but I like to have people
24 around me all the time who I know, who I can rely on. I like to know they're there. Then I
25 thought, "OK I actually I need to do this for me 'cos I need to gain my independence." Then
26 that was really handy that he said that he'd pay for me to do it. So, I thought "Yeah, let's
27 go for it." And I'm a lot more independent now than I was ... because I've pushed myself
28 to do it. I thought, I can achieve things without having people there all the time. Although
29 we were all together as a group, I didn't know everybody really well and you have your own
30 personal struggles that you have to deal with on your own as well as sorting everything out.
31 And now I just feel like "Well, let's just do it, let's just get out there and enjoy it!"

32
33 S: OK. So quite a change around in that respect? And at a personal level.

34
35 Becky: Yeah. Yeah. On a personal level.

1 S: And I wonder – we'll maybe come back to this - whether that's also influenced you as
2 a professional too. Maybe we'll chew that over in a bit. So that's a great step forward –
3 you said "I'll go on the trip", you were successful to get a place and so on. And how about
4 the sort of trials and tribulations of going through all of that. I mean actually going to India
5 - the flights and ..

6

7 Becky: Oh it was scary. Scary as anything! I loved it – I loved every minute of it but I didn't
8 really like flying (laugh). But I loved it, but it was scary at the same time. The day I broke
9 down, you know, the first couple of days I was a bit of a mess and I think I needed that to
10 be able to deal with it in my way and then I managed to overcome it.

11

12 S: So just tell me about it, 'cos that's really interesting. I remember at one point on the
13 coach you were upset when you were talking to [Student C]. And you said "Well, I've
14 overcome that" but tell me how that came about?

15

16 Becky: I don't know what it was because 'overwhelmed' would be like because I went on
17 the river tour at first when we got there ... that was amazing. I've never seen anything like
18 that before and that was amazing. And obviously the man was fishing in the river and I just
19 suddenly thought "Well OK that's strange - somebody standing on the river fishing" and
20 then the realisation that the owners of the hotel slept on the floor. I was thinking "Well,
21 we've got beds, why haven't you got a bed?" And then it got me thinking. I went to bed that
22 night, and I was really missing home anyway, and I just thought well we have so much, just
23 so, so much. And we live in a world where money is everything and people don't realise
24 how lucky they are.

25

26 S: Take things for granted.

27

28 Becky: Yes. Yeah. So the people in the hotel were so friendly and so happy yet they slept
29 on the floor and were so willing to help all the time. And there were people in the shop
30 down by the beach on the sea front and they were so friendly and welcoming and I got
31 talking to a lady in one of the shops and her daughter worked in the shop and they both
32 helped each other out. And her daughter went to school in the morning but she came home
33 at lunchtime because she had to help get money in. And I found out two days' later that
34 the little girl was asleep on the floor because she was so knackered from the late nights
35 and the next morning she just kind of dropped onto the middle of the shop floor. And I just
36 wanted to hold her and give her a hug.

37

1 S: Do you think those sort of conversations that you just happened about ...nothing's
2 planned - but they seemed to be really powerful for you.

3

4 Becky: Definitely – I think because they are so willing to talk to you as well. You know, you
5 go to a shop in Faversham or Canterbury they're like "Go on, take your stuff and get out –
6 I've got another customer to serve." (beeping sound covering conversation) Just
7 everything overwhelmed me like ...just so happy and friendly and vibrant and wonderful.
8 And yet I felt guilty because I missed home and I missed my computer and I missed my
9 phone and I missed all these things. I was arguing with this in my head, like I don't need
10 technology and yet I miss it. It's not like I can't live without it.

11

12 S: As an ■ teacher – it's fundamental to you, I would think.

13

14 Becky: It's definitely fundamental to me, but since then I've stopped. Although we have ■
15 lessons, I don't necessarily have to do ■ all the time. So we do things differently like we
16 made CD cases the other week. We've been making games as part of our coursework.
17 And I thought well let's make some CD cases and we spent a whole day designing them
18 on paper, working together in groups working out all these different things and we didn't
19 touch a computer once.

20

21 S: Was that something you took from Kerala?

22

23 Becky: Yes. Yes. They managed to have ICT and computing with these old text books
24 and old computers and they learned by writing things down and drawings in their books.
25 Why do we need all this stuff here when they're quite capable of learning without it? So,
26 yeah .. it was lots of different learning curves, I think.

27

28 S: So you said it was a bit overwhelming but then you seemed to just get stuck in. How
29 did you get to that stage where you were coping?

30

31 Becky: Well, talking to [Elizabeth] on the coach that first day really helped. And then I
32 managed to get through the day but come the evening when we all went separate ways I
33 was still really upset and things. And then [Jane, Rachel, Fay] – [Jane] was there all along
34 and brought [Rachel and Fay] in the room as well - and we just talked.

35

36 S: You were sharing with [Jane], were you?

37

1 Becky: Yeah. And we just talked for like three hours. Letting everything out – you don't
2 realise at the time that everyone's going through the same things as you are because
3 everyone hides it and some people are better at it than others. And everyone's like scared
4 and happy and excited and everything.

5 S: All those contrasts.

6

7 Becky: Yeah.

8

9 S: All at the same time.

10

11 Becky: Just people kind of put a smile on their face and carried on but were feeling it inside
12 and I couldn't do that. Like .." I don't know what's meant to be going on in my head just
13 now" and I just found myself either in tears or in giggles. I don't know – really strange
14 emotions that I don't really display at any other time.

15

16 S: But do you think that something – I was talking to other people about – we were doing
17 other things that we just wouldn't normally do back in the UK or we'd stop ourselves and so
18 on.

19

20 Becky: I think when we held the Cultural Show and I read the poem out with Sherry. I was
21 standing up there and reading it out and I was thinking "Why am I doing this? I'd never,
22 ever do this!"

23

24 S: Why did you do it?

25

26 Becky: Because they were so giving and because they wanted to show us their culture, and
27 they were so proud of it, and I just wanted to give them something back. Because we
28 should be proud to be British and we should be proud of our culture and we shouldn't feel
29 like we have something to hide, in a way. 'Cos that's kind of what it felt like we were doing
30 at the beginning. Like hiding away ...

31

32 S: By not being able to show ... Yeah. I think that some people have said "Well, I couldn't
33 think of anything to do ...I couldn't really think of what our culture was."

34

35 Becky: When I think about British culture, I think about fish and chips and roast dinners.
36 (Laughter) You only think about the food and different places you associate with it you

1 don't think of things that we do. But, I think the only thing I could think of was Maypole
2 dancing and there was no way you could Maypole dance without a pole (Laughter).
3 S: I'd like to see it though! Try it. (Laughter) And that was obviously at the end of the
4 week.
5 And you talk about the trip, being on the bus with [Elizabeth], and talking things through
6 and that was at the start of the time.
7 Becky: And then the middle bit.
8
9 S: Yeah. And lots of school visits in the middle bit.
10
11 Becky: Yeah. That was really strange – school visits. I found it really strange because
12 although we went to see classes we didn't get to see a lot of lessons because we felt like
13 ..we were white people and they don't see white people they just wanted us to talk all the
14 time and to ask us questions or to ask for autographs and pictures with us.
15
16 S: Very hard to be discrete, wasn't it.
17
18 Becky: Yeah. And that really did throw me big time ... especially on the first day when they
19 had the parade in the first school that we went to.
20
21 S: The brass band ...
22
23 Becky: [Nancy] was in tears and she kept looking at me and I was like welling up – “don't
24 look at me – or else I'll cry too.”
25
26 S: Why was that emotional do you think?
27
28 Becky: Because you don't you don't ... I don't know ... you don't deserve it. What
29 have I done to deserve a brass band welcome at a school with people that I haven't met
30 before?
31
32 S: Lording over ...
33
34 Becky: They got us on the stage and we were sitting on the stage as if we were something
35 superior when we weren't ... and we should have been sitting with the children because
36 we're human. And then they gave us roses and that's when I lost it. I thought “Will you
37 stop giving me things?” I just couldn't .. it's really hard to ... I know here children would be

1 very welcoming. In a school like this, children would be very welcoming when there's
2 visitors in – I mean we have visitors in all the time. And they are really welcoming and they
3 talk to visitors but they'd never think "Oh let's get up and sing them a song." "Let's give
4 them a gift for coming to the school." And it's so lovely. It really is lovely.

5

6 S: Why do you think those gifts were like an emotional trigger for you? With the rose. ..

7

8

9 Becky: I don't know. I really don't know. It's a sign of friendship – they don't care what you
10 ever thought. Because to them, you're a friend and they've never met you and they want
11 to meet you. And they don't care about anything else in your life, you're their friend now.
12 It was really, really lovely.

13

14 S: It felt quite open.

15

16 Becky: Yeah yeah (said with emotion). And it's like some of these families can't afford to
17 send all their children to school, can't afford to feed them all well all the time, yet they're
18 giving us gifts out of gratitude for being there when we asked to go and see them and not
19 the other way around.

20

21 S: Yes. I remember that school at [REDACTED]. He said in assembly "Well these
22 people have come here out of all the schools in India they chose us." Yeah. In some ways
23 that's true, isn't it? But the reason is it's an available school and we're really happy to
24 come and we'd like to learn but we're nothing special and yet we're given this, as you say,
25 all this whether it's a gift or just the status that comes with it.

26

27 Becky: It's really mind blowing.

28

29 S: It is. I agree, I agree. We learn a lot about Indian education – or we try to – if we can
30 get beyond the status. But one of the things that we tend to reflect on is something going
31 on back home. And you talked a lot about family and so on on the trip and then your PIES
32 as well. So that's something that provoked quite strong reflection.

33

34 Becky: Yes, definitely. My relationship now with my Mum is incredible. I said to her after
35 the trip " I just .. I need to talk to you – I need to get this out in the open and get over it.
36 Because I need my Mum in my life. So many people don't have a Mum and I've got you.
37 And, OK we don't get on all the time but you're still my Mum. And I still need you there and

1 I still need to be there for you.” I feel that every week now. Whereas before, I think last
2 year I saw her three times in the whole year.

3

4 S: Ok this is a significant shift?

5

6 Becky: Yeah. Mostly, my Dad’s not any better at all but I never expected it to improve
7 anyway because of the things that have happened in the past. But now, I’m going to move
8 in with my brother when I’ve finished the PGCE; we’ve got a lot closer. He’s just bought a
9 new house in Herne Bay and he said “Come and live with us”. And I said “OK!” ... and I
10 haven’t lived with him since I was six. He’s a lot older than me, so he moved out and he just
11 said “Come and live with us .. it’s fine.” “Don’t worry about rent, we’ll pay for your food ...
12 just go to work and earn some money and get some money for a house and become a
13 stable unit and then .. everything else.” Yeah.

14

15 S: So what .. it seems to me that you have made the decision that I’m going to reach out,
16 I don’t know what happened but I’m going to reach out. But what provoked you to come to
17 that decision?

18

19 Becky: There was a lot of different occasions like the child helping her mum in the shop.
20 Like other people who we talked to out there who said they worked so many hours to send
21 their children to school, because they don’t want them to go to a state school. And, when
22 we went for the curry in ... (whisper) can’t think of the place now ... when we were in the
23 middle of Trivandrum and we had the metal bowl of rice and the metal plates .. and a whole
24 family came in, and there was like 20 of them, and they were all just sitting there waiting
25 whilst we’d finished. And I just felt “Wow” – like the whole family had just come out together.
26 I’d never be able to do that with my family. I just thought that was amazing.

27

28 S: It must be quite an extended family, I would guess, to be that sort of size and number.

29

30 Becky: But because I never did anything with my family growing up, it just really made me
31 think “Well, I do want my family there.” Like all these different times you just see the families
32 together, like even on the market stalls trying to sell their stuff on the market stalls or when
33 we burst our tyre and the family came out and tried to help. And the children who came out
34 – and we’d just been to the school before and they said, “Oh we know you, we know you,
35 we’ll come and help.”

36

37 S: Was it family just generally, family per sae or was it very positive images of family?

1 Becky: Very positive images of family. Definitely.
2
3 S: And that made you think?
4
5 Becky: Yeah. It made me think “Why do we need to argue all the time? Why should there
6 be tension over something that happened five years ago when life’s too short?” And we
7 have everything we need here and people aren’t happy and they should be. And it’s like –
8 in a way – I feel I wasn’t a happy person before I went to India because I didn’t have my
9 family around me and I relied on technology and I didn’t go out a lot because I was like ..
10 [REDACTED] there all the time with me because he was like my stability, kind of thing. And now
11 I just think .. like I went and I was thinking now I should be happy. I have everything.
12 I have a house, I have a bed, I have food. I’m now on my second uni degree and I’ve had
13 everything given to me growing up. I haven’t had the relationships; but I’ve had everything
14 given to me. And I should be so grateful for that. Then, it just made me think, actually, that
15 I should be really happy and it made me a more positive person which in turn – seeing
16 these families and things – made me realise I need people around me. I need these
17 relationships.
18
19 S: It’s not just these materials things that I should be content with but connections, people,
20 relationships. Families.
21
22 Becky: Family’s a big one. Yeah.
23
24 S: So did you have to go back and air the problems of the past or was it a fresh start?
25
26 Becky: We did have to air the problems of the past.
27
28 S: It’s a really big thing to do that .. you had this confidence that you talked about?
29
30 Becky: Yes. I rang Mum up and I said to her “We need to talk, we need to talk .. we need
31 to get this out in the open and sort this out.” And she said, “Why do we need to, I don’t
32 wanna talk about it .blah blah blah” And I said, “Mum, I need to ...I need to have you in my
33 life. We need to be in each other’s lives.” And then we met up and, it’s always been a
34 coffee chat, like for a coffee and I said “No, I’m coming to your house because I’m not airing
35 everything in a coffee place!” So we went to my Mum’s house and I just said “Shut up
36 ...don’t say anything .. just listen.” And then every time she went to talk I said “shhh”
37 (laughter) just let me finish.” So she sat there for about half an hour just listening to me

1 rambling on and afterwards she was like “yeah. OK.” And she didn’t really say anything
2 and I thought, “Right have I actually got through to her? Has she listened to anything I’ve
3 said?” Then a couple of days later she called me and she hadn’t called me in about a year.
4 I was always the one to call her. [REDACTED] was like “Mum’s on the phone” and I was thinking
5 like “Oh my god!” It was like a really big shock. And she said, “Right let’s sort this out again
6 ‘cos I’ve thought about what you said and this is my view on it. How do we move forward
7 from here?” And we just talked – I think we were on the phone .. the only time we went off
8 the phone was when she wanted to go to the toilet and because she wanted to watch ‘East
9 Enders’. (Laughter). She stopped to watch ‘East Enders’ and then she rang me back. And
10 we were on the phone from about 6.00 to about 11.00 at night. Just chatting. And, yeah ..
11 since then we just grew.

12

13 S: Just re-building and ...

14

15 Becky: Yeah. It’s really, really nice.

16

17 S: Well, these Indian visits – who knows what the outcomes are going to be. But I don’t
18 think in my wildest dreams I would have thought that it’s going to re-start a relationship. So,
19 I don’t want to put words into your mouth, but the Indian trip on a personal level has ...

20

21 Becky: Really, really helped. And to think I was really contemplating not going on it as
22 well.

23

24 S: Yes. You were a little bit shaky at the start and so on.

25

26 Becky: But it really, really helped.

27

28 S: But I’m looking at you now, and you’re looking alive and smiling and you’re quite buzzing
29 with it all which is great to see. And what about how that’s ...you’ve mentioned a little bit
30 about how when you’re teaching ICT you don’t rely on technology so much but I’m just
31 wondering about this confidence .. is it that ... is it new or is it something that’s re-emerged
32 from the past?

33

34 Becky: I think it’s re-emerged but it’s been a very, very long time since it’s been there.
35 We’re talking about at least ten years since I’ve been this confident in myself.

36

37 S: And ten years ago you were in school?

1 Becky: Yes, it was at the beginning of secondary school ten years ago and Mum and Dad
2 got along really well and life was so much easier back then because all the stress hadn't
3 happened. I just went out and had fun with my friends and could ring my brother up if I
4 needed him. And went to school and was getting really good grades at school and I had
5 the perfect life really. And then things all happened and I became very reclusive in myself
6 when everything happened. I just became really, really reclusive, wouldn't really talk about
7 anything and although I always wanted to be a teacher, which is why I did the PGCE, when
8 I was at [REDACTED] I really did struggle. Although I got the good grades I did struggle with
9 it because I wasn't an outgoing person and I wasn't that confident and the pupils picked up
10 on it. So some of the behaviours and some of the things that happened were as a result of
11 me not being confident enough.

12

13 S: Yes. I understand that.

14

15 Becky: Whereas now, like you have to learn so many new different pieces of software to
16 do ICT because everything's always changing. Then I started doing – when I did the CD
17 cases – I didn't know how to do PhotoShop because I'd never used it before and I said I'd
18 do it and then realised it was PhotoShop. And I had a weekend to learn, which wasn't
19 enough time, as I had other lessons to plan as well. And I went in on the Monday morning
20 and said "Yeah we're going to use PhotoShop – you know how to use it - how do we do
21 this?" And they were showing me. So, [REDACTED] said "No-one would ever have known you'd
22 no idea what you were doing." So he said, "You just learnt from them, didn't you?" I said,
23 "Yeah. I was just watching them all the time."

24

25 S: These are skills as a teacher to draw and elicit knowledge and skills from pupils. So you
26 feel that confidence and then you can just operate without knowing.

27

28 Becky: Without knowing anything, yeah. Which is really good ... yeah. I love it here
29 anyway. I really just love it here. I'm so much more confident in myself and out there and
30 not afraid to say what I think. Whereas before I would never say what I thought in case it
31 caused an argument and now I think you need to ... people need to accept each other's
32 opinions.

33

34 S: I guess there are consequences of not saying things just as much as there are of saying
35 things. Great stuff. Can I ask you about Post-Colonial theory and the danger of the single
36 story and that sort of thing before we went on the visit? Did those sort of theories make

1 any sort of sense and if they did what sort of times were they helpful .. or maybe they were
2 a barrier, I don't know?

3

4 Becky: The single story ... I think that was one of the things that was challenging in the first
5 few days because I did have a perception of what India would be like. And although there
6 was deprivation and people were poor and sleeping in their shops and on the floor and
7 things, I didn't realise that you don't need to have all the luxury and people were happy
8 anyway. I just thought poor people were sad and not happy with life and that's not the case.
9 And they're quite content – they work hard to survive – but they're quite happy to do so.

10

11 S: There's a way of life, that's fulfilling. In various sorts of ways, you can be fulfilled in lots
12 of ways that don't involve profit and lots of money and so on.

13

14 Becky: I think that really hit me because that's how I've been brought up. If you're poor
15 then you don't have anything, you don't have a life and you should be upset.

16

17 S: It really challenged that assumption for you?

18

19 Becky: Definitely.

20

21 S: And in terms of being poor, I guess the Post-Colonial theory would have a view about
22 rich West and poor East. Did that sort of make sense or was that a bit too crude?

23

24 Becky: It made sense in my mind. It really did. I felt really ashamed at points. Because I
25 was thinking - it does sound really horrible, but at times I was thinking well I am rich and
26 you're poor. And I felt really, really guilty thinking it but I think by the end of the week I had
27 overcome that.

28

29 S: How do you think you overcame it?

30

31 Becky: I think because you're immersed in it every day and because when we had ... the
32 first time we did take ourselves off after staying in the hotel. And we immersed ourselves
33 with the shopkeepers and the people on the beach and I thought, "Well, we're all people."
34 And like I said at the beginning, with "Why are we sitting on the stage?" We're just teachers.
35 I was certainly "What does it matter? Just because I have money doesn't mean I'm better
36 than you .. we're all people and we're all having fun together." I think that really helped in
37 a way but now I find myself ... like when we went to see the Hindu Temple and the woman

1 was begging with the baby. I was thinking “Why are we all getting really upset about a
2 woman begging in India when people beg in Canterbury and London and nobody gives a
3 toss, basically?” They don’t care at all. And it’s although we have these Western/Eastern
4 post-colonial type views, kind of thing. Why do we feel bad when we go to India and we
5 see the poor when we’ve got people living in the same deprivation in our own country and
6 nobody cares?

7

8 S: It’s a good question ... yeah.

9

10 Becky: Really ..it throws a spanner in the works to me. I can’t get round that in my head
11 at all. But, yeah.

12

13 S: You’ve mentioned this word ‘guilt’ a few times. And I’m not saying that was your
14 response, but I think for some other people that might have been an aspect of it. But, yeah,
15 you’re exactly right, we move from one context to another and certainly it becomes a big
16 matter. So yeah .. I guess that helps sort of explain the differences of wealth; rich, poor
17 that sort of dimension on a big sort of scale. But these connections with people, from what
18 you’re saying, that lots of learning goes on and is something that you .. well, it seems from
19 what you’re talking ... and you’re living it now .. but that’s happening in your personal and
20 professional life in the ways that you’ve sort of gone ...

21

22 Becky: Now I just kind of think well, I just say what I want to say and if someone disagrees
23 then we can have this discussion about it instead of saying itYou can see people going
24 .. you start questioning everything.

25

26 S: I think we spent 10 days asking why, trying to reflect and not taking things for granted.
27 It sounds like that’s the sort of thing you’re doing in departmental meetings now?! Any
28 plans for future travel or is that enough world travel for you?

