



# TEACHING & LEARNING BRITISHNESS

Encountering and negotiating  
discourses of identities and  
belongings through critical pedagogy

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## **DECLARATION**

I declare that this work is my own.

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# ABSTRACT

Teaching Britishness and 'Fundamental British Values' is a policy requirement increasingly placed on educational institutions. Yet the literature shows Britishness is fluid, evolving and often difficult to define for White British and ethnic minority youth, as well as for teachers, raising theoretical and pedagogical concerns about how best to respond to political initiatives. By examining the pedagogies employed by two Art classes in a southeast London school, this research aims to address the implications of Britishness exploration on young people's relationships with and within multicultural Britain. This ethnographic arts-based educational research examines (i) the complexities of teaching and learning Britishness, and (ii) young people's discourses of Britishness and belonging.

Through emotive artwork created by students, interviews with teachers and paired students, and extensive questionnaires, moving and personal insights into the significances of everyday racialised and classed belongings are investigated. The key findings show young people's experiences of local and global identities inform their notions of national identity. Students' sense of Britishness is deeply connected to intersectional and multiple experiences of social class, race and local attachments. Their national identity is often dwarfed by their local identity, and transnational postcolonial identities are also shown to impact upon young peoples' ways of belonging to Britain.

The research describes and supports critical pedagogical approaches to exploring identities and belongings. The emphasis on student voice, respectful and caring dialogue, and collaborative communication led to meaningful and engaged individual and collective critical reflections on students' stories of Britishness. The research shows teachers often require guidance and support on teaching critically about multiculturalism and social inequalities. The research presents students engaging with identity issues, advancing their own viewpoints, learning about alternative perspectives, and strengthening bonds with peers and teachers. Students felt empowered by having their critical counter-narratives validated and valued. Where students hear others' stories and tell their own, schools can become critical sites of opportunity for reflection, resistance and hopeful futures.

# CHAPTER ONE: AN INTRODUCTION TO TEACHING AND LEARNING BRITISHNESS

*Until the lions have their own historians, the history of the hunt will always glorify the hunter (Achebe, 1994).*

This research examines the teaching and learning of Britishness by presenting Art students and teachers exploring Britishness critically and collaboratively in the classroom. National identity and nation are not just difficult concepts for minority ethnic communities to define, but also for indigenous Britons (Vadher and Barrett, 2009), nevertheless Britain is “constantly engaged in debates about race, racism and national identity” (Malik, 2002:1). As teachers are wary of presenting “unthinking patriotism, discredited imperialism or an exclusive nationalism” (Osler and Starkey, 2005:12), important questions emerge about how educationalists might respond to policy calls to teach Britishness. My research investigates the reflections of teachers and students regarding the pedagogical processes involved in the exploration of Britishness in the classroom, as well as how British identities might be explored with ethnically, religiously, and culturally diverse students in a multicultural society.

Young people often perceive their views on belonging to Britain as neither heard nor respected (Harris et al., 2003). My research will argue identity exploration is important for young people, especially if they feel “marginalised” and “devalued” by wider society (Batsleer, 2008:17). I also demonstrate that notions of nationalism and national identity require examination, not only as peripheral phenomena on the side-lines of national consciousness, but also through thinking over their impact on everyday existences (Billig, 1995, Cameron, 1999). Concepts of nation cannot solely belong to far-right organisations like the British National Party (BNP) or the English Defence League (EDL)<sup>1</sup>. In my research study, recognising and elevating culturally diverse young people’s contributions to the multiple debates on Britishness matters. As well as examining perceptions about the teaching and learning of Britishness, this research seeks to (re)present students’ personal views and everyday experiences of British identities and belongings.

Despite some scholars arguing the importance of national borders has diminished (Wilson and Donnan, 1998), that the world is “obsessed with national pride and rampant with boundary wars” (Brennan, 1990:44) still seems true of today. *Banal nationalism* continues to occur daily

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<sup>1</sup> The English Defence League (EDL) are a far right racist and Islamophobic organisation.

through commonplace “beliefs, assumptions, habits, representations and practices” (Billig, 1995:6). These “ideological habits” allow for “the established nations of the West to be reproduced” daily; “the nation is indicated, or ‘flagged’, in the lives of its citizenry” without them perhaps even being aware that “nationalism, far from being an intermittent mood in established nations, is the endemic condition” (Billig, 1995:6). This research on Britishness, moves away from “elite master-narratives of nationhood that have fascinated historians, political scientists and quantitative sociologists”, by describing young people constructing nationhood, belonging and identities, as it is our responsibility to also research “the messy, fragmented and sometimes contradictory bottom-up constructions of nation” (Garner, 2012:455).

Young people’s perceptions of identities and belongings matter because youth are necessary in bringing about social justice (Leistyna, 2009, Smyth and McInerney, 2007), honest about lived realities, and potentially change-makers, thus “our futures depend on having a well-educated and politically engaged” youth (Smyth and McInerney, 2007:37). Official reviews/inquiries, and subsequent reports, often neglect youth voice (Ratcliffe, 2011, Osler, 2015), even when probing and documenting young people’s identities, belongings and attachments. Teaching Britishness, for example, was proposed by politicians as a way to develop young people’s sense of citizenship and national identity in multicultural society (Golmohamad, 2009). My research, therefore, involves young people working critically through conceptions of Britishness, belonging, and social inequalities. Just as anti-racist work should “address black people, their needs, aspirations, world views, and how they wish to live” (Gurnah, 1992:97), teaching and learning Britishness should focus on young British people’s needs, aspirations, and world views.

This chapter presents a rationale for the relevance of researching Britishness teaching and learning, before outlining the structure of the thesis. I will begin by presenting my position and motivations behind this research: (i) interest in identity issues and enthusiasm for identity work with youth, (ii) increasing societal interest in citizenship education and social cohesion (Sears and Hughes, 2006), and (iii) the debates on meanings of Britishness (Ward, 2009, Grube, 2011). One version of the African proverb referred to in the opening of this chapter is ‘until the lions learn to speak, we have only the hunter’s story’. Recognising the need for diverse historians, I adapt this proverb, and argue throughout my research that ‘Until the lion’s voices are heard, we have only the hunter’s story’. In this research, voices of Art students and teachers are heard in order to begin a conversation on the diverse counter-narratives that contest dominant notions of Britishness, as well as to interrogate mainstream pedagogies that support elitist ideologies. As an ethnic minority, and as a female British Muslim, my intersectional voice on identity and

multicultural belongings is necessary to broaden scholarship (Banks, 1973), particularly as, I am “not part of that privileged space of belonging” of White academia (Weedon, 2004:x). I will now present my personal, pedagogical, and professional experiences of identity issues.

## **INTEREST IN IDENTITY: ISSUES OF OTHERING**

### **Locating Myself in the Research**

My interest in identity issues is implicated in my own experiences of British belongings: “Understanding oneself, in terms of claiming an identity, is a means by which we announce ourselves to the world” (Headley, 2002:45). Born and bred in multicultural Britain, with Pakistani Muslim parentage, complex and evolving discourses of Britishness impact upon my social experiences. Whilst I frequently (re)negotiate my multiple attachments and my diasporic dilemmas of local, national and transnational belongings, encountering other people’s fascinatingly diverse identities encourages me to ardently seek their stories too. My childhood memories consist of complex struggles to belong to Britain, with cultural and religious heritage guardedly carving my personal British identity. I knew I was British, I knew I was Pakistani, I knew I was Muslim. I wanted to speak from all three identities, and more (Hall, 1991). At a young age I became aware “identities are never completed, never finished; that they are always as subjectivity itself is, in process” (Hall, 1991:47).

My parents talked over dinner with friends, planning the ‘Immigrant’s Dream’ of permanent return to the homeland. That “...immigrants consider themselves to be transients and not settlers” (Dahya, 1974:83) was once the norm, until it became a *myth of return* (Conway, 2005). Often first generation immigrants, including Hall (1991:52), were under the “illusion” they would return “back home”, perhaps because they were frequently asked about when they were going “back home”. My sister and I would joke about the ‘suitcase mentality’ of family and friends who stored many possessions in their suitcases - as though they could never quite fully unpack and settle - ready to take flight at a moment’s notice. Conversations reduced, and then eventually stopped, as my parents’ generation were reluctantly mobilised into slowly accepting notions of ‘home’ inevitably evolve; perhaps now ‘denizens’ who resided in Britain, because their children were British, but didn’t fully belong (Hussain and Bagguley, 2005) Multiple loyalties were emerging, and then shifting course, as my parents’ generation melded memories of Pakistan, and lingering psychological and spiritual motherland connections, with growing

attachments to Britain – now also a place known as home - where most would eventually come to spend the major part of their lives.

Contemporary debates on national identity reveal political discourses condemning ‘unintegrated’ ethnic minority communities, who are subsequently blamed for social disharmony, and criticised for not sharing a sense of collective belonging with indigenous peoples (Vasta, 2013). Observing schools, teachers and students struggle with the challenges of diversity (Sleeter, 2014), I also find myself negotiating increasing tensions and new complexities surrounding the prevalent discourses of multicultural belongings and national identities. Rejecting reification and homogeneity, I reassure myself race, nation and ethnicity are “constructed (not inherited) categories, shaped by political interests exploiting social antagonisms” (Cohen, 1995:2). I follow Brubaker (2004:11) in that race, nation and ethnicity “should be conceptualized not as substances or things or entities or organisms or collective individuals... but rather in relational, processual, dynamic, eventful, and disaggregated terms”. I remind myself even if “identities may be socially, culturally and institutionally assigned” (Weedon, 2004:6), identities are unfixed and fluid, sometimes contradictory and ambiguous, contextual and interdependent (Kershen, 1998, Parekh, 2000a, Lawler, 2008).

My curiosity about identity led me to contact writer Benjamin Zephaniah (Habib, 2014), who revealed his enthusiasm for counter-stories and resistance:

Now some people say a great symbol of Britishness is the Queen. I don't. I think a great symbol of Britishness is all the people who have fought against monarchy... the Levellers... the people who fought for freedom... the Suffragettes. That's the tradition that fascinates me.

I have been intrigued by the ways in which adoption and articulation of Britishness is written about; for example, pop star Freddie Mercury, a seventeen year old Parsi youth from Zanzibar arriving in 1960s Britain, is described as long constructing and negotiating ways of belonging to Britain: “Draped in references to Orientalism, Empire, Victoriana and *fin de siècle* English kitsch, Mercury critiqued the essence of Britishness even as he celebrated it within the context of a band he named after the institution of monarchy” (Stockdale, 2016:83).

## Teaching and Researching

Teaching in southeast London I employed critical pedagogies relevant to urban multicultural societies. Conversations with my students had revealed their boredom with studying texts by White, male canonical authors (Habib, 2008). Conscious of school curriculums constructed through 'cultural' and 'political' choices (Tomlinson, 2015), I challenged curriculum constraints by appealing to students' interests and social experiences. With my GCSE English students, I decided against teaching standard Hollywood blockbusters for the Media coursework even though the other classes were studying these films. I designed a module for students to explore *La Haine* (Kassovitz, 1995), a French film portraying *les banlieues*, urbanisation, masculinity, racism and ethnicity. Watching and analysing not only a foreign film, but one that was black and white and subtitled was a new and exciting experience for my initially reluctant GCSE students.

They soon came to appreciate the sociological themes of the film; multicultural and postcolonial Paris was relevant and fascinating to these London students. The popularity of the lessons resulted in my colleagues also adopting *La Haine* for media coursework at the behest of their students. Inspired by critical pedagogy, my teacher-researcher roles would come together to develop new ways of developing identity work. My Year Eight class (aged 12-13) studied *Refugee Boy* (Zephaniah, 2001), a powerful text about desire for place, refuge, security and belonging, and I wrote about the need for engaged pedagogies (Habib, 2008:51): "Curriculum reform should address the voices of teachers, students and writers, who believe in the emotional and social impact of relevant and real books". I wrote about the students' views on British Muslim identities (Habib, 2006), after we critically examined an Amir Khan interview and entered a discussion on what it might mean to be British and Muslim (Kureishi, 2006). With my GCSE (aged 15-16) and AS and A level English Language (aged 16-18) students I followed Freirean approaches by developing their standard English, explaining this was necessary to pass their examinations and for future education and employment:

...the liberatory teacher will, thus, train students yet simultaneously problematize the training- will, for instance, teach standard English and correct usage while also problematizing their status as inherently superior to other dialects or grammars (George, 2001:102).

Yet I defied prescriptivism by encouraging students to embrace language as contextual and evolving in their language investigations.

### **Problematizing Identity Categories and Labels**

Black and White cultures/identities are not homogenous, thus essentialising cultures and identities is problematic (Cokley, 2002, Yancy, 2005). As a language and literature teacher, I am also fascinated by the sociolinguistics of identity issues. Regarding the complex language of race, it seems “conventions governing the capitalization of racial identifiers are currently in flux” (Watson, 2013:ix). Some critical race scholars intentionally avoid capitalising racial categories. Lewis (2004) refers to ‘white’, ‘whiteness’, ‘black’ and ‘blackness’. Allen (2009), maybe because of marginalised Appalachian White roots, capitalises Whiteness. White students benefit from racial ideologies (Lewis, 2004), but White working-class students frequently do not experience the power and privilege associated with elite hegemonic Whiteness, therefore, capitalising Whiteness in presenting this research was a conscious decision. As my White British research participant, Ellie, highlights, she is Othered as the White working-class *chav* by humiliating wider social discourses (See Chapter Six). In educational institutions, White working-class students are sometimes perceived as “backward” in contrast with White middle-class “respectable” students (Preston, 2003:7).

When writing about Blackness, we make a political statement with a capital B; we can similarly empower White working-class students. I also want to draw attention to Whiteness as a social construct by capitalising the W (Ignatiev and Garvey, 1996, Shore, 2001, Foster, 2003, Lee, 2004, Kuehnel, 2009, Lund and Carr, 2010). Scholars sometimes refer to ‘race’ using quotation marks to problematise the unnatural notion (Rowe, 2012). Other advocates of critical race theory (CRT), like Delgado or Ladson-Billings, do not employ quotation marks when referring to race (Bhopal and Preston, 2012). To avoid clumsy and cumbersome stylistics of placing quotation marks around other social categories like class, following Jiwani (2006) and DaCosta (2007), I choose to highlight from the beginning my deepest commitment to deconstructing the flawed construct of race without continually employing quotation marks or italicising. Similarly, I recognise the derogatory label of *chav* is also a problematic social construction reflecting class prejudices and discrimination, but again, I will not be italicising it throughout my writing.

### **PRELIMINARY RESEARCH: IS BRITISHNESS INTERESTING?**

Before researching the teaching and learning of Britishness, I wanted to gauge students’ interest in identity issues. I collected empirical data and tested the viability and design aspects of researching the topic (Thomas, 1998, Anderson and Arsenault, 2005, Lodico et al., 2010). I was aware that “the historical, social and political construction of British identity” is opaque and

impenetrable, multiple and obscure: the “nature and contours of such an identity are exceptionally difficult to describe and analyse” (Cohen, 1994: 1). Nevertheless, I was excited to provide students with opportunities to try and describe and analyse Britishness, just as I had been keen to encourage students to explore *La Haine* and *Refugee Boy*, through doing identity work in the safe spaces of classrooms. My preliminary research (which I will briefly describe in this section to provide the background to my main research study) was two-fold:

- *Hidden British Histories* exhibition responses mainly from Year Eight students (aged 12-13)
- Interviews with Year Eleven (aged 15-16) and Year Thirteen (aged 17-18) students about Britishness.

This preliminary research would lead me to appreciate students need sustained and in-depth classroom activity to know more about British identities and belongings. I now turn to the findings of this preliminary research before outlining the chapters in my main study. Two parts to the preliminary research will be discussed: (i) responses to an exhibition on Hidden British Histories, and (ii) interviews with Year Eleven (aged 15-16) and Year Thirteen (aged 17-18) students.

### ***Hidden British Histories (HBH) exhibition responses***

My colleague at the school, a History teacher, had explained the difficulty in finding materials on the Black and Asian<sup>2</sup> contribution to WW II, arguing more inclusive materials were needed to recognise the distinctive culturally diverse threads representing British identities. Engaging in teacher-researcher activity, I ordered the Hidden British Histories (HBH) travelling exhibition (BBC News, 2004). This exhibition, containing testimonies, narratives and photographs - ordinarily displayed in local museums and community organisations - illustrated Black, Asian and Jewish connected British histories. My motivation was if “those who cannot see themselves reflected” in the mirror of national heritage, do not feel that they can belong to Britain, (Hall, 2005:24), perhaps White Britons might struggle to see ethnically diverse Britons as integral to the story of Britain. The HBH exhibition was located in the library where students could view it over a two-week period. A feedback box was placed by the exhibition so students could respond to key questions about the exhibition. My colleagues brought their English and History classes

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<sup>2</sup> Like Visram (2002), I employ ‘Asian’ to refer to the people from the Indian subcontinent, whilst ‘Black’ refers to African and African-Caribbean people, but I also use it as a *political* term to include Asian, African and African-Caribbean people.

to view the exhibition before undertaking relevant classroom activity. The majority of responses received in the feedback box were from students who had visited the library during lesson time. The librarian explained other students visiting the library in their own time did study the exhibition, but tended not to fill in the questionnaires.

The exhibition feedback revealed students across the year groups believed speaking English/having an English accent, citizenship, and living in Britain for a long time, were key features of British identity. Language is important to national identity (Williams, 1999), moreover, language can aid inclusion as we can learn a new language if we move to a new nation (Anderson, 2006). The tabloid newspapers, in Britain, sometimes create moral panics about ethnic minorities' multilingual repertoires:

...the report headed 'MIGRANTS SHUN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE: 4 million people living here hardly speak it' (The Express, 31.1.2013, p.1). The report began: 'MORE than four million migrants in Britain cannot or rarely speak English'. This can only be interpreted as a dishonest representation of the census figures... (in fact) 79.3% said they spoke English 'well' or 'very well' (Sebba, forthcoming).

The civic boundary of Britishness (Jacobson, 1997), seemed to matter to the young people who viewed the HBH exhibition. Hussain and Bagguley (2005) argue citizenship is now an important part of the identities of second and subsequent generation British ethnic minorities who feel they can assert their citizenship rights as these are their birth rights. Some students also suggested British identity and/or citizenship could be acquired after a period of living in Britain.

Through the HBH exhibition students learned of Britain's multicultural past, showing interest in the historical dimension to exploring the story of Britain. Vadher and Barrett (2009) identify historical Britishness as an important theoretical boundary for young people (See Chapter Two Part B). The UK Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition government (2010-2015) was keen to promote 'our island story' through British history teaching in schools, but theirs was a narrow and exclusive notion of belonging not acknowledging the legacy of our imperial past (Sales, 2012, Bhambra, 2014). My interview with Zephaniah also highlighted history as central to any discussion on Britishness. He emphasised Britain's long line of settlers, and raised concerns about teaching a "sanitised version" of the history of British institutions and their inextricable links with imperialistic ventures of past and present (Habib, 2014). My main research study argues the importance of recognising the relevance of attachments to identities of place in discourses of belonging, as well as historical boundaries of Britishness (See Chapter Six). The HBH questionnaire responses revealed students' interest in Britain's Hidden Histories. Britishness involved knowing British history, some students suggested. My main research study

with GCSE Art classes also reveals student engagement with the historical boundary of Britishness: Joe's passion for history and Kadisha's keenness to explore her Jamaican roots emphasise the significance of Britain's past to its present (See Chapter Six).

Students responding to the HBH exhibition referred to the difficulties and complexities of belonging in Britain, as well as treatment of immigrants and racism. Some students felt the exhibition offered new perspectives and changed their views on British history; they seemed engaged with the personal (his)stories of those who had come to live in Britain. Interestingly, one Year Seven student (aged 11-12) mentioned that she had learned the word 'Britishness'. The students' learning seemed heavily connected to what they found *interesting* about the exhibition, for example, learning about racism, diverse cultures, immigration and hidden British history. Some students reflected upon issues of social equality, perseverance and belonging, as well as gaining knowledge about ethnic minority achievements and integration. A Black African student stated that she had not known of these different cultures until viewing this exhibition. Some students perceived Britishness as synonymous with Whiteness and White ancestry/parentage, whilst many students, from diverse backgrounds, described a vision of multicultural Britain where racism was seen as oppressive and ugly. The exhibition, some students believed, had informed them of the realities of the everyday racism of Britain's past.

### **Year Eleven and Year Thirteen Students' Discourses of Britishness**

The HBH exhibition gave useful insight into younger students' interest in identity issues. I also wanted to know more about the perceptions of older students who had volunteered to converse with me about Britishness. Their parents received letters home from the school's Principal informing them about my research on identity and requesting permission for their son or daughter to be interviewed. I discussed ethical issues, confidentiality, privacy and anonymity before recording the interviews with the students. I will now briefly discuss the key themes that emerged, which highlighted the need for exploring Britishness through sustained classroom pedagogies.

### **Year Thirteen Students on Britishness**

The three Year Thirteen students (aged 17-18) conversed with me as a group for approximately one hour after school. I taught English Language to Afruz (second-generation Bangladeshi male), Michelle (second-generation Chinese female), and Robert (Ugandan/Russian heritage) in Years Twelve and Thirteen<sup>3</sup>. The Year Thirteen group interview highlighted student awareness that

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<sup>3</sup> I had also taught Michelle in Year Nine, and Afruz in Year Eight.

the civic/state boundary can be easily encroached upon by nationalistic fervour. Robert's multiple cultural influences – Ugandan, Russian and British – steered him away from identifying with nations. Throughout the interview, Robert frequently argued promoting nationalism is dangerous and symbolically demeans the Other:

Robert: I don't see anything wrong with being proud of your culture, but when you start teaching nationalism, you start to be wary of other cultures, maybe thinking yours is superior to theirs... that's a danger. You shouldn't teach that in schools. Somewhere like America, they may not say it, but they have this air of superiority about them, they think that other cultures coming there should maybe conform to their society. There is that sense in this country still that when foreigners or whoever come... you see that in the media... that immigrants are perhaps seen as inferior because of their culture. They are expected to acclimatise to British culture. But I think that people should embrace multiculturalism because that's the world we live in.

Nationalistic sentiments homogenising diverse and complex societies (Cohen, 1994) was a concern to Robert, as was the problematic "ideological aura attached to nationhood" (Billig, 1995:4). The three students also alluded to the current post 9/11 and post 7/7 climate as a time when policies were focusing upon Britishness; they touched upon the media, far right extremism and patriotic pride:

Robert: If they told me to learn about Britishness, I'd just be very sceptical thinking that they are just trying to teach me nationalism.

Afruz: ...media play a huge part in influencing what I think, so when I think of Britishness, straight away NF comes to my mind... The only people I can see who have 100% Britishness in them are NF<sup>4</sup>.

The racist violence Bangladeshi communities had once suffered at the hands of the National Front seems to be entrenched in Afruz' experiences of Britishness. Other students I taught also articulated notions of Britishness and belonging as frequently unsettled by the presence of the NF. Perhaps because electoral support rose for the National Front in 2002 (Jensen et al., 2012), this extreme right wing group, that some might think defunct, was a visible threat to the ethnic minority students. The male students recalled playing football in Year Eleven (aged 15-16), explaining there was 'segregation' as the White males would want to play 'Whites against Blacks'. This might have begun in jest, they explained, but soon became the norm. It was always the White boys who represented England against "anyone coloured, anyone not White, anyone not English basically", stated Afruz. When Afruz and Robert spoke about racism being an everyday feature of school life, Michelle articulated her shock to hear about the racist jibing common amongst the boys. She had not encountered the racist taunts in her experience of school. Afruz explained to Michelle that the White boys used words like "coon": "do you know

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<sup>4</sup> NF refers to the National Front – an extreme far right political organisation.

White people used words like that in the 1970s, when proper racism happened. They just bring them words back". The students' awareness of the 'proper racism' of the past was that it was more overt, violent and ubiquitous than the racism of today.

Though Michelle claimed she "felt" British, she referred to herself as having "adapted" to British culture, implying she had to work to fit into British society. Michelle frequently mentioned her mother's sense of identity was strongly defined as "non-British", that her mother was proud to instil Chinese values in her daughter believing Chinese-ness contrasted with Britishness. Michelle explained her mother often complained Michelle was too "westernised" and too British:

Michelle: My parents have brought me up in their rules, and I think I've taken the midway, I've met them midway. I do think I feel more British. I mean I'm Chinese, but the way Chinese people think is very different to... I mean my mum always preaches that maybe I'm too British. She says I even look it as well... (laughs)

Michelle believed her mother regards acquiring a sense of Britishness as being at the expense of losing a sense of Chinese-ness. Michelle was exploring her British identity, albeit reluctantly, aware of her mother's disapproval of her contemporary Britishness: "Britain nowadays she feels is more relaxed; there's not many social norms anymore". As a first-generation immigrant perhaps Michelle's mother's experiences of "the boundaries of belonging in Britain" resulted in her elevating Chinese traditions and ties (Hall, 2002b:5).

The Year Thirteen students also highlighted the importance of language in retaining their parents' culture. Michelle, keen to explore her emerging sense of Britishness, was aware of her use of language:

Michelle: The way I speak, and the way my mum would like me to speak, the accent for example. I do feel British ...when I stopped learning Chinese, (my mum) said "You just don't want to be Chinese anymore.

The students were conscious of the connections between retaining the home language and preserving the home culture. Bilingualism is seen as a rarity and a deviation from the monolingual norm by many Europeans (Romaine, 1995), but is the norm for many youth (Kenner, 2000, Kenner and Hickey, 2008), thereby problematizing the strong relationship between language and national identity (Harding-Esch and Riley, 2003). Some parents may decide against teaching children their native language, believing acquiring English would be more useful (Shin, 2013). Michelle stated her parents regarded abandonment of the home language as a marker of being too British:

Michelle: My parents think there's a stigma attached to parents not speaking Chinese to their children...because my mum's friend, their daughter never bothers speaking Chinese to them...usually responds in English. It's really weird... (My parents) don't like it... They think that they are losing their identity.

Passion for Bengali<sup>5</sup> was displayed by Afruz: "I actually read, write and sleep my language, because I've been taught that when I was very young". Even when students do not use or master their heritage language, there are symbolic attachments evident in how they refer to it as "my language" (Hamers and Blanc, 2000:204). Robert regretted not taking advantage of language opportunities as a child:

Robert: ...What Michelle is saying is completely true. That example of responding in English, that happened to me. I think that's why I lost my culture or my sense of culture 'cos for year and years and years I responded in English. And my mum stopped speaking Russian to me...because she couldn't handle it, 'cos it's kind of hard when someone is responding to you in a different language. So then as I was at school, she thought, just learn English. Only recently I started learning Russian again. And maybe that's why I completely lost my sense of Russian identity 'cos if you don't speak the language, there's nothing else really.

The students' reflections upon learning and valuing Russian, Bengali and Chinese emphasise the importance of multilingual and multicultural belongings to these young Londoners who deem ethnolinguistic identity and belonging as closely intertwined (Hamers and Blanc, 2000). The HBH Exhibition showed the dominance of the English language in students' notions of national identity. Perhaps this is reflective of the government's "anti-multilingualism agenda" (Sebba, forthcoming) increasingly evident in public and media discourses. The Year Thirteen and Year Eleven students, speaking from their personal experiences, understood multilingualism permits the development of ethno-cultural belongings and identities.

### **Year 11 Students on Britishness**

My individual interviews with two Year Eleven students (aged 15-16) were with Victoria, a White female Year Eleven student from Peckham, who had converted to Islam a year before I interviewed her, and Kemal, a Year Eleven male with a Turkish background. The Year Eleven students both emphasised their need to find a sense of belonging in British society. Victoria was proudly merging her new religion with her Britishness, determined to hold onto her Britishness, despite incurring Islamophobic abuse:

Victoria: I've got a lot of abuse from my neighbours. Kids, my age - near where I live - they'll hurl abuse at me...For some reason they call me "Paki". They don't think I am British anymore just because I'm Muslim. It doesn't make sense. I mean I'm still from the same heritage. I've just changed my ideas about the way I think outwardly about God... There's not enough knowledge going around about the deep understanding of

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<sup>5</sup> I remembered afterwards I should have asked Afruz if he was referring to any dialect.

Islam especially because of the media and its bad portrait of it, so people don't know what it's all about.

Victoria was regarded as treacherous, as 'Other', and as no longer British. Such hostile reactions raise questions about the relationship between religion - especially Islam - and Britishness; as well as about how notions of nationalism reinforce "exclusion, fear and anxiety vis-à-vis significant Others" (Rew and Campbell, 1999: 11). To Victoria, insults such as "Paki" Other her. She critiques dominant representations of Britishness that she feels exclude her: "...being British in this country is about the White Christian background, and to do with the monarchy". Through counter-narratives, she was developing her own ideas of multicultural British 'conviviality' (Gilroy, 2005). Victoria argued cultural mixing and evolving results in a London where "being British is about blending with other cultures, so I wouldn't be able to say there's one way of being British".

As a teenager growing up in London, Victoria envisioned a plural inclusive notion of Britishness, traversing the *in-betweenness* of diasporic communities. Becoming Muslim may have allowed Victoria to find a new space of belonging, but simultaneously she articulated challenges, confusions, and conflicts. The Muslim identity provided her with a space to belong, but conversely made her aware she did not belong: "It puts a smile on my face when I see another White Muslim. I haven't seen many of us". Victoria explained she was drawn to the cultural/religious lifestyles, family-oriented values, and extended families of the Muslim communities, who some Britons, she felt, might view as non-British. Yet she struggled to belong:

Victoria: ...I find it harder to break into circles with Muslims because they are so strong in their bonds together. I think it's good as everyone's looking after you...no need to worry about anyone backstabbing you or anything, but it is hard to get to know these people.

Notions of family and community also entered Kemal's notions of belonging, who argued interactions outside of school within the Turkish community raised his cultural self-esteem and identifications:

I've always been brought up...my mum, my dad, my grandma...with my Turkish history and culture. When I'm with my friends in school, I wouldn't say I was Turkish or anything, but when I'm at home, I stick to my culture. That's the reason why I feel more Turkish.

Pride about using the Turkish language, and learning about Turkish history and culture, was evident in Kemal's discourses on British identities. He explained he felt British when in Turkey, when the Turkish people perceived him as British; but he felt more Turkish in Britain. Kemal highlighted advantages of British identity experienced when abroad: "When you go somewhere

different, like Slovakia or something, and you say you are British... so it's like being known. You have more power when you go places". Kemal's geo-political notion of Britishness connected with holding what he referred to as a "red passport", a key instrument, offering powerful global status and advantages (Jacobson, 1998, Tziouvas, 2009, Pitkänen et al., 2012).

For Kemal and Victoria, belonging is crucial, but belonging to Britain is difficult when wider society, other than because of religion. They seek a space to belong that is more inviting, accepting and diverse. To be British is not at the forefront of identity for these students, even if they are brought up in Britain. They seem to be seeking other spaces of belonging that some might deem unBritish. Britishness, connoting Whiteness and Christianity, excluded Victoria and Kemal, who were keenly exploring *hybrid* identities (Bhabha, 1994), and developing "cultural intelligence through the advantages of 'in-betweenness', the straddling of two cultures and the consequent ability to 'negotiate the difference'" (Hoogvelt, 2001:170). This *in-betweenness* "carries the burden of the meaning of culture", and also "makes it possible to begin envisaging national, anti-national histories of the 'people'" (Bhabha, 1994:56).

Victoria and Kemal negotiated some levels of hybridity: Victoria through her relationship with Muslim neighbours and the local mosque congregation, whilst Kemal extensively discussed his attending a Turkish supplementary school. The Year Eleven students I interviewed had revealed significant themes in their discussions, but I felt that my main research project should allow students more time and opportunity to deeply reflect upon the complexity of Britishness. Students needed a sustained period of time to explore their personal and multiple experiences of belonging to Britain, as these preliminary interviews highlighted. In the next section, I will discuss how I decided to proceed with an in-depth research project to investigate more Year Eleven students' discourses of Britishness, but also investigate how they experienced the teaching and learning of Britishness.

### **Moving Forwards: The Teaching and Learning of Britishness**

After the preliminary investigation into identities and belongings, an in-depth research project on the teaching and learning of Britishness began (See Chapters Five and Six). My preliminary investigations had pointed towards students needing to freely discuss the concept of Britishness with their peers and teachers in safe and structured classroom spaces. My preliminary work had shown students willing to discuss Britishness and intersecting identities. Some White British students had keenly expressed their almost defensive pride in Britishness, maybe because expressing 'pride' in being British has been sullied by the British National Party (BNP) appropriating symbols of Britishness and even the term *British* itself. The BNP's attempt to

define Britishness on assimilatory and Islamophobic terms is evident in their claims that a ‘totally assimilated Greek-Armenian’ is able to stand as a BNP candidate, for he is ‘not a Pakistani Muslim’ (Slater, 2006:10). My preliminary research also found some ethnic minority students equating Britishness with Whiteness. The notion of Britishness, I observed, required deeper levels of examination, so students could better understand complex identities and belongings. White working-class students needed opportunities to express pride in their cultural heritage, especially when they commented upon the strong cultural ties of ethnic minority peers. The preliminary research also pointed towards students demonstrating awareness of the changing connotations of Britishness. Some students tended to highlight a more inclusive notion of national identity, celebrating the multicultural nature of British society today, particularly their city of London.

The HBH exhibition feedback and the student interviews revealed many curious complexities and ambivalences about Britishness, importantly supporting students’ interest in identity issues. The HBH exhibition provided breadth of understanding about students’ engagement levels with issues of identity, and highlighted significant boundaries of Britishness. The Year Eleven and Year Thirteen interviews provided initial depth of understanding about students’ sense of Britishness and their experiences of multicultural London. The students’ ideas intensified my interest in seeking out youth perceptions of multicultural British identities, as well my keenness to know how this could be explored through sustained classroom pedagogies. In summary, I observed high levels of student engagement and interest in identity issues, multicultural Britain, race and racism, and defining and discussing Britishness. Through their definitions and discourses of Britishness, I came to understand that students would bring forth other identity categories that mattered to them, for example, language, religion and racism.

To build upon my preliminary research, moving forwards to my main research study, I aimed to work towards understanding the pedagogies involved in teaching and learning about Britishness. I wanted to steer away from Britishness teaching being side-lined in extra-curricular subjects, seeking an avenue to reflect on Britishness in a personal, meaningful, structured and specific way. Students would be given time to work on their ideas of Britishness. Although the one hour interviews with the Year Eleven and Year Thirteen students yielded significant stories on identity, the interviews only gave definitions of Britishness. I wanted to learn more about how the students and teachers regarded the process of studying Britishness, in addition to learning more about diverse discourses. I proposed a project on Britishness to the Head of Art and we decided it would be valuable to explore Britishness in the classroom setting through

GCSE coursework. I wanted the topic to have significance by giving the students a safe and structured classroom setting through their chosen GCSE option. The artwork would contribute to their final GCSE grade, giving the project more gravity and significance.

By using data from a GCSE Art project over a longer period of time, I would be able to obtain deeper and more reflective responses from the students. The data collected from the Hidden British Histories exhibition had indicated students' interest in issues of ethnicity and identity. Now I wanted to delve further into their definitions and discourses on Britishness at a deeper level and through the curriculum. Based upon my findings from the preliminary research, for this thesis, I decided to conduct an in-depth research project into students' experiences of identity, home and belonging through sustained classroom pedagogies. This research, therefore, investigates classroom pedagogies with students and teachers doing identity work, by examining complex discourses of local, national and global identities arising in discussions and explorations of Britishness. My social experiences, teaching, and research, led me to conduct an empirical enquiry from the position that identity is never stagnant or stationary but in a state of rapid flux (Hall, 1992b, May, 1999), similarly treating Britishness also as contingent to change. In the next section, I present my personal position on Britishness.

### **POSITIONALITY: MULTICULTURAL BRITISHNESS**

My research understands that government is often "compromised by its attempts to placate racism and xenophobia within its increasingly disenfranchised electorate" (Back et al., 2002:452). Subsequent policies and practices might manifest that government "flirtations with multicultural democracy are combined, where opportune, with appeals to the remnants of racially exclusive nationalism and the phantoms of imperial greatness" (Back et al., 2002:452). My position is underpinned by the fundamental view that government promotion of Britishness brings more questions than solutions, as well as "fundamental disagreements about the nature of citizenship, belonging and what it means to be 'British'" (Sales, 2012:34). Readings on nation and identity reveal perplexity and discord where "'British values' and commitment to the 'British way of life' have taken the role of Durkheim's civil religion of the state, betraying a melancholic nostalgia for a monochrome Britishness that probably never existed" (Gidley, 2014:168). Contemporary Britishness is critiqued for sometimes evoking "a particular narrative of British history" (Croft, 2012:167), leading us to "distort the character and history" (Parekh, 1999:323) of nation. Critiquing the misrepresented character and history can counteract "the power of

the rhetoric of 'Britishness'" (Andrews and Mycock, 2008:143) for - as my research substantiates - there is no singular way to experience Britishness (See Chapter Six).

When Commonwealth citizens from India, Pakistan and the Caribbean came to establish homes in post-war Britain, "it became increasingly difficult to uphold the idea that a British identity was exclusively a white identity" (Cohen, 1994:18). Nevertheless, the supposed "common sense" view prevailed that "Britishness was a finite collective identity and could not accommodate all of these immigrants" (Ward, 2004:125). Current melancholic nostalgia (Gidley, 2014) for Britishness potentially excludes the voices of ethnic minority and White working-class communities from myths about nation (See Chapter Two). Successive second, third, fourth and even fifth generations settled in Britain are still asked about 'back home': What is life like back home? How often do you go back home? Where is back home? Sometimes, deliberately, when asked about 'back home', I will reply: "Lancashire".

I, therefore, attempt to write with awareness of hundreds of years of colonial rule and postcolonial posturing fashioning modern Britishness. Politicians appoint themselves as vanguards of "shaping, defining and guarding 'Britishness'" (Grube, 2011:628): "Patriotism and ideas of national identity have long been the playthings of politicians" (Ward, 2004:93). Yet colonial rule in distant lands, and here in Britain, complicates 'Britishness', defying the simplicity attributed to national identities by politicians. Seamus Heaney, for example, was offended by and rejected the label 'British' poet (Cullen, 2000, Thurston and Alderman, 2014): "be advised/ My passport's green./ No glass of ours was ever raised/ To toast *The Queen*" (Heaney, 1983). I follow the guidance, therefore, that we should "move beyond theorizing how diasporic identities are constructed and consolidated" to researching how diasporic identities are "practised, lived and experienced" (Braziel and Mannur, 2003:9).

During World War Two, "upholding Britishness" was "part of the national war effort" (Burlinson, 1993:120); since then Britishness has been frequently reinvented by media, political, and popular discourses, imagined in opposition to and as needing preservation from the Other (Croft, 2012). Politicians create "rhetorical frames through which to define how the public sees policy issues, how they decide on who is a friend and who is an enemy, and how they assess who are outsiders and who are insiders" (Grube, 2011:628). Citizenship education and social cohesion have been high on Britain's agenda (Sears and Hughes, 2006), and intense debates on the impact of migration and multiculturalism on national cohesion are still rampant (Murji and Solomos, 2015). The right-wing blame multicultural policies for social exclusion and urban riots, yet these allegations lack empirical evidence (Finney and Simpson, 2009, Wright and Bloemraad,

2012, Watson and Saha, 2012, Heath and Demireva, 2014). Some politicians deny the relationship between Britishness, Whiteness and racism (Back et al., 2002), yet British cultural nationalism was historically “a language of race” (Gilroy, 1992:56):

Whiteness nowhere features as an explicit condition of being British, but it is widely understood that Englishness, and therefore by extension Britishness is racially coded... Race is deeply entwined with political culture and with the idea of nation, and underpinned by a distinctive kind of British reticence – to take race or racism seriously, or even to talk about them at all, is bad form...(Parekh, 2000b:38).

*Race* - difference “associated with migration, origin and colour” (Finney and Simpson, 2009:5) - is a highly problematic and contested concept (Gunew, 2004, Fredman, 2011, James, 2006): “An individual’s race is determined socially and psychologically, not biologically” (James, 2006:44). The concept of race entered the European vocabulary in the eighteenth century, before then it was not used in Africa:

While Africa was a diverse continent in terms of the ethnic groups, languages spoken, and spiritual systems practiced, there was a cultural unity that allowed for an African worldview that did not facilitate a spirit of conquest, exploitation, and enslavement of people based on such an arbitrary physical marker as skin color (Cokley, 2002).

*Ethnicity* - the historical, political and cultural construction of identities (Hall, 1996b) - includes “the rituals of daily life, including language and religion” (Gunew, 2004:21), but even with shared ethnic identities, individual experiences differ (Maylor et al., 2007). Ethnic groups are not homogenous (Bhavnani et al., 2005, Fredman, 2011).

In the spirit of critical race methodology (See Chapter Four), my research explores ambiguous British identities by arguing “...it is worth raising questions about the relevance, substance and validity of what is commonly termed national identity today” (Ware, 2009:8). Ideas about teaching Britishness arose from social concerns like young people’s political disenfranchisement, fragmented multicultural society (Golmohamad, 2009), ‘radicalisation’ of young Muslim males and the educational failure of White working-class males (Jerome and Clemitshaw, 2012). I write knowing such discourses about troubled, failing and lost generations of potentially criminal youth is not new: “there is a long history of social anxiety that finds its crystallising focus in a preoccupation with the rising youth generation, and the crime and violence for which it is responsible” (Pearson, 2012:45).

This research with southeast London youth shows a need to work towards an inclusive society without essentialising, stereotyping, or creating a maligned Other (Mavroudi, 2010). Rather than deconstruct often irreconcilable political versions of Britishness (Sales, 2012), I seek an empirical understanding of students’ notions of British identities. Refusing to accept hegemonic

constructions from the top-down on national identity issues, I focus upon investigating what matters to young Britons from the bottom-up (Bechhofer and McCrone, 2010). I am interested in Britishness not solely as an analytical or theoretical category, but also in (re)presenting Britishness through promoting student voice. My research is informed by critical ideas about cultural and educational practices as able to yield “new forms of identity and agency and serve as ways of subverting and negotiating dominant forms of identity” (Weedon, 2004:10). Thus, in this research, I engage in the teaching and learning of Britishness through arts based practice, (the strengths and benefits of which I argue for in Chapter Four). Rather than focus on “national governmental reports and discourse” (Thomas, 2011:4), I gathered empirical data about the “lives, opinions and identities of young people... the reality of policy impacts on those young people and their communities” (Thomas, 2011:6). I will now outline the socio-political context in which I researched Britishness with young people in a southeast London school.

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING BRITISHNESS: POLICY, PROCESS AND PRACTICE**

### **Teaching Britishness 2007-2010**

My research was conducted during this period. It was a time when the Labour government, towards the end of its term in office, was promoting Britishness in schools. Britishness was suggested as a solution to social problems associated with certain social groups (Garner, 2007, BBC News, 2007, Ajegbo et al., 2007); complexities and uncertainties surrounding notions of immigration, identity, multiculturalism, and the Union’s future were also seen as potentially resolvable by promoting Britishness (Andrews and Mycock, 2008). The terror attacks in the USA on 11 September 2001 (9/11) and in London in July 2005 (7/7) amplified debates about Britishness (Kiwani, 2012): “senior government figures began to stress the importance of education in uniting the nation” (Osler, 2008:11).

Gordon Brown, before he was Prime Minister, called on Britons to be patriotic (Golmohamad, 2009): positioning “what he calls ‘Britishness’, at the top of the public agenda”, but his conception of British values were “tolerance, fairness and enterprise, none of which is unique to the country” (Parekh, 2008:69). The President of the National Union of Teachers (NUT), at the time I commenced my research, argued politicians were reinforcing racist rhetoric by ordering schools to teach Britishness (Eason, 2007). Researching identity appeals to my sense of self, as I have argued earlier in this chapter, yet an underlying uneasiness about possible hegemonic attempts to impose an unwelcome patriotic (or even ‘racist’) agenda on schools,

troubled me. I was becoming aware of the promotion of Britishness, a social phenomenon, as “officially constructed patriotism” by the powerful elite (Colley, 1992b:145), particularly when political and media spokespeople encourage emotional attachments to Britishness through “national holidays, sporting events, jubilees, parades and public service broadcasting” (Osler and Starkey, 2005:11).

I decided that when researching the teaching and learning of Britishness, I had the chance to “make hegemonic forms of subjectivity and identity strange” by “problematizing and relativizing them” (Weedon, 2004:4). This motivated me to research young people’s narratives on Britishness. At the same time I commenced my research, I observed the Ajebo Report (2007) come about because government combined a “need to counter terrorist activity and the strengthening of national identity and British values through the curriculum” (Osler, 2015:7). By 2009, though, the “wave of patriotic rhetoric” from politicians calling for Britishness to be promoted in schools and society “began to break on the shores of public indifference” (Hand and Pearce, 2009:464). A sense of Britishness sometimes becomes fashionable - or other times is presented as necessary - rising, falling and rising again in public rhetoric and political ideologies. The zeal for national identity might fade into the background until the next politician proposes new national identity policies, which is what happened (as I discuss next) when the new government came into power.

### **Fundamental British Values (FBV) 2011-2015**

After the Coalition government came into power in 2010, debates about immigration, place and national identities amplified. Communities Secretary, Eric Pickles, wanted an end to “state-sponsored multiculturalism” seeking to popularise ‘British Values’ by advocating Christianity and the English language as core to British identity (Walford, 2012, Communities and Local Government, 2012, Grayson, 2012). In changes to teacher education, the ‘Teachers’ Standards’, compiled after I conducted my research, require teachers not to *undermine fundamental British values* (Department for Education, 2011), raising questions about neoliberal regulation of teachers. In 2014, the Coalition government announced schools in England were expected to actively promote Fundamental British Values (FBV) (Easton, 2014), defined as ‘democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs’ (Sellgren, 2014). The FBV guidance (HM Government, 2015), does not root from education policy, but from Home Office documents on ‘extremism’ (Richardson, 2015b). Extremism is defined by the government as “vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values...” (HM Government, 2015:2). Britishness discourses initially emerged from political

elite's anxieties about Scotland and Wales seeking independence, but by 2011 'unintegrated' ethnic minorities – particularly Muslims – became the target of FBV policies (Maylor, 2016). Rather than preparing teachers to work with ethnically, racially and culturally diverse student demographics, teacher educators find themselves negotiating a securitisation and surveillance driven agenda attached to 'upholding' Fundamental British Values (Lander, 2016). Teachers' Standards could be perceived as political tools to promote government approved ideologies of Britishness (Maylor, 2016). The ways teachers are appraised on this professional duty not to *undermine FBV* is complicated by the relationship between FBV and Counter Terrorism and Security (Revell & Bryan, 2016).

After my research was conducted the government ordered, "We are saying it isn't enough simply to respect these values in schools – we're saying that teachers should actively promote them. They're not optional; they're the core of what it is to live in Britain" (Cameron, 2014). Schools might "face action if they fail to promote 'British Values', and "they will also be expected to confront pupils, parents or school staff that express intolerant or extremist views" (The Yorkshire Post, 2014). Superpatriotism (Zinn, 2013), is evident in the idea that FBV is a response to 'radicalised' Muslim students unwilling to assimilate. Questions continue to arise about who defines 'British Values', and whether religiously and culturally diverse Britons are permitted to contribute to the conversation on Britishness (Bragg, 2006, Berkeley, 2011, Miah, 2015).

This empirical study on the teaching and learning of Britishness, conducted before the duty to promote FBV, seeks to value the contributions of students and teachers' contributions through encouraging engaged pedagogies when exploring identities. By presenting teachers and students doing identity work collectively, individually and critically, this research project informs the current FBV work expected by schools. Rather than teaching students about a hegemonic Britishness, my research aims to understand students' conceptions of British identities and learn about the ways teachers encourage student voice in a multicultural setting. Critical pedagogy, this research shows, can encourage teachers to explore difficult notions of belongings and identities with their students (See Chapter Three); critical awareness develops through pedagogical practices promoting dialogue, collaboration, reflection and action. The chapter outlines below show this research project has been structured around two independent but interconnecting strands: (i) the teaching and learning of Britishness, and (ii) the Art students' definitions and discourses of Britishness.

## RESEARCHING BRITISHNESS: CHAPTER OUTLINES

### Chapter Two: Literature Review

The complexity and multiplicity of the contested concept of Britishness is explored in greater *theoretical* detail throughout Chapter Two: identities are viewed as unfixed and fluid, sometimes contradictory and ambiguous, contextual and interdependent (Hall, 1991, Kershen, 1998, Parekh, 2000a, Lawler, 2008). Discursive ideas on Britishness are popular among academics (Andrews and Mycock, 2008), yet **Chapter Two Part A** highlights Britishness remains an ever contested concept (Saeed et al., 1999, Croft, 2012, Thurston and Alderman, 2014, Mason, 2016). Britishness discourses sometimes seek to normalise and privilege Whiteness, pitting White Britons against Others (Wemyss, 2009), whilst simultaneously there is “over-racialisation of visible minorities at the expense of a de-racialization of ethnic majorities” resulting in White identity crises (Nayak, 2003c:139). **Chapter Two Part B** draws on past *empirical studies* exploring the further complexities and subjectivities of Britishness, and key studies that examine multicultural and White Britishness. In the past schools have not taken to exploring a shared British identity (Maylor et al., 2007) which explains the gap in the literature regarding students’ definitions and discourses of Britishness. I draw upon the studies of the boundaries of Britishness by Jacobson (1997) and Vadhver and Barrett (2009) who present fluid, context-dependent multiple positionings as the norm for young Britons. **Chapter Two Part C** draws upon recent empirical research regarding the *teaching and learning* of Britishness. Literature in the overlapping areas of race and diversity manifests there is not much written on how student teachers understand diversity, race and inclusion (Bhopal and Rhamie, 2013). I examine three key areas I deemed important in my readings on teaching about national identities: (i) institutional racism - Britishness promotion can reinforce ideas about White exclusivity, (ii) patriotism - Britishness teaching is perceived as heavily linked to ideas of nationalism and patriotism, and (iii) teacher training - confidence to explore controversial and sensitive issues.

### Chapter Three: Critical Pedagogy<sup>6</sup>

Chapter Three (Critical Pedagogy) examines key pedagogical concepts relevant to identity work in neoliberal times, presenting critical pedagogy as useful approach when exploring Britishness. Neoliberal ideas about multicultural citizenship and national identity marginalise experiences of

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<sup>6</sup> Critical pedagogy is also practised as “liberatory pedagogy’, empowering pedagogy, radical pedagogy, engaged pedagogy, or pedagogy of possibility” GEORGE, A. 2001. Critical Pedagogy: Dreaming of Democracy. In: TATE, G., RUIPIPER, A. & SCHICK, K. (eds.) *A Guide to Composition Pedagogies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

oppressed groups (Sleeter, 2014), “stifling critical thought, reducing citizenship to the act of consuming, defining certain marginal populations as contaminated and disposable, and removing the discourse of democracy from any vestige of pedagogy” (Giroux, 2013:8). Through the National Curriculum government can “exert direct control over what is taught in schools and how” (Coffey, 2001:43); teacher education is often impacted upon by government ideology (Arnot and Barton, 1992). Knowledge produced and disseminated to students is “cultural capital that comes from somewhere” imparting the “beliefs of powerful segments of our social collectivity” (Apple, 2013:25). Pedagogy is political, “inherently productive and directive practice rather than neutral or objective” (Giroux, 2013:6). Following Freirean philosophies, I call for engaging in pedagogies to guide students to “question answers rather than merely answer questions” (Brett, 2007:4). By applying a critical perspective, I argue students and teachers can expose and disrupt “monovocals, master narratives, standard stories, or majoritarian stories” (that privilege the White male political elite) by contributing counter-narratives (Solórzano and Yosso, 2002:28) about Britishness and belonging.

#### **Chapter Four: Methodology**

Chapter Four presents choices and positions I adopted on this research journey to ensure student voice was valued and respected. Coming from a position as a British Muslim female teacher of English, my methodological choices are influenced by my post-colonial, gendered, ethnic identity, as well as my passion for stories. Understanding there is no neutrality or impartiality in teaching, education, or research (Lather, 1986, Denzin, 1989, Patton, 1999, O'Toole and Beckett, 2013, Smyth and McInerney, 2013), impacts upon my self-awareness, my views and my research design. In this chapter, I continue to argue the importance of researching students' stories about their experiences of Britishness, rather than upholding official master-narratives, thus by “making visible the lives of people whose stories are not often told, it gives a voice to all of us who are ‘nothing special’” (Gregory, 2005:ix). I write about the ethnographic principles regarding multiple truths, research, and social transformation (Denzin, 1997), understanding that the role of the researcher has become increasingly important in educational research, with growing acceptance that representations of data are selectively constructed through subjective lenses (Walford, 1998). I integrate features of educational, urban, and critical ethnography, arts-based educational research (ABER), as well as critical race methodology (CRM) and critical pedagogy (CP), for I find these value participant voice and empowerment, as well as social justice and social change. Such stances also emphasise criticality through deconstruction of inequalities, injustices and intersecting identities.

## **Chapter Five: The Teaching and Learning of Britishness**

My vision of Britishness teaching and learning is to ensure hegemonic policies do not become symbolic representational tools to perpetuate 'symbolic violence' on powerless unaware citizens (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990) in a classed and racialised social world. In this chapter I present the Art project as a powerful pedagogical process. I investigate the needs of students and teachers when teaching and learning Britishness. I show how the personal nature of the project on identity impacted positively upon teacher-student relations. Students seemed to respond to teachers' keen interest in their frustrations and concerns, as well as their dreams and ambitions, as they started strengthening relationships with their teachers and peers. This chapter also illustrates how students use critical pedagogies to assert their personal experiences about Britishness and belonging, while simultaneously engaging with differences and diversities regarding Britishness. Critical pedagogy, in this research on teaching and learning about Britishness, was a "theoretical and political practice", not just a teaching technique (Giroux, 2013:3). The teacher's role in giving students a protected space to question prevailing modes of power is also explored. I show the ways discourses on Britishness might be addressed sensitively and discursively. Empowering critical pedagogy can be participatory and interactive, combating traditionally low rates of student involvement in the classroom (Shor, 1992). I show classrooms are sites of struggle with opportunities for resistance and critique, moments of hope and possibility, and beginnings of social change (Giroux, 1995, Giroux, 2013).

## **Chapter Six: Discourses of Britishness**

Following on from analysing the teaching and learning processes involved in identity work, in Chapter Six, I present my empirical findings and analysis about how the students perceive Britishness and belonging. This chapter demonstrates that the young people are deeply concerned about social divisions and inequalities impacting upon their sense of belonging to southeast London. Student identity is found to be inextricably bound up with their intersectional experiences of multiple categories such as social class, gender and race; often students from marginalised communities having grown up battling the stigmas and consequences of labels imposed upon them by the powerful and the privileged (Darder et al., 2009a, Ferguson, 2012). I show the research participants discursively exploring complexities of race and social class. I repeat the importance of students critically engaging in open discussions about identities and racisms, as they negotiate ways of belonging to Britain. I show when discussing national identity, home and belonging, youth often affirm local place attachments and a local sense of citizenship (Osler and Starkey, 2005). Positionality and intersectionality impact how the students explain

their sense of Britishness. Students' sense of national identity is dwarfed by their sense of local identity, and transnational postcolonial identities impact upon ways of belonging to Britain. The conversations between the students suggest benefits to critical pedagogy, particularly if we want to give students space to confidently interrogate identity issues. In Chapter Six, some of the individual artworks are presented; below though I have grouped the artworks together by carefully constructing a collage repositioning and honing into the key intersectional ideas students raised about British identities.



Figure 1: Britishness and Belonging in Bermondsey: A Collage of GCSE Students' Artwork

### Chapters Seven: Discussion, Conclusions and Ways Forward

This final chapter argues the need for further research on definitions and discourses of Britishness, as well as on teaching and learning about Britishness. The kaleidoscopic images emerging from the Art students reflected the multi-layered, multi-faceted and vibrant nature of contemporary Britishness. Critical pedagogues, like myself and the teachers in my research, move away from notions of national identity revolving around ethnicity or monoculture; British identity needs to be reworked and rewritten in fluid and changing contexts “in which identities

are constantly being negotiated and reinvented within complex and contradictory notions of belonging” (Giroux, 1995:55). I argue that if there exists a “politics of forgetting that erases how disparate social identities have been produced, legitimated and marginalized with different relations of power” (Giroux, 1995:47), then these disparate social identities cannot be abandoned in the name of pursuing national common identity and culture. Britishness cannot become a “marker of certainty” that “affirms monoculturalism and restores the racially coded image” (Giroux, 1995:50) of what it means to be British. Moving forwards we must continue to give young people – our future generations – greater space to discuss national identity, as well as the critical tools to deconstruct classed and racialised belongings to Britain.

### **‘BLACK IN THE UNION JACK’: Where are we now?**

In the past, governments may have discouraged citizenship education, preferring docile subjects, rather than radical citizens challenging the status quo (Heater, 2001, Andrews and Mycock, 2008), but today critically examining and embracing new conceptions of belongings and identities is becoming increasingly necessary. Perusal of mainstream and online media reveals Britishness and British values continuing to be debated in popular, academic and political spheres (House of Lords, 2008, Brunel University, 2016) “at unprecedented levels” (Ward, 2009:3). Decades before though there was “relatively little public debate about the meaning of Britishness” (Carrington and Short, 1995:221); instead political rhetoric defended an exclusive White Britishness (Ward, 2004). The government reacted angrily to The Parekh Report’s suggestion that the symbols of Englishness/Britishness represented Whiteness (Gilroy, 2004). Britishness with its “systematic, largely unspoken, racial connotations” (Parekh, 2000b:38), can be perceived as just as problematic as Englishness (McGuigan, 2010), with ethnic minority youth often finding British identity is not inclusive (Phoenix, 1998, Barrett, 2002, Phillips and Ganesh, 2007).

Since I commenced my research, the London 2012 Olympics illustrated everyday British multiculturalism (Modood, 2014), with athletes like Mo Farah, wrapped in the Union Jack flag, cheered on by the British (Werbner, 2013). Even though the Union Jack flag is perceived by some ethnic minorities as representing racist ideologies of far right groups like the BNP, and thus Bradfordian Pakistani youth preferred to fly the St George’s flag during the 2002 World Cup football tournament (Hussain and Bagguley, 2005), Mo Farah made an intentional performative gesture of embracing his Britishness through donning the Union Jack. His multiple attachments were too much for some. Farah’s pride in his Muslim African heritage resulted in his belonging

and loyalty questioned; he was asked if he would have preferred to represent Somalia (Wagg, 2015). Though seemingly loved by the nation, Farah's Somalian Muslim Otherness was emphasised by a media that frequently denigrates Somalia "with the negative signifiers of civil war, poverty, piracy and unwelcome (often 'asylum seeking') immigration" (Wagg, 2015:155). More recently, after my research was conducted, *The Great British Bake Off* (Love Productions, 2015) winner Nadiya Hussain received racist and Islamophobic threats on social media: she "stole the nation's heart throughout the show – but that didn't stop cruel Twitter trolls targeting her because of her faith" (Gordon, 2016).

Hall (1996b) referring to Gilroy's *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack* writes: "Fifteen years ago we didn't care, or at least I didn't care, whether there was any black in the Union Jack. Now not only do we care, we *must*. Dominant perceptions of belonging and Britishness still define policies and practices, making this research pertinent and poignant:

We are in a crisis of belonging, a population crisis, of who, what, when, and where. More and more people feel as though they *do not* belong. More and more people are *seeking* to belong, and more and more people are not *counted* as belonging (Miller, 2008:1).

Inconclusive messages about belonging harbour tensions and ambiguities regarding multicultural Britain: politicians applaud diversity and integration, whilst simultaneously their policies are critiqued for assimilationist rhetoric (Back et al., 2002). Diversity is "a fundamental characteristic of the universe" Kedourie (1993:49), inevitably arising in discussion on nation and identity. Yet diversity no longer commands respect in a post 9/11 and 7/7 world where it "has become conditional on a new duty to integrate at the level of shared values" (McGhee, 2008:3). Thus, this research with Art students problematises the notion of 'shared values'. What happens when some young people do not fully subscribe to the supposed core characteristics of a nation (Young, 2000)? In the next chapter, I will discuss the literature on Britishness, reflecting upon the highly contested notion as capable of creating diverse debates. Just as the notions of *borders* and *diaspora* cannot be discussed without reference to one another (Brah, 1996), I present Britishness as interconnected with broad concepts of citizenship, national identity and multiculturalism. Terms like multiculturalism, Britishness and citizenship are contested and contingent on context for meaning, requiring regular critical analysis that deconstructs taken for granted descriptions and assumptions (Ward, 2004, Faulks, 2006, McGhee, 2008, Haste, 2010). I argue reading modern Britishness needs to be analysed according to how "nation is located in time and place" (Wallwork and Dixon, 2004:22).

# CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL PERSPECTIVES ON BRITISH IDENTITY

*(Identity is) a process of continually weaving together fragments of discourse and images, enactions, spaces and times, things and people into a vast matrix, in which complex systems of relationality between elements constellate around common-sense themes – one such being the national (Edensor, 2002:29).*

In **Chapter One**, I outlined personal, pedagogical and professional reasons for studying the teaching and learning of Britishness. **Chapter Two, Part A** provides a theoretical framework to understand national identity, citizenship and multicultural Britishness. **Part B** reviews empirical studies on youth perceptions of Britishness, and **Part C** focuses on empirical studies on the teaching and learning of Britishness. This chapter therefore positions my empirical study in the current literature on the (i) *definitions and discourses* of Britishness, and (ii) *teaching and learning* experiences of Britishness.

## **PART A: CITIZENSHIP, NATIONAL IDENTITY AND BRITISHNESS**

Britishness evokes ideas about identity in terms of who we are and how we might belong to the nation. The complexity of identity is the starting-point of my literature review. Part A explores Britishness, citizenship and national identity to provide a socio-political backdrop to the Britain inhabited by my research participants. Identity is approached as fragmentary and nuanced. I will discuss the ways the literature weaves together ‘fragments’, referred to in the opening quotation of this chapter, by problematizing nation, national identity and nationalism, and examining how this ‘vast matrix’ incorporates ideas of multicultural citizenship, belongings and Britishness.

### **Identity: Nation, National Identity and Nationalism**

*...the ability to define oneself and one’s reality represents a fundamental, existential requirement (Cokley, 2002:29).*

#### **Identity**

Identity, a relatively new concept, concerning who we are and what defines/distinguishes us as individuals (Parekh, 2000a), has become a key conceptual lens employed by academics (Solomos, 2001, Sarup, 2005). Identity is perceived as important for being human and for our sense of agency (Cokley, 2002). A broad concept with distinctive connotations (Deaux, 2001,

Brubaker and Cooper, 2000), *identity* requires clarification: its basic tenets consist of belonging, commonalities and differences (Solomos, 2001). It is often “defined in a relation of difference to what it is not” (Weedon, 2004:19). Personal identity refers to the ‘self’, whilst social identity concerns societal positioning and identification according to social categories such as class and race (Bradley, 1996). *Belonging* refers to acceptance and recognition within a group or society. Its multiple layers are illustrated by “the interplay of the subjective self, collective agency and structural positioning”, while its multiple facets mean we can “belong to a community, a locality or a nation” and experience “a transnational sense of belonging” (Vasta, 2013:198). *Community* concerns the right to feel that you belong within the boundaries of the community, that you matter and make a difference to the community, and that your needs are fulfilled while you share emotional experiences with other community members (McMillan and Chavis, 1986).

Within debates about (national) identities, referring to multiple identities is increasingly common (Hussain and Bagguley, 2005): “complex affiliations, meaningful attachments and multiple allegiances to issues, people, places and traditions that lie beyond the boundaries of their resident nation-state” are recognised and valued (Vertovec and Cohen, 2002:2). Within communities and nations, “identity is always in process, is always being reconstituted in a process of becoming and by virtue of location in social, material, temporal and spatial contexts. (Edensor, 2002:29). A “proud, much proclaimed identity” might “give way to another” over time (Modood, 2005:464). Some scholars describe *identifications*, emphasising process and change, rather than *identity* which seems fixed and final (Hall, 1996d). Even if identities are evolving, they are not “free-floating”, but “limited by borders and boundaries” (Sarup, 2005:95). Identities and identifications are sometimes limiting, other times expansive, as we co-opt and resist fluctuating features of identities.

### **National Identity and Nation**

National identity, has become a popular notion since the 1950s (Parekh, 2000a), importantly, a time when people from the Commonwealth were arriving in Britain. It has come to replace eighteenth and nineteenth century terms such as *national character* and *national consciousness* (Smith, 2010:18), not merely as a theoretical concept, but also invoking “notions and categories of practice” (Smith, 2010:19). National identity is “historically specific” and “plural, fractured and refigured by gender, ethnic and class relations” (Weedon, 2004:20). Historically, controversy has surrounded the idea of promoting national identities (Day and Thompson, 2004). This might be why we seem to know more about nations and nationalism than we do about national identity (Bechhofer and McCrone, 2010), witnessing politicians skilfully

manipulating national identity to reflect their attitudes, values and goals (Cameron, 1999). National identity, contrary to political rhetoric that attempts to fix, essentialise and reify it, is frequently contested, complex and difficult to define (Jacobson, 1997, Scourfield et al., 2006, Maylor, 2010, Anderson, 2012, Burkett, 2013).

*Nation, nationality and nationalism* are not only hard to define, but also difficult to analyse (Anderson, 2006). I follow the understanding that national identities are nuanced, multi-faceted and incomplete: "...too complex and elusive to be reduced to a set of easily identifiable features or summed up in a few neat propositions" (Parekh, 2000a:6). National identity exploration should not be mistaken for nationalism, nor is professing a national identity equal to a strong attachment to nation, for being a member of a nation can be a general taken-for-granted status, or might even reveal young people's apathy (Fenton, 2007). If national identity is, therefore, ambivalent and ambiguous, to move forwards as individuals, as communities and as a society, we can seek to understand redefinitions contextually and historically:

...redefinitions and changes require a deep historical knowledge of the country and a feel for its past, as well as a rigorous and realistic assessment of its present circumstances and future aspirations. While remaining firmly located in the present, we need to make a critical appraisal of our history and use its resources to develop a new sense of national identity that is faithful to the past and yet resonates with present experiences and aspirations" (Parekh, 2000a:6).

By reflecting upon British histories, we come to understand the present, and begin to shape the future. Exploring British histories, present complexities, and future possibilities of nation, it is important to research how ethnic minorities "are regarded, and regard themselves, as part of the nation" (Carrington and Short, 1998:149). This becomes paramount if national identity is "continuously constructed and reshaped in its (often apathetic) interaction with outsiders, strangers, foreigners and aliens – the 'others'. You know who you are, only by knowing who you are not" (Cohen, 1994:1). My research will argue it is also important to learn how all students, including White working-class youth, are represented and present themselves (See Chapter Six).

Nation, like national identity, is a contested and problematic concept (Cameron, 1994); it is a relatively new concept which "antiquity was unfamiliar with" (Renan, 1990:9):

Neither in Egypt nor in China were there citizens as such. Classical antiquity had republics, municipal kingdoms, confederations of local republics and empires, yet it can hardly be said to have had nations in our understanding of the term... Gaul, Spain and Italy, prior to their absorption by the Roman Empire, were collections of clans, which were often allied among themselves but had no central institutions and no dynasties. The Assyrian Empire, the Persian Empire and the empire of Alexander the Great were not patries either.

Some scholars define nation in relation to linguistic identity (Oakes, 2001, Rydgren, 2004, Kamusella, 2008, Gellner and Breuilly, 2008). Others might research nation-building, for example establishing education, health and welfare systems for citizens (Carnegie, 2002). Although some political theorists attempt to define a nation as dynastic, it is not a dynasty; nor can nation be defined by exclusivity of race or of language, as some have misguidedly asserted, for there is no linguistic or racial purity (Renan, 1990).

Then there is the “ambivalence” of the narration of nation: “the language of those who write of it and the lives of those who live it” (Bhabha, 1990b:1) might radically differ. For Renan and French Enlightenment thinkers, belonging to a nation was voluntary, whilst German Romanticism presented nation as “predetermined community bound by blood and heredity” (Malik, 1996:131). For Gellner, nations were far from natural (2008): the “horror of nationalist excesses” entered Gellner’s narrations (Day and Thompson, 2004:42). Prevailing Western narratives have long insisted the West “has always had ‘nations’ and ‘histories’, while the Rest had ‘tribes’, ‘ethnic groups’ and ‘traditions’” (Žarkov, 2015:5). Media narratives frequently neglect to present the nation’s borders as “arbitrary dividing lines that are simultaneously social, cultural and psychic”, instead they become:

...territories to be patrolled against those who whom they construct as outsiders, aliens, the Others; forms of demarcation where the very act of prohibition inscribes transgression; zones where fear of the Other is the fear of the self; places where claims to ownership – claims to ‘mine’, ‘yours’ and ‘theirs’ – are staked out, contested, defended and fought over (Brah, 1996:198).

Political discourses, like media discourses, often present a narration of nation that is closely tied to Othering. Parekh incisively deconstructs Margaret Thatcher’s version of British identity:

She finds no fault with the British people and takes a wholly uncritical view of them. Her words imply that continental Europeans are gravely deficient in such virtues as individuality, initiative, fairness and equity, and she has little that is good to say about them... (Parekh, 2008:64).

Thatcherism<sup>7</sup> “powerfully organized itself around particular forms of patriarchy and cultural or national identity” (Hall, 1996a:235). Politicians might claim national ties are powerful bonds, almost familial, or like religious connections with God (Kedourie, 1993), however nations are not eternal, as they begin and end, thus humanity becomes the highest ideal (Renan, 1990).

The most popular definition for nation seems to be an ‘imagined political community’: “because even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even

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<sup>7</sup> Thatcherism refers to the policies of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher’s government from 1979-1990.

hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (Anderson, 2006:6). This imagined political community consists of “economic, political, linguistic, cultural, religious, geographical, historical” relationships (Hroch, 2012:79). Following Baumann (1996), Vadhvani and Barrett (2009:443) present national identification as a “dynamic process through which the values, beliefs, traditions and indeed the boundaries of the national group are being renegotiated and redefined” in different times and places. The nation is “a powerful historical idea” which emerged from “impossibly romantic and excessively metaphorical” political and literary thought (Bhabha, 1990b:1). Nations “have always been culturally and ethnically diverse, problematic, protean and artificial constructs that take shape very quickly and can come apart just as fast” (Colley, 1992b:5), perhaps making the nation “important only in the moment where its cultural imperatives are being carnivalized, subverted and challenged” (Back, 1996: 250).

### **Nationalism and Patriotism**

Nationalism, another modern term (Williams, 1999, Smith, 2010), is a European construct of the early nineteenth century (Kedourie, 1993). The ideology of nationalism claims “humanity is naturally divided into nations” (Kedourie, 1993:1), whereby (like the Thatcherite example in the last section) “absolute priority” is given to a nation’s values over other values (Hroch, 2012:80). Some might chronicle nationalism negatively as “national egotism”, or others might refer to it kindly as “national fervour” or “national individuality” (Smith, 2010:5). Even when calls to nationalism are seemingly benign though, homogeneity is expected, and consequently, assimilation of ethnic minority communities is demanded, making the doctrine problematic for those who do not want to be assimilated (Carnegie, 2002), and for those practising and preserving their ancestral cultures and traditions. Ward (2004) refers to a 1983 General Election Conservative poster stating ‘Labour says he’s Black. Tories say he’s British’: “The poster, therefore, assimilated black people into Conservatism, but in the process the implication was that Britishness should be emphasised over blackness; the two identities were not seen as simultaneous or equal” (Ward, 2004:130). Nations might strategize to reproduce “a systematic process of assimilation... preparing each successive generation of children for the nation’s version of adult citizenship” through educational systems and political policies to fulfil these aims (Rosaldo, 1996:239), however, the political construction and hegemonic perpetuation of everyday nationalism in multicultural societies needs critical interrogation, particularly if inclusiveness and diversity matter (Mavroudi, 2010).

Patriotism<sup>8</sup> is emotional attachment and love for one's country (Kedourie, 1993, Hand and Pearce, 2009): the "narrative creativity" of patriotism presents it through "political matter-of-factness, selective memory, indispensable forgetting, interpretive legerdemain, self-conscious repetition and moral energy" (Johnston, 2007:23). Emotional loyalty encouraged through images of monarchy and empire once constituted British identity, and was impressed upon Britons – particularly young boys - through schooling, textbooks, literature, churches and the arts, in order to garner pride in Britishness and superiority over other nations (Heater, 2001, Ward, 2004). Patriarchal patriotism was especially heavily promoted through education in the late nineteenth century, though ironically Britain was personified as the female *Britannia* (Ward, 2004), while Englishness and Britishness were seen as the same (Kerшен, 1998):

Young boys and men were trained for service in the Empire. In public schools, games were used as training for citizenship; cricket, rugby and football were exclusively for boys and men. Britain's national and imperial heroes were represented as muscular Christian adventurers...

...the representation of patriotism was that it was intrinsically male and likewise that a leading component of masculinity was patriotism (Ward, 2004:38).

Patriotism is problematic, therefore, not only in its historic glorification of Empire, but also "the nation has been a male construct in which women have played little part" (Ward, 2004:39). Citizenship has historically served patriarchal interests in how it has been defined and practised (Heater, 2004, Faulks, 2006). Furthermore, although patriotic fervour impacted upon members of different social classes, jingoistic extolling was the realm of the upper and middle classes:

What empire did was to establish a cultural and national superiority of world-wide proportions: an empire where, truly, the sun never set. The British were the new chosen people. Their assigned task was to conduct a civilising mission at the frontiers of all humanity. They were enjoined to shoulder, in Kipling's famous phrase, 'the white man's burden' (Cohen, 1995:11).

Patriotism is therefore gendered, classed and racialised. If promoting patriotism is "morally dangerous" and harmful to "the goal of national unity in devotion to worthy moral ideals of justice and equality" (Nussbaum, 1996:4), cosmopolitanism becomes a preferable goal. Nationality and citizenship are often used interchangeably, but citizenship is potentially more "inclusive" as it is "a political concept that entails equal rights and responsibilities, but not necessarily a shared culture, religion or ethnic identity" (Faulks, 2006:132). In the next section, I will outline the significance of citizenship and cosmopolitan citizenship for examining the socio-political discourses surrounding the individual's relationship with the state.

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<sup>8</sup> For "benefits and burdens" of patriotism, see HAND, M. & PEARCE, J. 2009. Patriotism in British Schools: Principles, practices and press hysteria. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 41, 453-465.

## Citizenship in Britain

*Having a nation is not an inherent attribute of humanity, but it has now come to appear as such (Gellner and Breuilly, 2008:6).*

### Citizenship

*Citizenship* returned to the political agenda in recent decades, after having lain dormant for many years, perhaps as a consequence of post-Thatcher social changes, or due to growth of globalisation (Hall and Held, 1989). Citizenship, “a form of membership in a political and geographical community”, includes “legal status, rights, political and other forms of participation in society, and a sense of belonging” (Bloemraad et al., 2008:154). It refers to the relationship between the individual and the state (Osler and Starkey, 2005), as well as the relationship between individuals within a state (Hebert and Sears, 2001), and often “based upon the notion of the bounded society” (Urry, 1999:312). These relationships evolve as new policies and practices are introduced to police national boundaries by controlling immigration (Cole, 2009). Authorising the transformation from ‘immigrant’ to ‘citizen’ can be seen as regulating and controlling ethnic minority communities (Rosaldo, 1996): “Citizenship is one of the tools of inclusion and exclusion used by states to cope with the perceived threat of mobile migrants” (Gilmartin, 2008:1843). Before the post-1950s development of discourses of citizenship, Britons were referred to and positioned as “subjects” rather than “citizens” (Beck, 2013), poignant from a post-colonial paradigm. Osler and Starkey (2005:10) believe “there are still debates as to whether British people can really call themselves citizens or mere *subjects* of the crown”.

Contemporary neoliberal emphasis that “narrows the legitimacy of the public sphere by redefining it around the related issues of privatization, deregulation, consumption and safety” (Giroux, 2013:111) complicates relationships between the individual and the state. Neoliberal policies – promoting the free market over the state in distributing public resources, and encouraging competitive individualism – can have long-term consequences on citizens’ lives (Ong, 2006:8): “the calculative mechanisms of open markets articulate new arrangements and territorializations of capital, knowledge, and labor across national borders”, and within state borders too. Neoliberal promotion of national identity also problematises the identities of those without formal citizenship documents, raising questions about the meanings and experiences of citizenship (Sleeter, 2014), particularly important for refugees seeking asylum and formal citizenship (Ong, 2006:22): “Thus, the sovereign state is the producer both of modern humanity, by giving protection to citizens, and of bare life, by denying it to noncitizens”.

Politicians and policymakers, in multicultural societies, debate whether dual citizenship hinders integration, sometimes declaring hostility towards the idea and other times embracing it as a

“possibility that needs to be negotiated from various standpoints, ranging from simple pragmatic tolerance to active encouragement” (Faist and Gerdes, 2008:3). Home Secretary, Theresa May, has been criticised for an immigration bill stripping terror suspects of British citizenship, who are essentially rendered stateless if they have no other citizenship (Travis, 2014). Campbell (2014) describes “a Britain which is prepared to take measures that even the US has long determined to be beyond the pale”: The US Supreme Court ruling “railed against ‘subject[ing someone] to banishment, a fate universally decried by civilized people’, and making them ‘stateless, a condition deplored in the international community of democracies’”. In 1950, citizenship concerned the civil, political and social (Marshall, 2009). This conception of citizenship has since developed to include cultural or collective dimensions of citizenship to account for mobility/migration due to globalisation (Hebert and Sears, 2001). Diasporic diversity increases with new British citizens who once might have been “labour migrants”, as well as the arrival of “highly qualified specialists, entrepreneurs, students, refugees and asylum seekers”, and those migrating for better opportunities, to flee war or political oppression, as well as their children born in Britain (Brah, 2003:613).

### **Cosmopolitan Citizenship**

Cosmopolitanism - “allegiance to the worldwide community of human beings” (Nussbaum, 1996:4) – defies “national exclusivity, dichotomous forms of gendered and racial thinking, and rigid separations between culture and nature, and popular and high culture” (Stevenson, 2003:332), firmly opposing assimilationist notions of citizenship. Instead it opens “new spaces of political and ethical engagement that seek to appreciate the ways in which humanity is mixed into inter-cultural ways of life”. Osler and Starkey (2005:17) refer to Beiner’s conceptions of citizenship as *liberal* (rights and freedoms), *communitarian* (collective solidarity) and *civic republican* (institutional); they argue cosmopolitan citizenship is increasingly “a worthy aspiration”. To become more cosmopolitan though requires “confidence” for all the while one may be “preoccupied by ideas of home, displacement, memory and loss” (Sarup, 2005:93).

World Citizenship has been discouraged in UK Citizenship Education by those demanding loyalty to nation (Heater, 2001), yet globalisation necessitates new conceptions of belonging and citizenship (Faulks, 2006). This is particularly evident in contemporary educational policy on Fundamental British Values (FBV). Postnationalism might dispense with ideas of national belonging in favour of transnational ties (Habermas, 2001), critiquing FBV’s restrictive and insular nature. The “postnational imaginary” (Appadurai, 1996) describes belonging, home and national identity as subject to radical changes in the globalised world. OXFAM’s Education

programme (2013), for example, defines teaching of Global Citizenship as incorporating awareness of world citizenship, respect for diversity, outrage at social injustice, knowledge of the economic, political, social, cultural, technological and environmental elements of the world, and local/national/global participation. In Scotland, The 2010 *Curriculum for Excellence*<sup>9</sup> also features Global Citizenship as a key theme (Education Scotland, 2013).

Key questions of cosmopolitan citizenship revolve around peace, collective consciousness and “equal entitlement to human rights” (Osler and Starkey, 2005:78). People in the world seek nationhood and belonging: Bhabha (1990b) referring to the Palestinian people in his work on nations, laments “it is our loss in making this book we were unable to add their voices to ours” (1990b:7). Research on nation and citizenship can represent the voices of such marginalised peoples on their experiences of identities and belongings. Bhabha (1990b) argues, through nationless peoples, we can better understand our positioning and our relationships with others; education can enable the “reconnection of ‘self’ and ‘Other’ in a global context” (Stevenson, 2003:346). I will now move onto discussing how the Other is perceived in multicultural Britain, and examine the subsequent tensions and negotiations ethnic minority Britons endure.

### **Britishness, Multiculturalism, Community Cohesion and Super-diversity**

*“It is the British, the white British, who have to learn that being British isn't what it was. Now it is a more complex thing, involving new elements. So there must be a fresh way of seeing Britain and the choices it faces: and a new way of being British after all this time” (Kureishi, 1986:38).*

#### **The Stranger**

*Multiculturalism* has distinct meanings according to political and philosophical stances (Steinberg, 2009), and different uses depending upon whether you are describing organisations, curriculums, policies or practices (Osler, 2008). Multicultural educational policies are “devalued and transformed in the context of increasing global and neoliberal pressures” (Mitchell, 2003:391), perhaps why some politicians attempt to reinvigorate an “assimilative national project” (Alexander, 2007:115) moulding citizens by emphasising national cohesion while retreating from an increasingly global world. Politicians “reanimate the language of assimilation”, employing Britishness as “a political project and a tool of statecraft”, in response to migration and multiculturalism (Back, 2009:204). Prime Minister, David Cameron, was criticised for not condemning 3000 English Defence League supporters marching in Luton on the same day Cameron made his speech attacking multiculturalism (The Guardian, 2011, Berkeley, 2011). Cameron has not understood multiculturalism and integration are not two mutually

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<sup>9</sup> The Scottish equivalent to the English National Curriculum.

exclusive concepts (Meer and Modood, 2014b). Multiculturalism and shared British identity are also not exclusive (Berkeley, 2011). In the dismissal of multilingualism as well, politicians imply “English should become their *main* household language” if ethnic minority communities want to “show ‘integration’” (Sebba, forthcoming). Some scholars argue Britishness is “ill defined” hence “a poor basis on which to build commonalities across the diverse range of ethnicities and religions” (Faulks, 2006:133), yet politicians and policymakers have attempted to “produce certain kinds of citizens and subjectivities” (Sandercock, 2005:219), by advocating assimilative social projects “to make the Other into one of us”, projects that have “exhausted themselves in their futility and discrimination” (Sandercock, 2005:220).

Neoliberal notions of multicultural citizenship neglect to interrogate the significances of power, participation and inequalities (Sleeter, 2014). Current ‘cunning bureaucratic and political contrivances’ have resulted in legislation that can strip away citizenship and place Britons in a position where they may become stateless and struggling to belong. Race overlaps with ethnicity (Gunew, 2004), and now also with religion, particularly Islam. New racisms have emerged in Britain in the form of Islamophobia (Scourfield et al., 2005, Osler, 2015), evident in interrogation of British Muslims and their loyalty, portraying them as the “enemy within” (Abbas, 2004:30). News headlines like “Be more British Cameron tells UK Muslims” (Walters, 2014) construct British Muslims as Other and not British enough; they are dismissed as *less-than citizens* (Gilmartin, 2008), as Britons come to internalise the ‘new McCarthyism’ (Fekete, 2009) of political policies creating “fear and suspicion of Islam and Muslims” (Revell, 2012:78).

Religion has long been used to Other: “Christianity has provided inspiration, justificatory rhetoric and structural support to murderous practices of Crusades and colonialism” (Žarkov, 2015:5). Othering is now taking place through new racisms targeting culture and difference, rather than biological/physical differences: “Britishness, nation, national identity and belonging” are manipulated to emphasise who does not belong to Britain because of difference (Walters, 2012). Some decades ago it was not only ethnic minorities who were excluded from Britishness; until 1948, British women who married non-British men were prevented from holding legal status as British citizens (Paul, 1997). Only after 1983 were those women who had married non-British men able to “pass on Britishness to their children” (Ward, 2004:39). Interestingly contemporary patriotic ideologies focus on revealing the patriarchy of the Other by condemning the treatment of women in foreign lands:

...the dominant media are using the figure of the *burkha*-ed woman in what are often racist and certainly chauvinistic representations of the Middle East. These representations, we should remember, have a very old colonial legacy, one that

Gayatri Spivak once characterized as, “White men saving brown women from brown men” (Puar and Rai, 2002:127).

The nuances of national identity in the past - and the present - are therefore further problematised by gendered, classed and racialised elements.

### **Tolerating the Other**

In the “prevailing backlash” against multiculturalism (Meer and Modood, 2014a:6), common goals of government become exclusion or assimilation of ethnic minorities through a return to British values. This call for British values is often critiqued as “regressive for its veiled xenophobia and exclusionary nostalgia, and unrealistic for its denial of the plural constituency of modern being and belonging” (Amin, 2012). Antagonisms between the right wing promoting “monolithic and ethnically undifferentiated” British identity and those supporting “anti-racist and multicultural education” is not new. Decades ago this same debate was taking place (Carrington and Short, 1995:217), with plural and multicultural “conceptions of teaching and learning of the Centre and Left ... derided, lampooned and marginalised”. Tolerance is also often condescendingly presented as a generous and inclusive feature of life in the West, contrasting with the “primitive or uncivilized” intolerant social practices of ethnic minorities (Gunew, 2004:17).

Wemyss (2006:215) argues tolerance is not a “positive national aspiration”, if “those high up that unstable ‘hierarchy of belonging’ have the power to grant or withhold tolerance from those at the bottom.” If we are merely ‘tolerating’ certain groups in society, we are not accepting of them as ‘fully’ British. Plural notions of citizenship should not be about tolerating ethnic minorities (Wemyss, 2006, Modood, 2007, Wemyss, 2009): “...the dominant discourse about Britishness is flexible in determining both who has the power to grant or withdraw ‘tolerance’ and who is the subject of that ‘tolerance’ (Wemyss, 2006:216). School curriculums and policies that profess tolerance are also guilty of harbouring the idea that the mainstream dominant culture is tolerating ethnic minorities (Steinberg, 2009). Osler (2008:13) argues “tolerance is an important but inadequate response within a society characterised by diversity and deep inequalities”, needing to be “balanced by legal guarantees of equality of rights and the absence of discrimination” at both interpersonal and institutional levels. Policies that equate Britishness with tolerance are derided by scholars who recognise that the power dynamics at play that exclude some social groups from being tolerated. If we are tolerating certain groups in society, we are not accepting of them as having an inherent British identity.

Rather than simply tolerating the Other, we need to remember “the politics of multiculturalism” involves “facing an imperial history that has brought people from around the globe into intense and sometimes terrible contact” (Back, 1996:8). Some scholars might argue a “multicultural nation-state is, in some ways, a contradiction in terms”; it will always contain those who “think they have founded it or should have a special role in running it”; an inclusive nation would not refer to a *superethnos*, like *the* British (Baumann, 1999:32). The Smith Institute (2007:94) highlights how contradictions in calls to assimilate are disguised in language of *tolerance* about “progressive” British identity: “...we are not asking anyone to give up other loyalties or identities. We may, though, be asking for them to change their behaviour, and should not be afraid of doing so”. Surveys show ethnic minority communities are very often loyal to their British identity (Modood, 1998b), more so perhaps than the indigenous White British (Nandi and Platt, 2014). Ethnic minority allegiances are unacknowledged in media and political discourses, as are the evolving nuances and complexities of Britishness and belonging. Instead the language employed in relation to ethnic diversity - such as “conflict” and “challenge” - creates an image of “disaffected and inadequately assimilated minority groups destabilising urban life”, leading us to believe there are “inherent pathologies in their way of life that have rendered them a dysfunctional and threatening presence in our urban landscape” (Husband et al., 2014:4).

Pernicious media representation - especially concerning Muslims and their incompatibility with Britishness (Archer, 2003, Amin, 2003) - is “digested and repeated, feeding existing stereotypes and fuelling fears” about the state of the nation (Commission for Racial Equality, 2005:19). Moore et al. (2008) found print news coverage of British Muslims during 2000 to 2008 depicted as a threat to British values. Sian et al. (2012) also conducted critical discourse analysis of print news and found prevalent Islamophobic discourses concerning Muslims that positioned them as ‘foreigners’ and ‘outsiders’. Yet Muslims of all ethnicities identify strongly with Britishness (Nandi and Platt, 2014), perhaps more than any other religious group in Britain (Karlsen and Nazroo, 2015). Popular rhetoric regarding multiculturalism accuses ethnic minorities of being strangers who “expect too much and give back too little”, and “weaken social cohesion by undermining national heritage and tradition” (Amin, 2012:3). Ethnic minorities become weary of these judgements and verdicts about their (lack of) faithfulness and devotion to Britain, historically “racialized as inferior, or dangerous and foreign, and therefore outside the boundaries of the British national collectivity” (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1992:45). An expression of ethnicity “confined to the privacy of family and community” not making “political demands”(Modood, 2005:466) was once tolerable to British society, but since the 1990s ethnic minority youth have become more politicised, confident in publically “asserting their

Britishness”, and more “articulate and aggressive” in challenging institutional inequalities (Anwar, 2002:188).

At the same time paradoxically ethnic minorities have become the Other who is become “permanently vulnerable” to institutional and everyday racisms, and thus, they become publically visible with a hidden or less expressive ethnic identity becoming difficult to maintain (Modood, 1998a:53). Even if ethnic minority youth do not wish to become politicised, they are made to vocalise their political ideologies; since 9/11, British Muslims are required to “show their allegiance to Britain by condemning attacks and supporting military action in Afghanistan and Iraq, thus legitimizing the British position” (Yousuf, 2007:363). Government propagates the idea that minorities - particularly Muslims - are not integrated (Jivraj, 2013, Karlsen and Nazroo, 2015), yet these negative assumptions are “based on extremely limited empirical evidence” (Karlsen and Nazroo, 2015:2). When minority communities do voice their allegiance to Britishness, politicians and policy makers seem to ignore this evidence that shows ethnic minority communities – especially Muslims – profess attachment to British identity (Commission for Racial Equality, 2005, Manning and Georgiadis, 2012, Nandi and Platt, 2014).

### **Exclusion and Demonisation**

It is not only in Britain that national identity notions seemingly exclude the visibly Other (Archer, 2003, Balibar and Swenson, 2004, Maylor et al., 2007). Hage (2012:10) highlights how White Australians feel the most “committed” about their “concerns”, assuming “they have a monopoly over ‘worrying’ about the shape and future of Australia... Look at how many migrants there are, look at crime, look at ghettos”. In the United States too, belonging is easily proved if you are White, but if you are not White, you are “a threat that is feared and used to fuel the anxiety surrounding the decline of the nation, or of civilization as we know it” (Wingard, 2013:48). These insular, exclusive and racialised notions of belonging to nation pervade discourses of media and polity in Britain too, where the middle class White British are seen as most ‘committed’ to Britain, and therefore justified in their ‘concern’ about migration and multiculturalism. Yet worryingly, media and political spokespeople propagate untruthful ‘facts’ through “(mis)use of statistics” about fervidly debated topics like race and immigration (Finney and Simpson, 2009:4), as well as through “overstatement and oversimplification” leading to “division and tension, prejudice, fear, hostility and discrimination”(Finney and Simpson, 2009:13-14):

...it is the majority White populations that are most isolated and least engaged with communities other than their own. However much this is at odds with the ruling myths of minority isolation and self-segregation... the White population will be naturally more likely to bump into its own than the smaller groups who tend to live in much

more diverse areas. But there is a more worrying level to the isolation of the White population. It is they who on average are less tolerant, more suspicious and less willing to engage with the diversity of democratic Britain... (Finney and Simpson, 2009:111).

One example of skewing statistics is the number of migrants entering Britain is shown in the British media as “shockingly high”, yet that it is close to the world average, reflects “global rise of mobility and structural changes”, and is economically beneficial is ignored in media discourses (Finney and Simpson, 2009:11). Another example is of data showing exclusive ethnic friendship groups, yet the same data could be “interpreted as revealing surprisingly broad friendships” (Finney and Simpson, 2009:11).

British (middle-class White) political and media spokespeople who misinterpret statistics seem to be suffering from what Hage (2012) describes as the “White-and-very-worried-about-the-nation” fantasy; being in a position of power and privilege, means you can create moral panics about migration and multiculturalism. In the UK we have also seen a history of moral panics about youth: “football hooligans, skinheads, muggers, punks, chavs<sup>10</sup> and hoodies” (Pearson, 2012:46). Moral panics highlight power structures and inequalities in society, particularly as we observe public, political and media rhetoric deciding what constitutes a social problem (Citcher, 2006). In the Victorian era, Britishness (and Otherness) transformed from being a religious question to becoming a moral one: “As Jews, Roman Catholics and atheists were brought into a genuine sense of partnership in the British constitution by being allowed to seek election to Parliament, homosexuals, prostitutes and the allegedly innately criminal Irish found themselves further and more vehemently displaced” (Grube, 2011:628). Britishness and Otherness have again become questions of religion, as evident in the moral panics created through media and political rhetoric about Muslims not belonging to Britain.

There is an increasing fear of new types of identities believed to be a threat to Britishness (Morley and Robins, 2001), often these ‘threats’ are merely myths about segregation, ghettos, immigrants and Muslim terrorists perpetuated by political and media rhetoric and seeping into the public imagination (Finney and Simpson, 2009). Thus, the narrative of the ‘enemy within’ – propagating moral panics about both male and female young Muslims – has resulted in transforming “every Muslim *already living in the West* into a ticking time-bomb” (Žarkov, 2015:4). Within schools, such representation can translate into students who might “simultaneously hold images of frightening Muslims alongside friendship with a Muslim in their class. ‘You’re all right, but it’s all the others’ or ‘You’re like one of us’ are some of the

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<sup>10</sup> The moral panic about the *chav* caricature features in my research participants’ discourses of Britishness. See Chapter Six.

mechanisms employed to resolve these contradictions” (Gaine, 2005:19). Muslims are condemned for not attempting to become more British, yet empirical data reveals Muslims ‘feel’ British (Meer et al., 2015). Kundnani (2005) powerfully argues our racist values are the real problem; instead of dismantling the institutional racism that pervades social structures, Muslims are depicted as strange/alien, and through the lens of the ‘war on terror’, as the enemy. Prejudices seep into the thinking of White Britons who blame the decline of Britishness on migrants and Muslims (Commission for Racial Equality, 2005), thus government and media rhetoric regarding the ‘war on terror’ is successfully “exaggerated” to create moral panics (Yousuf, 2007:366).

There are four “modes of integration” regarding multicultural belonging according to Modood (2012:10): (i) assimilation (minorities become like the majority community); (ii) individualist-integration (minorities exist as private groups but not publically); (iii) multiculturalism: integration taking place through multiple ways, with equality and social groups respected; (iv) cosmopolitanism: ‘difference’ is valued and inter-cultural exchange becomes the norm. Despite negative media and political narratives, multiculturalism impacting positively on British society (Parekh, 2013, Berkeley, 2011). Scare-mongering about segregated ghettos and cultural clashes are “unnecessary and unwarranted”, as when statistics and claims, even those presented by academics and well-intentioned government organisations, are properly scrutinised, it is found that selective evidence is being utilised to set a sensationalist agenda (Finney and Simpson, 2009:2). Instead of “focusing on possible negative consequences of the maintenance of cultural traditions for social integration”, more attention should be directed to how communities are marginalised due to socio-economic factors (Karlsen and Nazroo, 2015:19).

Politicians and policy makers claim ethnic minorities lack a strong sense of belonging to Britain because of their diasporic commitments, yet to belong to a nation requires not only *identification*, but also *recognition* (Gellner and Breuilly, 2008). Moreover, third and subsequent generation ethnic minority youth might not engage in diasporic cultural and linguistic practices, preferring to create and inhabit *third spaces*. Research has shown ethnic minorities, battling to be recognised as British, frequently articulate their Britishness:

...we found little evidence of these processes manifesting into feelings of alienation from *their own* general and variously articulated senses of ‘Britishness’. Stretched and plurilocal attachments were seen by most second generation respondents as being entirely reconcilable and compatible with notions of simultaneous belonging to Britain (Waite and Cook, 2011:13).

Therefore, *translocal* attachments are expressed by young people in an “alternative public sphere”, for example through Jungle music<sup>11</sup>: “The ideologies developed within these musical cultures offer a stark alternative to the racialized views of nation circulated in the wider public arenas of British political life” (Back, 1996:235). The community cohesion agenda was introduced by politicians who declared multiculturalism a failure, perhaps because increasing Muslim public presence and confident voices expressing Islamic values and traditions seemed an “affront to Britishness” (Revell, 2012:36). For those inhabiting Britain’s vibrant and lively urban landscapes, though, “the briefest look around confirms that multiculturalism has not actually expired” (Gilroy, 2005:2): “Indeed, while scholars took the rhetorical demise of multiculturalism at face value, this is now being empirically rebutted” (Meer and Modood, 2016:26). I will now outline the characteristics and critiques surrounding the notion of community cohesion.

### **Community Cohesion**

Seven years prior to when I began researching the teaching and learning of Britishness, the 2001 summer riots - in northern towns and cities like Oldham and Bradford - resulted in a new policies to investigating race relations, with multiculturalism/integration dismissed as inadequate models, and thus, replaced by community cohesion (Shukra et al., 2004, Fortier, 2008, Thomas, 2011, Hussain and Bagguley, 2012). Kedourie (1993) refers to Plato’s idea that society is a blank slate upon which the ideologue attempts to impose his own vision. The current “ideological” nature of promoting teaching of Britishness to create community cohesion needs to be stated, as the assumption that core ‘shared values’ result in a successful “flourishing society” is overstated by politicians (Edyvane, 2011:90). Modern political thinking on Britishness can be critiqued as ideological politics. The problem with assimilationist rhetoric is “like all essentialisms it assumes an obvious, definable, homogenous essence (British culture) into which the hapless migrant might be inducted” (Rattansi, 1992:15). Often culture is not discussed in a “neutral nor descriptive” manner but through “subjective and political questions of what immigrants are supposed to do in order to integrate” (Garner, 2012:449), as modern nation states reproduce “coercive ideologies designed to forge all their citizens into a single homogenous national community” (Rosaldo, 1996:239).

It might be argued that Fundamental British Values policy is one such coercive ideology. Government figureheads, since my research commenced, have been amplifying the importance

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<sup>11</sup> Nowadays researchers could investigate translocal attachments through newer music forms like Grime.

of social cohesion through ‘coercive ideologies’ instructing schools to teach Britishness and Fundamental British Values, which raises questions about whether we are returning to assimilationist discourse, as well as the potential consequences for those not subscribing to the official version of Britishness. It is unsurprising therefore that not recognising the difference between *assimilation* and *integration* is evident in some White Briton’s perceptions of multiculturalism (Commission for Racial Equality, 2005). Social cohesion generally refers to society sharing common values, civic culture, and a common sense of belonging and identity, but can often have connotations of assimilation and social control (Vasta, 2013).

Government’s concerns with ‘radicalisation’ of young Muslim males (Bryant, 2009, Reid et al., 2010, Zuberi, 2010), a failure of adopting ‘British’ values (Brown, 2010, Berkeley, 2011, Sales, 2012), and educational failure of White working-class males resulted in Britishness to be elevated as an important inclusive category and a remedy for solving societal problems of ‘vulnerable’ youth who are disloyal in national identifications (Reid et al., 2010). Previously ‘extremism’ policies seemed to focus upon Muslim men, but recently young Muslim girls have become implicated in media and policy discourses. Described as ‘jihadi brides’ betraying Britain and its opportunities, Žarkov (2015:4) explains Islamophobic and Orientalist discourses depict them as “double victims: of Islam as well as of Muslim men”. Gowrinathan and Mampilly (2015) argue Western media dwell upon what *pulls* young women to join Daesh<sup>12</sup>, ignoring motivations that might *push* them towards Daesh, including a sense of alienation and a lack of recognition as belonging. Since my research on teaching and learning Britishness was conducted, political discourses continue to present Muslim youth as “problem communities” and “security concerns”: they are “placed on the margins of citizenship and their loyalty questioned” (Brown, 2010:171). A new Britishness in relation to the Other of the ‘new terrorist’ (Croft, 2012:161) continues to be asserted in political and media discourses. Disturbingly even when ethnic minorities self-identify with Britishness, they are still positioned as the Other and their efforts at “self-defined identity can be overruled by an excluding society” (Osler and Starkey, 2005:13).

White working-class students are also perceived by policy advisers as struggling with identity issues in multicultural society, with a celebration of British identity proposed to help resolve these concerns and aid educational achievement (Ajegbo et al., 2007). White working-class students’ educational disenfranchisement can be blamed on schooling that neglects the students’ culture: curriculum reform requires “schools to develop a multicultural curriculum that

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<sup>12</sup> Daesh – also known as ISIS or ISIL – refers to the terrorist group said to have been created in the wake of the Iraq war

treats White British identity in the same way as ethnic minorities” (Demie and Lewis, 2014:33). Questions might be asked about whether White working-class youth feel pushed towards far right extreme groups if their identities are being rejected by mainstream society and schooling, just as questions are raised about the young Muslims drawn to extreme groups like Daesh. Ideas about teaching Britishness, when I started my research with the southeast London Art students, thus, initially stemmed from concerns about disenfranchisement of Muslim and White working-class youth, and the need for a cohesive multicultural society (Golmohamad, 2009). Educational policies influenced by right wing “anachronistic and sentimental” notions of British identity have long been an issue, as identified by Carrington and Short (1995:217) over twenty years ago.

Community cohesion becomes an “implicit series of oppositions masquerading as choices and riven with moral valencies” Alexander (2007:116):

<b>Good</b>	<b>V</b>	<b>Bad</b>
Britishness	V	Multiculturalism
Cohesion	V	Diversity
Citizenship	V	Community (mainly bad)
Majority	V	Minority
Us	V	Them (very bad and probably dangerous)

Table 1: Britishness v Multiculturalism dualisms (adapted from Alexander, 2007)

There are examples of community cohesion practices effective in providing safe spaces created by youth workers for ethnically diverse youth to come together to learn about commonalities (Thomas, 2011). Thomas believes the concept of multiculturalism has ‘become tainted and unhelpful, no longer offering a constructive way forward’, arguing *community cohesion* is better “recognises a renewed focus on commonality and on community relations” (2011:195). This claim is problematic, because ‘community cohesion’ also has negative connotations of assimilation (Shukra et al., 2004, Alexander, 2007, McGhee, 2008, Thomas, 2011), and has also been criticised as empty rhetoric employed by politicians to scapegoat social groups, rather than resolving inner-city deprivation that impacts upon diverse communities (Abbas, 2004).

Advocates of the *intercultural* believe it focuses on dialogue and contact more than the multicultural (Cantle, 2012), while the concept of *super-diversity* (Vertovec, 2007) vividly illustrates the landscape of global cities evolving and revealing evermore complex

characteristics. London, the site of my research on Britishness and belongings, epitomises *super-diversity*. London contains over 179 nationalities using over 300 languages (Stillwell and van Ham, 2010), and is extraordinary in its “enormous, fluid, and inter-connected diversity – by economic sector, by the socio-economic, ethnic and religious make up of its population, and by area” (Jayaweera et al., 2011:4). The city’s multicultural ‘conviviality’ is evident in social relationships in everyday life between peoples from diverse cultural, religious and ethnic backgrounds. ‘Conviviality’ refers to “processes of cohabitation and interaction that have made multiculturalism an ordinary feature of social life in Britain’s urban areas and in postcolonial cities elsewhere” (Gilroy, 2005:xv). Moreover the conviviality of “multinational, multilingual, or multi-ethnic nation-states” was not unusual for the British, Spanish and French of the nineteenth century, who lived in “ethnically and linguistically heterogeneous” societies (Malik, 1996:135). I will show students’ convivial experiences of multicultural London in Chapter Six, while simultaneously pointing out the ways students negotiate tensions and ruptures encountered through classed and racialised belongings to Britain in Chapters Six and Seven. I will now specifically outline the literature on contemporary socio-political understandings of ways of belonging to Britain, to better understand the historical and political contexts that influence contemporary discourses of Britishness.

### **Britishness and Belonging: The Literature**

*“All history is the history of migrations. All of us got to where we are because we or our ancestors came from somewhere else” (Fernández-Armesto, 2003:36).*

#### **Evolving Britishness**

Great Britain came into existence in 1707, when the Union was formed to join England, Wales and Scotland (Robbins, 1998). The concept of *Britishness* was therefore ‘invented’ after 1707, particularly in response to expanding colonies throughout the world and in an attempt to define Britons against the Other (Colley, 1992b). Paul (1997:10) argues since the seventeenth century, “the power to interpret and manipulate British and imperial nationality has rested with the Parliament at Westminster, not with British subjects or citizens themselves”. Paul (1997:xii) highlights how since World War Two, governments actively pursued their political goals through “the creation and manipulation of British nationality and migration policy”. Since the 1970s there has been a “sense of crisis” about the meaning of Britishness (Ward, 2004), as it has become a steady feature on the public agenda, perhaps due to an increasingly diverse UK, and also as a consequence of the ‘war on terror’ in a post 9/11 and 7/7 world (Karner, 2011, Jerome

and Clemitchaw, 2012). Andrews and Mycock (2008) add that Britishness debates have intensified in response to issues of identity, multiculturalism, community cohesion and immigration. Ethnic minorities were seen as a “threat to Britishness” long before 9/11 (Gillborn, 1995:1), while Muslims particularly are now globally targeted as problematic when it comes to national identity policies and practices (Mason, 2016). Political and media rhetoric and popular culture determine and define “the discourse of nation-ness and the symbolism of nationhood” (Day and Thompson, 2004:xi), sometimes coming dangerously close to being viewed as *jingoism*, with “nation-obsessed, close-minded, xenophobic, inward-looking” ideas (Boehmer, 2011:14).

Exploring *new ethnicities* (Hall, 1996b) provides ways of understanding Britishness (Back, 1996). Britishness finds it difficult to leave behind its past of glorifying racial imperial superiority (Ward, 2004), with its own conceptual baggage of race and empire, as evident in contemporary political rhetoric frequently guilty of hiding racist realities behind a veneer of neutral concern about nation, borders and immigration (Condor, 2000), which are hot topics of political and media agendas (Finney and Simpson, 2009). The “British reticence” regarding race as witnessed in the critique of The White Report (2002) and The Cattle Report (2001) for neglecting the significance of racism (Yuval-Davis et al., 2005), coupled with the recent 2016 European Referendum debates exposing ‘racist realities’ in British media and political rhetoric, reveal race matters. In 1999, the Institute for Public Policy Research reported urgent need for a redefinition of a national identity that was inclusive of *all* British people, irrespective of race, and acknowledged New Labour was attempting to address the issue of a lost national identity (Alibhai-Brown, 1999), and the Parekh (2000b) Report also highlighted similar concerns about re-thinking “a more flexible, inclusive, cosmopolitan image” of nation. Cohen uses the term “fuzzy frontier” to highlight how “the shapes and edges of British identity are historically changing, often vague and, to a degree, malleable” (2004:35), offering hope and possibility for the development of new flexible and inclusive British identities.

### **British Identities**

For some Britons, the power and prestige of Britain and Britishness are disappearing (Tilley and Heath, 2007), with some, in England, preferring affiliation with Englishness (Bradley, 2007, Kumar, 2010, Leddy-Owen, 2014, Woodcock, 2016). The English have related to Britishness patriotically, as well as to Englishness through *ethno-nationalism* (Smith, 2010:16). Englishness might be harder to define than Britishness, for in political and historical terms British identity monopolises English identity (Miller, 2013). English identities are frequently bound up with Britishness (Colley, 1992a, Kumar, 2010), revealing blurred and shifting boundaries between

Englishness and Britishness (Byrne, 2007b). Surveys show few people see themselves as mainly British, preferring to uphold their English, Welsh or Scottish identity (Tilley and Heath, 2007, Bechhofer and McCrone, 2010, Jivraj, 2013, Harries et al., 2014). The debate on Britishness might be about “competing nationalisms”: “...about what it means to be English, or Scottish, or Welsh, or Irish, and extrapolating from that what it means to have a ‘British’ identity superimposed on these existing identities” (Grube, 2011:630). The Scottish National Party, for example, criticised proposals for a British Day (BBC News, 2008). Langlands (1999:64) argues that Britishness should be viewed “as an allegiance that is held in addition to – rather than instead of” Englishness or Scottishness. While some argue the bid for Scottish Independence has strengthened Scottish affiliations to Britishness (Riley-Smith, 2014), other Scots feel detached from Britishness (McDermott, 2015, Stewart, 2016).

Britishness is frequently posited as a more inclusive identity than Englishness which has racial connotations of Whiteness (Phoenix, 1998, Byrne, 2007a, McGuigan, 2010, Mann, 2012). Black or Muslim locals are depicted as disruptive Others in an imaginary landscape and community of White, possibly Christian, Englishness (Leddy-Owen, 2014). Britishness professes strong ties with “imperialism, monarchism, conservatism, hierarchy, racism, masculinity, militarism and xenophobia”, while a new identity of Englishness – for some English people - invokes positivity through “multiculturalism, egalitarianism, democracy, radicalism” (Aughey, 2007:105). Scottishness is frequently seen as more inclusive of ethnic minorities than Englishness or even Britishness (Commission for Racial Equality, 2005, Hopkins, 2012), but ethnic minority newcomers to Scotland have cited experiences of racism (Phillips and Ganesh, 2007). Britishness discourses often follow an ‘Invisible Empire’ model, with Britain constructed and celebrated as a colonial civiliser, rather than exposed for its bloody violence and ruthless racism (Wemyss, 2009). Britishness needs to be re-imagined to include minorities, but without restricting them to “a narrow cultural norm” (Modood, 1998a:53).

‘English’ and ‘British’ are therefore used as synonyms, with sometimes little or no difference between them (Langlands, 1999, Phillips and Ganesh, 2007, Bechhofer and McCrone, 2010, Kumar, 2010, Croft, 2012). When English people do like to assert their British identity it is in order to include all parts of the United Kingdom as well as diverse ethnic minority communities, and to celebrate British Empire’s importance and achievements (Bechhofer and McCrone, 2010); as illustrated in Blair’s *Cool Britannia*, which Percival (2010) points out is “playing on the title of the eighteenth-century patriotic, nation-building song *Rule Britannia!*”. After all it has been argued that Britishness originated in nineteenth century empire expansion (Kershen,

1998). Music by Bally Sagoo, Asian Dub Foundation, the Kaliphz, Cornershop , Fundamental and others shows how artists “lay claim to Englishness, while parodying the racial exclusivity present within the cultural rhetoric of national belonging” (Back, 1996:228), significantly contrasting with Blair’s Britpop vision. Englishness, like Britishness, is thus problematic and complex, often exclusionary: definitions of Englishness are often ambiguous, and used in reference to the White majority, as well as in opposition to multiculturalism (Mann, 2011).

### **Politicised Britishness**

Politics and policies have contributed to how Britishness is presented, produced, experienced and contested today. Distinct groups defined by the political elite, despite claims of equality, have historically “experienced Britishness in a different way”, in accordance with “where they were perceived to “fit” within the hierarchy of Britishness” (Paul, 1997:xii):

Immigrating white aliens were recruited as members and citizens for their perceived potential to become British, and white UK residents were directed to the Commonwealth in order to maintain Britishness abroad... migrating citizens of color were rejected as members of British society because they had never been and could never become “really” British (Paul, 1997:xv).

Margaret Thatcher, British Prime Minister from 1979 to 1990, “who prided herself on her patriotism” (Ward, 2004:38) yearned to put the ‘Great’ back into ‘Great Britain’ (Croft, 2012:161), declaring schools should teach Empire “without apology, as a story of the nation’s ‘civilizing’ mission in the world at large” (Morley and Robins, 2001:6). Parekh (2008:64) critically analysed Thatcher’s speech for using “the language of national identity... to foreclose a wide variety of views” arguing she “breathes the spirit of intolerance”: “Thatcher places post-Elizabethan colonial expansion at the centre of British history, sees it as a wholly beneficial influence, and equates the English with British history”. Another Conservative politician, Norman Tebbit, is famous for his ‘cricket test’ to determine loyalty levels of British ethnic minorities according to support of international cricket teams, yet what of the Scots: would they pass the ‘cricket test’? (Croft, 2012). John Major, also a Conservative Prime Minister, in 1993, described his exclusionary Anglo-centric romanticised Britain: “long shadows on county (cricket) grounds, warm beer, invincible green shrubs, dog lovers and pools fillers and - as George Orwell said ‘old maids bicycling to holy communion through the morning mist’” (Bratberg and Haugevik, 2009, Kearney, 2012). When Gordon Brown requested the British Library to create an exhibition to celebrate Britishness, the powerful response from the British Library was an exhibition entitled “Taking Liberties”. Key government policies on ID cards and detention of suspects were explored in the exhibition; the opposition regarded the British Library’s response to Gordon Brown’s request as a clever snub (Hastings et al., 2008).

Some politicians have attempted to counter pastoral images of Britishness, for example William Hague, ex-leader of the Conservatives, celebrated urban and multi-ethnic Britain (The Guardian, 1999). New Labour of the 1990s was created with emphasis on Britishness as an underlying and important value (Croft, 2012), resulting in “entangled” Britpop and Blairism, and clumsy attempts to thrust upon the nation a new, inclusive and multicultural Britishness, alongside reclaiming of the Union Jack flag from the far right (Huq, 2010). Kunzru (2006:14) refers to New Labour as “enforcing nationalism with the carrot of ‘belonging’ and the stick of exclusion”. However, this symbolic alliance of Britpop and Blairism was “almost exclusively white” (Morley and Robins, 2001:9), and male-dominated (Whiteley, 2010). Where did ethnic minority men and women, some with Bhangra, Bollywood, reggae and rap repertoires, situate themselves in Blair’s *Britpop Cool Britannia* vision? *Britpop* not only excluded ethnic minority communities and women: most of the music bands promoted were English, and mainly London-based (Scott, 2010, Percival, 2010), despite other British cities like Manchester, Sheffield and Glasgow offering talent. Parekh (2008:68) compares Blair’s vision with Thatcher’s:

“Although his view of Britain’s history was free from the Thatcherite gloating over how it had ‘civilized’ the inferior races of Asia and Africa and ‘saved’ the rest of Europe from its internal Barbarians, he shared her view that British colonialism was on the whole a good thing, and that the country should continue to give ‘leadership’ to the rest of Europe and the world”.

Within New Labour discourses there were “competing narratives” of Britishness (Karvounis et al., 2003:313): (i) Imperial/transcontinental nationalism which “locates British identity in the wider, geopolitical context of traditional allies of Britain... Here, Britain’s political and spiritual home is within the British Commonwealth and/or the Anglo-American alliance”, and (ii) Euro-nationalism which “locates British identity solidly within the European Union, where Britain is prepared to ‘pool’ sovereignty, but only as a means to maintain national identity”.

The Swann Report (1985:7), over thirty years ago, had highlighted Britishness as “dynamic and ever changing, adapting and absorbing new ideas and influences”. The Cattle Report (2001) and The Runnymede Report (Parekh, 2000b) both state “there is no inherent and/or homogenous ethnic construction of Britishness and suggest civic values, based on Human Rights conventions, as the basis for a cohesive national collectivity” (Yuval-Davis et al., 2005:525). The Cattle Report (2001) and the White Paper (2002) could only provide universal liberal values when attempting to define core values of Britain and British citizenship (Joppke, 2004), yet over fifty years ago, Kedourie viewed nationalism as “always inherently illiberal and in constant tension with universalism” (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1992:39). Some politicians have claimed British values consist of “free speech, the rule of law, mutual tolerance and respect for equal rights”, and the

Ajegbo Report (2007) also referred to schools teaching these British values (Andrews and Mycock, 2008:143). Osler (2008:12) argues that “in commissioning the Ajegbo report, the government made a direct link between the need to counter terrorist activity and to strengthen national identity and British values through the curriculum”.

British values though are not uniquely ‘British’ (Rosen, 2014, Iordanou, 2014), but “ a grab-bag of universal values that can no longer effectively bind the nation together” (Grube, 2011:632/3). After my research was conducted, a letter from writer Professor Michael Rosen to previous Education Secretary Michael Gove also emphasised the universality of British values:

Your checklist of British values is: "Democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect, and tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs." I can't attach the adjective "British" to these. In fact, I find it parochial, patronising and arrogant that you think it's appropriate or right to do so. (Rosen, 2014).

At the time I was commencing this research on Britishness, the President of the National Union of Teachers also put forth the same question in response to the Education Secretary Alan Johnson: “In what way are values of free speech, tolerance and respect for the rule of law not also the values of other countries?” (Eason, 2007). Britishness is frequently articulated in a new context where “western culture comes to be recognised as but one particular form of modernity, rather than as some universal template for humankind”, in an age where Britain is no longer as influential, and increasingly ethnically diverse (Morley and Robins, 2001:3):

...this lack of unified concept has been explained in terms of the collapse of the British empire and the United Kingdom’s declining economic role on the world stage, globalization, increased devolution and increased pluralism (Runnymede Trust 2000) (Kiwan, 2012:52).

Politicians who, in grand speeches, equate Britishness with worthy principles like equality, tolerance, justice and human rights are critiqued for foreign policy decisions that result in Britons feeling “a sense of betrayal and disillusionment that the principles they associated with British society were being neglected by its institutions” and politicians (Yousuf, 2007:371). Moreover if nations necessitate communal obligations between co-nationals, then the idea that it is only co-nationals who deserve justice impacts upon those with transnational attachments (Young, 2000). Somalian-born Muslim music artist K’Naan (2005), who grew up in the United States and Canada, rapped about the African proverb, discussed in Chapter One, illustrating the need to tell stories about transnational ties: “Until the lion learns to speak/The tales of hunting will be weak/My poetry hails within the streets/My poetry fails to be discreet/It travels across the earth and seas/From Eritrea to the West Indies/It knows no boundaries”.

The mainstream media also attempts to define British identities: The Telegraph (2005), for example, two years before my research commenced, listed ten 'core' British values: rule of law, sovereignty of the Crown in Parliament, pluralist state, personal freedom, private property, institutions, family, history, British character, and the English-speaking world. Since my research was conducted, other media sources have interrogated Fundamental British Values promotion, particularly as Home Secretary Theresa May could not define British values: Rickman (2015) states "What we've learned: the only tangible British value is the urge to mock politicians who are trying to promote British values". Prime Minister David Cameron was also criticised for "his argument for protecting British values": "(this)<sup>13</sup> is as effective a definition of British values as exists. It is a free society: follow the law and the state will leave you alone... now (Cameron) plans to dismantle this notion in the name of British values" (Dunt, 2015). Questions arise, therefore, about who defines British values, the Home Secretary or British citizens (Lyons, 2015)? Kundnani (2005) distinguishes between 'phoney' attempts to promote Britishness with genuine universalism, interrogating whether a cohesive community is possible when some are Othered, condemned for refusing to integrate, and excluded for not attempting to become more British. Political discourses on integration have a "punitive streak", with the onus on migrants to ensure they are dramatically presenting how they fit into society (Gidley, 2014:168). Yet racist values are the real problem, for instead of recognising institutional racism pervades social structures, the spotlight was on the Muslim Other even before I commenced my research on Britishness (Kundnani, 2005). My empirical data in Chapter Six shows youth describing their experiences and perceptions of British identities.

### **Conclusion: Narratives of National Identity**

This chapter has shown the essence of nation is not successfully theorised, yet a robust theoretical framework to "understand and criticise national ideology" is needed (Bauer, 2012:39), particularly when teaching and learning of Britishness. Nationalism is not merely the realm of radical or extreme separatists; diffused through everyday lives are elements of 'banal nationalism', resulting in subconscious reminders of belonging to a nation, that sometimes bubble under the surface, and other times are more salient than silent (Billig, 1995). The "bounded space" of nation "continues to be the pre-eminent spatial construct in a world in which space is divided up into national portions" (Edensor, 2002:37), not just maintained through obvious means, like celebrating royal events or supporting national sporting teams, but

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<sup>13</sup> Prime Minister David Cameron to the National Security Council: "For too long, we have been a passively tolerant society, saying to our citizens: as long as you obey the law, we will leave you alone" PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE, HOME OFFICE, THE RT HON DAVID CAMERON MP & THE RT HON THERESA MAY MP 2015. Press release: Counter-Extremism Bill - National Security Council meeting.

nation is reproduced in subtle, everyday and invisible ways, thus experienced by citizens daily (Billig, 1995): “the often unreflexive habits, unnoticed objects and homely spaces that constitute the comfort of identity, conceived in national terms” (Edensor, 2002:186). Examples of everyday Britishness – in an exhibition around fifteen years ago – are examined in detail in *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life* by Tim Edensor:

...the milk round, driving on the left, going to car boot sales, playing bingo and Sunday morning football, and eating Sunday lunch are all mundane practices which are identified as epitomising Britishness. National identity is located in the familiar routines and embodied habits that such practices engender. It is perceived in the familiar sparrows and cats that populate local environs, in one’s friends, in pigeon lofts and fish and chip shops, Oxo cubes and baked beans, bicycles and tea cosies (2002:186).

‘Nationhood’ marginalises and silences minority communities by promoting an ideology that supports the powerful dominant elite (Sales, 2012), for the bordered “bounded entity” of a nation is “imagined to enclose a particular and separate culture, a notion which is articulated by hegemonic ways of differentiating and classifying cultural differences” (Edensor, 2002:37). Nationalism is reproduced by the powerful through “conscious and deliberate” ideological processes that implicate and exacerbate existing racisms (Hobsbawm, 1990:92), ultimately perpetuating hegemonic nationalism. Nation marginalising minorities, creating instability and humiliation for the Other, is a world issue. Hage (2012:17) refers to habitual debates on immigration in Australia where “the ‘migrants’ and the ‘ethnics’ are welcomed, abused, defended, made accountable, analysed and measured... the debates work to silence them and construct them into passive objects to be governed...”.

When nationalism rears its ugly head through far right extremism “strengthening and focusing on a division between us and them, between citizens and foreigners” (Osler and Starkey, 2005:11), or in the case of the English Defence League (EDL) who specifically target Muslims (Show Racism the Red Card, 2015), patriotism is “manipulated and transformed into a dangerous nationalism” (Carrington and Short, 1998:150). Some theorists strongly advocate a distinction<sup>14</sup> between the language of patriotism (‘love of country’) and nationalism (‘loyalty to the nation’) (Viroli, 1995). As generations pass, new dominant national values emerge through “reselection, recombination and recodification of previously existing values, symbols and memories and the like, as well as the addition of new cultural elements by each generation” (Smith, 2010:22). I offer evidence in Chapter Six that the generation of southeast London students in my research are concerned with their lived experiences of Britishness and belonging. Some students and

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<sup>14</sup> For the distinction and sub-categories of nationalism and patriotism, see VIROLI, M. 1995. *For Love of Country: An Essay on Patriotism and Nationalism*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

teachers may read belonging to Britain positively. Sympathetic readings of *nationalism* might incorporate ideas of language, growth, belonging and goals of “national autonomy, national unity and national identity” (Smith, 2010:9), or further the importance of national *belonging* in an insecure world (Calhoun, 2007), or point towards the *benign* nationalism of countries like Switzerland or Costa Rica (Zinn, 2013). Citizenship can also have positive connotations. In the “campaigns across the world for freedom from colonial rule”, citizenship is promoted as representing “freedom, equality and solidarity” (Osler and Starkey, 2005:10).

Other students and teachers may examine citizenship discussion “increasingly framed as a requirement of duty and conformity (especially from the stranger and minorities), rather than as a right or entitlement” (Amin, 2012:4). Ethnic minority students may feel ambivalent towards the concept of *citizenship*, if they learn that “the term ‘British citizen’ was first introduced under the Immigration Act 1981 as a means to exclude Commonwealth citizens from freely entering the UK” (Osler and Starkey, 2005:10). Jacobson, over ten years before my research commenced, predicted redefining of Britishness would not be “rapid or problem-free”:

within minority communities there will be sharp and sometimes conflictual differences in attitudes to identity issues, and an awareness of persisting prejudice and discrimination emanating from the white majority will undermine hopes for an end to exclusivist conceptions of the ‘nation’ (Jacobson, 1997:196).

While governments are concerned about a declining sense of citizenship (Faas, 2012), researchers write about fragmentary and multiple identities (Brah, 1996, Faas, 2012), global citizenship (Osler and Starkey, 2005), and distinctive diasporic identifications complicating traditional national affiliations (Back, 1996, Gilroy 2002). Conventional notions of national identity being stable and fixed as citizens belong to one country dissipate. Even if government wants to hold onto a version of Britishness, identity cannot be defined in one consistent way. Identities are “several, sometimes contradictory or unresolved” (Hall, 1996c:598); not “to do with people that look the same, feel the same, call themselves the same”, but Hall argues, identity is “as a process, as a narrative, as a discourse, it is always told from the position of the Other” (2000a:147). Examining Britishness can be interesting and challenging. National identity is grasped through interrelated concepts of nation, collective belonging, and citizenship (Smith, 1991); teaching and learning Britishness will inevitably touch upon these ideas. There is concern though “that incorporating ‘Britishness’ into the curriculum should not lead to ‘indoctrination into a narrow, fixed, uncritical and intolerant nationalism’ (Breslin, Rowe and Thornton 2006:21)” (Maylor et al., 2007:6). Alternative respectful ways of discussing citizenship, race and migration which support equality, anti-racism, and ensure rights of marginalised people, for example refugees, are urgently necessary (Finney and Simpson, 2009), for students to benefit

emotionally, socially and intellectually from studying Britishness. Anti-racist education concerns pedagogies and policies combatting individual and institutional discrimination through advancing racial equality (Troyna and Carrington, 2012).

## **PART B: EMPIRICAL STUDIES ON YOUNG PEOPLE AND BRITISHNESS**

*(Some) completely reject the idea that they are British, some feel ambivalent and uncertain, and others affirm their own Britishness" (Jacobson, 1997:186).*

In **PART A**, I provided a theoretical introduction to key themes relevant to my research regarding identity, national identity, citizenship and Britishness. Now in **PART B**, in reference to empirical research, I focus on young people's discourses of Britishness, examine the literature on established boundaries of Britishness, and continue the conversation on White Britishness and Multicultural Britishness by focusing on British youth perceptions of belonging to Britain.

### **Students and Britishness: A Largely Unexamined Topic**

There is a remarkable paucity of literature on school students' definitions and narratives of Britishness, or on their attachments to nation (Scourfield et al., 2006, Lam and Smith, 2009). If citizenship is increasingly impacting upon youth consciousness, since its introduction in 2002 as a school subject (Huq, 2009), and if "childhood and nationalism are intertwined" (Scourfield et al., 2006:4), empirical research on school students' discourses of Britishness, and their classroom experiences of learning about Britishness is required. Research on Britishness is particularly important to challenge "ethnocentrism, cultural racism or xenophobia" (Carrington and Short, 1995:220). The empirical studies I draw on here refer to the category of *youth* in a broad sense<sup>15</sup> for youth are frequently the socio-political focus of debates on citizenship and belonging in modern multicultural societies (Fortier, 2008, Butcher and Harris, 2010). Young people are "everybody's business", with society placing "hopes for building a better world" upon them (Smyth and McInerney, 2007:37). Yet, young people are frequently maligned in media and political rhetoric (Smyth and McInerney, 2007, Grattan, 2009), with policies of social control to discipline them increasingly justified in the interest of social harmony.

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<sup>15</sup> On how to define young people, see FURLONG, A. 2013. *Youth Studies: An Introduction*, Abingdon, Routledge. Also see HOPKINS, P. E. 2010. *Young People, Place and Identity*, Abingdon, Routledge.

## Boundaries of Britishness

### Civic, Racial and Cultural Boundaries

Britishness as complex, contested and unfixed came to be evident through empirical data collected by Jacobson (1997) regarding young British Pakistani Londoners. Jacobson embraced an “attitudinal approach” of “lay people’s understandings” of Britishness, instead of utilizing approaches others incorporated<sup>16</sup> in their studies of national identity (Jacobson, 1997:181). She found three main ways youth articulated Britishness: rejection, ambivalence and affirmation. Postmodern notions of identity are seen as multiple, unfixed and “infinitely malleable”, she argued, nevertheless, Britishness is not “subject to limitless reinterpretation” (Jacobson, 1997:187). Jacobson observed the following boundaries in her empirical research:

<b>Civic boundary of Britishness</b>	“the formal or official boundary which defines people as British if they are British citizens”
<b>Racial boundary of Britishness</b>	“defines people as British if they have, or are believed to have, British ancestry or British blood”
<b>Cultural boundary of Britishness</b>	“defines Britishness in terms of values, attitudes and lifestyle: that is, Britishness is regarded as a matter of the culture to which one adheres”

*Table 2: Jacobson’s boundaries of Britishness (adapted from (Jacobson, 1997:188)*

Primary school students defining national identity in “concrete” ways by referring to “speaking English or being born in Britain” (Carrington and Short, 1995:236) is an example of the civic boundary. Bechhofer and McCrone (2010) outline how English people might perceive Britishness through (1) the prism of loyalty to notions of empire, monarchy and tradition, (2) the lens of devolution, or (3) commitment to multicultural and multinational diversity. Maylor (2010) highlights multiple ways students define Britishness: being born in Britain, holding a passport, citizenship, Whiteness, British parentage or family, and historical heritage dating back

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<sup>16</sup> Jacobson (1997) provides an extensive list of other approaches taken in the study of national identity: large-scale surveys, study of school text-books, public images, media analysis and more.

to Anglo-Saxon times, while Hussain and Bagguley (2005) found Bradford's ethnic minority youth keen on asserting their Britishness by referring to their rights to belong as citizens.

Britishness is often depicted as synonymous with Whiteness (Swann, 1985, Maylor et al., 2007), with some White Britons advocating racialised Britishness over civic Britishness (Garner, 2012). Other European nations also emphasise Whiteness and belonging. Icelandic migrants, in Norway, claim belonging by marking themselves as the White privileged race, different from the hypervisible Black Somali community for example. (Guðjónsdóttir, 2014). Some Norwegian ethnic minority youth associate Norwegianness with Whiteness, while others resist this *racial* boundary of national identity (Phelps and Nadim, 2010). Almost two decades ago, Hall was writing about the notion of Englishness in the Thatcherite period as a "privileged and restrictive cultural identity", consequently "becoming a site of contestation for those many marginalised ethnic and racial groups" suffering social exclusion and seeking alternative forms of ethnic identification (1989: 132). Such alternative identifications, Hall explained, were necessary in providing "some sense of 'place' and position in the world": it "reminds us that everybody comes from some place – even if it is only an 'imagined community' (1989:133).

In northwest England, some White youth feel positive about terms 'White', 'English', and 'British', perhaps more positive about 'White' and 'English', despite the fact that "four in ten of them associate 'British' with England" (Sanderson and Thomas, 2014:7). Faas (2008:42) also found some White students preferred Englishness - "a term they associated with concepts of blood and birth" - to Britishness. Back (1996: 242) once predicted ethnic minority young people's "claiming" of England as home could "produce a reworking in the definition of what Englishness means". Sanderson and Thomas's research reveals the complexities of racialised English and British identities, as sometimes "'British' appeared to prompt a 'White' association almost twice as often as 'English'" (2014:8). Muslim youth also racialised 'British' and 'English' by referring to Whiteness, but felt more comfortable with 'British' than 'English' for the former symbolised multicultural diversity (Sanderson and Thomas, 2014).

### **Religious Boundaries**

It might be argued that "descendants of Jewish and Irish immigrants" assimilated through embracing a Britishness that dismissed their religious roots (Panayi, 2010:316), perhaps contributing to religion becoming insignificant to British identity. The current Fundamental British Values (Department for Education, 2014) policy, however, in practice seems to target Muslim youth (Bolloten and Richardson, 2015), necessitating research on how young people juxtapose the nuances and complexities of Britishness and religion. This is even more pressing

if we understand Islam is a fast growing religion in Europe (Vavrus, 2015). A decade on from Jacobson's work, when I was researching Britishness, studies showed school students associated Britishness with Christianity (Maylor et al., 2007). British Muslim youth also might privilege attachment to Islam over identification with nation, (Kershen, 2004, Thomas, 2009, Hoque, 2015), but this does not mean they disassociate themselves from Britishness. Muslim youth hold strong religious identifications and still express pride in British identity (Thomas, 2009).

Young White school students often perceive themselves to be British, while ethnic minority students, particularly older ones, might refer to their Britishness in conjunction with religious/ethnic identity (Carrington and Short, 1995, Carrington and Short, 1998). One feature of Britishness identified by a student in Maylor (2010) was not having a religion; thus Maylor poses the question of whether White Britishness with a religion can be seen as British. Religion has become important as a social signifier (Karlsen and Nazroo, 2015). In the 1950s/60s public discourses referred to "colour", "race" in the 1960s to the 1980s, "ethnicity" in the 1990s, and today religion, particularly Islam (Abbas, 2004). Prominent scholars seem to forget about the significance of religion for ethnic minority communities. Gilroy and Hall, for example, have been critiqued by Modood (1998b:34) as "guilty of a woeful neglect of religion". Modood's predictions are pertinent today: "British race theorists had assumed that there was a deep racial/colour divide. Contemporary developments suggest that ethno-religious divisions will prove more persistent" (1998b:39). We must consider the growing number of White British autochthonous Muslims; in my preliminary research (discussed in the opening chapter), for example, a White student felt strongly she was both British and Muslim.

### **Multicultural Boundaries**

Building on Jacobson (1997), Vadher and Barrett (2009) interviewed young British Indians and Pakistanis. Arguing Jacobson's civic and cultural boundaries are more complex than she describes, they outlined new boundaries, affirming the notions of multiple identities/positionings: racial, civic/state, instrumental, historical, lifestyle and multicultural (Vadher and Barrett, 2009:450). Their methodological stance involved collecting young people's own perspectives through their "self-descriptions and self-categorizations" (Vadher and Barrett, 2009:442). Racism and threats of racism figured in their participants' perceptions of British identity, with some young people expressing they felt they were not fully accepted as British (Vadher and Barrett, 2009). The participants' identifications with Britishness differed depending upon socialising with friends, holidays abroad, and national sport fandom (Vadher and Barrett, 2009). The participants in their study hailed from the South of England, and so I take into

account that localities impact upon identities. My data also reflects the need to consider context for which I offer evidence in Chapter Six. National identifications most probably vary according to ethnicity and geographical locality of the student (Barrett, 2002).

My major criticism of Vadher and Barret's sampling is that *all* the Indians in their study were Hindu, and *all* the Pakistanis were Muslim, thereby an artificial distinction between Hindu Indians and Pakistani Muslims as being discrete homogenous identities is implied. Vadher and Barrett (2009) claim the Pakistani youth gave more importance to religion, thereby differing from the Indian youth; participants had "fluid and context-dependent" identifications "especially pronounced across the divide between the private and public spheres of their lives" (2009:446). They found Indian participants did not find the distinction between public/private spheres as problematic, but Pakistani participants did. Would Indian Muslims encounter the same barriers in public life mentioned by Pakistani participants? Muslims, often represented as a homogenous collective (Baumann, 1999), results in society seeing Muslims as monolithic (Commission for Racial Equality, 2005). Although Vadher and Barrett (2009), at the end of their paper, write that their findings cannot be generalised, nevertheless, the heterogeneity of the Indian sub-continent with its many cultures, religions and languages needed emphasis.

The Department for Education and Skills<sup>17</sup> commissioned a review of diversity and citizenship in the curriculum, led by Sir Keith Ajebo (2007). The Ajebo Report (2007), after finding schools neglect White British diversity when teaching the National Curriculum, proposed schools teach British values alongside cultural diversity. Although the Ajebo Report attempted to include urban and rural schools, schools in the northwest and southeast were not included. Further reviews need to be conducted throughout Britain and beyond to learn about students' perceptions of nation and belonging<sup>18</sup>. Children in South Wales, for instance, construct identities in relation to "dominant discourses" of belonging to Wales, as well as "class-based notions of what it means to come from the valleys" (Scourfield et al., 2005:222), whilst London youth have been shown as displaying "higher levels of national identification" than those in surrounding counties like Surrey and Kent (Barrett, 2002:6).

Nussbaum (1996) advocates aspects of Stoic philosophy in education to show simultaneous attachments to world citizenship and local identifications are possible. Even within multicultural

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<sup>17</sup> Now known as the Department for Education.

<sup>18</sup> For an older study on Scotland and a more recent study on Ireland see CARRINGTON, B. & SHORT, G. 1996. Who Counts; Who Cares? Scottish children's notions of national identity. *Educational Studies*, 22, 203-224, WALDRON, F. & PIKE, S. 2006. What does it mean to be Irish? Children's construction of national identity 1. *Irish Educational Studies*, 25, 231-251.

spaces, students will negotiate identities amidst racialised and exclusionary encounters. Clayton (2011:1689) found Leicester youth, in dealing with racism and social inequalities, were “making the best of their various situations” : “drawing upon a range of resources and identities from the immediate to the global, within everyday contexts of relative powerlessness”. Barrett (2002) found that White English students, aged 5-16, identified more strongly than the ethnic minority students with Britishness and Englishness. Ethnic minority teenagers perhaps sense they are only included when it suits national narratives (Back, 1996:148): they see that their hyphenated identities are deemed by politicians as “at best as problematic and at worst as mutually exclusive”. This might account for why African and Caribbean students in Britain, particularly females, sometimes regard ethnic heritage as a more valuable category of identification than nationality, revealing pride and emotional attachments about their ethnicity (Lam and Smith, 2009).

Research with young people (16 to 21 year olds) in six areas of the UK (including Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales) found Britishness is not as important as other more personal identity markers for young people; they don't ponder on Britishness, but see it as unchangeable, and connect to their local identity instead, however they are willing to discuss Britishness when invited to discuss national identity (Phillips and Ganesh, 2007). The diversity of students' experiences of multiculturalism is evident in research with Turkish and White British students by Faas (2008) who found that distinctive approaches to multicultural education (either emphasis on 'diversity' or focus on 'commonality'), as well as school dynamics and social class impact upon students' experiences of multicultural Britishness. My data in Chapter Six similarly reflects the significance of social class. There are a number of ideological approaches towards diversity and multiculturalism that schools seemingly adopt, including (i) socially conservative positions that glorify the Western canon as a universally civilising and progressive force, and hostile to multiculturalism, rather aiming for monoculturalism or assimilation; (ii) liberal positions that promote equality, common humanity and sameness, but also seek assimilation, and neglect the significance of social structures on individual's agency; (iii) pluralist positions that recognise class, gender and race matter, and encourage pride in heritage through a diverse curriculum, but ignore oppressions (Steinberg, 2009, Vavrus, 2015).

Following Steinberg (2009) and Vavrus (2015), I understand the significance of the critical multiculturalism approach in exploring race, class, power, privilege, social inequalities, knowledge and resistance. Critical multiculturalism approaches to Britishness can usefully interrogate White supremacy and race, and in Chapter Three, we will come to understand the

benefits of critical pedagogy for teaching and learning about British identities. Schools have long been crucial spaces to challenge the idea that White skin is required to belong to Britain (Swann, 1985), yet today schools still struggle with vague definitions of Britishness that might invoke “desire to keep Britain White” (Maylor, 2010:245):

...the head teacher of School A argued that ‘Britishness’ needs to be defined because, if pupils who are not used to engaging with a culturally and ethnically diverse Britain are allowed to define it, they could be ‘quite nasty’ (Maylor, 2010:245).