29

30 Becky: No, I’m travelling. We’re going to Greece in the summer. We just thought “Let’s go
31 on holiday in the summer so we’re going to go to Greece.” I want to go to China at some
32 point. I really want to go to China.

33

34 S: So big travel plans.

35

1 Becky: I want to go travelling at the same time as teaching and then .. get it out of my
2 system, but not get it out of my system, and then settle down with a family. And know that
3 I've actually experienced the world.

4

5 S: Travelling first before the family plans? Why do it that way round?

6

7 Becky: Because then I can see the world and be able to manage it on my own. Trying to
8 understand it without having to worry about someone else trying to understand it that I've
9 got to look after, kind of thing. Like, we all went to India together but we all had our own
10 learning. Whereas if I had a child with me, I'd travel and get it in my head and they'd be
11 going, "Why's this, what's this, what's that?" and you're trying to juggle everything at the
12 same time.

13

14 S: No, absolutely. I didn't bring my three year old on that trip for pretty much the same
15 reason! Yeah. So not having travelled .. so now you've got a bit of a bug. Do you sense
16 that we managed to scratch below what a typical tourist would learn? How did we do that?

17

18 Becky: Although we had our minibus of safety, I don't know because I've never been on a
19 touristy holiday. I've been to National Heritage Museums and things and Houses and
20 the Maharajah's Palace but that kind of touristy but then we went further because we spent
21 time talking to the children and learning about their lives and learning about the teachers'
22 lives and what they did. And when we went to the Teacher Training College and we had
23 the bit where there was two English people and a lot of teachers. That was really I
24 learnt so much and it was amazing, it really was. I really enjoyed it.

25

26 S: The conversations are connections. I don't know how long we've been going for – we've
27 had a lovely conversation - but is there anything else you want to mention or add?

28

29 Becky: I think one of the big things for me, which was really lovely when we were out there,
30 but obviously really horrible at the time, but was the way that obviously [Scott] didn't cope
31 at the beginning very well and he struggled a bit and I saw him in tears when he was
32 struggling. And obviously everything else happened and he got really upset but it was really
33 nice how we all came together as a group. And although we didn't know each other there
34 was a massive support unit and we all just became family and we all helped everybody out.

35

36 S: No I agree. I think the way, firstly, the group, the way they supported [Scott]. I was so
37 proud of everybody because I think no-one could expect that to happen to somebody out

1 there on the trip. But the wider point about the group and support was brilliant, wasn't it? I
2 don't think many people knew each other before the trip and yet we were this unit and it
3 was really intense, wasn't it?

4

5 Becky: It was really good. It was lovely to see all different friendship groups forming as
6 well. You know you shared a bedroom with somebody, you became friends really quickly
7 with somebody else. So like me, [Student G and F] got really close during the trip and that
8 was lovely and we still see each other and we have coffee.

9

10 S: You can't take that away. One might get a job in Essex and you're in Thanet and you've
11 all got a connection .. and Facebook as well as a means to do that.

12

13 Becky: The friendship bonds we formed in India have been a lot stronger than some of the
14 ones we have at home. Because we went through so much in such a short period together
15 and had to deal with so much together. And it made amazingly strong relationships.

16

17 S: I agree. The power of people and the connection is a message of people coming
18 through. Well, thank you so much for your time and the wisdom and insight into all of that.
19 I think you've shone a really strong light on the power of these things for you and your own
20 strengths and confidences that come from that. So thank you, [Becky].

1 *Interview with 'Holly': 13th May 2014 at her Placement School*

2

3 S: Thanks, [Holly], for agreeing to talk and this is just a conversation about the visit, the
4 study visit, and your learning over the process of that time and any points that were
5 significant that really helped your learning or might have hindered things. And also, I want
6 to talk about, if you're happy to, to think about now we're back home and what's still with
7 you or whether it's a dim and distant memory, really. And maybe pick up on a few things
8 you wrote in your PIES through that time.

9

10 Holly: OK. That's good.

11

12 S: And what we'll do is, if you're happy for this to be recorded, we'll get a transcript of this
13 and then you get that back and say, "yeah, this is an accurate recording, hopefully, of what
14 we said." And your anonymity is assured in this and so on, so there we go.

15

16 [Holly]: Oh I'm sure it will be.

17

18 S: So here we are in your [REDACTED] setting. So we're very much back in your UK school
19 and quite a contrast to your Indian experiences but let's try and go back to mid January
20 and think about the visit and maybe talk me through that process and how you learned.

21

22 Holly: Erm, well, at the beginning I didn't really think it would really be such a big culture
23 shock, but it was a little bit, but I started referring things, you know, trying to put them into
24 perspective and comparing them with what I already knew, and then

25

26 S: When you say, what you knew, what were you referring to?

27

28 Holly: So, erm ...life that I've already been experienced to. You know, just like life on the
29 streets in places like [REDACTED], where some places are quite similar cos we stopped off at the
30 airport as well, you know, memories. And, sort of, everyday life. "Oh, this is normality
31 now, I do this ... I do this at home. I have breakfast all the time; it's not necessarily served
32 to me." But, just normal things like that. You meet people that you don't know all the time,
33 you know, rather than not being normal. 'Cos, yeah, you go abroad all the time. It's meant
34 to be normal, but ...

35

36 S: Yes. I guess so. But I just wonder whether that was something that you were more
37 familiar with than some of the other folks who maybe hadn't travelled much or maybe had

1 just gone to the odd place in Europe. Not everyone was like that. But your having a base
2 in [REDACTED] and being a [REDACTED]?

3

4 Holly: Yeah. It was kind of normal but you still have to think ... it was a bit different, the
5 setting.

6

7 S: Did you have to force yourself or remind yourself rather to ...

8

9 Holly: Not all the time. At the beginning – you go through stages, don't you? It wasn't very
10 – it wasn't as simple as I like to make it out to be. It was first 'normal' and then "oh my gosh,
11 what's going on?" And then you have to reach that 'normal' level again.

12

13 S: That sort of equilibrium – that one of those models talks about?

14

15 Holly: That's it. That's it. Erm... I'm trying to recall the name. You know what I mean?

16

17 S: The model?

18

19 Holly: Yeah.

20

21 S: It's the Weeden and Hayter one.

22

23 Holly: That's it

24

25 S: So there's the .. you reach the coping ..

26

27 Holly: The coping ...

28

29 S: Does that make, sort of, sense to you?

30

31 Holly: Yeah. Erm. Yeah – so that's what happened. But I had to tell myself. If I was
32 reaching a stage where I wasn't coping, I had to tell myself, I had to look at the 'why?'.
33 Because at the beginning you're critical of everything, aren't you? "Oh this isn't like how it
34 is. Oh, I can do this better or this isn't how I do it so it isn't right." And it's because I was
35 trying to compare it with what I already knew rather than just sort of experiencing it for what
36 it is.

1 S: Ah so that's really interesting. So that's a strategy that you'd, I don't know whether
2 consciously, but that's how it developed anyway? Yeah.

3 Holly: Yeah. Yes. And that's what happened, I remember writing it in my Journal because
4 when you first go into those Schools you think "Oh whatever is this? They've got nothing
5 on the walls so how can they be learning?" And, but you know .. you have to take a step
6 back. You said that, I think. You have to take a step back and think of it as "I don't know
7 anything else except this." That's how I thought of it, "I'm going to forget everything at one
8 point" and then I found myself coping quite easily when I did that.

9

10 S: It's really hard.

11

12 [Holly]: Yeah. But it's only hard because you don't realise that you're doing that. You have
13 to come, I think, you have to come to the realisation that you need to forget everything and
14 just embrace it for what it is. Embrace the life.

15

16 S: Yeah. Look at the differences, maybe look at the similarities but don't always refer or
17 compare.

18

19 Holly: Yeah. So that's happened.

20

21 S: A good message, I think. Yeah. I don't think you'll have heard of Jacques Derrida, one
22 of the post-structuralist writers, but he talks about this 'difference not reference'.

23

24 Holly: Oh that's a good one. 'Difference not reference'.

25

26 S: You're straight up there with him on that one.

27

28 Holly: Yeah. Me and Jacques! You know! (Laughter). No, actually, can I write that down?
29

30 S: Yeah. Please do.

31

32 Holly: So I don't forget.

33

34 S: 'Difference not reference'.

35

36 Holly: What was it?
37

1 S: Jacques Derrida.
2
3 Holly: Is he French?
4
5 S: Yes. Well, he was, he died a few years ago.
6
7 Holly: If I've spelled it wrong, I can always Google him. Okay. (*writing down the reference*)
8
9 S: 'Difference not reference'.
10
11 Holly: Thank you. Cool.
12
13 S: And if you really want to get into the depths of it, in the French 'defer' – the verb is also
14 to defer – so you sort of defer meaning; so you don't jump to a meaning, you keep
15 deconstructing.
16
17 Holly: Yeah. You defer. Différence.
18
19 S: Exactly. There's 'difference' but also 'defer' too. Anyway, that's a little aside. This is a
20 conversation, hopefully, more than an interview. That's a good example.
21
22 Holly: Yeah. Thank you.
23
24 S: So, you'd got this idea of just immersing yourself in the experience? And thank you
25 for what you did.
26
27 Holly: Pretty much. Pretty much.
28
29 S: And had you done that before or was that a new thing for you?
30
31 Holly: Oh ...erm. I tend to do that a lot. I remember having a convo with you about clean,
32 blank canvases? And, yeah, because I often find myself in strange situations (Laughter),
33 you know, especially if you've done a lot of travelling you often have to do that and think of
34 their way not always your way. So, for me, it's just part of learning. The thing is when I
35 came back and when I got the chance to do my PIES referring to stuff back home, it's then
36 and it's at night, when we had that time to reflect that I put things into perspective and

1 compared them. But when I was in the 'there and the now' everything was forgotten except
2 what they were. Does that make sense?
3
4 S: It does. Yes. So, it seems that what you say is that it's important to get back home and
5 then mull it over, think it through.
6
7 Holly: Compare ...just so it makes a bit more sense, in a positive way.
8
9 S: Yeah. That makes really good sense to me. We're jumping around a little bit but talking
10 about returning home. Was home the same for you?
11
12 Holly: Erm.... I want to say, 'yes'. But during the course of the interview I could change my
13 mind. But for now, if I really -interview self convo - I think it was. Are you trying to say, if I
14 learnt anything new and saw things from a different angle and perspective? Because I've
15 always been like that.
16
17 S: Yes. More or less. It tends in some ways ... some people say, "I got home and
18 everything was different." I remember a colleague of mine got home and saw a guy with a
19 dog on a lead walking down the street. It was just so bizarre. "I've been in India for x weeks
20 and dogs just walk free. And suddenly it's so constrained."
21
22 Holly: The thing is that I'm used to seeing different things.
23
24 S: Sure.
25
26 Holly: And, you know, when you have to put your mind back and forth it's sort of

27
28 S: So maybe, is it fair to say to you then, that home is a sort of multiple series of places?
29
30 Holly: Yeah. I would say that I don't have a fixed place, which is a bit strange and that's
31 probably why but it's always been like that. But I refer to where I'm from as home, only
32 because people are so intent on asking me where that is so I sort of had to put it in a box
33 saying, "Ok, well, if you really want to know ..."
34
35 S: Sort of wrap it up and present it.
36 Holly: "There you go". So they're happy.
37

1 S: But home is also [REDACTED]?

2

3 Holly: Yeah. Everywhere, [REDACTED]. For a short time, India was home. Home is
4 where you make it.

5

6 S: Okay. So you felt comfortable in Kerala?

7

8 Holly: For the most part. Not all the time.

9

10 S: Sure. And, it's nice to jump around like this. But for the most time you were comfortable
11 but that would suggest maybe that there were certain uncomfortable moments. Did that
12 help your leaning or hinder your learning?

13

14 Holly: Yes. Yes. It probably helped my learning because stuff like – actually, I tell you what,
15 I did learn something about myself. Obviously, I'm not a very social character sometimes.
16 You know how sometimes you have to be really sociable with a large group of people.

17

18 S: Yes. We were in a group of people – 16 people.

19

20 Holly: Some people are naturally OK with it. I was probably not.

21

22 S: Someone who needs time and space to themselves.

23

24 Holly: Yeah. So, figuring that out and realising that, it does help your learning. 'Cos then
25 you can say, "well, why am I like this, what's going on? Oh, I am like this ...da da da." So,
26 if things go wrong, it makes you question it and then you try and understand it. So, if there
27 were any hindrances, it was sort of like a good thing.

28

29 S: So that exposes a characteristic. Once you know it you can say that to people.

30

31 Holly: Work with it. Or maybe try and make it a bit more flexible. 'Cos sometimes you have
32 to put the effort in, don't you, even if you're not really like that? You're OK for this setting,
33 you have to be like this, wear a different mask all the time. And then sometimes when
34 you're just by yourself it's like, "Ah normal."

35 S: Thinking about who you are. Some people have talked about, some of the primary
36 students I've interviewed and some of the secondary people, have talked about their sense
37 of subject as affecting the way that they see the world and so on. And I don't know your

1 degree background and so on, and you might share that now in a moment, but how did
2 you see the world, was it in a primary teacher, general sort of way, or is there a budding
3 historian/sociologist or whatever trying to peak out from you?

4

5 Holly: That is a difficult one because I don't often like to say.

6

7 S: Okay. Well don't feel that you have to.

8

9 Holly: Only because sometimes things make sense and then when you say them, they don't
10 to other people. So it's always easier just not to say anything. But, so are you asking me
11 if I went there with a primary lens or what lens was I wearing?

12

13 S: No. I was just thinking in terms of seeing – as a geographer, I might tend to try and
14 make connections between different aspects of places and try and get this notion of a sense
15 of place really deep imbedded in my head. But as an historian, I might try and, instead of
16 looking at space and place, I might try looking at timescale or something like that.

17

18 Holly: I was probably then looking at it in a cultural aspect. Because you know me, different
19 aspects of cultures.

20

21 S: Plural? Many hats around.

22

23 Holly: Yes. And so, I was always trying to think what can I bring back to the primary
24 classroom. So in that sense it was sort of two things culture and primary.

25

26 S: Yeah. Well, it makes good sense.

27

28 Holly: So when I went out and bought the tapestry, it was the sole purpose – other than the
29 fact it looked pretty – for the sole purpose of having it up in the classroom to bring a little bit
30 of India back. You know, when you bring the banana chips with you, you can then – check
31 if any children have allergies (whispers ... laughter) – and bring a little bit of India back into
32 the classroom because it wasn't a holiday. The purpose was to learn and bring things back,
33 wasn't it? So as well as the physical things that primary children need, I was also trying to
34 bring back different strategies and stuff. So, yeah, I was also really interested in their culture
35 and what they are like as a culture and what they believe in. I mean, just because you have
36 that natural human curiosity; you just want to know what people are like. You know, there's
37 a whole world out there.

1 S: Well, some people could be very closed up. They could be very frightened by that, I
2 guess.
3
4 Holly: That's true.
5
6 S: But you weren't.
7
8 Holly: Do you remember the tailor, in the alleyway?
9
10 S: Yes. Yes.
11
12 Holly: I was sitting there talking with his brother who's a businessman from the North and
13 then he came down and etcetera, etcetera. Anyway, we were just having a political
14 conversation about the North and South divide in India and it was really interesting because
15 who better to talk to about that than the people themselves and when do you ever get the
16 opportunity to do that? I know it's a one sided, one person story but, you know.
17
18 S: Depth of argument, maybe. But as you say, it can't represent the whole of India but his
19 views
20
21 Holly: Make understanding a bit easier. So it was that culture thing that I really wanted to
22 uncover. And I remember a few of us were just sitting on the beach, just talking to other
23 pupils who, I think, came from the University of Kerala. They were down there. It was with
24 [Elizabeth] and co. We were just sitting on the beach talking to them. Just 'cos they had
25 things to say, we wanted to know.
26
27 S: Right. Right. But those sort of spontaneous conversations sound powerful, for you?
28
29 Holly: Yeah. You know. I know they're not people you're going to meet again. But it's
30 different because you don't necessarily – it's different to people from the UK. I mean, if
31 there was a tourist there and there was a local there – if you were at home, you would
32 probably speak to the tourist 'cos they're not a tourist, they're just another person. But if
33 you're in India you just want to speak to the local, does that make sense?
34 S: Well, it does in our context, maybe, about learning interculturally. Certainly. Well, it
35 might for others too. But, yeah, it makes really good sense. So those conversations were
36 powerful?
37

1 Holly: Yeah. They were. You know, listening is a big skill and not everybody does it. Not
2 everybody wants to know. Curiosity.

3 S: I remember one thing, and you've possibly linked to that, was that you made an effort
4 to try and use local Keralan words. Was that part of that reaching out?
5

6 Holly: That was two different things. That was me trying to cope and trying to yeah...
7

8 S: How does that help coping?
9

10 Holly: 'Cos when you're in a strange place, the only way to sort of be at one with it, probably
11 not the only way, but one of the ways to be at one with it is to sort of be on the same level.
12 And I know they all speak English but it's nice for them as well as for you to be able to
13 communicate in a different way.
14

15 S: Did that help with communication, do you think?
16

17 Holly: Definitely. And also sort of like you feel –if I feel out of place ... say, you're in a
18 different country that you've never been to before. Like, anywhere. Well, we'll use India as
19 a reference – pretend you've never been there, pretend you're a first-timer and all of a
20 sudden, someone walks up and starts speaking English. You feel a little bit at ease, don't
21 you? Because you can understand what's going on. That's how I wanted to feel with them
22 by speaking their language, by speaking their dialect because I wanted to feel a bit more at
23 ease. I wanted to make the effort because you're a guest in their country.
24

25 S: Yeah. And, you know, the English language has a bit of a contentious history, isn't it?
26 In India – amongst other places.
27

28 Holly: That's true. So, yeah. And sometimes when I felt, "Oh my gosh, it's all different, it's
29 all changing, nothing's the same" "Well, hang on, I do know a bit of the language, I can
30 communicate. It's fine." It's not that I couldn't communicate in English, it's just something
31 to link you together with, like if you've got a person who understands what you're saying.

32 S: Yes. Can I just ask you, just a thought coming into my head. When you go to [REDACTED],
33 do you speak English or ...?
34

35 Participant: I speak a mixture. With my Arabic friends I speak a bit of Arabic and then, you
36 know, 'cos there are a lot of different cultures in [REDACTED]. With my Greek friends I speak
37 Greek or Armenian. Greek Armenian. And then English gets mixed in there.

1 S: Right. So lots of different hats again.

2 Holly: You have to. You have to adapt. I think that's what we're like as humans. We have
3 to adapt to everything.

4

5 S: Good stuff. And you talked about language in your PIES and the importance of that. Is
6 that a continuation of that thing we were talking about language or is it?

7

8 Holly: Yeah. Language has always been important so that's why I wanted to bring it in
9 there because a lot of people just think, "Oh, everybody should learn English" but
10 actually.....

11

12 S: Yes. Your personal reflections, I thought, were cracking. They were really deep and
13 very personal as well. Your style of writing – whether you adapted it to suit that critical
14 reflection or whether that is I thought it might be just your approach. It suited it really
15 well.

16

17 Holly: It's just my Yeah. Yeah. I didn't want to adapt anything. I don't like adapting
18 things because then you don't get the full picture.

19

20 S: Yeah. Would the word 'authentic' be a good one to use? Being authentic?

21

22 Holly: Probably. As authentic as one can be.

23

24 S: In an academic

25

26 Holly: Yeah.

27

28 S: Right. Understood. Were you authentic then in your Journal, given that I was going to
29 look at it?

30

31 Holly: Yeah. Did you realise something then, is that why you're asking (giggle)?

32

33 S: No, just innocence and a generally naive question there.

34

35 Holly: No definitely ... 'cos, if I say it you'll probably look back, but as you scan the pages
36 there were a few things that I'd written at the bottom and I'd just cropped it. Because I
37 thought, "Oh, I can't let Simon read that!" (Laughter) So, I did crop a few things 'cos I knew

1 it would be submitted so if the pages are like that – if I had something that I really wanted
2 to rant about – really, something that happened ... I'd write it at the bottom, "Oh ... da da da
3 da!"
4 Only probably one sentence, I'm not really much of a 'ranter'.
5
6 S: Sure. Were they thoughts that came afterwards ... your main writing?
7
8 Holly: Yes. It's quite funny. And then I thought I might crop it.
9
10 S: That's understandable because we write for different audiences.
11
12 Holly: And also, it's not relevant, really. It's just a rant.
13
14 S: OK.
15
16 Holly: It's just everybody feels pressured, don't they? You know how sometimes when
17 you're in a school environment and somebody doesn't do their part of a job, and you feel
18 ... you know, it happens. That emotion was no longer relevant at the time of submission.
19
20 S: And it seems to me that therefore your writing was quite ... you were quite relaxed with
21 your writing. You were writing things down and certainly...????....you were thinking, "Ah
22 this is going in with an academic piece of writing, maybe just crop this bit off the bottom."
23
24 Holly: Because it's no longer relevant. It was relevant for maybe a minute or two.
25
26 S: Sure. It's good to get it down.
27
28 Holly: Yeah. 'Cos that's how I am. I'm quite silent but I like to get it down. And then, you
29 know, it's over with. The rest of it – all the questions that I was asking, all the good stuff
30 was in there.
31
32 S: Great stuff. No, I enjoyed looking through it. Certainly. And definitely reading your PIES
33 with really thoughtful reflections and so on. One thing I recall, sometimes, just in
34 conversations with you in Kerala, you wanted to make – I'm not sure if the word was
35 'impact'; I've got that in my head. "I want to make an impact." Why was that important?
36

1 Holly: Yeah. I remember you asked me this before and I didn't answer! (Laughter) Sorry.
2 Because you just feel as a teacher, or just anyone, but OK as a teacher that you just want
3 to make a bit of a difference. Because I'm not there as a tourist. If I was there on holiday,
4 then "Yeah ... party on."