Scholars of identity ask “whose heritage we should now be counting as British?” (Morley and Robins, 2001:2). Further questions arise: whose Britishness we should teach in schools? How can we successfully define Britishness without ‘nasty’ racist discourse? How can we ensure teaching about British citizenship necessitates sensitive coverage of colonial histories and contemporary cultural diversity (Heater, 2001)? The Ajebo Report also found the National Curriculum is regarded as inherently Eurocentric and diversity is low on most schools’ priority list (Maylor et al., 2007:5). Next *Part C: Teaching and Learning Britishness* explores teachers’ concerns about negative and offensive comments from students when controversial topics are raised.

## **PART C: TEACHING AND LEARNING BRITISHNESS**

In Part C, when examining the literature on teaching and learning about Britishness and identities, I will particularly focus upon racism, patriotism and teacher training, which I found were recurring themes in the literature on teaching and learning about multicultural Britain.

### **Diversity and Pedagogy: Research Required**

The little research conducted about Britishness teaching points to teachers’ nervousness and reluctance to debate Britishness, and highlights schools are not tackling the issue of diversity in Britain effectively (Maylor, 2010). Sometimes teachers are in danger of “underestimating” their White students’ understanding and experience of diversity in Britain (Maylor, 2010). For these students “experience of identity issues in the curriculum is that they have a deficit or residual British/English identity” (Maylor et al., 2007:8)<sup>19</sup>. Schools in predominantly White communities neglect teaching about diversity in Britain, assuming White students “are unlikely to engage in ethnically diverse communities” (Maylor, 2010:241). However statistics show “virtually no secondary schools” are all-White (Gillborn and Mirza, 2000:6). Moreover, in predominantly White communities “active support of minority ethnic identities” is necessary through

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<sup>19</sup> My research showed some White students described themselves as culturally void.

“education of white children about cultural diversity and opportunities for minority ethnic children to mix with each other” (Scourfield et al., 2005:222). There are also presumptions made in multi-ethnic schools, that (i) the teaching of diversity in Britain is not needed as students do diversity daily, and (ii) minority ethnic students have innate knowledge about diversity (Maylor, 2010). Yet the complexities of choices available to young people, as well as the consequences of these choices, can impact upon how ethnic minority youth position themselves in relation to, for example, their ‘Asian-ness’ or ‘Britishness’ (Hall, 2002b). Language and music, for example, are two social sites where London youth may come together sharing urban multicultural ways of doing Britishness through contesting racisms (Back, 1996).

Schools, therefore, are failing to explore “what is meant by ‘diversity’, the type of diversity messages they would like to promote, and how they want such diversity messages to be received and understood” (Maylor, 2010:248), even if educationalists highlight the close relationship between identity, diversity and achievement as needing discussing to better understand teaching and learning philosophies and practices (Knowles and Lander, 2011). Schools only tend to equate diversity with students from minority ethnic backgrounds, thereby neglecting White British and dual heritage experiences (Maylor, 2010). Mixed heritage students are sometimes stereotyped as coming from “fragmented homes” and having “confused identities”: “...invisible at policy level with no guidance in place about terminology or monitoring of achievement. There was a failure to reflect Mixed heritage experience and identities in the curriculum and school” (Fuller, 2013:142).

In *Citizenship Established?* (2010), Ofsted highlights how Britishness has been taught superficially, focusing mainly on stereotypes, and Citizenship Education generally ignored or misunderstood. The report contained an example of Britishness discussion that slipped into racist discourse. The Department for Education report *Young People and Community Cohesion* (2010) also promotes citizenship teaching and learning to mould responsible young citizens, who will feel a greater sense of belonging, opportunity and fairness in a cohesive society, rather than resentment and a lack of belonging. Breslin et al. (2006:13) recommend Citizenship teachers should adopt “a carefully measured approach that recognises the complexity” of Britishness, for it is “a contested concept, for some specific, others dynamic, and others nebulous”. Schools must ensure identities of all students are explored with “sensitivity” through a curriculum that “enables pupils (particularly the majority population) to appreciate their own identities within a wider British diversity” (Maylor, 2010:248).

Jerome and Clemitshaw (2012:31) researched Citizenship and History trainee teachers' views of teaching Britishness, finding they had "a strong notion of the democratic classroom, but one which sits uneasily alongside the more simplistic exhortations of politicians for the promotion of identity and democratic responsibilities through the curriculum". They observed student teachers are cynical about governmental agendas regarding British identity, but they are confidently willing to teach Britishness through a framework about inclusive, diverse and multiple identities. Student teachers are critical but also willing "to teach *about* complex issues, while generally refusing to promote simple or simplistic messages on behalf of politicians" (Jerome and Clemitshaw, 2012:39). Importantly, student teachers are "overwhelmingly sceptical" about "being asked to deliver what they considered to be propaganda-like messages through their teaching"; while the majority were "confident in their own ability" about teaching Britishness, there was still "a significant minority who appear to lack either confidence or a critical understanding of the key terms" (Jerome and Clemitshaw, 2012:38). Those who had experienced Britishness teaching were keen to project a multicultural notion of Britishness (Jerome and Clemitshaw, 2012). The literature on teaching about identity generally, as well as the literature on teaching about Britishness, reveals three key themes needing further examination, which I will discuss next:

- racism
- patriotism
- teacher training.

### **Racism in Schools**

*"Both the head teachers of Schools A and F noted the inclination for some pupils to bring racist attitudes to school and the difficulties in trying to counteract such attitudes" (Maylor, 2010:245).*

Politicians have attempted to render race invisible by underemphasising, even ignoring, institutional racism and racial inequalities in social policy initiatives and public discourses and debates (Gillborn, 1995, Ratcliffe, 2011, Craig and O'Neill, 2013). This neglect has seemingly seeped into professional practice with new teachers not recognising issues of race and racism as important (Solomon et al., 2005, Pearce, 2012, Lander, 2014). If White people are (un)witting members of "a club that enrolls certain people at birth, without their consent, and brings them up according to its rules", whether politicians, policymakers or teachers, if they "question the rules, the officers are quick to remind them of all they owe to the club, and warn them of the dangers they will face if they leave it" (Ignatiev and Garvey, 1996:10). A major challenge for

anti-racist activism then is how to ensure critical White studies<sup>20</sup> is incorporated into the pedagogies, policies and practices of educational and social policy. I argue throughout this research that race, racism and racial inequalities need examining in schools (Maylor et al., 2006b) through critical race theory and critical pedagogy (See Chapter Three), if we want to address social inequalities:

There is a greater need now to understand the reality and experiences of racism while acknowledging that race is a socially constructed concept, and that racialisation connects with other socially constructed discourses in the processes of 'othering'. These material and intra-personal experiences include stigma, exclusion, disadvantage and humiliation (Craig and O'Neill, 2013:94).

Examples of the "downgrading of the 'race' agenda" including political rhetoric, loss of funding for regional Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) networks, the EHRC's responsibilities being decreased, and the Government Equalities Office having its budget almost halved (Gillborn, 1995, Craig and O'Neill, 2013) all highlight race, institutional racism and racial inequalities are deemed insignificant. Worryingly "Britain cannot get over its past and racism holds the society hostage" (Back, 2009:205).

Critical race theorists argue that "when the ideology of racism is examined and racist injuries are named, victims of racism can find their voice", share solidarity with similarly demonised or oppressed peoples, and become empowered in a collective story-sharing experience, "hearing their own stories and the stories of others, listening to how the arguments against them are framed, and learning to make the arguments to defend themselves" (Solórzano and Yosso, 2002:27). Examining racisms should not solely focus on "personal prejudice and ignorance", but also on institutional racisms experienced by school students (Gillborn, 1995:36), as well as on "new racisms" that reveal socio-cultural (or religious) targeting of the Other (Back, 1996). Moreover, ethnic identities are often explored in relation to adults, and mostly in urban multi-ethnic areas; thus children's ethnic identities as well as the ethnic identities of those situated in rural White areas need researching (Scourfield et al., 2005).

Two years before I commenced my data collection, British society was being warned by academics to be wary about "ways in which debates led by politicians and the media quickly become the norm and end up fuelling racism" against Muslims who are racialised and blamed for not integrating in British society (Bhavnani et al., 2005:49). It is, thus, concerning that student teachers are still not trained on how to handle everyday incidents of racism, nor are

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<sup>20</sup> Critical White Studies concerns White people "and their sense of self, their interests and concerns" (Cole, 2016:5).

they confident in dealing with structural racism by challenging the Eurocentric curriculum (Lander, 2014), especially since hostile racial examples like ‘It’s our country meant for white people’ or ‘paki’ feature in young people’s discourses (Sanderson and Thomas, 2014:8). The Ajebo, Crick and Cattle Reports have all been criticised for focusing on ‘diversity’ rather than directing critical attention to structural racism, societal and global inequalities, youth voice/experience of education, and human rights (Osler, 2008, Garratt, 2011, Ratcliffe, 2011, Osler, 2015): “the re-incarnation of citizenship education through the Crick Report (QCA 1998)” included “only two paragraphs on multicultural issues (Tomlinson 2008a), and, significantly, no mention at all of racism” (Garratt, 2011:30). Osler (2008:13) further argues that The Crick Report almost “reflects, rather than challenges, the institutionalised racism of British society” through pejorative language and stereotypical representations of ethnic minority communities.

Nandi and Platt (2014) also discuss how the ‘failure’ of multicultural policies in creating social cohesion is often cited in relation to Muslim communities, while other minority groups and the White majority are rarely investigated; yet some ethnic minority communities have strong affiliations to British identity (Manning and Georgiadis, 2012), “stronger in fact than the White majority” (Nandi and Platt, 2014:41). Political and media rhetoric is frequently to blame for the increasing public discourses against minority ethnic communities (Bhavnani et al., 2005). Simpson and Finney (2009) cite one of Ruth Levitas’ approaches to understanding processes of social exclusion:

...a “moral underclass discourse, which emphasises moral and cultural causes of poverty and is centrally concerned with the moral hazard of ‘dependency’... [It] tends to replay recurrent themes about ‘dangerous classes’ to focus on consequences of social exclusion for social order, and on particular groups, such as unemployed and potentially criminal young men, and lone parents, especially young never-married mothers’ (Levitas, 1999, p12) in (Simpson and Finney, 2009:34).

Simpson and Finney go on to argue that if Levitas had been writing a few years later, she may have included the Muslim community in the aforementioned list of people who are labelled - especially by politicians - as belonging to a moral underclass (2009). Growing Islamophobia has been highlighted for many years; Alexander (2000:6) saw British Muslims were increasingly being seen in terms of “negativity, deprivation, disadvantage and alienation”.

Bhopal and Rhamie (2013:18) show how student teachers recognise that, though identity is fluid and malleable, “visible markers of difference” of Whiteness and Blackness “impact upon the teaching and learning experience”. Racism was identified as a potential problem by Carrington and Short (1995) in their research with primary school students in the 1990s, even though the students did not explicitly state racist views. They found the same case with 12 and 13 year olds

(Carrington and Short, 1998). Critical theorists like Cohen (1988) and Wright (1985) have argued that racism is not a mere appendage to British history. Instead racism is perceived as inherent in British identity (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1992). In Citizenship Education, then, race is sometimes essentialised, the topic of racism is not adequately handled, and Britishness is equated with Whiteness by teachers (Chadderton, 2009). One reason for teachers' being unprepared to handle debates around racism may be that racism is "a notoriously difficult concept to define", furthermore "there is no one monolithic racism but numerous historically situated racisms" (Back, 1996:9).

### **Problematic Patriotism**

*...schools cannot afford to ignore the topic, but nor are they justified in either promoting or discouraging patriotic feeling in students. The only defensible policy is for schools to adopt a stance of neutrality and teach the topic as a controversial issue (Hand and Pearce, 2009:454).*

For some politicians, patriotism is a prized value to be instilled in the nation. Osler (2009:89) analysed speeches by senior politicians, examining their rhetoric on Britishness: Gordon Brown's vision of Britishness was patriotic and "progressive", endorsing symbols such as the union flag and a national day which Brown argued "must be reclaimed from far right and racist political parties, and adopted as a symbol of unity, tolerance and inclusion". Research reveals some students and teachers affirm neutrality of approach towards patriotism: "preferred classroom practice is to address patriotic ideas in the context of open discussion" (Hand and Pearce, 2009:453). Hand and Pearce (2009) conducted empirical research with Year Nine students (aged 13-14) and Citizenship and History teachers in London schools. Perhaps they should have also interviewed teachers in other subjects other than these two subjects traditionally associated with national identity issues. Interestingly, "more than half of the teachers and students surveyed agreed or strongly agreed with the proposition that it is a good thing for people to be patriotic" (Hand and Pearce, 2009:461). Yet despite regarding it positively, overall there was support for a neutral stance on patriotism, and some of the surveyed even argued that it should be avoided.

In the United States, the darker side to "arrogant nationalism" is evident in the indoctrination of young Americans to support the powerful elite in society, whilst racial and religious groups are ostracised and even harmed: "... that devotion to a flag, an anthem, a boundary, so fierce it engenders mass murder ...along with racism and religious hatred" (Zinn, 2013). Surveys in the 1990s stated European identity would overtake national identifications (Kershen, 1998). Yet in Europe, the rise of ugly nationalism (Bhambra, 2014), through "aggressive political

demagoguery, targeting minorities, immigrants and democracy itself” no longer remains the sole domain of far right extremists but is witnessed in “mainstream political forces” (Amin, 2012:119). The way the French and German states, for example, view their minorities as “problems” are “reflections of how these states run themselves, run their schools, and run the curricula” (Baumann, 1999:151). The 2016 European Union Referendum revealed mainstream British politicians were comfortable in employing aggressive rhetoric of Othering and exclusion. The 2008 Green Paper, *The Path to Citizenship*, a Home Office document, depicts immigrants as a criminal threat to Britain’s stability: “Negative messages about newcomers are contrasted with ‘British values’... the document gives the impression that Britain is a country under siege by certain unspecified newcomers unlikely to subscribe fully to such values” (Osler, 2011:196). Berke (1998:43) perceives nationalism as a type of “narcissism” that obsesses over size and shape through boundaries and borders, as well as about the inner and the exterior, through ideas of racial purity and prestige. This type of ‘narcissism’ features heavily in political and media posturing about multicultural Britain. Even seemingly innocent census data can, for example, be “used by the media to feed xenophobia, and by politicians as grounds for *reducing services*” (Sebba, forthcoming).

Some teachers express wariness about promoting patriotism as it is potentially “socially divisive” in excluding non-British students, while one teacher explains, “patriotism about being British in my experience tends to be a white preserve” (Hand and Pearce, 2009:460). Students too were worried about the controversial nature of patriotism as causing trouble and racism. There is a danger that in solely championing British history, values and identity, diverse students’ ethnic and cultural heritages are viewed as marginal and insignificant. Writers on nation have emphasised the problematic nature of claiming an exclusive nation by proclaiming racial or linguistic superiority:

Such exaggerations enclose one within a specific culture, considered as national; one limits oneself, one hems oneself in. One leaves the heady air that one breathes in the vast field of humanity in order to enclose oneself in a conventicle with one’s compatriots. Nothing could be worse for the mind; nothing could be more disturbing for civilization (Renan, 1990:17).

Pride in the nation is perpetuated at the expense of acknowledging the shameful histories of Britain’s colonial aggressions (Fortier, 2005, Zembylas, 2008). In the United States, teachers who openly critique colonial aggression and the political status quo are also vulnerable to neoliberal hard-lined practices and neoconservative ideologies which can destroy their teaching career and livelihood (Groenke and Hatch, 2009, Gabbard, 2009). For example, the American

teacher, Deborah Mayer's contract was not renewed after she expressed a pro-peace stance in the classroom (Gabbard, 2009).

Schools potentially handle patriotism in different ways: avoidance, neutrality, active encouragement of patriotism, active discouragement of patriotism: "schools have a responsibility to ensure that students not only understand the phenomenon of patriotism but are equipped to make reasoned judgements about the place it should occupy in their own emotional lives" (Hand and Pearce, 2009:454). Teachers can use various strategies to handle controversial issues: neutrality and impartiality, express a personal perspective, provide a balanced varied viewpoint or play devil's advocate by presenting the opposite case (Copeland and Bowden, 2014). Hand and Pearce (2009) advocate a neutral approach from schools when dealing with patriotism. Yet can neutrality be achieved when teaching Britishness, or will teachers inevitably lean towards personal or political interpretations of Britishness? Thus, these are tensions that need further exploration as to be a critical pedagogue is to recognise education is not neutral (Lather, 1986, Denzin, 1989, Patton, 1999, O'Toole and Beckett, 2013, Smyth and McInerney, 2013).

Advocates of nationalism, through politics and education, frequently grant "a weak concession" to cosmopolitanism, instead promoting nation as more important than world citizenship (Nussbaum, 1996:5). Liberal multiculturalism also seems to focus on "the boundaries of the nation and to neglect the wider global picture" (Osler, 2008:16). Trainee teachers however tend to believe that respect, tolerance, human rights and diversity are key values that schools should teach (Jerome and Clemitshaw, 2012), for these themes of cosmopolitan citizenship allow for exploration of "shared global problems" (Stevenson, 2003:332). Teacher-facilitated open discussion in order to promote respect and diversity seems to be the desired practice amongst some trainee teachers.

### **Teacher Training**

*"Research has raised concerns about teachers' knowledge of diversity and the effectiveness of teacher training in enabling teachers to cover diversity issues. The data also points to a misconception amongst some teachers that subjects such as Mathematics and Science do not allow for discussion about the world and local and national contexts"(Maylor et al., 2007:5).*

Times may have moved on since a teacher might have referred to an ethnic minority student as a 'wog' (Anwar, 2002), yet today 'new racisms' have resulted in examples of young people branded as 'terrorists' by their teachers (Shammas and Evans, 2015, Pettifor, 2016, Revesz, 2016). Teacher training and school professional development courses in the UK still do not give

issues of multiculturalism and diversity due time and attention (Carrington et al., 2000, Maylor et al., 2006a, Pearce, 2012, Stokes and Nea, 2013, Bhopal and Rhamie, 2013, Lander, 2014). Teachers in the USA and Australia also recognise key challenges impact upon their profession: decreased funding, educational attainment of ethnic minority students, increase in racial and hate crime, lack of training on diversity and challenging monocultural and Eurocentric curricula, as well as political rhetoric that demonises ethnic minorities (Howard, 2006). Teachers need effective diversity training to be able to successfully teach in British schools (Home Office, 2001). Teachers receive insufficient support on teaching citizenship education, and schools are unsure how to deliver it through the curriculum (Faulks, 2006). Moreover as there are many conceptions of citizenship – multicultural, European, and global – teachers need guidance on how to explore “multiple identities and allegiances” (Heater, 2004:195).

King (1991:133) highlighted some of the views held by her “relatively privileged, monocultural” trainee teachers in the USA regarding teaching:

Not surprisingly, given recent neoconservative ideological interpretations of the problem of diversity, many of my students also believe that affirming cultural difference is tantamount to racial separatism, that diversity threatens national unity, or that social inequity originates with sociocultural deficits and not with unequal outcomes that are inherent in our socially stratified society.

The ‘dysconscious racism’ of these often anxious and ‘miseducated’ White trainee teachers with their “limited and distorted understandings” about diversity and inequality issues (King, 1991:134) is troubling; these misapprehensions can affect student engagement and achievement. King was writing about 1990s USA, but her words resonate even today in the UK, where teachers are inadequately trained on how to “understand their own racialised positions as powerful professionals, within either predominantly White or multiethnic classrooms” (Lander, 2014:93). Educationalists who are tackling racism, by interrogating Whiteness and White privilege, are frequently subjected to startlingly and revealingly negative responses from their students, the media or wider society generally (Lund and Carr, 2010, Smith and Lander, 2012). Teachers can work towards critically deconstructing Whiteness more effectively if they are not overwhelmed by blame and guilt for their White privilege and power (Howard, 2006, Lea and Sims, 2008, Lund and Carr, 2010). There will also be teachers who students perceive as racist (Gillborn, 1995). Teachers not grasping cultural diversity can lead to further misconceptions and stereotyping that can damage students’ confidence and hinder their educational progress. For example, teacher education in the USA has been critiqued for promoting *majoritarian stories* or *monovocals* “to explain educational inequity through a

cultural deficit model and thereby pass on beliefs that students of color are culturally deprived” (Solórzano and Yosso, 2002:31).

Social inequalities can be reflected in schools, adversely affecting inter-ethnic relations in the classroom; working out ways of promoting inter-ethnic classroom harmony in school is not always easy (Verma et al., 1994). Some schools have high “levels of racial harassment” (Carrington et al., 2000:20), making teaching Britishness in such schools challenging, particularly if racist discourses are employed by the students. Citizenship and History teachers, familiar with teaching controversial topics, are also wary of the “sensitivity of the topic” and the “difficulty of teaching” a potentially divisive topic such as patriotism (Hand and Pearce, 2009:461), and “suspicious of using history to promote any sense of British identity” because of its legacy of colonialism and empire (Husbands et al., 2010:153). Primary schools teachers need guidance on citizenship teaching (Maylor et al., 2007), especially if primary school students find national identity complex to comprehend and explain (Carrington and Short, 1995). Students - even in ‘monocultural’ schools - appreciate teachers including controversial discussions in lessons as it aids understanding of diverse perspectives (Hess, 2009).

Overseas-trained teachers with no experience of teaching London students from ethnically diverse backgrounds may be new to promoting London-specific diversity (Maylor et al., 2006b). In order to combat racism, teachers require the “knowledge and confidence” to explore multicultural Britishness (Maylor, 2010:249). Of concern too is that there are insufficient numbers of ethnic minority teachers in our schools (Anwar, 2002). Gaine (2005:114) cites a class watching a video briefly featuring an Asian teacher, to which a White student responds: “My mum says if I had a Paki teacher she’d send me to another school” (2005: 114). Trainee teachers who receive some appropriate training still believe their educational institutions “could and should do more to equip students with greater skills to deal with incidents of racism and prejudice as well as with a focused understanding of these issues” (Bhopal and Rhamie, 2013:18). We cannot expect “teachers to be what they have not learned to be, namely, culturally competent professionals”: we cannot assume White teachers in multicultural schools will easily “behave in ways that are inconsistent with their own life experiences, socialization patterns, worldviews, and levels of racial identity development” (Howard, 2006:6).

It is not only White trainee teachers in monocultural areas who require diversity training (Bhopal and Rhamie, 2013), but also trainee teachers from diverse ethnic backgrounds (Maylor et al., 2006a, Howard, 2006). Jerome and Clemitshaw (2012:31) found that though trainee teachers perceived racism, and other prejudices, as “undesirable”, they were uncertain on how to handle

this. There is an urgent need, therefore, for more research on identity and diversity, particularly as sometimes when diverse identities are addressed in teacher training curriculums, they are “marginalised” as an “add-on” (Bhopal and Rhamie, 2013:18). To be a teacher “involves far more complex bodies of knowledge and conceptual insights than is sometimes found in teacher education and educational research programs” (Kincheloe, 2007:12). Student teachers might benefit from exploring cultures and identities by compiling reflective written autobiographies to be used by teacher trainers developing culturally responsive pedagogies with the student teachers (Gunn et al., 2013). Through critical reflection trainees might strengthen their critical pedagogies, becoming ‘culturally responsive teachers’ who “know how to determine the multicultural strengths and weaknesses of curriculum designs and instructional materials and make the changes necessary to improve their overall quality” (Gay, 2002:108).

A 2003-2006 on-line educational project *Multiverse* supported trainee teachers in becoming more aware of race, religious diversity, ethnicity, multilingualism and social class, and “to critically reflect on their own cultural background and interrogate their own subject positions and biases” (Maylor et al., 2006a:42). This is necessary for teachers “to recognise prejudice and their role in reinforcing stereotypes, and confront any assumptions they may make about those considered ‘different’ and develop antiracist/inclusive practice (James 2001)” (Maylor et al., 2006a:42). Bhopal and Rhamie (2013), whilst highlighting examples of positive practice of diversity training with reflective trainee teachers, raise concerns about teacher training that does not address racism, barriers to achievement, and teacher expectations, resulting in teachers feeling unprepared when dealing with Otherness and racism. Recent work on initial teacher education and issues of race/ethnicity point towards lack of training on how to move classroom conversations beyond media stereotypes about ethnic minorities (Lander, 2014). Multicultural diversity and anti-racism implementation does not solely involve teachers’ reflections upon personal identity, but teachers must also come to understand and challenge White supremacy and White privilege (Howard, 2006), as otherwise ‘dysconscious racism’ (King, 1991) results in White teachers not comprehending their “social dominance” (Howard, 2006:8).

The 1960s and 1970s ‘immigration’ assimilation policies continued well into the 1990s (Troyna and Carrington, 2012), and remain present today. It is unsurprising that there will be teaching staff who commit to the government’s vision of assimilation. Keddie (2013:6) conducted empirical research in a large multi-faith and multicultural London school where teaching staff echoed “broader public and government anxieties about Britishness”: “a concern articulated by over half of the staff interviewed related to students’ lack of connectedness or affiliation with

‘British’ culture” (Keddie, 2013:9). Although Keddie (2013) points out teachers are generally advocates of social integration rather than assimilation, strikingly some of the teaching staff interviewed believed students from ethnic minority communities who had an affiliation with their ethnic/cultural identities were *alienated* from Britishness:

...that students’ affiliation with their family or national heritage undermines or hinders their knowledge about and connection to English/British culture/national identity. Indeed there is a sense in these remarks that students’ constructions of their identities as ‘first and foremost’ Indian, Afghani or Pakistani are incompatible or incommensurable with their affiliation with British identity—as Ms L says students affiliate with these identities despite being born in Britain (Keddie, 2013:11).

Teachers, like Ms L, can be guilty of transmitting an ideology of assimilation to their students, as well as diminishing the significance of multiple, fluid and evolving identities and attachments. The “message” received here by ethnic minority students would be “forget the culture of your parents, discard any affiliation to your ethnic background and blend in” (Troyna and Carrington, 2012:2). Cultural assimilation is frequently promoted by educationalists who assume “a successful student of color is an assimilated student of color” (Solórzano and Yosso, 2002:31). Critical multiculturalism is a useful approach for teachers who recognise that the cultural and linguistic diversity is not threatening to the nation’s culture, and need not be diluted (Vavrus, 2015). Teachers need to be trained in global education pedagogies, as well as multicultural education pedagogies (Ukpokodu, 2010). Teacher training must emphasise critical and transformative pedagogies, through “global perspective pedagogy” that “challenges learners to question world realities, their own experiences, beliefs and values, and helps them rethink the ways they have come to see the world” (Ukpokodu, 2010:129). When teachers are given opportunities to critically interrogate dominant ideologies, they have a better chance of transferring transformative ‘global perspective’ pedagogies to their own classrooms and engaging in emancipatory education with their own students (Ukpokodu, 2010).

### **Towards Critical Pedagogy**

In 1999, Prime Minister, Tony Blair stated in his speech: “I am a patriot. I love my country” (Croft, 2012:160). Since 9/11 and the Iraq War of 2003, public patriotic discourses have been augmented in America, as have calls for schools to teach patriotism (Banks, 2010), because 9/11 “intensified nationalist superpatriotism” (Zinn, 2013). In the UK, Britishness discourses are in danger of being “depressingly insular and nationalist... premised on the qualifications of being white and indigenous” (Ware, 2009:8). It seems then that the “message” young people once received through schooling “that ‘Britain’ and ‘the British’ are categories that can never truly include them” (Gillborn, 1995:2), prevails in contemporary discourse of education policy and

practice. Conversations about Britishness are necessary to come to a shared understanding of the meaning of Britishness (Keddie, 2013). However the literature shows definitions and discourses of Britishness will vary according to place and time, thus whilst a shared vision of Britishness may provide elements of temporary societal cohesion, this vision can only be time and context-bound, and might not be accepted by all in society. It is perhaps more useful to problematise and interrogate “narrow, fixed and racialised views of national identity and assumptions that associate an affiliation with Britishness with generating social cohesion and conversely, a lack of affiliation with Britishness with generating social conflict” (Keddie, 2013:2).

It is argued teachers should neither encourage nor discourage feelings of patriotism; rather they should teach about controversies from a neutral position (Hand and Pearce, 2009). The education system, through the National Curriculum, may attempt to encourage students - and teachers - to be proud of their national identity, but there are moments of resistance: “reluctance among British teachers and student teachers to endorse the use of national symbols, such as the flag, in school contexts” (Osler and Starkey, 2005:12). Students and teachers prefer open classroom discussion of patriotism (Hand and Pearce, 2009). There are further implications for how teacher training institutions teach concepts of multiculturalism, race and diversity, alongside Britishness. Many new teachers have little or no training to grasp complex concepts like race and ethnicity (Lander, 2014), making schools problematic places for students needing space to explore the nuances and multiplicities of identities. Others argue ethnicity, as a term, has “outlived its usefulness now that hybridity and cultural mixing have become the norm” (Mason, 2008:106), which needs exploring by trainee teachers.

Crucially though these teachers engage with students from multicultural backgrounds amidst political and media rhetoric declaring multiculturalism is dead. In the backdrop teachers and students witness “Britain’s inability to reckon with a metropolitan paradox”:

...in which a city like London is both the stage for some of the most profound, and I would say beautiful, realisations of dialogue and radical multiculturalism; and yet, at the same time, it also provides an arena where brutal and enduring forms of racism take hold (Back, 2009:205).

Educational institutions are sites where the government’s *majoritarian* stories and myths of a post-racial society can be critically examined through analysing everyday and institutional racisms (Gillborn, 1995, Solórzano and Yosso, 2002). To incorporate features of critical pedagogy when embarking on a journey of learning with school students is to challenge prevailing *master narratives*. To provide counter-stories is to dismantle hegemonic master narratives which “tend to legitimise and privilege the fears of the bourgeoisie, their fear of those

Others who might invade or disrupt their homely spaces, their habitus” and to challenge powerful “discourses of fear” surrounding youth and ethnic minorities (Sandercock, 2005:232).

In the next chapter, I explore the strengths of encouraging counter-narratives through employing critical pedagogy when teaching and learning sensitive, controversial and complex issues. Teacher and students may resist or contest imposition of the Britishness agenda for often “state-induced forms of subordination have created the conditions for movements of resistance” (Rosaldo, 1996:239). The literature confirms Britishness is not a static or stable concept, and thus the students’ representations of Britishness will be highly subjective, contextual and inevitably subject to change. If ‘narrating the nation’ yields a narration of the self (Byrne, 2007b), I expect the Art students’ stories on Britishness will yield stories of their personal identities intertwined with their social experiences. I am also keen to learn about the pedagogies teachers employ with their students in exploring the potentially exclusionary and controversial notion of Britishness.

# CHAPTER THREE: CRITICAL PEDAGOGY - A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

*Critical pedagogy currently offers the very best, perhaps the only, chance for young people to develop and assert a sense of their rights and responsibilities to participate in governing, and not simply being governed by prevailing ideological and material forces (Giroux, 2010:n.p.).*

## WHAT IS CRITICAL PEDAGOGY?

Paulo Freire, often cited as one of the original critical pedagogues, argued for a progressive pedagogy of *possibility*, with its basis in education for *liberation*: traditional *banking* methods of education where students were dismissed as knowing nothing, and teachers held knowledge which they routinely and uninspiringly transferred to students lacked liberation and possibility (1985a, 2001, 2000, 2004). *Problem-posing* education that values concepts like respectful and caring *dialogue*, *praxis* (moving beyond theoretical reflection and critical dialogue into reflective action), and *conscientizacao* (critical reflection about oppression) was perceived by Freire as necessary to educate and liberate marginalised communities. These aforementioned notions help the oppressed to critique the social world, ultimately working to transform their own lives and society (Freire, 2000, Freire and Freire, 2004). To empower students to respond to social injustices, teachers use key critical pedagogy principles, that support: (i) student participation and critical consciousness; (ii) the language of hope and possibility; (iii) problem-posing pedagogy where students formulate questions and solutions; (iv) the belief that teachers, students and citizens can engage in reflective action for social justice/change (Freire, 2000, Brett, 2007).

Teachers have the option to embrace strategies from diverse educational models to promote *dialogue*, *praxis*, and *conscientizacao*. Two approaches that work harmoniously with critical pedagogy by elevating students' cultural experiences and knowledge are 'critical educulturalism' and 'culturally responsive teaching'. Educulturalism is "an activist learning process" utilising "visual and performing arts, narrative, oral history, and critical dialogue" (Lea and Sims, 2008:15) to enable "critical thinking about social and cultural issues" through "social justice-oriented, culturally responsive, critical, and creative curricula" (Lea and Sims, 2008:1). Educulturalism with Maori students, for example, involves working on classroom relationships, caring and unity (Macfarlane et al., 2007). Culturally responsive teaching includes key features to enhance

student engagement and achievement: knowledge about cultural diversity, culturally diverse curricula and pedagogies, and learning communities that value caring and communication (Gay, 2002). My research methodology (See Chapter Four) is informed by the aforementioned tenets of critical educulturalism, culturally responsive teaching and critical pedagogy.

### **Social Inequalities and Injustices**

Policymakers may dictate pedagogies that conflict with ideas about student voice and social justice. For example, the right-wing think-tank Civitas, in recent years, has been advocating a type of pedagogy based on E.D. Hirsch's views, criticised for its prescriptive nature, as well as its overemphasis on facts (Ward, 2010). Government members have expressed interest in introducing E.D. Hirsch's right wing conservative ideas into the English curriculum (Abrams, 2012). Hirsch's idea of "cultural literacy"- core knowledge that he believes all need to acquire (Hirsch et al., 1988) – reminds me of Bourdieu's notion of 'cultural capital' – whereby certain cultural resources are esteemed and privileged to the exclusion of the working classes (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990). Inevitably there will always be those who cannot access cultural capital/literacy privileged by the powerful and the policymakers. Critical pedagogues see such social inequalities and injustices as impacting upon ordinary communities, who need hope and possibility to fight oppression (Freire, 2000, Freire and Freire, 2004, Darder et al., 2009a, Apple et al., 2009, Giroux, 2013). Structural inequalities perpetuated through hegemonic policies have far-reaching consequences on social identities, for example:

A radical break with the principles of the Welfare State coincided politically with a move towards competitive individualism (Tomlinson 2008b), and a growing belief in the need to safeguard and protect the British national identity (and white majority) from the 'enemy within' (Gilroy 1987) (Garratt, 2011:29).

Rooted in Marxist critical theory, critical pedagogy "represents a transformational educational response to institutional and ideological domination, especially under capitalism" (Gruenewald, 2003:4). Schools are sites where hegemony prevails often through conforming teachers and passive students (Apple, 2013, Giroux, 2013), but other times complex modes of agency and resistance challenge hegemonic practices (Giroux, 2001, Anyon, 2011). Critiquing curriculum and pedagogy, for instance, disrupts the "invisibility... of subjugated knowledges" (Edgeworth, 2014:38). Traditional Marxist theory is not fully followed by critical pedagogues who go beyond pessimistic "critique" and towards optimistic "intervention" (George, 2001:96). Nevertheless critical pedagogues working in a Marxist and neo-Marxist framework argue education is "a site for resistance to bourgeois hegemony", and as such an important field to challenge cultural production and reproduction (Au and Apple, 2009:87).

Of concern is that “we rarely hear from those folks whom official discourse classifies as Other, about *their* fears” as they struggle to belong to social spaces where they experience hostility, hate, poverty and discrimination (Sandercock, 2005:232). The summer 2011 riots in English cities might have begun as community demonstrations against institutional discrimination and state violence – sparked by the killing of north Londoner Mark Duggan by the police – but the narrative quickly became about ‘disenfranchised’ youth looting and rioting. The media and politicians whipped up a frenzied moral panic about “gangs” , “problem youth”, “dysfunctional families”, and the “feral underclass”(Briggs, 2012:27), while academics provided more balanced and nuanced analysis on protests about “social mobility, racism, discrimination and aggressive policing” (Briggs, 2012:12). For educationalists, to understand and empathise with young citizens undergoing oppression, marginalisation and disenfranchisement, “repositioning” allows them to observe “the world through the eyes of the dispossessed and act against the ideological and institutional processes that reproduce oppressive conditions” (Apple et al., 2009:3). Engaging in critical practices is necessary to help the marginalised and oppressed through (Apple et al., 2009:4): examining and exposing ideological educational policies; revealing contradictions, contestations, and “spaces of possible action” for resistance and radicalism; redefining research and using academic privilege by providing “thick descriptions of critically democratic school practices” and of “transformative reforms”; and solidarity and collaboration with social movements.

‘Pedagogies of indifference’ (Lingard, 2007) insist on “producing and legitimising social inequalities”, and are the opposite of ‘productive pedagogies’ such as connectedness, supportiveness, recognising and valuing difference and diversity, and intellectually demanding schooling (alongside redistributive policies and funding) enable social justice in education and society (Lingard and Keddie, 2013:427). A “mobile and flexible pedagogy” is required when dealing with disengaged students - “dynamic, in contrast to the static and fixed regulatory regimes of mainstream classrooms that are anathema” (Smyth et al., 2013:309) – providing students with crucial opportunities to experience what learning can be like and how achievement feels, contributing to transformation of self. Smith (2013) describes how he subverts dull pedagogies in order to engage his students in learning that is real, lived and critical. Critical pedagogy needs to be relevant and exciting for students to critically interrogate existing social structures and values, and seek social justice.

## **Schools, Students and Stories: Collaborative Communication**

Teachers are increasingly “pilloried by the media” and subjected to “ill-informed, poorly conceptualized and damaging policies developed by politicians” (Smyth and McInerney, 2007:6), One such example is the Fundamental British Values (FBV) requirement. The ‘Teachers’ Standards’, compiled after I conducted my research, require teachers not to *undermine fundamental British values* (Department for Education, 2011), raising questions about teachers implicated in enacting racist and Islamophobic policies, serving as “instruments of the state” (Lander, 2016:275):

Respect for the rule of law is announced in the *Standards* as a fundamental British value. Where does that leave a history teacher’s approach to the suffragette movement, say, or the anti-apartheid struggle? What of any discussion of tuition fees or the Occupy movement, of the Arab spring or Palestine? What, too, of the requirement that these standards apply as much to a teacher’s life beyond the school gates as to anything that might happen in the classroom? (Turvey et al., 2012:38).

There are easily identified tensions, therefore, about the vague definition about FBV that teachers are expected to not ‘undermine’. Teachers naturally feel uneasy personally, professionally and pedagogically about the contradictions and injustices surrounding the promotion of FBV, as well as about feeling coerced into institutionally racist behaviour through monitoring, surveilling and reporting on students who are seen as dissenting or resisting hegemonic societal attitudes, expectations and ideologies (Lander, 2016, Farrell, 2016, Smith, 2016, Panjwani, 2016, Maylor, 2016).

Some teachers work in school settings where progressive critical pedagogies are encouraged. Other teachers must engage in critical pedagogy “behind closed doors”, subverting the system and challenging the official school curriculum in an educational setting where being critical is unsupported, and where students’ “current life circumstances” remain unexplored (Smith, 2013:144). In the USA, prison-like ‘penal pedagogy’ is pushed onto disempowered teachers and disenfranchised students, subjected to increasing governance, surveillance and social control (Giroux, 2003). In Britain, young British Muslim students are particularly “rendered as appropriate objects for state intervention and surveillance” (Coppock and McGovern, 2014:242), particularly more so in the post-*Prevent* era. The *Prevent* duty was introduced by the Labour government in 2007, and then consolidated and revised by the Coalition (2010-2015) and Conservative (2015-) governments, as part of the counter terrorism strategy *Contest* first developed in 2003 (Revell, 2012, Miah, 2015). *Prevent* encourages monitoring, surveillance and reporting of young Muslims. State ‘intervention and surveillance’ are not new for ethnic minorities: Visram (2002:356) discusses the historical treatment of Asians in Britain when

“supervision and control of students and others, designed partly to restrict sexual relations with white women, but also to prevent their politicisation, and so keep them loyal, increased as anti-colonial organisations developed”.

Today, young people are often positioned as the future of the nation and easily accessible through educational and policy initiatives (Sanderson and Thomas, 2014), nevertheless, their “voices, dreams and collective memories” are often excluded (Giroux and McLaren, 1989:xviii). Their political vulnerability means youth are less able to actively challenge dominant ideologies and initiatives. Students not relating to the official curriculum reproduces indifference or confusion about how schooling applies to their present or future (Smyth and McInerney, 2007, Smith, 2013). Young people “after years in passive, authority-dependent classrooms” may not realise their oppression, or their potential to “transform knowledge and society”:

In a school system devoted to banking pedagogy and formally assessing anything and anyone that moves, students internalise values and habits which sabotage their critical thought. They may well go on to become alienated and anti-intellectual adults (Brett, 2007:9).

For successful collaboration and communication, Freire (2000:72) argues the dichotomous relations between teacher and student need addressing: “Education must begin with the solution of the teacher-student contradiction, by reconciling the poles of the contradiction so that both are simultaneously teachers and students”. Knowledge, as a consequence, is not solely owned by the teacher to instil into students, but knowledge, democratically, belongs to all and is mutually shared. Decentring the teacher’s role is not about teachers losing their knowledge, authority or expertise, but about teachers using their “power and knowledge as *democratic authorities* who question the status quo and negotiate the curriculum” (Shor, 1996:56). Dewey also argues that communication results in an “enlarged and changed experience”: “One shares in what another has thought and felt and in so far, meagrely or amply, has his own attitude modified” (2004:5). Collaboration, according to pedagogues like Dewey and Shor, is key to democratic societies for “without formal participation in decision-making, students develop as authority-dependent subordinates, not as independent citizens (Shor, 1996:31). Through promoting an ethos of collaborative participation, schools can help teachers and students to employ critical pedagogies to relay stories about belonging to Britain.

## **CRITIQUES OF CRITICAL PEDAGOGY**

Traditionally critical pedagogy focused on social class in capitalist society, at the expense of understanding Whiteness, power and privilege (Allen, 2004, Leonardo, 2009), and also neglected

intersections of gender, race and social class (Anyon, 2011, Giroux, 2001). Some critics argue Freirean philosophies provide insufficient guidance on how to “move from critical thought to critical practice”, but this can be a strength as Freire “urged his readers to reinvent him in the context of their local struggles” (McLaren, 2000:13). There is a critique that critical pedagogy is not neutral. However, it does not purport to neutrality as it concerns the lives, struggles and oppressions of those treated unjustly by social structures, seeking social justice with passion and determination, not with objective neutrality (Kincheloe, 2008). The playing-field is not level; curriculums and pedagogies are not neutral. Thus, critical pedagogues do not pretend to be neutral in their fight to challenge traditional, conventional and unprogressive ideologies:

Students have been taught to believe that objectivity is an attainable virtue that should be practiced by everyone involved with education. They have never been exposed to the argument that education is never neutral and that when we attempt to remain neutral we fail to expose the political inscriptions of so-called neutrality (Kincheloe, 2008: 35).

Valid questions to ask of critical pedagogy and its origins are “what would critical pedagogy look like if it had been founded upon the belief that white supremacy, not capitalism, is the central problem of humankind?”:

What would be its main tenets if, say, Du Bois had been its originator rather than Paulo Freire? Would it have gained wider acceptance in the US had it been based upon a more race-conscious framework... (Allen, 2004:122).

One way to respond to this critique is by connecting critical race theory (CRT) with its articulation of race, culture, ethnicity and indigeneity, with critical pedagogy. Freire, after all, advocated an open critical pedagogy subject to reinvention, change and transformation (Darder et al., 2009b). The notion of race is “an important node in the analysis of the triumvirate between capitalism, racism, and patriarchy” (Leonardo, 2009:xi). CRT’s “conceptual tools” of “story-telling and counter-stories” (Cole, 2016:4) are also employed by critical pedagogues. Giroux, Kincheloe, McLaren, Ladson-Billings and others, have interrogated race, however this has not previously been sustained in the wider scholarship (Allen, 2004). *A Critical Pedagogy of Resistance: 34 Pedagogues We Need to Know*, edited by Kirylo (2013) includes pedagogues from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds; hopefully, more critical pedagogues will continue interrogating race and racisms.

For Freire it was not only about social class, as other social relations with their contradictions and complexities were recognised for their oppressive characteristics (Giroux, 1985). Influenced by Frantz Fanon, Freire would have been well versed with ideas about White power and colonisation (Allen, 2004, Irwin, 2012); still others argue that Freire did not give “race-radical

scholars” due attention (Allen, 2004:134). Critical pedagogy is flawed if White power is not interrogated; White supremacy and colonisation need addressing in work involving critical interrogation and a critical consciousness. The young people, in my research, raised classed and racialised experiences, as the critical pedagogy strategies employed in the classroom enabled some students to begin to interrogate notions of belongings and Britishness. Freirean ideas are not incompatible with critical race thinking. Anti-racist critical pedagogy can draw on Freire and extend his notions of *oppression* and *transformation* (Allen, 2004). The intersectional nature of social class, gender and race becomes evident in research on identity. Intersectionality, as a sociological notion, was originally introduced through Black feminist scholarship to examine overlapping identities of race, class and gender (Byrne, 2015).

Kincheloe (2007:11) also complains about contemporary critical pedagogy as having become too White American/European, as insufficiently engaging “people of African, Asian, and indigenous backgrounds” from whom we have a lot to learn. Critical pedagogy in the British context can learn from critiques of the USA ways of doing critical pedagogy. If “white identity politics has structured critical pedagogy from its inception, regardless of its anti-colonial intentions”, then a “new focus on white supremacy, not just within society and schooling, but also within critical pedagogy itself” is necessary (Allen, 2004:134). Critical feminists call for critical pedagogy to interrogate patriarchal structures, not solely social class (hooks, 2003b). Lather (2001) critiques McLaren’s advocating a return to historical materialism, for this would reverse the hard work that exposed struggles of feminist pedagogues. Critical pedagogy terminology has been critiqued as excluding those “at the margins of classical intellectual discourse” for inaccessible language used by academics “reinscribes power and privilege” (Darder et al., 2009b:15). Academese is just one of the ways power, privilege and patriarchy are perpetuated. For example through the “incessant use of the masculine pronoun in reference to both male and female subjects” once the norm in the language of critical pedagogy (Darder et al., 2009b:15). Thus, these aforementioned critiques of critical pedagogy and its relationship with ‘race’, gender and language need addressing by those doing justice to the possibilities and potential of Freirean philosophies. I have already earlier discussed how incorporating critical race theory into our critical pedagogies can help progress our fight against oppressions, now in the next section I show how we can continue to resolve these critiques and tensions through postcolonial critical pedagogy.

## POSTCOLONIAL CRITICAL PEDAGOGY AND NARRATOLOGY

A useful way to address the aforementioned criticisms levelled at critical pedagogy would be to apply it within the framework of postcolonial critical theory. Postcolonial critical pedagogy can offer a space to groups oppressed due to race, class, or gender, in order for them to “actively participate in the shaping of theories and practices of liberation” (McLaren, 1995b:244). If national identity notions depend upon a narrow curriculum, or a “narrowly defined notion of history” and “the narratives of imperial power and dominant culture” (Giroux, 1995:46), resistance is possible through postcolonial critiques of Britishness. Johnson is cited in Apple (1993b:231) to highlight how a ‘common curriculum’ is narrow, divisive and exclusionary:

...the great delusion is that all pupils – black and white, working class, poor, and middle-class, boys and girls – will receive the curriculum in the same way. Actually, it will be read in different ways, according to how pupils are placed in social relationships and culture. A common curriculum, in a heterogeneous society, is not a recipe for “cohesion” but for resistance and the renewal of divisions.

Teaching and learning Britishness through a ‘common curriculum’ might not aid cohesion. Rather postcolonial critical narratology suits the identity exploration inherent in the teaching and learning of Britishness. As the data analysis in Chapters Five and Six reveals, students and teachers can challenge narrow and exclusive definitions of Britishness by drawing on pedagogies that:

- ❖ “...contest the stories fabricated for them by ‘outsiders’ and to construct counterstories that give shape and direction to the practice of hope and the struggle for an emancipatory politics of everyday life”.
- ❖ “...rupture the dominant narratives of citizenship and destabilize the pretensions to monologic identity...”
- ❖ “...trouble the surface of Western texts of identity such that gaps and faults (failles) produced can create an historically discontinuous subject and thus can help to inhibit the resurfacing of colonialist discourses of the self”

(McLaren, 1995a:105).

Working with school students in a postcolonial context, *critical narratology* (McLaren, 1993, McLaren, 1995a, Haymes, 1995, Gruenewald, 2003) enables reflection and action, through personal narratives, challenging oppressions and injustices. *Critical narratology* gives teachers and students a chance to be “both affirmed and challenged to see how individual stories are connected in communities to larger patterns of domination and resistance in a multicultural, global society” (Gruenewald, 2003:5). The juxtaposition of “personal narrative (our own and those of our students)” against “society’s treasured stock of imperial or magisterial narratives” allows marginalised students’ stories which otherwise remain “highly devalued, within society’s rifts and margins” to be heard (McLaren, 1995a:91). Examining the political rhetoric on Britishness through a critical postcolonial lens is further illuminated when we study Homi

Bhaba's *Nation and Narration* (1990b). Postcolonial critical narratology can helpfully "unfix, unsettle, and subvert totalizing narratives of domination as well as engender an infinity of new contexts for destabilizing meaning" (McLaren, 1995a:90). Working within a framework of postcolonial critical pedagogy, Britishness might be examined through its "political, cultural, and pedagogical components" (Giroux, 1995:54), like critical race theory (CRT). By employing CRT and postcolonial critical narratology approaches identity issues can be examined justly within a narrative that is inclusive of diverse social groups.

## **EXPLORING BRITISHNESS USING CRITICAL PEDAGOGY**

*"Place +people = politics." – Williams in Gruenewald (2003:3)*

Why is Critical Pedagogy a valuable theoretical framework to apply to the teaching and learning of Britishness? Teaching and learning "entails judgements about what knowledge counts, legitimates specific social relations, defines agency in particular ways, and always presupposes a particular notion of the future" (Giroux, 2013:6). To understand students' experience of social relations, to count their knowledge, to encourage them to be agents of social change projecting their visions of the future of Britain, and to successfully challenge the dominant ideologies that serve to exclude students, we need critical pedagogy. Ideologies are "sets of values, beliefs, myths, explanations and justifications that appear self-evidently true and morally desirable":

What we think are our personal interpretations and dispositions are actually, in Marcuse's (1964) terms, ideologically sedimented...Louis Althusser (1969) and Pierre Bourdieu (1977) argue that what seem to us to be natural ways of understanding our experiences are actually internalized dimensions of ideology...Ideologies are manifest in language, social habits, and cultural forms (Brookfield, 2009:38).

Combatting inequalities and injustices might not be at the heart of policy decisions, especially in times of austerity (Bradley, 1996), thus, critical pedagogy will not be welcomed by all, as it does not serve prevailing elitist interests for students and teachers to become interrogators of policy and polity. Exploration of Britishness and identity issues through a framework of critical pedagogy can be necessary then in what Giroux (2013:4) refers to as "the construction of critical agents". Students and teachers become critical agents by interrogating commonsense assumptions about the nature of legitimate knowledge, social relations, and ideologies (Giroux, 2013). My research on the teaching and learning of Britishness in a south London school reveals teachers employing a critical pedagogical approach to exploring identity issues (See Chapter Five). Students from diverse ethnic, class and cultural backgrounds were enthusiastic about

telling their stories about their experiences of British identity (See Chapter Six), and teachers were not keen on imposing an official political narrative of Britishness on their students.

### **Interrogating Power and Powerlessness**

To understand how power works in society, like Foucault, educationalists can examine the margins where the “other” resides, and come to know their “knowledge, self-understandings, and struggles” (Apple, 2013:203). In the context of schools, students’ experiences and recollections are valuable to the understanding of the machinations that determine power and powerlessness. Some groups in society are presented as guardians of legitimate official knowledge, while the knowledge of other groups is regarded as unimportant which ultimately reflects power dynamics in society (Apple, 1993b). For some it is questionable whether schools, as state apparatus, can ever achieve social equity (Gabbard, 2009). Interrogating where power lies, how power works, and how power is challenged through alternative knowledge is crucial in critical pedagogy. Critical pedagogy is “a position that threatens right-wing private advocacy groups, neoconservative politicians, and conservative extremists” (Giroux, 2013:158), challenging the power they hold in defining marginalised peoples.

Some students have been socialised into believing the teacher is an authoritarian who holds the key to knowledge (See Chapter Five). Powerlessness is perpetuated when student voice is not heard, and when collaborative communication in the classroom is not the norm, perhaps because of curriculum constraints (Darder et al., 2009a). The fluidity and flexibility of identity is often discussed in relation to the power dynamics involved in identity construction, inclusion and exclusion: “What happens when subordinate groups seek to mobilize along boundaries drawn for the purposes of domination?” (Solomos, 2001:202). If teachers work with their students to adapt, resist and challenge curriculum and policy (Fischman and McLaren, 2005), to improve educational democracy and plurality, then students might confidently contest hegemonic notions and ideologies, by presenting their own truths and experiences of life in British society (See Chapters Five and Six). Critical pedagogy examines schooling through a socio-political and socio-historical lens, interrogating how power and privilege augment social divisions of class, gender and race and impact students’ educational achievements (Duncan-Andrade and Morrell, 2008, Darder et al., 2009a). Power, which can be positive and negative, Freire (2000) believed, is more than one group oppressing another. Domination is “a combination of historical and contemporary ideological and material practices that are never completely successful, always embody contradictions, and are constantly being fought over within asymmetrical relations of power” (Giroux, 1985:xii).

## **Critical Pedagogy, Citizenship and Britishness**

In the fourth century, Aristotle, in *Politics*, cross-referenced “a nation’s constitution” with its “educational system” (Boisvert, 1998:110). Dewey likened school to a “miniature community, an embryonic society” (1900:15), stating the significance of schooling in creating a “better future society” (2007:20). Dewey believed active participation in education and society was important to learning and democracy (Shor, 1992):

For him, participation was an educational and political means for students to gain knowledge and to develop as citizens...Politically, for Dewey, participation is democratic when students construct purposes and meanings. This is essential behaviour for citizens in a free society (Shor, 1992:18).

Classrooms and curriculums too frequently serve to “function as modes of social, political and cultural reproduction” by utilising banking methods, rote and transmission teaching, and through instilling “a culture of conformity and the passive absorption of knowledge” (Giroux, 2013:5). Such passive pedagogy constructs the docile and unresisting young student, later becoming an adult citizen in the same submissive mould:

Students learn to be passive or cynical in classes that transfer facts, skills, or values without meaningful connection to their needs, interests or community cultures. To teach skills and information without relating them to society and to the students’ contexts turns education into an authoritarian transfer of official words, a process that severely limits student development as democratic citizens (Shor, 1992:18).

Dewey saw schools as microcosms of society, where students passed through and acquired values and norms that would prepare them for citizenship. In particular, he saw Social Studies (subjects such as History and Geography) as the perfect subjects to pursue citizenship education to encourage students who would become active participants in society (Carpenter, 2006). Social Studies, Humanities, Citizenship Education, English Literature, Art and numerous other subjects can all play a significant role in giving students much needed insight into wider society and what it means to be a part of a local, national and global society.

Critical pedagogy has the potential to produce articulate and bold students, rather than reproducing conformity and passivity. Citizenship Education should raise questions about social experiences, possible futures, and how we can contribute to social transformation and social justice (Brett, 2007:4):

...to imagine a better local and global future and having the knowledge, skills and self-confidence to take some practical steps to achieving that future. Citizenship education like Freirean philosophy aims to help young people to become more fully human. To become more fully human involves discursive debates over meanings and definitions.

Schooling should create “critical, self-reflective, knowledgeable” citizens “willing to make moral judgements and act in a socially responsible way” (Giroux, 2013:3). Through subjects such as Art (see Chapters Four, Five and Six), students and teachers can study identity and society. Citizenship Education should not be perceived as lip-service or as a way to encourage functional participation that is solely concerned with creating dutiful, loyal and patriotic citizens, uncritical of the status quo:

Participation with an emphasis upon duty, and without political drivers, can collapse into an unproblematic conception of active citizenship as volunteering. It can become a way of offloading state responsibilities onto the family, individuals, voluntary organizations and the community (Brett, 2007:1).

The exploration of Britishness can be used to develop critical citizens who aspire to improve society and actively engage in social change. There is a danger that, as Richard Johnson believed, a national culture is “defined in exclusive, nostalgic, and frequently racist terms” (Apple, 1993b:233). Because of my positioning (See Chapter Four), my research project on Britishness aims to be progressive. Chapter Two described current literature on teaching Britishness which showed student teachers are wary about imposing a hegemonic vision of Britishness on their students. Student teachers, keen to promote multicultural Britishness, are “overwhelmingly sceptical” about “being asked to deliver what they considered to be propaganda-like messages through their teaching” (Jerome and Clemitshaw, 2012:38), but they are confidently willing to teach Britishness through a framework about inclusive, diverse and multiple identities (Jerome and Clemitshaw, 2012). Student teachers “combine a critical stance with a willingness to teach *about* complex issues, while generally refusing to promote simple or simplistic messages on behalf of politicians” (Jerome and Clemitshaw, 2012:39). Critical pedagogues recognise teaching and learning is not just about employing routine teaching methods, but also concerns knowing the “social, economic, psychological and political dimensions of the schools, districts, and systems...about information systems in the larger culture that serve as pedagogical forces in the lives of students and other members of society”, and understanding marginalised communities, as well as how the status quo maintains a powerfully oppressive hegemonic order (Kincheloe, 2007:17).

### **Public Intellectualism: Obstacles to Student and Teacher Participation**

Schooling can both “enable” students and “silence” students: critical pedagogues focus on how schooling “affirms the voices of teachers and students while simultaneously encouraging them to be self-reflective and more socially critical”(Giroux and McLaren, 1989:xxxii). Schools “guided by higher purposes other than the reproduction of the *status quo*... should encourage the acquisition of critical literacies and democratic practices” (Smyth and McInerney, 2007:xi). If

students become used to pedagogical practices stifling self-reflection and social criticism, they might believe there is only one version of truth to be sought from the omniscient teacher. Critical pedagogy values the student and her voice: the “use of pupil’s own experiences” might “help reduce idealisation and stereotyping of particular cultures by some teachers (and pupils)” (Maylor et al., 2007:9), thereby aiding student *participation* (See Chapters Five and Six). Empowering critical pedagogy needs to be participatory and interactive to combat traditionally low rates of student involvement in classrooms (Shor, 1992). Students are used to being passive recipients of teacher-led instruction, thus, critical pedagogy insists learning is “not something done by teachers to students for their own good but is something students co-develop for themselves, led by a critical and democratic teacher” (Shor, 1992:20).

Some teachers may not know about critical pedagogy, or may not understand the benefits. We also cannot assume because a school contains culturally and ethnically diverse demographics that teaching staff have “good understanding of ethnic and cultural diversity” (Maylor, 2010:239). Many educationalists are unaware of the “suppression of historical consciousness and critical thinking” in schooling (Giroux, 2013:42). Teacher training programmes can introduce student teachers to the importance of “the historical nature of their own fields” (Giroux, 2013:42), and to critical pedagogy, to work towards creating a democratic and fair classroom, where students are valued for the diverse knowledge they bring to collaborative learning opportunities. Teachers acting as authoritarians are guilty of “gatekeeping” classrooms, thereby hindering democratic collaboration (Shor, 1996, Giroux, 2001). When it comes to issues of equity, hooks (2003a:25) believes teachers are sometimes neglectful of “the extent to which white-supremacist thinking informs every aspect of our culture including the way we learn, the content of what we learn, and the manner in which we are taught”. There is a pretence, even in anti-racist work, “that racist and white-supremacist thought and action are no longer pervasive in our culture” (hooks, 2003a:25). Anti-racist activists need to work hard to challenge institutional racisms and intersectional classed and racialised discrimination (Troyna and Carrington, 2012).

This denial of institutional and everyday racism may appear in the exploration of Britishness too. Teachers may not address the implications of institutional ‘racist and white-supremacist thought and action’ for discourses of Britishness. To disrupt Whiteness, and develop *conscientizacao* for ourselves and our students, examining “the influence of public cultural scripts and personal experience on our identities, ideologies and practices”, as well as deconstructing the prevailing status of Whiteness in our institutions, cultures, curriculums and pedagogies (Lea and Sims,

2008:15) is key. Cultural scripts refer to “ways of thinking, feeling, believing, and acting” which can often reflect hegemonic interests (Lea and Sims, 2004:101). Therefore, as social agents we can work towards nurturing “alternative cultural scripts... based on anti-racism, critical multiculturalism and social justice” to counter dominant mainstream values and norms (Lea and Sims, 2004:102).

Another obstacle in using a critical pedagogy framework to explore Britishness might be teachers’ reluctance to relinquish their power, authority and status as knowledge-givers. Some teachers dislike sharing authority or expertise with students and do not consider how the classroom reflects and reproduces societal structures of power and privilege (Katz, 2014), resulting in the “inherited vocabulary of mainstream pedagogy” (McLaren, 1995a:116). Brett (2007:8) identifies the need for a long-term progressive pedagogical vision which requires patience and new ways of thinking:

The transformation of teachers and students from authoritarian to democratic habits will not happen overnight. It is not easy for teachers to share decision-making in the classroom, negotiate the curriculum and pupil activities, pose problems based upon student priorities and thinking, and learn with and from students.

Giroux (2001) also believes social inequalities cannot simply disappear, and we must persist in struggles to have an impact upon society through critical pedagogy. Importantly teachers are “public intellectuals”, schools are “democratic public spheres”, and students are “potential democratic agents of individual and social change” (Giroux, 2013:5). Teacher training institutions can help trainees to deconstruct notions of power, privilege, and pedagogy in order to develop an understanding of their duties as *public intellectuals* working in *democratic public spheres* with students who will affect *individual and social change*. Teachers’ “narratives” that are “contrary politically to those prescribed by the dominant regime of truth” need developing, as do “counternarratives underwritten by a politically inspired teleology whose narrative closures are always contingent and therefore open to the creative and the new” (McLaren, 1995a:116).

The role of the *public intellectuals* – the teachers – requires recognition and support from politicians and policymakers as important in working towards resolving social problems through novel, creative and innovative solutions. Educationalists “should be addressed as public intellectuals willing to connect pedagogy with the problems of public life, a commitment to civic courage, and the demands of social responsibility (Giroux, 2013:6). When the teachers in my research take on this role as *public intellectuals*, they become critical pedagogues exploring social problems together with their students (see Chapter Five). Teachers might benefit from

regular professional development to understand social realities their students' experience, as well as exploration of how critical pedagogy can advance education and affect social changes. Teachers, like students, are in danger of falling victim to what Gramsci (1971) outlines are hegemonic forces of *spontaneous consent*. Through affiliating with the social institutions and social norms that maintain the status quo, and promoting the prevailing social order, teachers are consenting (sometimes without consciousness) to maintain power and privilege for the elite.

There is a danger that the government is espousing versions of Britishness, of culture, and of citizenship alien to how Britishness, citizenship and culture are actually experienced by our students. Counter-hegemonic strategies can help in the battle for social change and social justice (Anyon, 2011). Critical reflection, particularly ideology critique, can also encourage students and their teachers to critique the status quo together, to "learn to recognise how uncritically accepted and unjust dominant ideologies are embedded in everyday situations and practices" (Brookfield, 2009:36). Reflection leads to action. In this case exploration of Britishness is a starting point, and students can move onto critical action in order to tackle the social injustices and social inequalities that they see as detrimental and damaging to their school and local community. Bearing in mind Karl Marx's eleventh thesis: "*the philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point, however, is to change it*" (Brett, 2007:6), change is required.

### **Critical Pedagogy of Place**

A critical pedagogy of place is crucial in any discussion about Britishness. Critical pedagogy of place involves deliberately combining two separate, but sometimes overlapping, strands of place-based education and critical pedagogy (Gruenewald, 2003). We cannot escape the overarching significance of place in research on identity for where we belong, where we come from and where we live all have an impact upon how we perceive our place in the world. Place featured heavily in my students' notions of belonging to Britain, London, and Bermondsey (See the data in Chapter Six). Spatialised critical theory and racialised critical geography are two areas that link neatly with critical pedagogy, interrogating connections between power, race and place, and directing us towards a critical pedagogy of place that "insists that students and teachers actually experience and interrogate the places outside of school – as part of the school curriculum – that are the local context of shared cultural politics" (Gruenewald, 2003:9). Critical pedagogy recognises context by emphasising how struggles experienced by students are specific to their communities and contexts (Giroux, 2013). Cutts, writing about the American Deep South, calls for a critical pedagogy of place to encourage students and teachers to "liberate

ourselves from all forms of suppression and marginalization and to act upon a liberatory and inclusive curriculum” (2013:149). Students in my research emphasised *place* and *race* in their discussions of Britishness, particularly belonging to Bermondsey, and to London.

Discussing Britishness requires a deconstruction of place alongside understanding of local attachments. Gruenewald (2003:5) refers to Stephen Haymes’ radical multicultural ideas about pedagogy of place as a method for Black people to “transform –or decolonize–their own geographical situationality”. This approach of transforming *geographical situationality* would be useful for students from all cultural and ethnic backgrounds. As the students in my research showed (see Chapter Six), urban experiences impact upon White and ethnic minority students. The students in my research engaged in “the struggle over geography” (Said, 1994:6): “That struggle is complex and interesting because it is not only about soldiers and cannons but also about ideas, about forms, about images and imaginings.” One of the students, Ellie, attempted to resist the ugly label of a city chav, demonstrating insights into what it means to be defined by powerful public discourses about place and class (see Chapter Six). As educationalists, we cannot afford to ignore (White) working-class marginalised students ostracised by the privileged elite who decide what is deemed socially acceptable and respectable. The spatial elements of belonging and identity can be successfully explored using a critical pedagogy framework: a framework that “seeks the twin objectives of decolonization and “reinhabitation” through synthesizing critical and place-based approaches”(Gruenewald, 2003:3) to the study of social beings and their experiences of belonging to British multicultural society.

### **CONCLUSION: STUDENTS AND TEACHERS NEED CRITICAL PEDAGOGY**

It is important to find ways to help students and teachers to question the status quo, to interrogate prevailing ideologies that privilege the elite, and to challenge media and political narratives that perpetuate hegemony. Students may need to explicitly explore their situationality through the problem-posing education, advocated by Freire (2000), thereby developing critical consciousness in order to better grasp how social institutions control and repress their communities. Education should not be about creating subservient automatons unwilling to rise up to transform social injustices pervading local, national and globalised spaces. Education needs to inspire and enable youth to grow in confidence to critique the social order that subjugates them as the Other. My research participants who reflected upon *race* and *place* (See Chapter Six) were provided opportunities to carefully interrogate concepts of belonging to Britain for the first time in their lives, with the hope that they keep on questioning notions of

race and social class, and act upon injustices and inequalities as they eventually move on from school into adult life.

Silencing students' stories hinders the encouragement, engagement, and enfranchisement of future generations. Student (dis)engagement is a real concern in schools: students from disadvantaged and marginalised communities often lack the cultural capital to succeed, and thus 'new social spaces' are urgently needed to enable the disengaged students to develop love for learning (Smyth et al., 2013, Lingard and Keddie, 2013). Facilitating open discussion in order to promote respect and diversity seems to be a common theme supported by critical pedagogy approaches (See Chapter Five). In schools there is a danger that on a wide range of issues affecting students there may be "...a silencing of students' own stories, needs, contexts, thoughts, and concerns, in favour of the stereotypes and assumptions which were features of the hegemonic discourse" (Carlile, 2012:395). This silencing of students' stories should be actively challenged and changed for students to become critical citizens of the future. Rather than education creating "cheerful robots", we need critical citizens who learn about the world which they inhabit and come to understand the workings of "justice, values, ethics and power" (Giroux, 2013:3).

Kincheloe (2007:16) argues critical pedagogues will forever be asking questions about social justice, privilege/power, and praxis "operating in different historical times and diverse pedagogical locales". Teachers and students' identities evolve, as demonstrated by the teachers and students who undertook a pedagogical journey of learning about the self and the other. Moreover, "educational spaces are unique and politically contested (Kincheloe, 2007:16). My research setting - a school in south London - had unique characteristics of student demographics, community influences and entanglements of race/social class/place. Freire's concept of *situationality* where *social* beings are encouraged to reflect upon their *social* contexts, and act critically upon these "temporal-spatial conditions which mark them and which they also mark" (Freire, 2000:90) applies to Britishness exploration. Teaching Britishness cannot solely be an exercise in determining a national collective 'imagination' because, as students in my research show, and as critical pedagogues advocate, the unique character of local context plays a major role in identity formation. Calls to rework and rewrite the national collective imagination must be received cautiously when there is a chance that appropriating national identity becomes "a vehicle to foster racism, nativism, and political censorship" (Giroux, 1995:47).

Where schools are situated in heavily disadvantaged areas, innovative and alternative pedagogies need to be used by the teachers, in order to increase educational engagement and achievement (Smyth et al., 2013). It is the responsibility of the school leadership team to encourage their teaching staff to be innovative and creative. Teachers, after all, “represent a potentially powerful force for social change” (Giroux, 2013:42). Instead of over-focusing on levelling and testing students, as well as examination league tables, schools could create give teachers the training and support needed to develop pedagogies that are impactful, positive and engaging. A curriculum that is “attentive to the lives and needs of young people rather than the performative imperatives of the system” (Smyth et al., 2013:309) works towards enabling students to be more engaged and enthusiastic about learning. Is it too radical to suggest students should have input in designing a curriculum relevant to their experiences of the ever evolving social world? Chapter Five will show students practising critical pedagogies that enhance learning and critical reflection, whilst Chapter Six will examine students’ concerns about classed and racialised British belongings.