5

6 S: But you felt there was a difference ... an intercultural something?

7 Holly: Yeah. You want to bring something to the plate. Like, a bit of seasoning. So, like
8 a good rice dish you want a bit of seasoning in there. Because you're encroaching. You
9 don't want to be encroaching. And especially 'cos you're working with children and because
10 there was nothing – you know, when you're going into a school – I didn't quite realise,
11 naively, how big the language barrier would be when you've got Year 1s and Year 2s –
12 Reception. Sometimes a smile isn't enough, you've got to know that – sorry if that sounds
13 a bit harsh. Sometimes facial expression isn't enough, you want to know that you've
14 impacted. It's easier to talk about once you're back home because you're a teacher.

15

16 S: Yes. Were people interested in what you were saying?

17

18 Holly: Yeah. Definitely. The Key Stage 1 children were. I didn't go into Key Stage 2 at
19 that point. But now they are actually. So, yes, they are. Key Stage 1 and 2 definitely. They
20 just want to know. First of all, riding an elephant – awesome! 'Cos I sent them a postcard.

21

22 S: Oh, I see.

23

24 Holly: So, they did want to know a bit more.

25

26 S: What a lovely idea.

27 Holly: Yeah. You know, you've got to tell people where you've been.

28

29 S: I just asked that question because one or two people have said "it's been really hard to
30 try and explain how I think and feel."

31

32 Holly: Yeah. I remember we had this convo in the ST suite and I was saying that as a
33 teacher you need to unlock that passion. Because fair enough, I'm not going to sit here
34 and say to you, "Oh everyone loved it, everyone wants to know about India!" Because,
35 actually, some people can't relate. Actually, there are some kids, some children in that
36 Year 1 class who have never been outside [REDACTED], don't even know and don't really ...
37 might not be relevant to them so you've got to home that in because ...

1 S: So your role as a teacher comes to the fore?
2
3 Holly: True. This is what's happening here.
4
5 S: That's a good point. A really good point.
6 Holly: Because, you know, sometimes it's not enough just to be passionate about it,
7 sometimes you have to use different things. Because then, I think, everybody has a natural
8 curiosity and it's your – sometimes it's the job for the teacher to bring that out. You know,
9 have that ethos of curiosity and learning. This is what's going on here. So, yeahbut in
10 that sense, they were all interested, especially when I brought all the food back and all the
11 things, the physical things. And then we looked at the globe; we had a mini-geography
12 lesson – it was good times.
13
14 S: I'm glad to hear that!
15
16 Holly: And then here, you know the stuff from India – because they all asked, "Oh, where's
17 this all from?" Oh, it's from India." And you find out a bit more about it. Are there any books
18 in the Library about India? I haven't actually looked if there are – but they can. They can
19 do that. So they are interested. PSHE wise it's very handy, as well, to learn about the 'self',
20 isn't it, 'cos then all these things about emotion come in which is really difficult for children
21 in primary school to talk about emotion.
22
23 S: And for some grown-ups to do that.
24
25 Holly: True. Good point, yes!
26
27 S: That's very tricky sometimes, we focus on the cognitive and the emotions get a bit lost.
28
29 Holly: True. And not everybody knows who they are. If, like me, they're from a million
30 different places and they've moved around all the time, you're not going to have a place.
31 And I'm OK with that. I think I told [Scott] this. I remember telling him about this that I'm
32 OK with the fact that I'm not from anywhere specific. But you have to realise the case.
33
34 S: But you realise that now. That makes sense. Is it fair to say that there's a [Holly] who
35 operates and lives in [REDACTED] and a slightly different one that operates in [REDACTED] and then
36 slightly differently in different parts of [REDACTED] depending on who you're with? So, are any of

1 those different types of [Holly] affected by going to India or is it back to what it was with a
2 few extra stories?

3

4 Holly: I think I'll maybe always have at the back of my mind that you don't need the whole
5 world to be able do something.

6 S: Well, go on .. tell me a bit more about that.

7

8 Holly: OK. So, I'm just going to .. you know, when you're in a school again. Sorry, I'm
9 relating it back to school again.

10

11 S: Well, it makes very good sense. You are a teacher, after all.

12

13 Holly: Yeah. Some people always complain about not having all the resources and the
14 funding and bla bla bla but actually you don't need that.

15

16 S: Right. I see what you mean.

17

18 Holly: 'Cos in India they didn't have a lot of things but they had the love. The love was their
19 passion. Probably, safe to say, the respect between child and teacher was there.
20 Sometimes, that's all you need – is the respect to be there, the caring.

21

22 S: And the respect for education.

23

24 Holly: Yeah. Definitely. And the whole learning ethos. Sometimes that's all you need. You
25 know, if the computer doesn't work, I'm not going to freak out about it, that's fine. We can
26 do something else or we can adapt it. That's sort of still in the forefront of my mind since
27 coming back from India. So that has changed me in the way that you don't need the whole
28 world to do one thing. You just don't always need to blame something. It just all links, it
29 links to me. You just have to be decisive, do it, get on with it.

30

31 S: That interconnection...there's a richness and a depth that comes with that. That makes
32 really good sense, I think. Yeah. And, one thing I've asked people, in terms of we looked
33 at Postcolonial theory and the danger of the single story, that representation thing really,
34 before we went. Did that make sense to you at the time?

35

36 Holly: Definitely. At the beginning? Oh yeah. Well, there's always two sides of the coin
37 and, equally, two sides to every story.

1 S: Yeah. At least.
2
3 Holly: At least, if not more. So, going there with preconceived ideas of what's going to
4 happen is definitely going to impact on the way, and affect the way you are, isn't it?
5 S: Sure. Yes. Yes.
6
7 Holly: You know, if you go there thinking a certain thing, you're never going to be right
8 because actually you don't know 'cos you haven't been. Don't try and be clever.
9
10 S: I agree. You go many, many times – it's not a right or a wrong thing, is it? It's digging
11 a bit deeper, hopefully, each time.
12
13 Holly: Yeah. It's this tip of the iceberg thing, isn't it, as well? In that there's always
14 something underneath. Even if you get a single story, there still might be a bit underneath.
15 I remember writing about it in my PIES when that boy was flying the paper aeroplanes. He
16 was actually talking about the gravity and the wingspan. But if I'd just been observing from
17 outside the walls, I'd have thought, "Oh, that little pickle"
18
19 S: Messing around?
20
21 Holly: Yeah.
22 S: Yeah. 'Cos I think I've read quite a bit of Postcolonial theory and so on and that's a way
23 of seeing the world. And you said, "God Simon, you're on about power again!"
24
25 Holly: It made sense towards the end though.
26
27 S: Did it? Yeah. It's a way of seeing things, not *the* way.
28
29 Holly: No, but I remember, mentioning, referring to that in the essay and saying that that
30 made sense. I don't know if I used those exact words but, yes, there's a lot to do
31
32 S: Can I ask you, why did it make sense towards the end rather than right at the beginning?
33
34 Holly: Because – good question actually – when you say it and it's taken into a completely
35 new context and you have nothing to attach it to, it doesn't make sense. It's sort of like me
36 trying to teach something they've never heard before. I'd never heard that before and I
37 couldn't relate it to anything. And then, once the trip is over and you're sort of writing the

1 essay and reading through all the Journal notes and adding new ones in for the UK one, it
2 sort of starts making sense and I linked it to a lot of things that I was writing, in my mind,
3 not necessarily in the text. I'm trying to think of a solid example. There was something
4 definitely with gender that I could see and power and I think, maybe, women teachers and
5 male teachers.

6 S: It's interesting that you mention gender, 'cos I know we talked a little bit about that – or
7 maybe actually quite a lot?

8

9 Holly: We did, didn't we?

10

11 S: But, let's not say that everybody talked about that in their PIES. They looked at – in a
12 crude way - the East-West power dimension but gender got a little bit lost, I felt. But not
13 with you.

14

15 Holly: Well, I don't know if I wrote it in the essay, but it was certainly there.

16

17 S: But it's with you right now ..

18

19 Holly: Definitely. Even here, we're always talking about gender. 'Cos in the classroom,
20 there's an equal split between boy and girl. I was having this discussion yesterday with a
21 teacher – yet, everything is pitched to a male gender and the lesson plans are always male
22 orientated. And I asked the teacher why that was, and this was just literally yesterday, and
23 he said to me, "Because it's always the boys that are going to be the cause of behaviour
24 and disruption and once you've homed them in it's fine, the girls are happy to just along
25 with it." He said, "I don't want to sound sexist, but the girls are just happy to go along with
26 everything whereas it's only the boys that will cause you the behaviour and management
27 issues and stuff like that." I was thinking, "Oh, I wonder if that happens in India?" You
28 know, all this ...

29

30 S: A metaphor for society, isn't it? We instil that, "Oh, the girls will be happy."

31

32 Holly: I'm wondering why it's like that though. If that's how it's been – I know it's not been
33 set straight to them but everyone picks things up.

34

35 S: No, but a fascinating little snippet, though.

36

37 Holly: Society, isn't it?

1 S: Yeah.
2
3 Holly: It's like, why do we walk the way we walk? Because we copy it. You know, girls
4 walk ... females walk a certain way and males do. Well, you know ..
5
6 S: Culturally inducted.
7
8 Holly: Probably.
9
10 S: Yeah. And what about the gender things back in India. What were the things that were
11 really stark?
12
13 Holly: Well, you know, the whole male/female divide thing.
14
15 S: In the schools?
16
17 Holly: Yeah. In the schools. Just that general thing was a theme, wasn't it? Everybody
18 could see it, not everybody could understand why, but it was there. And then I think
19 somebody mentioned how they view Western women as well versus how they view Western
20 men.
21
22 S: Could well be, yes. I think the managers in the schools tended to be male.
23
24 Holly: Men. And the principals were women.
25
26 S: Yes. They sort of had headteachers who were 'head teachers'. Not Chief Executives
27 as in holding budgets and purse strings.
28
29 Holly: As in Members of the Board. Which is funny. It's funny to see.
30
31 S: I think you're so right to raise that as a dimension of our visit. Some people got a bit
32 lost, or it didn't emerge, frankly.
33
34 Holly: I'll tell you why. Because sometimes you don't see it here but it does happen. Well,
35 the Headteacher here is female but they've become an Academy.
36
37 S: I saw that on the gate.

1 Holly: Yeah. For funding. Once you're an Academy you get more funding, etcetera,
2 etcetera, unless it's Ofsted which is a different story. But anyway. I think as a woman
3 you're always looking at the gender because it's obvious.

4

5 S: You see it more clearly.

6 Holly: Sometimes, you go – sorry, again, relating to schools – all the staff will be female
7 but the Head will be male; SLT senior leaders will be male. Which is a bit weird ...strange.
8 I don't understand it but it happens. Some of them are really good; don't get me wrong.
9 Some of the best Heads that I've met, guys, top bananas. But, it's there and sometimes
10 it's kind of obvious and you think, "Why?" and especially when you're talking about finance.
11 That lady from the University said she gave a good analogy, it's on the tip of my tongue.
12 It's something about the women...something about brains and women and initiative and
13 something about men sitting on the couch but they have all the finance. Do you remember
14 that?

15

16 S: It was something to do with the environmental thing, wasn't it? I couldn't say the phrase.
17 It's Dr [REDACTED], I think, the lady who was talking to the students.

18

19 Holly: I think it was. But it was ... what she said was really good. If I look back on my
20 notes from the lectures, which I still have, it will be in there.

21

22 S: Great stuff.

23

24 Holly: But, you know what I mean?

25

26 S: I do, yeah. Yeah. It's sort of an activism.

27

28 Holly: And again, you can relate it back to power. We heard a lot about the woman in India,
29 this random lady who led this big ... was it against Coca Cola?

30

31 S: Yes. Yes.

32

33 Holly: And, it's all about power, power is linked to money, isn't it?

34

35 S: Quite often, yeah.

36

1 Holly: And I think it makes a big statement when there's different genders controlling it.
2 But you can't quite put your finger on it 'cos again you don't know the full story. You only
3 know the tip of the iceberg.
4
5 S: No, no. You're right to be tentative. Yeah. We have to be tentative, don't we, in our
6 interculturalness? We're also reading it through our lens or lenses.
7
8 Holly: And it's not like perfect here, either, is it? You know, who are we to say, "Oh look at
9 them."
10
11 S: We've just exemplified it through primary school leadership and so on.
12
13 Holly: Yeah.
14
15 S: One thing, I was just thinking. Were there any particular triggers or barriers during your
16 study visit, or even when you got back, that really propelled your learning or actually just
17 stopped you in your tracks?
18
19 Holly: There probably were, actually.
20
21 S: Sorry, I've put you on the spot a bit there.
22
23 Holly: No, that's fine. I'm trying to remain positive 'cos when you talk about barriers you
24 automatically (interruption in classroom). When you talk about barriers to learning you
25 automatically think it's going to be something negative, but like you said, you can learn from
26 it.
27
28 S: Like a temporary thing that then enables you to emerge into something new.
29
30 Holly: Whether or not that happens all the time, but probably the whole social thing.
31 Sometimes, it's really hard to act a certain way, isn't it? When you just want to be yourself
32 but it's difficult because you're not in your normal environment.
33
34 S: In a largish group with people we don't know that well.
35
36 Holly: Some people dealt with it really well. I probably didn't.
37

1 S: So did the group help your learning? Or was it a bit of a trial or somewhere in between
2 or a bit of both.
3
4 Holly: It's probably a bit of both. Because when it's reflection time, it's always good to do
5 it in a little group because then you can bounce ideas off each other. Similar to here, you
6 can bounce ideas off each other - works really well - but sometimes, people are sometimes
7 not interested in all the dramas that go on, you know. If there's alcohol involved, I don't
8 want to know, 'cos I'm not on holiday - until the end.
9
10 S: And different people ...????... things differently, don't they?
11
12 Holly: Yeah.
13
14 S: Yeah, you're right
15 Holly: Another barrier to learning, if I may say, is probably the weather. Does this count?
16
17 S: Yeah.
18
19 Holly: 'Cos it was really hot. I should have been used to it, but you know. I was almost
20 dying out there, having to hold water, mosquitos biting you all the time! You know, I came
21 home and I had like my whole leg was all red from mosquitos. Don't worry, I'm alright now.
22
23 S: I think it's important to mention that. And, actually, not many people have.
24
25 Holly: Sorry.
26
27 S: No, because we were deliberately saying, "drink, let's just take it steady, we're not going
28 to rush around and so on, 'cos know the humidity's high."
29
30 Holly: The turtle wins the race, you know.
31
32 S: Yeah.
33
34 Holly: Not all the time, but certainly in India.
35
36 S: And I think, you know, lots of people, at some point during the trip, were feeling under
37 the weather.

1 Holly: And that I remember saying - somebody got ill and they couldn't come to the school
2 on one day but they'd been drinking a number of nights prior and I remember saying to
3 someone, "That's not a coincidence, you know."
4
5 S: Burning the candle and you need sleep and water and so on. It catches up with you.
6 Holly: Exactly. I remember saying, "the body's dehydrated as it is, because it's not a cold
7 place anyway."
8
9 S: Maybe having part of your life in [REDACTED], you're a bit more aware of that?
10
11 Holly: Like a cactus, some people think they are. They don't need water, but they do.
12
13 S: The cactus needs some ... at some point.
14
15 Holly: Yeah.
16
17 S: [Holly], anything else you want to mention while the tape is running.
18
19 Holly: I couldn't mention anything that's ... you have to direct me a bit more. Is there
20 anything specific you want me to say?
21
22 S: Well, I think we've talked about the way that you've learned, we've talked about some
23 of the features of the trip and triggers and barriers, we've talked about when you got home
24 and the importance of language to you and the impact idea and we talked about things that
25 are more residual. I'm happy that we've covered things ... it's just an opportunity to say,
26 "Oh, I wish, I said ..."
27
28 [Holly]: It was a really good trip, Simon.
29
30 S: Well, I'm glad you were part of it.
31
32 Holly: So am I. I think probably the best thing – and sorry, it's going to sound a bit strange
33 – I think the best thing about it was coming back and being able to share it with others.
34
35 S: I think that's great.
36 Holly: 'Cos not only did I share it with children, I shared it with the staff and they were all
37 really interested. I know a couple of us did presentations when we got back, which was all

1 really good and it sort of emphasises the whole ethos of why we're here, which is to learn.
2 And sometimes, I think, I personally think that gets a bit lost. Maybe it's a bad thing, 'cos I
3 always focus on that, but to me that's important.
4
5 S: Yeah. I agree – we're put on this planet to learn, that's my take on life. I'm not someone
6 who has fixed and firm ideas 'cos I'm here to learn and things change.
7
8 Holly: Yeah. Yeah. You move like a warrior ... you have to adapt , you have to be flexible.
9 Sometimes it doesn't always pan out as smoothly, but, you know, you get there in the end.
10
11 S: Great stuff. Well, thank you, [Holly].
12
13 Holly: Thank you.
14
15 S: I'll turn the tape off now.

1 *Interview with 'Maggie': 14th May 2014 at her Placement School*

2

3 S: So, just to clarify, then, Maggie, and thanks for meeting. And, what I wanted to do was
4 to talk about the Intercultural Learning module and particularly the ideas, sort of how you
5 learned through that study visit and before and after and to think about any really significant
6 points along that journey, if I can give it that sort of term. And then here we are back in
7 your UK setting and is there still something that resonates with you or is it all something of
8 the past? So the intention is to hear from you, but I'll just give prompts along the way. So
9 it's meant to be a very informal conversation rather than something strictly like an interview.
10 OK speak forth, if you want, and I'll chip in.

11

12 Maggie: OK. So, starting with how I learned?

13

14 S: Yeah – all the ways that you learned.

15

16 Maggie: Obviously, I think a massive part of the whole journey was the group environment.
17 I think we all gelled pretty quickly together.

18

19 S: Why do you think that happened?

20

21 Maggie: I'm not really sure. I think that sort of trip attracts like-minded people, to a certain
22 extent, and so I think we all got there knowing we were all going to be similar in one way or
23 another. And, at the same time, I think none of us knew what to expect so we got that
24 shared uncertainty. Obviously, we all shared the excitement. I'm not really sure how we
25 all gelled together so quickly.

26

27 S: No. But then, I guess, you think of the characters there and some were more vocal and
28 lively and some were quieter and more reserved.

29

30 Maggie: Yeah. And I think it all balanced out quite nicely, in a way.

31

32 S: I think so. Yeah.

33

34 Maggie: I think the more reserved ones heard what others were saying. 'Cos I think even
35 the more reserved ones, towards the end, were a lot more open with what they were saying
36 because they felt more comfortable 'cos they were hearing what others were saying and
37 they were agreeing or ...

1 S: Sure. And led and directed things in certain ways, thinking cultural activities and so on.
2
3 Maggie: Yeah. So I think that made a massive difference and I think the briefing sessions
4 we had, the debriefing sessions ...
5
6 S: The plenary things?
7
8 Maggie: Yeah. That we had at the end of each day where we could speak about our
9 experiences and our feelings and what we thought about what we'd seen and stuff. I
10 thought that was, definitely, really useful.
11
12 S: In what sort of ways? Just to clarify?
13
14 Maggie: Yes. In clarifying – because we saw some pretty incredible things, we experienced
15 some incredible things and it was a lot to take in and to really understand what was going
16 on, almost. So, to have other people talking about it, could almost then deepen your own
17 thinking to then come to an understanding of some sort.
18
19 S: They were fairly informal affairs but did those conversations go on at other times of the
20 day between you and smaller numbers of people?
21
22 Maggie: Yes. And when we returned .. and still, to this day, people I still meet up with, we
23 still talk about those sort of experiences and how it affected us and what we think.
24
25 S: So, it's not just about, "Oh do you remember when?" sort of anecdotes, they're actually
26 still chewing ideas over?
27
28 Maggie: Oh yeah. Definitely.
29
30 S: It's really interesting to hear. This is the first time that I've taken primary and secondary
31 people. That seemed to have a significant influence.
32
33 Maggie: I think that worked really well because I don't think that us as primary teachers
34 really know much about how secondary teachers work. And what we do then affects what
35 they then do, and vice versa. They don't really know what we do affects what they do and
36 so I think it was quite nice to share experiences. And I think we were just bouncing ideas
37 off each other to do with our own teaching experiences, anyway, and to then put that into

1 what we were experiencing in India. You could share those ...I mean, a lot of schools we
2 went to were full primary and secondary so it was nice to get those differences.

3

4 S: Good stuff. Do you sense that, I mean, I don't know what your degree background is,
5 but I sort of sense from some of the secondary folks that their subject was, not a driving
6 force, but influenced the way they saw things.