Educationalists are witnessing growing neoliberal education philosophies which produce non-autonomous state subjects, rather than critical citizens (Di Leo et al., 2014): “Education has been reduced to a subsector of the economy, designed to create cybercitizens within a teledemocracy of fast-moving images, representations and lifestyle choices” (McLaren, 2000:16). Neoliberal perspectives of learning embraces the “individualist and competitive aspects of education”, and “only highlights so-called ‘useful knowledge’” (Gadotti, 2009:32). For radical change, schools can seek to enhance our philosophies and practices of education with “an enobling, imaginative vision” (Giroux, 2013:5). Critical pedagogies in the teaching and learning of Britishness can help to produce this ‘enobling’ and ‘imaginative’ creative space. Society can look to critical pedagogues and their philosophies to learn more on challenging mechanisms of oppression in order to demand equal opportunities to participate in the world: it is “ethically responsible to scrutinize, challenge, and oppose people, structures, and systems that oppress and dehumanize”(Kirylo, 2013:xix). Critical pedagogy provides critical tools to reflect and act upon social struggles in specific contexts with communities and students who inhabit local places (Giroux, 2013); making it useful for teachers and students to explore identities, social experiences and belongings. For the educational researcher, critical pedagogy as a theory helps us ask necessary questions needed to better understand the social world (Kincheloe and McLaren, 2002). In the next chapter, I will detail my methodological intentions and choices as a critical pedagogue researcher.

# CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGICAL JOURNEY – Critical Urban Educational Ethnography

*...a journey from which he or she will return with stories to tell, having engaged in conversations with those encountered along the way...unexpected twists and turns as interviewer-travellers follow their particular interests and adjust their paths according to what those met along the way choose to share... (Heyl, 2001:371).*

## RESEARCH JOURNEY

Throughout the research process I positioned myself as being on a journey. I later learned this was a familiar trope for ethnographers (Hammersley, 1994, Wolcott, 2002), illustrating the ways researcher and researched can travel together as active producers of reality. Research terminology accentuates the dynamic process and active participants. *Informant* has connotations of a powerless and passive social being coerced into sharing information reluctantly. ‘Researching with’ is preferable to ‘researching upon’, emphasising a collaborative and democratic journey (Shah, 2014:42). *Respondent* is too passive, *subject* is hierarchical, whilst *participant* implies “active involvement” and a “sense of equity”(Seidman, 2012:13). Conventional ethnography has been criticised for ignoring power dynamics in research (Hammersley, 1994), yet addressing issues of power to ensure ethical, democratic and collaborative research is paramount (O'Reilly, 2005, Phillips et al., 2013). Researchers can adopt features of post-structural ethnography to protect and empower participants, for example, by making cautious claims about ‘knowledge’ and clarifying truths as constructs (Edgeworth, 2014). The researcher’s subjectivities result in ‘relevant’ data being collected, and thus, analysis is partial, reliant on the positionality of the researcher (who holds a certain degree of power), and who is sometimes an insider, and other times an outsider (Clifford, 1986, Edgeworth, 2014).

In this chapter, I outline how I approached my research by valuing the voices of my fellow-travellers, how I embarked upon what I experienced as an exciting journey (for me) as doctoral researcher, and seemed so for the Art teachers exploring diverse meanings of Britishness critically and collaboratively with their classes, as well as for the GCSE students exploring identity. Contemporary urban ethnographies might examine how young people learn what it means to be British, Muslim or Asian, for example, by investigating education, policy and media (Hall, 2002b). I aimed to present rarely heard voices to the world (Gregory, 2005, Smyth and McNerney, 2013). Following Clifford (1986) and Edgeworth (2014), I recognised that data is partial and contextual, maintaining awareness of the implications of power and positionality.

Thus, I was sometimes an outsider and at other times an insider, selecting and interpreting data, while attempting to remain mindful of my subjectivities. My research with students from diverse backgrounds in a southeast London school aimed to explore (i) their constructs of Britishness, and (ii) how students and teachers practised *pedagogies of identity*. Britishness teaching in schools is now a requirement (Department for Education, 2014), but at the beginning of my research journey it was just a proposal (BBC News, 2007).

My research was therefore conducted with teachers who *chose* to bring Britishness into the classroom. Research - traditionally a solitary and individual activity - is now often community-oriented (Bentz and Shapiro, 1998, LeCompte and Schensul, 2010). I collaborated with the Art department, requiring their support and expertise to conduct in-depth research, aware that teachers often “embrace the political as a positive means to develop critical consciousness” (Yokley, 1999:24). This empirical research focuses on research participants’ reflections on the pedagogies involved in discussing Britishness and how these pedagogies contribute to increased awareness about identities. The study also reveals discourses of identities raised through exploration of Britishness, whether Britishness is important to the students, and how the themes arising in students’ discourses on Britishness relate to contemporary multicultural Britain. Like Back (1996:6) states, my research cannot reveal the ‘whole story’, but is “read as an open contemplation on the cultural dynamics of post-imperial London”.

**In summary, the principal research questions address**

- (i) how teachers and students in a south London school explore the teaching and learning of Britishness
- (ii) what definitions and discourses of Britishness emerge from and matter to the students.

In the next section, I focus on my epistemological and ontological viewpoints, and my choices of ethnographic methodology and research design.

**METHODOLOGY – REPRESENTING MULTICULTURAL VOICES**

My investigation of contemporary British identity, and the teaching and learning of Britishness, resulted in a broad picture of students’ discourses and experiences through using a mixed methods approach that incorporated artwork, questionnaires, and detailed narratives through in-depth interviews with teachers and students. Ethnographers do not tend to only employ one research method, and to the surprise of some traditionalists might incorporate questionnaires as an additional research tool (Wolcott, 1997), which I will discuss later in this chapter. This chapter will show that throughout the research process I understood “epistemology,

methodology, and pedagogy” are “closely interdependent and directly influence the research process” (Bernal, 2002:115). I was “learning” that “to listen to counterstories within the educational system can be an important pedagogical practice for teachers and students as well as an important methodological practice for educational researchers” (Bernal, 2002:116). Humanity is characterised by storytelling, as we keenly relate our stories and listen to the stories of others (Behar, 2003). Like Jacobson (1997), I chose an attitudinal approach by focusing on what ordinary people – particularly those marginalised by wider society – reveal about British identity (see Chapter Two); her rationale was many modern scholars approach national identity by examining how it includes or excludes the minority groups in the nation. However, my research participants included White British, ethnic minority and dual heritage students exploring individual and collective identity matters. In this chapter I will also discuss how research depends upon amicable relations to gain access and maintain rapport with diverse participants: “Good ethnographic practice, data collection and analyses rely upon genuine empathy, trust and participation” (Coffey, 1999:47). Furthermore, I will present the reasons my research was informed by critical scholarship that recognises social inequalities impact upon racialised and classed youth.

### **An Ethnographic Approach**

Ethnographers seek to (re)present the social worlds of those frequently ignored and marginalised in academia, media and political debates (Goodall, 2000). Ethnography as narrative (Bruner, 1997, Harrison, 2014) appealed to my literary mind, heart and soul: “as collage-makers, narrators of narrations, dream weavers, however, narrative researchers are natural allies of the arts and humanities” (Jones, 2006:67). Narratives usefully “*reveal* the speaker’s identity” (Bamberg, 2004:358), whilst “talking with real people about how they experience their world” is an important ethnographic method (Cruikshank, 2000:1). Classic ethnography is sometimes critiqued for neglecting “ideas about history, about political processes, about global forces”(Cruikshank, 2000:2). The critical pedagogue within me appreciated ethnography’s “propensity to perpetually and critically assess, and at times reinvent, its methodological, theoretical and epistemological foundations” (Harrison, 2014:244), thus my research on identities recognised the significance of history and politics.

The research journey itself is a process of renewing identity as global changes impact upon how we do methodology (Denzin, 1997:xii): “National boundaries and identities blur. Everyone is a tourist, an immigrant, a refugee, an exile, or a guest worker, moving from one part of the world to another”. Thus the changing nature of ethnography impacts upon the researcher, the

researched and the research as boundaries and identities blur, and continue to blur. Following Wolcott (1997), my research borrows features of diverse ways of doing ethnography. My research integrates features of educational, urban, and critical ethnography, arts-based educational research (ABER), as well as critical race methodology (CRM) and critical pedagogy (CP). These aforementioned ethnographic approaches value participant voice and empowerment, as well as social justice and social change. Social justice education is key to democratic societies, with the purpose of ensuring “human enlightenment and human liberation” (Ayers et al., 2009:xiii). Moreover these methodological stances I have chosen to combine emphasise criticality through deconstruction of inequalities, injustices and intersecting identities. These approaches employ multiple methods to better understand the individual and the society she inhabits. I will now outline why I selected features of these distinct, but overlapping, approaches to inform my research path, and how the similarities strengthened my methodological approaches.

## **The Critical Ethnographic Encounter and Modern Multiculturalism**

### **Urban Educational Ethnography**

Educational ethnography is valuable in researching social justice and cultural diversity through listening to students’ stories (Gregory, 2005). Through “Relevant, Rigorous, and Revolutionary” pedagogies, social justice education can enable ways of rethinking “equity”, “activism” and “social literacy” (Ayers et al., 2009:xiv). An ethnographic approach suits teacher research (Denscombe, 2008), enabling educational ethnographers to “describe, interpret, analyse and represent the lived experiences of schools, classrooms and workplaces” (O’Toole and Beckett, 2013:48). The rich descriptive account using a contextualised and holistic approach based on familiarity with a natural setting is “flexible and adaptive” and “idiosyncratic and individualistic”, permitting a researcher to select key ethnographic techniques suiting their study (Wolcott, 2002:33). It is problematic though to define schools as *natural* settings, and often impossible to gain long-term familiarity with the setting (Wolcott, 2002). However, as a teacher at the school, I already had ‘familiarity’ with the research site.

Urban educational ethnographies ask questions about participants’ perceptions and social/academic learning (Gregory, 2005). My research was conducted in an urban setting, with an ethnographic approach focusing on (i) meanings of Britishness for southeast London school students, and (ii) reflections of students and teachers on exploring Britishness:

<b><i>Ethnography features:</i></b>	<b>What is occurring?</b>	<b>How is it occurring?</b>	<b>Participants' perceptions</b>	<b>Group membership</b>	<b>Social/Academic Learning</b>
<i>My Research Study:</i>	Teaching and learning about Britishness	Through individual reflection, class discussion and GCSE artwork	Students' perceptions of Britishness, and of the teaching and learning experiences	What happens for students and teachers through participating in the teaching and learning of Britishness	Learning about Britishness, identity issues, perceptions of peers, life in multicultural London, raced and classed belongings, local and transnational belongings.

Table 3: Features of an ethnography (adapted into table format from the ideas of Gregory, 2005)

Urban ethnography identifies 'social problems' in contemporary cities, often outlining poverty, social class, race and migration in modern metropolises (Smith, 2002, Anderson, 2004, Duneier et al., 2013). As far back as 1915, urban ethnographers were unconcerned with providing "definitive answers", but "posed crucial questions" about the city (Park et al., 1984:viii), which was depicted in terms of 'social organisation', with citizens "creating social values and social goals" (Park et al., 1984:ix). One of the earliest examples of urban ethnography from 1925 (Park et al., 1984) illustrates complex communities and social change. Today urban ethnographies continue to depict complex and changing societies. Following these principles of urban ethnographies, I also steer away from insisting on 'definitive answers' about Britishness, preferring research participants ask 'crucial questions' about belonging to the city, and to the nation. This research with London students argues for the importance of urban multiculturalism that moves beyond "foods, festivals, and folk tales" to one that critically interrogates curriculum and pedagogies that maintain the status quo (Steinberg, 2009:xii).

Relevant to the study of British identities, an urban ethnographic approach can provide empirical evidence of fluid and shifting identifications in modern multicultural cities. The notion of "in-between" (Ngo, 2008), or the *third space* where hybrid identities emerge bringing potential for something novel and different (Bhabha, 1990a) can be sharply illustrated through ethnographical accounts. Perhaps because ethnographers easily relate to the "in-between" or the "third space" as they "intrinsically operate in the physical, social, and psychological spaces of the in-between" (Harrison, 2014:235). I came to the exploration of Britishness with awareness that young people inhabiting multicultural modes of meaningful social relations are inclined towards identities that are hybrid, creolised and fused (Burdsey, 2006), and with the

understanding that “a reflexive relationship between the local and the global produces the hybrid” (Smith, 2008:4). From a postmodern perspective of anti-essentialism and anti-grand narrative, language used to explore cultural complexity can be fluid and evolving (See Chapter One) (Pennycook, 2009), and thus, once a pejorative term - *hybridity* - is now positive and aspirational: “those who occupy hybrid spaces benefit from having an understanding of both local knowledge and global cosmopolitanism” (Smith, 2008:4).

Urban educational ethnographies can (re)present school students’ fluid identities in urban contexts. When exploring Britishness, the intersectional interplay between gender, social class, age, ethnicity, race and place become relevant for identity is fluid and contextual, never fixed nor definitive: “In a world where images of clashing cultures (still) dominate”, young people are “mixing and melding – performing elastic identities and maneuvering between the local and the global” (Ríos-Rojas, 2011:84), resisting being constrained by classed and racialised positions. Progressive academics have long discredited the notion of ‘culture clash’ (O’Donnell and Sharpe, 2004): “the pathology of ‘culture clash’ and ‘identity crisis’” is often foisted upon ethnically diverse youth who in reality *mix, meld* and *manoeuvre* their elastic identities. More important is “the skilfulness with which they are juggling with a whole spectrum of identities and bringing off brilliantly staged performative acts, the sheer variety of which will continue to defy easy description” (Rattansi, 2000:130). At the ethnographic heart lies an exploration of social/cultural context and participant experience (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995, Atkinson et al., 2007). Ethnography can therefore lend itself to the study of meaningful moments in the lives of school students – as they relay these experiences to us - within the school setting. Students, to open up, sometimes require a safe space, a structured project, and encouragement to express their hopes and disappointments with social location. In the next section I present my research as influenced by critical ethnography’s focus on social inequalities and social justice (Lather, 1986), as well as on marginalised communities whose voices urgently need to be heard to enable social transformation (Gregory, 2005).

### **Critical Ethnography**

Grounded in the works of critical pedagogues like Freire, Giroux and Shor (Brown and Dobrin, 2012), critical ethnography understands “the goal of teaching is to engage students...in the dialogic work of understanding their social location and developing cultural action appropriate to that location” (Brooke and Hogg, 2012:116). While government discourses on Britishness originate from an anti-extremism agenda (See Chapter One), my findings, in Chapter Six, will show that the students in my research had their own concerns about belonging to Britain, and

wanted to discuss social locations Chapter Five will present the ways my research allowed for teachers and students to engage *critically* “whether in written, spoken, or visual form” (Yokley, 1999:24) about Britishness in their everyday lives. My research reveals discourses of Britishness (see Chapter Six), and shows it is possible to explore Britishness using a critical pedagogical framework (see Chapter Five). Critical research focuses on questioning how knowledge is structured by prevailing social relations and dominant social structures serving to oppress certain social groups because of class, gender and racial differences, or through imperial, national or colonial oppression (Harvey, 1990, Bhavnani et al., 2014). Crucially, critical researchers move beyond description and analysis to research that galvanises “change, contradictions, struggle, and practice in order to counter dominant interests and advance the well-being of the world’s majority” (Bhavnani et al., 2014:176). Emancipatory educational research also tackles social injustice, powerlessness and oppression through political means to help marginalised and disadvantaged communities (Babbie, 2012, McColl et al., 2013), while others mobilise through transformative activist research reflecting upon issues of “self, place and community” (Guajardo et al., 2008:3). Criticality is significant for researching Britishness and the pedagogies that teachers incorporate in the teaching and learning of Britishness. Hegemonic governmental ideas that filter through social institutions, in order to convey a message about Britishness that is biased, exclusionary and elitist, can be challenged and contested in critical ethnographic research. I will now move onto discussing how critical ethnography can combine the creative arts with critical theories and pedagogies giving research participants a space to reflect upon and contest prevailing dominant ideologies.

### **Arts-Based Educational Research, Critical Pedagogy and Critical Race Methodology**

To research the teaching and learning of Britishness and elevate student voice, an integrative approach that combined features of critical urban educational ethnography with aspects of arts-based educational research (ABER) and critical pedagogy (CP), as well as critical race methodology (CRM) was required. In the last thirty years, researchers have developed visual data collection and analysis to understand social experience (Mitchell, 2011). ABER, including linguistic forms such as poetry, prose, and drama, as well as non-linguistic forms such as painting, photography, multimedia, sculpture and performing arts, is increasingly popular (Barone and Eisner, 2006, Chilton and Leavy, 2014, Kara, 2015). CRM is a research approach that interrogates race and racism - alongside intersections with other social categories such as religion, class and gender) - exposes oppressions, and challenges dominant ideologies by

providing social justice approaches to research, for example counter-storytelling (Solórzano and Yosso, 2002). My particular focus was visual art, specifically creating self-portraits to explore British identity. An ethnographic approach shares 'phenomenological' similarities with art: both emphasise creative and complex social realities, reflexive observation, and positionality (Denscombe, 2008). The Head of Art and I discussed the need to examine discourses of Britishness and pedagogies of teaching and learning Britishness, and she was keen to explore what she perceived as the potentially controversial notion of Britishness critically through art. Visual and digital images/technologies are increasingly popular as they become more accessible and acceptable in ethnography (Pink, 2004), making the visual "central to the cultural construction of social life in contemporary Western societies" (Rose, 2007:2).

As the students had chosen the subject of Art at GCSE level, I believed in their skilful capacity to express the abstract and complex nature of Britishness with confidence and enthusiasm. Arts-based projects are useful in "honouring, eliciting and expressing cultural ways of knowing" and "exploring sensitive topics" (Kara, 2015:24). My research participants would come to use the artwork as stimulus to discuss the meanings of Britishness in the interviews and to reflect upon their experiences of social identities in their questionnaires. Their artwork was significant, but what they revealed about the critical pedagogies that enabled the production of this artwork, as well as the interviews, informed my data analysis in Chapters Five and Six. ABER harmonises well with critical pedagogy, as both focus on critical questioning. The "resistive capabilities of the arts" can potentially allow the critiquing and contesting of dominant ideologies and social norms (Chilton and Leavy, 2014:403). ABER provides methodology that seeks to work towards "novel, ethical and noncoercive ways" to encourage "hopeful dialogue" and "critical consciousness", leading to "social change"(Chilton and Leavy, 2014:407), thus compatible with issues of social justice, equity and ethics. I was motivated by the potential for visual methods to enable collaborative, reflexive and ethically considerate interdisciplinary research (Pink, 2003, Pink, 2004), particularly recommended when studying communities (Back, 2009).

There is a synchronicity between critical pedagogy and ABER. The arts can animate "critical awareness of injustice and oppression in participatory and action-oriented ways" (Chilton and Leavy, 2014:407), like critical pedagogy. Visual arts education is able to draw upon critical pedagogy's frameworks (Eglinton, 2008). The 'resistive capabilities' of the arts (Chilton and Leavy, 2014), ally with critical pedagogy, in opposing prevailing ideologies, subverting the status quo, transforming social injustices and resisting hegemonic practices. Critical pedagogues, for example, have criticised Bowles and Gintis' deterministic notions of schools as merely "capitalist

agencies of social, economic, cultural, and bureaucratic reproduction” by showing schools can “become sites of resistance and democratic possibility through concerted efforts among teachers and students” (Kincheloe and McLaren, 2002:89). Inspired by Braidotti, Kincheloe, McLaren, Giroux and other critical pedagogues, Tourinho and Martins (2008:65) argue visual arts critical pedagogy should include:

- i) a “nomadic consciousness” that embraces multiple and unfixed identities and attachments
- ii) “a radical qualitative perspective” towards pedagogies and research, where asking questions about the world, and seeking multiple voices, is the norm
- iii) “favouring the public sphere”, thus emphasising “collaborative character of knowledge, the constructive dimension of understanding and the participatory condition of human development and transformation”

ABER and critical pedagogy, therefore, share many commonalities, particularly pursuit of social justice, desire to challenge the status quo, and hope/possibility for transformation (Chilton and Leavy, 2014). Visual arts critical pedagogues advocate “a radical qualitative” approach to research, teaching and learning, for this “expands the expressive possibilities of language in that it recognizes multiple voices and seeks for more contingent, circumstantial and poetic ways to narrate and reflect on what is and is not done, thought and felt in schools” (Tourinho and Martins, 2008:65).

Critical pedagogy and critical race methodology (CRM) can be combined to reject the racist legacies of colonialism and empire when exploring Britishness. CRM recognises that “race and racism are endemic, permanent”, intersecting with other social inequalities, thus the CRM approach is to question traditional research methodologies that neglect the ‘experiential knowledge’ of marginalised communities (Solórzano and Yosso, 2002:25). CRM also critiques prevailing ideologies that profess “objectivity, meritocracy, colorblindness, race neutrality, and equal opportunity” of curriculum/schooling by researching and emphasising the voices and social experiences of students who are otherwise silenced by the White supremacist master narratives of the political status quo (Solórzano and Yosso, 2002:26). Critical race approaches reveal how Black students’ “histories, experiences, cultures, and languages are devalued, misinterpreted, or omitted within formal educational settings” (Bernal, 2002:106). CRM researchers focus on exposing/resisting/eliminating social injustices and inequalities and empowering oppressed/marginalised groups (Solórzano and Yosso, 2002). CRM also shares similarities with ethnographic approaches to research. For example, by emphasising the value of “experiential knowledge” of minorities, CRM researchers utilise methods that allow for research participants to tell their stories (Solórzano and Yosso, 2002:26), always questioning

“Whose stories are privileged in educational contexts and whose stories are distorted and silenced?” (Solórzano and Yosso, 2002:36). CRM in education therefore shares similarities with critical pedagogy and ABER, for all three emphasise reflection, participation and voice in research.

## **Reflexivity**

It might be that “a chance encounter with a book, a classroom incident, a teacher, child or parent’s remark will often be enough” to move us to begin our study (Gregory, 2005:x). Educational research can reveal the researcher as well as the researched. Reflexivity is an “aspect of all social research” (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007:19); enabling reflection over one’s own role in the research process (Clifford, 1986, O’Reilly, 2005). Due to “heightened awareness, change, growth and improvement of self and our profession” (Ryan, 2005:4), researchers refine their critical stances regarding dialogue, participation and knowledge production (Phillips et al., 2013). If the researcher is a tool to collect data (LeCompte and Schensul, 2010:1), then reflecting on one’s own role as researcher is significant:

We all carry theories of one kind or another and those theories are worked on and shaped as a result of our field experiences, and in turn, our encounters with the field are reshaped by the theories we bring to our research (Smyth and McInerney, 2013:3).

Research is conducted by an individual with “a personality, a social context, and various personal and practical challenges and conflicts” impacting upon the research and necessitating mindful inquiry (Bentz and Shapiro, 1998:4). I was mindful about ensuring the research participants were presented justly, hoping that the readers of my research would acknowledge the warmth and courage of these talented students, as I did. Like McGrew (2008:12), I “care” about these research participants, as well as their communities. My urban ethnographic research is also informed by “commitment to re-assembling, reconstructing, and portraying accounts of social life in ways that honor its inherent complexity” (Smyth and McInerney, 2013:3), for cities like London are complex ‘metropolitan paradoxes’ (Back, 1996). In the Freirean spirit, I wanted “to do more than report”, by also seeking social justice (McGrew, 2008:12), through giving students opportunity to interrogate social experience. (Re)presenting controversial characters, I was determined not to conceal contradictions and complexities: “The danger here in creating heroic portrayals is that we make the very people whose humanity one may want to defend less than human. We don’t allow them to be as complicated as we are, i.e. compounds of pride and shame, weakness and strength” (Back, 2004:209).

Critical pedagogy demands reflexivity by establishing education cannot be neutral or apolitical (Freire, 1985a, Shor, 1992, Apple, 2013, Anyon, 2011, Gruenewald, 2003). Claiming

objectivity/neutrality is upholding an agenda to “mystify the inherently ideological nature of research in the human sciences and to legitimate privilege based on class, race and gender” (Lather, 1986:64). Engaging in “constant reflexivity and pragmatic creativity” is required for research is unavoidably a “complex, uncertain, and invariably messy process” (Heath and Walker, 2012:3). A researcher cannot avoid making decisions about the research process, but reflexivity ensures choices are made with integrity and openness. Distance from the research field, from analysis and from dissemination is problematic and difficult (Birks and Mills, 2011). Instead acknowledging beliefs and biases (O’Toole and Beckett, 2013), and recognising the “fluid boundary between the self, the field and the outcomes of the fieldwork” (Coffey, 1999:117) can contribute to the reflexive turn.

My chance encounter (Gregory, 2005) with media stories about government proposals for schools to teach Britishness prompted me into wanting to know more about how this could work for students and teachers:

Margaret Meek has often referred to this eloquently as ‘the paradigmatic moment’ that both symbolises and illustrates the central or big question of the study, a moment we keep returning to throughout the work and which we never forget” (Gregory, 2005:x).

Eventually, the teachers and students in my research conveyed to me that an approach heavily grounded in critical pedagogy could yield some remarkable results about southeast London discourses on Britishness, as well as about the teaching and learning processes (See Chapter Five). By situating oneself in the research, by acknowledging what has influenced us in our own experience of life, by positioning the self at the most suitable location, the researcher is prepared for the journey. Acknowledging our own stories to make sense of the stories of others, knowing more about our own multiple identities, before investigating the identities of others, are necessary steps. Researchers come with “stories that are grounded in both our own experience and that of important others in our lives” (Gregory, 2005:3). Our personal stories and the stories of others cannot be separated for different narratives cannot be regarded as discrete entities with their own boundaries. The self exists in relation to the Other. Methodological considerations are influenced not only by the research question and data required, but I found that personal history also informs methodology: “Teaching is a political, cultural and ideological act in which we are all situated very specifically. That’s just as true of research” (O’Toole and Beckett, 2013:viii). Acknowledging positionality when doing “rigorous, robust, authentic, and well documented” research is sincere and professional (Smyth and McInerney, 2013:2). Howard Zinn, for example, stated his standpoint as one that honoured the social experiences of marginalised and oppressed social groups (Vavrus, 2015). Ethnography

might once have been a colonial enterprise (Harrison, 2014, Bhavnani et al., 2014), criticised for “mere description”, for not seeking “emancipation” (Hammersley, 1994:12). Fortunately ethnographers themselves have become more culturally diverse over time, challenging the traditional politics of lack of representation (Anderson, 2004), providing grass-roots perspectives as insiders, rather than allowing White, often male, middle class privilege to dominate.

Acknowledging subjectivity is helpful for those engaging with your research (Edgeworth, 2014). Positionality indicates privilege or disadvantage (LeCompte and Schensul, 2010), but making your position clear is crucial for this affects the knowledge created in research (Vavrus, 2015). I am a female British Muslim teacher/researcher from Lancashire who is of Pakistani descent. My “cultural prism” affects how I will “make meaning and interpret events”, and my identity also “shapes how I am perceived” and impacts upon “my relationships in research sites” (Edgeworth, 2014:30). My story about Britishness is informed by the stories of my family members, my friends, my colleagues, my students, my supervisors. As a teacher-researcher collecting students’ experiences of Britishness, their stories may resonate with my own memories of growing up in Britain, or their experiences will be eye-opening and new territory. My story locates my experiences of growing up in a Northern town in a Pakistani family, whilst my students have their distinctive family backgrounds and lives located in London. If “one does research in order to learn more about others, but in doing so also learns more about oneself” (Gregory, 2005: 5), then my research on which I am embarking with participants is a shared journey, a collective exploration of identity, to understand Britishness. The research would impact on my perceptions of Britishness as I absorbed the stories of the students and started (re)defining my own ideas on Britishness (Brooke and Hogg, 2012). I will now discuss the significance of undertaking research as a teacher by elaborating upon my reflexive thinking.

### **Teacher as Researcher**

Teacher research is “systematic and intentional inquiry carried out by teachers” (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1993:7), often not separate from formal academic activities (Lankshear and Knobel, 2004). Teachers researching in order to develop ‘reflective practitioner’ skills (Schön, 1983) is a growing area (Denscombe, 2008). Teachers might engage in social research that, for example, informs about social class or policy (Lankshear and Knobel, 2004). For some teachers though, research might still have “connotations of fear and awe of a powerful, uncontrollable and rather alien beast” (O’Toole and Beckett, 2013:xvi):

...teachers have not been encouraged to work together on voluntary, self-initiated projects or to speak out with authority about instructional, curricular, and policy issues (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1993:21).

Thus, teachers might reject research possibilities due to negative experiences of research or researchers (Shagoury and Power, 2012, O'Toole and Beckett, 2013). Teacher research is not only the teacher researching her own classroom, often we gain a new perspective if we encounter other teachers' practices (Lankshear and Knobel, 2004).

The pedagogies employed by the Art teachers in my research on Britishness taught this researcher - an English teacher - about the multitude of outcomes of arts-based educational research. Researching the Art department enabled reading of students' responses differently than I was used to in teaching English lessons. I was delighted with the opportunity to explore "interventions and approaches" in a familiar setting (Lankshear and Knobel, 2004:5), in a different subject. "Eurocentrism and White privilege" tend to dominate educational institutions, making them far from "meritocratic, unbiased, and fair", even though the institutional values and ethos may profess equity and inclusivity (Bernal, 2002:120). Teacher research, like my Britishness project, therefore provides opportunities to explore the diverse nature of the school setting and its place within the community, as well enabling alternative curriculum and pedagogical values and giving students space to explore key issues, rather than confining classroom activities to learning pre-determined hegemonic content (Lankshear and Knobel, 2004). Teacher researchers can also aim to critically challenge the "oppressive culture" (Kincheloe, 2008:18) of a standardised Eurocentric curriculum that excludes the voices of the minority groups, and that neglects diverse students, schools, and communities (Lankshear and Knobel, 2004).

Gaining entry to a research setting is often problematic as researchers find themselves negotiating with powerful 'gatekeepers' of bureaucratic organisations (Delamont, 2002, LeCompte and Schensul, 2010, Brooks et al., 2014), or battling shyness to contact research participants (Seidman, 2012), or facing staffroom hostility (Delamont, 2002). My research proposal was warmly welcomed by the Principal and the Head of Art. Gaining trust requires time and effort, and establishing long-term relationships with the research participants and maintaining intimate involvement with the research setting in order for research to be 'credible' (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, LeCompte and Schensul, 2010). As an insider with existing relationships in a familiar research setting, rapport-building was straightforward (LeCompte and Schensul, 2010, Alderson and Morrow, 2011). Knowing the "routines and rules of the school" can contribute to collecting quality data (Barley, 2011:1). Not having to struggle with access

issues, nor with familiarising myself with the protocols and practicalities of doing research in this particular educational setting, nor worrying about establishing relationships and rapport (Alderson and Morrow, 2011), I could focus on researching. Nevertheless, I was sensitive to the requirements and responsibilities of my teacher-researcher role (BERA, 2004, BERA, 2011).

Ethically and emotionally negotiating teacher and researcher identities was crucial, making it apparent to myself and the participants when I was acting as researcher (Alderson and Morrow, 2011). The concept of insider-research has developed from the classic anthropology dichotomy of outsider v insider to become more complex as “distinction between the outsider and insider is ambiguous and arbitrary” (Shah, 2014:43). I was an insider because the research participants knew me as a teacher. As an insider, I knew the school and its social location in London. Researching my own workplace eased access and familiarity as I drew on insider knowledge (Blaxter et al., 2010), reminding myself I was researching, not teaching. Though advantageous to be an insider, awareness of impact upon impartiality is essential (Shah, 2014), as emotional attachment to the site or participants can influence the study. Awareness of “my prejudices, my social attitudes, my values” is important (Schostak, 2006:2). I was also an outsider because I was a teacher/researcher, whilst the students were research participants.

I might be an outsider because I am from northwest England, or because of my age, gender, ethnicity, or religion. One student, Joe, during a paired interview with his peer Kadisha revealed: “I would go in more in-depth but I think I’d be getting a bit more racist”. Thus because of an absence of Whiteness, Kadisha and I were both outsiders. Joe felt he had to restrict what could be perceived as racist statements within a limited boundary of acceptability: “If you were both White people I would probably open up more”. The emancipatory pedagogy employed in the classroom seeped into the interview with students, thus Kadisha checked, regulated and challenged Joe’s racialised rhetoric (See Chapters Five and Six). I was constantly aware that ethical considerations cannot always be fully planned pre-research, sometimes decisions might need to be made when conducting the research (Brooks et al., 2014). The students’ increased confidence levels resulted in willingness to engage in debating and discussing. My role here seemed to have evolved into a facilitator enabling students to have the space to explore taboo topics.

As an insider I also negotiated the tensions between my multiple selves present in this research site. Speaking from a critical pedagogue position, and as a woman of colour with a strong racial and religious consciousness, I was aware of the undesirable consequences of stigmas and stereotypes imposed upon marginalised peoples. Thus, I was protective of the diverse young

people in my research who saw that they were dismissed as 'problem' Black or White working class youth by wider society. My insider researcher status resulted in negotiating my personal and professional understandings of representing accurately and authentically youth fragilities, follies and flaws without condemnation or dismissal of them as prejudiced. While I wanted to present an honest account of the students, the teachers, the school and Bermondsey, I found myself wanting to protect the students, staff and school too. Having long term attachments to the people and the place (having worked at the school for many years) resulted in my being very aware of the demonised status of Bermondsey and its residents, and thus, I was careful and conflicted about presenting anything that might contribute to the already negative notions wider society seemed to have about Bermondsey and its people. To complicate matters further, I was writing also aware that students of colour in my research were coming across more sympathetically and more likeable to those who were outsiders to the school and the area. Yet I had a positive affinity with all of the students in my research. Calling out White privilege and power, as well as White racism, is not so easy for us scholars of colour who are very often accused of 'hating White people' when we interrogate Whiteness.

Yet it was important also to analyse problematic 'racist' assertions about Britishness through a critical theory lens. Joe, for example, offered racist White supremacist notions of Britishness but as I had known him since Year Eight and I had a personal affection for him, I struggled to refer to him as a 'racist'. Kadisha 'called him out' in the paired interview on his racist commentary, but like myself, she had a fondness for him as her peer. As a teacher, I did not want to accept perhaps that some students are 'racist', but optimistically preferred to think of students like Joe as conflicted and contradictory, but open to change. Being an insider therefore raised such complexities of (re)presenting unpleasant views of young people without 'sugar-coating' them, whilst balancing this with not playing into the hands of those who might utilise my research to malign a place like Bermondsey and its inhabitants, and staying true to my affinity for the young people and the place. I wanted to write about the place and the people (protectively), the struggles and histories (movingly), and show why students like Joe, Ellie, Kadisha and Chris might feel the way they do about Britishness and belonging. I wanted to write without judgement, recrimination or demonisation.

One of the advantages of my role as teacher researcher was that it enabled students to overcome the potential hurdles of getting to know an 'outsider' researcher. I had taught some of the students in lower school. Others viewed me as a familiar face. To address students' shyness or discomfort about being open and honest, paired interviews helped as I observed,

recorded and occasionally asked questions. Interesting data is often revealed in unexpected places, sometimes just before the tape is switched off or just after (the Turkish Year Eleven student, in my preliminary study outlined in Chapter One, wanted to discuss his worries about perceptions of British Muslims “off the record”). Just when I thought the interview with the Art students Joe and Kadisha was drawing to an end, the interviewees were still enthused about this topic having studied it in a sustained manner, wanting to converse more with me:

Kadisha: Do you feel like you are British? (laughs)

SH: (laughs) I do, yeah, I think I do.

Joe: Why is that? Is it ‘cos you’ve been brought up in Britain?

SH: Yeah, brought up in Britain....born in Britain...brought up in Britain...and you know how you Joe talk about the docks and Bermondsey.... I feel very much from... being part of Lancashire... because I guess you can tell. I’m from North Manchester....Lancashire...so I feel very strongly and passionately about being from that area

Joe: I bet you know a lot of the history...

They didn’t seem to want to end the interview, displaying curiosity about my Britishness. I also reaffirmed that Joe valued a historical perspective. Joe’s means of gauging Britishness and belonging – through his ideas of race, birth-right, language and history – were disrupted as he now considered how to categorise the researcher in his framework of British identity.

## **MY RESEARCH DESIGN**

### **About the School/Students/Teachers**

Situated in southeast London, in a traditionally White working-class community, the school caters for students from the ages of 11 to 19. According to the Self Evaluation Form (Vaughan, 2010), approximately 40% of students are classed as non-White. GCSE results in 1992 were 7% (5 A\*-C), but had vastly improved to 72% (5 A\*-C) in 2005. Great improvement in the results highlights the school’s progression over the years. Free school meals are given to approximately 26% of the students. In terms of SEN, 25% of students have SEN without statements, and 2.9% have statements. Many students are multilingual: 19% 11-16, 24% Post 16. Traditionally, the students did not embark on further or higher education, yet now approximately 50 out of 120

in the sixth form progress to university. Over half of the sixth form students were in receipt of EMA<sup>21</sup>. Appendix One includes further contextual information about the school.

Rather than a side-lined project, my research was part of the formal curriculum. While on maternity leave, the Head of Art wrote a scheme of work for the two classes of GCSE Art students which she and her colleague taught from the following September – the final outcome for GCSE examination would be a self-portrait exploring the student's notion of being British. This was an incredible opportunity to (i) gather information about these students' Britishness and (ii) learn about how students/teachers explored Britishness. The research participants consisted of two GCSE Art classes embarking on their first coursework module in Year Ten (aged 14-15). Parents received letters posted to their homes - to ensure receipt of information - from the school's principal outlining my doctoral research study, giving parents the opportunity to withdraw their children from the study if they chose, or contact the school with any queries/concerns. In their Art lesson, the teachers and I introduced my research on identity, and discussed how data would be collected and used in the research, through the artwork, questionnaires and interviews.

There were 34 students in total (aged 14-15), 16 students in one class and 18 students in the other class. As some students were absent when the questionnaires were completed on separate occasions or when the artwork was photographed, this resulted in slight variations in my final data set (See Appendix Two). The Art project was mainly worked on in the first academic term of Year Ten, but in subsequent terms the students were still finishing off the project, as well as working concurrently on other projects. Thus, questionnaires were completed towards the beginning and end of Year Ten, and the interviews were conducted with students/teachers at the beginning of Year Eleven. I informed the students about ethical protection/anonymity regarding different stages of the process, for example when collecting/analysing the data, and also relaying how it would be stored/disseminated. I was aware of the need for my ethical decisions needing to be revisited regularly throughout the research journey (Brooks et al., 2014). **Appendix Two** provides detailed information about the individual students regarding ethnicity, religion, connections to London and the title they gave to their artwork. One of the Art classes was taught by the White British Head of Art who had designed the scheme of work. She had been teaching at the school for nearly a decade. The other Art class was taught by her male colleague who was in his fourth year of teaching at the school. I had assumed he was White British also until my interview with him which revealed

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<sup>21</sup> EMA is Educational Maintenance Allowance was a financial incentive to help students from lower income backgrounds in Further Education. EMA was stopped in England in 2010.

White Britishness is a generic label encompassing many ethnicities. Appendix Three provides interesting details from the interviews about the teachers' personal perceptions of Britishness.

### **Research Methods: The Artwork, Interviews, and Questionnaires**

The use of multiple research tools enabled me to develop knowledge of how Britishness could potentially be explored through art-based pedagogies in a meaningful way, and with relevance to curriculum and student identity. Multiple methods that are “unconventional and creative” are frequently employed by critical race researchers (Solórzano and Yosso, 2002:37), moreover mixed methods include students “actively and respectfully” (Alderson and Morrow, 2011:14). Empirical data from one small-scale ‘real world’ setting (Hammersley, 1994), suited my qualitative research questions. The mixed methods approach provided scope for a “complete understanding”: questionnaire survey of the two classes obtained a “general understanding” of Britishness, while semi-structured interviews provided “detailed understanding” of Britishness and the experiences of teaching and learning Britishness (Creswell and Clark, 2011:8). Interview data needs to be cross-referenced with contextual elements to authenticate the research (Erben, 1998).

The Head of Art shaped the GCSE Art project. This was negotiated along the way with the students as she (and the other class teacher) allowed them freedom to express their Britishness, even when their ideas took a different direction to those she initially had in mind. Thus the beginnings of the idea may have been mine, but the teachers and the students – that is the participants of the study – shaped the study. To learn to understand the problems and perspectives of young people “we need to listen respectfully to what they have to say and be willing to involve them more directly in discussions” (Smyth and McInerney, 2007:59). I discussed the Art project with the Head of Art before in the planning stages, and then at an interim period. I also interviewed her and her male colleague once the project had been fully completed. I obtained questionnaire data and interview data from students over a period of twelve months<sup>22</sup> which meant I was (re)requesting permissions from the principal, the two Art teachers, the parents and the students to obtain the questionnaires and interview data. Renegotiating of access is common in research (Delamont, 2002). I was sensitive about negotiating this according to what suited them as it would be during part of the lesson time or

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<sup>22</sup> The GCSE Art classes completed questionnaire 1 in the early stages of their coursework project on Britishness, and they completed questionnaire 2 at the end of their coursework. The interviews were conducted with the students after the projects were completed. The interviews with the teachers were conducted at the beginning of the project and then, once again at the start of the new academic year.

in the students' own time. I didn't want to unnecessarily take up time of busy students and teachers.

### **The Artwork**

As students' individually and collectively explored their personal ideas, they produced artwork which would eventually be submitted as GCSE coursework. The artwork had potential to act as exciting visual stimulus manifesting how students articulated their British identity, and how they had experienced the teaching/learning elements. Giving the students a space to be creative through art, and at the same time respecting them as a voice of experience on identity issues that matter, developed some students' confidence to be open and honest in providing their perspectives through their art, through the questionnaires, and through the interviews. The teachers used critical pedagogy strategies – such as promotion of individual reflections, student voice, dialogue and collaboration - to elicit artwork which was powerfully revealing and also gave students' opportunities to express personal views.

Some experiences are better presented through the visual (Pink, 2004), and critical race methodology also embraces the visual allowing students to (re)present their *experiential knowledge*, privileging their “racialized, gendered, and classed experiences as sources of strength” (Solórzano and Yosso, 2002:26). Painting and drawing have long been used “as means of both encountering and expressing oneself” (Pink, 2004:7). Students' artwork allowed for student autonomy, “visual research involves those who often do not have a voice” and enables students to become “the producers and not just the objects or the consumers of research” (Mitchell, 2011:16). Moreover, students acquire knowledge about “the self in society” through the production of personal artwork (Yokley, 1999:23). The social justice approach of educulturalism (referred to in Chapter Three), through art and narrative, can nurture “balanced, creative, informed, and open-minded citizens, who are able to fully participate in democratic society” (Lea and Sims, 2008:15).

I observed the teachers setting up the Britishness project with their classes, and I also informally observed the students working on their artwork part-way through the autumn term (which was when they spent their time working on it). I did not observe class discussions about Britishness as I intended to interview students again towards the end of the project to learn about their reflections over a longer period of time. The students' artwork was important in opening a space to discuss identity issues in the interviews. The students' artwork was laid on the table in the interview room, as “conversation starters or part of building rapport”, and as “tools to gain entry into the interview process” (Mitchell, 2011:37). Thus there were multiple uses for the students'

artwork as cultural artefacts: "...texts of visual research in and of themselves? Social texts – objects and things – are texts of materiality. They can be seen, touched...(Mitchell, 2011:37). Compositional interpretation of some of the artwork involved my considering, at a basic level, the content, colour, *mise en scene* and expressive content, but also the "social modality of its production", that is "who commissioned it, why, who painted it..." (Rose, 2011:56).

It is not enough to just study the content of visual data, as it is also necessary to discuss the production of the visual data, as well as how the images are received by audiences (Rose, 2011). Regarding the production of the artwork, there were multiple intentions: as a researcher I commissioned it to investigate Britishness and the teaching/learning process, along with the class teachers who were requesting it for GCSE assessment. My focus was on how the Art students perceived Britishness through how they reflected upon their artwork, as well as their choices for depicting their British identities in specific and intentional ways. (For information about the artwork see Appendix Two).

### **Interviews**

Educational research with the very young - often observation-based – fails to engage personal perspectives; in-depth interviews, however, can give a voice to the powerless (Connolly, 1998). Observation where eye contact is avoided with the *subjects* of the study, and young children are "to be seen but not heard" is limiting (Connolly, 1998:3). Rapport with participants is necessary for revelations about the personal (Heyl, 2001, Tuettemann, 2003). Interviewers hear narratives (Seidman, 2012), by ensuring research is "collaborative rather than interrogative, guided rather than structured, flexible and usually informal" (O'Reilly, 2005:5). Through paired interviews I worked to empower and privilege the participants to shape the interview together (Heyl, 2001). Semi-structured interviews permitted flexibility, minimising potential research bias as questions emerged organically. Not controlling topics resulted in dismantling of traditional power relations between interviewer/interviewee (Lankshear and Knobel, 2004). The respective teachers chose students to be interviewed who they felt would confidently articulate their ideas, collaborate, or challenge one another when necessary. In future, and with more class time available, I would like to give more students the opportunity to participate in paired interviews if they expressed keenness. The interviews were friendly conversations (Spradley, 1979), recorded using a dictaphone, with students' permission<sup>23</sup>, with the view that:

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<sup>23</sup> In my preliminary research, (See Chapter One), Kemal revealed more once the interview was over, after the recording device was switched off. He explained he felt uncomfortable about revealing

Conversation really cannot be required. It is engaged in freely, when people are interested and involved in a topic because they feel it matters. Equally, it is disengaged from freely (Batsleer, 2008:7).

Conscious of power dynamics and potential ethical dilemmas, I reassured participants once again about the nature of *informed consent*, ensuring they were comfortable and confident to end the interview at any time. Informed consent is when research participants are given about detailed information about the study, about why they have been requested to participate, and how the research will be disseminated (BERA, 2011, BERA, 2004). Consent does not just take place at the beginning of the research meeting with the participants (Miller and Bell, 2012), thus, I requested students' and teachers' consent at different stages of the research – when doing the artwork, when completing questionnaires, when being interviewed, when photographing the artwork.

Students' voices dominated, which was a “productive” strategy to elicit information as they would “prompt one another” (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007:112), raising matters pertinent to them (Lankshear and Knobel, 2004). Perhaps students were more “forthcoming”, finding the interview “less threatening” (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007:111) because they were in pairs. I was the peripheral listener, protecting the integrity of the data by asking minimal questions. Respectful listening, awareness of my role as a researcher in co-constructing the interview with the researched, and understanding “that dialogue is discovery and only partial knowledge will ever be attained” (Heyl, 2001:370) guided my interviewing. Active listening is not always easy: “The paradox is that we academic scribes are not always sociable. We cling to the library like bookish limpets that, like Kierkegaard, find real human beings too heavy to embrace” (Back, 2004:213).

Directly asking about Britishness may yield limited data due to the “silence and indifference” of research participants; other times participants may bring up issues of Britishness and Englishness themselves even when not directly asked (Fenton, 2007, Garner, 2012:455). Heyl (2001) cites Mishler regarding possible relationships between interviewers and interviewees: (i) informants and reporters, (ii) research collaborators, and (iii) learners/actors and advocates. Challenging traditional power relations as *reporter*, the students were more than mere *informants*, for I was “listening carefully and respectfully, allowing the informants to ‘name’ the world in their own terms” (Heyl, 2001:375). As research collaborators we were co-constructing the interview: “...the interviewee influences the content and order of questions and topics

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“personal” experiences of Britishness on tape. When I asked him if he would mind if I wrote down what he wanted to tell me to include it in my research, he gave me permission.

covered” (Heyl, 2001:376). Multiple realities mean research questions cannot be firmly decided upon beforehand (Robson, 2002). In the paired interviews, students guided one another. In all the interviews, participants guided the research. Participants were *learners* exploring identity, discovering themselves and understanding others.

In-depth interviews permit the reflexive honour of valuing students’ momentous and remarkable stories: “Being interested in others is the key... we are not the center of the world.... our actions as interviewers indicate that others’ stories are important” (Seidman, 2012:9). The interview method supports multiple realities (Stake, 1995, Robson, 2002), and through the act of ‘collusion’, we recognise the realities of others, ensuring co-operation and collaboration (Gregory, 2005). Engaging with the narrative of the participant is essential – what is she telling us? What does she grant importance to? After all narrative is “central to constructions of identity in the diaspora because it stakes the key claims to authenticity” (Rew and Campbell, 1999:27). When we are seeking stories revealing multiple realities, we can stop collecting when we know research participants have “made all the observations they feel necessary”, and there are no “novel cues” (Erben, 1998: 6). The complex reality of the interview is “views may clash, deceive, seduce, enchant. It is the inter-view. It is as much about seeing a world- mine, yours, ours, theirs – as about hearing accounts, opinions, arguments, reasons, declarations: words with views into different worlds”(Schostak, 2006:1). Interviews should be entered with an open mind in the “hope that somehow by listening enough, something might be learnt and something might be changed” (Schostak, 2006:1).

Interviewers are often said to “probe” when following up on what research participants have said, yet this connotes “a sharp instrument pressing on soft flesh...a sense of the powerful interviewer treating the participant as an object”, thus I prefer “explore” (Seidman, 2012:86). Throughout the paired interview, occasionally I explored by extracting balanced views from both students: “What do you think about that Joe? About what Kadisha just said?” I knew Kadisha as bold and brave, and vocal in her views; she would not become distressed or lose confidence if Joe was candid and controversial. She was able to challenge and disrupt any essentialised talk (See Chapter Six). Never “a ready-made toolkit to allow novice-researchers to go out and ask scripted questions”, interviews should enable “the basis for engagement with others, the openings for dialogue, the modes of drawing out views (Schostak, 2006: 3). Research should be meaningful to the students participating in the research, meaningful to the researcher, and meaningful to those who will use the research.

## Questionnaires

The two classes of GCSE students completed questionnaires in the early stages of the project and again once the project was almost finished. The questionnaires provided students' biographical details, information about gender, family, religion, place of birth, where the young people grew up, and where they felt they belonged (see Appendix Two for details about the students), as well as insight into their artwork (See Appendix Four for questionnaire information). I did not provide students with closed categories to respond with on their questionnaires, as I wanted students to have the opportunity to self-define. It was fascinating to learn about how students chose to classify themselves and which areas they felt they belonged to by collating this self-identification data on the questionnaires (See the extended Appendix Two). Importantly the questionnaires also provided a broad picture of ways in which identity issues mattered to the students who took time to write their experiences and ideas about i) culture and identity ii) belonging to London and Britain iii) exploring Britishness in lesson.

Disadvantages of questionnaires are that we are unable to "have a discussion" with participants (O'Toole and Beckett, 2013:136), and unable to gain deep detailed responses, but that is where the interview method complements the questionnaires. Reliable/trustworthy data is achieved through questioning that is "as transparent and unambiguous as possible" (Lankshear and Knobel, 2004:183). I checked my questionnaires by repeating some of the questions in two questionnaires given to the students after a time lapse, to assess how they responded to the questioning at the early stages and then once the project was finished for most of the students. The questionnaires took approximately 45 minutes to one hour to complete in lesson time. Both questionnaires were quite similar but functioned in order to elicit responses from the students at differing stages of the project. Questionnaire 2 built upon Questionnaire 1 with some new sections providing a comprehensive and necessary overview of the students' perceptions of Britishness, as well as their pedagogical experiences. Whilst the interviews provided detail and depth, the questionnaires yielded the breadth of student views across two classes. Due to student absence, or abstention in some sections, I did not have a complete set of 34 questionnaires, as shown in Appendix Two. Appendix Four highlights the key questions.

## Responsible Research

### Ethics

The values of ethical educational research result in respect for “The Person”, “Knowledge”, “Democratic Values”, “The Quality of Educational Research”, and “Academic Freedom” (BERA, 2011:4). Educational research with young students highlights a myriad of power issues between the researcher, students, teachers, management and parents (Scott and Morrison, 2006), pre-research, during research, and when the research is disseminated. Ethical research respects participants, engages in responsible research, and protects the researcher and participants (LeCompte and Schensul, 2010, Alderson and Morrow, 2011). As well as protecting people, ethics requires we must protect specific settings and communities. Pre-research basic ethics asks whether the study is “worth doing”, and whether the research is outlined clearly to participants (Alderson and Morrow, 2011:11). The Britishness study was topical and exciting. I was keen to draw out marginalised youth voices on this topic often discussed by those in positions of power (See Chapter Two). The study was therefore ‘worth doing’. The principal, teachers, parents and students were made aware that this research would be potentially published in the form of a doctoral thesis, journal papers and a monograph.

Revisiting ethical elements along the way and affirming these with participants to ensure ethical practice is essential (Brooks et al., 2014). Researchers often encounter unexpected findings (Alderson and Morrow, 2011), thus ethical reporting of what research participants reveal is paramount. Holding back just because we don’t like what they say or what they say is politically incorrect is not ethically sound: “...we have to allow the people about whom we write to be complex, frail, ethically ambiguous, contradictory and damaged” (Back, 2004:209). I was always aware that my research should be respectful and inclusive of the humanity of the teachers and the students, thus I steered away from making judgements or writing negatively about my research participants (Brooks et al., 2014). As researchers we can only provide partial knowledge of ourselves and our positionalities – just as our respondents can only do the same – for with the passing of time, our ideas, opinions and stances are ever evolving. Ethical strategies should therefore incorporate practices that ensure authenticity, honesty and integrity.

Ethical considerations involve weighing up the benefits/problems of using different research methods, aiming to give students a platform to express themselves, without exploiting them (Alderson and Morrow, 2011): “the question of ethics is not one just for researchers in the usual

sense of the word, but also for the participants who are themselves engaged in the process of community engagement” (Mitchell, 2011:16). Students too must take on board ethical considerations about how they create and collate visual data about their school, their family and their community. If students were photographing to collect data on Britishness, they would require training on ethical factors involved in photographing and videoing (Mitchell, 2011). Ethical practices and reflexive practices are intricately interconnected as both require respect and responsibility for the participants and protection of the integrity of educational research. The relationship between the *responsible* researcher and the *vulnerable* researched is of ethical importance. It is our responsibility as researchers to ensure that we engage with difference and otherness. Importantly ethics matters in any situation where difference exists: “...ethical conditions arise out of this possibility of acknowledging and welcoming the alterity which, according to Levinas, is always already part of the self’s experience” (Zylinska, 2005:33). Ethical responsibility informed my research journey, as I planned the research, collected and analysed the data, and wrote up and disseminated my findings.

Avoidance of harm, whilst doing good, is paramount (Mitchell, 2011). In discussing sensitive topics, this can be achieved by creating a secure space for students to feel valued when they articulate their experiences of identity, and respect the contributions of their classmates. The teachers created a supportive but open environment due to the potentially sensitive nature of identity talk. The teachers chose the student interviewees, knowing who would work well together. During the paired interviews I was a *privileged listener* (Siegel, 1988:30), for students to be honest it was necessary that they “understood, trusted and respected my motives in doing the study” (Tuettemann, 2003:18). The students were comfortable, to the extent that when the allocated time slot was over, they continued talking about Britishness. Students were made aware that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time (BERA, 2004), and that they did not have to respond to any questions they did not want to answer, or participate in class discussion or be interviewed about Britishness if they so decided. None of the students chose to withdraw at any time. I also provided them with my email address in case they wanted to get in touch about the research, or add anything they had thought of or changed their mind about including their artwork and questionnaire/interview responses in my research project. To ensure anonymity, I specifically requested students provide an alternative name to use in my write up of the research. Many of the students were initially keen to use their real names, so I explained to them why I preferred them to choose a pseudonym. I reiterated this in the lessons that they were completing the questionnaires, as I ensured they understood their rights to privacy, anonymity and confidentiality (LeCompte and Schensul, 2010, BERA, 2011). Students

were also reassured that completing the questionnaires was optional, and if they felt uncomfortable about any of the questions, they need not respond.

Throughout the research process, I recalled my reasons for researching: to provide a space and opportunity for students and teachers to highlight how the pedagogical processes of the teaching and learning of Britishness work in the classroom setting, and investigate emerging ideas about the meaning of Britishness through students' artwork, questionnaires and interviews. Seidman (2012:12) explains how "interviewing as exploitation is a serious concern and provides a contradiction and a tension within my work that I have not fully resolved". Thus, as researchers we must be conscious of our powerful positions, as well as our personal and political motivations for conducting research into the intimate areas of the lives of often vulnerable and powerless research participants. One way to maintain awareness and to keep on doing good in the research would be to continue to ask oneself important questions about the research: "...for whom, by whom, and to what end" (Seidman, 2012:12)? Ethical research asks many questions throughout the research journey, not just about the research participants, but also about ensuring the research maintains high quality, validity and reliability which I will now discuss (Brooks et al., 2014).

### **Validity and Reliability**

Data and analyses in educational research are "sometimes transient and ephemeral" rendering old-fashioned and fixed terms like 'triangulation' and 'rigour' unhelpful (O'Toole and Beckett, 2013:32): "Education is shifting, ephemeral (only for today), dynamic, ambiguous or provisional. Other words must be found to verify or validate the data" (O'Toole and Beckett, 2013:31). Rather than referring to triangulation (Lincoln and Guba, 1985), today's educational researchers discuss "*plausibility, credibility, resonance and transferability*" when defending the reliability of research (O'Toole and Beckett, 2013:31). Yet even these terms are critiqued as "too definitive" by arts-based researchers, preferring Richardson's term 'crystallisation' (2000) "to define the emerging reliability of their findings" (O'Toole and Beckett, 2013:32). When conducting my research I was aware that my data, my analysis and my final report would be based on my interpretations of the multiple youth voices I heard and observed in the research process, even if I was working wanted to ensure meanings were being co-constructed. There is no neutrality or impartiality in teaching, education, or research (Lather, 1986, Denzin, 1989, Patton, 1999, O'Toole and Beckett, 2013, Smyth and McInerney, 2013). For some, all research is interpretation, and we can only analyse from within the world's "boundaries and blinders"(Kincheloe and McLaren, 2002:97).

To reduce interpretative, idiosyncratic and subjective bias in research, and for data to be credible and trustworthy, researchers can use multiple data sources, methods and theories (Lather, 1986, Hammersley, 1994, Lankshear and Knobel, 2004). I used two types of questionnaires, interviews with students and teachers, and the artwork created by students to gain a broad and in-depth picture of how the two art classes perceived Britishness in Bermondsey. As well as interviewing students in pairs, I interviewed the two class teachers separately to learn about the pedagogical processes involved in the teaching and learning of Britishness. The different methods of my research yielded emerging multi-layered patterns and interweaving themes to support the validity of my research. My theoretical frameworks developed after I had coded the data finding emerging themes about place, race and social class. Before embarking upon this investigation, I refrained from speculating about what the students might express about identity, or how the teachers and students might respond to the teaching and learning process. Once the students commenced their reflective process, and the artwork was being created, I utilised the data from the questionnaires and interviews to locate significant and interesting themes. If research concerns “transformative social praxis”, then researchers need to employ theory that “explains lived experience... through empirical grounding” (Lather, 1986:76). With this in mind I analysed the data through a critical pedagogical lens: I focused upon students’ narratives to illuminate the inequalities and injustices that seep into their lives as young Londoners.

### **Generalisability and Relatability**

The language of research methodologies, for example “generalization, objectivity, bias” is often positivistic in origin (Erlandson et al., 1993:xii). Generalisability is not achievable with *locally specific* research (LeCompte and Schensul, 2010), and with Arts-based Educational Research, “every artist accomplishes the operation in his own way and never exactly repeats himself in any two of his works”(Dewey and Boydston, 1987:209). The context-specific nature of educational research findings renders generalisability as inapplicable (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1993), particularly as educational research is prone to change over time and place (Yates, 2004). In the ethnographic spirit, I did not set out to produce “precise, objective, generalizable findings” (Scott and Morrison, 2006:92). My research findings show what Britishness means to two Art classes situated in a particular place and time, hence providing an in-depth and relevant theoretical case was my goal (Hammersley, 1994). Thus, the “relatability of the work is more important than its generalisability” (Opie, 2004:5). In terms of external reliability, that is replication of the research project in “same or similar settings” (Lankshear and Knobel,

2004:362), this art project would most probably yield uniquely different but comparable findings if it was repeated with other Art classes or in different schools in Britain.

I follow the view that “conditions, history, and people are different...but there are principles, strategies, and ideas that can be taken and integrated into other cultural and political contexts” (Guajardo et al., 2008:4). Educational research should contribute to the improvement of learning, but this is not the only purpose (Yates, 2004). Yates cites Berliner regarding an important point regarding educational research: “context and specificity appear to be of as much interest as the ‘general’ pattern” (2004: 26). Therefore, educational research is always evolving (Yates, 2004): findings do not stay stable over time as researchers’ assumptions about gender/race have changed over time; students, teachers and research questions are not static, but subject to socio-political influences. When it comes to investigating Britishness, factors like ethnicity and geographical location might influence how students perceive Britishness (Barrett, 2002). This local study might resonate for some students and teachers in other parts of multicultural Britain working on identities and belongings, and provide a useful benchmark to compare Britishness discourses and classroom pedagogies in schools throughout Britain. Thus the relatability of this study is a strength of the research, as this project is required to better understand Britishness and the teaching and learning of Britishness in different places and over time.

## **ANALYSIS OF DATA**

Wide-ranging empirical material, including media texts, interview data, observation, art work, is required for providing insights when doing critical research (Harvey, 1990), as well as themes, patterns and significances of data (Lankshear and Knobel, 2004). The empirical data I collected allowed me to move towards a theoretical understanding of identity issues that matter to young people, as well as a theoretical understanding of how teachers and students explore identity issues. Most of my data was collected from the interviews, but I also observed the introduction of the project in the classroom, as well as the final stages. Using data as evidence requires the qualitative researcher to be both simultaneously ‘involved’ with and ‘distant’ from the research site and participants (Lincoln, 2002). Writing up of the research also illuminates the ethnographic, for the ethnographer gives meaning to the data and evidence collated in the field through the act of writing, for example, by constructing a sociological text (Wolcott, 1997).

## **The Artwork**

Analysing the artwork alone would be a messy and complicated affair, as not many visual methodology books contain “possible *methods* of interpretation, and even fewer explanations of how to do those methods...” (Rose, 2011:xvii). It would not be in the spirit of social justice and social change to rigidly impose my personal interpretations on the artwork, for there is no one single meaning of an image that can be argued, but multiple meanings, interpretations and readings (Hall, 1997). I decided to use the artwork alongside questionnaire and interview data to inform the research in multiple ways. Trustworthy data depends upon the credibility of the researcher who is tasked with collecting and analysing the data with “intellectual rigor and professional integrity” (Patton, 1999:1205), but employing multiple methods to obtain data is also a key ethnographic feature (Wolcott, 1997). My interpretation and analysis of the images was therefore minimal as I relied on titles the students provided for their images (see Appendix Two for the titles), and how the students discussed their artwork in the questionnaires and interviews. From a theoretical point of view, I followed the approach of Rose (2011:xviii) which is that visual data needs to be understood as “embedded in the social world and only comprehensible when that embedding is taken into account”. Collecting such data can come in useful when analysing and writing up ethnographic research (Wolcott, 1997).

My research highlights healing and therapeutic pedagogies through the creative and cathartic research journey that the students undertook with energy and zeal, at times by themselves, at times along with their peers and teachers, and at time as well with me - the researcher, resulting in astounding artistic and verbal expressions on the importance of identity issues. Schools - “through uninspiring pedagogy” - can repress “individuality” and “creativity” (Smyth and McInerney, 2007:59). To move away from this humdrum pedagogy, key elements of creativity including “using one’s own voice”, “trusting one’s own judgement, and “sustaining inner atmosphere of exploration” (Booth, 2015:56) can be nurtured in identity work with young people. In analysing students’ artwork, alongside the interview data, I observed that processes of creativity enabled sustained identity exploration. Creativity also involves “pleasure in creating, inquiring, and reflecting”, “trying on multiple points of view”, and “working with others” (Booth, 2015:58). I found it important to consider the extent to which students benefitted from the creative and cathartic pedagogies.

## **Interview Data: Thematic Analysis**

The interview produces *empirical* data through a privileged process that is “emotionally and intellectually satisfying” (Seidman, 2012:5). Yet interviews “are no innocent windows into

participants' interiors", but reveal fascinating "inconsistencies, contradictions, and ambiguities that arise as our interviewees try to find ways to mitigate the interactive trouble of being misconstrued" (Bamberg, 2004:365). While collecting the data and self-transcribing the interviews in full I began to "immerse" myself in the data to gain "intimate familiarity" and identify patterns (O'Toole and Beckett, 2013:151). Transcribing of data is "*part* of the analytic process"(Braun and Clarke, 2013:173). After transcribing all the interviews, I read through the 'thick' data twice to see how it answered my research questions on (i) the meanings of Britishness and (ii) the teaching and learning of Britishness respectively, and discussing my preliminary findings with my supervisors (King and Horrocks, 2010, Braun and Clarke, 2013, O'Toole and Beckett, 2013). Coding the data necessitated three key elements (King and Horrocks, 2010):

- ❖ descriptive coding highlights/comments upon research participants' perspectives, before defining descriptive codes and merging any overlapping ones after further readings of the transcripts
- ❖ interpretative coding moves beyond participants' words to researcher interpretation of the descriptive codes (without attempting to incorporate theoretical concepts)
- ❖ defining between two to five overarching themes for the full data set by building upon interpretative codes

Thematic analysis depends upon the researcher sifting through and selecting what s/he deems is relevant from the data, thus deciding "what to include, what to discard and how to interpret participants' words" (King and Horrocks, 2010:149). I employed a "complete coding" process, thus coding all the data according to what was relevant and fascinating (Braun and Clarke, 2013:206). Moreover after transcribing the data and conducting preliminary analyses, I read the relevant literature on emerging themes. I examined the literature to make sense of how my empirical research related to established literature, and how it contributed to "new knowledge"(O'Toole and Beckett, 2013). I then returned to the data, and analysed the data in accordance with what the literature had presented as significant themes. Thus, the teaching and learning data was coded using my readings on critical pedagogy, and the data on students' discourses of Britishness were coded according to the literature on British identity. I drew on these codes from distinct literature, but also developed my own additional codes that illuminated the experiences of my research participants.

## **Questionnaire Analysis**

Questionnaires enabled collection of qualitative/quantitative data (O'Toole and Beckett, 2013). The questionnaires allowed me to gain a broad picture of the participants involved in the art projects in terms of their identities (See Appendix Two), artwork and experiences of the teaching and learning of Britishness. The questionnaires provided data about demographics (See Appendix Two) - gender, ethnicity, religion, place of birth, family background (Wolcott, 1997, Bamford, 2008). I was able to explore "similarities and differences" within the two classes to gain an overall understanding, as well as identify what was "typical and atypical" (O'Toole and Beckett, 2013:161). The questionnaire data from two classes was integrated with the paired interview data to ensure a comprehensive understanding of Britishness, and the teaching and learning of Britishness. The questionnaires and the interviews together allowed for "data integration" resulting in a broader understanding of the "variety of perspectives" on Britishness and teaching/learning (Kara, 2015:111).

## **LIMITATIONS OF RESEARCH**

### **Reflecting with Hindsight**

When writing up the research I had the awareness that I was what Back (2004:204) describes as *writing in and against time*:

...an aspiration to hold the experience of others in your arms while recognizing that what we touch is always moving, unpredictable, irreducible and mysteriously opaque. As a consequence of this we are always writing in and against time.

I was also aware of research as a "literary activity as well as a set of investigative procedures" (Back, 2004:204), needing to perfect how I wrote about the research setting/procedure/findings in a way that was honest, raw and real. Yet always aware of time: "...we are writing in time, at a particular moment, which is partial and positioned in place, is a major advance. I think we are also writing against time, trying to capture an outline of an existence that is fleeting" (Back, 2004:204). I was writing about Britishness in a particular place which is always changing and in a particular cultural and socio-political context that is also transitory. Students' personalities/perspectives are also changing. Thus, I cannot claim that my study promotes the "one main" description of Britishness, as these perspectives offered to me by the students will continue to evolve, growing and adapting into new ideas about identity. Nevertheless it is fascinating to understand aspects of identity by identifying some of the themes and patterns

that are emerging in the students' discourses and definitions on Britishness. A limitation of my research project is that it does not give students a way to completely disregard or abandon Britishness. Some students in my research may have preferred to completely focus on another aspect of identity. Young people might be emotionally disconnected from Britishness as they encounter ideas of Britishness they view to be fixed, and not offering necessary fluidity (Phillips and Ganesh, 2007:13): "Britain represents an old, hierarchical, traditional, political discourse that does not fit with the fresh, inventive, messy and often chaotic world of a teenager". Thus Britishness or Englishness might be "almost meaningless" to British youth "embracing diversity in seemingly inexhaustible combinations" in their local spaces and cities (Back, 1996: 250).

Participants inevitably hold back due to time constraints or taboo topics, and we cannot say all we have to say as ideas come and go. Post-interview one of the participants might think of something s/he should have said. A socio-political event, or a media event, or an instance in the world outside perhaps triggers further development of ideas on Britishness. Thus knowledge is partial (Stanley and Wise, 1990) and expanding (Bentz and Shapiro, 1998), yet "the fact that those traces of life are opaque and that the person who made them is always to an extent unknowable doesn't mean that all is lost" (Back, 2004:205). It might be true that we are writing in and against time, and this is inevitable, as each second goes by, time could be seen as against us. Yet what we learn in one moment in time can be recorded and can represent that moment, albeit only ever partially. Definitions of Britishness are fleeting as time passes, evolving as experiences mould us, multiple as we encounter new events, ideas and people. Researchers can take heart that "the fact that those traces of life are opaque and that the person who made them is always to an extent unknowable doesn't mean that all is lost" (Back, 2004:205): It is important to allow for our students to learn about identity itself, about the multiple, fluid and shifting nature of identity, so that they are able to bring plenty of examples from their own lives. Students need a space to interrogate how identity is influenced and affected by social structures too, and how this impacts upon their everyday lives. We can give students the chance to critique cultural mores, as they reflect upon social constraints and challenges for freedom.