7

8 Maggie: Yeah. Definitely. I would agree with that.

9

10 S: So, are you primary, more generalist, or is there still a background of your degree that
11 comes through?

12

13 Maggie: I don't know. My degree was [REDACTED] so obviously I was interested in – I mean, I'd
14 never even thought about it before we went there – but the whole idea of Post-Colonialism
15 and stuff like that, I found that really interesting because of my [REDACTED] background, I think.

16

17 S: You could see that sort of progression?

18

19 Maggie: Yeah. So, I thought that was really interesting and I think that was something that
20 pushed me to look into that more in my assignment and things.

21

22 S: Yeah. Did – 'cos the assignment was obviously written afterwards. Did the theory sort
23 of make sense when you were there or was it more a later sort of experience?

24

25 Maggie: I was sort of coming to terms with it when I was there. It was still kind of confusing
26 'cos I'd never thought about it before, it sort of baffled me a bit how this was still going on.
27 This idea of colonial position of some sort in different ways or whatever.

28

29 S: 60 years after Independence.

30

31 Maggie: Exactly. Yeah. So that was quite hard to come to terms with – a bit. But then
32 when we got back and I started doing all the reading, that's when I really started to make
33 sense of it and I could get a better understanding of what it all meant. So that was really
34 interesting.

35

36 S: Good stuff. It's great to hear that. As you can get the idea, these conversations go off
37 at tangents and so on but we talked about how you were learning and that was a good

1 example using the theory but then thinking about it later on too. And you talked about the
2 importance of the group. Were there other, maybe, examples within the group or just other
3 ways you learned?

4

5 Maggie: I think getting really involved in everything, as much as you possibly can. I think,
6 you know, the idea of exploring. The timetable that we had was really good and I think we
7 got a lot of experiences that obviously people who go over there on tourist sort of holidays
8 wouldn't be able to get. So it's getting under that ...

9

10 S: You felt that we got underneath the surface?

11

12 Maggie: Yeah. I know we only scratched the surface but we scratched it and I think we got
13 further in there than a tourist would. And I think talking to the locals and, I know not
14 everyone gets to go to the schools, but talking to the children, talking to the teachers, not
15 being afraid to make those conversations can really enhance what you then begin to learn.

16

17 S: You found that powerful?

18

19 Maggie: Yeah. Definitely.

20

21 S: How did that happen? I sort of deliberately don't have a very scripted sort of experience.
22 It's there, it's open, it's what you make of it, isn't it?

23

24 Maggie: I think a lot of the times, to be honest, it's them, the locals. It was the teachers,
25 the children – not so much the younger children cos they were a bit wary of us,
26 understandably. It was more them that wanted to speak to us which I thought was lovely
27 and I think then it was important for us to really then engage with them fully and to get that
28 conversation going, even with the language barrier and everything. But I do think, as much
29 as we could say we wanted to start the conversation with them – which we did, I think a lot
30 of the time it was actually them which was lovely and it was important for us to then carry
31 that on.

32

33 S: I think there is something in that two-way process and maybe, although for short periods
34 of time, relationships seem to be significant there rather than just saying, "I'm going to talk
35 to that person and learn."

36 Maggie: Yeah (laughter). It's having just that normal conversation with someone, which
37 you can really ... when we were out for dinners and stuff, just speaking to the waiters or

1 you can learn a lot just about their life in India. So I think just getting into that sort of
2 conversation.

3

4 S: So even when we were in a more sort of touristy set up, you can still scratch a bit. Why
5 do you think people wanted to do that? Or did you want to do that?

6

7 Maggie: I think .. for me, well, I'm really interested in culture anyway. I've travelled a lot
8 but I've never really felt – since this trip, I've never felt that all the travelling I've done has
9 really actually experienced that culture as such.

10

11 S: Right. So why was this different then, I suppose?

12

13 Maggie: I suppose, I'm not really sure. The fact that we had gone out there to specifically
14 experience another culture and to almost study it. There was almost an underlying sense
15 that, "Oh we're here to really learn something." But not in a, "I have to do this" it was more
16 in a willing, "I want to do this." But, yeah, personally, I just wanted to know about them.

17

18 S: So you think your global travels before that – was that an advantage or possibly a
19 disadvantage in learning in this time?

20

21 Maggie: I think a bit of both really. It was an advantage in that I wasn't scared or wary of
22 getting stuck into a different culture.

23

24 S: You seemed confident from my sort of view and things?

25

26 Maggie: Yeah. So I wasn't concerned about that at all but then maybe a disadvantage in
27 that I thought that what my travels had been previously were really pretty good, learned
28 about the culture and got involved, but, actually, there was a lot more than I could have
29 done when I've been travelling before. And I learned that on this trip, you have to really
30 connect with the people to really know how a culture exists, how their life is and stuff like
31 that.

32

33 S: That makes good sense.

34

35 Maggie: I think it's that connection with people which makes a big difference.

1 S: Yeah. I think you've hit on something there, definitely. In terms of understanding their
2 culture, did you make comparisons to some of your other travels or did you try not to do
3 that?

4

5 Maggie : Yeah. I tried not to, to be honest 'cos, I think, if you make too many connections,
6 in a way, you sort of not undermine that culture but you - you don't dismiss it either - but
7 you don't give it such a high credit as individual cultures should be given.

8 S: So you wanted to see it in its own?

9

10 Maggie: Yeah. I obviously did make comparisons in "Oh that's really similar to ... I don't
11 know, something that they do in Africa." Some sort of dance and arts and how they've got
12 all that in Africa and things. But then it's so different at the same time, you can't really make
13 that comparison, in a way.

14

15 S: So you managed to scratch underneath the surface so you could see the differences?

16

17 Maggie: Definitely. Definitely.

18

19 S: I suppose the temptation is when there are similarities. You think, "Oh that's just the
20 same." (Laughter)

21

22 Maggie: Yeah. Yeah.

23

24 S: I remember in your PIES, as well, you talked about some of the differences you found
25 in Kerala compared to back home, the culture or cultures of UK and so on. Do they still
26 ring true, those differences?

27

28 Maggie: Yeah. I think a lot of them do. I think I've realised that we, in the UK, still do a lot
29 of things right. I think I was very harsh and judgemental on the UK when I came back. But,
30 I think, we don't give enough credit to India and to just other cultures in general in how they
31 do things and I think they need a lot more recognition in some ways. But, yeah, there's a
32 lot of differences which I found difficult to grasp with, really.

33

34 S: So, was coming home quite difficult?

35

36 Maggie: Yeah coming home was more difficult than going there and dealing with the
37 experiences we saw over there. It was actually a lot more difficult coming back.

1 S: Can you just explain why you think that?
2
3 Maggie: Yeah. I think when we were over there, firstly you were all together in a big group
4 and it was an amazing experience and we were seeing all these new things and we were
5 talking about all these new things in quite some depth. And, you know, all this really quite
6 significant new learning was taking place which was challenging our own ideas that we had
7 previously of things. And then coming back you're kind of thrown, straight away, the next
8 day, normal life (laughter).
9
10 S: Yes. Sorry!
11
12 Maggie: And it's just a bit of a ... I don't know, it just felt like a bit of a slap in the face, just
13 right down to reality. And suddenly, you're thinking, "Why are we not doing this and not
14 looking at them doing that and thinking that's amazing, let's do that?." And "Why are we
15 still testing like crazy?" You know, just questioning everything, and I think it was that
16 questioning which sort of
17
18 S: You've been questioning things for nearly two weeks and now you come home and you
19 carry on, back in the home culture. But things we take for granted are disturbed, unsettled
20 or whatever.
21
22 Maggie: Exactly. I felt much more disorientated coming back than going out.
23
24 S: And as you say, which is a really good point, we've been in a group and now you're on
25 your own in this School.
26
27 Maggie: Sort of in that bubble where you were all sharing the same things and then you're
28 back where nobody has had those experiences and it's quite hard to then ...
29
30 S: Were you able to talk to other people in School or at home about your experiences?
31
32 Maggie: Yeah. I did. I spoke to people here like the students and teachers and family and
33 things.
34
35 S: And did they listen?
36

1 Maggie: Yeah. I think they did! (Laughter). Unless they were politely not listening! No, but
2 I think it was still hard. And I've spoken to others on the trip and it was hard to describe
3 and really get across what we'd experienced out there. And I think that's what made it
4 harder when we were back; it almost felt like nobody really understood what we'd
5 experienced and how we were feeling that things aren't right. (Laughter)

6

7 S: Yeah. It's tricky. I really estimated how tricky that might be and I like the immersion
8 back in school, in a way, because that potentially questions, "Well what have I learned or
9 am I just sucked back into it?" But if you are questioning still, then that suggests that there
10 is a disturbance, at least.

11

12 Maggie: Definitely. And I think because we were all expecting to be more disorientated
13 and lost a bit when we got there, because of the culture shock, the fact that we felt that
14 more when we returned was even more disturbing. It was like, "What's going on?"

15

16 S: I think there's a lot in that and that's not necessarily illustrated in the literature at the
17 moment, so much. Did the literature help in understanding that learning process or was it
18 more nuanced and complex?

19

20 Maggie: I think it did to some extent but then I think when I was reading for the theory part
21 of it all – reading about Postcolonialism and Neo-Liberalist theories and all that sort of stuff
22 - and I think that then made me question things even more. And I remember sitting in the
23 Library and me and [Eve] were just destroying our minds by going around in circles of
24 questioning life. It was brilliant, and I really enjoyed reading all that, but it's so intense and
25 something that we'd never thought of before. It was amazing that we were questioning
26 things like that and I think .. it's definitely changed the way I think about things because I
27 still question things, question policies and things and how things are done. But then I've
28 also come back – taken a step back a bit - which I think you have to when you get back to
29 normal life and think that, "Ah well, OK this is how we do it here." And there are the
30 advantages and there are the disadvantages and there are two different cultures and we
31 are never going to be the same, but it doesn't mean we can't learn from each other and try
32 and implement things.

33

34 S: Do you think ... is your worldview the same or has that changed as a consequence,
35 whatever 'worldview' might be?

36 Maggie: I think it has changed to some extent. I think I always had a – I've always thought
37 that we could always be, we can try and become the same. Like, we've all got our cultures

1 but we don't have to do things completely differently, sort of thing. But, now I'm thinking
2 that it's lovely to have your own unique cultures and, that's what I was saying in my
3 assignment, that I feel quite sad that we don't necessarily have such a strong culture in
4 some aspects to what they have in India and in other cultures; in their dance, and their arts
5 and their history, you know. All that sort of stuff which I think is amazing to have and that
6 should never, ever change and there shouldn't be any reason why it should change. And
7 therefore a lot of things won't change, including education and that there's just different
8 ways of doing things. But we can always take things from each other and, you know, share
9 it. Experience it.

10

11 S: Makes good sense, absolutely. And how about you as [Maggie]? You know, you as
12 [Maggie], the person, you as [Maggie], the teacher, are you still the same?

13

14 Maggie: Well, I think I'm pretty much the same! (Laughter) But it's definitely changed the
15 way I think about things. Professionally wise, I think, I'm a lot more tuned into sort of looking
16 into policies, especially into the My whole last presentation at uni was on international
17 comparisons. And I did that as a result of going to India 'cos I was really interested in how
18 they use these international comparisons and policies.

19

20 S: Like PISA?

21

22 Maggie: Yeah. Like PISA results and, you know, just sort of things like that. And I found
23 it really interesting. And there's a lot of critics out there who say that they're quite dangerous
24 because they can be misused. It was interesting, because I came back thinking, "Well, we
25 could take this from India 'cos they do this really well." But actually, that works in that culture
26 but it won't necessarily work in this culture. And so it was really interesting to see that
27 difference and that separation there.

28

29 S: Sounds fascinating. And that's sort of been stimulated as well. So, was that a written
30 piece as well, that you did?

31

32 Maggie: Yeah. We had to do a sort of annotated bibliography. So, yeah, I found that really
33 interesting. And that came from India. And then, I don't know, personally wise, it made me
34 a lot more confident, in a way. Because a lot of things were out of our comfort zone,
35 obviously, when we were there. But because of the whole support system that we had,
36 none of us – people may have had their moments when they thought ...

37

1 S: Wobbles?

2

3 Maggie: Yeah wobbles. But the majority of us, I think, just really loved every minute of the
4 whole experience and it definitely made me, personally, a lot more confident, I think. And
5 a lot more grateful for what we have – not education-wise as such but just in general society,
6 I think.

7

8 S: Tell me .. just unpick that a little bit more, about 'gratefulness'.

9

10 Maggie: I think just grateful for ... poverty we saw out there was a big thing and just how
11 lucky we are here with what we've got. But it's also made me realise, actually, yeah we're
12 lucky with what we've got but it's also very materialistic what we've got. And what they've
13 got ... and one of the big points that hit me during the trip was at the Teacher Training
14 College. And one of the trainee teachers was just asking us questions, which was really
15 nice. But she was talking about how sad it is that she doesn't understand why the UK
16 doesn't have strong family units anymore, like India. And how theirs is one of the most
17 important support systems. Obviously that's not the majority of cases in UK but, I think, it
18 did show me that maybe we are quite materialistic and a lot of people's motivations now
19 are for materialistic fulfilments which I know there is an increase in, especially in Northern
20 India. I know it's getting more westernised in a way. But, yeah, it's changed me in different
21 ways; I feel more lucky, but feel like I question more.

22

23 S: Do you think there's anything I was talking to [Holly] yesterday and she raised the
24 issue of gender and so on and saying that family units and the role of women is very strong
25 within that but then there's the tension of teaching as a career and so on, just as an
26 example.

27

28 Maggie: Definitely. Yeah. I think it was pretty easy how obvious it was of the gender
29 differences in India. That was quite ... I know poor [Slater and Mark] got a lot of it (Laughter).
30 But the fact that as soon as the sun went down you wouldn't see a woman out on the
31 streets, and all that. And the majority of people on the streets during the daytime were men
32 and men were the ones driving the cars and all that sort of thing. And I think that hit quite
33 hard with a lot of us and how we've got a very equal society here and how lucky we are to
34 have that, really. But then, also the other side of it out there; [Mark and K] were very popular
35 because they don't have many male teachers out there. Although, the first school that we
36 went to ...

37

1 S: With the brass band and so on?
2

3 Maggie: Yeah. The Principal was a female but it was all the male Directors who were
4 speaking to us and she would rarely get a chance to speak to us which was very interesting.
5

6 S: Which was a shame because I thought she probably had a lot to say. She was the
7 Headteacher out there – she was the one who knew about teaching. They knew about
8 finances and this sort of thing.
9

10 Maggie: Yeah. Exactly. It was interesting to see that the teaching profession was very
11 female dominated. I mean there were some male teachers that we came across but it was
12 the managerial part of the school which were all men. So that was quite interesting.
13

14 S: And did that .. it was only a little bit of India that we saw in that respect .. but did that
15 change your views about what India – did you expect that, for example?
16

17 Maggie: I don't know. I think it's funny. I think I went out there thinking more about the
18 poverty that we were going to experience. I didn't even really think about gender as such.
19 But as soon as we got there it was almost straight in your face, the gender inequality straight
20 away. Yeah. It was quite shocking; it did hit home quite a lot how different it is. And that
21 is something which, you know, is very culturally based and even religiously based in India
22 and something of which we were all saying. I know we've all been coming back and saying
23 how amazing the culture is and how much better they do things out there than us but,
24 actually, there are parts of it that we wouldn't want to have, at the same time.
25

26 S: Yes. I think, as you say, maybe your questioning policy here, as an example. We're
27 still questioning the things that we've seen and it's sinking in a little bit deeper and with that
28 come criticisms as well as things beyond the 'Wow'.
29

30 Maggie: Yeah. I think we were all so .. I mean we were there and then when we just got
31 back, we were all so in love with India that nothing it did could have been wrong. It felt
32 almost. It wasn't until a little bit later that we started to look back and think more and let it
33 all sink in and maybe we started to question their way of doing things a bit more as well.
34

35 S: I think there's something in that. That sort of timescale to let things sink in and so on.
36 And it wasn't the intention of doing the interviews now; the intention was to do it after the

1 Module had finished and then have marked all your stuff and so on. But, actually, looking
2 at it a little bit later is a good point.

3

4 Maggie: It's really quite interesting. Yeah.

5

6 S: So, I'm trying to think what else we've got. We've talked about the sort of process and
7 sort of personal and professional outcomes. Were there any sort of big events that helped
8 or hindered your learning or was it more of a gradual, seeping sort of ...?

9

10 Maggie: I think, to some extent, it was a gradual thing in that every day held a different
11 learning experience, almost. But then, obviously, there were a few big moments which
12 really hit you and, I think, hit most of us. So that first school we were meted and greeted
13 by that brass, marching band and then taken into that Hall with thousands of kids singing
14 prayers and National Anthems to us. I think that was something we'd never, ever expected.

15

16 S: Not prepared for that?

17

18 Maggie: No. (Laughter) So I think that was massively overwhelming. I think we all felt
19 very overwhelmed at that time. And so that immediately, straight away, I know we were all
20 – I think we were anyway; I definitely was – just questioning, "Why?" "Why were they doing
21 this for us?" "Why were they treating us like celebrities?" I think that was huge that bit.

22

23 S: Yeah. Good point.

24

25 Maggie: I think the part when we went to the Temple with the lady begging with her baby.
26 I think that was quite a hard moment for a lot of people.

27

28 S: Yeah. Absolutely. Yeah. Quite a few have mentioned that.

29

30 Maggie: Just how intense the poverty was there was quite hard to deal with.

31

32 S: You're out of the city and into the more rural areas.

33

34 Maggie: And the fact that ...I mean it was our personal choice not to give her money but it
35 was – you know that grappling decision in your head. So that was quite difficult. And the
36 other one was probably – the other school, what school was it? It was the last school we
37 went to with the colourful uniforms and the amazing Head Boy who took us around?

1 S: Is that the one that [Scott] led?
2
3 Maggie: Yes. Yeah. Yeah. You weren't there. Yeah.
4
5 S: I'll have to go back.
6
7 Maggie: That was an amazing school. But again, that was how they treated us. That was
8 the school where they'd made autograph pages in their books and they were wanting us
9 to sign their books and give them autographs. And they were screaming and running after
10 us and it was like we were world class pop stars or something. It was just ridiculous but it
11 was an amazing experience but again, it just questioned "Why?"
12
13 S: It was provocation for you to question?
14
15 Maggie: Yeah. I think by that point we'd had a few debriefing sessions and we were all
16 starting to think about the topic of Postcolonialism and by that point we were then just, "Why
17 are they still holding us as Colonialists and almost thinking of us as Colonial people,
18 anyway?" And one of the big memories would be on the last day of the whole trip. A few
19 of us, well, a lot of us went – me, [Eve and N] - took a trip to the Lighthouse. And I
20 remember standing up on the Lighthouse, just looking over Kovalam, and we were all just
21 reminiscing on what we'd experienced and how we couldn't believe that we were going
22 home and it was quite a big turning point in actually thinking about .. really thinking about,
23 "Oh we've really had the most great experience." That was quite a big turning point.
24
25 S: You remember it well. What a great place to reminisce.
26
27 Maggie: Exactly. We stayed up there for quite a while. (Laughter)
28
29 S: How fantastic. Good stuff. I'm sure there are other things that will come to mind.
30
31 Maggie: Endless. Endless things.
32
33 S: I can't think of anything else to ask. Is there anything else that you've sort of thought
34 about in terms of your learning or the outcomes or the trip itself that you want to mention?
35
36 Maggie: No, I think, I can't speak for everyone but I would say for the majority of us it would
37 definitely – for me and I know for people like [Eve and Mark] and people, and [Jane] - it's

1 something that we haven't really stopped thinking about. It's always there and I think it
2 always will be in a way. So it's definitely been a life changing trip, definitely personally, and
3 I think, for a lot of us, professionally as well. I know we've just had to get into normality but
4 there's always that thing in the back of our head which India has definitely changed.

5

6 S: It's still there. It's sort of gnawing away.

7

8 Maggie: Yeah. Yeah.

9 S: It's troublesome in a way. (Laughter).

10

11 Maggie: Yeah. Just there in the back ...

12

13 S: It shapes our certainty, which I like.

14

15 Maggie: Definitely, I know for me and [Eve] – we've discussed it. It's given us the passion
16 to want to teach abroad at some point. And, I know, we wouldn't get the experience of
17 working in one of the rural schools that we visited but just to get that experience of a different
18 culture, of the different education systems of another culture.

19

20 S: I agree – tempting. Another thing I was going to ask and that was things like participating
21 in a song at the Teacher Training College that we went to. And I just think – well, there's
22 two thoughts really. One is, I'm not sure that people would do that if they were back in the
23 UK but the other thing is if it was purely a secondary visit I don't think people would have
24 done it anyway. I don't know what your thoughts were, 'cos you participated in that and
25 why did you do it then?

26

27 Maggie: I think all of us felt really quite ashamed that first day when we didn't have anything
28 to show and perform at that Cultural Show. And I think that was quite embarrassing for us
29 really when they put on such an incredible Show for us. To then be asked, "Will you go do
30 something?" To turn around and then we say "No", I think was really quite terrible, really.
31 (Laughter). I think we were all feeling quite bad about that so to have the opportunity to
32 sort of rectify

33

34 S: Make some amends?

35

36 Maggie: Yeah. I think definitely all of us wanted to do that. And [Alice] took the lead and
37 she said, "Let's do this song" and we practised it and it was amazing. But, yeah, this is

1 nothing against secondary teaching but it's different dimensions in teaching, but I think a lot
2 of primary teachers ... there's that different dimension and artsy doing that sort of thing,
3 anyway, with children.