### **Looking Forward**

Giving students a voice though is not simply to "transcribe their speech as if what they say corresponds to a stable truth", as some have done when writing about the White working-class communities whose "accounts might be better understood as a tangle of desires, resentments and grievances" (Back, 2009:206). Thus, methodologically innovative youth research is a popular critical pedagogy approach I would like to develop. It involves promoting youth voice,

representation and participation through using innovative new methods, and emphasising ethics, reflexivity and mixed methods (Heath and Walker, 2012). In future I would be keen to encourage the students to participate in the analysis by interpreting any visual data they have created or collated (Mitchell, 2011), to empower young people and give them more of a voice in the research. Moreover, “because visual texts are very accessible, the possibilities for inviting other interpretations are key” (Mitchell, 2011:11), and the research journey can involve new ways to increase student participation and empowerment (Hickman and Eglinton, 2015). Mr Martin also reflected upon ways teachers of other subjects may tackle the exploration of Britishness, and on how he would love to be able to give the students a longer period of time to explore identity, and to engage more deeply with the notion of Britishness using audio and visual methods, as well as partnering up students of different ages. Participation and collaboration can be enhanced in community-based projects if we employ visual and digital research methods such as digital storytelling or photography projects revealing identities and belongings (Gubrium and Harper, 2013, Gubrium et al., 2015, Hickman and Eglinton, 2015). Visual ethics is a new and evolving area requiring researchers to consider the impact of digital technologies and social media on how we protect and anonymise our research participants in our storage and dissemination of visual data (Mitchell, 2011, Rose, 2011). There is scope to present a digital gallery of the artwork to an international audience, but then visual ethics would need rigorous application.

There is no textbook to be distributed to students that will teach them about Britishness. Even if education policymakers were to design a textbook, its relevance and reach would be very limited, and the ideas contained therein would soon expire as the discourses of Britishness evolve, maintaining fluidity, multiplicity and diversity of meanings. A textbook - “the ultimate canon: a fixed tome of knowledge” – can be unalterable and counterproductive when teaching about fluid and evolving identities, thus a critical textbook (in a range of digital formats) that belongs to everyone, is subject to revision, and is open-access (Shaffer, 2014) might be an exciting future project to work on collaboratively with students and teachers. Textbooks - written, edited and published by groups of people with specific ideological interests and values - are subject to stringent and complicated controls upheld by government policies, as well as business practices of the world of publishing and profit (Apple, 2013).

The critical textbook may “facilitate student access to existing knowledge, and empower them to critique it, dismantle it, and create new knowledge” (Shaffer, 2014). Critical consciousness, we saw in Chapter Three, involves awareness about re-appropriating power, challenging

dominant values, becoming critically literate and organising social change (Brett, 2007). This can be achieved by reading existing texts as “objects of interrogation” (Giroux, 2013:5). A goal could be to create new texts that depict the world through the students’ eyes. Freirean philosophy advocates reading and writing as crucial to the process of *conscientizacao*: “Reading the world radically redefines conventional notions of print-based literacy and conventional school curriculum. For critical pedagogues, the “texts” students and teachers should “decode” are the images of their own concrete, situated experiences with the world” (Gruenewald, 2003:5). Reading the world and reading the word are equally important (Freire, 1985b), and not separate, for it is through reading the world and reading the word that *conscientizacao* progresses into social transformation (Gruenewald, 2003). Thus, moving forwards, I would like for students from marginalised communities, whose voices are unheard in an ‘authoritative’ textbook, to contribute their ideas of Britishness to critical textbooks in History, Geography, English and other subjects.

### **SUMMARY OF MY RESEARCH JOURNEY**

This research on teaching and learning Britishness incorporates features of urban/educational/critical ethnography. These approaches allow me to “record the agonies, pains, successes, and tragedies of human experience... the deeply felt emotions of love, dignity, pride, honor and respect” (Denzin, 1997:xiv). Ethnography recognises the need to emphasise the perspectives of the research participants (LeCompte and Schensul, 2010). Even if ethnography can never be wholly truthful and complete, we can nevertheless work to “offer – as faithfully as possible – the accounts young people” give about multicultural belongings (Back, 1996:6). Critical ethnography with its emphasis on “the ethics and politics of representation in the practice and reporting” (Brooke and Hogg, 2012:117) of research complements innovative youth research and arts-based educational research (ABER). Phenomenological principles of interviewing emphasise the participants’ lived experiences through their meaning-making and their subjective perspectives, all the while accepting that human experience is “temporal and transitory” (Seidman, 2012:16), ensuring student voice is maximised.

This study depicts how Britishness is perceived by school students in the two Art classes, and how the teachers/students implemented ideas about teaching and learning Britishness. The importance of a critical pedagogy approach in exploring identity issues is emphasised. Social justice issues dominated the students’ perceptions of their social world, and what they revealed resonated with my own memories and experiences of race, place and social class. Research that

privileges *dialogue* and *participation* respects difference/diversity, whilst creating new collaborative knowledge to empower individuals and communities (Phillips et al., 2013). Listening – without judgement - is the door to another world where we can learn about our participants, and then when we return back to our reality we may be able to change the world in some way by providing a greater and clearer understanding of another reality. The key to the door is the act of the interview itself - the potential gateway to a greater understanding of social beings leading to social change: “It is hard and sometimes draining, but I have never lost the feeling that it is a privilege to gather the stories of people through interviewing and to come to understand their experience through their stories (Seidman, 2012:5).

After listening to students’ stories on their experiences of exploring Britishness, I came to see the benefits of a critical pedagogy framework with its non-hierarchical and non-elite emphasis on teachers and students collaborating, students’ voices valued, the importance of dialogue, reflection and action, and promoting social justice and social equality. The research journey taught me how research can be used to challenge and change prevailing ideologies and assumptions about Britishness (Lather, 1986). Knowing education reform policies and practices are “deeply political and serve the interests of some groups, while actively working against and denying others” (Smyth, 2014:954), my methodological decisions were informed by the need to steer away from promoting assimilation and homogeneity through pedagogical choices, whilst feeling open-minded and excited to see what Britishness teaching yields. In the next chapter I show how, for students and teachers, education is “the opening up of possibilities through the exploration of alternative understandings, the critical application of evidence and argument and the development of the skills and dispositions necessary to act on the possibilities” (Sears and Hughes, 2006:4). The knowledge acquired about definitions and discourses of Britishness (see Chapter Six) and the teaching and learning of Britishness (see Chapter Five) was new and exciting for me as a social being, as a teacher and as researcher. This chapter has highlighted the ways critical pedagogies can work as methodological approaches. Next, in Chapter Five, I will discuss the ways critical pedagogies are can be employed in the teaching and learning of Britishness by examining the perspectives of the Art teachers and students who sought to identify the multiple ways of belonging to Britain. In Chapter Five, we will also observe the two Art teachers’ self-reflexivity leading to them getting to know their students better as they collaboratively researched Britishness.

# CHAPTER FIVE: TEACHING AND LEARNING BRITISHNESS – A Critical Pedagogy Approach

*...and when we speak we are afraid  
our words will not be heard  
nor welcomed  
but when we are silent  
we are still afraid*

*So it is better to speak  
remembering  
we were never meant to survive.*

*(Lorde, 1995)*

## **INTRODUCTION: EXPLORING BRITISHNESS THROUGH ART**

The research participants in my study embarked on an identity exploration journey implicitly informed by critical pedagogy approaches (See Chapter Three for more on critical pedagogy). They came to know diverse and multiple ways of reading and comprehending British identities through creating powerful self-portraits and engaging in structured collective discussions in the classroom. Art teachers are no strangers to dissecting socio-political commentary to enhance students' "critical consciousness" (Yokley, 1999:24). Recognising the classroom can be a place where hegemony is resisted and cultural reproduction challenged (Au and Apple, 2009), Art teachers are well placed to set about "revealing conditions of the past, illuminating present politics and forecasting possible futures" (Grierson, 2008:22). Education that is liberating is a core concern for critical pedagogues (Freire, 1985a, Freire, 2000, hooks, 1994). My analysis reveals two reflective and innovative teachers incorporating strategies such as *critical consciousness* and *dialogue* (Freire, 2000) in their lessons, without explicitly employing critical pedagogy terminology.

The two Art teachers' pedagogical approaches, I will show, were in the Freirean spirit - outlined in Chapter Three – whereby teachers and students were collaboratively participating in critical reflection and dialogue. Such "critical praxis" aims to develop "not only better learning climates but a better society as well" (Kincheloe, 2008). The Art teachers treated students with respect and care as they created knowledge about British identities together. Critical pedagogy, we will see, is a prism through which we can observe complex relationships between teaching and learning, and between teachers and learners; the prism brings to light socio-political, socio-economic and socio-cultural aspects of our present and our past (Wink, 2005). The Art teachers' approaches would eventually inspire confidence and independence, as students individually and

collectively reflected upon Britishness in personal artwork and class discussions. Critical pedagogy champions “changing how people think about themselves and their relationship to others and the world”, significantly “energizing students and others to engage in those struggles that further possibilities for living in a more just society” (Giroux, 2004:64). Arts Based Educational Research (ABER) is suited to ‘sensitive topics’ for its potentially healing and therapeutic effects (McNiff, 1998), and it:

can promote autonomy, raise awareness, activate the senses, express the complex feeling-based aspects of social life, illuminate the complexity and sometimes paradox of lived experience, jar us into seeing and thinking differently, and transform consciousness through evoking empathy and resonance (Chilton and Leavy, 2014:403).

ABER is valuable and successful when it poses questions, rather than simply generating answers (Barone and Eisner, 2006). It perfectly complements urban ethnography’s emphasis on raising questions (Park et al., 1984). Patiently asking questions and embracing the unknown was part of this research journey: living the question, rather than rushing the answers.

My research participants had begun a collective exploration of how Britain was ‘imagined’, and where they were situated socially and emotionally in Britain (See the ideas of Anderson (2006) and Billig (1995) in Chapter Two). In this chapter I report the critical pedagogical perspectives (See Chapter Three) of the Art teachers, Ms Anderson and Mr Martin, as well as their students – particularly Ellie, Chris, Joe and Kadisha. In the spirit of critical pedagogy, rather than treating teachers’ and students’ viewpoints as distinct categories, I have intentionally chosen to interweave their experiences together, for Freire saw teaching and learning as inseparable (Freire, 2001, Freire, 2000). Teachers both teach and learn, and students both learn and teach, that is the nature of progressive pedagogical encounters. The Art teachers, we will learn in this chapter, wanted to educate, not indoctrinate. They recognised “liberating education consists in acts of cognition, not transferrals of information” (Freire, 2000:79). The Art teachers were engaging in *culturally responsive teaching*, as though they seemed to understand that ‘caring’ is “a moral imperative, a social responsibility, and a pedagogical necessity” (Gay, 2002:109). This chapter (and the next chapter) will show how tools of critical race theory permit “inquiry, dialogue, and participation”, while “counterstorytelling and narrative” enable students and teachers to engage in “deliberative and mindful listening techniques” (Taylor, 2016:8). The impact of the Art teachers valuing student autonomy and criticality resulted in fluidity and focus, whereby students became emotionally engaged, confident and independent, whilst re-learning about learning, about identities and histories, and about multicultural Britain. I will now discuss the teachers’ intentions and motivations towards the setting up and start of the project, before

moving onto showing the ways the critical pedagogies employed in the classroom enabled students and teachers to reflect upon identity issues with growing confidence.

## **BEGINNING BRITISHNESS TEACHING IN THE ART CLASSROOM**

### **Multicultural Britishness: Diversity and Difference**

The Head of Art, Ms Anderson<sup>24</sup>, had designed the coursework module enthusiastically, but cautiously, explaining she anticipated wide ranging experiences of belonging to Britain. Students often encounter varied viewpoints in school, far more than at home, as their classmates come from diverse backgrounds with varied social experiences (Hess, 2009). An awareness that students come to our classrooms with diverse backgrounds and influences, necessitates the need for promoting inclusion and equality by recognising difference (Knowles and Lander, 2011). Conflicting discourses would emerge – as Ms Anderson predicted – and as we will observe in the conversation between two Art students Kadisha and Joe (See Chapter Six). Ms Anderson’s pre-teaching concerns were that a project on Britishness “potentially inflames some... deep felt emotions about how people have been treated in Britain”. She mulled over possible controversies “particularly if their families come from other countries... or if they’ve been impacted upon in any way by you know an influx of refugees and feel hard done by”. She knew that refugees are scapegoated in popular and media discourses, leading to prejudices and distortions against those seeking sanctuary. Young people are inevitably impacted upon by this negative rhetoric against refugees and asylum seekers, and some may feel ‘hard done by’. Rutter (2005:133) observed a lesson where students expressed tabloid news “crude stereotypes”, branding refugees as “money-grabbing terrorists”<sup>25</sup>. A critical race theory approach can give students the space to deconstruct ‘normalised’ racist caricatures of social groups (Taylor, 2016). Teachers can facilitate classroom discussion of controversial topics by challenging stereotypes and enabling multiple perspectives to emerge for debate (Hess, 2009). In my research on Britishness, we see students like Kadisha embracing critical race theory approaches as she confidently contests stereotypes and injustices (See Chapter Six).

Chris, one of the Art students, recalled mocking reactions towards new non-English speaking arrivals during primary school. He argued young children should explore belonging to

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<sup>24</sup> I have employed pseudonyms for all research participants – teachers and students (See Chapter Four).

<sup>25</sup> My earlier research found students describing refugees as ‘terrorists’ HABIB, S. 2008. Refugee Boy: The Social and Emotional Impact of the Shared Experience of a Contemporary Class Novel. *Changing English*, 15, 41-52..

multicultural British society. His peer, Ellie, recognised very young students may lack emotional maturity to sensitively address multicultural belongings. Reflecting upon diversity and difference (Knowles and Lander, 2011), the experienced Ms Anderson was cautious about potential controversies arising in the teaching and learning of Britishness. Mr Martin was also initially “apprehensive”, and “expecting all sorts of different outcomes really because it was quite open”. The Art teachers’ concerns are unsurprising, as teachers might find themselves labouring to “reconcile the increasingly complex agendas that come into classrooms with young lives” alongside providing “an authentic, relevant, fulfilling and meaningful educational experience” (Smyth and McInerney, 2007:7). This ‘educational experience’ is arrived at through pedagogies that “connect with students’ narratives, needs, experiences and communities” in multicultural and globalised societies (Stuhr et al., 2008:83). Thus, critical pedagogues actively work to develop a curriculum “responsible to the lives, aspirations, and cultures of young people” (Smyth et al., 2013:317). The philosophy that there is “no teaching without learning” (Freire, 2001:31) comes alive when teachers learn about their diverse students’ cultures and identities; additionally improving student engagement and achievement (Knowles and Lander, 2011), while nurturing creativity and collaborative learning in the classroom.

Culturally responsive teaching benefits students who otherwise struggle to succeed if a remote and unfamiliar middle class Eurocentric curriculum is all they know (Gay, 2010). Turvey et al. (2012:33), for example, refer to a school student, disengaged from learning, until his teacher sparks his attention by appealing to his urban multicultural interests: the teacher “recognises the complexity of the relationship” between “identity” and “learning”. I argue, in this chapter, that because both Art teachers in my research were keen to validate the students’ stories, interests and cultural experiences of family, community and belonging, the levels of student involvement were consistently high. Mr Martin “worried” students may have “inherited” parental prejudices. Nevertheless he encouraged students to discuss Britishness with family to gain a broad understanding, finding students “enjoyed talking to their parents”. Students, like Joe, displayed affective attachments to Britishness that may have felt very personal, but simultaneously were not his alone. Young people may internalise family talk or media rhetoric on multiculturalism (Wetherell, 2012), which Mr Martin acknowledged. Far right rhetoric seeps into speeches of mainstream politicians “trying to appease national majorities that have been destabilized by growing economic and welfare insecurity, cultural and ethnic mixity, and future uncertainty” (Amin, 2012:119). Chapter Six illustrates how students might be affected by polity, media and family deficit discourses on multicultural belongings. For example, racialised resentment discourses are evident in Joe’s experiences of Britain.

## **Beyond the Banking Method: Teachers, Students and Knowledge Production**

Teachers cannot merely function as robotic clerks, practising what Freire (2000) refers to as the *banking* approach by acting as depositors of items of 'knowledge' (officially sanctioned 'correct' deposits) into students (the depositories). Conversations with teachers and students reveal that focus on school standards and improvement in educational policies result in less time and opportunities for examining identities (Turvey et al., 2012). Though sometimes students may not realise their oppressed positions, I follow Giroux and Shor's views that students are not "dupes of dominant ideology"; more often than not they are "fighting for their humanity without quite realizing how they might reclaim it" (George, 2001:96). My research shows students are becoming increasingly aware of how popular media and political discourses demonise and vilify them through classed and racialised discourses (See Chapter Six).

Some students only know years of schooling characterised by uninspiring pedagogies and uncritical curriculums, often pushed by dull and regimented educational policies that restrict teachers' time, potential, ambitions, creativity and scope. Chapter Three highlighted banking education does not give students space to develop a critical consciousness (*conscientizacao*), but will "kill our curiosity, our inquisitive spirit, and our creativity" (Freire, 1985a:2). The official curriculum in our schools "is never simply a neutral assemblage of knowledge, somehow appearing in the texts and the classrooms of a nation", for it is "always part of a *selective tradition*, someone's selection, someone's group vision of legitimate knowledge" (Apple, 1993b:222). Young people seem to have become "subjects, to whom the curriculum is delivered", which is contrary to the ideals of youth voice emphasised in the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Children (Gamman, 2004:149). Thus, they come of age in a context where they are treated as passive automata:

They are the objects of government policies, testing regimes, curriculum frameworks... The idea that they might have something important to say about curriculum, pedagogy and school organization or that they have the knowledge and skills to shape their own learning has not found much favor with policy makers (Smyth and McInerney, 2007:39).

Critical pedagogues witness suppression of youth voice: "the "free spaces" within the institution of schooling where young people can express themselves and do their identity work are being severely eroded" (Smyth and McInerney, 2013:3).

To challenge this depressing and dystopian vision of the educational landscape, teachers and students can actively engage in pedagogies and practices that enable a hopeful and progressive future. Critical pedagogy approaches encourage students to become responsible and active *participants* or *citizens*, unafraid to seek social transformation and social justice. Exploring

Britishness critically through artwork permitted students and teachers to produce new knowledge relevant to their readings of nation and ways of doing pedagogies. If students become accustomed to pedagogical practices prohibiting self-reflection and social criticism, they may come to believe there is only one version of truth, to be gleaned from the omniscient teacher's oracle of 'knowledge'. Critical pedagogues strive to re-define 'knowledge', as less about the teacher, and more about students asking questions and posing problems (Shor, 1996). I will show how freedom granted to the GCSE Art students resulted in some students worrying about what the teacher thought, wanted and knew; students were not used to the autonomy of critical pedagogy approaches, and thus both Art teachers worked to challenge hegemonic representations of Britishness by encouraging students to express and value their own voices on British identities.

Traditional *banking* methods of teaching elevate teacher knowledge at the expense of student knowledge (Freire, 2000). The Art students, in my research, needed gentle steering away from such limiting authoritarianism. They were guided towards "engaged pedagogy" for "we learn best when there is an interactive relationship between student and teacher" (hooks, 2010:19). Though the Art teachers were facilitating, not dictating, their knowledge was still perceived as more valuable, with some students finding it difficult to escape traditional attitudes of 'teacher knows best'. Traditional *banking* methods of schooling assumes teachers hold 'knowledge', which they transfer to students with the aim of making them knowledgeable (Freire, 2000). Mr Martin, rejecting a traditional *banking* style of teaching, finding himself adapting his teaching and re-emphasising to students the project was not "his perspective". Nor would he dismiss their ideas as "wrong":

Mr Martin: ...they were waiting for me to say 'You can't do that! It has to have a flag in it... or it has to have some bit of culture in it...'... I moved in my approach and I sort of said "You do it. There's a reason why you are doing it"...

Teachers can become "discouraged" when students struggle with critical thought (hooks, 2010:10), for students are often not used to developing criticality and conversation. Historically systems of schooling have firmly established an "anti-conversation model of education" in the pedagogical frameworks of students and teachers: "The teacher speaks according to a set curriculum which must be ingested by the student. The teacher distributes handouts... The students listen, read and take notes" (Batsleer, 2008:7).

To quash possible disappointment or frustration, exploring Britishness took careful thought and flexibility, on the part of the Art teachers and their students. Being granted freedom was a novel, unexpected, and at times disconcerting, pedagogical practice for the students. Students are

often socialised, through standard schooling practices and rigid traditional pedagogies, into believing the teacher's knowledge is the only knowledge. Good teaching recognises "knowledge and understanding are waiting to be created rather than existing in some *a priori* dimension beyond human intervention" (Brookfield, 2009:38), and the Art teachers, in my research, took great lengths to apply this notion about 'knowledge and understanding' in their classrooms. Mr Martin believed students wanted him to tell them, for instance, to "draw a portrait of themselves with a Union Jack in the background... a nice cup of tea... and a nice red phone box". Thus, he had to adapt the lesson to challenge students, reminding them, sometimes to their frustration, this was not about *his* knowledge, but about *their* knowledge. Even in critical pedagogy practices, tensions about the authenticity of 'democratic' teaching and learning practices emerge as teachers have the power to shift the course of the teaching and learning, sometimes more so than the students. Mr Martin felt that critical thinking is difficult for students who have become "comfortable with learning that allows them to remain passive" (hooks, 2010:10). Both teachers were attempting to negotiate traditional power relations between teachers and students, and thus were searching and re-searching with their students (Freire, 2001). Both teachers encouraged students to venture out of these curriculum comfort zones through exciting and interpretative pedagogies.

The students discussed how they negotiated the project as individuals and as a collective with peers and teachers. This fluidity and openness resulted in personal final outcomes. Research participant Chris recalled classmates challenging conventional ideas about Britishness, believing "they should represent where they are coming from, like where their parents are from...". The idea of 'shared values' is a problematic and partial understanding of British identity, with some students not convinced about belonging to mythical narratives (Young, 2000, Faulks, 2006). Some students, like Kadisha and Ellie, grasped moments of flexibility and freedom to express their unique attachments to transnational or local belongings, rather than nation specifically (See Chapter Six). The Art students gradually acquired understanding of the value of their own knowledges, experiences, and voices, coming to appreciate their own and their peers' discourses on identities. Ellie, for instance, commented upon classmates moving away from superficial and stereotypical notions of Britishness: "I think British colours are just colours on a flag. And that's not what anyone really did their work about. Everyone did it about something that was kinda personal to them".

Approaching identity work through "independence of thought and developing skills of reflection, enquiry and debate" (Gamman, 2004:154) was challenging but yielded student

participation and engagement. Mr Martin explained he challenged very simplistic notions of Britishness for which students sought approval from their teacher. To ensure students understood about multiple identities, he gave them opportunities to consider different perspectives. Thus, teacher and students developed knowledge together about the diversity within the classroom. Mr Martin found himself providing alternative ideas to some students, requiring them to reflect upon multilingual Britain, for example. His students had discussed Britishness with their families, finding holding a passport and speaking the English language as key to Britishness. (See Park et al. (2014) for similar findings in the British Social Attitudes survey). Speaking the English language seems to be regarded as a core characteristic of British citizenship (Sebba, forthcoming). Mr Martin challenged students' monocultural acceptance by discussing multilingual students, schools and cities. Young people are growing up in a society where official discourses repress the expression of the multilingual diversities encountered in Britain, hindering the efforts of progressive pedagogues. On the last UK census (Office for National Statistics, 2011), Question 18 asked 'What is your main language?' with the possible responses requiring you to choose between English or the Other language you chose to specify. Thus the census neglected to ask Britons about bilingualism or multilingualism (Fuller, 2013:144). This "emphasis on English *only* displays an ideology of monolingualism which devalues bilingualism and linguistic diversity, leading to a 'blind spot' where 'main language' becomes 'only language'" (Sebba, forthcoming).

The teachers wanted students to analyse national identity as more than merely a practical concept manifested through a passport or birth certificate. National identity might relay the story of belonging to a place (Byrne, 2006). The Art teachers recognised that this narrative of belonging, in all its muddling and enthralling contradictions, would differ depending on students' socio-cultural experiences. The project laid bare diverse identities. Things hitherto unknown were revealed, sometimes to the surprise of students and teachers. For Mr Martin, the project was "an uncovering", and for the students. He would think over what to show them to foster thinking beyond simple stereotypes. The "political" may need to be embraced when helping students to "develop critical consciousness" (Yokley, 1999:24). Studying national cultural identity entails "political" entanglements: "national culture which is primarily political is the site where cultural beliefs and values are formed, sanctioned, and/or penalized" (Stuhr et al., 2008:86). Both Art teachers embraced the 'political', accepting that discussing socio-political British identities with students was inevitable and necessary. Chapter Six will reveal the results of this willingness on the part of the teachers and students to openly re-think the socio-cultural and socio-political elements of classed and racialised British belongings.

## **Teaching and Learning Britishness: Education, not Indoctrination**

Political and media rhetoric on Britishness informed both teachers' pedagogical approaches. Mr Martin had heard suggestions on news programmes of British school students pledging national allegiance. Teaching Britishness, teachers know, can become jingoistic (Hand and Pearce, 2009, Hand and Pearce, 2011, Jerome and Clemitshaw, 2012). Mr Martin feared American-style pedagogies seeping into British education, patriotic acts like "saluting the flag" which dominated a "corner of the classroom". Proposals "for schools to have flags and other national (and nationalist) symbols and ceremonies to celebrate Britishness" (Peterson et al., 2016:112) are not unheard of. Mr Martin argued "that seems to me to be like indoctrination". While in America it might be the norm to openly demonstrate patriotism (Johnston, 2007, Banks, 2010, Zinn, 2013), where school policy, curriculum and textbooks inculcate students with the meaning of patriotism and 'good' citizenship (Stratton, 2016), both the Art teachers in my research were receptive and encouraging to students resisting patriotic notions of nation, national identity and Britishness.

Research, since my study was conducted, shows student teachers sceptical about employing simplistic and superficial approaches to Britishness teaching, and about indoctrinating students (Jerome and Clemitshaw, 2012). Yet schools are becoming "an ideological battleground for competing versions of 'Britishness'" causing teaching staff to be "increasingly positioned on the frontline of the 'war on terror' at home, with an emphasis on the surveillance and control of BME students rather than their education" (Alexander et al., 2015:4). Student teachers prefer students to become independent learners, by staying clear from indoctrinating or undemocratic pedagogies (Jerome and Clemitshaw, 2012). Hand and Pearce (2009:414) present teachers as agreeing "open discussion combined with correction of factual errors" is the best pedagogical strategy to deal with a controversial topic like patriotism. Critical thinking flourishes when an "open mind" is encouraged (hooks, 2010:10). Teaching Britishness to critically educate students, not uncritically indoctrinate them, was important to both Art teachers. Mr Martin wanted to deconstruct patriotism, but was "a bit worried about not having the tools to do that as a teacher", and deliberated: "I'm gonna be confronted by students who are... do want to do quite deep investigations... but I'm not able to support them". Patriotism can easily become "dangerous nationalism" (Carrington and Short, 1998:150); knowing this, the 'open' nature of British identity concerned both Art teachers. They began the project with care and forethought, aware possible controversies and conflicts might arise. Both teachers cited anxiety about teaching Britishness to students from diverse ethnicities and cultures. Maylor (2010) also found

teachers had concerns about teaching diverse students. Teachers, thus, require guidance on exploring “multiple identities and allegiances” (Heater, 2004:195).

Pedagogies of liberation (Shor and Freire, 1987a) were evident in strategies employed by both teachers. Ms Anderson endorsed the need for student freedom, autonomy and criticality when exploring identity. Mr Martin valued “individual thought and belief” and “freedom of thought and freedom of information”, which he perceived as significant to teaching Britishness. There were three typical student responses to the pedagogies practised, Ms Anderson explained, which was supported by my data too:

- ❖ Students who scratched the superficial surface of Britishness as they were “a bit flummoxed”, lacking personal attachment to Britishness, perhaps finding the project too complex.
- ❖ Students who enjoyed exploring what Britishness meant to them on a personal level providing “...some quite fun responses, like to do with their leisure time”.
- ❖ Students who grappled with personal attachments/detachments to Britishness who delved “deeper into who they were and their identity, and found it quite cathartic to actually say something quite deep about themselves”.

Thus, teaching and learning of Britishness, even approached through pedagogies of freedom, autonomy and criticality would yield a range of responses, with some students more intensely engaged than others. Critical pedagogy emphasises both student and teacher knowledge as important. Both Art teachers valued and sought student knowledge, which students responded to with enthusiasm and engagement. Increasing student participation and engagement necessitates discussion about the reasons for studying the topic and its relevance to local and cultural diversity (Gamman, 2004). Four *interests* held by students are “natural resources, the uninvested capital, upon the exercise of which depends the active growth of the child” (Dewey, 1900:45): (i) conversation/communication; (ii) inquiry/finding out; (iii) interest in construction/creating ; and (iv) interest in artistic expression. Dewey (1900:46) inspires us to consider how best to increase the potential of these interests in our students: “...are we to ignore it, or just excite and draw it out? Or shall we get hold of it and direct it to something ahead, something better?” By promoting critical questioning, which is “the epistemic stance of critical learners and citizens” (Shor, 1996:54), the teachers could develop students’ critical

exploration of multicultural British identities. I will now move onto discussing the research findings and the impact of utilising critical pedagogies when exploring Britishness with further detailed examples of the ways in which teachers and students participated collaboratively and creatively with identity work.

## **RESEARCH FINDINGS: STUDENT INDEPENDENCE AND EMOTIONAL ENGAGEMENT**

My analysis of teacher and student interviews and questionnaires revealed findings about developing student independence and emotional engagement with identity exploration. In this section I show students were encouraged to be creative and responsible in how they approached Britishness, which enabled the journey to be cathartic for some of the young people grappling with defining the self and contesting how others define them. I present students' becoming confident in expressing their identities and owning their knowledge. I also argue that some students' association of Britishness with Whiteness necessitates the examination of race and racism in multicultural Britain.

### **Responsible and Creative Freedom**

Art teacher, Ms Anderson, made clear to her students they were in a safe and open environment, free to express themselves without fear of judgement, but reminded them always to bear in mind that opinions should be presented respectfully, sensitively and empathetically. This was risky and brave, but the way to obtain students' trust and interest. Creative art can aid student "autonomy" and "awareness" (Chilton and Leavy, 2014:403), leading to responsible freedom within boundaries of acceptability. We will come to learn students need to work hard to negotiate these boundaries of acceptability and configure ways of expressing their frustrations and disappointments (see Chapter Six). Art can successfully contribute to students' perceptions of the self and society, bolstering "seeing and thinking differently" (Chilton and Leavy, 2014:403). Students are able to learn about the fluid, evolving and contextual constructs of Britishness: "the fluidity of identity does not mean that there is no coherence, but rather that this has to be continually reproduced to ensure fixity" (Edensor, 2002:29). To achieve this transformation of self requires freedom of expression within the boundaries of what is deemed appropriately inclusive and socially just. For an open classroom where students are rethinking the self and society, the Art teachers needed to develop open relationships and good rapport with students.

The students were encouraged to take this Art project on Britishness forward in a meaningful and sensitive manner to acquire knowledge about culture and identity. Art projects are conducive to sensitive and respectful cultural knowledge acquisition (Kara, 2015). Creativity in the classroom to illuminate students' interests and experiences also enables students to gain "deep, cultural knowledge about the power of art and their power to communicate through it" (Freedman, 2008:46). Arts-based pedagogues advocate the necessity of "cultural literacy and intercultural studies in every single school... in order to be able to read and build a multicultural world which guarantees cultural rights, together" (Baron Cohen and Souza, 2008:79). Visual arts critical pedagogues argue "today's paradoxes – global/local, private/public, identity/difference, knowledge/feelings, etc. – require critical theorization in order to help us articulate teaching practices together with the social, political and cultural issues that constitute, design and could transform them" (Tourinho and Martins, 2008:63).

A flexible and participatory curriculum will often "take account of local social or cultural variation", and can lead to students to becoming active participants in their local communities with increased socio-political awareness (Gamman, 2004:151). The Art students tended to situate themselves in their localities when discussing Britishness which I offer evidence for in Chapter Six. Ms Anderson explained the journey was "very personal which direction they chose to take... we gave them a lot of freedom to take it off in their own direction and so what happened happened". When it comes to Britishness, students seem principally concerned with locality (Scourfield et al., 2006, Phillips and Ganesh, 2007, Maylor, 2010), and Ms Anderson too commented upon students' discussions of local belongings and attachments. Still she did not deter students from traversing their "own direction", even if it focused on belonging to Bermondsey or London (rather than Britain). National identity exploration cannot ignore local or international place-based identities (Back, 1996, Gilroy, 2002, Scourfield et al., 2006, Phillips and Ganesh, 2007, Maylor, 2010), which both Art teachers appreciated.

Creativity, through art, is not simply the domain of the 'genius', but for all students to access if taught in supportive environments (Booth, 2015). Both teachers advocated 'freedom' in the classroom, facilitating students to pursue creativity through individual and collective journeys exploring multiple viewpoints about identity. Students came to know the self and society better through art. Ms Anderson enjoyed granting students "freedom to come up with their own ideas", alongside students developing skills to succeed in GCSE Art. As students enjoyed independent pursuit of their personal exploration of identity, Ms Anderson saw they seemed more focused, especially usually "easily distracted" students.

Ms Anderson: ...the skill in which they produced their artwork is really enjoyable. So when they actually produce something and they go “Wow, that looks like me!” or “That looks really good!” so the positive affirmation from them about each other and the skill of their work is really lovely...

GCSE Art students Ellie and Chris voiced appreciation for the freedom and fluidity granted by the teachers. The students also acknowledged the benefits of the pre-planning stages which gave them a chance to ponder over their personal sense of identity before they commenced the artwork. Both students keenly discussed their peers’ passionate perspectives and enthusiastic responses to multicultural Britishness. The artwork was “evoking empathy and resonance” (Chilton and Leavy, 2014:403):

Ellie: ...so everyone’s is completely different...because it’s all your own idea... your own thought on Britain and how you perceive it, there’s similarities in people’s, but everyone’s means something individually to them.

Ellie delighted in the “open” nature of the project: “we could interpret it however we wanted to”, which allowed her to be creative, and appreciate the distinctive artworks of her peers. Creativity gave students courage to begin to trust their own voices, and delight in “creating, inquiring, and reflecting” (Booth, 2015:58). Yet, whilst some students became quite deeply involved with expressing meaningful aspects of their identity, for others it was not as easy to represent abstract notions or express personal voice. Mr Martin found some male students were not so easily encouraged in delving deep into identity issues. As it was their first GCSE assignment, some of the students may have found identity interrogation slightly challenging; perhaps also because students were not used to this invitation to defy traditional banking methods, and emphasise their personal voices critically. After all student voice is not heard often enough, and even though it is a productive pedagogical approach, collaborative communication in the classroom is not encouraged enough due to the constraints of the curriculum (Darder et al., 2009a). Therefore when flexibility and freedom are promoted by teachers, these pedagogical practices can take time getting used to. Even in the relatively safe spaces of these Art classrooms, the teachers and students were chipping away at times at hesitations and uncertainties.

### **Cathartic Journey: Disclosing and Unburdening**

The teachers observed that explorations of identity through Art were cathartic, meaningful, healing and therapeutic for the students. They found there was a need to give students opportunities to do identity work in a meaningful and personal way through creative and expressive subjects. Adolescence is an important time for forming identities (Mauro, 1998, McGann, 2006), and the young people in these Art classes were able to disclose and unburden

themselves about what mattered to them. Art exploration is potentially healing and therapeutic (McNiff, 1998, Chilton and Leavy, 2014), which we witness, along with Ms Anderson, in Ellie's journey of getting to know the self, whilst deliberating upon social class struggles and her relationship with wider society:

Ms Anderson: ...she wanted to get some of her...angry feelings out about being seen as a chav...which is obviously in her mind not a very nice term...that people have called her...so she did this really interesting piece of work...beautifully done... of her face that is kind of chained around... with Tiffany chains and bracelets, and Lacoste logos and all the kinds of fashion labels that go with that idea of being a chav. And then a gun that was shooting Burberry bullets...at her head...and Lacoste crocodile trying to eat her...

Freire (2000) emphasises the necessity of '*conscientizacao*', that is consciousness and critical reflection about societal oppressions. Myths about racialised and classed peoples "must be confronted and exposed for what they are – vicious lies" (Kincheloe, 2008:73): "Such confrontation and the plethora of insights that emerge in the process constitute what Freire labels "conscientization" – the act of coming to critical consciousness... individuals grasp the social, political, economic and cultural contradictions that subvert learning".

Chapter Six will show students like Ellie interrogating these 'contradictions' imposed upon them that might impact upon their ways of being and ways of learning. According to Freire, learning and being are entangled notions (Kincheloe, 2008). Ms Anderson engages in critical awareness here when she analyses Ellie's artwork, through the pedagogical processes she is learning of Ellie's experiences of social inequalities, coming to understand Ellie's positionality, realising Ellie's "angry feelings" at unjustly being demonised, marginalised and caricatured in British society. Ellie's thoughtful and detailed portrait of herself as a chav points towards Ms Anderson and also Ellie's conscious reflection on Ellie being caricatured and demonised due to her White working-class position in British society (see Chapter Six for more on Ellie's developing class consciousness). Ms Anderson stressed the significance of giving students, like Ellie, a safe opportunity, to mull over identities in meaningful, creative and purposeful ways: "...for her I think she found it really useful because it gave her a chance to actually say something about herself... that maybe she can't actually directly say in day to day life". Ellie's development of critical consciousness about classed British identities was a proud moment for Ellie's teacher Ms Anderson. Students from marginalised communities sometimes find critical consciousness difficult, as they have too long been repressed by powerful myths and untruths confining them to racialised and classed existences (Freire, 2000). Ellie's self-portrait was an act of creative contestation. It was an act of 'consciousness' and 'cognition' (Freire, 2000). It was an act of 'talking back' (hooks, 2015). It was an act of 'critical pedagogy'.

Research participant Joe also revealed how he had unburdened, thus feeling relief in discussing rarely spoken about topics (see Chapter Six for Ellie and Joe's disclosures about Britishness and belonging). A classroom environment that ensures "optimal learning" needs teachers to know well their students' "emotional awareness and emotional intelligence" (hooks, 2010:19). Mr Martin's students also experienced emotional release about the lived realities of London, "actually dealing with it, they are actually telling us something", demonstrating their "awareness" of urban multicultural experiences. Mr Martin saw his students were "communicating" something significant to him and the other students about the interplay between social categories and lived experiences:

Mr Martin: ...I'm actually communicating to you "Yeah, I am a Black male or a Black female... and yeah, there are people in this particular area, in Peckham, in local areas to here, not necessarily Bermondsey, Camberwell, where I may have somebody... know a teenager who has died... and lost their life..."

Students found the project cathartic as they could delve into disturbing, and almost painful, social experiences. Revelation about identity is very powerful in the message being communicated by the students independently, as they have not been instructed on what to put in their artwork. Instead they have chosen to communicate their exploration of identity as a result of gentle encouragement:

Mr Martin: ...and that's how it's made really powerful artworks that have led us to read into it more and think "Actually that is quite a sophisticated comment you have put in there" so it's very healthy kind of letting the kids reflect on that..."

Personal positionality impacts upon teachers' pedagogies also, and "interacts with affect and emotion" when teaching diversity or controversial issues, as "people typically have strong emotions and much passion" (Tisdell et al., 2009:134). Thus the ways the Art teachers position themselves is important, as they are able to explore the socio-political (Yokley, 1999), open up a dialogue on British identities and multicultural society, and pursue critical pedagogies with their students to challenge stereotypes and reconceptualise belongings and identities. While it must be stated that young people are compelled to attend school, and may not feel that they belong in a classroom environment, nevertheless schools have potential to be culturally diverse spaces where these students can negotiate their belongings to school, locality and nation. Young people can use culturally diverse spaces to discuss very controversial topics through openly inclusive curriculums and with reflective teachers (Hess, 2009). The critical pedagogies employed by the Art teachers gave students a chance to respond with emotional intelligence to a potentially controversial topic. Both teachers found the project on identity was cathartic and meaningful for some of the students as they were able to use the opportunity to break silences

to reveal something significant. In Ellie's case, this was an unfair imposition of a stereotype causing her anger and frustration. Later we will learn how Kadisha, though reluctant to explore British identity, used the space to resist and contest traditional schooling she felt was exclusionary in its homogeneity.

### **Student Voice, Knowledge and Identity**

Students demonstrated high levels of engagement expressing their knowledge, identities and experiences of Britishness to peers and teachers. Visual Art students can develop their "self-expression, intuition and imagination", whilst undertaking a journey of "personal growth" (Hickman and Eglinton, 2015:146). Personalities were projected into their artwork, as they became confident in valuing their own knowledge. Student and teacher motivation increases when a rigid curriculum is replaced by emphasis on student voice and choice (Gamman, 2004, Smyth and McInerney, 2007). The "boredom and despair" of schooling is combated by appealing to students' interests and identities through curriculum and classroom activity (Smyth and McInerney, 2007:4). Ms Anderson described the students as enthusiastic and excited "because it was to do with them", as students do not often get such an opportunity to explore the self in the school curriculum or lesson time. For Art students to develop creativity, rather than just getting them to create meaningless artefacts, they need encouragement to project their personalities into their artwork (Freedman, 2008). Ms Anderson emphasised students were motivated to produce outstanding artwork because of this opportunity to (re)present the self: "...it gave them a freedom they don't often have to be able to express themselves about who they are". Mr Martin's class were also "very excited" about the project "because it sort of unpicks something about their own personality and they found that really rewarding".

The students were able to project their analyses of identity into new found knowledge of diverse meanings of Britishness. The students were "always keen" on exploring their identity, Mr Martin found: "I'd really approach it from the identity angle... what are the things that make you... ... and then encourage them to sort of engage in some discourse... they've been able to draw stuff and for them it's been a sort of outpouring". This "outpouring", referred to by Mr Martin, and the "cathartic" aspects emphasised by Ms Anderson underline the significance of giving students opportunities to explore identity in a safe and structured way, with the guidance of teachers. Mr Martin frequently expanded on the project providing powerful and poignant opportunities for the students "to make a statement ... a communication and to make that clear and evocative... and that's really what we wanted to do with Art..." Mr Martin observed a deep level of involvement with the project for some, for example the Black female student who was "locked

away in some sort of other world” as she created “strong and bold” artwork about guns and urban violence.

Some students delved into childhood memories. Mr Martin referred to his students relaying personal histories, for example, one of his students created artwork about her time spent at the seaside in Margate: “... and you couldn’t help but think that had been something...a genuine part of her life when she was younger... that she sort of unfolded and told us”. The girls in his class surprised him with their “intensity” more than the boys. Their energies and efforts resulted in revelatory artwork on ambitions and dreams. Mr Martin observed Amiela had undertaken identity exploration with profound patience, portraying aspirations to succeed in the fashion world, working on her portrait with deep involvement, “for a longer period of time”. Mr Martin was pleased by the dedication of students like Amiela, but reiterated perhaps the project was too difficult and challenging to be completed as a first GCSE project or in one term alone. Mr Martin believed students who were more deeply engaged with the project were the ones who seemed to benefit the most from it in terms of the learning experience and outcome.

For some male students there may have been reluctance to invest “emotion and energy” into the project, as Mr Martin commented on gender differences about student engagement. He noticed some boys were not as deeply involved. More time was needed for these male (and female) students to “unpick, uncover and discuss” identity issues, as the process was neither easy nor straightforward, but took careful reflection. However, once the students had arrived at what they deemed important about their identity, Mr Martin explained they experienced “a real energy once they’ve latched onto something they felt that was really good... and I think that sort of maintains through the project and they got it finished... had that not had occurred... they probably would have just hit the doldrums and just been told what to do...”. The exploration of identity, using critical pedagogy approaches, thus takes time and eventually students reach a breakthrough point where they realise what is important for them to express at that moment in their lives. The process the students underwent was “powerful as a learning experience”, perhaps more powerful than their final outcomes, Mr Martin believed. Ellie observed her class move beyond superficial Britishness through deep self-reflection, as they were “trying to figure out” their Britishness. Careful deliberation on identity resulted in Ellie creating a stunning portrait about the vicious social stereotypes encountered by White working-class youth. That White British students need to explore identity alongside ethnic minority students (Ajegbo et al., 2007) is evident in my research participants Ellie and Joe’s seizing of the moment. Maylor (2010:243) argues that because teachers seem to ignore the importance of White British

identities, students from such backgrounds “undervalue their British heritage” and “feel less confident to talk about it”.

Students were able to freely express themselves to the extent some were brutally honest about their identities and influences. Ms Anderson referred to student’s artwork on London gangs; the portrait contained a gun pointed at his head, which Ms Anderson felt was a recurring symbol for some students, reflecting the threatening nature of urban belonging. Perhaps this image had been acquired from mainstream media where it seems to dominate. The teachers were able to learn about the reality of students’ lived experiences as young Londoners in modern Britain, as the students revealed important details in safe spaces. Mr Martin also observed students, like Joe, professing excitement in exploring Britishness in a free and honest way. Mr Martin explained most of the students’ artwork revolved around urban London, and that he would not have expected the school students to create scenes of rural idyllic Britain. He claimed he would be “a bit worried” if they had and it “would bring up alarm bells” as it would not be a true reflection of their London experience, and might show they had not been honest and open about their personal experiences.

### **Owning Britishness through Whiteness**

The Head of Art reflected upon whether the White Bermondsey students felt they “owned” Britishness, as they were “defiantly defensive about this area”, claiming this was the “best place”. Observing their loyalty to Bermondsey she asked them: “But you haven’t seen anywhere else?” She found the White Bermondsey students were “very much into being in London – concerned about their locality more than their nationality” (See Chapter Six for students’ discourses of local belongings). I follow Rattansi (2000:123) on disrupting generalisations, for just as “there is no essential black British ‘youthness’”, we know there is no essential White British ‘youthness’ either. Thus ‘racial essentialism’ perpetuating the idea that “humans are divided into biologically discrete races that have essential traits (i.e., intelligence, temperament, morality, and so on) that define and delimit their nature of being” (Cokley, 2002:35), whether it be about Black or White youth, needs disrupting.

When it comes to Britishness, the local often commands loyalties and attachments that national identities cannot (Barrett, 2002, Maylor et al., 2007, Sanderson and Thomas, 2014). Some of the White working-class Bermondsey boys - who moved beyond locality - painted self-portraits about Britishness from the perspective of the England football team. However others brought their Britishness back to Bermondsey by focusing on the local team Millwall FC. Ms Anderson explained there was a “certain kind of political opinion” underlying their expressions of the

interconnections between race and football: “Some of them felt quite strongly that too many footballers these days in British football were from other countries... so it was done in a very sort of round the houses kind of way...”. Some students claimed Britishness as the domain of heroic White footballers, being infiltrated by foreign footballers. Yet football can be a uniting cultural citizenship experience, as Hussain and Bagguley (2005) found in their study of Bradford’s Pakistani community proudly supporting England during the football World Cup.

Joe, like some of the other White Bermondsey boys, demonstrated possessiveness towards Britishness. The promotion of “male military heroism”, often “excluding” of others (Cooling, 2013:106), was evident in Joe’s pride, as he depicted the British army in his portrait which he entitled *Pride of Britain: Man for Man we are the best*. Some of his male peers were turning to football to present ‘White male heroism’. In the past working-class boys were galvanised into passionate patriotism and unquestioning loyalty through motifs of empire and monarchy (Heater, 2001, Ward, 2004). This pride and superiority is evident in Joe’s depiction of the army in his portrait. He repeated his passion for the project on a number of occasions – in the lesson, in the interview, and on his questionnaire – revealing ‘primordial attachments’- to Britishness: “Such ties are a complex mix of myth, belief, emotion, and the realities of physical existence” (Allahar, 2006:32). At one point Joe, using a biological framework of race, stated Britishness exploration is only for ethnic minority students, not White students: “It’s interesting if you’re not British. If you’re not White. If you know for sure you’ve got some other race in you”. Media and political narrative frequently calls for minorities to scrutinise and declare their Britishness, but disregards White Britishness (Nandi and Platt, 2014). Perhaps Joe had become accustomed to the ways in which media and polity interrogate the Britishness of those who are not White (See Chapter Two).

Sometimes we learn about insecurities in Joe’s exploration of identity, unsure about whether he can enjoy it and about how open he can be about his personal views. Mostly Joe wants to own Britishness, emphasising loyalty to Britishness. At other times though he wants to profess his stable/secure sense of White Britishness:

Joe: People... that aren’t British...or that don’t consider themselves to be British would search to find out about who they are... why they are here...whereas White people are like “I’m White. I’m British. That’s it.

The evolving complexities of belonging to Britain reveal ethnic minorities as often pronouncing more loyalty to British identity than their White counterparts (Modood, 1998b, Thomas, 2009, Manning and Georgiadis, 2012, Nandi and Platt, 2014, Karlsen and Nazroo, 2015). Joe, though, perceives ethnic minorities as disloyal to Britishness, as seeking mythical belonging in far off

places. Joe thinks culture and identity exploration appeals to those from other cultures, yet interestingly he had embraced the Britishness project, finding a space to express his identity, as well as enthusiastically discussing his passion for local cultural history:

Joe: I learnt about the dockers and that from my dad 'cos he used to work on the rice mills when he was fourteen... The rice mills... down Rotherhithe Street. They are still there.

Celebrating 'other cultures' and understanding racisms, oppression, White privilege and power are important aspects of multicultural and anti-racist education, as are exploring diverse White cultural experiences (Howard, 2006). When I ask him to tell us more about the docks, Joe continues to be animated about his family history, local history and British history:

Joe: They just made boats come in with a load of rice and they like sacked it and packed it and all that... My granddad worked there his whole life. Which he told me. He worked there, his sisters, his brothers. He had like six brothers and sisters...And he said that his whole family grew up in the rice mills as a docker.

Britishness, for Joe, is represented through the army (as depicted by his artwork in Chapter Six) and through the dockers and their legacy, specifically White dockers:

Joe: I think that most dockers are British. If you've got mums and dads, or their dads that were dockers that's kinda British 'cos I don't think you could say that or that any Black person could say that.

Following in his family's footsteps, Joe, in the past, might have sought work on the docks. Since the decline of the docks though, the army seemed to be an appealing post-education route for Joe. Owning Britishness for Joe is (re)presenting what he feels strongly about, and thus he focuses on patriotism in his artwork and discusses family, locality, and British history, as well as his enthusiasm for the army.

Although Joe passionately articulated his Britishness, he worries: "I was scared that I would be too racist". Joe accepted he can be controversial. The teachers and students recognised identity work can unleash racist attitudes and perceptions. Moreover, Joe showed some understanding of the relationship between racisms, positionality and privilege:

Joe: I think White people are scared of being racists 'cos it upsets people. Whereas if a Black person was racist towards a White person... we don't care... (laughs) ...it really don't bother me.

Regarding racism, Joe explained he does not "take it seriously" and is not "cautious about it": "To some people it means more and they get upset easier". It is important for students to overcome the current 'colour-blindness', where White people perceive race to be only about ethnic minorities, irrelevant to their own 'normal' non-racialised lives (Lewis, 2004), as well as

to engage in deconstructions of racial categories, privilege and power. My empirical data also highlights that, to develop anti-racist pedagogies in the classroom, we must examine the “politics at play through which white working classes are the proxy through which hegemonic notions of racialised social boundaries are being regulated” (Patel and Tyrer, 2011:43).

Critical race research reveals stories of race and racism (Solórzano and Yosso, 2002), by interrogating the “specific tools used in the construction of majoritarian stories” that normalise and make neutral White power and privilege (Love, 2004:229). One of the ‘tools’ employed to ensure master narratives remain dominant includes ‘invisibility’, whereby “invisibility of white privilege is maintained by what is not discussed”, and also “majoritarian stories are not viewed as stories at all. Rather, they are viewed as history, policies, procedures, rules, regulations, and statements of fact” (Love, 2004:229). Thus, when it comes to majoritarian ‘stories’ about British identities, we can observe the ways politicians seem to neglect the seriousness of racial inequalities (Ratcliffe, 2011, Craig and O’Neill, 2013). Thus by utilising another ‘tool’- “schooling as neutral and apolitical and the myth of the meritocracy” - to maintain majoritarian narratives (Love, 2004), we find this inattention to racial injustices seems to have impacted upon teachers lacking guidance in dealing with issues of inequalities (Solomon et al., 2005, Pearce, 2012, Lander, 2014). Inevitably, as race and racism pervade society, intersecting with other social inequalities (Gillborn, 1995, Solórzano and Yosso, 2002), and Britishness divulges “systematic, largely unspoken, racial connotations” (Parekh, 2000b:38), critical race theory is a useful approach to help students to reflect and act upon realities of racialised identities.

Reading hooks (2015:5), I come to realise one way of telling counter-stories of race and racism that are advocated by critical race researchers is by “talking back” – that is, “daring to disagree” and “having an opinion”. In my research, I observed critical pedagogical moments between the students where they engaged in critical dialogue and came to consciousness about stories of race and racism, and by talking back, disagreeing and sharing their opinions with one another (see more in Chapter Six). Kadisha, for example, ‘talks back’: she challenged Joe’s ideas about Whiteness, highlighting the need to deconstruct race when analysing nation and national identity.

Joe: I consider White people as like the first race...

Kadisha: They weren’t White.

Joe: Weren’t they?

Kadisha: Have you not heard of how everyone originated from Africa?

Joe: No.

Kadisha: Have you never heard that? Have you Miss?

One of the foundations of critical race theory in education is a “refusal to remain silent” thereby exhibiting “strength and empowerment” (Taylor, 2016:19). In Kadisha, we see this strength and empowerment as she refuses to stay silent and instead talks back eloquently and confidently throughout the project on Britishness.

National identity might connote kinship/ancestry, “those things one cannot help” (Anderson, 2006:147) in right wing discourses. Yet “the purportedly biological character of ancestry, kinship, and descent are popular fictions” (Baumann, 1999:39), needing critiquing in safe and respectful classrooms. Students benefit from examining Whiteness as fluid and historically situated. In the past, for example, Italian, Irish and Swedish migrants to the USA were described as non-White (Ignatiev and Garvey, 1996). More evidence of why race - as a social construct - needs exploring is evident in Kadisha and Joe’s very different perceptions of school demographics. Joe stated each year more Black students are arriving: “most of the Year Sevens are Black”. Kadisha contested this, arguing the school is “mixed”: “Like as half Black and half White. I don’t see many Asians”. Joe explains he once lived in the same street as the school, and would mainly see White students, however now he sees “Black people are the majority”. Blackness is very visible to Joe: “I swear there’s only one Black teacher in the school. Or two Black teachers that I’ve seen. There’s one that works upstairs outside Mr Griffith’s office and Mr Mensah”. Ironically one of the “Black teachers” Joe mentions is a school administrator, not a teacher. Joe declares “the school’s a bit racist”, before beginning a discussion on “... a White person would hire the White person and a Black person would hire the Black person”. Joe’s conflicted discourses on Blackness and Whiteness necessitate a dedicated and patient teacher committed to critical race theory to help students to better interrogate multiple views on ‘race’. On the one hand Joe recognises the lack of diversity in the teaching staff (institutional racism) as problematic, as “a bit racist”, yet he seems to see diversity amongst the student body as displeasing (everyday racism).

A Britishness project requires learning about experiences of ‘race’ and everyday racism. The literature reveals the interconnectedness of race, racism and British identity (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1992, Maylor, 2010, Sanderson and Thomas, 2014). Both Art teachers in my research shared concerns about race/racism inevitably arising when exploring Britishness, and the students also discussed racialised belongings to London. Historically “white adolescent racism” has “appeared to be common, even ‘normal’ in South London and more widely” (Hewitt, 1986:6). Students could learn about alternative community champions, like Bede House,

reclaiming a new inclusive British identity by challenging the BNP (see Chapter Six), particularly as ethnic minority youth might regard the BNP as dangerous to their sense of Britishness, and to their citizens' rights, as well as to the ethnically and culturally diverse localities these young people proudly inhabit (Hussain and Bagguley, 2005). Students need to learn many fascist marchers might not belong to Bermondsey, but are outsiders causing conflict resulting in tarnishing Bermondsey's reputation. Challenging racist discourses in local communities is urgent. The Bede House story (See Chapter Six) can be used to mobilise and motivate other British citizens to reframe how Britishness is defined in their own localities. The changing nature of racism must be frequently examined (Bhavnani et al., 2005). Recently, Black and ethnic minority communities from Southwark, the borough of my research setting, recommended "schools must publish their equality information and equality objectives", and it "should be easily accessible to parents" (Stokes and Nea, 2013:22).

Institutional racisms also need examining, particularly how structural inequalities impact upon students and schooling (Gillborn, 1995). Joe argued race is "important to people". Critical race theory argues "racism is permanent" (Taylor, 2016:9). Racism is often experienced by students (Gillborn, 1995, Anwar, 2002), as evident in the other students' discussions too. There is a pressing need for schools to address racisms and 'othering', and teach students about social constructs like race (Craig and O'Neill, 2013). Studying racism as "multifaceted and complex" helps gain deeper understanding of "multiple identities of perpetrators and recipients as well as the structures, processes and cultures of the institutions in question" (Bhavnani et al., 2005:2). Everyday racism is no longer about Blacks and Whites. We inhabit a super-diverse society making racist attitudes and practices become more complex (Stokes and Nea, 2013). Critical race theory and critical whiteness studies allows for new fresh insights into 'old problems' of racism (Gillborn, 2005).

### **DEVELOPING A CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS**

This section examines the ways in which students and teachers were reflecting and engaging with pedagogies in the Freirean spirit. I show the problem-posing nature of Britishness exploration resulted in teachers and students developing respectful and caring dialogue, as well as collaborative and critical reflection. Such *conscientizacao* encouraged growing resistance to dominant narratives and dangerous doctrines, as teachers and students bravely took emotional risks with this project on Britishness.

## **Developing Dialogue, Sharing the Self**

Teachers are not infallible and may make assumptions about their students, but a project on identity challenges teachers' pre-judgements by allowing students to express themselves and how they wish to be perceived. The dialogue that developed between the teachers and students, and amongst the students, resulted in sharing the 'self' and learning about the 'other'. Respectful and compassionate *dialogue* can inspire the beginnings of social change (Freire, 2000), for it permits meaningful new ways of understanding and critiquing the social world (Batsleer, 2008). The art based project created "hopeful dialogue" and "critical consciousness" (Chilton and Leavy, 2014:407) amongst the students, as well as impacting upon the teachers ways of knowing and notions of identity and belonging. We have already seen how Ms Anderson had learned about her student Ellie's strong objections to social injustice. The teachers were also surprised to learn more about their students' cultural and ethnic heritages. Ms Anderson found it interesting that one of her Turkish students, Ece, had not included reference to Turkey in her self-portrait. Mr Martin was surprised to learn one of his students was fluent in French and had French heritage. These different layers of critical consciousness point towards critical pedagogy in action, with teachers learning about their students' cultures and identities.

Schools are crucial spaces to engage in 'identity work', especially as "inequalities, class differences and the prejudices of adults penetrate schools" (Smyth and McInerney, 2007:59). Teachers might find "educational processes and practices provide ongoing locations for the negotiation, (re)production and (re)presentation of selves in contemporary society", thus students come to learn how "individual identities are shaped by collective experiences and structural processes" (Coffey, 2001:67). Rather than relying on stereotypes and assumptions about students' cultural attachments, exploration of identity granted teachers insight into what matters to students. Mr Martin emphasised how the "illuminating" identity project allows you to "really to get to know your students". In the end he was no longer "the scary Art teacher" solely concerned with exam results, as they may have perceived him as at the start of the process: "but we sort of know each other now slightly differently". The teachers came to know their students, and the students came to know their peers and the teacher. Teaching and learning is a partnership: Teachers are also students, who can learn from their students; students are also teachers, who can teach their teachers (Freire, 2000).

Mr Martin explained the project provided openings for teachers to get to know their students' "abilities" as they shared "their ideas, their aspirations, their loves, their hates". The project was poignant and powerful, and laid the foundations for the year ahead. "Critical thinking" and "radical openness" combat teacher or student possessiveness with being 'right', and take

“courage and imagination” (hooks, 2010:10). These Art teachers and students had courageously and imaginatively taken first steps in a journey of teaching and learning by adopting these principles to last them throughout the GCSE Art course and beyond. Assumptions about students’ cultural backgrounds diminished, as teachers valued student voice and experience. Mr Martin put aside what he already knew about his students’ “religious and cultural background”:

Mr Martin: ... it’s quite important as a teacher that you sort of stand objectively and you say “Well, you tell me about it. You tell me what it is... If your day involves praying... if your day involves picking up your brother, okay, you tell me about it... because I haven’t got enough information about you.”... And that sort of thing... sharing... is a big thing...

Sharing their Britishness was not always easy for students. As a teacher, Mr Martin, struggled at times to shape and (re)present his Britishness: “I found it more difficult because I had to be more open about why I feel British... And I haven’t really evolved my view of what it is to be British...”. Teachers might be working out their own definitions at the same time as students. The value of dialogic conversations and their impact upon the teachers shows the democratic nature of critical pedagogy approaches to identity work. Mr Martin considered complexities of multicultural belongings, and histories of his “immigrant” parents and grandparents:

Mr Martin: My dad’s Irish and my mum’s Macedonian... so I’m bilingual because obviously when I was young... my mum spoke old Yugoslav so... and still speaks old Yugoslav but it’s sort of a Macedonian accent and dialect... so sort of always feel like I speak another language so therefore I’m sort of you know half and half...

Considering students’ stories, but also considering our own stories as teachers/researchers, are important features of critical pedagogy (Tourinho and Martins, 2008). Teachers engaging in “anti-racist, critical multicultural activism” often examine their own “cultural scripts” (Lea and Sims, 2004:109). To overcome the potential pitfall of students feeling wary of easily expressing themselves honestly, Mr Martin had to ensure the students understood the project was purely about them, but also found himself sharing his personal sense of Britishness with them to build rapport and strengthen the teacher-student bond. This was balanced with emphasising to students how to achieve their outcomes with minimal teacher interference. Mr Martin avoided a didactic or doctrinal approach, for that would be “the wrong way”: “you are sort of saying well actually, you’re not important at all... you know... get out of the way and I’ll do it all for you”.

Since 2011 though pre-service and in-service teachers have found that educational policy on FBV and Teachers’ Standards disturbing their educational philosophies and practices. The freedom that the teachers in my research felt that they had to explore - sometimes controversial - personal and societal identity issues within their classrooms was a freedom that they were keen

to give their students. However, very recent research with teacher educators, pre-service and in-service teachers presents the prescribed, fixed and singular nature of FBV policy as restricting creativity, criticality and conversation. The problematic FBV agenda – rooted in a counter-terrorism and security narrative - is especially seen by teacher educators as indiscriminately targeting Muslim students through panoptic processes of surveillance, regulation and referrals (Maylor, 2016). Students need the space to converse creatively and critically, and to know their experiences and voices matter. The students “loved” the project, Mr Martin argued, perhaps as he repeatedly informed them: “Look, this is about you”. Ms Anderson also shared her multiple attachments with the students. She had moved seven times before the age of ten. They discussed whether she might be classed as more Nigerian - having lived there - than some of the students with Nigerian ancestry who had never visited Africa. We see, therefore, identity exploration can provide a much needed warm and personal space for both students and teachers to open up as a collective and become well-acquainted with self-perceptions and others’ perspectives. (See Appendix Three for more on both teachers’ notions of Britishness).

### **Resisting Dominant Narratives, Expressing Multiple Belongings**

The students were keen to explore Britishness in school, albeit admitting some students might not embrace the study of national identities with enthusiasm. Ellie advocated a “cautious” approach recognising the potential pitfalls of enforcing the teaching of Britishness as alienating students who find the category to be neither inclusive nor important. The project could have pressures for certain students to *participate* reluctantly in the exploration of Britishness, she argued. Not all students will be as open to the Britishness project as Ellie and Chris, or as excited about it as Joe. Kadisha, for example, expressed her initial reservations about feeling “unhappy” with the scope of this project because she did not see herself as British. Students can refuse to accept the assimilating rhetoric of a Britishness project (Rosaldo, 1996, Carnegie, 2002), thus Kadisha preferred to represent “our own background”. Such an “act of resistance” – whereby Kadisha chose to focus on what mattered to her – could be perceived through a critical race theory lens as a small “triumph” (Taylor, 2016:9). Kadisha’s triumph was that she felt she was overturning what she perceived were the conventional ‘Eurocentric’ requirements of the teaching and learning of Britishness, and that she was confidently presenting her counterstory for her peers, for her teacher and for the researcher.

African and Caribbean students in Britain, particularly females, sometimes regard ethnic heritage as a more valuable category of identification than nationality, revealing pride and attachment with ethnic heritage (Lam and Smith, 2009). Resisting a dominant construction and reading of Britishness and its boundaries (Solomos, 2001), Kadisha included Jamaica in her

portrait on Britishness and belonging. Her contesting of “monovocals, master narratives, standard stories, or majoritarian stories” about Britishness (Solórzano and Yosso, 2002:28), is intentional, confident and daring. Challenging Eurocentrism matters to Kadisha as it does to those working in the critical race theory tradition. Rather than accept the status quo or seek the teacher’s knowledge of Britishness, Kadisha boldly presents an alternative Britishness, one that is steeped in Jamaican history. Kadisha is keen to honour her heritage, whilst at the same time locating her identity in present-day London. Transnational ties result in multiple transnational belongings and identities (Tilley and Heath, 2007).

Jamaican-ness, Kadisha wants to believe, resonates for her more than Britishness:

Kadisha: I was born here, but... I’m more into my own culture... and my parents’ background...

...And I spoke to my sister’s boyfriend about it. And he didn’t think much of the project either.

Her sister’s boyfriend was looking at the project from an outsider’s viewpoint, not realising the project’s potential for criticality giving scope for Kadisha to resist dominant constructions of Britishness. A limitation of the project was that it allowed students to only resist British identities, not articulate an identity independent of Britishness. Culturally responsive pedagogies enable students to utilise their prior cultural knowledge and personal experiences as an asset (Gay, 2010), benefiting and inspiring students like Kadisha keen to elaborate confidently upon her Jamaican heritage. Knowing “policy can hurt as much as it can help” (Freedman, 2008:40), teachers can employ culturally responsive pedagogies to constructively critique dominant ‘master narratives’ offered in schools by focusing on students’ perspectives and valuing students’ social experiences.

Supposedly *commonsense assumptions* about the status quo in society (Giroux, 2013:3), and about what Britishness means according to the politicians and policy-makers, can be successfully challenged and interrogated through critical pedagogical means and methods. One way of disrupting *commonsense assumptions* and dominant master narratives is by giving counter-narratives greater status in the classroom. Counter-narratives are a key method employed by critical race theorists to give voice to oppressed and marginalised groups who have been excluded or ignored in *official* narratives (Solórzano and Yosso, 2002), aiming to challenge *grand* or *master* or *meta* narratives “concerning Man, Truth, Justice and Beauty, representing the West, and “America” as the last projection of European ideals, as the apex of an unbroken, evolutionary development of two thousand years of civilization” (Peters and Lankshear, 1996:2).

Kadisha articulated disillusionment with Eurocentric schooling/curriculum: “I don’t find it interesting. Only ‘cos of the fact that I’ve been doing it for a long time... since primary school... and it irritates me because.... that’s all we done in history”. Some social groups are presented as guardians of legitimate official knowledge, while others are disempowered groups are marginalised, with their knowledge dismissed as unimportant (Apple, 1993b). As the project valued student voice, making Kadisha determined her voice would not be stifled and her knowledge would not remain ignored. An “assimilative national project” (Alexander, 2007:115) was therefore strongly contested by Kadisha. Moreover, Kadisha’s dismissal of a Eurocentric curriculum demonstrated “a sense of empowerment” (McGann, 2006:214), perhaps developed by the critical pedagogy elements of the art project. That female British Afro-Caribbean students demonstrate pride and emotional attachment to ethnicity over nationality (Lam and Smith, 2009), is evident in Kadisha’s artwork about Jamaica, as a form of resistance to dominant mainstream definitions of belonging to Britain.

While some teachers feel untrained on how to challenge the Eurocentric curriculum, and how to tackle everyday and structural racisms (Lander, 2014), other teachers will work with students to resist, challenge or adapt curriculum and policy (Fischman and McLaren, 2005), increasing educational democracy and plurality. Critiquing racist ideologies normalised through policy and curriculum has long been identified as vital for ‘cultural pluralism’ (Dickeman, 1973). The Art students were able to contest hegemonic notions and ideologies by presenting their own truths and experiences of life in Britain. Kadisha, and her teacher, understood one of the key tenets of critical pedagogy: the school curriculum is never neutral. Curriculum is legitimised through “complex power relations and struggles among identifiable class, race, gender, and religious groups” (Apple, 1993a:46), and thus needs resisting, challenging and adapting. This Freirean-like project allowed Kadisha an opportunity to develop consciousness and engage in critical reflection about dominant ideologies encountered through the education system. Apple (2013) cites Gramsci’s notion of ideological hegemony to help us understand how intellectuals, like teachers, can maintain and legitimate social structures to make them seem acceptable and neutral. There is hope and possibility though, for resistance is achievable through challenging hegemonic practices (Giroux, 2001, Anyon, 2011, Apple, 2013).