4

5 S: You would be singing and sort of actions whereas as a geographer expert .. poor
6 geography teacher ..we didn't do a lot of that! (Laughter)

7

8 Maggie: No. So I think that that did make a difference to some extent. But they got the
9 secondary teachers involved and we did it as a whole group, really.

10

11 S: I remember, I talked to one person – there were only a few that didn't get involved –
12 but, that student said, "I was really conscious I wasn't ... I didn't really want to sing but I did
13 want to then try and be involved and so stepped up and did the thanks at the end." I think
14 that shared drive or need to actually do something and respond was shared.

15

16 Maggie: I think that's another thing. Me, personally, and I think a lot of other people, like
17 at school or university I'd never be the one to be the top participator in a seminar. I'd sit
18 quietly and I'd listen to everyone and I'd take it all in and so on, but this trip because it was
19 so emotive what we were experiencing and what we were learning that actually there was
20 never that sense of holding back as such. I know that one of the moments which I will
21 always remember, personally, from my own sort of personal development looking back on
22 the trip was during the Conference at the University. We were all doing our presentations,
23 which was a nerve wracking thing for all of us, but then at the end of it I suddenly realised,
24 "Ah we've all just been preaching at these people for a few hours about how we teach in
25 the UK" and then I suddenly thought, "Well, that's all well and good, I'm sure they're all
26 interested and all that sort of thing and we've listened to them." But then I felt it necessary
27 to say, "We're really impressed with how you're teaching, as well. You know we're not
28 telling you this is how you should teach." But in this country, I'd never have thought of
29 talking in front of all those people, just making a comment, just making a sweeping
30 comment. But there, I didn't really feel .. there was not inhibitions, there was no feeling that
31 you were going to be judged by anyone.

32

33 S: You're not the only person to say that about the lack of judgement.

34

35 Maggie: Yeah which I think was amazing.

36

37 S: Great stuff. Ok, well, thank you very much for your insights and wisdom.

1 Maggie: It's alright. No problem.

2

3 S: If there's anything else that you think about do give me a shout. Very much appreciated
4 and I'll turn it off now.

5

1 *Interview with 'Laura': 19th May 2014 at her Placement School*

2

3 S: So, I think that's working now, [Laura]. And just to say, for the benefit of the tape, that
4 we're talking to you about Intercultural Learning. It's about the experiences that you had
5 and if there were any big events that maybe triggered things or stopped your learning. But
6 also now that we're a few months after our return, what's still sort of present with you now,
7 and so on. And just to sort of confirm that you're happy for this to be recorded.

8

9 Laura: Yeah. That's fine.

10

11 S: Great. We'll get a transcript done and I'll send that to you and you can confirm that
12 that's all OK or change whatever, as and when. OK. And, it's really intended to be a
13 conversation rather than a formal interview so I've sort of set it up really with the intention
14 that, hopefully, you will speak forth and just talk, if that's OK? Right, how was it for you?

15

16 Laura: It was, I think the whole thing of the culture shock affected me in a different way.
17 And I think it's because I have been to Arabic countries previously, which is a culture shock
18 in a different kind of way. So I felt comfortable being in a new place but I think the first
19 shock to me was the cleanliness.

20

21 S: You mean 'shock' as in 'surprise'?

22

23 Laura: Yeah. 'Cos there was like litter in the streets and things. I found it hard to picture
24 people living there every day because it was so different. It didn't seem like a real place
25 that people live.

26

27 S: That wasn't just where we were staying, it was on the trip itself?

28

29 Laura: No, it was like when we were on the buses and things, looking out of the window
30 and it was just it just seemed like a separate world, it didn't feel like part of our world. It
31 just seemed so different.

32

33 S: So, if it wasn't part of our world, were you making a judgement on it based on our world?

34

35 Laura: Definitely. Yes. Based on what I'm, personally, used to. So somebody who's grown
36 up in a different area to me in this country may have had a different view as well. I think it
37 was just what I'd seen. Also, going abroad previously, you go to nice, little holiday resorts

1 where they're nice and clean and it wasn't that at all. But I think over time that sort of 'shock'
2 turned into a love of it and I thought actually, they've got a much simpler, nicer lifestyle in a
3 way. So, what first I didn't like, I did learn to love later on.

4

5 S: 'Cos I guess that's the trick, isn't it? How did you learn to love it? I mean how did it go
6 from shock to something that you loved?

7

8 Laura: I think it's just having to take part and live there for a while. It was for a short time
9 but you learn to appreciate things. One of things at first I found quite daunting was the dark
10 alleys to get to the hotel. I thought, "Oh it's a bit scary with all these narrow alleyways." But
11 as we were walking to them every day down the beach we got to know some of the locals
12 and then it didn't become a scary thing, it was just how we got back to the hotel.

13

14 S: Just the normal route, in a way?

15

16 Laura: Yeah. But it was definitely one of the things, first of all, when we were dragging our
17 cases down these dark alleyways that I found really strange.

18

19 S: Well, we think we're going to a hotel and it's got a swimming pool. And you don't
20 anticipate getting off the bus and having to drag a case 'cos there isn't a road that comes
21 to the hotel. When you said you were sort of taking part, was it just you or were you learning
22 with the others?

23

24 Laura: I think with everyone else. So, I think that helped as well because you knew other
25 people were experiencing the same thing; and maybe sort of growing together, really.

26

27 S: Through the same experiences?

28

29 Laura: Yeah.

30

31 S: But I guess people experience things in different sorts of ways?

32

33 Laura: Yeah. And, obviously, we split up into groups during our free time, especially. Like
34 when some of us went down the beach others spent time by the pool and I felt like although
35 we did different things we were still learning, but in a way that we felt comfortable.

36

1 S: Ah yeah. So you could pick and choose and so on? And what did you prefer, by the
2 way?

3

4 Laura: I preferred being down the beach because I think there are a lot of nationalities
5 there so sort of not just ours and theirs. So I thought that was really nice. But one thing
6 that I was less comfortable with, and other people were, was in the shops with the haggling
7 and things. So, talking to people down the beach I was much more comfortable with.

8

9 S: What was the thing about the haggling bit that was ...?

10

11 Laura: I find to be fair you almost have to be a bit rude. And they're comfortable being a
12 bit rude to you as well. I remember one of them said something like, "What's that in your
13 belly?" And I was like, "Oh it's a piercing." They were like, "Oh I don't like those." And they
14 were just happy to

15

16 S: Straight up. Yes. Quite a direct response. And how about the schools themselves?
17 What about your learning? How did you cope and learn through those, 'cos there was a
18 range of different schools?

19

20 Laura: I think the first shock, like the school, the welcoming was overwhelming. But then
21 looking around the school I felt quite comfortable, and learning and how they did things and
22 a lot of it made sense. So, I thought I was able to take to that. But then I went to another
23 school and everything was blown out of the window. I was just like, "All these ideas I had
24 from the first school just don't seem right anymore." I think it was we went to the
25 [REDACTED] School after that ...

26

27 S: It was the second one, yes.

28

29 Laura: ... which maybe did things more like the way we did and I was like, "mmm, actually,
30 maybe this isn't right and then we went ...

31

32 S: What, the [REDACTED] School in India wasn't right?

33

34 Laura: Yeah. Yeah. And I thought, "Oh maybe we don't do it quite right." And then I think
35 we went to, I think it was a Catholic school, and I felt I really didn't like the way things were
36 done.

37 S: Tell me a bit more about that?

1 Laura: I felt there wasn't .. the children were just sort of going through the motions. I didn't
2 actually see any lessons in the first school so although it seemed very regimented and well-
3 behaved on the outside, at the [REDACTED] school I saw the lessons and I thought, "Well they're
4 all being very well behaved but you can't actually see the learning going on." Like, they
5 might be writing down the right answers but do they really have the understanding or are
6 they just going through the motions?

7

8 S: They might think they know it but could they apply it – it's that understanding context?

9

10 Laura: It was very, "You do this and you do this" which is different to how we're taught to
11 teach. So that was really interesting to see it done.

12

13 S: Absolutely. And then in terms of your process of getting used to this, I mean at different
14 sorts of schools. How one minute you think you're OK with it and you go to the next one
15 and it's shocking and it's different. How did you put the whole thing together then?

16

17 Laura: I don't think I was ever really sort of in a place where I was ... I wasn't uncomfortable,
18 but like my mind hadn't settled into the way it was done. Because every single school threw
19 everything that I knew out of the window and challenged it again.

20

21 S: And were you OK with that challenge?

22

23 Laura: Yeah. I was. And that's what kept me thinking. It wasn't just like, "Oh they're doing
24 it that way, what a good idea." It was like, "But what about this?" So, I think it was good
25 that each school was different.

26

27 S: Did you sort of ... I guess there was a lot of questioning going on; either secretly or
28 privately or within the groups and so on. Were you part of those discussions?

29

30 Laura: Yeah. I think, I don't know. I think some of the questions that I asked were more
31 about the style of teaching rather than the behaviour management. I know lots of people
32 were focussed on that but my real thing was the differentiation and the fact that they didn't
33 use it. And that had the biggest impact on me because on my first placement I was really
34 struggling with saying to a child, "Right you're going to do this, that's all you can achieve."
35 And it's interesting to see that they gave everyone the same work but people say in the real
36 world you can't do that so was it perhaps because they've done that from an early age and
37 not been differentiated since they were four and they've all learned together? Is it because

1 they don't have a choice; like if they don't learn they've not got a good lifestyle ahead of
2 them? Is it out of fear? Yeah, I thought that was really interesting.

3

4 S: Yeah. And we don't know. But, maybe, you get to the point where you're comfortable.
5 And there's a whole range of different options and it could be one of those or many of those
6 but it's being comfortable with that uncertainty, I guess. But it's quite hard to get hold of
7 sometimes.

8

9 Laura: I'm still not sure. I'm still not sure whether we're doing it right or if they are. There's
10 no real answer. It's two different lifestyles.

11

12 S: Yes. Yes. I think you're right. They're different and we celebrate the differences and
13 so on but I quite like that not knowing. It's good. I don't like to screw things down. Did I
14 remember, but your background ... you have some sort of scientific degree?

15

16 Laura: I did [REDACTED].

17

18 S: [REDACTED]. Yeah. I wondered, does that influence the way you think and see
19 things?

20

21 Laura: I think it did because I wanted it to be black and white; I wanted there to be an
22 answer. And, as we've just said, some questions weren't answered so I think what I was
23 looking for was a direct answer but I learned that's not how it is.

24

25 S: That's a big shift in our thinking then, isn't it? You go from being able to cope with the
26 uncertainties. Yeah. So, we've talked a bit about the early sort of process, you might jump
27 back to some of the things later, but were there any sort of big events during that trip that
28 really were a barrier to your learning or actually moved it on. Any events or things?

29

30 Laura: I think, yeah. As we said about when visiting the [REDACTED] School, I think that
31 was a huge – well, it was a barrier and a movement in a way because it stopped me and
32 stopped all the thoughts I'd started developing and then made me look at them in a different
33 way because it was different from the first school. I had all these ideas from the first school
34 and then those ideas were sort of cut off and then I had to sort of re-think. I think that was
35 a big one.

1 S: That was a big one for you. Sure. I can see that. It sort of provoked your thinking. 'Cos
2 I'd not been there before, as well, and it sort of unsettled our thinking, more than I thought
3 it might, really.

4 Laura: Yeah. It did. And I'm glad it did. Because I think it just made us, I can't really explain
5 it. It made me see the School there done in a similar style to our way so it sort of cut out
6 our lifestyle/their lifestyle, it sort of broke that away. And I thought, "Oh, it actually can be
7 done both ways, maybe. There might not be a right or wrong way."

8

9 S: Absolutely. And I think this School that we saw, there's just a tiny, tiny fraction of society
10 in Kerala that can afford to go to that School so we see a very niche sort of thing. Yeah. I
11 think you're right. There's a whole variety of different ways.

12

13 Laura: It's made me really interested to see International Schools in other countries to see
14 if they work in the same way as the one in Kerala.

15

16 S: It's an International qualification but do they approach it differently or similar? Yeah, I
17 like that. There's your research project; you can get yourself around the world doing that, I
18 think! (Laughter) OK, so any other big events, maybe in the schools or outside events?

19

20 Laura: Not so much in the schools but one of the things that I found really strange was the
21 eating. Because I was very up for "Oh, eat with the hands" but, one, it didn't seem practical,
22 even they were making a mess and, two, what we consider rude is eating with our hands
23 and they eat with their hands very quickly and that would be rude. But it would have been
24 rude for us not to embrace that culture. So, I think that was a big thing for me and I'm still
25 not sure whether I like eating with my hands or not!

26

27 S: But you were happy to because that was the local custom?

28

29 Laura: I was happy to do it, I didn't think it was always practical!

30

31 S: Yeah. The more liquidy things are a bit tricky. Absolutely. And, obviously, that was an
32 ongoing thing during the day but then we go back to Kovalam and there'd be knives and
33 forks set out for us 'cos they were expecting that we'd conform to Western practices, I
34 guess. But different parts of Kerala, doing different things. Notice what they think we are,
35 and notice what we think they are, and so on. And what about coming home? Was home
36 just the same as you found it?

1 Laura: I think, first of all, I had India really fresh in my mind and I was trying to apply what
2 I'd learned and sort of teach about it. Whereas now it's not something that I reflect on in
3 my everyday life but there's little pockets of like memories that pop up and I think, "Oh
4 actually." It's more of a reflective thing, it's not there all the time, it's just every so often
5 there's

6 S: They emerge. And when these little pockets do emerge, what do you sort of do when
7 they come to the fore in your thinking?

8

9 Laura: Well, a lot of it's in my teaching like, "So do I do it this way? They tried it this way."
10 And they sort of taught me that there might not be right or wrong answers and it sort of
11 taught me to be a bit more forgiving with myself in that I didn't have to find the direct method
12 of things.

13

14 S: So it's not actually specific about India, it's more about the questioning and the openness
15 that comes in and that you can try things in different

16

17 Laura: Yeah. Yeah. I think so.

18

19 S: Fascinating. And when you got home. Was it just the same or did it seem different
20 having had 10 days or so in South India? Or did you seem different?

21

22 Laura: I think, at first, it felt comfortable to be home because you're back to everything
23 you're familiar with and then later on I was like, "actually we don't have this over here or
24 that over here" and I think one of the things I really struggled with was that it's a place so
25 few people have been to so I can't sort of share that and I really do struggle with that. I've
26 got no-one to ... just like, another thing is like little pockets of stories that we've done and I
27 sort of just feel like it's one-way conversations because I haven't got anyone to share it with.

28

29 S: There's this little group of people who've been there (Laughter). I know lots of people
30 have said that, you know, "I wanted to talk and share but people either weren't interested
31 or couldn't really get a grasp of what we were trying to say."

32

33 Laura: Yeah. It wasn't enough just to describe.

34

35 S: Did you feel, when you were in India, that you were a tourist or did you think we got
36 beyond that?

37

1 Laura: I think I was a tourist when we were....Like the first weekend, I felt like a tourist 'cos
2 we were doing tourist activities.
3
4 S: Cultural things, yeah.
5
6 Laura: I felt when we were in schools, I did feel a bit of an outsider when we were in schools
7 but they were accommodating us and we were outsiders to the schools anyway. But, I
8 think, the time that I felt most like we were there, embracing the lifestyle and things, was
9 when we were down at the beach and back at the hotel because we talked to the same
10 local people every day so although they weren't like, we didn't know them well, it was sort
11 of getting into an everyday routine.
12
13 S: A two-way process. So was that important talking to the ... sort of spontaneous
14 conversations?
15
16 Laura: I think so. Yes.
17
18 S: In what sort of ways?
19
20 Laura: Just sort of, like, once I was in the sea and somebody just like gave us tips and
21 things and I thought that was like a normal conversation, that's not treating me like a tourist.
22 That's treating me like someone new and I really liked that.
23
24 S: And, as you say, you go there for a few days and you start to recognise people and they
25 recognise you, and so on. Good stuff. You said when you got it, it was sort of comforting
26 and then you started to miss certain things. What sort of things did you miss?
27
28 Laura: I missed, sort of, the different foods. I've been to restaurants and they have Keralan-
29 style curries and it's just not right.
30
31 S: No, it's not, is it? It's too gloopy, I think. Yeah. I think you're right.
32
33 Laura: I miss sort of the openness of schools. In the Summer we can do a lot more outside
34 here but they were just so open, I really liked that, and I thought the approach in Early Years
35 was really nice. It was a lot more caring and maternal.
36
37 S: And you were doing Early Years here, were you?

1 Laura: Yeah. I was initially, so it was a really good comparison. 'Cos they're treated more
2 like young children there whereas here they're taught, "Right, now it's time for you to be
3 learners, so ..."
4
5 S: Formalised?
6
7 Laura: Yeah. Although you'd expect them to be more formalised because the writing they
8 produced was amazing.
9
10 S: That's a good point. There's another conundrum there, isn't there? Yeah. Something
11 to ponder about. OK and then coming home, you were talking about things that were
12 comforting and so on. Are you the same [Laura] now or have things changed?
13
14 Laura: I think I am the same. I don't think it's changed who I am but I might sort of ... I
15 think I do use the experiences to think, or like, as I said, I am more reflective and I think I
16 am a bit more forgiving when I teach, to think actually there are different styles and it's not
17 necessarily right or wrong.
18
19 S: Yeah. Yeah.
20
21 Laura: Or see 'outcome' as not important so much as ...
22
23 S: Thinking about that sort of process, and that there are different ways. Yeah. Not right
24 or wrong but lots of shades of things in between. And that sounds like quite a significant
25 shift of sorts?
26
27 Laura: Yeah. Definitely. And I think, as you said, I do have a scientific background so I
28 haveinitially, I was like, "This is how you do it, this is the way it's done. That will produce
29 these results." Whereas now I sort of see it, it's like, well, actually we saw a lot of schools
30 that had good students but they were different and when you compare it to here, different
31 again.
32 S: Absolutely. But do you feel more, I'm only saying this because some other people have
33 said it as well, but do you feel more confident in being able to make those decisions?
34
35 Laura: Yeah. Yeah. I think I do but I don't think it's particularly a conscious thing. I don't
36 think, "Oh I can do this because I went to India." I think it's a bit more, sort of, underlying
37 that it happens so it's ...

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S: Yes. It's somewhere inside you now, and it emerges in different sorts of ways?

Laura: Yeah. I wouldn't say like, "I'm a new person and everything's changed." Not at all but I look at things slightly differently.

S: For a trip that lasted slightly less than two weeks (Laughter) it would be slightly odd. But, yeah, your point there about seeing things in a range of different ways rather than "yes", "no", makes good sense.

Laura: And I think the important thing was that the contrast in schools, I think, was the main thing there that sort of set that in motion.

S: Good stuff. Did anything .. 'cos didn't you come back here when you did your ... the school here for those few days?

Laura: Yeah. For a few days.

S: I'm just thinking, did that... and I'm just thinking of that sort of process, partly because we have to do so many days in school. It wasn't an in depth, theoretical worked out thing. Did that challenge you, do you think?

Laura: I found it challenging in itself because I came back and all these children were a lot more free, they weren't sat at desks, like copying things parrot-fashion. It's so frustrating to sit down and listen. Their expectations are different.

S: Those four days must have been quite a shock, in some sort of a way.

Laura: Yeah.

S: Well, are there any other things, [Laura], that you want to raise. You know, you were thinking about this maybe or "Oh, I must tell Simon about that."

Laura: I think going back to coming back. I felt as though, although I could share what I'd done, like, "I went to this school and I did this", I couldn't share my emotions about it. The challenges it threw up. I just sort of said, "I did this, I did this. It was very interesting." But, it was hard to get across how it made me feel and I think if I had, I don't know if people would have been interested in that.

1 S: No. I can see that. You end up almost like a catalogue of things. Maybe the people
2 who are here think of it as though we've had a tourist experience and, "This day we did that
3 and here's the picture" rather than it being a more emotional experience.
4

5 Laura: I suppose 'cos it's a personal thing so maybe that's why I don't share it so much.
6

7 S: Sure. This sounds contradictory as well, but did looking at some of the Theories help it
8 become more of a personal thing for you, to help your understanding of it, in a way?
9

10 Laura: Yeah. It didn't make it more personal but it did make me sort of – especially, it was
11 the documentary, I can't remember, of the lady who grew up in Africa?
12

13 S: Oh yes.
14

15 Laura: And about one view.
16

17 S: The danger of the single story.
18

19 Laura: Yes. And I felt that was just so apparent. Every experience we did sort of challenged
20 that again and I think that's one of the reasons why I find it so difficult to tell people about
21 our experience because I know that they won't get the whole picture and I feel like I don't
22 want to sort of give them half an image.
23

24 S: Or just, you know, cut to the quick and say, "Well, here's the story" and present it as a
25 ... too simplistic, maybe. It's really complex, isn't it?
26

27 Laura: Yeah.
28

29 S: It's quite hard to disentangle in our minds. A lot of people have said about the story and
30 some people said also about, "Oh we'd looked at the Post-Colonial Theories' angle and it
31 was only really when I got back and started to write my piece that it started to make sense."
32

33 Laura: Yeah. It was almost in the way I was writing. I thought, "Hold on a minute. Have I
34 been that outsider that's sort of ..." It challenged me, whether I was sort of the person I
35 was criticising for having those views.
36

36 S: I think that's a really good question to ask about those sort of study visits.

1 Laura: 'Cos that's what you said before, like we were all people who were willing to travel
2 and do new things but I thought that would make us different persons to people who haven't
3 travelled. But I think we go travelling with those initial views anyway, so ...
4

5 S: Yes. So you've got the urge to travel? You said you've been to Arabic countries. Where
6 was that, by the way?
7

8 Laura: I've been to Marrakesh. I think it was the most terrifying experience of my life
9 (Laughter). Sort of being grabbed at and, again, with the bartering I find very difficult. But
10 it was a very different experience to that and I actually felt more comfortable in India where
11 I was told in advance that it would actually be scarier. But, actually, I felt more comfortable
12 in India and I don't know why that is. I think it's 'cos we had to time to get comfortable with
13 it, whereas I spent a day in Marrakesh and it was so overwhelming.
14

15 S: I had a few days in Tangiers and I had a similar sort of experience. Morocco's quite in
16 your face at times (Laughter).
17

18 Laura: I was actually watching "Idiot Abroad" the other day. Have you seen it?
19

20 S: Oh right. I've only seen snippets of it.
21

22 Laura: It's actually very apparent, like relevant because the person that goes abroad is the
23 He doesn't like travelling. So he has the very, like, view of it, "Why are they doing that?
24 Well, that's stupid. Why are they making this noise?" It's very noisy and it really made me
25 think of the things that I didn't like and I might not have said them because I wanted to be
26 this comfortable traveller and it made me think, "Actually, I agree with all of those things."
27 It was scary, it was loud, so ...

28 S: I shall look at that. It might be there was sort of naïve questions that sometimes
29

30 Laura: He asked "Why are they doing that?" It's sort of him not being very open to new
31 things but the things he says that you can appreciate.
32

33 S: OK. Well, I shall have to have a look at that. Is there anything else you want to add,
34 [Laura].
35

36 Laura: No, I think that's it.

1 S: You've got all your points. You can always ... if you think, "Oh I must tell him that", you
2 can always email me and so on. So, thanks for your comments and your wisdom on that.
3 And, as I said, we'll get a transcript of this and then send that back to you and you can
4 approve that and we'll take that from there. So, I'll switch off now.

1 *Interview with 'Jane': 21st May 2014 at her Placement School*

2

3 S: OK. So, we'll just confirm that it's you, [Jane], and what we're doing is talking about the
4 India Study Visit and Intercultural Learning and how you think that happened, really. And if
5 there were any significant moments that were either drivers or barriers to your learning.
6 And then, sort of what's happened since you've got back, really.

7

8 Jane: OK.

9

10 S: So, the intention is that it's a conversation but I'd much rather there's less of me and
11 more of you, if that's OK. And we might draw on your Journal – you might draw on your
12 Journal or your PIES that you wrote, so it's very much open and fluid and the intention is
13 for you to be able to speak about your thoughts. So, tell us about your learning? How did it
14 happen?

15

16 Jane: Well, while we were on the trip the reflection in the evening was a massive help
17 because, actually, what was going on during the day was just so overwhelming and so, just
18 "whoom", it really was just – you couldn't even take it in because it was all so new and all
19 so different. So the reflection, actually, in the evening allowed you to discuss and share
20 different points of view and that really was an eye opener because there are some people
21 that had a lot of different views in the group to what other people did.

22

23 S: Yes. There were.

24

25 Jane: So, you know, we had an hour to discuss most evenings but we could have gone on
26 for hours and hours discussing it.

27

28 S: Yes. I think sometimes over the meals, that different approach, that did happen, didn't
29 it?

30

31 Jane: Yes. Definitely. So, I think the reflection is where itall kind of questions came in
32 my mind. Not only the learning, it's all the questions, the thinking but not the learning. And
33 then it was when I got home that I had to start explaining it to people and I had to start
34 saying what was happening and then I had to write my PIES, obviously. And that's where
35 it all came into like, "wow".

36

37 S: So, that's where the "wow", the learning really hit home?

1 Jane: Yeah. It really did. Because I think that whilst we were just taking it in during the
2 trip, and we were all, like, thinking and questioning what we saw on the trip, when I got
3 home that was when it was really like ...'cos when I was having to explain it to other people
4 and that is where the learning was taking place. 'Cos I was having to tell people what was
5 happening and why it was happening and things like that, especially people in my group
6 they were like, people in my curriculum group were all asking about it.

7

8 S: Did they get it? Did they understand it?

9

10 Jane: They thought it was fascinating. They really did. But they weren't expecting it at all.
11 You know they were just taking my word for it 'cos I was the one who'd been there and they
12 were just really in awe, just "wow".

13

14 S: But the way you're speaking now, there's an energy to you, isn't there, and I can imagine
15 you're a good storyteller!

16

17 Jane: Yeah, I mean I could have spoken about it for a long time afterwards but I think
18 people would have just got bored and at the end of it, having to tell the same story over and
19 over again, does get a bit boring but ...

20

21 S: But they wanted to know?

22

23 Jane: Yeah. They wanted to know.

24

25 S: Brilliant. And what was your story then?

26

27 Jane: Well, I think the main thing – cos that's what I wrote in my PIES – is the Colonial
28 aspect which, apparently, has disappeared. Well, not disappeared, but there's a connection
29 between India and England but there's not a, you know, "We own this country-type
30 connection."

31

32 S: Sure. Yeah.

33

34 Jane: But that's by Law, that's not actually how it is in reality. There's a lot there that would
35 suggest that we have as English, as white people, we have a lot of power over there.

36 S: OK. From your experiences?

37

1 Jane: Well, I just think 'cos of the way we were treated when we went into the schools.
2 You know, we were treated like royalty (laughter); we were given a marching band, we were
3 given flowers, we were treated so well. We signed autographs, they would hang out of the
4 windows waving at us. It was crazy and it was because we were people that they had never
5 seen before, white people, or they hadn't seen much of them. And, you know, for them, I
6 think it was the first school that we went to – the [REDACTED] School?

7

8 S: Yes, the [REDACTED] School.

9

10 Jane: They said, "Thank you for choosing us." You know, as if

11

12 S: Yes, out of the whole of India.

13

14 Jane: As if we're doing them a massive favour when, actually, they're doing us a favour
15 because they're allowing us to come and see their School. And, you know, as if we've
16 chosen them, as you said, we've picked them out of the whole of India and it was such an
17 honour for us to be there and that really is like, "Why is it an honour for us to be there?" Is
18 it because they think we can bring them status? Well, that's what I felt. You bring the status
19 and respect and attract different people to their School because we were the English people
20 that came to their School and visited and things like that.

21

22 S: And in their annual brochure there were pictures of the previous trip.

23

24 Jane: Exactly. 'Our friends from England' and things like that so, actually, the Colonial
25 aspect is still there because there's still a huge amount of respect and honour bestowed on
26 everyone.

27

28 S: Was that a surprise to you?

29

30 Jane: Yeah. Definitely. Because I was kind of expecting if they hadn't really seen visitors,
31 you know, there would be some interest. You know, like English kids if they're interested
32 in someone they'll stare at them or things like that, but it was not it was actually, you know,
33 there was a process, there were ceremonies, and there was this and there was that.

34

35 S: It was formal, wasn't it?

36

1 Jane: It was all very, “This is an honour to have you here. We are so pleased to have you,
2 etc, etc.” So that is what I learned the most about in terms of where mybefore, what I
3 thought – not India – but what I thought is changed because I was like, “Yeah, that whole
4 colonial thing.....”

5

6 S: A thing of the past and so on.

7

8 Jane: Yeah. Obviously I knew there was always going to be some kind of connection
9 between the two countries because of their colonial past but I didn't think that it would still
10 be. It's like a mindset; it's not there in practice but it's actually there in their minds.

11

12 S: Yes. Yes. And I remember in your essay, you wrote at quite a length about that, the
13 colonial dimensions of the mindset.

14

15 Jane: Yeah. Definitely. 'Cos I really like history, anyway, so I'm really interested in that
16 kind of thing. Do you want to hear in terms of school, education?

17

18 S: Well, yes. In terms of how that's formed your learning, really.

19

20 Jane: Well, in terms of my learning I just think that it was a big shock to see all the kids and
21 all the children. They were so happy to be at school, they were happy to see us. They
22 loved school, they worked hard, etc, etc. Such a contrast to English schools, you know,
23 where the children really just don't feel like they need to be here.

24

25 S: Is it a fair comparison to compare it to a school here, for example?

26

27 Jane: It's not a fair comparison in terms of their backgrounds –they're totally different
28 backgrounds - but even though it's compulsory to go to school in India, they want to as well
29 because they can see themselves getting a better life out of it. But here, it's compulsory to
30 go to school but half of the children just don't think they need it and it's a chore to go to
31 school.

32

33 S: So many of you talked about that?

34

35 Jane: Yeah. It really is and it's just in terms of my learning. I just think I realise how children
36 in UK are spoilt, actually, in terms of behaviour. They need to behave better, they need to
37 have more appreciation for what's put in front of them. And a big thing that I learned is that

1 in India they don't have much; they have a few text books, they don't have interactive
2 whiteboards. For example, if you take [REDACTED] this has had millions of pounds thrown at
3 it. I mean, look at the building, they've got projectors, every kid's got a laptop so that they
4 can all access PowerPoints and the Internet and stuff like that. I mean, it's such a stark
5 contrast but going to India made me see that, actually, you don't have to have millions of
6 resources, you don't have to have all this kind of technology. Sometimes less is more.

7

8 S: I agree. I agree.

9

10 Jane: And to actually just do some teaching and not rely on fancy gadgets and stuff.
11 Sometimes that's fine – you know?

12

13 S: It's funny though, 'cos [Becky] was talking about, an [REDACTED] teacher, was talking about how
14 she's reduced the amount of technology in her teaching and a guy who went on the trip,
15 three or four years ago, was an historian and his whole thing is changed. His use of ICT
16 was completely changed by that. So I think you're not alone in thinking that.

17

18 Jane: Yeah. I mean, it's hard to escape it here 'cos it's so technology driven here. School
19 is, like, based around technology, you know. But I do, I do say, "You don't need your laptops
20 today." You know, and they're like "What?!"

21

22 S: "What has she said?!"

23

24 Jane: Yeah. You know, "Laptops aren't needed today, you can just look at the screen and
25 that's it."

26

27 S: Laughter.

28

29 Jane: So in terms of that behaviour, that expectation Although I do set high expectations
30 now, for my pupils.

31

32 S: What, after you'd been to India?

33

34 Jane: Yeah. Definitely. Because I know that you shouldn't have to stand for that kind of
35 rubbish, you know. Because in India, when we were going around the temples and the
36 man who gave us the tour said it was, "Mother, Father, Teacher, God." Or something, the

1 order in which they worshipped. So, teachers are up there and it's such a contrast to here
2 where teachers are not very appreciated.

3

4 S: Yeah. I remember when we did the plenary back in Canterbury, one of the things you
5 said was, "I'm not sure I want to be a teacher, anymore." And I think you might have said,
6 "I don't want to be a teacher in the UK, anymore." But you're going to be.....

7

8 Jane: Yeah. Yeah. But there's a lot of stuff that comes with teaching in the UK. There's
9 a lot of pressure and there's a lot of things you have to deal with in terms of behaviour and
10 there's also a lot of things that, that's another realisation, there's so many labels here in the
11 UK which I know that we have to abide by, like, you know, ADHD, ADD ...

12

13 S: Special Educational Needs.

14

15 Jane: Yeah. But, you know, I know that's a debate sometimes in the UK as well, whether
16 we over-label people and then they play up to that label.

17

18 S: Yeah. It's a performance.

19

20 Jane: Yeah. So coming from India where they don't have anything like that. They don't
21 have specialist labels for kids that can't work, they just have to work. So that's another
22 thing that made me think. It's not necessarily anything that I've acted upon because there's
23 not much that I can actually do, because the School has a system so if you choose to ignore
24 a kid that says they've got ADHD or ADD you're in trouble if you don't do something about
25 it. It's just made me think in terms of that.

26

27 S: Something that's just pondering me from what you said earlier when I arrived, is that
28 you're going to teach in [REDACTED]. And that's probably a challenging environment and
29 had you got ideas about that before you went to India? Has India influenced you in anyway?

30

31 Jane: I was thinking of teaching in [REDACTED] before I went to India but I think that I like the
32 idea of going to teach - especially after going to India, it has helped - children that are from
33 deprived areas and that don't necessarily have the best backgrounds and help to teach
34 them. You know, those that don't necessarily have the best start in life which is what the
35 kids in India had - some of them come from very poor backgrounds. Yeah.

36

1 S: It's something that I'm sort of mulling over in my mind. We get this idea of transformative
2 learning, and I think it's not necessarily as big as that but it's almost like there's a little seed
3 in our minds and going to India has just troubled it or provoked it or something. And it's
4 changed us in certain sort of ways but it's not like a fully blown transformation but it's just
5 emphasised things.

6

7 Jane: Yeah. It's just emphasised things, actually, I think, 'cos that's what I think, you know.
8 I'm not saying that all the kids in [REDACTED] will appreciate their education and stuff but you'll
9 have some of them that will appreciate it more than children who come from privileged
10 backgrounds in Kent and have quite a lot. There will be more in [REDACTED] that won't have
11 that and especially coming from different cultures in [REDACTED]. I spoke to – when I was at
12 my interview – they said they've got an influx of Afghan – Afghani? – children who for them
13 they say, obviously, education for girls was a big “no, no” for them in Afghanistan before
14 and so it's working with that, kind of, where they haven't really had much education and
15 trying to work with them. So, it has, yeah.

16

17 S: And language is important here really, it's such an influential area. Great stuff and so
18 on. Can I take you back to the trip? You talked about the importance of reflection and
19 those sort of plenary things that we had in the evenings. You said there were all these
20 experiences that were happening during the day that you couldn't make sense of at the
21 time. But were there any ways that, during those experiences, that it helped you mull things
22 over or were there any actual specific incidents or triggers that really helped you with
23 thinking or memorable occasions or something like that?

24

25 Jane: I think a memorable occasion, which I'll always remember, was when we went to
26 that first school and the band was playing.

27

28 S: (Laughter) You're not the only one to say that.

29

30 Jane: But then, [Nancy] burst into tears. And I think that will stick with me for a long time
31 'cos I think she portrayed what everyone was feeling. Although we didn't all burst into tears
32 we were all feeling pretty emotional, we were feeling overwhelmed and we just didn't really
33 know what to do with ourselves. And she was, she was the image of where it's just
34 something that .. you just don't know how to deal with it because it's so unknown. It's like,
35 “What is this?!” And she just kind of, that's how we were all feeling.

36

37 S: She epitomised ...

1 Jane: Yeah. How we were all feeling. And that was a big shock in terms of seeing that
2 and it was also a turning point when I realised, “Well, actually, this is going to be something
3 that I just really wasn’t expecting.” ‘Cos I was going into schools and I was thinking I was
4 going to be uncomfortable in terms of just because it’s a different setting, but actually it
5 wasn’t because I was made, to a degree, to feel uncomfortable because there was such a
6 , “Oh you’re here!!” Such a privilege and honour bestowed upon us. It was a different kind
7 of uncomfortable but, you know, that’s when I really thought, “This is not going to be what I
8 expect, this is going to be a lot better actually. Because it’s not going to be - not about me
9 feeling uncomfortable about the setting of the school because it’s going to be deprived –
10 it’s going to be because, actually, there’s this whole other dimension that we hadn’t even
11 thought about that they are going to completely “Wow” us and things like that.” I don’t know,
12 there’s so many events that happened.

13

14 S: You’ve talked about, in some ways, your understanding of the Colonial or the
15 Postcolonial and so on. Were there any ways that things speeded up your understanding
16 of that or stopped it?

17

18 Jane: I don’t know. I mean, when we visited the [REDACTED] School that was like a
19 ‘shocker’ because there were obviously children that were from more privileged
20 backgrounds; they didn’t just really care that we were there, to be honest.

21

22 S: No. It was very different, wasn’t it?

23

24 Jane: Yeah. And that was more like an English school ‘cos that’s how English children
25 would have behaved. If we had visitors here they wouldn’t be like, “Oh my God!” There’d
26 be a bit of interest but there wouldn’t be a lot. But I think that’s where the colonial aspect
27 doesn’t really fit in because although they were - I don’t know, they weren’t all Indian, were
28 they?

29

30 S: No.

31

32 Jane: Some of them were foreign.

33 S: I think, if I remember rightly, some were from South Korea. There was a little girl from
34 the Netherlands and sometimes they have the States as well and they are linked to the
35 Science Park in the City.

36

1 Jane: Yeah. Because that's what kind of didn't fit in with the whole thing because, actually,
2 it was to do with wealth because they come from a more privileged background. Their
3 parents had more money to send them to a school where they obviously had more access
4 to white people, to other cultures, etc, etc. So that is where the colonial aspect didn't really
5 fit into my thinking.
6
7 S: Yeah. I think you're right. And in some ways we have these different lenses or layers
8 that we can look at and 'colonial' might be one and 'gender' might be another but 'wealth'
9 or 'class' is one.
10
11 Jane: That is definitely one.
12
13 S: Well, thanks for raising it.
14
15 Jane: Well, actually, that's just made me think about it now for the first time – well, not for
16 the first time but ...
17
18 S: It just reminded ...
19
20 Jane: Wealth is actually a factor which I hadn't even really considered, you know. That
21 they have the wealth that they're in a different class so they don't really feel they need to
22 learn anything from us, maybe.
23
24 S: Yes. Could be.
25
26 Jane: Could be.
27
28 S: With wealth comes a certain agency and .. yeah. "We've moved on, we've got our own
29 ...". Yeah. It's a good point. I like that.
30
31 Jane: Which is good. I don't think anyone should have that whole image of us begin
32 amazing because well, we're definitely not. (Laughter).
33
34 S: No, that makes really good sense. Great stuff. I'll need to think more about that, it's a
35 good one. I mentioned 'gender' as well, just sort of in passing. But did you notice any
36 points there?
37

1 Jane: There was, obviously, big issues on gender but, for me, it wasn't a surprise because
2 it was something I expected. And I think the group expected that as well because although
3 there is, as I understand, there is a push for more equality in India but we'd all heard – and
4 I'm going to sound very stereotypical when I say this – but, I'd heard all about, you know,
5 there's the girls that got gang raped in Delhi was it, in the City? So, we'd all heard about
6 the stories in India and, obviously, we're going through a completely different ???? that I
7 kind of expected there to be a gender divide. But what made me laugh, well, not made me
8 laugh – I'm not sure if that's the right word – is that when we went to Trivandrum and we
9 went to the park and we saw that tuk-tuk and it had the sign on it, and I can't remember
10 what it said but it basically said something like, "Safe for Women to get In" or something
11 like that. "The Government says that this is safe for women to get in." I've got a picture of
12 it somewhere and it says, you know, "Safe for Women." But that's not something that would
13 even cross our minds. I mean, I know in England there's a bit, you know, girls....sometimes
14 they don't like going out alone or getting into a taxi alone at night but during the day it's fine.
15 You know. But in India, to say, "Oh this is safe."

16

17 S: Yeah. It's a good thing to highlight.

18

19 Jane: And that was just in general. And then, where we stayed in the touristy parts there
20 wasn't any ...there was a bit of, you know. I mean, we were dressing how we would
21 normally dress. I know we covered up a little bit to go to school but when we were back on
22 the beach and in the restaurants we were all just wearing what we'd normally wear because
23 it was hot.

24

25 S: You performed as tourists.

26

27 Jane: Yeah. Exactly. We were. But I didn't see – I might have just been ignorant – but I
28 really didn't see any problems with that. But, so I think they're very accepting that women
29 from other cultures can wear what they want so they don't ... they turn a blind eye and
30 things like that. But I do remember, this is another point actually, I do remember when
31 Elizabeth and Deborah] were smoking cigarettes in public and they got very, very dodgy
32 looks from the men. They were like, "Women smoking!"

33

34 S: But that was out of the resort?

35

36 Jane: Yeah. But that didn't make them feel uncomfortable, it didn't make me feel
37 uncomfortable either, it was just, I think ...

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S: You noticed it.

Jane: I noticed it, yeah.

S: The thing I remember is the twilight time. On some of those long days we were travelling home and from seeing lots of women around during the day and suddenly they've gone.

Jane: They've gone. Yeah. That's something that I hadn't thought about, well I had, obviously, thought about it but not loads. But, yeah, that is true.

S: I think you're dead right to highlight the colonial big picture, sort of thing, and then sort of underneath that is this wealth dimension and the gender thing, as well.

Jane: I mean the gender is a huge thing. I could have done a whole different essay on that but I knew there was going to be a lot of people

S: You can't do it all.

Jane: Yeah. I know that [Nancy] was really all into the whole gender thing.

S: Yeah. She did actually nail that.

Jane: Yeah. Exactly. I know that she ... it's just a very interesting, you know. But the thing is though in England there are also gender issues. You know, so it is that on a bigger scale. I think that in terms of, and I don't want to put this wrong, but in terms of when was their Republic founded or their ...?