Teachers should not be hindered from expressing “intelligent and thoughtful criticism” of educational policy (Freedman, 2008:40). I would argue students must also be given the chance to critique policies, for these often impact upon their learning, attainment, well-being and identity, as well as their future. Regarding government proposals, Kadisha argued exploring

Britishness is not a new phenomenon, “we do it all the time”. Kadisha was frustrated that her entire school career had focused on “learning about Britain”. The Eurocentric curriculum with its exclusionary and narrow focus troubled Kadisha. Problem-posing about how best to explore Britishness gave her an important chance to critique society and schooling, and her position within this hegemonic paradigm (Freire, 2000, Freire and Freire, 2004):

Kadisha: It annoys me because it's the only... only culture we learn about. I'd like to explore... not just Jamaica... It's not just about Jamaica, I mean I'd like to explore all cultures and history... See the thing is Britain's history isn't just Britain's... like the country was made up on a lot of other cultures. So you can't just blank them out because other cultures helped make Britain... Africans. During slavery time when they came and made... I don't know in particular the names of it... but I know they made loads of statues and buildings...

Students exploring British identity will encounter “British imperialism, slavery and racism, which are fundamental characteristics of the British Empire” (Iordanou, 2014). Gilroy (1993) places emphasis on the impact of the ‘terror’ of slavery on the African diaspora as transnational ties developed for these Blacks who sailed to Britain and the USA, but he also highlights how slavery enabled the West to prosper through exploitation. As Britishness exploration involves discussing multiple angles of nationalism, patriotism and citizenship, students can gain deep insight into historical constructs of ‘subjects’ (Osler and Starkey, 2005, Beck, 2013), and present-day global identity issues revolving around post-colonial diasporic citizenry (Hebert and Sears, 2001, Heater, 2001, Husbands et al., 2010). Also helpful would be to deconstruct *culture*: “Far from being unitary or monolithic or autonomous things, cultures actually assume more ‘foreign’ elements, alterities, differences, than they consciously exclude” (Said, 1994:15).

Despite greatly enjoying exploring and discussing Britishness, Joe was unsure about schools exploring Britishness as it would “cause debate”. Yet he embraced the “debate” himself, raising many aspects of Britishness, at times in a controversial way. Kadisha tended to focus on her own frustrations and resentments on critiquing unfair and exclusive ideas of British identity through postcolonial readings of Britishness, while Joe put forth the White working-class experience. Through these students’ discourses we are reminded any definition of Britishness will inevitably only provide a partial understanding, as features others deem relevant are excluded by those who do not share those experiences (Parekh, 2000a). ‘Debate’ in the classroom should be lively, engaging, reflective and collaborative. Yet since the FBV policies came into play, students today are not being offered the same opportunities to debate controversial issues, and teachers encounter “the fault lines of tension, fear and ambiguity that exists between policy and practice” (Maylor, 2016:278). OFSTED’s Common Inspection Framework (2015) “states that inspectors will evaluate the extent to which leaders, managers

and governors ‘actively promote British values’” (Revell and Bryant p342), resulting in hastily compiled displays of British – often London-centric – iconography (flags, images of red buses, pillar boxes, cups of tea and the Queen) in school hallways and classrooms to welcome OFSTED inspectors to a school apparently bursting with pride about its Britishness.

My research shows that a deeper and more reflective approach to Britishness exploration can reveal the nuances of nation and belonging. Ms Anderson realised White British students were particularly “defiantly defensive about the area”. Some students loved holidaying in Spain, but the teacher found students had limited experience of Spanish language and culture, only familiar with parts of Spain that she labelled “Bermondsey by the Sea”. Mr Martin did not feel “entirely successful” in providing them with ideas about the workings of different cultures, but believed unpicking identity together would benefit the students as they matured and mulled over cultural diversities in years to come. Mr Martin was also apprehensive about how to respond to students with strong affiliations to other cultures, acknowledging “we seem to have forgotten that these children aren’t completely and utterly British”. Some students expressed multiple allegiances, loyal to Britain and to France, or China, or Jamaica. Multiple and global attachments are commonplace (Vertovec and Cohen, 2002, Osler and Starkey, 2003), but not all teachers find it easy to embrace diversity, difference, and global or multiple identities (Carrington et al., 2000, Maylor et al., 2006a, Pearce, 2012, Stokes and Nea, 2013, Bhopal and Rhamie, 2013, Lander, 2014). As a result of “current global conditions, postmodern identities and political economies” new educational policies emerge, necessitating teacher training to be updated to account for new times (Freedman, 2008:47). As ‘diversity’ will inevitably arise in classroom work on nation and identity (Kedourie, 1993), teacher training is necessary.

Schools with diverse curriculums tend to give precedence to global diversity rather than British diversity (Maylor et al., 2007), allowing students to make sense of how globalisation impacts upon our local and national ways of belonging. Mr Martin felt inadequately trained to “support” students who had different life trajectories:

Mr Martin: ... they strongly believe that their future is gonna be in Jamaica, that they are gonna leave Britain... so there’s a whole strong identification... and I wasn’t really prepared for... the different needs of the learners... and saying how can I support somebody... because obviously I don’t have that in my own sort of personal itinerary... it’s not something I can draw upon.

Significantly, this highlights the need to train teachers on how to support students with multiple identifications and attachments, as well as on how to deal with controversial or sensitive topics. Critical pedagogy approaches, through problem-posing and dialogic encounters, can guide

teachers and students exploring difficult social issues. Inevitably students have identifications we do not personally relate to, and as teachers, we must be prepared. Sometimes teachers might make assumptions about students based on their ethnic, cultural, or religious background, yet other times they may even forget to acknowledge the significance of cultural or religious influences. A fine balance is needed: not making assumptions based on ethnicity, culture or religion, but actually giving a voice to the student, so s/he can express what is meaningful to them in terms of identity and lived reality. Mr Martin emphasised to students that this project was personal to them, that they should focus on their own sense of identity, but having previously taught Muslim students in East London, Mr Martin “wanted the kids to understand a little bit about what it’s like in other parts of London”. Mr Martin was therefore keen to share his own experiences of *super-diverse* London with his students.

### **Deconstructing Dangerous Doctrine**

Dangers of discussing Britishness were highlighted by Ms Anderson, for example two students referred to Aryanism and Hitler being a hero figure. She explained that she responded by bringing students back to the topic of Britishness. Many teachers would be reluctant to explore national identity with students, as inevitably taboo topics will arise, or discussion and deconstruction of far right wing xenophobia would be required. The government guidance in the form of the *Learning Together to be Safe: a toolkit to help schools contribute to the prevention of violent extremism* (DCSF, 2008) is critiqued for not providing a definition of ‘extremism’, for failing to deconstruct far right extremism, and for reproducing Islamophobic rhetoric (Coppock, 2014).

Joe touched upon potential controversies when he explained he would be “getting a bit more racist” if he went any deeper into his views. He would “open up more” in the interview if Kadisha and I were White, he admits. Joe had already claimed Chinese people refer to White people as smelling like “sour milk”, and that White people see Chinese people as smelling like vegetables, and Indians as smelling of curry. Thus Joe’s claim that he could delve deeper into “a bit more racist” views raises important questions about how much further did Joe wish to delve into racialised discourses, and would his teacher have felt adequately trained in dealing with racism. Teachers are sometimes unable to identify or analyse racism, no matter how “well intentioned, trained and experienced they are in anti-racist work” (Maylor et al., 2006b:3). Societal racialisation is so ingrained that even scientific and medical research refer to ‘Blacks’ and ‘Whites’ promoting biological constructions of race (Fluehr-Lobban, 2006). Educational sites have the potential to offer opportune spaces to tackle such racisms if we want “lasting impact

on school students (of all ages and ethnic backgrounds) and the communities of which they are part” (Gillborn, 1995:2).

The aforementioned controversial examples demonstrate the teaching and learning of Britishness needs a balance of careful guidance and supervision from the teacher, alongside the general remit of openness in expressing opinions. To what extent students, like Joe, will be open about their perceptions of race/racism when in a multicultural classroom requires further research. Teachers need confidence and guidance in handling prejudices appropriately, so they may permit an open environment, but not allowing offensive or racist commentary to go unchallenged. Mr Martin believed some students acquired ‘racist’ and ‘exclusive’ notions of identity from home, and although he had encouraged them to access multiple ways of being British from family, there would always be a chance students raised ugly stereotypes and dangerous right-wing doctrines. Multicultural education has been criticised for celebrating culture, rather than tackling everyday racisms and institutional inequalities, and Joe’s racialised commentary in his Britishness discourses points towards a very necessary need to return to anti-racist education.

Joe highlights deep-seated racialised resentment and hostility when exploring Britishness with peers who criticise Britain: “They don’t have nothing they like about it... just using us... it gets on my nerves. If you’re here for education then... you use benefits. Use. Use. Use.” Joe is “annoyed” when his peers show dislike for Britain: “Why are you here then? Seriously why are you here?” The underlying implication that this is ‘our country’ (Sanderson and Thomas, 2014) is manifested in Joe raising the ‘us v them’ dichotomy. The right-wing rhetoric of ‘Benefits Britain’ has seeped into Joe’s insecurities about belongings. Exclusivist and scaremongering discourses are now prevalent in mainstream political documents too (Bhavnani et al., 2005, Osler, 2011), where nation is seen as territory to be defended from outsiders encroaching upon its provisions and possibilities (Brah, 1996, Osler, 2011). Young people’s precarious positions with regards to employment, housing and social mobility create antipathy towards others who, according to right wing propaganda, are seen as acquiring British ‘benefits’ (Phillips and Ganesh, 2007). Such antipathy can result in “one of the most powerful forms racism takes” which is “a false sense of injustice which masks the real injustice of a situation” (Batsleer, 2008:155).

Arts based identity work on Britishness can critique right-wing media and political rhetoric by exploring lived experiences of multicultural social relations. Schools can be discursive sites where students and teachers explore multicultural Britain through “facts and informed discussions in classrooms” rather than through “media headlines” (Lander, 2014:94). Students

recognise stereotypes can be dangerous and media can contribute to racism (Show Racism the Red Card, 2015). While there needs to be space for students to voice their experiences, care and caution needs to be taken by teachers to ensure the learning environment is conducive to healthy and respectful debate. Joe is “glad” that he “talked about it today”, as otherwise he is expected to stay silent: “You gotta keep your opinions bottled because... you might say the wrong thing...”, and “you may be racist about situations”. Yet this opening up of spaces to voice opinions should not become a platform to promote hate speech.

The ongoing impact of critical pedagogy approaches was evident in the following year’s Art classes developing the project further. Another colleague, Mrs Foley and her students had watched a video referencing the extreme right-wing BNP propagating belief in a White Britain, which impacted upon the Afro-Caribbean students. The students were shocked into action. Mr Martin explained Mrs Foley and her class embraced the project to challenge these right-wing views they had seen in the video:

Mr Martin: but it was a definite different and a positive approach in some ways because it sort of fired up the kids’ imagination in terms of ‘Actually, we are doing something that’s valuable for us, it’s about unpicking my own identity’ ... it’s not about doing something that we want you to do... and I kind of liked that approach...

A potentially charged topic of the right-wing agenda was utilised by one teacher in a positive way to engage the students into contesting right-wing ideas by creating their own depictions of modern Britishness. Young people better understand multiple multicultural belongings and identities when they engage in the “oppositional, subversive, transformational, and otherwise resistive capabilities” (Chilton and Leavy, 2014:403) of identity work.

### **Taking the Risk, Reaping Rewards**

Art lessons are in danger of remaining old-fashioned and uncritical, with teachers, burdened by traditional curriculum and examination demands, reluctant to make “radical change” (Hickman and Eglinton, 2015:156). Teachers are often “marginalised figures within education”, frequently “subjected to an agenda which is not theirs, driven by values they do not share” (Gamman, 2004:144). Some educationalists perceive the National Curriculum as acting to reduce teachers’ power over curriculum content and classroom pedagogies (Coffey, 2001). Teachers, like my research participants, who embrace innovative new ideas and pedagogies to develop their students’ creativities and identities take a big risk emotionally and professionally. Teaching critical and alternative perspectives is stepping into brave territory for teachers who may get labelled as “unpatriotic radicals and as terrorist sympathizers” for providing different perspectives on wars and government policies/interventions (Ukpokodu, 2010:124). “Engaged

pedagogy”, hooks believes, is when teachers focus on their own emotional and physical well-being; consequently through their being “actively committed to a process of self-actualization” they become proficient in empowering their students (hooks, 1994:15).

The notion of ‘engaged pedagogy’ has become difficult for teachers to experiment with in British schools. Since my research was conducted, educational policy has evolved to include statutory obligations upon teachers to monitor and counter radicalisation through upholding Fundamental British Values (FBV). The ways such policies are interpreted by teachers (and students) and enacted at the classroom level need to be investigated. Panjwani’s research with Muslim teachers shows they do not find British and Islamic values to be incompatible, but argue FBV duty is flawed and problematic: “the lack of clarity, irrelevance, inadequate choice of values, conflict between proclaimed values and state practices or simply a facade to hide the ‘real’ British values” (Panjwani, 2016:333). Teachers from diverse backgrounds with distinctive perceptions and experiences of Britishness are expected to adhere to a government narrative on FBV, but are voices of the teachers who find the socio-political nature of FBV to be conflicting, contradictory and contested being heard? An open and honest debate is urgently required today where teachers and students are able to express their concerns and fears about the implications and consequences of FBV policies and practices.

My research participants had taken a chance exploring identity in an open and direct manner - before the FBV requirements were in force – aiming to combat the restraints of the curriculum. For example, attempting to resolve the lack of specific opportunities for students to explore Britishness in school (Scourfield et al., 2006, Maylor et al., 2007, Lam and Smith, 2009), was partly the rationale for developing the scheme of work. Due to teacher reluctance or curriculum restrictions, students were missing out, as teachers often would not take the risk. The teachers concluded it was possible to successfully manage a potentially controversial topic in the classroom, as they had done, and were willing to do with the future GCSE classes:

Ms Anderson: ...we have experienced that it isn’t that difficult to manage, and that actually allowing them to do a piece of work about it almost gives it a voice and softens it all, and hopefully builds an understanding between the students as well.

Often though, in the current climate of “fear-driven security policies”, teachers might be hesitant to teach controversial topics (Freedman, 2008:41), resulting in silenced students. As has been seen in the USA school system, for instance, Sikh students are marginalised in the curriculum, and even though they have been long settled in the USA, post 9/11 Islamophobia has impacted upon their everyday existences alongside their Muslim peers (Verma, 2010). In the UK, the “controversial” (Mason, 2016:2) Prevent strategy focusing on ‘non-violent

extremism' (HM Government, 2015) calls for teachers and lecturers to report students displaying signs of 'radicalisation', subsequently creating fear and mistrust in schools (Mumisa, 2014, Richardson, 2015a, Richardson, 2015b, Bolloten and Richardson, 2015, Reclaiming Schools, 2015, Garner, 2015, Birt, 2015, Neustatter, 2016). Yet 'radicalisation' and 'de-radicalisation' definitions and discourses, and the accompanying "assumptions", are contested and problematised by critical terrorism scholars (Baker-Beall et al., 2015). Muslim students have recently been reported, for example, for proclaiming pro-Palestinian support (Broomfield, 2016), or for reading course books on terrorism in the university library (Ramesh and Halliday, 2015). A Muslim teacher was also recently reported for telling a colleague she was planning to attend a charity fundraising dinner for Syria (Bowcott, 2016). Critics of Prevent (HM Government, 2015) question representation and social control of Muslim bodies seen as transgressing 'normal' Britishness:

The problem of radicalisation comes to be tied to a notion that the radicalised subject is vulnerable to extremist messages due to their dislocation, their dis-identification from the normalcy of British society. Thus positioned, it becomes those who (are seen to) exist outside of a framework of British norms and behaviours who may potentially threaten the unity of the British state (Martin, 2015:194).

The Prevent duty (HM Government, 2015) has been "widely criticised for casting all Muslims as a 'suspect community'"; unions, including the TUC, UCU, NUT and NUS, have passed motions opposing Prevent for stifling freedom of speech and activism, encouraging racism and Islamophobia, and hindering safe learning spaces (UCU Left, 2015). At the NUT annual conference, teachers "voted overwhelmingly to reject the government's Prevent strategy" (Adams, 2016).

Visual Arts critical pedagogues advocate a "nomadic consciousness", whereby students frequently create "situated connections", but will not "accept the limitations of a national, fixed identity" (Tourinho and Martins, 2008:65). There will be critical pedagogues in the classroom who embrace their students' "situated connections", and allow students to reject a "national, fixed identity" in favour of multiple belongings and attachments. The danger is that teachers will be 'Prevent-ed' from encouraging students to express honestly how they feel about nation state and national identity. To move away from Prevent ideology, I advocate the argument of Baron Cohen and Souza (2008:79) that "arts-based pedagogical training is essential" for teachers if society is to develop "a new, self-reflexive, expressive, dialogic and empathetic humanity". More "autonomy" and "participation" is necessary both for teachers and students in order for knowledge to be co-constructed and for individual and collective learning to take place about local, national and global issues (Gamman, 2004).

After having seen in action how the process worked with the two GCSE classes, the Head of Art consolidated her belief in the benefits of exploring topics which are sometimes seen as taboo and risky. Mr Martin also discussed how later in the year the students reflected back on their enjoyment with this first project, that it enabled them to understand that art can be straightforward communication and creative self-expression. Mr Martin saw exploring identity through Art as generating “emotive” and “personal” responses, with students being able to “communicate” feelings about belonging to Britain:

Mr Martin: art... is a big part of them communicating... so when you look at their outcomes... there's a great deal of inherent value because...they're as skilful as I'd expect someone fifteen years old to make... but I look at those and I think that's probably a record of how you feel at this particular moment in time... which is really good...

This artwork was essentially a “record” of how the GCSE students felt “at this particular moment in time”; identity as unfixed, fluid and evolving (Kershen, 1998, Parekh, 2000a, Lawler, 2008) was a key underlying theme of the project. Students recognised that, though important for primary school students to explore multicultural Britishness, younger students might struggle to maturely and sensitively articulate diversity. Ellie believed as students got older and explored identity issues they would better be able to “understand or grasp the concept of how maybe Britain isn't as it is always perceived to be and is quite controversial”.

The students believed the start of Key Stage Three was a perfect time to begin exploring Britishness. Student Chris explained that as students often arrive from a number of primary schools, they are more amenable to new people and new ideas. Ellie agreed with her peer: “because in Year Seven, it's when you move up to secondary school, you feel like you have grown up a lot...so you feel like you could grasp a new concept”. Mr Martin also commented on how the project may be problematic for younger students, that it would take them even longer to reflect upon Britishness than it had taken these Year Tens, and they may not have the cognitive skills to grasp abstract identity concepts. The advantage of doing such a project with older students was they were able to engage with it more independently and more deeply.

### **Growing Confidence, Strengthening Bonds**

Critical pedagogy strategies offer emotional and social benefits (hooks, 1994, Giroux, 2013). By developing dialogue with their students (Freire, 2000), the Art teachers observed students had grown in sensitivity, maturity and sophisticated articulation of the self, as well in their relations with others. The benefits of dialogical pedagogies are students' relationships develop as they collaboratively relearn about knowledge, pedagogies and wider society (Shor and Freire, 1987b:11). The students and teachers were “creating a learning community together”, thus

ensuring that “learning is at its most meaningful and useful” (hooks, 2010:11): “it is essential that teacher and students take time to get to know one another” (hooks, 2010:20). My research participants did take time to get to know one another, and the community classroom environment developed new relationships, emotional awareness and self-assured learner identities:

Mr Martin: they’re closer to us you know... they feel more confident at expressing themselves... they are not as shy... they are more willing to dabble and actually more willing to ask for help... you know a lot of the time it was just technical help... how do you do this... how do you paint that... but they’re also a bit more willing to say: “Sir, how do you feel about being British?”

The student-teacher relationship blossomed as the students grew in confidence and curiosity, not just about the technical aspects of Art, but also about how others, teachers and peers, perceived Britishness. Ms Anderson’s students learned about her love for the British landscape and British seasons; she felt “very passionate about Britain being a wonderful place to live”, despite concern about political problems. The teachers welcomed the students’ keen disclosures, recognising students’ bravery in honesty:

Mr Martin: I find the most rewarding thing for me as a teacher is learning about what those students are about... and they’ve recognised that... in a way that that they have shared their life during the lessons and through their artwork... mainly through their artwork... not just through discussion... but I’m producing the point that they’ve kind of felt... I’ve kind of made a summary about Britain... I’ve made a sophisticated comment and that’s what we’ve got...

Critical race theory approaches to education approve of teachers reflecting upon their own identities, as well as the identities of their students, in order to improve the pedagogical processes and conditions necessary for engaged teaching and learning. Mr Martin found it “rewarding” when he got to know his students’ identities better, and he felt that their sharing a sense of ‘self’ through classroom conversations and reflective artwork helped the young people to develop a deeper understanding of the self and society.

At the beginning of the project some students had assumed they knew what Britishness was:

Ellie: I think we all knew what we thought about it but none of us... like we all thought something of it... but none of us had ever thought about what we might think of it.

Joe also mentioned how he had “never thought about it” at a deeper level, but always considered himself as British. Joe strongly expressed his pleasure with moving beyond superficial representations of Britishness to deeper analysis. He mentioned how previously “the only place I’ve looked at Britishness is a British dish... some programme I watched on BBC or something... the most British dish... probably fish and chips”. Later he discussed how he had felt

inspired by advertisements to join the RAF: “I just think that advert is well British. Although it’s people from all different cultures, you’re fighting for Britain”. He was very firm about his intentions for his portrait of Britishness: “I knew what I was doing and no one could change my mind”. Thus the Britishness project enabled students to delve deep into their self-definitions and personal experiences of Britishness, beyond anything they might have initially thought about Britishness:

Ellie: So we had to get our heads around trying to figure out what we...how we perceive Britain, but when we had done that we were more kind of...knew what we were doing... and where we wanted to go with it.

Students Ellie and Chris discussed how they were proud this was the “first project we ever did”, resulting in a sense of accomplishment and achievement, as well as giving them the confidence to excel in GCSE Art, as well as articulate identity issues. Ellie and Chris, in the paired interview, discussed their pride in their artwork nominated for a prize at the school awards evening, as well as how a number of their peers’ Britishness artwork had also been nominated. If the classroom is a “microcosm of a democratic society”, then “caring about students and enabling them to care about others helps to create environments in which they feel safe and secure and encourages them to be hopeful, joyful, kind, visionary and affirming” (Stuhr et al., 2008:83). Learning about self-identity, and peers’ meanings of Britishness, through critical pedagogy, enabled the students to develop a sense of democratic citizenship as they came to respect diverse views.

It was important the project allowed students to *explore* identity issues, and not be *taught* Britishness. In the spirit of Freire (2000), both teachers were always conscious of encouraging this exploration, rather than relying upon traditional teaching methods that deposited teacher knowledge into students’ minds. The students were also mindful of the journey and the outcomes. The fluidity and freedom of the project resulted in focused students who were open to being tentative about Britishness, rather than ascribing fixed meanings to identity. After all, critically courageous teachers know that “learning in action means that not all of us can be right all the time, and that the shape of knowledge is constantly changing” (hooks, 2010:10). Mr Martin highlighted how some students engaged in a “big learning game” as they came to reflect upon uncertainties, complexities and realities of different ways of perceiving Britishness:

Mr Martin: ...they kind of thought “Well, I’m not sure what it is to be British... I think it’s this, this and this...” For them I think that was... pretty heavy-going really... and I mean philosophically as well because they’re still young, I mean they are the young people of today.

In the Freirean paradigm, marginalised individuals’ reflections and actions lead to social transformation (Freire, 2000). As Mr Martin recognises, these students “are the young people

of today”, and soon they will leave school and continue their journey as citizens of Britain. In terms of *praxis*, after students have explored Britishness through personal reflection and dialogues with their peers, they could begin to identify actions that would be necessary to implement social justice and social change. Education is more than just schooling, it is what happens beyond schooling too (Freire, 1985a, Giroux, 1985). Our students operate on other social sites, aside from in the school, and when they leave school, they will probably participate in new sites of education and work. Reflection on identity, on Britishness and its intersections with race, class and gender will help them engage in further reflection and action as they one day leave school and embark upon new paths. We need to empower students to develop a confident and critical consciousness about power and inequalities, in order for them to one day work on transforming the self and society (Shor, 1992).

### **CONCLUSION: TEACHING AND LEARNING BRITISHNESS THROUGH CRITICAL PEDAGOGY**

Throughout my research, I argue that students hearing others’ stories and telling their stories is one of the most important ways to have hope, to critique and to transform injustices and inequalities of our world. Students’ stories have the possibility of becoming a tool of resistance, of presenting hope and possibility, and of aiding a journey of discovery of the self, the other, and society, thereby ultimately laying seeds of social change. The project was particularly poignant and powerful for the students who were capturing lived realities, signifying their concerns as young Londoners, and for the teachers who were observing student engagement, creativity and learning. Careful and sensitive handling of the potentially controversial elements to identity exploration by the teachers who enjoyed exploring Britishness with their classes resulted in students gaining new perspectives on individual and collective meanings of Britishness. High levels of student engagement and what the teachers deemed as successful outcomes resulted in the Art department continuing the Britishness project with new GCSE Art classes too. The Head of Art explained she would “encourage them to go deeper and think beyond the obvious...” in future, but without directing the students, as she valued student voice: “...it’s a careful balance of letting them have their own ideas and introducing them to new ideas”. Mr Martin explained he would like to conduct the project over a longer period of time. They had commenced the project with the new cohort of GCSE students and were tackling it slightly differently by looking at more documentaries beforehand to get to know multiple viewpoints on Britishness. To enable students to appreciate the sheer diversity of opinion, Mr Martin had shown his new GCSE class a documentary on Britishness showing pensioners in the North of

England discussing Britishness, bingo, and the cost of living which “surprised” the London students and gave them new insights into identity.

Uncovering identity issues enabled students to recognise their voices and views were respected and required. Students became confident and independent, learning their personal journey was part of the story of Britishness. For some students the experience was cathartic and poignant, especially dissecting the realities of their lives as young Londoners. Students demonstrated diverse cultural ideas about what it means to belong to a nation, with some preferring to focus upon local or global attachments. Some students were more highly engaged in the project on emotional and intellectual levels than others, delving deep into abstract concepts of identity. For others the project was difficult, and they were unwilling, therefore, to involve themselves too deeply in the emotional journey. Perhaps because national identity is difficult to define (Jacobson, 1997, Scourfield et al., 2006, Maylor, 2010, Anderson, 2012, Burkett, 2013), and even analyse (Anderson, 2006), they chose instead to shy away from grappling with Britishness. Mr Martin acknowledged students would not be able to express all that they found important about Britishness and identity in one portrait alone. These findings are valuable and hopeful in a time when academic freedom is discouraged (Ross and Vinson, 2013), and neoliberalism has given rise to individualism, privatisation, competition and profit, with schooling increasingly seen in terms of economics, and students as commodities and their teachers as mere machines (Kirylo, 2013). Thus concerns continue to be raised regarding education and “the gritty sense of limits it faces within a capitalist society” (Giroux, 2013:5). Researching students’ views about effective pedagogies can also enrich the education system (Gamman, 2004), allowing students to embrace the education they want and need.

The apprehension both the teachers felt pre-teaching soon dissipated as most students energetically embraced critical pedagogical approaches to Britishness exploration. Instead of passively accepting a hegemonic narrative of Britishness, students utilised the space to debate the current discourses on British identities, and revealed personal definitions and experiences from diverse racial, ethnic and class positionings. If a democratic goal of education is to inspire morally and socially responsible citizenry, critical pedagogy helps students to become “critical, self-reflective and knowledgeable” active members of society (Giroux, 2013:3). Moreover the Art project manifested how “knowledge” created through art can move beyond “aesthetic and formalist concerns” towards “critical practice whereby contextual enquiry exposes the social, cultural and political terrain within which it is situated” (Grierson, 2008:25). The teachers worked with students on exploring concepts of Britishness and incorporated critical pedagogy

strategies to encourage students to challenge prevailing societal stereotypes about social class and race. Classroom dilemmas of identity exploration included unwillingness on the part of teachers to 'impose' a 'correct' version of Britishness on the students, as well as students' reluctance to withdraw from the 'banking' method of teaching they were traditionally familiar with where students expect the teacher to be the oracle of knowledge, clinging to the idea that teacher knows best.

My research findings probe the importance and value of "critical pedagogy as theoretical and political practice" (Giroux, 2013:3) when teaching and learning about Britishness. Critical pedagogy emphasises "critical analysis, moral judgements, and social responsibility", going "to the very heart of what it means to address real inequalities of power at the social level and to conceive of education as a project for freedom" (Giroux, 2013:158). Critical pedagogy seeks counter-narratives from students and teachers to "critique the world in which they live and, when necessary, to intervene in socially responsible ways in order to change it" (Giroux, 2013:14). Inspired by Freire (1985a, 2000, 2004) and Giroux (1988, 2001, 2013), I argue for teachers and students to employ a language of critique, hope and possibility about the potential of resistance, challenge and change: "a vocabulary in which it becomes possible to imagine power working in the interest of justice, equality, and freedom" (Giroux, 2013:5). For students to become critically reflective and active citizens is a core aim of critical pedagogy, as evident in the works of Paulo Freire, John Dewey and Ira Shor. In contrast to traditional banking methods of education (Freire, 1985a), like "rote learning and skills drills" that "bore and miseducate students" (Shor, 1992:18), I came to understand how the teachers and students used approaches heavily grounded in critical pedagogy to yield remarkable results about contemporary southeast London discourses on Britishness, as well as about pedagogies. I argue critical pedagogy has the capabilities and capacities to give rise to oft-silenced voices, stories and experiences, working towards implementing social change through collaborative and transformative advocacy and activism (Wink, 2005). I show students need "a challenging curriculum that will assist them to make sense of their lives and identities" (Smyth and McInerney, 2007:xi).

There is a danger that in solely championing British culture, history, values and identity from a middle-class White Eurocentric (and often patriarchal) perspective, students' ethnic, class and cultural heritages are viewed as marginal and insignificant. Moreover, if history is taught according to the perspective of the British textbooks, then world history and universal human rights are eliminated from the picture (Osler, 2009). Privilege and power operate in a way where

“objectivity and neutrality” is presumed to be the domain of the “White, male, class-elitist, heterosexist, imperial, and colonial” elite who are presented as espousers of “reason, rationality and truth” (Kincheloe, 2007:19). This myth of ‘reason, rationality and truth’ impacts upon educational policies, for example in the 1980s and 1990s, politicians took on board opposition towards the sociology of education because of its focus on social classifications and structures, rather than on educational ‘standards’ (Arnot and Barton, 1992). Prime Minister John Major dismissed the study of social identities:

I also want reform of teacher training. Let us return to basic subject teaching, not courses in the theory of education. Primary teachers should learn how to teach children to read, not waste their time on the politics of gender, race and class (1992).

In the 1990s, young people were experiencing “the resurgence of racism on the streets and housing estates of urban Britain” (Dadzie, 1997:10), at a time when political rhetoric was discounting the significance of race and class. Moreover, when it comes to schooling, “race, gender, class, religion, and a host of other factors inform and influence what happens in schools and classrooms” (Hess, 2009).

My research, over twenty-five years later, shows the urgency of training teachers about race and class, as well as exploring intersectional identities with students. Nation and race are inseparable (Carnegie, 2002). The Art students’ discourses, in the next chapter, will show that Britishness discussion is inseparable from old and new notions of race and racism. Examining how “being White and the discourse of Whiteness are perpetuated” (Lander, 2014:94), that “race is not something with which we are born; it is something learned and achieved in interactions and institutions” (Lewis, 2004:629), is significant to the teaching and learning of Britishness, if students like Kadisha and Joe see Britishness as sometimes synonymous with Whiteness. If Fundamental British Values (FBV), for example, are ‘White’ values (Maylor, 2016), then the requirement to not undermine FBV - as required of the Teachers’ Standards - might result in teachers feeling unable to speak out against the racist and Islamophobic undercurrents of FBV narratives. The potentially narrow, insular and racist approaches to FBV policy and practice are brought to light by the Teachers’ Standards that insist teachers monitor and report students’ sense of Britishness, and also enforce an assimilatory vision upon young (Muslim) people:

Though not stated, the instruction teachers will be bound by (that is not to undermine British values) suggests that teachers instead will through their teaching impose British values on students and by doing this downplay the value of minority

ethnic cultures and the values that inform minority ethnic cultures (Maylor, 2016:319).

Teacher educators are forced to introduce this Standard to trainee teachers from diverse cultural backgrounds while coming to terms with their own personal perspectives and experiences of British values (Maylor, 2016). What about teachers who do not feel affiliated to Britishness or British values? Or those who critique the definition of FBV? Can Teacher's Standards be implemented in a way that gives trainee teachers the confidence to challenge stereotypes, racism and narrow conceptions of Britishness, and the courage to promote a critical consciousness (Maylor, 2016)?

The research demonstrated students were able to hold a conversation on the meanings of Britishness, critically question the multiple meanings of Britishness, and learn what Britishness meant to others. Respectful and caring dialogue between students, and with the teacher, allowed for critical consciousness to flourish in the classroom as students mulled over multiple meanings of Britishness (Freire, 2000). With the arrival of recent refugees to Europe, new ways of understanding modern multicultural societies need exploring, making updated teacher training even more pressing, particularly training that enables students and teachers to build upon critical pedagogy strategies like *reflection*, *dialogue* and *action*. Schools are too often seen as places that perpetuate traditional asymmetrical models of power/powerlessness with processes and practices that "actively silence students...marginalize and ensure failure for working-class and minority students" (Giroux and McLaren, 1989:xviii). Yet critical pedagogy can work towards combating this silencing, marginalisation and oppression by validating student voice. Young people like Ellie, Kadisha, Joe and Chris might have come to the project thinking "*when we speak we are afraid/our words will not be heard/nor welcomed*" (Lorde, 1995), but, the next chapter will show, the teachers' critical pedagogy strategies enabled students to grow in confidence: to not be afraid, to speak, and to have their words heard and welcomed. To learn "*to survive*" (Lorde, 1995). To better understand discourses of Britishness, the next chapter will further detail and discuss the "profound and rigorously syncretic cultural dialogues" (Back, 1996: 241) of the ethnically diverse young people in my research.

# **CHAPTER SIX: DISCOURSES OF BRITISHNESS - Encountering and Negotiating Local and Transnational Belongings in Bermondsey, London**

*Joe: ...then England went over to America, and then stuff like that... we've all just branched off and we're a bit of each other. Everyone's a bit of everything...*

## **INTRODUCTION: BRITISHNESS, BELONGING AND PLACE**

My research with young southeast Londoners explores how analysing Britishness reveals incompleteness and multiplicity: it “highlights some features, ignores or marginalises others, and is inherently partial and partisan” (Parekh, 2000a:6). The previous chapter presented the pedagogies enabling GCSE Art students to confidently and openly discuss personal meanings of Britishness, as they undertook an individual journey, while developing dialogue with peers and teachers regarding contradictions and complexities of belongings. In this chapter, I continue to argue ‘Britishness’ is a complex, context-dependent and nuanced notion requiring continual critical definition and analysis, and often intertwined with other contested concepts like ‘multiculturalism’, ‘place’ and ‘belonging’ (Ward, 2004, Faulks, 2006, McGhee, 2008, Haste, 2010). These Art students (and teachers) in my research are “kaleidoscopic people”: “implicated by, and constructed within, a multiplicity of complex and contradictory discourses” (Shah, 2001:142) who actively negotiate belonging to Britain by ‘carnivalizing, subverting and challenging’ (Back, 1996) dominant identity inscriptions enforced upon their racialised and classed bodies. For students like Kadisha and Chris, Jamaica featured heavily in their negotiations of belonging to Britain, revealing a ‘double consciousness’ (Du Bois, 2007) about Britishness and Blackness/Otherness. The quotation at the beginning of this chapter is from Joe, a White British working-class male student, who recognised transnational experiences of belonging matter to his peers. Yet, as we saw in the last chapter, and as we will read in this chapter, sometimes Joe voiced displeasure and disapproval of multiple belongings, identities and alternative ways of being British.

Previous chapters highlighted the significance of the interplay between nation, race and Otherness, whilst this chapter will provide empirical evidence of ways students perceive national identities as deeply connected to their racialised and classed positions. This chapter shows

nations are not “obvious and natural divisions”, but they are social constructs trying to bond people through racial, linguistic or historical elements (Kedourie, 1993:74). Just as ‘ethnicity’ “reminds us that everybody comes from some place – even if it is only an ‘imagined community’ – and needs some sense of identification and belonging” (Hall, 1996a:236), this chapter will focus on how Britishness exploration similarly draws out attachments, identifications and belongings. Building on the last chapter which emphasised the importance of local place in the students’ articulations of belonging to nation, this chapter continues to show “self, place and community” matter to youth (Guajardo et al., 2008:3). My research supports empirical studies that find some students express a greater sense of local identity than British identity, whilst others lay claim to “hybrid, hyphenated” identities that express ethnicities (Maylor, 2010:249).

‘Place’ and ‘space’ are complex, ambiguous and nuanced social constructs, with multiple meanings and histories (Harvey, 2012, Massey, 1994), sometimes differentiated, and other times used interchangeably. I will use both terms ‘place’ and ‘space’ to focus on ‘social relations’ such as race, gender and class as evolving notions, rather than bounded and fixed, (Massey, 1994), recognising youth are frequently situated and (re)presented through these notions, therefore “notions of space and place as they relate to young people are never innocent” (Smyth and McInerney, 2014:285). For instance, space and place are often racialised to show the presence of ethnic minorities “as an invasion, an emotional trauma”, or “some white estates frequently become local bywords for pathological, almost racialised behaviour” (Garner, 2012:450). In this chapter, I focus on how students’ local place experiences and attachments impact upon their perceptions of Britishness, and how they locate themselves as belonging to Bermondsey, London, Britain, and also beyond Britain. Place, “a unique location that is connected to other places but is also self-contained and distinctive”, has “open and permeable boundaries, shaped by complex webs of local, national and global influences and different social and cultural flows and processes” (Hopkins, 2010:1973). I analyse students’ perceptions of belonging and Britishness with the increasing understanding that living in a globalised world, we assume less attachment to local space, yet growing preoccupations with local affiliations can be a *response* to globalisation (Shildrick et al., 2010, Inglis and Donnelly, 2011).

When thinking of “identities, inequalities and conflicts”, we think of space, for “racial interactions and processes...are also about how we collectively make and remake, over time and through ongoing contestation, the spaces we inhabit” (Neely and Samura, 2011:1934). Rather than ‘learn’ dominant political and media definitions of Britishness from their teachers, the Art students communicated their lived experiences of belonging to local spaces in Britain.

Collectively understanding and communicating Britishness directly contrasts with the current 'shared values' ideology (Kiwani, 2007) which seems to 'tell' students what Britishness *should* mean to them. In this chapter I explore how young people in my research experienced identity, place and belonging at an individual and collective "biographical, cultural and structural level", and how "particular places have meaning and bring a sense of belonging, and a form of space is created through acts of naming and activity via memory" (Shildrick et al., 2010:4). I employ the *civic, cultural, racial and multicultural* boundaries of Britishness (Jacobson, 1997, Vadhvani and Barrett, 2009), identified in Chapter Two, to present my research participants' conceptions of belonging to Britain. Through examining students' notions of Britishness, I merge and extend the boundaries established by Vadhvani and Barrett (2009) and Jacobson (1997) to reflect findings from my empirical research with these Art classes.

My research shows intersectionality matters as the Art students I interviewed - Kadisha, Joe, Chris and Ellie - discussed Britishness alongside intersecting identities. Intersectionality might have origins in Black feminist scholarship, but also needs to be understood in the context of Whiteness – disrupting White power, for example (Allen, 2009, Byrne, 2015), but also exploring White working-class identities, inequalities and intersectionalities. Just as Blackness works through "multiple inflections" of, for example, class and gender (Back, 1996), similarly Britishness is not an essentialised entity, but must be understood in relation to intersecting categories such as ethnicity, religion and gender. Research participants Ellie and Kadisha asserted their sense of agency by resisting societal attempts to define them through social categories: "By agency it is meant that an individual or people have the freedom to be self-defining and self-determining" (Cokley, 2002:29). Focusing on the interview data yielded by paired discussions between Kadisha and Joe, as well as Chris and Ellie, I also refer briefly to the arguments and ideas raised by their peers in the two Art classes. To begin with, I outline the key characteristics of London's socio-political landscape, to show the backdrop against which my research participants encounter and negotiate evolving belongings and multiple identities in a city constantly undergoing social transformations.

### **THE LOCAL CONTEXT: TERRITORIAL LONDON, RACIALISED BELONGINGS**

Young people are growing up in a world where globalisation and transnational ties necessitate the investigation of complex and evolving identities (Tilley and Heath, 2007) on local, national and global levels. Hall (1996a) has frequently articulated the simultaneity of the local and the global. For years now local place identity has been significant for ethnographers; Nayak,

(2003b), for instance, defies postmodern claims that youth cultures are about “placelessness” (2003a:320). The significant place for my students is their city of London which has transformed from an imperial to a global city, becoming a financial, political and cultural capital where millions of tourists flock annually (Eade, 2000). London is frequently essentialised and personified, yet places are “created and sustained by human activities” (Eade, 2000:5). Cities, like London, are spaces of “struggles” over “identities, rights, cultural encounters or conflict and social transformations” (Ehrkamp, 2008:119). These “landscapes of social division that often play out in political fights over the very right to exist and move through urban space” (Brahinsky, 2011:145) are frequently ‘victims’, like ethnic minorities and single parents, unfairly blamed for social decay and social unrest (Massey, 1994). London has its own uniquely problematic educational landscape. Teachers and students are impacted by issues of high levels of deprivation, low achievement, a highly diverse and mobile population, high costs of living, and teacher retention and recruitment issues (Archer et al., 2010). Urban discourses also reveal fear in the city, with immigrants, working classes and young people denigrated as producing “disorder” and “dis/ease” (Sandercock, 2005:219). Within these complex and evolving landscapes of inequalities, youth live “contested local histories as they confront contemporary social change” (Dillabough et al., 2008:344), whilst the “effect of neighbourhoods and places on the lives, educational opportunities and life chances of young people from contexts of socio-economic disadvantage” (Smyth and McInerney, 2014:286) requires detailed empirical investigation. Youth belonging is often tied to “immediate locality”, yet “locality in turn may influence what nationhood comes to mean” (Thomson, 2007:168), for “...although ‘national space’ is an imaginary”, it is “literally, embodied in the real local spaces of one’s street, neighbourhood and city, where it is either reinforced or undermined”(Sandercock, 2005:223).

My research is situated in London Docklands, once one of the largest and most powerful maritime places globally (Twigger-Ross and Uzzell, 1996). The socio-economic landscape altered dramatically once the docks closed. London saw unemployment, poverty and “vast areas of riverside land lay wasted and despoiled” until Canary Wharf was developed to become a commercial success (Massey, 2005:166). While “an invasion of yuppies” benefited from city developments, working-class Londoners battled for ‘space’ (Massey, 2005:167). The newly developed Docklands failed to celebrate and credit “Indian seamen who worked on the merchant ships that brought wealth to Britain”, instead it glorified “past commercial triumphs” of Empire (Kershen, 2009). The East End of London today comprises “extreme wealth and extreme poverty” (Wemyss, 2009:23). Increasing social inequalities due to “deindustrialization, economic restructuring and neoliberal welfare policies” lead to deeply divided neighbourhoods

with “redevelopment and gentrification at one extreme and concentrated deprivation and stigmatization at the other” (Watt, 2006:776). In the background capitalist ideologies dominate in society, “as long as workers blame other (racialized) workers rather than capitalists and capitalism for their structural location” (Cole, 2016:7) in British society.

Neoliberalism – that is, “economic-cum-political doctrine extolling the virtues of unfettered market forces and rapid state shrinkage” (Atkinson et al., 2012:5) – unsettles the lives of Londoners (Massey, 2007), with increasing inequalities of housing and employment (Finney et al., 2014). South of the river, where my research site is situated, became a place of controversy because of redevelopment and gentrification, bringing debate about who belonged to this place (Twigger-Ross and Uzzell, 1996), and concerns about ‘social cleansing’ (Hill, 2014, Meaker, 2015). Gentrification is not a neutral term or process, but reflects “class-based displacement” (Lees et al., 2008:xxii), requiring critical examination through a “social justice agenda” (Lees et al., 2008:xxiii), particularly as it may be argued that gentrification serves to ensure policy-makers control the ‘problematic’ working classes (Uitermark, 2007). Bermondsey space has also been historically used by right-wing racists. The British Fascist Party would march there in the 1930s. (Jensen et al., 2012); BNP marches were prominent in the 1990s and 2000s, and electoral support rose for the National Front in 2002, and for the BNP in 2010 (Jensen et al., 2012).

Young people are used to encountering diverse ethnicities in their everyday lives (Neal et al., 2014). Nevertheless, multicultural belonging is a complex story: youth in large UK cities attempt to symbolically mark their ‘space’ in their city and in super-diverse Britain. Harris et al. (2003:77) found ethnic minority youth in Birmingham and Bradford neither fully ‘belong’ in Britain nor in their Asian/Caribbean ancestral lands, thus they maintain a “minimalist stance” about Britishness. Racism in cities is also complex and shifting with some social groups stereotyped and excluded more than others, until perhaps a new group to vilify comes along. Back (1996:240) wrote about Black and White young people who shared “neighbourhood nationalism” but rejected Vietnamese youth in the area with “the worst forms of racial abuse”. More recently Clayton (2011) described Leicester youth excluding Somali newcomers from having the right to belong. Importantly “debates over belonging to home are thus intrinsically debates over power and who controls it” (Ralph and Staeheli, 2011:526). Harris et al. (2003) found African-Caribbean and Pakistani youth identified with their cities, rather than Britain; other studies show ethnic minority youth tend to stay in the safe spaces of their locale, rarely venturing to other parts of the city, deemed as White territory, due to fear of danger and racial harassment (Watt and Stenson, 1998).

Urban youth displaying territorial tendencies tended to be teenage boys from deprived neighbourhoods, for to behave territorially sometimes has “deep historical roots”, a “cultural expectation...passed down to young people from older generations” (Kintrea et al., 2008:4). Territoriality is “when a claim is made over an identified geographical space”, and there is “willingness to defend that space against others” (Kintrea et al., 2011). Territoriality can be dangerous if there is the desire to exclude others from your claimed space and to go to any lengths to do so. Contesting territorialism are urban spaces and places where youth engage in “multiethnic cultural practices which transcend racism and ethnic stereotypes” (Watt and Stenson, 1998:253). Nevertheless, youth may attempt to feel White through racialization of culture and space (Garner, 2012).

Racialised belonging to London was discussed by my research participants, familiar with the annual Bermondsey British National Party (BNP) march. Initially celebrating Hitler’s birthday (later changed to St George’s Day), the march predominantly involved BNP outsiders coming into Bermondsey in an “ugly and intimidating” manner (Locality, 2013): “that didn’t go well in area which had suffered from the Blitz” (Wyler, 2013). Since my research was conducted, the race equality think tank, Runnymede, described a Southwark charity challenging racialised belonging (2014): Bede House Association demonstrated a community stance against racism, working with tenants, police and the council to reclaim St George’s Day by organising a festival involving ethnically diverse local school students and residents. Consequently the BNP no longer march in Bermondsey (Locality, 2013). Bede House pledged “We will continue to support our local, multicultural community with a St George’s Day celebration, which has helped reclaim ‘English identity’ in Bermondsey from the far right’s politics” (End Racism This Generation, 2013). The London borough of Southwark was commended for their community cohesion initiatives and awarded beacon status for their hard work in reclaiming St George’s Day as a national emblem of diversity (Jensen et al., 2012).

**Figure 2** presents a map of Southwark, where my research site is situated. Once one of the poorest boroughs of London, Southwark has undergone increasing gentrification as “young professionals” have come to live “amid the families of unemployed dockworkers” (Savitch, 1988:188). The socio-diversity and social polarisation of Southwark is popularly observed: “The borough’s neighbourhoods vary from Bankside, where the Globe theatre and Tate Modern gallery stand proudly beside the Thames, to places with names historically synonymous with the working class – Bermondsey, Walworth, Peckham – to gentrified East Dulwich”, as well as the notorious Aylesbury Estate (Hill, 2014). Tony Blair symbolically chose the Aylesbury Estate “as

the backdrop for an announcement” on New Labour’s plans to tackle social exclusion, poverty and unemployment (Haylett, 2001:351). Southwark’s Aylesbury Estate is one of Europe’s largest social housing projects, associated with ‘social problems’ (Gold, 2007): “A sprawling mass of monumental concrete blocks, it was home to 7,500 residents – the size of a small town. For years, the estate has been vilified and painted as the black hole of London, sucking in unsavoury types to create a crime-riddled nightmare of poverty” (Meaker, 2015). Child poverty, child obesity, teenage pregnancies, adult smoking related deaths, homelessness, long term unemployment, and new cases of sexually transmitted infections are seen as features of social deprivation - higher than the England national average - impacting upon the health of Southwark locals (Public Health England, 2015). Life expectancy in Southwark is lower than boroughs like Kensington and Chelsea (Massey, 2007). My research will show young people residing in Southwark are deeply concerned about social divisions and inequalities that impact upon their sense of belonging to southeast London.

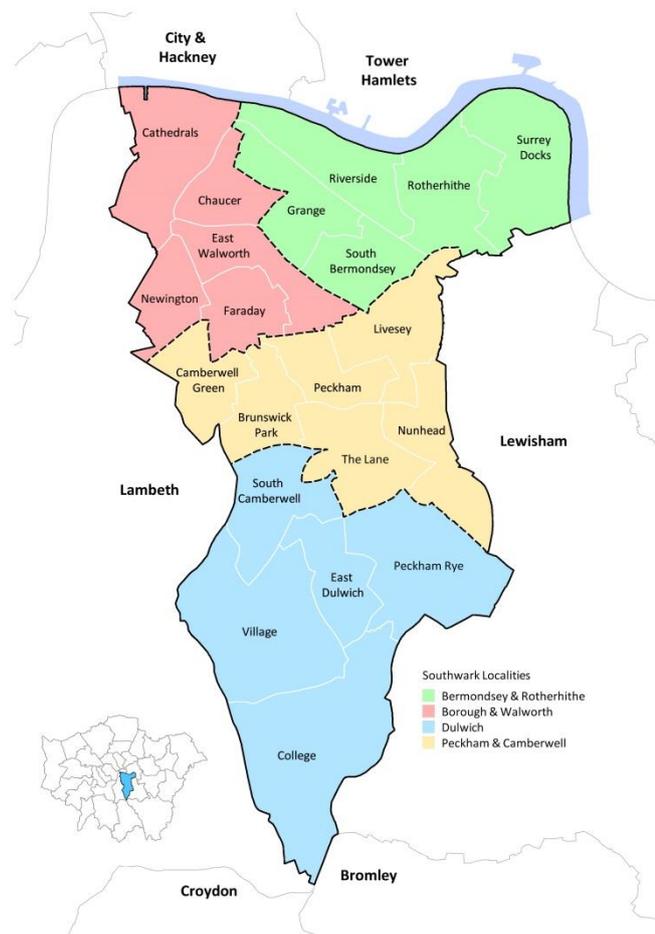


Figure 2: Map of London Borough of Southwark (Southwark Council website, n.d.)

## **BOUNDARIES OF BRITISHNESS IN BERMONDSEY**

In Chapter Two I outlined work by Jacobson (1997) and Vadher and Barrett (2009) regarding perceptions of Britishness contained within specific boundaries. Here, I build on their findings by additionally including the theoretical importance of the religious boundary of Britishness, for the current Fundamental British Values (Department for Education, 2014) requirements, and the Prevent duty (HM Government, 2015) draw upon Muslim faith, identities and belongings (Miah, 2015, Birt, 2015, Qureshi, 2015, Reclaiming Schools, 2015, Faure Walker, 2016, Adams, 2016). I will now refer to the boundaries established by Vadher and Barrett (2009) and (Jacobson, 1997) in presenting my research participants' discourses of local and national belongings. Throughout the data, the historical boundary of Britishness identified by Vadher and Barrett (2009) features heavily in students' discourses of Britishness.

### **Racial, Religious and Historical Boundaries of Britishness**

#### ***Britishness and Whiteness in Bermondsey***

Chapter Two explored how Britishness is often inseparable from Whiteness (Swann, 1985, Maylor et al., 2007, Sanderson and Thomas, 2014). My research participants also frequently relayed Britishness in Bermondsey as principally belonging to White people, making connections between local place, race and nation. Even if there is "inherent definitional slipperiness and instability" about Whiteness (Rasmussen et al., 2001:8), racial superiority and privilege has influenced notions of Britishness (Cohen, 1994, McClintock, 1995). Yet like "any other racial label, whiteness does not exist as a credible biological property" (Rasmussen et al., 2001:8), nor do racial groups have "coherent and consistent self-conscious group identities" (Lewis, 2004:626). Case studies outlined in Maylor (2010) manifest discourses of racism evident in students' discussions on Britishness, whilst Hand and Pearce (2009:461) cite examples of teachers mentioning that students demonstrated "a form of patriotism verging on racism or xenophobia"<sup>26</sup>, which is unsurprising as "xenophobia and nationalism are thriving" (Gilroy, 2005:2). Race, a "category of social visibility...made and affirmed through processes of seeing and being seen", needs deeper interrogation and contestation (Brahinsky, 2011:146).

Terms like race and Whiteness are "inconsistently" defined in empirical and theoretical scholarship (Rasmussen et al., 2001:8), perhaps because concepts like racism are "notoriously difficult" to define (Back, 1996:9). Ethnic belonging when tied to an "exclusive and regressive

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<sup>26</sup> Unexpected coverage and hostility to research by Hand and Pearce (2009) from the British newspapers evidences mainstream media distorting valid educational research, causing moral panics about Britain and its borders.

form” of national identity becomes symbolic of British racism (Hall, 1996b:446). Racialised belonging is nothing new; imperialism and colonialism and its lasting legacies (Neely and Samura, 2011) result in the continuation of political discourses “homogenising groups, de-historicising and not seeing their struggles, reducing their distinctiveness and viewing them as bearers of particular kinds of cultural norms” (Garner, 2012: 451). Political narratives, through official documents, equate “enhanced immigration and asylum controls” with “improved sense of citizenship and community”, but mixed messages emerge as advantages of migrants entering the UK are also outlined (Walters, 2004:239). Thus new (and old) migrants encounter “hostility and welcome” (Sarup, 2005:95), learning nation is “always subject to contestation, especially about who belongs to it” (Day and Thompson, 2004:83). Ethnic minority communities negotiate new contestations. Students are impacted upon by the ‘War on Terror’ rhetoric, experiencing “new excuses for anti-Islamic racism” (Scourfield et al., 2005:222).

When exploring Britishness, research participants Kadisha and Joe raised personal identifications and positionings in relation to racial and multicultural belongings. Joe, a White British male student, stated fierce pride for White British heritage, explaining he loved “everything” about this project (See Chapter Six for Joe’s artwork). His teacher observed Joe was exceptionally engaged and excited about this classwork, more than usual. The title he chose for his artwork about the army suggested grand sentiments about Britishness and belonging: *Pride of Britain: Man for Man we are the best*. For Joe, Britishness was heavily interconnected to ethnic and racial markers: “I consider every White person to be British straight away”. Kadisha, born in Britain to Jamaican parents, understood Whiteness as complex and diverse, challenged Joe’s belief that every White person can straightforwardly be categorised as British. When Kadisha raised White diversity, Joe responded with racialised stereotypes of nationality:

Joe: I can tell a Polish person from a Welsh person from a Scottish person...Just by looking at them. The colour of their skin. Welsh people are pale. Scottish people are pale. Polish people are massive and hench. Most of them. White British... English people are... think they are hard and are crazy about football.

Thus, Joe homogenised the Welsh, Polish and Scottish according to physical appearance, passionately claiming “White British” identity for the English. His ideas were similar to nineteenth century discourses that attempted to “identify the different “races” of which the British population were composed, using hair and eye colour and skull measurements (Beddoe 1885)” (Miles and Brown, 2006:27).

If Joe encountered Kadisha on a London street, he claimed he would not think her British, though he knew this was a “stereotype”. Joe argued “she is...like Jamaican... a different colour and

stuff... and you'd just think she's from a different place. Obviously she is. She might be born here but she's still of a different race". Carolus Linnaeus' *Systema Naturae*, published in 1735, in which humans are divided into four classifications, and the subsequent racial taxonomy asserted by Johann Blumenbach, are still used today (Fluehr-Lobban, 2006:4): "The strength and endurance of racist description and associated stereotypes continue to show the persistence of the race concept and how difficult it is to shed long-held beliefs, myths, and stereotypes". Joe assumed he just needed to look at Kadisha's physical appearance to deduce her identity and 'classify' her, like Linnaeus and Blumenbach, as separate. When defining Britishness, student Joe specifically focused upon White English ancestry and heritage, intersecting race with nation.

Critical race theory works to explode the myth about biological notions of race. The social construct of race is interrogated as a contested concept (Brahinsky, 2011). The "dubious nature of the validity of race" is emphasised by "(1) its conspicuous absence from the worldview and cultural practices of ancient Africans and (2) its recent development on the landscape of human history, as manifested in European thought and cultural practice" (Cokley, 2002:32). Kadisha critically interrogated Joe's ideas on racialised belonging to Britain, asking him: "You can immediately look at someone and tell if they are of British origin or not?":

Joe: Yeah...you can.

SH: Do I look British?

Joe: No.

Kadisha: No.

Both students saw the visible marker of my skin colour as problematic with regards to constructing Britishness. Fluehr-Lobban (2006:22) writes about a third generation Japanese American whose taxi driver could not grasp that he was from California, not Japan: "Ronald Takaki's visual phenotype overwhelmed the linguistic message he was communicating. His Japanese features signalled "foreigner"" (Fluehr-Lobban, 2006:22). Although Kadisha critically questioned Joe's stereotyping, she also stereotyped my skin colour as not British, revealing ambivalence about ways to understand the relationship between Britishness and race. Yet, at the end of the interview both Kadisha and Joe would want to know more about my sense of Britishness. Racial and ethnic identities are "riven by contradictions, ambivalences, situational and contextual variations, and unpredictable individual and group alliances" (Rattansi, 2000:122). This chapter shows that national identities seem similarly ambiguous.

Joe perceived the English as having more of a claim to Britishness, as feeling more British than the Scottish, Irish and the Welsh who he saw as having a "passion" for their specific country and

wanting to “separate”. Joe’s argument is not dissimilar to the fears of the political elite about Britain ‘separating’ if Scotland and Wales become independent (Fuchs, 2016). For Joe, there was significant difference between belonging to Britain as a legal citizen and belonging with “passion”. He was unsure whether the Scottish considered themselves to be British, even though he believed they were British; he felt certain most English people considered themselves to be British. Joe disliked the Irish for they “separated themselves from us” for which he believed “they’d no need”. Interestingly Colley (1992b:8) argues the “invention” of Britishness was “so closely bound up with Protestantism, with war with France and with the acquisition of empire, that Ireland was rarely able or willing to play a satisfactory part in it”. Some Britons reject British identity, preferring to identify with Englishness or Scottishness. Bechhofer and McCrone (2010) write perhaps this is because they are reacting against the British Empire’s past responding to devolution, or maybe they prefer to identify with the history, traditions, culture and institutions of England or Scotland respectively. Interesting questions arise about how the promotion of British values is received by those who reject Britishness, and prefer Englishness, for example.

Joe’s ideas about Black British identities were essentialised and racialised: “I don’t think any Black person in this school would consider themselves to be British”. He was annoyed at multiple identifications amongst Black peers: “They always talk about their countries and half of them have never been to their countries (nor) want to go their countries”. He created a dichotomy between himself and his Black peers: “Their passion for their countries is passion I have for my country”. Joe’s discourses sometimes revealed “self-generated preoccupations” of patriotism: “us and them, loyalty and enmity, fidelity and betrayal” (Johnston, 2007:26). Socio-psychological approaches can be usefully combined in understanding national identity’s emotional/affective dimension: Vogler (2001:20) argues sociology should investigate “strong emotions such as love, hate, shame and anger”, not just socio-political and socio-cultural aspects of identity. Joe displayed emotional and affective elements to national belongings. I asked Joe whether ethnic minority students might have “passion about Britishness” too:

Joe: Not what I’ve seen...Nah. The majority say it’s about where they come from. I feel like Britain’s getting used in the sense that people are coming over here, claiming our benefits. And I don’t think we should be letting people in unless they’ve got a good job...

Right wing anti-migrant rhetoric about “coming over here” and “claiming our benefits” seeped into Joe’s discourses of Britishness. Linking the rise of immigrants with the rise of (youth) unemployment, particularly by National Front propaganda, has long been problematic (Hewitt, 1986). Media and political rhetoric powerfully propagate deeply problematic ideas about belonging and Britishness, excluding of the consequences of Empire, to maintain ‘cultural

hegemony' (Wemyss, 2009). Media content transmits "particular cultural, social, ethnic, and political values, knowledge, and advocacies" (Gay, 2002:109). Through tabloid news, British ethnic minorities are paradoxically accused of both claiming British benefits and taking British jobs. Cole (2016:10) refers to Althusser's concept of *interpellation* as necessary to understand contemporary racisms: "Interpellation is the process via which the politicians and the media, for example, claim to be speaking on behalf of the people: 'what the British people have had enough of'...". Thus the complexities of racialised representations require investigation with students.

Joe polarised White British and Black British students, excluding Black students from Britishness by arguing that they have more "passion", and hence stronger identifications, for their African ancestral homelands. Yet my data shows Black students, like Kadisha and Chris, were negotiating belonging to Britain with the racism they experienced, expressing *identification* whilst simultaneously seeking *recognition*. Another student, Bradley, born in Bermondsey with Nigerian heritage, pointed out though he was "proud" to be British and felt he belonged to Bermondsey, it was nonetheless a "racist" area. Bradley felt "unsure" about Britishness as "in some ways it can be positive and in other ways it's not". Ethnic minority youth in Bradford also struggled with belonging, feeling they belonged as citizens, but felt that the White British did not recognise them as belonging to Britain (Hussain and Bagguley, 2005). The "cultural and spatial mosaics of societies" altering due to diasporic influences (Ehrkamp, 2008:118) impact upon students. The East End of London, for example, has evolved over centuries as the Huguenots, the Irish, the Jews, and the Bangladeshis sought sanctuary and better lives (Wemyss, 2009).

Although Joe claimed fixed ideas about Britishness and Whiteness, later in the interview he explained he was unsurprised that I felt British: "You probably you do (feel British)... you've grown up in Britain...born in Britain. You are British". He observed that I might *identify* with Britishness. To belong to a nation necessitates *identification* with its culture, but also *recognition* (Gellner and Breuilly, 2008). Joe was reluctant to offer this 'recognition', unable to comprehend multicultural Britishness, multiple identifications and the postcolonial belongings that make up British identities today. Joe insisted Britishness and Whiteness were interconnected, but then conceded that Britishness identification can move beyond appearance, as "accent" can highlight Britishness. Both Kadisha and Joe regarded appearance as significant in ascertaining whether someone belongs to Britain. Discourses of Britishness thus come across as complex and contradictory, as students focused on accent and appearance, presented Whiteness as Britishness, and conceded ethnic minorities can identify with and be recognised as British.

At the end of the interview, there was a reflective pause before Kadisha asked about my identity:

Kadisha: Do you feel like you are British? (laughs)

SH: (laughs) I do, yeah, I think I do.

Joe: Why is that? Is it 'cos you've been brought up in Britain?

SH: Yeah... born in Britain...brought up in Britain...and you know how you Joe talk about the docks and Bermondsey.... I feel very much from... being part of Lancashire... because I guess you can tell. I'm from North Manchester....Lancashire...so I feel very strongly and passionately about being from that area

Joe: I bet you know a lot of the history...

Joe expressed pleasure discussing the history of Lancashire cotton, and how people came from New Commonwealth countries like Pakistan to work in the mills after World War II. Throughout the interview he emphasised his Britishness, but at one point informed Kadisha and me, at length, of his grandfather's French identifications: "Now I think about it... like on my mum's side I think I'm a bit French". As he elaborated upon his grandfather's "connections" with France during the war, it emerged Joe was not "a bit French", but his grandad had briefly lived with a French family in England. Joe was enthusiastic about providing a non-British link to his heritage; perhaps this gave Joe a chance to show 'diversity' and 'difference'. My colleagues have pointed out White British students often keenly highlight Irish ancestry lay claim to cultural diversity.

Joe frequently displayed passion for researching identity and history, and revealed ambitions to join the army to discover new places: "I wanna train... go see new places...Yeah, fighting for our country". He believed "unless you felt you were hundred percent British", you would not fight for Britain, for example, he thought ethnic minorities would not join the army. Joe has internalised the 'Invisible Empire' that dominates discourses of Britishness (Wemyss, 2009). West Indian immigrants to Britain, as well as their relatives, had served Britain during World War Two (Ward, 2004, Modood, 2005). Indians worked in the war factories and served in the navy (Ward, 2004). The War had "encouraged migration at the same time as it created a new sense of a socially cohesive British identity" excluding Black and Asian migrants arriving in Britain who were seen as the Other (Ward, 2004:124). Joe doubted attachments his ethnic minority peers had for Britain could ever be as strong as his. Joe's perspective of doubting the belongings of ethnic minorities is not new, and crosses British class boundaries. Ward (2004:125) explains the attempts at "reasonableness" made by a retired judge relaying views on Britishness to the Welshpool Conservative Club in 1970: "The judge explained his desire to exclude in two ways. First, that there were too many immigrants to be 'absorbed' into Britishness, and second, that the immigrants did not want to be British anyway".

Joe's ideas on Britishness reveal themes of pride, power and patriotism, as depicted in his artwork (see Chapter Six):

Joe: ...Britishness... I think of the army and that's what my one is based on...the army... and the power we have. I think it's... statistics I read about... man for man... Britain have got the best army... but obviously we don't have the most population so... like all the allies we have... so powerful for a little country.

Joe's emotional attachments to the army seem to be a contemporary equivalent to the emotional attachments to empire, nation and monarchy that were once encouraged in Britain, especially during wartime (Ward, 2004). A long-standing senior teacher at the school discussed with me the cultural character of Bermondsey and its relationship with Britishness. She reflected upon the pro-monarchy stance of the locals, as well emotional attachments to the St George's flag which she argued was frequently found flying in this working-class part of London. White working-class British boys may find that joining the army is one of the few viable masculine employment 'escape routes' available since the closure of the steel, mining and docking industries in their local areas (McDowell, 2011). Strikingly Joe's use of the first person plural when he twice referred to "fighting for our country" highlighted his deep emotional attachments to nation. He also dismissed his ethnic minority schoolmates: 'they' wouldn't fight in the British army, he claimed. When prompted about Black British soldiers, Joe conceded that there may be ethnic minority soldiers in the British army but again firmly spoke against multiple loyalties, arguing one can have loyalty to Britain alone.

Joe enjoyed learning about ancestry, for example, he explained he watched television programmes that explored people's ancestry and deconstructed notions of racial purity:

SH: How would you feel if you did this DNA test and they said to you that your great great grandfather was actually Black ...Jamaican or African?

Joe: It would shock me. It would actually really shock me. I'd believe them.

Both Joe and Kadisha discursively explored the complexities of race, discussing alternative perspectives and introducing "the start of a different narrative" (Hall, 2005:26). Their ideas showed that the contested nature of the notion of race needs urgent discussion in the classroom. Kadisha and Joe's peers also raised important points about the complexities and evolving nature of Britishness. The interplay between race, multiculturalism and Britishness therefore needs examining, to enable students to negotiate and comprehend belongings. I will now discuss the students' conceptions of race and place as they located themselves as belonging to Bermondsey in their discourses on Britishness and belonging.

### ***Stereotypes of Place and Race in Bermondsey: Racialised London***

Policy makers are frequently advised by researchers to consider the impact of place identities on multicultural conviviality and everyday cosmopolitan belongings (Neal et al., 2014), whilst academics attempt to work out how racialisation affects urban experiences (Brahinsky, 2011). Young people's attachments to place often "provides security, access to social networks and/or a sense of identity" (Smyth and McInerney, 2014:296), whilst simultaneously the "multiplicity and ambiguity" of place reveals the realities of belonging to an evolving London (Eade, 2000:6). In London, categories such as "'Cockney', 'English', 'working class' and 'British'" are constructed as "subcategories of whiteness, each superficially racially unmarked, yet all are sites of struggle over their racial meanings" (Wemyss, 2009:69). For Joe, belonging to Rotherhithe or Bermondsey was caught up with racial meanings which he contrasted with other London areas he deemed to be Other. Thus, as well as homogenising nations, Joe racialised London, with what he perceived as Rotherhithe racialised as White British. Chelsea was also White British, Joe claimed: "I've not been there a lot, but when I have been there, I've seen lots of White people walking around". Areas he perceived as multicultural, he dismissed as not British:

Joe: I don't consider Fulham to be a British part of London...Because of the races in that area. They are just all Indians that live in Fulham – and yeah, I wouldn't consider that place to be British if I was in search for British people.

Kadisha challenged Joe's categorisation and racialisation of London areas: "Joe is looking at Britain's history. Not the present". Kadisha saw Joe as articulating historical Britishness, specifically the historical context of dockers working on the River Thames. Kadisha argued today's London contained a multitude of cultures contributing to the modern story of Britishness. Joe agreed he was thinking of "past British people", when the Docklands were thriving. A "selective history" about the narrative of the docks has romanticised the White working classes, while ignoring the ethnic minority contribution, and downplaying the consequences of "colonial expansion and expropriation of land and people" (Wemyss, 2009:49). Counter-stories revealing the historical presence of ethnic minority communities in the London docking areas, as well as connected histories with colonised peoples need discussing. Connected sociologies (Bhambra, 2014) are also evident in London spaces that have provided refuge for hundreds of years for people from all over the world (Wemyss, 2009). For example, in the relationship between East India Docks and the colonisation of Bengalis (Wemyss, 2009). Academic research into Asian communities in Britain tends to focus on post-1950s arrivals from the Indian subcontinent; the history of Asians in Britain since the time of the East India Company is often neglected (Visram, 2002).