S: '47.

Jane: Yeah. So their country hasn't been as it is for a long time and so it's going to take time to iron out all their issues and we're still ironing out our gender issues. So in terms of that I wasn't so surprised by the gender although it is such an interesting topic, I'm not surprised by it.

S: No, that's a good point. So, when you got back – like you said in India there were some big surprises and maybe some that weren't so much – but was it a surprise to get back or

1 was it just the same Tunbridge Wells and so on that you ... was it the same [Jane] that got
2 back home?

3

4 Jane: It was surprising how quickly you get back into routine, but it is always like that, you
5 know. You go on holiday, I'm not saying this was a holiday, and when you get back you
6 can't even believe that you've been on holiday 'cos you just get into routine so quickly. But,
7 yeah, I mean it was a different [Jane], yeah, definitely. I mean, I don't see how you can go
8 out there and not be a little bit moved or a little bit changed by what you've seen.

9

10 S: Well, I hope so, yeah.

11

12 Jane: Exactly. So, I think, you know, I'm glad though. I'm glad that it has. But I don't think
13 it has in terms of it's made any drastic changes, you know.

14

15 S: More those provocations?

16

17 Jane: More like emphasising things that maybe I was thinking about or slightly turning
18 different ways than I would have done but not huge, dramatical changes.

19

20 S: Yes. That's quite a good way: emphasising, making a slight detour ... and that sort of
21 thing. Can you give some examples – I mean we talked about the job – can you give some
22 other examples?

23

24 Jane: Within the job or just within my personal life, in general?

25

26 S: No, mainly you ... as much as you want to say, or not.

27

28 Jane: Well, I don't know, I just think that 'cos I know that [Becky], it had a huge impact with
29 [Becky] for her family.

30

31 S: Yes. Yes. She told us about that.

32

33 Jane: It really did. And I just think, I'm trying to think of some specific point but in terms of
34 my attitude actually, just in general. You know, to really appreciate what there is here and
35 what there is in life, as well. You know, because over there the children, in particular, are
36 so full of beans and they're so appreciative of everything. You know, to really .. Actually,
37 as well, there's one thing which I haven't mentioned is 'culture'. Our culture. And, you

1 know, 'cos they're obviously so proud of their culture; they put on shows for us and they
2 really are so proud. There's dancers, there's everything there and we didn't really have
3 much. I know we all said on the trip that there wasn't really much that we could do, we
4 didn't really think we had a particular culture to present to them.

5

6 S: Or maybe the skills or gifts to share it?

7

8 Jane: I think that, you know, I have appreciated more England for what it has in terms of
9 its culture and its benefits, you know, compared to what India has. But, in terms of culture
10 I've tried to appreciate and find that 'hidden culture' that we seem to have lost.

11

12 S: So dig under the surface a bit? So do you think, in some ways, just the skills of digging
13 and questioning that you got in India, you've brought home with you?

14

15 Jane: Yes. Definitely. Just to try and question a little bit more what's around us.

16

17 S: I think you participated in the 'song'? Would that be something that you thought you
18 would have done?

19

20 Jane: No. Definitely not! But, at the time it felt like it was the right thing to do and it felt
21 amazing and it felt like, "Yeah this is brilliant." You know, but I wouldn't do it here 'cos it's
22 a completely different setting.

23

24 S: But you felt it was right there?

25

26 Jane: Yeah. Definitely.

27

28 S: It's quite interesting, I think. I don't quite know how to explain ... can you explain it?

29

30 Jane: No, I can't explain it either. (Laughter) But I felt like 'cos I was over there, I needed
31 to do something to show them that I appreciate what they've done and, actually, "Yeah, this
32 is a bit of my culture and I'll sing it to you." You know. But here, I don't know, I just wouldn't
33 do it.

34

35 S: No. I do wonder. 'Cos in previous trips that's never happened and it might just be new
36 space, new time, new people but I do wonder if having primary students for the first time –
37 they're a bit more 'singy songy' – but there was something about, I don't know, we seemed

1 to operate in a different way in that culture. As you say, you just wouldn't stand up and sing
2 a song in front of ...

3

4 Jane: And I think it was because we were in this group setting where we had to rely on
5 each other so much and that you don't have that here where you have a specific group of
6 people that you have to rely on and that you have to, you know. There's not one specific
7 group here that you spend your time with, there's a lot more. So I felt that we could do that,
8 actually, because we were so reliant on each other and we'd gone through all this together;
9 it was a group thing.

10

11 S: Yeah. I think there's a lot in that. You know, we're a few thousand miles from home,
12 we've got to look after each other in that respect. But there was a sense that some people
13 thought, "There's all this culture coming our way, we've got to give them something."

14

15 Jane: Yeah. We've got to give something back.

16

17 S: It was [Alice], wasn't it that corralled people into a song and so on. It was a really moving
18 thing, I loved it. I was sitting there and I thought, "Wow." (Laughter)

19

20 Jane: Yeah. That was a good time.

21

22 S: Great stuff. So, I think that's about half an hour or so, so that's rattled through. Are
23 there any other points, [Jane], that you want to raise or to talk about?

24

25 Jane: There's so much, you could talk about it for hours. I don't think so. I think the colonial
26 aspect and the whole education; the expectations of behaviour, the appreciation are the
27 main things that I brought back from that. Obviously, there's a lot more but, yeah.

28

29 S: And you've kept in touch with folks? Well, some of them, at least.

30

31 Jane: Yeah. Yeah. Well, I'll be seeing them in half-term, hopefully.

32 S: Fantastic. Excellent. Well, thanks for your time and also for your thoughts; they're really
33 provoking. I'll switch off now.

1 *Interview with 'Slater': 21st May 2014 in Of50, CCCU.*

2

3 S: Just for the tape then, you're [Slater] and we're talking about the India Study and the
4 learning that happened during that trip and any significant moments during that trip for you
5 and maybe after. But also, now that you're home and immersed in school, is the learning
6 still with you or is just a dim and distant memory?

7

8 Slater: I think a lot of it still is. Any trips I've ever done have always, sort of, hit a nerve in
9 some way.

10

11 S: 'Cos you were one of the few that have travelled quite widely?

12

13 Slater: Yeah. I've done Central America a couple of times and Bali. So, India was my
14 second time to Asia.

15

16 S: Yes. 'Cos, I can't remember who else I asked that question, but did it help or was that
17 a problem at times?

18

19 Slater: I think it did help, up to a point. It helped me be quite comfortable, quite quickly with
20 local people and being in the schools and being in an environment where, maybe, some
21 people were overwhelmed quite easily. Because I'd been exposed to quite a lot of the
22 abject poverty, I suppose is probably the best way to put it, in some cases that we saw in
23 the city or, for instance, the woman begging which still has quite a big ... I still remember it,
24 but because I've seen things like that before I don't think it hit quite as hard as what it would
25 have for some of the people that were on the trip.

26

27 S: But you still remember it though?

28

29 Slater: Yeah. But I enjoyed the trip so much that I can remember a lot because of how
30 friendly the locals were. And I think that's something that's massively different between
31 India and here.

32

33 S: So you seemed to be one of the – well, everyone in different sorts of ways – but you
34 seemed to be one of the people that went out and engaged with whoever, really.

35

36 Slater: Anyone! Anyone and everyone!

37

1 S: Is that just because it's you, [Slater], or is that a particular way that you thought, "I can
2 find out."

3

4 Slater: I think it was partly just because it's me and I quite like – I never like to go
5 somewhere, say if it was Scotland or Wales, without actually interacting with local people.
6 I think it's very important if you go anywhere that you try and be polite and learn from them
7 as much as they can learn from you. So, learning things just like simple greetings.

8

9 S: Yeah. Sure.

10

11 Slater: Or how to, maybe, order a drink in their language or speaking to locals about how
12 they feel about different things. For example, going surfing with [Mark] there were two
13 locals from India who obviously had got the money to rent a board or didn't feel very
14 confident to go in the sea because a lot of them couldn't swim very well, I realised while we
15 were out there. So, me being a teacher, and stuff like that, it's come through then we were
16 putting them on hard boards and teaching them how to do it. So there was that two-way
17 interaction that we were sort of learning about how they lived and their day-to-day routine
18 and what they did as jobs and things like that and whether they were studying, because a
19 few of them were at university there.....

20

21 S: Right OK.

22

23 Slater: ...and had come towards the coast for a week to have a bit of a break. But teaching
24 them was amazing because you learned so much and you could see that they were really
25 enjoying themselves. I quite enjoyed that bit of the process that everything is a two-way
26 thing.

27

28 S: Yes. Absolutely. And they were just spontaneous, really.

29

30 Slater: Yes. It was really unplanned stuff and the main thing that stuck with me, I think,
31 was probably the fishing and we were late for dinner that night. And me and [Mark] were a
32 good 20 minutes late but it was because we were fishing with the locals and we got back
33 and everyone was looking at us as if, "Why have you been back late?" And we'd been out
34 for a good 45 minutes, hauling in the nets that was a good kilometre out to sea. But that
35 was amazing, 'cos the teamwork and the camaraderie of people out there .. but it's
36 something, again, that I've seen before. People are very friendly and very welcoming to
37 each other. And there's a lot more of a people centric, person centric....

1 S: Beyond just being you as a tourist, and so on or a bit of a novelty, and so on. That
2 friendliness was with each other as well?

3

4 Slater: Yeah. Yeah. At that point, I don't think it was because I was white or looked at as
5 a power figure like we looked at before we went. But, actually, because they were all
6 helping each other and they were quite happy to have someone else help them and that
7 interaction, again, was really nice.

8

9 S: And I like the way you questioned that, "It could be that, it could be this."

10

11 Slater: Yeah. It's one thing I think the trip's done for me. It's actually made me look at
12 different sides to a situation now back here.

13

14 S: There's no such thing as a single story.

15

16 Slater: No, definitely not. Like the pupils at school; there's a lot of pupil premium and pupils
17 with Special Educational Needs and maybe EAL and things like that. And it's just made me
18 question – before I would be really quick to say something to them if they won't do what I
19 wanted them to do but now I've started to look at it that, maybe, there's actually something
20 more behind it and I've started to deal with things in a different way.

21

22 S: Oh, so that's really interesting. So you've sort of – that sort of idea that we can question,
23 we can try and deconstruct things and not jump to a conclusion?

24

25 Slater: For example, I've got a lad in my Year 7 class right now that's been really disruptive.
26 I moved him and that worked for a short period but he's started to be a nuisance again.
27 And I've got a ball that I bought from Canterbury, down in Siesta, that was made in Peru;
28 one of those little bean bag balls and I've give him that to play with. And he sits there and
29 he plays with that and he doesn't cause any problems; does all his work and plays with that
30 instead. But, I think, before that I would have been happy to just keep shouting at him.

31

32 S: Keep nagging.

33

34 Slater: Keep going and going and going until one of us was worn out.

35

36 S: So, you've come at it from a different angle; you question it and critique it? That's a
37 really neat example. I'm actually just thinking that you seemed to be one of the – I mean

1 we all did it in some sorts of ways – but you thought about what was going on back here in
2 terms of schools. You wrote about that in your essay.

3

4 Slater: Yes. I did. The way that people are so - they always want, want, want here. Out
5 there people are happy to be with people and to make the most of the opportunities they're
6 given whereas here, I think, young people, whatever their background, whether they're from
7 a disadvantaged background or from a very well-off background, I think, they're from the
8 "get-go" from when they were a baby. All that's happened is that they're throwing
9 opportunities at them and I think, almost, they learn to not value the opportunities they're
10 given as much as those abroad would.

11

12 S: Where the opportunities are fewer?

13

14 Slater: Where the opportunities are more sparse. They take a bigger outlook or outlay of
15 kindness or determination or saving or money or care for each. There's a lot of sacrifice, I
16 think, that happens out in India for their children. And whilst here individuals sacrifice a lot
17 for their children I think sometimes they sacrifice their own relationships and things like that
18 for their children. But I think out there, instead of sacrificing their relationships, I think they
19 strengthen their relationships with their children. They're all working for a common goal to
20 improve their situation whereas our situations and our nice houses and cars and things like
21 that, it's already fairly peachy.

22

23 S: I think they're good observations and I think – I suppose you could scratch underneath
24 the surface and say that's not the case for everybody in the UK. But I take your point.

25

26 Slater: You do have a lot of people that are possibly living on the streets or something like
27 that and we're very quick to dismiss people like that here. And yet, when we were out in
28 India, a lot of the group found that really challenging, thinking that people were living on the
29 street and they didn't have a house.

30

31 S: Or you mention the woman begging with the baby.

32

33 Slater: But if there's people like that, they might go "Oh, she's got a baby, that's a shame."
34 But they won't give her any money or they won't give her any food or anything like that.
35 They would almost go, "What's she done to get herself in this situation? Was she addicted
36 to drugs? Did she sleep with people to get money for drugs; is that why she's got a kid?"

37

1 S: Judgemental.
2
3 Slater: Whereas out there they go, “Oh, that’s such a shame. We need to try and kind of
4 help her.” And I think it’s that lens that maybe we’re still responsible for other people in
5 some way.
6
7 S: Yes. We in the West, do you mean? Yeah.
8
9 Slater: We as Westerners are sort of responsible for those that we see as disadvantaged
10 or less well off than ourselves and I think there’s a real wealth that’s untapped.
11
12 S: Do you think that Post-Colonial Theory – the reading around that. Did that make sense
13 to you?
14
15 Slater: It did, yeah. I think there’s definitely a power relationship there and it still stands
16 because we were seen very much in the schools, and the way we were welcomed to
17 schools, as almost a powerful figure. I thought the thing that was really interesting was
18 talking to some of the pupils though, about it. And some of them said, “No. All these things
19 that happened was the Indian movement for freedom which was, actually, against the
20 British.” And that almost flipped on its head that the power relationship was actually us
21 being in the way and trying to impose ourselves as opposed to the way that we like to look
22 at it that we were going in and helping everyone and making everything more nice for them
23 and improving their way of life that, actually, even now it’s starting to come back that,
24 actually, some of the Indians are starting to go, “Well, actually, how much did that help and
25 would we have been better off without that?” There was this bloke that we went out for a
26 drink with one evening – a local chap that was one of the waiters – and he said, “No, I
27 wouldn’t want to go to England; I love my Mum too much to leave her.” And there was that
28 real family feeling but also an undercurrent of “You didn’t really help us, I don’t really want
29 to go.”
30
31 S: When you say, “didn’t help us”, you mean the colonial past?
32
33 Slater: Yeah. The colonial past. He saw it quite negatively; in fact very negatively, and he
34 was very open about that which he was very hesitant to say to us to start with, which again,
35 I think, shows the power of the relationship there still.
36
37 S: Different sort of scales, I guess. You’re maybe in a restaurant and he’s ...

1 Slater: Yeah. He's sort of learning ... I think it was quite hard for him 'cos he obviously
2 wanted to tell us he had a very strong view but I think society almost dictated that he didn't
3 say it to a white person or a Westerner. So, it was very interesting. It was only afterwards
4 that I actually said, "No, no, no. We want to hear what you actually really feel. Just tell us.
5 We're not going to be offended. Don't worry about offending us. If you do, then we've
6 asked you to, so just say it anyway." And he said, "Well, I wouldn't go, I don't think." That
7 was very interesting though. That was one of the most

8

9 S: I can understand that, as well. In some ways, if you think about going back to the UK
10 and when I took a trip a few years ago and there was a geographer who came who was
11 from Gibraltar. And she took a globe to play with the kids and so on. She was asking them
12 and they could all spot India, they could all spot the Middle East, they could all spot the Far
13 East, Japan. And then, "Where's UK, where's Europe?" No chance. You know, it just
14 wasn't on their radar. You know ...

15

16 Slater: We have this view that everyone should know where we are.

17

18 S: That's right.

19

20 Slater: Although we do have fairly good knowledge, most people against a bit of guesswork.
21 I think geography is quite a lot about international geography as well now.

22

23 S: Yes.

24

25 Slater: The West, in UK, be it in UK or America, we see it as quite important to know where
26 different things are. Maybe not to know that much about the different things but to at least
27 know where they are whereas I think for them, they're building probably what's going to be
28 a new Super Power and will overtake us very soon, I'd have thought.

29

30 S: Next couple of decades, certainly.

31

32 Slater: And maybe then they'll start to look more international. But, at the moment, I think,
33 they're trying to build themselves and they're going up to a level where they're almost more
34 at ease on the international stage.

35

36 S: So a confidence with that? And, you know, I guess they'd look to money in the Middle
37 East and look to Far Eastern money.

1 Slater: Yeah. I think that was in the Conference that we had. In the fact that they thanked
2 us at the end, they put all their snacks and their coffee and their tea – they put so much
3 effort into making us feel welcome that it was almost as if they were shying away that it was
4 actually their Conference at their University in their country. We should be thanking them
5 for all their hospitality as opposed to them trying to make us more comfortable.

6

7 S: Sure. And I think you're right to notice that there was a different power relationship
8 there, in a way. And that's one of the ways, on a Study Visit, we try and get a little bit more
9 of equality through hearing from different voices at that Conference.

10

11 Slater: That Conference was really nice to actually see so much of their culture. 'Cos that's
12 another thing that really came out and really hit me, was the culture that they had and the
13 culture that a lot of the places that I've been have had....have had a really strong culture,
14 be it family or dance or anything like that; there's such a strong attachment to their own
15 county whereas we're so multi-national and multi-cultural now that, I think, our culture is to
16 accept everyone. That's what our culture is. And I don't think there's one thing that you can
17 say, "Oh that's very British."

18

19 S: No. I mean there's some discussions, I probably think sort of led by the UKIP political
20 bit at the moment. You know, "What is Britishness and so on?" I think it's a really hard thing
21 to pin down.

22

23 Slater: I don't think there is a Britishness anymore, it's just the fact that we are multi-cultural.
24 Not to get political but I think parties like UKIP are going to struggle to ever be very big
25 because they're just recognising the multiculturalism in the country.

26

27 S: Yeah. They're archaic, aren't they? And they're looking for something that isn't there
28 anymore.

29

30 Slater: They are. In some ways it's a shame that it's not there anymore 'cos we don't have
31 anything that's British that we can be proud of, almost. Except maybe the Royal family
32 (Laughter) which are actually German.

33

34 S: Well, hopefully, there are a few other things. But maybe you can look at values and so
35 on. But there's Heritage, I suppose.

36

37 Slater: There is Heritage. There's a lot of heritage.

1 S: But there's a danger of harking back to the past.
2
3 Slater: I think we need to be looking forwards and places like India are stuck how we were
4 when we were there as opposed to how we are now with other people in our multicultural
5 society. And also the view of people from India or Pakistan or Bangladesh in UK, in
6 England, I think is very different from how people viewed them when we were in India.
7
8 S: And I guess you've got to think that when we were in Kerala we were dealing with school
9 teachers and people in the University and so on and that's not necessarily representative
10 of people who are over here.
11
12 Slater: Such a broad spectrum of people, I think, it would be very easy to get bogged down
13 and say, "Well, Indians are all like this."
14
15 S: Exactly, yeah.
16
17 Slater: ... which is, I suppose, is the thing with when we've only got the single story of how
18 Indians are owning only takeaways or corner shops over here, that very traditional view.
19 It's very easy to go over there and go, "Well, hold on, there's all this professional level and
20 emerging middle class out there that's professional, academic and some of them don't want
21 to come over. And everyone's got this view that everyone wants to come to our country but
22 it's not actually really the case, I don't think. I think more of us should want to go to other
23 countries as opposed to
24
25 S: I think you're right. Times are changing, certainly, in that respect. We've still this notion,
26 maybe almost of a Mother country still, which is deep inside us.
27
28 Slater: I think a lot of people felt that as well, on the trip. It was almost a motherly instinct;
29 especially the woman with her baby. The girls, I think, felt very motherly towards them and
30 wanted to look after
31
32 S: There was that compassionate dimension and sort of connection.
33
34 Slater: There was. Definitely. Whereas, I think, it was easier for me and obviously I can't
35 speak for [Mark] but, I think, both of us, from what we spoke about in the room afterwards,
36 probably could detach ourselves from that more easily. Most males probably can, from
37 children, than women can.

1 S: Were there things that you did attach to that were very significant for you? I mean you
2 talked about connecting with the locals and I think that's a really important way of learning
3 beyond the face value of thing. But were there other things that you connected with,
4 [Slater]?

5
6 Slater: My own view of family because there was a lot of things in my family that were a bit
7 dodgy the year before we went. And, the strength of their family bond out there made me
8 reaffirm, actually, despite everything that had happened in my family they're still my family.
9 And while I'm still angry about things, there's no point in letting it get between us because
10 that should be something that's really held up high and really valued.

11
12 S: You're not the only person to say that. There's another person in the group where their
13 family has renewed those connections.

14
15 Slater: It's nice. I still don't get to see them as much as I'd like but that's the way it is.

16
17 S: Something to do with the PGCE as well, with all the busyness....

18
19 Slater: (Laughter) Quite possibly! Quite possibly!

20
21 S: Well, I'm fascinated by such multiple effects that this trip has had on people.

22
23 Slater: Yeah. It definitely had more of an effect on me than I was expecting it to. I knew I
24 was gonna go out there and learn a lot because I always go out with the view to learn about
25 people.

26
27 S: Why do you think it was a bigger effect than you thought?

28
29 Slater: I think because of the things happening with my mum and dad and things like that.
30 I think because I had something that wasn't stable at home, I was quite happy to stabilise
31 myself in another situation where I could actually latch onto something and really put myself
32 into another situation as opposed to looking back at what happened.

33
34 S: Fascinating. Sorry, was that easy to do, move yourself into a new position?

35
36 Slater: It was quite nice because it was almost like a fresh start because none of us really
37 knew each other and there was so much learning about everyone else and we all sort of

1 got closer and small groups of us got very close. There was [Eve and Maggie] and me and
2 [Mark and Elizabeth and Deborah] that really gelled by the end of the trip and with you and
3 [Scott] as well there was a group dynamic that almost got to be .. almost like a family feel
4 where everyone was really close.

5

6 S: I like that. Big family, yeah.

7

8 Slater: It was almost like I'd not been very happy with what was going on and almost, not
9 conjured a situation, but really threw myself into it and wanted to be close to other people
10 and not have to look back at what happened but actually look at the now and what was
11 happening in the future.

12

13 S: So you sort of threw yourself into it?

14

15 Slater: I probably threw myself into it more than ..

16

17 S: than you thought your might?

18

19 Slater: More than I normally would have. I would have done all the things I did but I think
20 I did them to a more deep level.

21

22 S: Live life to the full while you're there. You know, that's probably the

23

24 Slater: I think that's what's come back with me, as well. There's so many things now that
25 I've decided that actually I'm going to do and it's going to be that. I'm going to make the
26 most of

27

28

29 S: Well, like what [Slater]? If you don't mind giving me a few examples here?

30

31 Slater: Like, I've always been tempted to go skydiving and finish off my scuba diving
32 qualification and things like that but never really thought I will. But now I think everything
33 that I've wanted to do, be it kayaking or skydiving or anything, I think I will now make time
34 for, I suppose. And, I suppose, make the most of my own opportunities as opposed to
35 thinking, "Oh that'd be nice but I haven't got time." I think it's important now for me to take
36 time for me to do the things that I've got the opportunity to do 'cos so many people don't
37 have the opportunity.

1 S: Yes. 'Cos it could seem quite selfish? "I'm going to do this and I'm going to do that."
2 But it's not that, is it?

3

4 Slater: No, it's not. I think it's almost important to be able to do - in a sort of selfish way it's
5 important to do what you need to do as a person to then let you live with other people quite
6 comfortably 'cos otherwise I think there's this tension between either home or family or
7 friends and what you feel like you'd like to be doing with your life. I think you have to strike
8 a balance between the two. And I think to strengthen relationships and things like that
9 you've to do both or all have to be able to follow what you want to do and speak quite freely
10 about what you're doing.

11

12 S: So it's that balance of "This is my direction but adapt"

13

14 Slater: I think it also makes you a more rounded person to be able to discuss different
15 things and put yourself in different people's positions.

16

17 S: Yes.

18

19 Slater: If you've had a multitude of experiences you can then apply yourself in different
20 ways as opposed to having that single story of yourself. You learn about yourself to help
21 you learn about other people.

22

23 S: I think that's a really important. It's not just a single story of India is it, or of a school or
24 whatever. It's a single story of yourself, which is quite a dangerous thing.

25

26 Slater: It is. You look at yourself as just one thing, "This is who I am and this is how I am."

27

28 S: So do you think with these many versions of [Slater] that there are, when you went to
29 India was it - were all those versions of [Slater] there or was it a specific one that operated
30 in India and it's a different [Slater] that's back here? Or are you doing many things all the
31 time?

32

33 Slater: Viewing the Andreotti, whether it's a caravan or back pack or things like that, I think
34 it was all the versions of me out there, in different situations. When I needed to be alert,
35 and I needed to be alert and be able to do everything I felt I needed to do, then I was. But
36 when it was a situation where I could really just sort of relax and let the experience take me
37 away then I could. It was almost, like, I think I feel I didn't particularly need that connection,

1 like if we hadn't had the hotel I think I'd have been quite happy to speak to people and try
2 and get places to stay with people or find hotels around the place or whatever it might be, I
3 think I'd have been quite comfortable doing.

4

5 S: That's my next sort of step for that sort of trip, is we do a week with the hotel and a week
6 where we're ...

7

8 Slater: 'Cos I know we discussed trying to stay with other teachers or stay in the city or sort
9 out our own accommodation or things like that. I think that would be very valuable for a lot
10 of people to experience that.

11

12 S: It would be, I think. There's a power in the group or a strength in the group.

13

14 Slater: Or the hustle and bustle of the city. 'Cos a lot of people didn't go and see the city
15 which

16

17 S: No, that's something to point out 'cos you ... you four guys went ..

18

19 Slater: We went and got the tuk-tuk back from the city and we had the bloke following us
20 for a couple of miles.

21

22 S: Yeah! And you went to the silk shop?

23

24 Slater: And we went to the silk shop and we got some food and went and had a wander
25 about the City. That was really nice, actually.

26

27 S: You learned a lot.

28

29 Slater: And it was really nice to see the city as opposed to just seeing the resort bits.

30

31 S: Why do you think, I should ask them really, but why do you think lots of others went
32 home on the bus and didn't go around the city?

33

34 Slater: I think it was partly because a lot of them – I think some of them wanted to but I'm
35 not sure they had the confidence to. Whereas [Elizabeth] had been travelling before,
36 [Deborah] had been travelling before, I've been travelling before. Me and [Mark] were so
37 close that although [Mark] hadn't been travelling before he went out and we spoke on the

1 'plane and he said, "I'm very open to anything, I've never done this but I'm going to make
2 the most of everything that I see and can do and I'm going to see and do everything that I
3 can." So, I think he felt quite safe that we knew what was going on and the fact that it was
4 a new experience for him and he could experience as much as he possibly could. The only
5 thing that would be nicer about the trip is if we could go to some different parts; go to the
6 North and see what the schooling's like there. And go to different areas as well so you
7 break down that single story even more because I think we've got a plural story of Kerala
8 now.

9

10 S: Or even just South Kerala.

11

12 Slater: I think there's still a view of India that some people may still retain that by going to
13 different areas, more rural areas, and things like that, you could get a little bit deeper.

14

15 S: That's the next trip, [Slater]! Must be. Must do that! I think you're right about the
16 experiences that you guys had had before.

17

18 Slater: It just gave us that extra confidence and more comfortableness with the situation.
19 Like I think a lot of them would have been really worried about being followed by the guy or
20 getting transport back, or something like that, I think. 'Cos even [Deborah] felt very
21 threatened with her blonde hair and blue eyes and very pale skin ..

22

23 S: She would stand out.

24

25 Slater:with the guy who was following us. So, I was crossing the road, holding her
26 hand, and stuff like that, but obviously that was me saying, "Stop".

27

28 S; Yes. As a signal.

29

30 Slater: Whereas I don't know that other people would have been comfortable, I think they'd
31 have possibly been very uncomfortable or even started to panic in that situation.

32

33 S: That's a good point. And that's with these sort of trips - people have open choices and
34 they decide what they want to do.

35

36 Slater: Which is what the nice thing is; people are then in their comfort zone so if people
37 are still sort of testing the water and sitting around the pool when we're not in a group so

1 they haven't got that group security, they're sitting by the pool which is quite a normal
2 situation to be in on holiday.

3

4 S: It gives that same space, doesn't it, of a place?

5

6 Slater: Which I think is the only thing that you might need to be careful with if people had
7 to go and stay. Because I think you might get a few people that go the complete opposite
8 way and really be bewildered.

9

10 S: I'm sure. I'm sure. We will need to balance it quite carefully. So what about you,
11 [Slater], now you're back here and we got back in late January/early February and we're
12 now into May – quite a long way into May.

13

14 Slater: Nearly June.

15

16 S: So is it just a glimmer in the past or are there still these .. I mean you've talked about
17 some things already.

18

19 Slater: Yeah. I think the fishing's really stuck with me. That really made me realise how
20 much more we should be doing for each other.

21

22 S: Yes. Yes.

23

24 Slater: Or how much we have to live up to. We can learn from other cultures. Because I
25 think that's a real example of people really working for each other for a mutual goal.
26 Although they might not have got many fish or anything like that, I think it was really
27 important for them as a community to have that and also for them to obviously to be able
28 to eat and things like that but I don't think there's that pressure on people to get along and
29 everyone's too wrapped up in their own lives to really give each other time, which is what I
30 think is something we should all learn a little from.

31

32 S: You mentioned family as well. What about you, as a teacher?

33

34 Slater: I think it's made me look at, a risky thing to say, but I think my teaching has become
35 slightly more didactic with some repetition now as opposed to ... I wanted them to get the
36 idea of the [REDACTED]

37

[REDACTED] And I actually made them repeat, "[REDACTED]

1 [REDACTED] I made them say it a couple of times, the whole class, in a similar way
2 to the teachers out there. But just for a couple of minutes so that they got the idea and
3 hopefully that will stick. 'Cos I showed them it and I made them repeat it and they hopefully
4 will have that next lesson when I come back to it. [REDACTED]

5 [REDACTED]. I've been
6 trying to include more practical so that they actually get the experience of doing as opposed
7 to just being told.

8
9 S: Sure. Actually, there's some contradictory things there, but yeah. So using it judiciously,
10 a little bit of didactic work here but more experimentation?

11
12 Slater: Yes.

13
14 S: No. That sounds ... I can picture those labs that we saw there and, as you say, the
15 didactic approach is quite prevalent.

16
17 Slater: Yes is it quite prevalent. It also seemed quite effective. I don't know how much
18 application they had which is where the extra practical comes in.

19
20 S: Yeah. I think you hit the nail on the head there. They know lots and lots of stuff. They
21 know a lot of the styles of teaching but ...

22
23 Slater: But they don't know that they know how to do things so you can give them a different
24 situation and say, "Right, how are you going to do that?" Except for, maybe, that
25 [REDACTED] School where it was a lot more like western teaching.

26
27 S: Yeah. A very different case, wasn't it?

28
29 Slater: And more western behaviours. Western school behaviours.

30
31 S: Absolutely. Because lots of people said, "That really threw me 'cos I got to one school
32 and there was a big marching band and then I go to this one and they're much more relaxed
33 and cool about us being there."

34
35 Slater: I think it's important that they still keep the big marching band and things like that,
36 not for us particularly but that real respect for different people and things like that, I think it's
37 very important.

1 S: Yes. And I think you're right that there's that deep respect and importance of relationship
2 and whilst we were revered guests we were probably part of a series of revered guests, as
3 well. You can't just put it down to whiteness or status. It's a good point.

4

5 Slater: I don't think we can. I think we just need to step back and say "Is it 'cos we're white
6 and westernised or is it because they really do value relationships with other people and
7 that's taught from a very early age."

8

9 S: Excellent point. And I think relationships all through, from talking to locals or being in
10 the schools or the University.

11

12 Slater: And the teacher-pupil relationship was really lovely as well. No matter what people
13 say about them having canes under the desk, and stuff like that. I think if those pupils were
14 being hit with a cane, either they knew that it was just a punishment and the teachers didn't
15 actually mean it or it didn't happen and it was just a threat, and actually it felt like that it was
16 a very motherly environment or very family orientated environment in the classroom. The
17 teachers really, genuinely cared about the pupils that they were teaching which is
18 something that I'd like to have in my teaching, if I could.

19

20 S: Happy kids. I look forward to that.

21

22 Slater: I look forward to trying. I don't think some of the pupils that I teach it will help a lot
23 but ..

24

25 S: How are we doing for time? We've gone for thirty odd minutes and I don't want to keep
26 you forever but ..

27

28 Slater: It's one of my favourite things to talk about so it's not

29

30 S: A lot of people have said that. It's like a therapeutic process.

31

32 Slater: I haven't had anyone to speak to about it for a long time.

33

34 S: I can be that person!

35

36 Slater: I can't keep just going on about it to my girlfriend all the time, she'd get bored!

37

1 S: Do you think – we talked about the sorts of things you brought back home with you and
2 so on. What about further travel and that sort of thing, have you got the bug for that?
3

4 Slater: I intended to go this year somewhere. I'm going to Turkey.
5

6 S: On holiday?
7

8 Slater: Yeah. On holiday for two weeks. Because it's with my family and my family won't
9 really get out of the villa or anything like that
10

11 S: That's difficult.
12

13 Slater: So, I think I'll try and do a couple of days where I go out on day trips but you can't
14 really go that far and you can't really immerse yourself on day trips but ...
15

16 S: We're away next week. You know, real family, little girl and so on...
17

18 Slater: Oh that'll be fantastic!
19

20 S: But that idea of a tourist thing but, do you think on the India trip you got beyond
21 being a tourist?
22

23 Slater: I think I did within probably the first day of getting there. There was the excitement
24 of it being a beach and being warm and from that, I was actually From the first night we
25 sort of went and spoke to locals in the restaurant and stayed on and spoke some more
26 afterwards and I think it was actually really important to speak to them without too many of
27 the big group being there. So when there was only a couple of us we really got to speak to
28 them.
29

30 S: I know from the conversations back in India, the time around the surfing, the time down
31 by the sea, was a lot of learning going on?
32

33 Slater: There was a lot, yeah. It was really important to me, actually, not just because I
34 enjoyed the being in the sea but actually doing something like surfing or an activity which
35 is sort of neutral. No-ones in control of ... really breaks down all those barriers of who's in
36 charge and who's got power, I think.
37

1 S: That's good. I like that.
2
3 Slater: It puts everyone on a level playing field, especially when the other guy that's out
4 there is five times as good as you at surfing and he knows he is! So it almost flips itself on
5 its head and you can learn a lot from them and they quite enjoy teaching you and talking to
6 you.
7
8 S: That's a nice microcosm of intercultural exchange or something. So, great stuff.
9
10 Slater: Maybe if I do this Masters, maybe that's what I'll write about: The surfing
11 relationships of people in India!
12
13 S: There we go! Find some more surf and we'll get out there. Anything else you want to
14 mention, [Slater] before we switch the tape off in terms of your learning or barriers or triggers
15 or anything since you got home?
16
17 Slater: I think the only sort of barriers were that maybe we didn't have as much time with
18 locals or in the city or travelling about to see actual people.
19
20 S: Time was precious, wasn't it?
21
22 Slater: We were quite sort of either in the minibus or at a school and we obviously had our
23 agenda, and it's like watching that film about the brothers ...
24
25 S: Oh "The Darjeeling Limited?" (Laughter)
26
27 Slater: Yeah. It was only when they got lost that, actually, they began to really learn. And
28 it was only when we managed to get out of our own sort of .. our agenda of what we were
29 doing and it was in the evenings when we had time to just sort of talk to people and get on
30 with people and the day when we went to the city to actually start to experience more of the
31 culture as opposed to us having our set thing that we needed to do and things we had to
32 learn.
33
34 S: That's good.
35

1 Slater: And finding the experience of schools and things like that – although it's not possible
2 – it would be nice if you could sort of just wander into a school and maybe be part of a
3 class and not be seen as an outsider. But actually, be really immersed in that.

4

5 S: I think that sums it up really well. And I think you did that sort of informal learning really
6 strongly just from the conversations we had over a beer or a curry or whatever it might be.

7 Great stuff. Well, I'll switch off now and thank you very much for your thoughts and time.

Appendix Five: Personal Communications

Appendix 5.1 Deborah's email dated 1.5.14

I think it's important see art as language and even if we cannot read, speak, write we all understand visual language. We have communicated through pictures since the beginning of time, and in fact it is our architecture, art and symbols, in my opinion, that can say more about history and a culture that just language by the definition we generally accept.

I think images break the barriers of language, many aspects are universally understood. Gestures and body language are commonly understood without words because this is visual language.

In terms of the images we used in the presentation their impact was due to the fact the visual language is so human. There's not always a need for translation although of course we have unique symbols within culture. But the art we showed, it broke down the language and cultural barrier, because art (being very biased here) brings people together in mutual understanding. They could see what they objects were, they could see what the children had learned how to do, the skill involved, the colours, the detail, and this surpasses anything we could say. I think because everyone, whether they realise it or not, are expert visual linguists, we learn more through visual communication than we know.

I've studied this a lot, and actually wrote a paper for my masters on universal visual symbols with body language, and how that can enhance storytelling through animation, and working in games I had to design environments and characters that told stories through what the player could see. Everything tells a story and we pick up on these stories.

Appendix 5.2 Elizabeth's email dated 1.5.14

I most definitely think art is a way of crossing language/culture barriers. They've started renaming Graphic Design degrees as BAs in Visual Communication - that's how much artists and designers exist in a world beyond language. But I somewhat disagree about surfing, I think those capable of doing it feel very emotional about the process.

One of the things that is most important about Art for me is its ability to enable communication outside of the verbal and written, and how this communication provides a connection between those looking at the art, but also between the viewer and the artist themselves. Human expression connects us, and we can connect with others with no shared language, but I think the visual arts make that connection much easier. The visual arts can connect people across time and across cultures; in the sense that we can still understand what fascinated Da Vinci, even when we cannot read his words or speak to him.

Perhaps, this helped [Deborah] and I's integration into another culture when in Kerala. We already felt a connection to the people through their art, their frescos, their temple architecture, etc, from the smallest section of text to the signs on the side of a road - there is a visual vernacular that you can relate to and in a small way interpret a culture through. But I would not say that only those trained in Art were capable of that.

There is no doubt that I feel it is easier and sometimes more powerful to communicate visually and that you can say things of much deeper meaning, infact you often integrate multiple different meanings into a single piece of art. When we were in India one of the more confident women was greatly interested in our practice and asked us many questions, those images moved her to speak to us and they seemed to inspire her as to how she could attempt the same in her classrooms.

Anyway, I digress. Not sure if any of that is entirely relevant but, it was a good question nonetheless.

Appendix 5.3 Dr Manish's email dated 20.2.15

(in response to my questions (a-d))

a. In what ways do you think the student teachers learn from the study visit?

1. From the reading/research they might make prior to making the visit.
2. From what they infer from things observed during the study visit.
3. From what they get from the media during the study visit.
4. From discussions with different people during the study visit.
5. From the mentors during formal and interaction during the study visit.
6. From observation and interaction with students/teachers/others during the visit.

b. What sorts of things best aid their learning?

1. A non-challenging environment in the place of visit.
2. Sufficient preparedness for the culturally unfamiliar things in the place of visit.
3. Possibility to interact with the right people (people with whom they can interact meaningfully)

c. How does the organisation (ie the way we influence their experiences) promote and/or hinder their learning?

1. The organisation essentially makes some choices and decisions, which ultimately decide the broad nature of the interactions and experience the students would have during a study visit.
2. This does hinder to some extent given the more ideal situation when students have a wide choice about the places they should go to and the people they should meet.
3. From a realistic perspective, under the circumstances, the organisation absolutely promotes their learning by planning situations for them within a short period of time, which they would never be able to cover otherwise.

d. Finally what do they learn about?

1. They basically learn to actually see/experience a new sociological, political, linguistic and cultural ambiance.

2. This may not be a thorough 'learning' in the deeper sense, as a first visit, however well planned it is, is likely to be only have an exposure impact.

3. Still as the programme is intensely planned, they would certainly pick up a lot of disconnected but very revealing information about the new place through their interactions and observations.

4. They learn about the pedagogic practices/difference which they are expected to.

5. They also incidentally learn an immense lot about a drastically different weltanschauung, though this learning may be seriously fragmented.

6. They would pick up innumerable cultural aspects new to them.

7. Ultimately they would learn to look at things new and strange with greater tolerance and from a more intellectual plane, seeing unique universal patterns and similarities.

8. Along with this, they would also learn to look at the sociocultural entity that was their homeland from a distance, and see aspects of it they might not have seen so far

Appendix Six: Extract from Personal Field Research Journal

South India Day 8 Friday 24th January 2014, Model School Teacher Training College Vyt
 PGCE Primary and 11-18 Inter-cultural Learning Journal

At 10:30 AM
 Paragraphs
 • Malayalam script
 • Interactions
 • Journal
 • Cultural text

Documenta → Copy → Exhibition

Malayalam script
 NA is required - too embarrassing
 give so much - 'have to copy'
 Realised how easy & easy
 be understood, they a little bit of our
 culture
 I'm proud to be British
 + we're not
 no occasion to
 be with the school - but standard - we're not
 concerned
 celebrated by Malay people - we're
 well
 accepted
 singing about it
 all year to say how
 happy we are to be here
 + 'welcome'
 - last year
 - last year
 - last year
 - last year

Changes
 Drop Box - 24 Feb

South India Day 9 Saturday 25th January 2014, Independent Learning
 PGCE Primary and 11-18 Inter-cultural Learning Journal

Thursday
 • English changes, on the 9th corner
 space on 'cultural' banners
 as - and others
 photo in their room
 dimensional help - some long tables for

Friday
 we would not have done the group if it had not been so
 perception + relation changed

Thursday
 • elephants in chains - expands for an interview
 • group - had to get up + talk for the group
 • first out of control zone - prefer to sit
 • but have found to be in 'attention' here
 • group doesn't have with themselves + conversation
 effect
 • 'language is hard to say things'
 • 'I speak punishment: withy with others
 • two - 2 yr. introduced
 • 'what - it's about to hit - but then - it's like
 • about the hits - many

Drop Box - 24 Feb

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