According to Joe, Bermondsey, like school, was characterised by social interaction between distinct races and ethnicities. In Rotherhithe, the bordering area, Joe claimed, ethnically diverse peoples do not mingle. He did not witness inter-mixing in Britain “apart from when I come to school”. The Cattle Report (2001) emphasised ‘mixing’ as “the antidote to segregation, disaffection, distrust, hate and fear, all of which result from too much sameness” (Fortier, 2008). Often though ethnic minority communities are wrongly blamed for ‘self-segregation’ (Fortier, 2008, Finney and Simpson, 2009). That the majority White population could work harder in getting to know British ethnic minority communities is never discussed in national conversations on integration and social cohesion. Another student, Jodie James, also explained outside of school most of her friends were “White British”, whilst in school she had friends of “many different cultures and races”. Multicultural schools can provide ‘safe spaces’ (Antrop-Gonzalez, 2006, Ghosh and Galczynski, 2014), as ‘coming-together’ places in locales where youth, like Joe or Jodie, can engage in cultural exchanges. The burden of responsibility for an integrated society should not solely belong to ethnic minority communities though (Simpson and Finney, 2009), and neither should the blame be placed solely on ethnic minority communities for social problems like employment and housing. In boroughs like Southwark, often ethnic minorities are deeply impacted by social inequalities (Finney et al., 2014). It is not just the education system that inadequately addresses “deep-rooted everyday racism”, but the “collective failure” of British society to tackle institutional prejudice and discrimination needs examination (Lander, 2014:94). Race and racism are relevant to British society, particularly in educational settings, and evident in dismissal of race equality interventions, alongside claims we live in a post-racial society (Stokes and Nea, 2013).

Britishness equating to Whiteness continued emerging in Joe’s discourses: Rotherhithe was ‘British’ because it was more “White”. Joe dis-identified with Bermondsey and its growing ethnic population, instead laying claim to Rotherhithe (see Figure 1 – Map). Even if some, like Kadisha, argued Rotherhithe and Bermondsey are similar in characteristics, Joe disagreed: “Bermondsey, there’s a lot more gang action. Rotherhithe’s a lot more laidback”. Joe positioned Rotherhithe as desirable and respectable, contrasting with what he perceived as violent and multicultural Bermondsey. Kadisha again contested his perspective, explaining she had witnessed “a lot of fights” living in Rotherhithe. Ideas about territorial borders in London, and where a sense of belonging begins and ends, were emerging in their discussions of identity and belonging. Territorialism is often “cultural rather than geographical” (Hewitt, 1986). The “Silward” area, for example, which Kadisha regarded as part of Rotherhithe, according to Joe was part of neighbouring Deptford, although another time he seemed unsure. Kadisha unpacked Joe’s ideas

on “high raised” buildings leading him to confess to stereotypes about the residences of Bermondsey and Rotherhithe:

Joe: Like it sounds horrible... but I feel that all people who have just come to this country, they are on benefits, ain't got really good jobs, ain't got a lot of money so live on estates and stuff and most estates are in Bermondsey. You don't really get estates in Rotherhithe, except maybe Silward... but maybe that's not even Rotherhithe. I consider that road, like Surrey Quays, anywhere beyond McDonalds that is not Rotherhithe.

Place identities are frequently constructed in relation to ‘Other’ places that lie beyond (Massey, 1994); place is often used by people as a “social category” in order to “distinguish themselves from others” (Twigger-Ross and Uzzell, 1996). While housing estates are often pilloried by media and political discourses, those inhabiting these spaces might think positively about their neighbourhoods (Herbert and Rodger, 2016). I asked the students what lay beyond McDonalds, to which both firmly replied the borough of Lewisham. Joe added that Lewisham begins where buildings become “high-raised”, which Kadisha contested as racialised discourse:

Kadisha: Can I say something? ...You are trying to say that all White people live in houses and Black people live in high-raised flats (laughs)

Joe: Yeah, they do.

Kadisha: You can't say that!

Joe acknowledged he “can't say it” and that it was “a bit horrible”. Joe's contradictions became apparent when he admitted it was a “stereotype” that he did not agree with:

Joe: I don't agree with it. It's my opinion.

Kadisha: Exactly, so you agree with it. You're saying that's your opinion.

Again Kadisha engaged in critical pedagogy, challenging stereotypes and myths. Joe's reference to the high rise and low rise residences manifested youth encounters with territorial boundaries. Boundaries “between the desirable and the rough, between the established and the incomers, and between the respectable and disreputable are typically well-rehearsed social boundaries” (Husband et al., 2014:1) that young people might encounter:

The criteria that justify these certitudes are rehearsed and validated in exchanges of emotionally rich expressions of opinion, shared between in-group members as they record the most recent violation of their territorial dignity (Husband et al., 2014:1).

Kadisha confronted Joe on his views about the demographics of Rotherhithe and Bermondsey. Kadisha attempted to clarify Joe's stereotypical assertions about immigrants and Blacks residing in “flats”, reminding him about professional migrants working in London. She contested his view “foreigners” were benefit-claiming, high-rise flat dwelling and unemployed, by highlighting

affluent and ambitious immigrants, referring to doctors, entrepreneurs and home-owners. When Joe conflated ideas about minority ethnic communities and the welfare state, Kadisha argued minority ethnic individuals are often affluent with professional and entrepreneurial skills.

Fascist groups, like the National Front, and mainstream political and media spokespeople “share responsibility for exploiting and redirecting the disillusionment caused by unemployment and poverty” towards refugees and migrants (Alia and Bull, 2005:25). Kadisha, like her peers, recognised media distortion of the Black experience. Stereotyping Black boys as dangerous gang members results in Black students feeling criminalised, thus impacting upon self-esteem and educational achievement (Stokes and Nea, 2013). The British media has long been seen to promote racism (Verma et al., 1994), which still occurs today through television programmes and current affairs reporting, unfair and problematic portrayals of minority ethnic communities, and irresponsible reporting by journalists (The Runnymede Trust, 2014). Moreover, 94% of UK journalists are White (National Council for the Training of Journalists, 2013). These critiques of the media become a concern when we observe that for some students, “mass media is the only source of knowledge about ethnic diversity” (Gay, 2002:109). Race and racism continue to exist “in new and emerging forms and in a denial of racism that sees it as ‘no longer an issue’” (Stokes and Nea, 2013).

Kadisha understood media moral panic had seeped into Joe’s perceptions of London violence. Ellie and Chris also referred to moral panics surrounding Bermondsey and its reputation as a racist chav place. Joe merged stereotypes with further racialisation by referring to stabbings in London, “all to do with Black people”. Educationalists working in the field of critical whiteness studies have highlighted how there only seem to be three ‘models of whiteness’ that are ‘readily available’ for students (Tatum, 2016):

- (i) White supremacy
- (ii) What Whiteness?
- (iii) White guilt

Joe identifies with the first model of Whiteness as demonstrated by his racist commentary. Ellie has moved beyond the second model of Whiteness and mentions her privilege as White British female, but is not consumed by shame or embarrassment about Whiteness. There is a fourth more preferable model of whiteness, Tatum (2016) argues, that will help White students to adopt a positive White identity: the model of the White ally who is a White anti-racist activist speaking up against institutional and everyday racisms. At times, I can see that Ellie is embracing

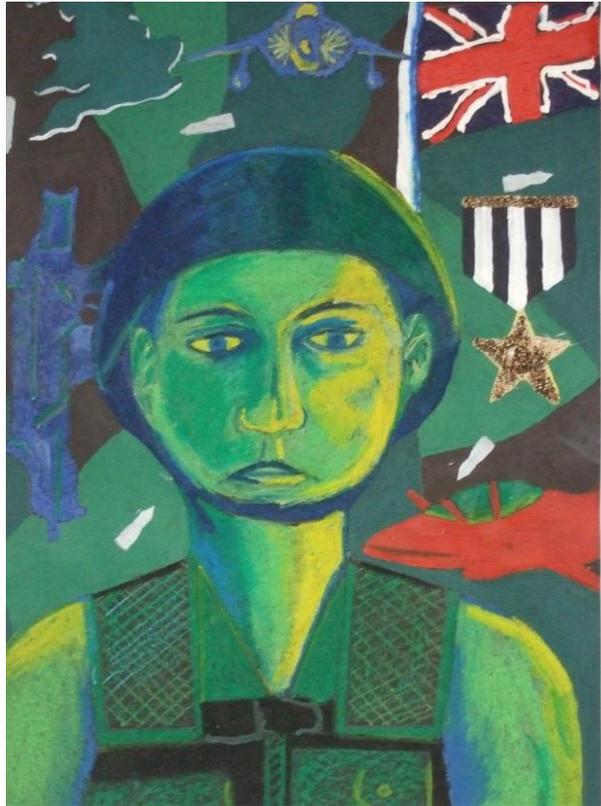
this positive White identity as she allies with Chris in condemnation of racism, and in celebration of multicultural, multiracial and multiethnic Britishness. A critical race theory approach could help White students like Joe and Ellie to deconstruct racialised rhetoric and racist ideologies that pervade media, political and societal discourses. By interrogating White invisibility, privilege and domination, students might be in a better position to interrogate the social construct of 'race'.

Kadisha identified the role of the media in demonising Black youth by linking them to gangs: "...as soon as they see it's Black people, then they wanna make a big deal of it". Kadisha deconstructed Joe's stereotypical ideas about "White people's idea of fun is goin' down the pub and watchin' football" by reminding him of football hooliganism, and in particular, the notorious violent reputation of the local football club Millwall, supported by many of the school students. Millwall has a national reputation as having a large fan base of racists, but in 2011, the fans voted for a player of Malawi origin as player of the year (Jensen et al., 2012). Since my data was collected, anti-racism work taking place in Bermondsey allowed primary school students to visit Millwall FC and engage in anti-racism, art and identity work (Show Racism the Red Card). Joe regarded the pub as a positive feature of White Britishness. Positive references to pubs as representing 'English' identity are sometimes claimed by White youth, but Muslim youth discourses might associate 'British' or 'White' identities negatively with alcohol, pubs and drunks (Sanderson and Thomas, 2014). These notions are not dissimilar to Engels on "incivility", who "writing in the 1840s, condemned the Irish who made up a large percentage of the working class people he observed in Manchester for their drinking habits" (Rooke and Gidley, 2010:99).

My research with the Art students shows race and place need to be deconstructed (Brahinsky, 2011, Nayak, 2003c, Jackson, 2005) if we are to work towards developing cohesive communities and societies. Critical Marxists in the 1970s identified the importance of power and domination in any discussions on space, arguing the social and spatial cannot be divorced (Neely and Samura, 2011). Work has been done on race and space in distinct fields, but needs collaboration and interdisciplinarity (Neely and Samura, 2011:1934). Power and inequalities are inevitable factors of global cities as they contain disadvantaged places and people (Sassen, 2005); capitalist ideologies in particular have contributed to the inequalities in places (Harvey, 1996). Young people are hemmed in by policies of education, housing and welfare that negatively impact upon their experience of multicultural Britain (Berkeley, 2011). Kadisha and Joe's conversation on Britishness, place and race highlight the importance of exploring social inequalities and the power of media and political discourses in representing multicultural Britain negatively. Joe's

racist discourses also reveal that teaching White students about racism is necessary and urgent. In the next section I will discuss students' perceptions of religion and culture in Bermondsey and multicultural Britain.

### ***Boundaries of Religion and Culture in Bermondsey***



*Figure 3: GCSE Artwork on Britishness by Joe Wayne:*

*Pride of Britain: Man for Man we are the best*

When asked if he found anything difficult about the project, Joe replied: “People saying they don’t like being British”. Belonging to Britain was emotional and passionate for Joe, but he believed cultures are constraining and restrictive:

Joe: I don’t have any culture... I just live life with no rules but the law... This means I have more freedom and don’t have to think about if I am doing any wrong...

... I don’t believe in anything... I think that makes me British.

Britishness was almost like a religion for Joe, seemingly where his heart and soul lay, evident in how enthusiastically he embraced the project on Britishness. It might be argued that his pride and passion for Britishness was his belief. Patriotism has been likened to a faith (Bragg, 2006), while ‘primordial ties’ to nation might “come to acquire a power and control over humans that

they elevate to the level of the sacred, in much the same way as they develop and maintain their beliefs about God and religion” (Allahar, 2006:33). For Joe, British patriotism equated to having no “culture” and no religious affiliations: “...I don’t believe in anything... I think that makes me British”. Another White British student, Katie Oakham, had also stated she was “part of a British culture, but I don’t really consider it as a culture”. She hadn’t thought about British identity until this project.

Interestingly Joe thoroughly enjoyed deep contemplation, through this Art project, of his sense of personal identity and belonging, proving that it is not just for people of other ethnicities and religions, even if he had stated that it was for his ethnic minority peers. Other White British students had expressed similar engagement with exploring British identity. Ollie, another GCSE Art student, too stated that he found it “useful” that the project allowed him to think about himself at a deeper level. Ollie stated “every now and then we get Black History month”, and contrasted the learning done then with the learning done now about Britishness. Another student, Lucy Pink, also stated “we don’t really celebrate” being British. She hadn’t thought about Britishness before the project as she “didn’t know what it was”, and so she found the project interesting and useful. Though the Eurocentric nature of the curriculum has been long established (Leighton, 2004, Maylor et al., 2007, Weller, 2007), some students believe White British history is ignored (Maylor, 2010). The Eurocentric curriculum is indisputably class-biased; White working-class students, like their ethnic minority peers, are often unable to relate to the content when “Anglocentricity, Britishness and Eurocentricity” that pervades the National Curriculum (Leighton, 2004:171). The working classes are brought up to believe British history is predominantly about Kings and Queens, and yet there is so much more to learn about political and historical class resistance (Bragg, 2006).

Even though Ollie enjoyed the exploration of British identity, he stated Britishness should not be discussed in school as it is “discussed everyday” and “anymore would just be unfair” to students from other cultures. Colley (1992b) argues that the construct of Britishness cannot be examined separately from world histories. The challenge is for teachers to provide opportunities for students, like my research participants, to understand that exploring Britishness and studying Black History are not mutually exclusive processes, as well as spaces to learn about shared class struggles in British history. Through a critical pedagogy framework, hierarchies of privilege and power can be critically interrogated as the classroom context creates collaborative communication between students and teachers, ultimately resulting in educational transformation and liberation from the oppressions of social injustices and social

inequalities (Darder et al., 2009a, Fischman and McLaren, 2005). Critical pedagogy, therefore, can give students the space to contest dominant master-narratives that separate Britishness from world histories by exploring counter-stories that show connected histories and sociologies.

Ollie's juxtaposition of learning about Black History Month with learning about Britishness suggests the need to discuss hyphenated, hybrid and multiple identities common in multicultural London, for example British Muslim, or Black British. When considering Britishness in a global perspective, students might learn about fluid global flows through the notion of *ethnoscapes*. Appadurai (1990:297) coined the term *ethnoscape* to refer to:

...the landscape of persons who constitute the shifting world in which we live: tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, guestworkers and other moving groups and persons constitute an essential feature of the world, and appear to affect the politics of and between nations to a hitherto unprecedented degree.

The ethnoscape we now inhabit is still just as "complex, overlapping, disjunctive" as the time when Appadurai (1990:296) was writing. The Art students' reflections of multicultural Britain show it is just as urgent to examine these complex ethnoscapes with our students in any work on Britishness and belonging.

Thus this research shows that students from all cultural backgrounds need opportunities to interrogate 'culture'. Students also need a space to configure the relations between religion and nation. Sometimes school students cite Britishness as interconnected to Christianity (Maylor et al., 2007). Another male research participant in the Art class, Ollie, stated "being British" is a "Christian thing". However Joe disassociates Christianity from Britishness:

Joe: ... like if I was Christian, I don't think I would consider myself British. I don't know where Christianity comes from. Probably comes from Britain. But if I was a religion. I'd probably think I'm Christian.

Joe was insistent that Britishness relays a lack of religiosity: "generally all the people I know and all my friends... all the people that I think are British don't follow a religion". Nevertheless, if he had to choose a religion, he stated he would opt for Christianity, but ultimately he claimed he and his friends value Britishness over religion. To be religious is the opposite of being British, in Joe's opinion. Joe painted a portrait depicting his ardour for "fighting" for or "defending" Britain which correlates to his ideas about Britain's "courage and bravery". He would love to fight for Britain. He wished the government would bring in mandatory military service. The religious, Joe argued, are searching and seeking answers, whilst the British just live in the here and now. It seemed Joe believed in Britain just as others believe in God.

Though some students equate Britishness with Christianity (Maylor et al., 2007), my findings show students might perceive Britishness as disconnected from religion. It is important then to understand students' conceptions of Britishness both as intersecting with religion or as areligious. Having no religious belief, according to Joe, was a feature of Britishness; he argued the British are "just laidback people, don't care about too much about why we are here, like what happened to get us here". He contrasted this characteristic of British identity with others who philosophically "spend their whole life searching for why they are here". This echoed Joe's argument that ethnic minorities find it more interesting to explore how they belong to Britain. Joe perceived deep reflection on belonging and identity as the realm of the Other, claiming that White British people "just live in the moment". However, Joe's intense fervour for this project on Britishness, his own deep reflections on belongings and identities revealed great engagement and enthusiasm, but also worryingly he professed attachment to racial status and hierarchy.

Pre-2001, before the riots in English northern towns and cities, prevalent policy ideas about young people in the UK highlighted multiculturalism, however since then emphasis is on "community cohesion, shared values and a renewed 'Britishness'" perhaps (Sanderson and Thomas, 2014:1). Formal approaches to community cohesion though can undervalue the negotiation of complex everyday multicultural micro-processes (Neal et al., 2014). Of concern is that the 'immigrant/host matrix' presents White Britons "with the homely privilege of automatic belonging" while ethnic minorities are "always just passing through, whose presence is in some way in need of explanation" (Back, 2009:207). This might also explain why, like Joe claims, ethnic minorities are attempting to seek answers on belonging and identity. Maybe they feel compelled to not only locate themselves in multicultural Britain, but also to defend their positioning too wider society who demands the explanation. This immigrant-host dualism seems to prevail in policy discourses on cohesion, integration and Britishness, with the presence of ethnic minorities needing explanation seeping into social institutions. If immigrants sense they are unwelcome in Britain though, they are less likely to identify with Britishness (Ward, 2004). Joe thought Britishness exploration would be of greater interest to ethnic minority students, who need to work out how they belong to Britain. Chris and Ellie argued that the migrant contribution to Britishness was significant and required further exploration in primary schools (see Chapter Five). Importantly, conviviality between students, like Kadisha and Joe, and Ellie and Chris, enabled open and honest discussion about their social experiences of belonging to Bermondsey, London and Britain, which I will continue to detail in the next section.

## Multicultural and Transnational Boundaries of Britishness

### *Multicultural London*

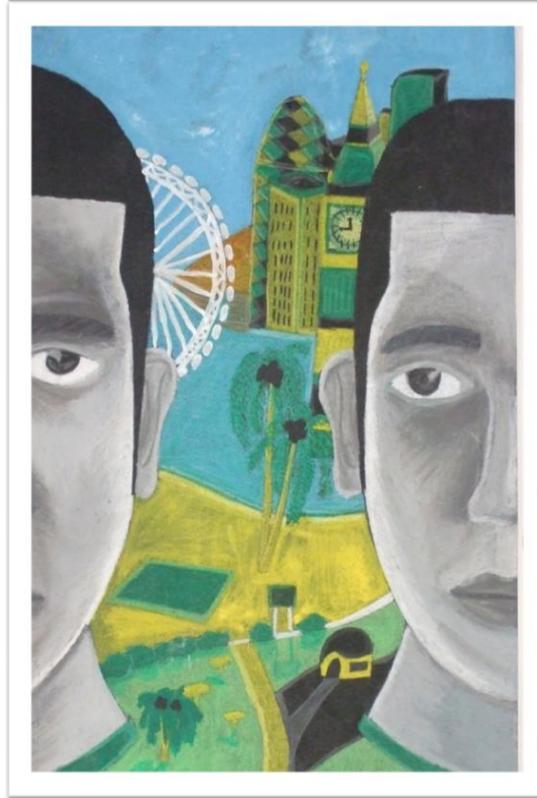


Figure 4: GCSE Artwork on Britishness by Chris Miller:

#### *Jamaican London*

The research site is situated in *super-diverse* London (see Chapter Two), where fluid cultural identities result in a complex multicultural society with “an elastic web of crosscutting and always mutually situational, identifications” disrupting ideas about fixed identities (Baumann, 1999:118). Exploring national identity, national belonging, citizenship and crossing borders in the current post 9/11 socio-political climate is important (Brazier and Mannur, 2003), particularly as nation-states are critiqued for prioritising national identity over community, local and global identifications and attachments (Banks, 2005). The urgent and timely importance of redefining an inclusive multicultural Britishness is shown to be a helpful way forward for young people grappling with notions of identity and inequality. All interviewees in Vadher and Barrett (2009:453) viewed multiculturalism as “positive and good”, for its inclusive and anti-racist philosophy, making this the most inclusive of all the boundaries of Britishness, preferable to other boundaries of racial/cultural exclusion. Multiculturalism, from a human rights

perspective, can helpfully simultaneously respect distinctive cultural identities and promote shared values (Berkeley, 2011). Whilst some theorists claim the local is not as important due to forces of globalisation, others have argued that *glocalisation* - an amalgamation of the *global* and the *local* (Robertson, 1995) - is increasingly evident as the global and the local are not mutually exclusive but often interdependent concepts in the study of modern societies (Husband et al., 2014).

As we saw in Chapter Five, teachers can help students to articulate their social relationships and identities by giving them safe spaces to make sense of their social experiences (Leistyna, 2009). From a very early age, young people “come to occupy an inherently ideological and thus political space, whether or not they are aware of it”, therefore we need to interrogate the “cultural practices” and “notions of youth” they encounter in their daily lives (Leistyna, 2009:51). The *ethnoscape* of nation must be explored “as a site of resistance and reinvention” (Giroux, 1995:55) where students’ narratives are meaningful, where students can resist master narratives and reinvent and rewrite the ways in which identities matter in their everyday lives. Narrating stories that counter master narratives is an act which is both political and pedagogical, and necessary in a globalised society, if we are to help students in “negotiating and constructing the social, political, and cultural conditions for diverse cultural identities to flourish within an increasingly multicentric, international, and transnational world” (Giroux, 1995:55).

Embodying intersectionality issues was Mixed heritage male Art student Chris. Familial and cultural attachments featured in Chris’ discourses of Britishness:

Chris: I’m half Jamaican half English because that’s who I am and how I feel... but I feel I belong more to the Jamaican culture because I only know my Jamaican side of the family and I grew up with only them.

His artwork, entitled *Jamaican London*, exemplified his view that British identity is composed of cultural diversity. Emphasising his Mixed heritage and dual identity through drawing two parts to his face, Chris juxtaposed London landmarks with Jamaican national colours of green, black and gold. Chris, like his peers, expressed ambivalent feelings about Britishness: “proud” of belonging to Britain, but also “I don’t feel part of it”. Chris argued media rhetoric, particularly negative representation of Black youth, influences his peers into making racial judgements. The ‘media obsession’ with London Black youth and gangs (Shildrick et al., 2010) impacted upon Chris’ sense of belonging to Britain. Chris referred to his observations of Black youth as demonised through negative media representation, portrayed as likely to “rob” or “stab” other Londoners. Headley (2002:68) argues Black identity can be grasped “not as static nor as already completed but rather as dependent on the stories individuals tell about themselves and their

understanding of their place in the world". Thus, tensions emerge in Chris' understanding of his place in British society; he attempts to relay his story of Britishness as one where he is proud of his British heritage, but at the same time, he recognises that media bias against Black youth makes his position as a Mixed heritage London youth difficult.

When Ellie's positioning as White and female, discussed later in this chapter, resulted in her providing a racialised and gendered stance on threat and safety, Chris responded by identifying the causes of spurious representation of Black youth. Chris spoke from a position as a young male identifying with Whiteness and Blackness in multicultural Britain. Political discourses urge a common culture and shared values through promoting Britishness and through the Fundamental British Values programme. Separately to these political pleas, we find Black and White youth in certain localities already crossing ethnic and racial boundaries to unite in class solidarity against political oppressions. This is nothing new, for the Brixton and Bristol riots regarding policing showed working-class ethnic solidarity when White adolescents joined Black protestors (Hewitt, 1986). Ellie and Chris collaborate, in the interview, to deconstruct media and political discourses about Bermondsey, thus, uniting in class solidarity.

For some students, school is the only site providing sustained and positive exposure to become acquainted with cultural, religious and ethnic diversity. Joe stated the local neighbourhood residents do not interact with people from other ethnicities or races on an everyday basis, but at school he witnessed that students of diverse backgrounds intermingled. Stokes and Nea (2013) highlight some London boroughs reveal sites of tension between different ethnic minority communities. City dwelling sharply hones in on the "general 'question of our living together' in a manner more intense than many other kinds of places" (Massey, 2005:169). Schools have an important role in fostering this diversity, and providing students with opportunities to learn about multicultural Britain. Historically the presence of immigrants has been blamed for societal disharmony (Tabili, 2006). Bringing local people, with diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, together to promote intercultural exchange about community issues can help improve the neighbourhood and create better understanding of super-diversity (Phillips et al., 2010). Policymakers and academics need to be representing "everyday lives, families and neighbourhoods as resources, rather than depicting them as deficits" (Smyth and McInerney, 2014:290). Involving youth in local politics in order for them to learn about how to resolve local problems is also recommended (Stokes and Nea, 2013).

### ***Transnational Britishness***

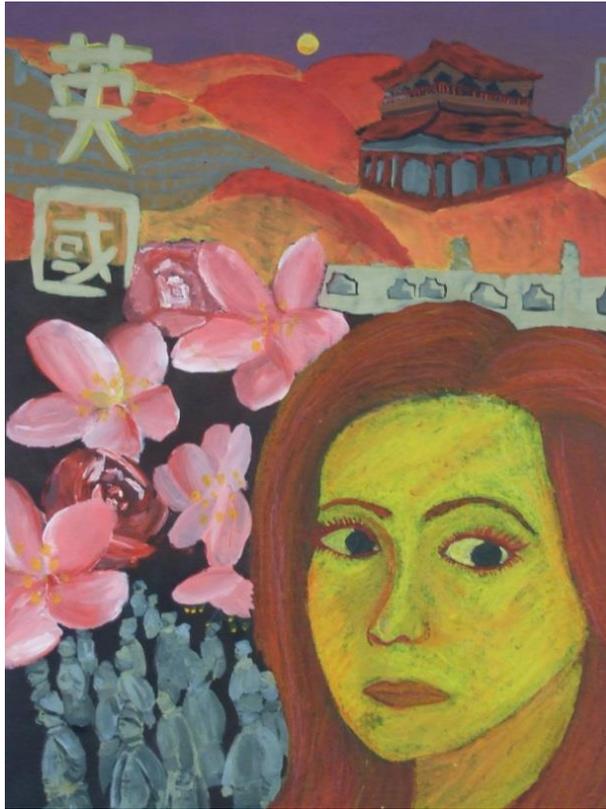


Figure 5: GCSE Artwork on Britishness by Mia Hoang:

*Culture Unknown*

Contemporary theorists have continued to build on the significance of power relations when analysing the meaning and practice of place, instead of simply seeing place as static, academics now argue place is about process and mobility, and about routes not roots (Massey, 1994, Cresswell, 2013). Roots still have significance as apparent in the attachments young Black Americans develop with Africa after reading Alex Haley's fictional text *Roots* (Allahar, 2006:31): Africa became "an idea of "home" as a place of spiritual escape or refuge, all with a view to combatting the alienation, poverty, and disenfranchisement that had become the condition of so many black Americans...". Transnational belongings are equally important for urban newcomers who can use their affiliations to express multiple diverse and global belongings (Clayton, 2011). Policy discourses on national identity promote "expectation that people should feel identity with a national community, even if it is hierarchical and exploitative of certain groups" (Vasta, 2013:198), ignoring the significance of transnational ties. Transnationalism, highlighting multiple attachments and belongings, negates this idea of assimilation into one homogenous society/culture frequently called for by political and policy rhetoric (De Haas, 2005), as transnational ties also relay the flawed nature of the "modernist political construct of the nation-state and citizenship" (De Haas, 2005:1273).

Inevitably *nation* is intertwined with exclusion or marginalisation of minorities (Balibar and Swenson, 2004, Maylor et al., 2007), as their sense of belonging is interrogated by rhetoric propagated by media and politicians. One of the students with Nigerian heritage, Tosin Ogbe, felt that the project was difficult as he felt he had to choose between Nigerian and British culture; he was concerned that exploring Britishness in lessons “could stress people out” and “make them think harder” about whether they are British. This highlights the importance of showing students multiple identifications and transnational ties are possible and common. Transnational experiences were also evident in the narratives of White British students. A White British student, Lily Temple, had only lived in Britain for ten years, as her parents moved with her to Guyana for five years: “...I saw a lot of different cultures (in Guyana) so Britain doesn’t seem interesting”. Lily was “not sure” if she felt British: “...to me it’s just a place I was born in”.

Diasporic citizens who might “feel excluded from hegemonic and top-down discourses of ‘Britishness’ (i.e. an identity perceived by some to be refracted primarily through ‘Whiteness’)” (Waite and Cook, 2011:13), will prefer emphasising transnational belongings. Back (1996:149) writes about Geoff who has “vacated” British identity; Geoff argues Britishness does not “attract” him, and that he would find it “an insult” to see himself as British. Similarly my Art student Kadisha was not keen to explore Britishness:

Kadisha: Britishness is a culture, to me, different than my own. I was born in Britain so a lot of the Britishness has rubbed onto me, but I feel most comfortable when I’m with people of my own culture.

Kadisha appreciated what she referred to as the “good opportunities”, which Vadher and Barrett (2009) refer to as the ‘instrumental’ boundary of Britishness. Nevertheless Kadisha claimed she did not “feel” British because of her Jamaican “background” and “parents”: “But I do feel more comfortable in Jamaica”. Back (1996:149) has argued that Black youth in his research, like Geoff, “are in the process of working out” their Britishness and Blackness. My research participant, Kadisha, was similarly working out her Britishness and Blackness, as evident in her artwork that showed her negotiating how she belonged to Britain. Another student, Mia Hoang, stated she felt “more comfortable” about her Vietnamese and Chinese background than her Britishness, perhaps because of her “appearance, friends, family and culture at home”. Mia claimed that she belonged to British, Vietnamese and Chinese cultures, but struggled with her negotiation of Britishness: “not knowing where I belong in it”. She demonstrated shifting and fluid identifications, due to ancestry and multilingualism: “I speak fluent Cantonese whereas I only understand Vietnamese”. As a Londoner, she highlighted the ease with which she belonged to Britain because “London is a multicultural society”. Moreover she pointed out her ability to

“communicate with more than one culture”. Interestingly she had given her artwork the title *Culture Unknown*. Mia’s artwork title could mean she was grappling with her own belongings and attempting to locate herself in one culture, as maybe she thought this was the norm, to have one known culture. Or her artwork title may be her way of expressing how wider society perceived her as with a *culture unknown*. Perhaps this was the transnational experience, that there was no one culture to belong to. Instead multiplicity mattered. Mia’s artwork demonstrated transnational identifications, for she imitated the Queen’s pose to show that “being British is important” to her, alongside “Chinese ornaments and landmarks....because I feel Chinese”. Mia also explained: “I’ve always felt part of both communities”.

Kadisha was also negotiating transnational attachments. She suggested ambivalence about Britishness: “I don’t think it means anything to me really...Just the place I was born in... the place I live in”. Yet her artwork reveals Britishness has significance to her identity too. Kadisha is caught up in the tensions of belongings. Belonging, after all, concerns both identification and acceptance (Gellner and Breuilly, 2008). Her peer Joe acknowledged that Britain is the place where Kadisha comes from, yet he also perceived Kadisha as not being visibly British. Kadisha seemed to be working out her positionality by discussing counter-narratives of home and belonging and pushing the boundaries of this Britishness project to ensure it is inclusive and transnational. Kadisha frequently mentioned she enjoyed learning about issues of history and heritage. She was keen to delve deeper into the histories of her “parents and ancestors”. Learning about culture and identities allowed her to “look at things differently”. Black British females’ identities and identifications was once an under researched area (Rattansi, 2000), and Kadisha’s engagement with identity issues highlights the importance of giving Black British females space to articulate their identifications. Joe showed interest in Kadisha’s journey of discovering more about Jamaican culture and traditions. Kadisha was critical of Britishness that excludes the contributions of minority ethnic people:

Kadisha: See the thing is Britain’s history isn’t just Britain’s... like the country was made up on a lot of other cultures. So you can’t just blank them out because other cultures helped make Britain.

SH: Like?

Kadisha: Africans. During slavery time when they came and made... I don’t know in particular the names of it... but I know they made loads of statues and buildings...

Joe: They basically were the people who built it up... they done all the graft... because they couldn’t get people to graft for them...

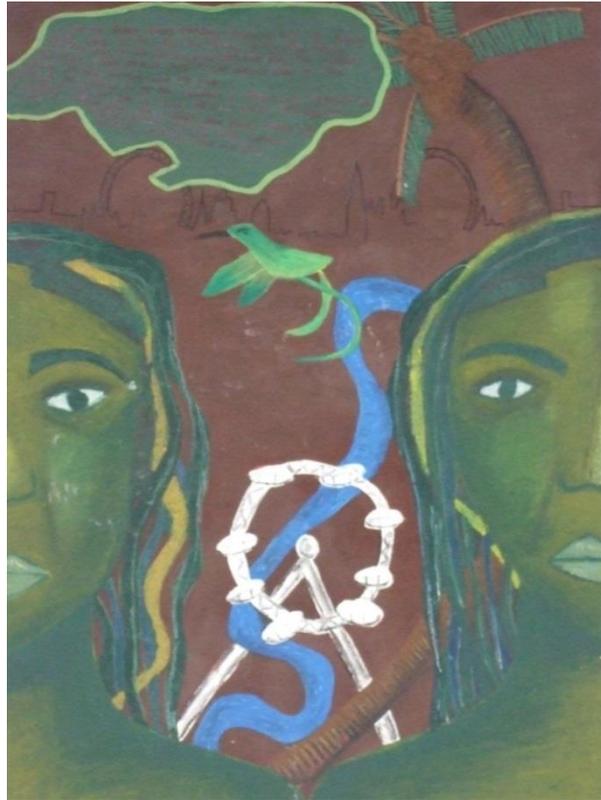


Figure 6: GCSE Artwork on Britishness by Kadisha Jones:

*Untitled*

Deeply uncomfortable truths about “the history of colonization” as “a record of betrayal, of lies, and deceits” (hooks, 2015:3) are known to arise when studying nation and identity. Joe and Kadisha have learned about the building of Britain in their History class, and this knowledge reminds them of another angle to the debate on Britishness, as well as another way to appreciate transnational belongings: the contribution of colonised peoples. Dominant White liberal discourses of Britishness frequently withhold the ongoing and prevalent ramifications of colonisation, requiring urgent interrogation of ‘the Invisible Empire’ (Wemyss, 2009). If Empire is occasionally made visible, often the bloody history is obscured in favour of commemorating victories of the British who ‘civilised’ the Others (Wemyss, 2009). History is important to contemporary identities (Weedon, 2004): regarding the historical boundary of Britishness, some students feel excluded from an “officially sanctioned and codified history” of Britain (Vadher and Barrett, 2009:451). Similarly Benjamin Zephaniah<sup>27</sup>, condemned a “sanitised history” of Britishness (Habib, 2014). Citing Parekh (2000b), Vadher and Barrett believe this exclusionary

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<sup>27</sup> Benjamin Zephaniah is also cited in the footnotes of Vadher and Barrett’s 2009 paper as a “high profile example” of the historical “boundary in operation”, for his reasons for rejecting the OBE (written about in *The Guardian* in 2003). VADHER, K. & BARRETT, M. 2009. Boundaries of Britishness in British Indian and Pakistani Young Adults. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, 19, 442-458.

history “ignores the contributions which other peoples have made to that nation, or ignores the exploitation, enslavement and massacre of other peoples during that nation’s history” (2009:451). Examining the writing of history is essential in understanding discourses of home, belonging and Britain in the context of Empire (Hall, 2006), and may help develop new inclusive notions of Britishness.

Kadisha articulated her attachment to her Jamaican origins, mentioning she felt detached from Britishness. Yet when asked about her artwork, she referred to her British identity: “One half is representing like being born in Britain and the other half is representing my background. And I just tried to incorporate two... cultures into my work”. Earlier Kadisha seemed to disassociate herself from Britishness, but now she articulated having half a British identity and a half a Jamaican one: “I tried to make it equal”. Though Kadisha discusses Jamaica passionately, she still seems to be attempting to work out how she belongs to Britain. She has not dismissed her identification with Britain, but she highlights it is a challenge to belong to a place where skin colour and afro hair types are distinguished as Other and exotic. The Black body as a “site of struggle” and an “embodied subject”(Weedon, 2004:14), appeared in Kadisha’s reservations about fully belonging to Britain. She felt pressured to frequently “explain” herself:

Kadisha: ...for instance, say my hair... being in this country I get asked all the time... like how do you do it ...all the time... but being in Jamaica...I don’t need to say ‘cos they already know. But in this country I have to explain things more. There’s like less of an understanding. Sometimes they look at you differently ‘cos you do things differently.

Waters (2006:143) refers to a Black university student who is repeatedly asked “innocent questions about black hair”: “...after you’ve been asked a couple of times about something so personal you begin to feel like you are an attraction in the zoo, that you are at the university for the education of the white students”.

Joe perceived British identity as almost monocultural, believing “British people are narrow-minded”, whilst his ethnically diverse peers are not:

Joe: Just because of the fact that they have only come from one... background, and they live in that background. Those people who have come from all different places have got to have more of an understanding for all different people’s beliefs.

When Kadisha expressed her desire to learn more about other cultures in school, arguing too much focus is placed on British history and culture in school subjects, Joe argued against Kadisha’s keenness for intercultural learning: “See I wouldn’t... that’s what I feel makes me British”. Joe was beginning to think about multiple attachments, whilst claiming “I can’t put myself in their shoes”.

Joe: I dunno what it's like to have all these ancestors that come from all different places. And you're born in Britain. And don't know what to say – either British? I reckon at home you're African, but when you come out and say go to school you say you're British.

Race is repeatedly raised in this discourse on transnational Britishness. The students seem interested in history, migration, diaspora and race relations. The conversation about Kadisha's transnational ties gives Joe an opportunity to opening to understand notions of national identity are slippery:

Joe: I feel like I am British... but really no one is British, no one is Jamaican, no one is African, no one is American 'cos everyone's just a mixture.

At times Joe advocated multiple and transnational identities, despite having also dismissed the experience of multiple and transnational belongings of his ethnic minority peers. Joe spoke against multiple identifications, not agreeing with minority ethnic students who give more value to their cultural heritage than their British identity. Whilst Kadisha is able to move between Britishness and Jamaican-ness, Joe struggles with the notion of multiple identifications. Rattansi (2000:132) has suggested that whilst ethnic minority British youth become accustomed to "identity switching": "they become more at home with not being at home... being able to survive ambiguity, uncertainty, fragmentation and the uneasiness of being", White working-class males may "bear the brunt of a series of shattering identity shocks". Joe's discourses on Britishness reveal these very 'identity shocks' as he attempts to grapple with 'ambiguity, uncertainty, fragmentation and the uneasiness of being' and belonging in multicultural London where complexities of class and race combine in young people's everyday lives. The Black students in school did not fit into Joe's perceptions of belonging to Britain because of their passionate affiliations for their African homelands. Joe needed opportunities to learn how Black African students may also have equally strong affiliations with Britain and with other places that impact upon their identity. Joe needed a space to develop a discussion on multiple and transnational belongings. I will now move onto discussing how the boundaries of class and culture emerged in the students' discourses of belonging to Britain, and how, like multicultural and transnational boundaries, these too need exploration with young people.

## **Cultural and Class Boundaries of Britishness**

### ***The Chav in Bermondsey: Where Class and Race Meet***

In recent years there has been an increase in academic research and media reportage about socially marginalised White working-class youth (Bottero, 2009). Some scholars of globalisation

studies may argue class and place are less important to our social experiences, yet my research the reasons “class still plays a significant role in many attempts to theorize youth” (Shildrick et al., 2010:3). Social class inequalities relay not just economic experiences but also cultural revelations and encounters (Atkinson et al., 2012). This section will expand on students Chris and Ellie describing the *chav* caricature which they believed epitomised British culture, and symbolised Britishness in Bermondsey. The term *chav* became a familiar media “buzz word”, to describe the White working classes, yet regional synonyms such as ‘charver’ have been around longer (Nayak, 2009), nevertheless, the etymology is disputed with some interpreting *chav* as an acronym for ‘council housed and violent’ (Tyler, 2008, Plan B, 2012b). Those popularising this term attempt to deny its pejorative connotations (Tyler, 2013), yet it is commonplace vocabulary to abuse the White working class in England, synonymous with the “White trash” of the USA (Tyler and Bennett, 2010, Tyler, 2008). *Chav* is the new *folk devil* (Hayward and Yar, 2006, le Grand, 2013), almost replacing the term “underclass” in media discourse, for *chav* has increased in use, whilst “underclass” has decreased considerably (Hayward and Yar, 2006). The ‘underclass’ reference connoting “a discourse of familial disorder and dysfunction; of dangerous masculinities and dependent femininities; of antisocial behaviour; of moral and ecological decay” (Haylett, 2001:358) has now transferred to the *chav*.

Media and political discourses amplify a contradictory identity of those they stigmatise as *chavs*: racialised as embodying dirty, poverty-stricken Whiteness (Tyler, 2008), while simultaneously being epitomised as “a bunch of racist bigots” (Jones, 2011:9) or “filthy White” racists (Tyler, 2008:25). During the summer 2011 riots in English cities, social commentators used classed and racialised language about young people (Pearson, 2012:60):

Bagehot picks up on the historian David Starkey’s comments on the BBC that young white working class people had ‘become black’: ‘The whites have become black. A particular sort of violent, destructive, nihilistic gangster culture has become the fashion... This language, which is wholly false, which is this Jamaican patois that has intruded England. This is why so many of us have this sense of literally a foreign country’.

Media discourses judging communities impact upon ways local areas are “governed and policed”, as well as ways “agencies providing services to the residents in the area perceive the residents” (Rooke and Gidley, 2010:102). Alongside media, policy and political discourses, academia also has been guilty of neglecting detailed and empathetic study of the ways in which the White working classes are disparaged, racialised and marginalised (Haylett, 2001).

Discourses mocking the *chav* need deconstructing for “pinning the mass of young, poor, White, working-class people to the social pathologies of, *inter alia*, welfare dependency, moral

degeneracy, academic failure, fecklessness, and excessive and tasteless consumption” (Shildrick et al., 2010:4). The emergence and popularity of the chav caricature proves social class divisions remain significant in British society (Lawler, 2005, Hollingworth and Williams, 2009, Jones, 2011). The political landscape promoting denigration of the working classes – through humiliating images such as the chav - has arisen from political policies contributing to representing the working classes as dirty and shameful (Jones, 2011). The “demonization of the working class” was exacerbated by Margaret Thatcher’s government in the 1980s when the working classes were vehemently attacked, along with their “communities, industries, values and institutions” (Jones, 2011:40). New Labour also promoted a negative representation of the working classes through rhetoric that incentivised them to free themselves from working-class roots and join middle-class Britain (Jones, 2011). Chav bashing, hence, must be interrogated and politically contextualised in light of Britain’s “deepening economic inequality”(Tyler, 2008:18). In his TEDxObserver talk on disadvantaged youth, music and aspirations, East London hip hop artist Plan B argues for a change in classed antagonism and abuse: “...in this country we openly say the word chav. The papers openly ridicule the poor and less unfortunate. If you did the same thing with race or sex, there'd be public uproar and rightly so. But why is it different with this word?” (Plan B, 2012c, Plan B, 2012a). Children, as young as aged eight, refer to chavs when discussing social difference: “private school children often perceived children who lived in council estates to be 'chavs', who were seen as badly behaved, with parents that did not care about them” (Sutton et al., 2007).

Chav-bashing is justified through a ‘rationalised’ critique of the racist attitudes and behaviours of those categorised as chavs: “The process of differentiating between respectable and non-respectable forms of Whiteness attempts to abject the White poor from spheres of White privilege” (Tyler, 2008: 25). Chavs are symbolically marked as different from ‘respectable’ middle-class Whiteness, racialised and classed because of their White working-class identity. Ethnographies from Victorian Britain depicted the White working classes as “dark” and “alien” (Preston, 2003:8). Today, cultural and racial contamination of the chav, through social and intimate mixing with Blacks, is an ‘abhorrent’ theme encountered in the discourses on lower class Whiteness (Tyler, 2008). Bermondsey resident, Jade Goody, who achieved fame through her participation in the TV programme *Big Brother* (Channel 4, 2002) was caricatured as a chav by media and public rhetoric. Later appearing in *Celebrity Big Brother* (Channel 4, 2007), she was involved in racist abuse of fellow participant and Bollywood actress Shilpa Shetty. Goody was viciously caricatured by the tabloids with racial and animalistic imagery likening her to hippos, baboons and pigs. There were derogatory literal and metaphorical references to her

“big mouth”. Initially Jade Goody was presented by the media as a prime example of the seemingly racist White working class at the bottom of the class hierarchy, but then the tabloids discovered her father’s Black heritage. Often the “intense racialisation” of working-class Britons is pursued through the chav caricature, with White working classes “positioned as utterly racially other” (Rooke and Gidley, 2010:106). Jade represents this obsession popular culture had at the time with racializing her as “utterly” other. In this chapter, I will later discuss my research participant Ellie’s articulation of wider society demeaning and demonising her as a chav.

Ellie and her peer, Chris, also discussed Bermondsey as a place that was tarnished with the chav label, which I will come to shortly. As well as being marginalised due to race and class, therefore, chavs are further outcast because of the social spaces they inhabit. Chav areas are “associated with street crime, disease, drugs, over-breeding... de-industrial urban quarters of the locality where South Asian communities, new migrants and asylum seekers are displaced” (Nayak, 2009:32). It was not just Jade Goody’s social class and appearance that were ridiculed, but also her belonging to a place she came to represent:

“That dark place was her childhood in Bermondsey, a grubby corner of south-east London” (The Economist, 2009).

London areas “coded as working class and minority ethnic” are often represented in ways to perpetuate moral panics about gangs in the “latest development in an ongoing history of the pathologisation of urban spaces” (Archer et al., 2010:2). These “inner-city habitations are often depicted as dark places and described as urban jungles, shanty towns, a ‘blot’ on the ostensibly White landscape” (Nayak, 2009:32). Racialising the White working classes is a process that relies upon “the politics of space”: ‘chav space’ and ‘chav place’ “are used discursively as a way of fixing people in racialized class positions” (Rooke and Gidley, 2010:95). If Jade and her family come to be seen by wider society as representing the White working classes (Raisborough et al., 2013), then similarly her place comes to suffer from the same pathologisation. The next section will show my research participant, Ellie, like Jade Goody, encountered the burdens and stigmas of pathologisation of place and White working-class identity.

### ***Class Boundaries: Imprisoned Identity***

Britishness in Bermondsey revolved around chav identity according to my research participants. The Bermondsey chav is complexly perceived by the students through race, place and social class. Focus on the chav caricature relayed the working-class experience of Britishness and belonging. Sometimes social class is referenced through coded language (Hollingworth and Williams, 2009), as is race. The chav caricature perpetuates “class boundaries”, through

“mockery... contempt, disgust or even hatred” (le Grand, 2013:219). Ellie, a White female student, depicted struggles encountered by the stigmatised working classes because of the imposition of the undesirable and demeaning label chav. The concept of ‘double consciousness’ that is used for ‘Black folk’ (Du Bois, 2007), could also apply to White working-class students like Ellie who looked at herself through society’s mocking and contemptuous lens.

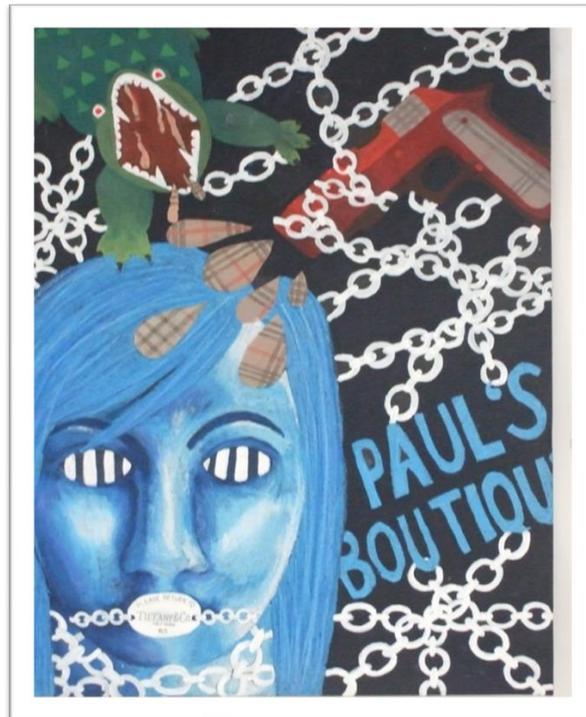


Figure 7: GCSE Artwork on Britishness by Ellie Jackson:

#### *Stereotypes and Judgements*

Ellie’s artwork was entitled *Stereotypes and Judgements*, because she felt “people may stereotype me”. Thus we observe her double consciousness, her recognition that the world views her with contempt (Du Bois, 2007), not because of her racialised body but her classed (and racialised) body are trapped in discourses of stereotypes and societal contempt. Ellie referred to labels such as “Lacoste, Tiffany, Paul’s Boutique and Burberry... things which people may associate with me before they even know me”. Visual researchers recognise that images represent “social categories such as class, gender, race” (Rose, 2007:7). The Lacoste crocodile, the Burberry check, the Tiffany bracelet, and the Paul’s Boutique logo, in Ellie’s visual piece, are easily identifiable by those well-versed in popular youth culture as connected to chav identity. Often young people’s experience of belonging and acceptance can be seen to be influenced by “the colour of their skin, their area of residence, their dress or speech” (Clayton, 2011:1679).

Chavs are very “visible”, with “White, young, British people adopting particular stylistic markers” (le Grand, 2013:218). Designer brands, fashion and appearance might matter to young people performing identities (Archer et al., 2010, Shildrick et al., 2010), and those involved in chav subcultures can be regarded as expressing class identity (McCulloch et al., 2006). The chav label becomes more than fashion, as embodiment or performativity are translated by society. Young people branded chavs are judged by “moral-aesthetic” standards, as representing “lifestyles, behaviour, body techniques, speech, values and social background” (le Grand, 2013:218) that are socially undesirable and shameful.

Ellie struggled to escape the class imprisonment of “stereotypes and judgements” feeling as though society was reminding her of her place. Her powerful and poignant artwork reflected deep displeasure and frustrated resentment at being labelled unfairly and prematurely. In the artwork a bar restrained her eyes, restricting her to a specific identity, enclosing her, confining her and repressing her self-identity, like prison bars:

Ellie: “... so it’s like you’re caged in and you can’t express yourself how you want to be perceived because other people do it for you”.

She saw society denigrating her through the chav label, for example, because she wears a Tiffany chain. Ellie’s vivid description of the positioning of the Tiffany chain in her artwork, evoked Freirean perspectives, for it reflected her oppressed and marginalised experiences, and her sense of lacking a voice to defend herself: “...it’s like tight around my neck and my mouth... so I can’t talk to myself ... I can’t breathe... I’m like tied up”. Ellie’s artwork, with its Tiffany chains and Burberry branded bullets, as well as the terrifyingly opened jaws of the Lacoste crocodile pointed towards confinement in an unfairly imposed sense of identity, as she battled social class prejudices. Ellie’s sense of Britishness was tied up with judgements and stereotypes about social class, belonging and Bermondsey, just as her artwork and its title presented.

Often chav discourse attempts to present the chav caricature as representative of White working-class youth, blaming “individual failings” (Shildrick et al., 2010:5). However, young people’s “identity work” shows that:

Identity is not a voluntary project of self-making. Rather, it is always set within a social, cultural and economic context, which sets limits on the kinds of identities that are available to particular selves: people position themselves within, and are positioned by, discourses” (Allen and Mendick, 2012:4).

Ellie identified her working-class White identity as a stigmatised identity, but powerfully embraced it at the same time by painting this very identity that is caricatured by wider society, like a type of complex reclaiming and re-positioning on her own terms, whilst admitting it was

an identity tainted by harsh social judgements and stereotypes. Ellie positioned herself within a discourse of Britishness that reflected repression and suffocation, recognising that she has also been positioned this way by wider society because of her White working-class female Bermondsey body. Blue tones in Ellie's artwork, she explained, suggested coldness experienced when people label her a chav:

Ellie: I think that when someone's cold towards another person... it stops them from actually getting to know them because they have a presumption in their head.

She felt her British-Bermondsey identity was viewed negatively by wider society, imprisoning in her a false identity.

Ellie also referred to 'chav celebrity' Jade Goody, perhaps empathising with the "stereotypes and judgements" surrounding others labelled as chav. Even as a celebrity, Jade Goody was "constituted as illegitimate, undesirable and lacking" (Allen and Mendick, 2012:2), as "having plentiful economic resources but few cultural resources" (le Grand, 2013:220). Thus acquisition of wealth and celebrity status cannot displace the stereotypes and judgements that seem rigidly attached to those labelled as chav. Ellie was not alone in her frustration at being unfairly demonised. Other female White British students also manifested their anger. Emma Jones entitled her artwork "Chav Britain" which consisted of an "angry expression" on her face, and "chav patterns in tattoo shapes", against a backdrop of a landscape of London. Emma explained chav "immediately" comes into her mind when thinking about British identity. She included positive images of London buildings in the background of her painting as a contrast to the negative image of a chav, thus demonstrating resistance and contestation. Another White British female student Sammie-Jo Earrey also referenced the Burberry logo in her artwork alongside a butterfly, stating Burberry represented stereotyping, whilst the butterfly symbolised her desire for "freedom" from the imprisonment of chav identity.

Students from ethnic minority communities, working-class communities, and Gypsy, Roma or Traveller families encounter obstacles and barriers such as low expectations, school exclusion, and social deprivation which can impact upon their educational achievement (Knowles and Lander, 2011). Teachers sometimes dismiss the White working classes as low in aspiration and ambition (Archer et al., 2010). The middle-classes perceive chavs as having no value for education (Hollingworth and Williams, 2009). Ellie, who personally felt subjected to this malicious and vicious stereotype, believed it an unjust and incomplete understanding of Bermondsey. Being British in Bermondsey may have been seen by the world at large as lacking in aspirations, but Ellie thought this was an unfair and demeaning misrepresentation, arguing

the school's students take pride in opportunities for advancement. The growing intake of sixth-formers, and increasing number of university applicants year by year, reflected the life ambitions of these Bermondsey students, also supported Ellie's arguments about aspirations. The GCSE pass rate of 5 A\*- C achieved by students is now higher in Southwark than the England national average (Public Health England, 2015), but around the time my research was conducted, according to Public Health England, the GCSE pass rate was lower than average (2007, 2008, 2009).

Through labelling areas as 'chav spaces', and youth as chavs, we can see the "persistent classing gaze which fixes working class people in place" (Rooke and Gidley, 2010:95). Ellie observed this pathologisation of place too, and countered it with her aspiration-speak. These were her counter-narratives about belonging to Bermondsey, London and Britain. Recognising that popular media discourses have labelled Bermondsey as "grubby" and its inhabitants as chavs, students, like Ellie, were fighting detrimental stereotyping, wanting to succeed in their studies at school, despite low expectations of their aspirational selves. Seen to originate from an area synonymous with racism and chavs, my research participants felt Bermondsey had especially been painted as racist and chav-like due to the representation of Jade Goody in *Big Brother* (2002, 2007) and subsequent sensationalising of Bermondsey by the popular press. For these students in my research Britishness in Bermondsey was about battling unfair representation and offensive classed and racialised caricatures perpetuated by media and wider society discourses.

Ideas about Britishness and what it means to be British, therefore, can be difficult, troubling and stifling for students from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Ellie felt very strongly about stereotypes imposed on British youth as compressing and controlling her identity. She believed wider society brands her as a representative of chav culture, a gross stereotype giving rise to her sense of injustice, rage and even violence. The gun and the chains in Ellie's artwork symbolised violent feelings of anger and frustration at being defined by others: "And then I've got a gun because... people... I don't think people think of guns related to chavs but I think they think like angry and like negative...and I think a gun represents that well. And that was painted in red to represent anger". Ellie pointed out complexities of identity and belonging: though she did not reside in Bermondsey, because of the fashion she followed, she had been labelled "a Bermondsey girl". Ellie believed "a Bermondsey girl" was synonymous with "a chav". She detested the stereotyping of the White working-classes through the chav representation because it was unpleasant and undesirable: "something I didn't like about Britain". Yet simultaneously Ellie embraced chav culture in her artwork, as she defended and protected it

from wider societal disparagement throughout the interview. Next I will continue the discussion of Bermondsey as a 'chav place'.

### ***Pathologising Place: Chav Space***

The students had focused upon Britishness in Bermondsey, highlighting how Bermondsey labelled as 'grubby' by wider society reflects social class prejudices. Chav areas, in the popular imagination, are classed and racialised as places where the White and minority ethnic working classes reside and belong (le Grand, 2014). Ethnic minorities, like Blacks, Asians and Irish, as well as religious groups, like Jews (and now Muslims) have frequently been "portrayed as filthy via the label of deviance" by the "culpable" media (Alia and Bull, 2005:15). Beyond racial representations of 'filth', "socio-economic status often serves as a proxy for ethnicity" (Alia and Bull, 2005:15). Negative media and public discourses about place can seep into the psyche of those who call these areas 'home', as observed in le Grand's study of a 'chav town' (2014), where residents began to believe rhetoric about social problems, like crime, defining their locality. Some of the Art students, when asked about Britishness, had chosen to discuss their locality of Bermondsey, and how it was tarnished as a chav place by wider society. Popular public discourse and the residents of a 'chav town' may perceive their area as violent and unsavoury, yet statistics on reported crime rates in such area negate the idea that the 'chav town' is dangerous (le Grand, 2014). Fear in and about the city often does not mirror social reality, but "is a complicated production of that 'reality' through the power of discourse (from everyday talk to advertising, to official documents about the city)" (Sandercock, 2005:231).

Ellie raised the 'race' issue, along with 'gender', and we can critically analyse her conception of racism, for Ellie indicated that the Whiteness of Bermondsey makes it "safer" for her to "walk through" as a White female than multicultural New Cross. She explicitly associated New Cross, an area where she lived, with gangs. Implicit in her perceptions of the differences between New Cross and Bermondsey was that the former was a place dominated with Black gangs, and the latter a place associated with White gangs. Male chavs are associated with gangs, "danger and violence" (le Grand, 2013:220), thus residents of a place labelled as "chav town" may draw boundaries and refer to other parts of London (like Brixton, Catford and Peckham) as more dangerous than their own area (le Grand, 2014). Although Ellie was a resident of New Cross, her loyalties lay with Bermondsey. Thus she noted New Cross received "bad publicity", but she did not defend New Cross, like she did Bermondsey.

Ellie's highly expressive artwork about the chav had demonstrated a critical approach of stereotyping, and an acute awareness of the misrepresentation of the White youth from

working-class backgrounds in Bermondsey. There is ambiguity though in Ellie's condemnation of racial and class stereotypes: Ellie disliked stereotypes about Bermondsey, but stereotyped New Cross. Ellie disliked the label of chav with its connotations of racism and violence, yet she labelled young Black boys from New Cross, in spite of acknowledging stereotypes can be misguided and ungrounded. She normalised societal stereotyping of Black males: "Everyone does. It's natural". Nayak (2009:35) also identifies White working-class youth contradictions: "egalitarian at one moment and exclusionary the next". Ellie's multiple and ambivalent subjectivities are not unusual. Archer et al. (2010:14) argue "our identities are made up of multiple positionings in, often contradictory, discourses", hence identity is not straightforward, "for all young people, constructing a viable identity takes work... there are unconscious factors – desires, anxieties, fantasies, projections, defences – as well as conscious ones at play". The evolving nature of identity - that becomes apparent when young people are asked to reflect upon concepts such as Britishness - complicates and extends identity work further. Students like Ellie will hold views that are highly subject to change. After all, urban fears exist because "...we are all vulnerable to being unsettled by the presence of Others who are different" and also "profound structural/social/cultural change" impact upon changing cityscapes amplifying "new contestations over whose city it is, who belongs where in the city, which groups are benefitting, which are being pushed out" (Sandercock, 2005:231).

Examining youth "habitus" enables us to see young people as "simultaneously unique individuals with agency and subjects who are produced by their structural locations", as classed and racialised "identities and inequalities impact upon young people's social experiences" (Archer et al., 2010:31). There is an "absence" of empirical research examining the feelings and perspectives of the working classes regarding identity, schooling and aspirations (Byrne, 2005). My research seeks to redress this absence by showing how working-class participants identify, deplore and deconstruct the pathologisation of their locale. The long term consequences of pathologising parts of a city, and its inhabitants, will inevitably impact upon these young Londoners. Pathologising places of no-go areas of "moral decay" impacts upon policymakers who propose "clearance, clean-up and redevelopment", whilst pathologising youth or immigrants also has "intended policy consequences", for example increasing surveillance and security measures (Sandercock, 2005:231).

In the post-industrial city landscape, increasing professionalization and gentrification diminishes class significance and class antagonisms according to Butler et al. (2008), yet others argue class is still salient in cities like London (Davidson and Wyly, 2012). Class clearly matters to students like Ellie who recognise the classed nature of social experiences in Bermondsey, in London, and

in Britain. Even if social class structures change due to a decline in traditional occupations, “widening inequalities and regressive politics of (public) austerity” show class antagonisms are present (Davidson and Wylie, 2012:401). Thus ‘class’ and ‘place’ are real and relevant to contemporary socio-politics (Shildrick et al., 2010). The relevance of “inequality and class” for young people becomes increasingly important (McCulloch et al., 2006:540), particularly in London, where inequalities and class differences result in child poverty, unemployment and homelessness (Massey, 2007). Cities are not just feats of grand, action-packed and lively performances for tourists, but cities also contain dwellers going about their daily existence in often ordinary and routine ways (Herbert and Rodger, 2016), quite similar to banal nationalism (Billig, 1995).

Ellie argued that the glossy façade of London tourists see on their visits to the capital is strikingly different to the reality of the city: there is “so much more than” the “nice and perfect” façade to London:

Ellie: ...last Christmas I did my work experience up in London. And when I started getting the bus back, and there were like loads and loads of tourists around taking photos, cos all the Christmas lights were up... And I got the impression that this is what they saw London as...I think I was in Regent Street, while I was there, I felt out of place, and then I thought this is London, this is Britain, this is what I am...and this is what they think London's about, but it's not. It's so much more than that. Tourists think it's all nice and perfect, but it's not.

Often in nations and cities, tourism is boosted through an imaginary of “national costumes, crafts and customs, cuisines and landscapes... of what makes a nation different and, in this case, worth visiting”, yet lived realities in the nation are very different from the advertised images (Weedon, 2004:20). Ellie was aware of these illusions of nation. She argued social inequalities and poverty impact upon Londoners, referring to their “struggle”, “poverty” and “need”:

Ellie: ...in Regent Street where I was, there had been so much money and effort put into making it look so lovely and everyone was friendly in the shops and that...like Christmas spirit or whatever. But there are so many people that are in need...and poverty in London, and I don't think a lot of people know about that...they think we are really rich and posh and formal, but there are a lot of people who struggle in London...

Chris also agreed that the tourism of London revolved around Oxford Street and Tower Bridge, but he stated there was a stark contrast between areas such as “Peckham” and “Brixton” in comparison with central London itself in all its glossy glory. There are two main approaches in current literature on London as social space, according to Davidson and Wylie (2012:404): : “widening inequalities (Buck et al, 2002)” versus “growing socio-economic homogeneity (Butler et al, 2008)”. The approach that advocates increasing social class homogeneity in London is “a

wide-angle, panoramic view of long-term demographic and class change—sometimes dismissing the localized conflicts over displacement as marginal legacies of a disappearing industrial-era metropolis (Butler, 2007; Butler et al., 2008)” (Davidson and Wyly, 2012:404). However, my findings point me towards the alternative position which critically exposes widening inequalities: a “sharply focused, close-up view of London’s fine-grained social geographies, and the dramatic, intensified socio-spatial juxtapositions (Buck et al., 2002)” (Davidson and Wyly, 2012:404).

Chris and Ellie’s discourses of Britishness revolved around locality, social class and race. Their focus on chav identity and pathologisation of place emphasised social class is alive. Keen to highlight personal understandings of social categories and social experiences, Ellie and Chris were determined to speak up about inequalities and injustices, rather than be defined disdainfully and painfully by wider discourses. Both Ellie and Chris problematised Britishness as a being a complex site of privilege, pride and pain. British identity was heavily interconnected to their identity as Londoners, particularly to their attachments and associations with Bermondsey. Like Smyth and McInerney (2014), I found therefore that “place, space and neighbourhood” can be observed as “significant resources that are drawn upon by young people in forming a viable learning identity – one that recuperates the damage often assigned to them by official policies” (Smyth and McInerney, 2014:286). The importance of the local, therefore, cannot be underestimated nor ignored. Students were keen to critique the damaging chav caricature – an embodiment of a classed and racialised society - as representing Britishness in Bermondsey. Politicians perpetuating “the chav myth” creates moral panics about “entire communities around Britain crawling with feckless, delinquent, violent and sexually debauched no-hopers” (Jones, 2011:80). The connotations of the chav caricature and chav place weighed heavy on the class consciousness of these Bermondsey youth. I have previously discussed how the term chav is simultaneously racialised and classed by prejudicial discourses, but also represented as producer of racist ideologies (Tyler, 2008, Jones, 2011). Next I move onto further analysis of how young people, in their exploration of Britishness, understand the racist reputation of the chav in Bermondsey.

### ***Racism in Bermondsey: A Grain of Truth or Truth Ingrained?***

Ellie was navigating through a maze of complex contradictions of the chav identity. Society had burdened her with a dangerous and demeaning stereotype, resulting in her both clasp and contesting humiliating and hurtful elements of British identity. Negative perceptions of chav identity had ramifications on Ellie’s self-identity. When she defended the people of Bermondsey as “not horrible”, she was defending herself too. Ellie has been unfairly categorised as a chav,

with all its ugly connotations, especially that of racism. Bermondsey too had been vilified as a racist place, Ellie explained, “especially since Big Brother”.

Chris positioned Bermondsey as Other, as a contrast to the “posh part of London”, agreeing with Ellie about its reputation as a racist chav area. Bermondsey, the site of their school, and home for many of the students, they felt was pathologised by wider society as an undesirable place featuring a racist and violent underclass. Although Ellie and Chris condemned media and political discourses on Bermondsey, they conceded racism is a problem:

Ellie: Yeah, there is racism in Bermondsey...

Chris: Yeah, there is...

Ellie explained she could “see where people get the stereotype from...”, yet also challenged stereotypes: “I don’t think you can put (chavs) into one category”. There may be a grain of truth to it, but it is not ingrained. While fears about urban spaces must be “*communicated and negotiated*” (Sandercock, 2005:233), it is as important for these young people to learn more about how pathologising youth or ethnic minorities or the working class as threatening, violent and dangerous “surely serves to some extent to produce the very behaviours that are dreaded, while also increasing the likelihood that such groups will be victimised (through hate crimes and/or official brutality)” (Sandercock, 2005:232). Moreover, there is not “one monolithic racism but numerous historically situated racisms” (Back, 1996:9), as the students’ complex and contradictory discourses also revealed.

Ellie and Chris wanted to refute unfair stereotypes about all Bermondsey inhabitants being labelled as “racist chavs”, but their defence of Bermondsey was problematic as they themselves expressed:

Chris: ...round Bermondsey every year, they have a NF march...a National Front march...they are racist people...and everyone who wasn’t born here or who isn’t British...they want them to go back where they came from or to get out of this country...because this country belongs to them...but at the end of the day, because Britishness has changed so much now and involves all these different cultures, if everyone left and went back to their country, this country would kinda fall...

Ellie: Yeah...

The annual march led by extreme right-wing factions in Bermondsey was a frightening and disturbing feature of Bermondsey, especially for my ethnic minority students who would discuss this in my lesson when the march was due to take place. This march was a real and terrifying part of the way Britishness was represented in Bermondsey by the BNP who, according to Chris, believed “this country belongs to them”. Chris pointed out that belonging according to the

extreme right wing concerned possession and control of “this country”. Chris contended Britain would “fall” without its diverse immigrant inhabitants who worked to “build” Britain, and Ellie agreed:

Ellie: Yeah...they are a part of us...

Chris: Yeah, they are a part of our country...they helped build up the country...and they still don't belong...

Sadness and disbelief resonated in Chris's admission of the exclusionary rhetoric propagated by right wing factions: immigrants have “helped build” Britain, and yet “they still don't belong”. Belonging to Britain generally, and Bermondsey specifically, was problematised in Chris' complaint of prevailing a far right racist British presence. Chris stressed that those seen as not British by far right racists have contributed to Britain's success, yet he was dismayed that they found it difficult claiming British identity and finding belonging and acceptance, as they were still perceived as Other: “they are a part of our country...they helped build up the country...and they still don't belong...”. Ellie and Chris both insisted those viewed as Other by far-right groups, do belong to Britain, for “they are a part of us”, keenly highlighting an inclusive Britishness where those from immigrant backgrounds belong, whilst still recognising racism does exist in the lives of Londoners.

Both Chris and Ellie recognised there were problems with Bermondsey, London and Britain, while emphasising attachments and pride with belonging to local and national place. Ellie was keen to state her identity as a White Briton. She identified with British identity because her parents were British, thus she explained she was “accepted” and “a part of this society” and “normal”. Being White “has a neutral or even positive signification that cannot be easily overturned” (Nayak, 2009:35), which Ellie acknowledged. Whiteness allowed her the privilege of feeling easily accepted and included in British society. Ellie recognised this was not always the case for many of her peers from other ethnicities, whose parents may not be obviously British. Sometimes members of the dominant ethnic and racial group (in this case White British), through interactions with minority group members will come to recognise their privilege (James, 2006), other times “we wonder if most White people even know they are White” (Lund and Carr, 2010:230). Whiteness as the perceived societal norm needs interrogating. Critical pedagogy approaches (See Chapters Three and Five) have resulted in students like Ellie and Chris viewing the self-portraits of their classmates and learning about the ways in which Britishness, Whiteness and belonging interact and mobilise in Bermondsey.

The students' sense of national identity is dwarfed by their sense of local identity. Sometimes there may be examples of active rejection of nation in favour of local identities (Byrne, 2007b). The pride the students have for Bermondsey is not unusual: Evans (2007:19) discusses how her assumptions about White working-class homogeneity were shattered as she became aware of London as "divided into manors, which were, and sometimes continue to be, closely defined territories about which people are fiercely proud and protective". Although students recognised the ugliness of Bermondsey's racist reputation, they still emphasised Bermondsey as a safe space. Here, it seems, is where they immediately wanted to belong. Often young people are "engaged in forms of reflexivity" overturning adult notions of a "dangerous and dirty" place (Shildrick et al., 2010:4). Ellie's perceptions of Britishness demonstrated how there also exists a duality of feeling towards Britishness in students from White backgrounds. It is not just students from ethnically diverse backgrounds who encounter multiple facets of identity politics, White students too will negotiate and balance positive and negative experiences of Britishness. Ellie professed pride in the privilege of belonging to Britain: a "fair, productive and an active country...it has provided a good and happy home for me and my family". Yet Ellie had an acute awareness that belonging to Britain for young people was also about battling prejudices of class and race.

Questions about space, place and race are crucial in determining social structures in London, for example interrogating why certain areas are seen as "Black" areas: "Consider how such positioning might create a narrative in your mind – and therefore in the public mind – about what particular people are capable of, or are willing to do" (Brahinsky, 2011:150). The complexity of how space is racialised becomes apparent if we compare how Ellie and Chris discussed Britishness in Bermondsey with Joe's alternative perceptions. While Ellie and Chris discuss Britishness in terms of the reputation of Bermondsey as an area with chav inhabitants, Joe regards Bermondsey as multicultural and therefore non-British, preferring neighbouring Rotherhithe which he considered a White area that was consequently British. Chris and Ellie also discussed different parts of London having their own unique identities. They racialised certain areas, for example Brixton and Peckham were referred to as "Black". Kadisha and Joe also raised discussion on racialised parts of London with their perceptions of Rotherhithe, Bermondsey and beyond.

## **CONCLUSION: LOCAL AND TRANSNATIONAL YOUTH BELONGINGS IN BERMONDSEY, LONDON**

Contemporary debate on Britishness tends to highlight an increasing lack of emotional connection with the idea of Britishness (Goodhart et al., 2005), yet my research presents how national identity “involves being situated physically, legally, socially, as well as emotionally... within a homeland” that is frequently reproduced in ways we do not even realise (Billig, 1995:8). This critical ethnographic research presented participants - Ellie, Chris, Joe, Kadisha and others – engaging in pedagogies of Britishness exploration that enabled expression of identity and belonging in ways that mattered to them as individuals, allowing them to (re)present aspects they deemed important and interesting. The findings discussed in this chapter also reveal that any exploration of national identity will always be partial, temporal and contextual: “parts of it remain opaque and inaccessible to even a most searching self-examination” (Parekh, 2000a:6). One of the reasons it remains difficult to define nation as a finite concept is because the concept fluctuates according to the historical, geographical and political contexts (Cameron, 1999:1). The Art students explored identity, not as a discrete concept, but as constantly negotiated with the significant others in their lives, against classed and racialised discourses, and within the shadows of wider societal, media and political discourses looming in the students’ lives. The urgent need for deconstruction of race in the teaching and learning of Britishness becomes apparent through the students’ conceptualisations of racialised Britain. Britishness, therefore, need addressing sensitively and discursively in any classroom debate. Data emerging from the interviews and questionnaires in relation to identity and belonging particularly suggested a strong connection with local space and place.

The dialogic nature of the critical pedagogy project resulted in conversations about social justice with students learning with one another. Kadisha responded as a critical pedagogue frequently, for example, when Joe conflated ideas about flat-dwelling foreigners with “gang culture”. Kadisha explained people have come to Britain “for a better life”. The “contemporary panic” about young people’s gang involvement in urban spaces is “coded as working-class and minority ethnic” issues (Archer et al., 2010:2). Britain was “in the thick of a moral panic” about youth around the time of my research, with “gangs, shootings, stabbings, family dysfunction, lack of community cohesion” surfacing as “social anxieties” (Pearson, 2012:45). Though public representation of a place emphasises danger, and residents of that place may cite incidents of violence, they still point out they feel safe and protected in the very same area (le Grand, 2014).

If “the making and remaking of space is also about the making and remaking of race” (Neely and Samura, 2011:1934), then the urgency of exploring these two notions together when

researching identity in London is more than evident in my data. McLoughlin (2006:112) refers to Bradford viewed as a "'microcosm' of BrAsian (Asianised) postcolonial Britain". Similarly, London can be regarded as a 'microcosm' of postcolonial multicultural Britain. The students' local space was urban and multicultural London, and more particularly southeast London, thus, when exploring Britishness, students articulated classed and racialised belongings in the cityscape. The findings also show it is necessary to learn about "the transnational basis of many lived identities *and* the concrete structural realities of a specific neighbourhood" (Husband et al., 2014:6) when exploring national identity.

The multiple ways "boundaries of racial categories are negotiated, challenged, and/or reinforced in daily life" (Lewis, 2004:625) are evident in the discussions of the Art students. Chris, as a Mixed heritage youth, crossed these boundaries as he expressed his ideas about negotiating belonging in multicultural Britain where Black youth are represented as social problems. Institutional and everyday "racism" and "lack of perceived acceptance by white society" will affect how Black students feel about Britishness (Rattansi, 2000). Institutions such as education and media are charged with being guilty of "stunting our moral imaginations" by "giving us far too little information about lives outside our borders" (Nussbaum, 1996:xiv). Social institutions should not only expand our moral imaginations but to do so in a way that makes explicit the diasporic connections and colonial histories of lives both within and 'outside our borders'. Vavrus (2015), advocate of critical multiculturalism, also recognises the significance of connected histories to present day social experiences. Colley (1992b), in the introduction to her book *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837*, writes about her frustrations as a sixth form student who was sometimes made to learn Welsh history separately from English history, without the histories being shown as connected and part of the same story. Bhabra recalls her father's stories of life under colonial rule as a series of struggles "about exploitation, about appropriation, about dispossession, and about the profound injustices and injuries of over two centuries of colonization", often criticising the Eurocentric curriculum imparted to his daughter through British schooling (Bhabra, 2014:x).

The 'Invisible Empire' dominates discourses of Britishness (Wemyss, 2009): that thousands of Bengali and Punjabi seamen worked on London docks from 1650 until World War Two is excluded from narratives of Britishness and belonging in London, maintaining a popular myth of the Docks being solely a White working-class space (Wemyss, 2009, Ullah and Eversley, 2010). The teaching and learning of Britishness is unable to ignore empire, even if the concept of empire seems dated, it is still salient in any discussions on British identity, (Burkett, 2013). Regarding

British national identity, there is a pressing need to “engage critically with its imperial history and to form a just view of what it did to its colonies and to Britain itself”, but so far there has been “disappointing” progress on this (Parekh, 2008:69), with young people unaware of the geopolitical history of Britain (Phillips and Ganesh, 2007). Counter-stories would enable students to develop a deeper knowledge and understanding about diaspora, belonging and Britishness.

Master-narratives about Britishness in London relay a celebratory and glorious tale of Empire’s “merchants, profits and the spread of liberty and democracy” (Wemyss, 2009:6). Contesting master-narratives are therefore very necessary. Discourses of Britishness in London must not neglect to interrogate the horror stories of Empire, the “exploitation, disease and racism” (Wemyss, 2009:6), and the lasting impact on Londoners today. The terror of Britain’s imperial past diminishes through ‘collective amnesia’ (Hall, 2002a), as Britishness discourses “venerate Britain’s colonial links at the same time as obscuring the violence of Empire” (Wemyss, 2009:69). Yet the legacy of Britain’s colonial past has long since impacted upon the social experiences of British ethnic minorities (Verma et al., 1994, Weedon, 2004), and continues to do so today. Just as schools should explore “the gap between the ideals of the West and its realities of racism, sexism, and discrimination” (Banks, 2010:237), my findings in both Chapters Five and Six place emphasis on how necessary it is to give students space to challenge the hegemonic notions of British ideals, values and history with the realities of their British experience.

My research points to offensive stereotypes of White working-class identities enraging and frustrating British youth fighting these demeaning and damaging labels. The *stereotypes and judgements* Ellie refers to in her artwork evoked her displeasure and disquietude. Neoliberal capitalism has reduced ‘culture’ to “something you consume”, yet “culture as an activity in which people produce the conditions of their own agency through dialogue, community participation, resistance, and political struggle” (Giroux, 2013:111) is the way forward for the working-class students to dismantle and deconstruct the nuances and ambiguities of classed (and racialised) identities. My research participants attempted to challenge negative images about youth, place and identity, wanting their voices to be heard on Britishness in Bermondsey as they presented a complex and engaged picture of local place by simultaneously affirming and negating any prevalent wider discourses. The students’ discussions repeatedly showed an intersectional approach to studying Britishness is necessary as issues of class, race and gender emerged. The students’ artwork evoked their understandings of intersectional lived experiences and identities. The Art students expanded upon intersectional identities in their reflections upon Britishness in

the interviews too, showing Britishness is not a discrete entity. The “flexibility” and “persistence” of Britishness is evident in noting how often it has been “compatible with a huge variety of other identities” (Ward, 2004:5). The Art students demonstrated the flexible and compatible nature of Britishness, by discussing it alongside class, race and place. Perhaps students focused upon local belongings as they are not racialised in the same way as national identities and thus allow for new identities and ethnicities (Back, 1996, Gilroy, 2002).

Chris, for example, emphasises his Mixed heritage by splitting his face to show he was negotiating his Britishness with his Jamaican-ness by engaging in a dialogue about his intersectional identities. His artwork with his black and white split countenance reflected his negotiation of Blackness with Whiteness. Rather than “culture clash”, O’Donnell and Sharpe (2004:118) argue “‘negotiation’ is a better and more neutral descriptor of the process by which individual boys (and girls) worked out their identities and relationships than one which implies constant angst and struggle”. The juxtaposition in Chris’ artwork of Jamaican sandy beaches, blue skies and green palm trees with the green pastures of the Britain and the iconic landmarks of London accentuated his multiple attachments. Positionality and intersectionality impact upon how the students explain their sense of Britishness and their sense of belonging to Bermondsey.

Territorial boundaries dominate the British newspapers’ obsession with borders and immigration (Baker et al., 2008). Research participant Joe’s anti-immigration discourse about “people are coming over here, claiming our benefits” also imitated right-wing media’s immigrant-bashing rhetoric. Minority ethnic communities are sometimes viewed as benefit claimers by White British youth (Sanderson and Thomas, 2014). In the past, anti-racist youth projects in Bermondsey have aimed to challenge racisms (Dadzie, 1997). Migrants from the European Union continue to arrive in Britain (Phillips et al., 2010), and in Bermondsey, necessitating new ways of defining multicultural Britain. New racisms come about as “immigration” becomes a buzz word in a “framework of ‘racism without races’” (Balibar, 1991:21). There is a danger that “Britishness” could similarly perpetuate a neo-racism and represent “racism without race” if not explored carefully and cautiously by teachers and students. Though research participant Chris mentions his Polish neighbours not wishing to belong to British society, he is aware of the evolving nature of identity, arguing people’s attitudes can change, and often do change. My research therefore emphasises the importance of myths about belonging needing debunking when young people discuss race, immigration and Britishness.

Scholarly interest grows in how youth respond to social changes, contribute to social cohesion, and live out everyday multiculturalism and class consciousness in an increasingly globalised world (Butcher and Harris, 2010, Shildrick et al., 2010). Young people's sense of belonging reveal contradictions: they are regarded as enabling "multicultural nation-building and social cohesion", whilst simultaneously represented as "most inclined towards regressive nationalism, fundamentalism and racism" (Butcher and Harris, 2010:449). Young people's identity-work reveals "processes, relationalities and intersections" (Hopkins, 2010:10), thus my empirical research sought to understand the intersecting identities of British youth. Focus on belonging and everyday life has become significant in understanding how youth negotiate race and place in multicultural societies, particularly as they represent the nation's future (Butcher and Harris, 2010, Clayton, 2011, Hopkins, 2010, Sanderson and Thomas, 2014). In practice, both multicultural and national identities complementing one another can work well in modern conceptions of belonging to Britain (Modood, 2008) for as my research findings show it is the norm to belong to multicultures of nation, ethnicity, religion, and locality (Baumann, 1999). An important objective of modern multiculturalism is to ensure Britishness is an inclusive identity (Uberoi and Modood, 2013), but my research also points to the need for anti-racist work to complement multicultural advocacy. If students are not given the opportunity to learn about race as a contested concept, they will struggle to comprehend anti-racism. My findings also highlight that racism must be interrogated as more than just about individual interactions, for institutional racism is still a prevalent feature of wider society (Hewitt, 1986, Lander, 2015). Teacher training needs to be more effective if new teachers are to "construct robust counterarguments" against media bias that influences students' "understanding of society" (Lander, 2014:94). Political rhetoric on community cohesion has also been heavily criticised for it focuses on faith and culture, rather than addressing urgent issues like social inequalities (Bhavnani et al., 2005, Ratcliffe, 2011). My research also demonstrates that young people raise concerns about job prospects, poverty, and low social mobility recognising these lead to prejudice against ethnic minorities (Phillips and Ganesh, 2007). Government developing "socioeconomic opportunities" is crucial "to help reform the image and participation of marginalized groups in society" (Mason, 2016:5).

There is a case for classroom discussion on how the teaching and learning of Britishness sanctions a programme of banal nationalism, a nationalism far from "benign" as it is "reproducing institutions which possess vast armaments" (Billig, 1995:7). Is the teaching and learning of Britishness to seep into the curriculum and schools in a way where "the metonymic image of banal nationalism is not a flag which is being consciously waved with fervent passion"

but instead the “flag hanging unnoticed on the public building” (Billig, 1995:8)? When considering the notion of nation, my research shows, we cannot divorce this from notions of diaspora. Concepts of nationhood and national identity should be interrogated alongside notions of diaspora, displacement and dislocation: “diaspora forces us to rethink the rubrics of nation and nationalism, while refiguring the relations of citizens and nation-states” (Brazier and Mannur, 2003:7). Nation and diaspora can never be mutually exclusive; these terms are interdependent as manifested in the lives of those who have made their homes in a new land, as well as in the lives of their neighbours in the new land, and even in the lives of those they left behind. Diasporic movements illustrate the fluid and unstable nature of identity – fixed identities bound to a certain village, a certain town, a certain city or a certain nation are no longer the norm. Identities are transforming – continually and constantly being remade, renegotiated, redefined, rediscovered and rewritten by diasporic communities.

Hall makes the same point: “Identity means, or connotes, the process of identification, of saying that this here is the same as that, or we are the same together”. Moreover, he highlights feminist and psychoanalytical theorists’ arguments: “...the degree to which that structure of identification is always constructed through ambivalence. Always constructed through splitting. Splitting between that which one is and that which is the other” (2000a:146). Hall articulates this notion of identity as the “doubleness of discourse”, as a “necessity of the Other to the self” (2000a:147). Hall goes on to explain that the idea of identity being “two histories, one over here, one over there, never having spoken to one another, never having anything to do with one another” is not an appropriate one in today’s world as he illustrates with the example of how even though he came to England in the 1950s, he had already been here in England for centuries:

I was coming home. I am the sugar at the bottom of the English cup of tea. I am the sweet tooth, the sugar plantations that rotted generations of English children’s teeth. There are thousands of others beside me that are, you know, the cup of tea itself. Because they don’t grow up in Lancashire, you know. Not a single tea plantation exists within the United Kingdom. This is the symbolization of English identity – I mean, what does anybody in the world know about an English person except that they can’t get through the day without a cup of tea?” (Hall, 2000a:147).

If there is no consensus on what Britishness means (Langlands, 1999, Ward, 2004, Garner, 2012), assuming a single meaning, as some politicians do, becomes problematic (Bechhofer and McCrone, 2010). Instead we can explore “complex and interdependent relation between local, national and global processes which impact on social identity”, and how notions of the Other are “intimately connected with a sense of self and belonging to a larger social collectivity which often provides a strong affective component in the experience and imagination of community and membership” (Rew and Campbell, 1999:22). Hall’s discussion of tea, the national beverage

of England, and its place of origin reminds Britons that histories can never be separate, discrete, or exclusive. Hall (2000: 147) explains tea comes from places like India: “That is the outside history that is inside the history of the English. There is no English history without that other history”. Globalisation’s legacy lies in the moments that took place centuries ago, for example “the conquest of the Americas, New World slavery” are early instances of “globality” that reveal much about the history of the world and whose history we learn about (Trouillot, 2002:8), as well as current events, and future directions. A “global version of ‘our island story’ that incorporates the African, Asian, Chinese, Jewish and Irish presence from centuries ago (Hall, 2005:31) is the invisible national story. After the East India Company was founded in 1600, the small numbers of Asians arriving in Britain, despite facing racial discrimination and hostility, “saw themselves as having a plural identity (Visram, 2002:355). They were well integrated with local indigenous White communities, inter-racial relationships were common, even though this was a societal taboo, and there were “many instances of genuine friendships and acceptance” (Visram, 2002:356). These socio-historical experiences of belonging do not feel that dissimilar to Britain today.

To understand race and space students can explore these terms as time and context-dependent, politically contested and influenced by culture and materiality (Neely and Samura, 2011). The lively exchanges between my research participants about racialised belongings signifies the need for discussion and debate in a safe environment. If we want to deconstruct racialised myths such as Blumenbach’s, that “the closer a racial group lived to the Caucasus Mountains, the more physically attractive (and implicitly, more superior) they were in comparison to other races” (Cokley, 2002:31), this debate my research participants engaged in is important in schools. If White students assume race does not apply to them, but only to those visibly marked as Other (James, 2006:44), again, these ideas need disrupting. Gurnah (1992) critiques those who are quick to define terms like race, ethnicity and cultural diversity, but do not address the “lives and struggles” of ethnic minorities. Bearing in mind such incisive advice, I sought the stories of young people’s experiences of Britishness and presented the context and struggles of modern multicultural belongings, learning that even in multi-ethnic London areas, some students may have little contact, experience or understanding of diverse lives and struggles (Maylor et al., 2006a).

Importantly, I observed the site of the school offers hope and possibility to challenge monocultural myths. Students often may not directly refer to social divisions (Shildrick et al., 2010), but beneath the surface of their identity talk lies their preoccupation with classed and

racialised belongings. They discussed the multiple, fluid and contested nature of place identities (Massey, 1994), beginning to understand Britishness as always evolving (Croft, 2012), and frequently “fuzzy”, “often vague, and to a degree, malleable” (Cohen, 1995:20). The students were engaged by the impact of British and global connected histories upon contemporary Britishness. Students, like Joe, would enjoy learning about the complexities of Welsh and Scottish identities. Ward (2004), for example, refers to the Welsh loyalty to Britain during World War One with high numbers of Welsh volunteering for the army. Chris and Ellie’s discussion of the caricature of the *chav* who they believe is seen by wider society as representing Britishness in Bermondsey, and Kadisha and Joe’s conversation about racialised belongings both draw out classed and racialised ways of experiencing British identity in London. More than “merely disengaged spectators”, through “critical dialogue, analysis and comprehension” (Giroux, 2013:13) my research participants worked to understand their multiple and diverse relationships with the social world.



seep into the public consciousness after young people leave school, for example, through public institutions like museums (Banks, 2010). Thus national heritage is preserved and promoted through cultural institutions presenting a specific national story (Hall, 2005). The influential role of the institution of education in promoting nationalism has been well established, with the state long glorifying nation through schooling (Baumann, 1999). A mainstream Eurocentric curriculum, however, fails students like my research participants, for it allows few opportunities to explore multicultural identity, resulting in “racism, ethnocentrism, and pernicious nationalism” hindering schools, communities and societies (Banks, 2010:234). Like Smyth and McInerney (2013:2), I was keen to exercise my “ethnographic imagination” and critical researcher privilege by presenting those “whose interests, voices, and perspectives are silenced, excluded, marginalized, expunged or totally denied”.

The principal argument running through Chapters Two, Three, Four, Five and Six is that for young people to develop as politically and socially literate active citizens, schools cannot ignore classed and racialised identities, and therefore, anti-racism and multiculturalism must become an integral part of pedagogies, policies and practices. The Art students in my research relayed embodied and historical ways of being British through their discourses on classed and racialised belongings, thus my research findings support notions of ‘the body’ and ‘history’ as key to identities (Weedon, 2004). My research participants engaged with “complex acts of cultural negotiation and contestation” (Turvey et al., 2012:41), reminding us of the powerful plea to “counter the idea that socio-cultural groups – including nations – are essentially unchanging and atavistic entities” (Back, 1996:10). The previous chapters explain classed, racialised and gendered positions are relevant and necessary to any deconstruction of the historical and socio-political concept of Britishness (Hall, 1992a, McClintock, 1995), and highlighted that ethnic minorities should feel part of an inclusive British identity (Modood, 2007).

This critical ethnographic research on Britishness and belonging has also presented southeast London youth as “simultaneously unique individuals with agency and subjects who are produced by their structural locations” (Archer et al., 2010:31). Students’ negotiating the tensions between individual agency and institutional/structural constraints was evident in their discourses of intersectional identities and belongings discussed in the last chapter. The kaleidoscopic images the Art students presented in their discussions about personal experiences of Britishness highlights the multi-layered, multi-faceted and vibrant nature of British identities. My research participants displayed developing awareness that “collective identities are not things we are born with, but are formed and transformed within and in relation to

representation” (Solomos, 2001:202). The cultural artefacts – the artwork – and the discussions that ensued in the interviews, presented students’ multiple ways of experiencing Britishness. In their discussions, students reproduced classed and racialised constraints, importantly alongside ways of resisting and contesting these societal labels and categories through self-definition. Agency and social structure, therefore, both featured in national identity debates in my research, as students engaged in self-definition to contest how others defined them, whilst also defining others (Bechhofer and McCrone, 2010). The students came to understand that national identity is limited and at times limiting: “...neither unalterable nor a matter of unfettered choice”, only “alterable within limits and in a manner that harmonises with its overall character and organising principles” (Parekh, 2000a:6). My research participants also began to discuss nations as “complex cultural communities or heterogeneous collectivities” in which “symbols, values and meanings” are “continually being renegotiated and contested” (Vadher and Barrett, 2009:443). I will now move onto summarising the significance of social structures imposing racialised and classed identities upon the students, as well as referring to the importance of students’ growing awareness of inequalities and resistance to prejudices.

## **BRITISHNESS: OLD AND NEW RACIAL AND CLASSED BELONGINGS**

### **Intersections of Race and Class**

The GCSE Art students - Joe, Kadisha, Chris and Ellie – raised social stereotypes in their conversations on Britishness, which they sometimes accepted and other times rejected. Their teachers encouraged the students to deconstruct racist stereotypes and racism through exploration of the complexities of modern multicultural belongings. My research on Britishness points towards race and racism as still present. Individual and institutional racisms are rife (Maylor et al., 2006b), while, as I wrote in Chapter Two, deconstruction of race and racism is overlooked or shied away from in school settings. My research participants illustrated young people’s discourses of urban racisms and anti-racisms are often complex and shifting (Back, 1996). Contemporary racism – alongside the policy imperative to teach Fundamental British Values which came into force after my research was conducted (see Chapter One) – implicates cultural difference and cultural otherness, rather than physical appearance or skin colour as in the past: “...people’s cultures are read as determining levels of civilisation, intelligence and ways of doing things” (Garner, 2012:447). Biological conceptions of racism are today seen as inappropriate and objectionable, but cultural racism continues to thrive in mainstream societal discourses (Cole, 2016). Representations of cities like London are also “typically – if often

unconsciously – informed by racial stereotypes”, even the term “urban”, which was “once used as a code for modern, advanced and civilized - became imbued with a racial overtone” (Brahinsky, 2011:147). When we provide a platform for students to speak “we can be left in little doubt of how competently and with what complexity”, they “appropriate, rework and reproduce racist discourses in relation to a variety of situations and contexts” (Connolly, 1998:5), potentially providing a rich and detailed account of the reality of their lives.

Since ethnic and national identities develop often due to “conquests, colonization and immigration” (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1992:3), my research shows schools cannot ignore the legacy of empire on life in multicultural Britain (Asari et al., 2008). Cohen (1995:20) hoped, as post-war Britain became more multicultural, it would be “more difficult for white Britons to territorialise their identity to the exclusion of ‘the other’”; he hoped that “nationality and citizenship, despite various cunning bureaucratic and political contrivances, had to be conceded on a non-racial basis”. However, my research offers evidence for the idea that “no person within a racialized society escapes the markings of race, but how it marks their life varies considerably” (Lewis, 2004:628). In a city like London “like all taboos, (race) remains ever present, even in the systematic silences and exclusions...what appears at first glance to be missing...turns out on closer inspection not to be missing at all, only unspoken” (Cross and Keith, 1993:8). British media present ethnic minorities - born in Britain and recent immigrants or refugees - as social “problems” (Alia and Bull, 2005:25), impacting on youth attitudes towards race, migration and multicultural Britain.

This research on Britishness, therefore supports the case that we must examine race and racism from both ideological and material perspectives (Paul, 1997, Lewis, 2004), for reasons of conscience and cohesion (Troyna and Carrington, 2012). Furthermore, critics of British nationalism recognise that racism is “inherent” in Britishness (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1992). Anti-racist work needs to be carefully planned and implemented or it will be deemed dangerous, controversial and ‘clumsy’ (Thomas, 2002). Detailed examination of how racism works on different levels in distinct social sites will allow work towards combatting racism (Bhavnani et al., 2005). Different types of racism can be deconstructed with young people, for example institutional racism and everyday racism, and the role of polity and media must not be overlooked, as these institutions influence how racism operates in British society (Bhavnani et al., 2005). Britishness, inevitably, consists of “exclusionary and inclusionary assumptions” (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1992:40), however even when teenagers feel excluded from political narratives because of their ethnicity, they are still keen to assert their own version of

Britishness/Englishness (Back, 1996), as demonstrated by Kadisha's discussions. Students with diverse cultural heritages, like Kadisha and Chris, may negotiate complex notions of home and belonging, living international elements in their everyday lives, maintaining contact with the distant lands of their parents whilst living in global London. My research supports Back's (1996) argument that Black youth in south London express both local identifications and transnational belongings, and thus research with young people should operate within this framework of the 'glocal'. Students, like Kadisha and Chris, carry deep awareness of transnational belongings, making their British identities intersect with colonial histories and multicultural urban belongings. Critical race theorists advocate an approach that "names racist injuries and identifies their origins" (Solórzano and Yosso, 2002:27) in identity work. Addressing roots of racism from a post-colonial perspective - "the tortuous history of Britain's imperial ambitions" - presents Britishness as "a concept that travels with heavy global baggage" (Ware, 2009:8). Kadisha embraced the exploration of Britishness by providing counter-narratives about transnational ways of belonging.

Intersections between nationalism and racism should be probed (Brah, 1996), otherwise reluctance to tackle issues of race/racism can only result in Britishness becoming inaccessible and even unobtainable to those who experience this double bind: on the one hand they are racialised by media representation and political rhetoric (Finney and Simpson, 2009), but on the other hand they are informed that we live in a post-racial nation and they should 'get over' issues of race and racism (Stokes and Nea, 2013). Contemporary racisms need addressing in new ways (Stokes and Nea, 2013) in conjunction with intersectional categories like class (Bhavnani et al., 2005). Notions of Britishness cannot continue to ignore the "impact of racism and other forms of social and economic exclusion" (Karlsen and Nazroo, 2015:15). Furthermore, multicultural needs to be examined in relation to social class, religion and other differences, rather than as a separate entity (Byrne and de Tona, 2013). The White working class seem to be pitched against other ethnic minority groups, for media and political rhetoric presents White working classes as deprived of entitlement to resources in favour of other racial groups (Bottero, 2009, Gillborn, 2009, Reay, 2009, Hage, 2012). There is a "false perception" among White-working classes when anti-racist initiatives are sometimes regarded as anti-White projects (Nayak, 2009:35).

The anti-racist 'backlash' by White working classes is often due to feeling neglected and excluded from discourse on multiculturalism: "...working-class white young people who have felt judged and policed by the middle-class professionals implementing such work" on anti-racism (Thomas, 2011:166). My research supports the argument that anti-racist policy work

should not suffer at the expense of 'steel pans, saris and samosas' style multicultural practices (Mirza, 2005), that neglect issues of racism as well as White working-class identities (Sivanandan, 1998): "Being tolerated, being tokenized is not enough" (Steinberg, 2009). Multicultural education that ignores oppressions and the oppressors is problematic (Garvey, 1996). My research shows positioning of White working-class youth against minority ethnic youth in public and media discourses impacts upon young people's understandings of multicultural belongings. Research participant Ellie has absorbed wider societal discourses and negative language surrounding Black male youth into her own perceptions of fear and safety. White domination then is "not solely the domain of white supremacist groups" (Leonardo, 2016:270). Ellie normalises societal stereotyping of Black males: "Everyone does. It's natural". Thus, White racism is also "the domain of average, tolerant people, of lovers of diversity, and of believers in justice", of the "good whites" (Leonardo, 2016: 270). Ellie – who loves London for its multiculturalism, who loves the school for its diversity, who is a 'tolerant' young person who believes in social justice – is a 'good white' displaying racist attitudes towards other Black youth, not the ones she is school friends with, but the 'others' who the media represent as threatening 'social problems'. A critical race theory (CRT) lens would enable students like Ellie and her peers to better reflect upon the pernicious consequences of the persistent myths of 'race' and how these lead to racial inequalities and divisions. CRT strives to show how 'racism' is normalised and presented as an 'ordinary' feature of society, as well as how it intersects with other social inequalities and oppressions (Taylor, 2016). Teachers working in multicultural schools could employ a CRT approach to critique the idea that racially stereotyping young Black males is 'natural' and 'accepted'. Black students Kadisha and Chris were aware of media demonization of Black youth, while Ellie highlighted the caricaturing of the White working classes. Hegemonic practices of dividing social groups and pitting them against one another for material resources (Bradley, 1996) features as a key concern in the students' discourses of Britishness as they refer to the vilification of both Black and White working-class youth (see Chapter Six). From a critical whiteness lens, teaching White students about racism might mean that teachers encounter students who are initially in denial about racism, and who might then begin to adopt a positive White identity actively allying with people of colour to tackle racial inequalities and racisms (Tatum, 2016).

The Art students relayed Britishness in Bermondsey as permeated by wider society's labelling of Bermondsey as an undesirable and disreputable racist and violent chav place. The students' ideas on social deprivation and inequalities are inextricably tied up with representations of the locals as chavs. Rather than addressing prevailing social problems, wider society despises and

dismisses Bermondsey inhabitants as racist chavs. In these supposed post-racial times, studying space and place, as my research shows, brings to light the continued salience of race and racism (Neely and Samura, 2011), alongside the intersections with class. Looking beyond belonging in terms of “identification and familiarity”, belonging is also about social exclusion/inclusion, power relations and positioning (Ralph and Staeheli, 2011:523). Just as White working-class areas have been labelled as “chav towns” through being “positioned in the demonizing discourse constructed around chavs”(le Grand, 2014), next I will summarise how the students and schools in these White working-class areas too suffer from this demeaning discourse. Following Freire, I continue to argue for hope and possibility. Not only do “racialized forms of subjectivity and identity” result in “resistances” (Weedon, 2004:17), but my research with students like Ellie, shows classed forms similarly result in resistance through counter-narratives.

### **Politicising the Chav Caricature by Examining Inequalities**

It is necessary to assess the current socio-political climate which results in social ostracising of sections of society through contemporary classism of chav-bashing. To challenge the attacks on the marginalised in society, students and teachers can seek to understand reasons for stigmatisation of the British underclass. Mocking and scapegoating the White working classes, for instance, masks the reality of social inequalities (Nayak, 2003c, Tyler, 2013). Fuchs (2016:n.p.) views the 2015 Queen’s Speech as “an indication that Cameronism pits “the British” against immigrants, welfare recipients, trade unions, young people” who are “constructed as unproductive and a drain on resources”. Cameron is seen as creating a false dichotomy between those he deems unsavoury, like youth or immigrants, and the British. While migrants may identify with belonging to Britain, that is not enough, for “membership must be validated” (Ralph and Staeheli, 2011:523) by British society or by politicians who exercise the power to exclude certain groups. Bermondsey’s history of being situated in the heart of a once thriving docklands parallels the “deindustrialized processes of production” in northeast England, where the working classes become unemployed (Nayak, 2009:137). Socio-economic and socio-political factors, hence, give rise to lampooning of the White working classes who reside in communities suffering social problems like unemployment.

It is easy for politicians to insist that working-class communities have a “poverty of ambition’ rather than blame the “deeply unequal society rigged in favour of the privileged” (Jones, 2011:10). In 2008, Prime Minister David Cameron stated while birth place, neighbourhood and schooling can impact upon your social circumstances, people were to blame for poverty or social

exclusion because of choices they had made (Jones, 2011). Cameronism<sup>28</sup>, as well as emphasising British identity, notes:

...social problems as being moral problems that result from a lack of morality, authority, discipline, and the deterioration of families and as a consequence calls for the strengthening of authority, traditions, law and order, and control. Cameronism neglects the political economy of capitalism, patriarchy and racism in explaining social problems and reduces them to moral issues (Fuchs, 2016:n.p.).

My research participants were aware of moral judgements made about chavs by wider society as “ignorant, uneducated, uncultured and stupid”, as taking advantage of the welfare system (le Grand, 2013:220), and as rebuked for not attempting to ‘better’ themselves. These young people were growing up in a society where they witnessed the working classes as classed and racialised through ‘tropes’ of “incivility, sexual immorality, bodily excess, excessive decoration and disordered spaces” in both “popular culture and policy discourse” (Rooke and Gidley, 2010:100).

Government policies, therefore, link poverty with “problems like lack of discipline, family break-up and substance abuse” (Jones, 2011:77). In the age of austerity, scapegoating by shifting the attention to the working-classes and blaming them for their poverty through chav-bashing whilst making deep welfare cuts has become commonplace. British government has historically ignored the significance of structural inequality in causing poverty and social problems (Davidson and Wyly, 2012). Instead media and public discourses perpetuate an image of a chav as a “council estate dwelling, single-parenting, low-achieving, rottweiler-owning cultural minority, whose poverty, it is hinted, might be the result of their own poor choices” (Bottero, 2009:7).

Working towards eliminating socio-economic inequalities, and assisting with aspirations and achievement would be a better solution. Local place also often “influences the educational aspirations and choices of some young people” (Smyth and McInerney, 2014:286), necessitating examination of the relationship between class, place and educational attainment. Citizenship education discourses in the UK also do not give due attention to the significance of social justice, social rights and the values of the Welfare State, in their paradoxically ‘political’ and yet ‘depoliticised’ policy documents (Garratt, 2011). The students in my research identified prevalent social class divisions and antagonisms, explaining that their local place was regarded

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<sup>28</sup> Cameronism, like Thatcherism, is a Tory ideology. Cameronism is especially concerned with national identity, the European Union and immigration FUCHS, C. 2016. Neoliberalism in Britain: From Thatcherism to Cameronism. *Journal for a Global Sustainable Information Society* [Online], 14. Available: <http://triple-c.at/index.php/tripleC/article/view/750/795>.

as an inferior and racist habitus. The young people I interviewed rejected these ideas by articulating positive ideas about multicultural Britain, as well as relaying aspirational attitudes in the school (See Ellie's perspectives in Chapter Six).

Although my research participants actively contested dominant stereotypical discourses about their locality, making concerted effort to redefine Bermondsey positively, this was sometimes done by positioning Other places as undesirable spaces, for example New Cross, which is a neighbouring vibrant multicultural area. Social class divisions in the students' discourses of Britishness were heavily intertwined with racialization of place and people. Ellie, for example, struggled with the contradictions and conflicts surrounding the *chav* caricature. Thus students need opportunities to deconstruct representation of White working-class identities as classed and racialised categories. The students emphasised the existence of disparaging social stereotypes of Bermondsey as an undesirable space compared to "posh" parts of London, which could impact upon their sense of belonging, as they might experience a sense of social exclusion in the very city they call home. There will be implications for other schools in pathologised and demonised spaces, as well as for the students who attend these schools in areas that are seen to contain the "socially excluded, 'unfit' and undesirable" (Archer et al., 2010:2). Pejorative labels "transfer from urban spaces and infect the identity work of their young students" (Archer et al., 2010:2). This pejorative label of *chav* is hate speech used to vilify and caricature the White working classes. The students challenged the imposition of *chav* identity: Ellie didn't think it "is necessarily true" that those who society would label as "*chavs*" lack ambition, for they too want to "go somewhere" and "do something".

Inter-cultural and inter-ethnic 'mixing' is an important feature of urban multicultural schooling, as my research highlighted. Students like Ellie, Chris, Joe and Kadisha were able to engage in critical pedagogies about the intersections of racial and classed ways of being British. Importantly though emphasis on diversity, harmony and inter-ethnic mixing in school does not mean we should forget the social problems of structural inequalities which impact upon city youth. Next I will discuss how schooling is core to "a successful future for multi-ethnic Britain" (Alexander et al., 2015:4) with schools impacting upon "the identity formation of young people, not only in terms of socialization and intellectual development, but also as places that create a sense of community and belongingness" (Smyth and McInerney, 2007:59).

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING BRITISHNESS THROUGH CRITICAL PEDAGOGY**

Young people are frequently seen as the way forward to disrupt social inequalities and disturb social injustices, and thus are often controlled or subject to surveillance by the dominant interest groups in society (Leistyna, 2009). My research calls for critical skills to be nurtured in students and (student) teachers so that they can interrogate “how some groups benefit or suffer by the colonial practices and decisions of others” (Stuhr et al., 2008:83). Just like “‘England alone’ is a myth”, to be always read in the context of “colonial empire” (Schwarz, 1996:1), ‘Britain alone’ is mythical too. Politicians, like Gove and Cameron, cite Marshall’s *Our Island Story* when rallying the nation, yet what they fail to point out is that Marshall’s preface, in 1905, encouraged the seeking of stories that were inclusive and diverse (Marshall, 2008, Brocklehurst, 2015:66):

...you will find some stories that are not to be found in your school books, – stories which wise people say are only fairy tales and not history. But it seems to me that they are part of *Our Island Story*, and ought not to be forgotten, any more than those stories about which there is no doubt. [. . .] Remember, too, that I was not trying to teach you, but only to tell a story.

Valuing and exploring everyday multicultural urban experiences was important for the Art students who argued schools should focus on multicultural Britishness. Importantly, my research highlights that the Fundamental British Values policy (Department for Education, 2014) - which came about after my research was conducted - cannot ignore anti-racist work, particularly as my research participants - teachers and students - raise race and racism as significant to the study of Britishness. Yet the complexities of teaching, learning and researching within educational systems and structures reveal the problems of working within a system upheld by White supremacy. If racism and racial inequalities are deeply ingrained in the education policies (Gillborn, 2005) that we are working with and against, the work for critical race practitioners becomes all the more challenging. The teachers in my research pointed towards the lack of guidance on dealing with controversial topics like race, racism and immigration, yet we need a discussion about race and racism with teachers and students so they can critically analyse structural inequalities connecting to racisms. If ‘education policy is an act of white supremacy’ (Gillborn, 2005), then the big question raised is where do policy calls for teaching and learning Britishness lie within the landscape of White power and privilege? A pertinent question teachers and students working in critical pedagogy and critical race theory traditions must ask one another is: Who benefits from the teaching and learning of Britishness?

There is hope and possibility that promotion of a homogenous national culture may be challenged through the very education system that has been designed to produce docile citizens. Students and teachers need avenues of departure to escape policies designed to indoctrinate

and produce submissive subjects. Critical pedagogical practices seem to provide these significant spaces where students and teachers can challenge prevailing misconceptions, critique the status quo, and define their own discourses on belonging to Britain. The previous chapters have highlighted the ways critical pedagogy can provide students and teachers with the necessary critical and conceptual tools to deconstruct social constructs like race. If racism concerns “relationships of domination and subordination” and perceiving the Other as “inferior, abhorrent, even sub-human” (Fredman, 2011:51), then my research shows allowing students the space to fully comprehend the pernicious causes and consequences of racism when analysing Britishness is crucial. Otherwise promoting nationalism or patriotism, at the expense of the Other, could lead to perpetuation, rather than deconstruction, of racisms. Citizenship guidance, in British schools, does not always inspire confidence or promote inclusion of diverse identities, thus active participation is hindered if young people do not feel they belong to Britain or cannot identify with Britishness (Kiwani, 2007). National identity can be critiqued in the classroom rather than “forged within popular memory as a discourse that too neatly links nation, culture, and citizenship in a seamless and unproblematic unity” (Giroux, 1995:46). Critical pedagogy importantly interrogates “who has control over the conditions for the production of knowledge, values and classroom practices” (Giroux, 2013:5); my research shows students and teachers resisting dominant ideologies about pedagogies and identities by focusing on the personal and the collective in classroom practice.

Critical engagement is especially necessary if we acknowledge that British and indigenous youth were key to the imperial mission and how Britishness was represented, reproduced and challenged throughout the world (Robinson and Sleight, 2015). Examining histories that deconstruct the social experiences of British and indigenous youth during colonial times could help today’s school students better understand the racialisation of Britishness and belonging during Empire. For example, by discussing how “Britain’s ascendancy in India was maintained to a large extent, on the mystique of racial superiority...” (Visram, 2002:356). Teaching and learning Britishness could involve a critical examination of who defined and reinforced certain narratives of inclusion and exclusion regarding British identities. Chapter Two presented a history of politicised Britishness, which would be useful for young people (like my Art students) to learn more about to better understand classed and racialised experiences of multicultural Britain. Paul (1997:13), for example, highlights the history of “competing definitions and communities of Britishness” whereby the working classes, people of colour, and women “found their access to material wealth, education, and privilege severely limited by economic, gender, and “racial” status”.

It is not only students who are underprepared for dealing with diversity. Trainee and new teachers lack guidance in dealing with racism and media stereotypes, as well as on how to explore race, ethnicity and multicultural Britain (Carrington et al., 2000, Maylor et al., 2006a, Pearce, 2012, Stokes and Nea, 2013, Bhopal and Rhamie, 2013, Lander, 2014) (See Chapter Three Part C). Although the research tends to focus on student teachers, I would argue ongoing professional development for *all* teachers should address stereotypes and inequalities in multicultural Britain, particularly as the Art teachers in my research showed awareness and concern about the difficulties of addressing such topics with students. My research shows instead of passively accepting hegemonic narratives of Britishness, students used safe spaces and critical thought to debate the current discourses on British identity. Students provided their own personal definitions and experiences from diverse racial, ethnic and class positionings. Not only does critical identity work impact upon educational engagement and achievement (Archer et al., 2010), but if a democratic goal of education is to inspire morally and socially responsible citizens, critical pedagogy encourages students to be “critical, self-reflective and knowledgeable” citizens (Giroux, 2013:3). Increasingly schools are controlled through government dominance over curriculum content, curbing teacher autonomy and professionalism, as well as student diversity, voice and participation: “lack of participation in discussion about curriculum content or values” yields “powerlessness, low self-efficacy and ultimately a lack of commitment” (Gamman, 2004:151). Teaching controversial topics in multicultural settings to diverse students is difficult for teachers who feel undertrained (Carrington et al., 2000, Maylor et al., 2006a, Pearce, 2012, Stokes and Nea, 2013, Bhopal and Rhamie, 2013, Lander, 2014, Maylor, 2015). Chapter Five highlighted the two teachers overcoming their pre-teaching anxieties and boldly encouraging students to resist and critically challenge narrow conceptions of Britishness. Students like Kadisha might experience marginalisation and powerlessness, and some teachers may not be confident in supporting diverse students to remove the shackles of Eurocentric education. Culturally responsive teaching is one of the solutions, for it involves teachers “acquiring a knowledge base about ethnic and cultural diversity” before they “learn how to convert it into culturally responsive curriculum designs and instructional strategies” (Gay, 2002:108).

When it comes to educational policies, questions are often asked about whether teachers are engaging in critical deconstruction of dominant assumptions about the nature of teaching and learning, or are they constrained social control by policies and practices imposed upon powerless teachers (Giroux, 2013). Critical pedagogy, by investigating and revealing contestations, conflicts and challenges to official narratives can help interrogate dominant

ideologies (Vavrus, 2015), about Britishness, British values and multicultural belongings. A critical pedagogy is thus “simultaneously as classroom researcher, a politician, and an artist” (Shor and Freire, 1987b:11). Critical pedagogy is a “moral and political practice”, embracing reflective and active citizenship as it “provides tools to unsettle commonsense assumptions, theorize matters of self and social agency, and engage the ever-changing demands and promises of a democratic polity” (Giroux, 2013:3). Critical pedagogy emphasises the importance of “justice, values, ethics and power”(Giroux, 2013:3); my research with the Art students and teachers showed them learning more about these very same notions as they come to rethink identities and belongings (see Chapters Five and Six). Teachers and students partaking in critical pedagogy willingly and enthusiastically will engage in acts of reflection, critical consciousness and collaborative action. However some teachers and students might not want to be critical pedagogues, nor want to create spaces for resistance, nor want to enact social change.

The Prevent duty (HM Government, 2015), that was rolled out after my research was conducted, is seen to be hindering critical thinking and critical discussion in safe educational spaces. Currently students fear freely offering their views and experiences of life in modern multicultural Britain, and teachers feel pressured to monitor, control and even report students (Mumisa, 2014, Richardson, 2015a, Richardson, 2015b, Bolloten and Richardson, 2015, Reclaiming Schools, 2015, Garner, 2015, Birt, 2015, Faure Walker, 2016, Adams, 2016, Qurashi, 2016). Moreover the Prevent duty (HM Government, 2015) has been heavily criticised for its “racial profiling”(UCU Left, 2015):

Three schools in Barnsley, an area with a high level of EDL activity, published risk assessments earlier this year that stated that the schools were not prone to radicalisation and extremism as “cohort of pupils are white British majority” and many pupils “take a keen interest in British military work”. They also stated that “Staff continue to monitor BME (black and minority ethnic) cohort”. The risk assessments were taken from a template approved by the Prevent team at South Yorkshire police.

Rather than controlling the pedagogies and practices of the classroom, this Britishness Art project was tailored to suit students with culturally diverse needs requiring different levels of support. Teachers were vigilant about students potentially venturing into xenophobic territory, reminding students of the ground rules throughout the project to ensure all students felt safe and protected. Safe spaces are therefore essential for teachers and students working on potentially inflammatory topics.

The Art teachers ensured the project was inclusive, intercultural and educative by emotionally investing in the project with their students. Critical pedagogy principles embraced by research participants permitted moving beyond the banking method of depositing knowledge into

passive students (Freire, 2000). Instead students reflected upon classed and racialised belongings in their discourses of Britishness, together learning about questioning dominant ideologies. Importantly “ethnicity versus class” was not propagated by the teachers when examining multicultural belongings to Britain, for this is divisive and inaccurate, and neglects the classed existence of ethnic minorities (Back, 2009:206). Throughout this research, I emphasise the importance of giving students the critical tools, reflective time and protected space to engage in identity work (see Chapters Three, Five and Six for detailed examination of the pedagogical approaches and beneficial outcomes of critical pedagogy when exploring identity). A new “ethnographic imagination” recognises that “the times we live in require (indeed demand) research approaches that move beyond tedious forms of research in ways that open up transformative imaginative spaces” (Smyth and McInerney, 2013:3). Critical pedagogy’s multiple advantages – it values student voice, student participation, collaboration between teachers and students, and challenges dominant assumptions about schooling and everyday life (Darder et al., 2009a) – markedly came alive in this purposeful and exciting Art project on Britishness.

This research contributes to the conversation on how to approach the teaching and learning of Britishness with ethnically, culturally and religiously diverse students in British schools. Days of advocating assimilation were seemingly over, for the once prevalent “expectation” that ethnic minorities “would simply blend into a homogenous British or even English stew, perhaps adding some harmless spice, was revealed as not only hopelessly unrealistic but symptomatic of a form of racism which regarded ‘Britishness’ and ‘Westernness’ as the only touchstones of cultural value” (Rattansi, 1992:13). Yet the return to advocating Britishness presents previous and current governments recycling assimilationist policies. Since my research was conducted, policy documents concerning ‘Teachers’ Standards’ and the ‘personal and professional conduct’ of teachers also make reference to “not undermining fundamental British values” (Department for Education, 2011, Turvey et al., 2012). The current tensions of how British Values policies and practices, heavily tied to discourses of counter-terrorism, are impacting upon not only student/learner identities, but also upon teachers’ personal and professional identities, need further investigation. How can we effectively disrupt and challenge “hegemonic discourses of history and invented traditions” (Weedon, 2004:20), is a key concern for critical pedagogues. If young people see Britishness as singular, imposing and restrictive (Phillips and Ganesh, 2007), we work harder, as teachers and researchers, for students to begin to understand nation and belonging is definable and debatable in multiple ways, and to recognise their voices on identity matter to their peers, their teachers and to educational researchers. Yet tensions exist for

educationalists. For example, if there is no one agreed upon definition of Britishness or shared/fundamental British values in contemporary multicultural society, then the requirement for teachers not to undermine FBV becomes complex, confusing and contested (Maylor, 2016).

Pedagogues often liken the critical student with the critical citizen (Freire, 2000, Darder et al., 2009a, Giroux, 2013), making critical pedagogy theoretically and methodologically suitable to the teaching and learning of Britishness. Business models of education, where schools are commoditised and students are consumers can be rejected through critical citizenship work that empowers students into becoming reflective and active members of society (Kincheloe, 2007). Promoting 'shared British values' is in danger of mimicking monocultural educational practices (Cole, 2013b), by "propagating and implementing the values of the White British male ruling class" (Cole, 2013a:239). Following Freirean philosophies, we take heart that critical pedagogy enables us to challenge "the authoritarian nostalgia that surrounds efforts by mainstream educational policy makers and their "authoritarian administrations" to reduce a highly complex world by means of simplistic answers" (McLaren, 2000:9). My research has shown there are no 'simplistic answers' to the meanings of Britishness or the teaching of Britishness, but that identity exploration is 'highly complex'. Critical pedagogy allows teachers and students to actively and collaboratively navigate the diversities, intricacies and ambiguities of identity exploration through reflection, participation and dialogue in order to construct new knowledge and transformed social worlds. Through employing notions of critical consciousness and critical interrogation, students are empowered into making their multiplicity of voices heard and making their diversity of stories matter. I found students were creating artwork suffused with meaning – their "representations" were "political statements" (Goodall, 2000:56) - about local, national and global belongings.

A 'banking' concept of education whereby teachers teach the government's version of Fundamental British Values will possibly further alienate students who already feel detached from the values of middle-class White Britain with its imperial legacy. Kadisha seized the opportunity to resist dominant interpretations of Britishness by focusing on her Jamaican-ness as being key to her identity. In "thinking feminist and thinking black", we can "reclaim and recover ourselves" (hooks, 2015:3), and this is Kadisha's approach to Britishness. In any exploration of nation and identity, therefore, we must be aware of how history "legitimizes an intensely narrow and bigoted notion" (Giroux, 1995:46) of being a citizen, of being British, and of belonging. Influenced by Paulo Freire, hooks (1991:220) advocated "education for critical consciousness". Freire's passionate convictions on education, my research finds, apply to

exploration of Britishness in a postcolonial context: marginalised groups in society do not need to be taught dominant notions of Britishness with the lasting connotations of colonialism and empire. Kadisha's resistance seeps into Joe's understanding of the ethnic minority perspective on Britishness. Joe keenly listened to his peer Kadisha, pointing out his own historical analysis: Britain "couldn't get people to graft for them". He recognised the contribution of Black peoples in building Britain. My research reminds us that national identities "have associated histories, heritages, and traditions that are continually being constructed and reconstructed in accordance with current political opinion" (Stuhr et al., 2008:86). The "officially sanctioned version of civics and citizenship education" has also been critiqued with regards to the Australian schooling system's narrow perspective omitting important issues of diversity, power and inequalities (Reid et al., 2010). In the UK, we similarly find "the politics of 'race' is consistently present in its absence in the policy discourse of citizenship education" (Garratt, 2011:28).

Teaching and learning of Britishness will reveal 'histories, heritages, and traditions' influenced and moulded by political policies. Educational systems can perpetuate institutional racism by manipulating the curriculum to devalue and marginalise students' cultural and ethnic knowledge and experiences, through "an ethnocentric dedication to the remodelling of citizens to conform to a single homogenous acceptable model (Dickeman, 1973:6). It is problematic if teachers are being coerced into presenting a certain version of Britishness (Chakrabarty and Preston, 2008, Chadderton, 2009). The Britishness project in schools cannot negate and dismiss students' cultural backgrounds, nor coerce conformity to a 'homogenous acceptable model' of British identity, particularly as Britishness is highly subjective, fluid and diverse. Training courses are not effectively "preparing and enabling student teachers to teach with confidence, knowledge and understanding" in multicultural Britain (Lander, 2014:93). Yet educationalists know "diversity is not a choice, but our responses to it certainly are" (Howard, 2006:4).

The two Art teachers wanted to avoid imposing their own views, or pushing a governmental agenda that is seemingly objective or neutral, upon their students. Teachers are not merely "hapless clerks or servants of the empire" (Giroux and McLaren, 1989:xix), but keen on encouraging students to define and debate matters of culture and identity. The traditional curriculum and the standard classroom, according to critical pedagogues, are not politically neutral (Freire, 1985a, Shor, 1992, Gruenewald, 2003, Smyth and McInerney, 2007, Anyon, 2011, Apple, 2013), but serve to legitimise the status quo. According to Shor (1992:12), "education is politics" and like Freire (1985a), he believed that "no curriculum can be neutral" but should interrogate schooling, society and the status quo, to develop our students into critical

thinkers and doers. The “use of pupil’s own experiences” also worked to “reduce idealisation and stereotyping of particular cultures by some teachers (and pupils)” (Maylor et al., 2007:9). Valuing student voice enhanced student participation: students in the Art classes were encouraged to fully participate in the project and they rose to this challenge. Increasing student engagement is possible if there is open discussion about *why* the topic is being studied, and if the topic is relevant to students’ diverse local and cultural belongings (Gamman, 2004). Students are used to being passive recipients of teacher-led instruction, Mr Martin and Ms Anderson found. Yet critical pedagogy remedied this so learning was “not something done by teachers to students for their own good but is something students co-develop for themselves, led by a critical and democratic teacher” (Shor, 1992:20). Research with the GCSE Art classes highlighted Britishness cannot be *taught* to the students in a didactic or authoritarian way, but only *explored* with students who have their own knowledge to bring to the meanings of Britishness. Importantly, students were also challenged by their teacher and by their peers’ conceptualisations of Britishness. Being able to express personal voice on Britishness, but also learn about multiple perspectives was fundamental to the pedagogical process.

High levels of student engagement and focus, as well as students’ hearty embrace of the chance to express their often unheard voices, outweighed potential problems in this particular research setting (see Chapter Five). My research with the Art teachers also pointed towards a wariness to impose an “official” version of Britishness on the students. Instead the teachers were interested in the students’ perceptions and perspectives of Britishness. Generally, when over-worked teachers are focused on getting students through the exams, they may not have much chance to get to hear about what matters to their students. The research raised critical questions about whether teachers know enough about students, and whether we have scratched beyond superficial assumptions about gender, ethnicity, social class or religion. Students found the project raised many complex questions about urban social life, rather than straightforward answers about race, racism, social class and belongings. Giving students a space and voice to (re)present personal identity was deemed a success by the teachers for the engaged and enthusiastic students achieved high levels of attainment, resulting in the Art department continuing with the project in the following year. Visual methods, we have witnessed, enable collaborative, reflexive and ethically considerate interdisciplinary research (Pink, 2003, Pink, 2004), useful when studying communities (Back, 2009).

Teaching Britishness is a complex multi-layered endeavour involving teachers and students together questioning prevalent notions of identity, bringing to the classroom their unique social

experiences and perspectives. My research demonstrates teachers and students collectively and individually reflecting upon the meanings of Britishness and belonging through critical pedagogy approaches to identity work. Critical engaged pedagogy's focus on student voice and independent thinking is "empowering" for students, especially if they had previously felt not "worthy" of participating in lessons (hooks, 2010:21). We observe the GCSE Art students thinking independently, projecting personal voice, and becoming empowered in sharing insights about belongings and Britishness. Schools as sites of resistance and contestation, thus, can reveal power is not exclusively "complete" or "negative", as students and teachers can "resist, struggle and fight for their image of a better world": thus we find hope and possibility in that "there are always cracks, tensions, and contradictions in various social spheres such as schools where power is often exercised as a positive force in the name of resistance" (Giroux, 1985:xix). Taking heart from tales of resistance, of "innovative" and "courageous" actions by teachers (Smyth and McInerney, 2007:4), can provide hope for students and teachers seeking educational progress and social justice. Critical pedagogues hope that when students (and teachers) realise that their oppression is affecting their everyday lives more than ever before, they will rise to challenge social inequalities.

## **MOVING FORWARD: WHERE ARE WE GOING?**

### **Who are we now?**

Since my research was conducted, politicians are still being criticised for making incorrect and problematic assumptions about extremism, integration, and Britishness teaching. Contrary to political assertions, multiculturalism is not dangerous, nor does it lead to terrorism (Parekh, 2012, Berkeley, 2011). Newspaper headlines like "Mass Immigration, and how Labour tried to destroy Britishness" (Heffer, 2012), reveal control of the nation's borders continues to be perpetuated through moral panics about an influx of immigrants ruining British culture and identity. Strict immigration controls are often seen by the powerful as able to resolve "the nation's social ills" (Hirschler, 2012:65), especially if "an invasive 'black' culture was in the process of assimilating an otherwise wholesome (white) British society" (Hirschler, 2012:70). The future of Britishness is currently being promoted through the statutory requirement for schools to teach Fundamental British Values (Department for Education, 2014). Assimilation is still on the agenda, with the responsibility placed "not on the 'host' culture to accommodate immigrants, but on individuals to integrate themselves" (Slater, 2006:10) by actively demonstrating they are integrated and British.

The coming decade will be “crucial in shaping alienation from a British identity” (Karlsen and Nazroo, 2015:19). Black and Asian youth were once separated from a collective British identity (Mirza, 2005), now Muslim youth are similarly scrutinised (Abbas, 2004, Kundnani, 2005, Ware, 2009, Nandi and Platt, 2014, Žarkov, 2015), particularly through the Prevent duty (HM Government, 2015). Since 9/11 some nation-states have promoted themselves as “a policing force” concerned for their citizens’ “security” (Giroux, 2013:111), thus policies and laws come into effect to strengthen social order, by minimising terror threats whilst protecting a particular version of Britishness (Miah, 2015). Teachers find students are Prevent-ed from opening up in classroom discussion because of “Foucauldian practices of governance and discipline of young British Muslims – practices that may be seen to reproduce and perpetuate institutional anti-Muslim racism and Islamophobia” (Coppock and McGovern, 2014:243):

As a teacher in East London I used to enjoy heated religious and political debates with the Muslim students who I served. In 2014 these conversations abruptly stopped. I wanted to know why this had happened and to try to understand what the impact of this might be (Faure Walker, 2016).

A classroom ethos cultivating student engagement enables students to participate in discussions about socio-political matters (Hess, 2009). However the current Prevent duty (HM Government, 2015) inhibits the discussion of controversial socio-political issues, by calling upon teachers and lecturers to report students, thereby creating reluctance on the part of both teachers and students to have open and honest debates (Mumisa, 2014, Richardson, 2015a, Richardson, 2015b, Bolloten and Richardson, 2015, Reclaiming Schools, 2015, Garner, 2015, Birt, 2015, Neustatter, 2016). The Prevent duty has implications for teachers and students required to develop an understanding of Fundamental British Values when debates seem to be increasingly shut down. My research presents ways to have these debates through arts based identity work which is “able to provide the participatory, ethical, multi-voiced processes” needed for social justice and equality” (Chilton and Leavy, 2014:405). Arts based exploration of identity can be “resistant to oppression by dominant paradigms and prevailing authorities”, and can develop “human understanding, capacity for empathy, and positive transformation” (Chilton and Leavy, 2014:404). Smith (2013:128) also provides examples of ways he contested the official curriculum by “introducing students to basic concepts of critical theory and co-developing with them a distinctive approach to learning that featured critical investigations of personal interests and dimensions of their lives both in and out of school”. At a time when racism is “a frighteningly real, burning and omnipresent issue” (Cole, 2016:2), critical investigations are crucial in engaging young people to make sense of social identities and to seek social justice.

The current Fundamental British Values (FBV) programme, which came into the public consciousness after my research commenced, seems to be perceived by critics as an assimilative social project, aiming to homogenise youth. The FBV project seems to be becoming one that's only legacy in years to come will be one of "futility and discrimination" (Sandercock, 2005:220). It has come to permeate every level of education, even toddlers are not exempt. If nurseries do not teach FBV, their local authority funding will be refused (Morton, 2014). The FBV programme also neglects the significance of race and ethnicity as "contextual and contingent" concepts, requiring regular "analysis of the power relations through which differences are made visible and given meaning" (Dwyer and Bressey, 2012:4). Instead increasingly we find ourselves in a position where neoliberal conceptions of national identity that attempt to fix and essentialise racial and ethnic categories (Sleeter, 2014) are promoted. The FBV policy arises from government documents on extremism (Richardson, 2015b), with 'extremism' defined by the government as "vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values..." (HM Government, 2015:2). Legitimate critical questions arise about whether teachers are being coerced into partaking in the 'war on terror' (Coppock, 2014). Government guidance outlines that violent extremism "may begin with a search for answers to questions about identity, faith and belonging" (DCSF, 2008:17). Teachers may look for signs and subsequently report students to the Prevent Officers, yet my research advocates the significance of students wanting to and benefitting from exploring identity issues in secure spaces with their teachers. Qurashi (2016) questions the potential short and long term impact of the Prevent strategy on young people's relationships with teachers and schooling, as well as on their mental health: "Prevent is an exercise in Islamophobia that continues to undermine democracy, equality, and justice. The state is complicit in undermining "British values" rather than upholding them".

Strong ethnic and religious identities can be perceived as threatening to Britishness (Shukra et al., 2004), resulting in a persistently intrusive interrogation of ethnic minority communities sense of Britishness<sup>29</sup> (Jivraj, 2013), and a sense of disquietude: "why must the quest for national identity function as the discursive regime through which the voices of people already marginalized in English-British society are articulated?" (Zuberi, 2010:183). Although the White British majority are reluctant to "sign up to national identification in systematic or consistent ways", they are not subjected to frequent cross-examination (Nandi and Platt, 2014:42). White Britons, instead, tend to ask visible ethnic minorities "Where are you from?" rather than converse about everyday topics like they do with fellow White Britons (Erel, 2011). The

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<sup>29</sup> See Zuberi (2010) for a critique of how Jeremy Paxman randomly questions Dizzee Rascal regarding Britishness.

supposed ‘incompatibility’ between Muslim and British identities seems to be constructed to keep Muslims out of public and civic spaces (McGhee, 2008, Karlsen and Nazroo, 2015), yet the Fundamental British Values of “freedom, tolerance of others, accepting personal and social responsibility, respecting and upholding the law” are also “the same values evident throughout the long history of Islam” (Mason, 2016:7). The language used about Muslims in the media – who are the visible Other with beard and hijabs - has long since been demeaning and distorted, portraying “images of savagery, barbarism and unBritishness” (Wahab (1989) in (Saeed et al., 1999:822). These xenophobic attitudes referring to a “dislike of the stranger, the outsider” (Kedourie, 1993:68), reveal fear and hostility for the Other who “refuses to remain confined to the ‘far away’ land or go away from our own land”, who is “physically close while remaining culturally remote” (Sarup, 2005:101).

Educationalists need to keep asking “challenging questions” to further understanding of “the real purposes of schooling” and “the motivations and commitment of politicians to the principles of equality and opportunity for all” (Arnot and Barton, 1992:viii). The work of Gurnah (1992) stresses the need to “challenge politicians’ discourses of black communities” and “be relevant to the political struggles of black people” (Arnot and Barton, 1992). Similarly we can challenge prevailing hegemonic discourses about students from diverse communities, including White working-class students, like Ellie, who feel marginalised and demonised by wider society, as well as political and media discourses. One way to counter student passivity, disillusionment and frustrations is to help students overcome marginalisation and oppression through collaboration and communication resulting in the school curriculum becoming relevant to their present and future lives. Another way is to value their counter-stories, for if we listen to and value students’ counter-stories, we can understand the impact of social inequalities and social injustices on their young lives (Love, 2004).

School leaders are sometimes in a powerful position to influence schools’ policies, practices and pedagogies with their discourse of diversity, multiculturalism and anti-racism. Hence, there is a pressing need to further research the discourses of Fundamental British Values employed by educational leaders. Researching schools’ responses, I came across a Southwark primary school website, outlining the head teacher’s commitment to upholding the ‘Teachers’ Standards’ and promoting ‘British Values’(Fox, n.d.):

The fact of the matter is that the ‘fundamental British values’ inherit (sic) in the Teachers’ Standards are Christian values that have underpinned the principles of all that has shaped Britain. In our school we have children of other faiths, but they and their parents tell us consistently that they want their children to attend St John’s because of the Christian values we promote, which they see as universal values.

...To clearly define what 'fundamental British values' are, may I suggest that the answer is very simple... read the Gospels and heed the teachings of Our Lord!

Fuller (2013) investigates the ways in which head teachers (*mis*)recognise difference and diversity, arguing this will no doubt affect distribution of school resources. Current socio-political thinking dismisses 'diversity' by applauding 'shared values' (McGhee, 2008:134): "According to Billig et al, what is fascinating about the new Britishness discourse based on shared values (including tolerance) is that it creates new outsiders...". 'Diversity' is depicted as "a dangerous feature of society" creating "weakness, chaos and confusion" (Gilroy, 2005:2). The denouncement of 'multiculturalism might be viewed as "a political gesture... aimed at abolishing any ambition towards plurality" (Gilroy, 2005:2).

Moving forward, Britishness exploration by critical pedagogues might support students in asking deeper questions about why the Fundamental British Values (FBV) agenda is being promoted, and at what expense. It remains to be seen how this policy might be adopted by schools, how educational institutions will train teachers, and how students will negotiate their multiple identities in light of calls to embrace Britishness. My research with Art teachers and students revealed the strengths and benefits of exploring Britishness through critical pedagogies, nevertheless, further research is needed into how FBV develops and current fears that it might translate into another form of what Foucault terms 'governmentality' to regulate and discipline young bodies and minds about how to act British, to create future citizens who are 'docile bodies', and to exercise power and control over wider society. For now though "homogeneity rather than diversity" continues to dominate (Gilroy, 2005:2). The FBV agenda, along with "narrowing of the curriculum, and the inculcation of an exclusionary and utilitarian version of citizenship" have marginalised "race equality and diversity" issues (Alexander et al., 2015:4).

It is a concern then that many new teachers, "even those about to embark on teaching in multi-ethnic schools, will lack a real understanding of the different ethnic and cultural groups that Britain comprises" (Maylor, 2015:29). Critical pedagogues recognise increasing surveillance and governance of young people render them powerless and insecure (Giroux, 2003). The inception of FBV policies are not from the Department for Education, but come from Home Office Prevent guidance (HM Government, 2015) on counter-extremism from 2011 (Bolloten and Richardson, 2015). Political manoeuvres of using Britishness to combat 'extremism' contributes to Islamophobia (Elton-Chalcraft, 2015). My research, conducted before the FBV policy was made statutory, informs us of racialised discourses featuring in students' discussions on Britishness. Further longitudinal research is necessary to investigate whether diversity, anti-racism, and multiculturalism training will be further neglected in the interests of promoting FBV.

After the 2011 riots in English cities, as well as ‘feral youth’ blamed by media and political spokespeople for the disorder (Briggs, 2012), multiculturalism and ethnic minorities were also denounced for having “threatened to transform ‘the British way of life’” (Hirschler, 2012:65). However, social problems of “festering post-colonial racisms, police profiling and excessive force, a vanishing welfare state, and unprecedented levels of unemployment in the midst of an economic crisis” (Gereluk, 2012:ix) were not addressed as core issues (Briggs, 2012). Thus, multicultural education that seeks to focus on justice and equality might require a cosmopolitan perspective of nation (Osler, 2015); it might be that “wider multiple identities held by some pupils have greater relevance” for them than Britishness (Maylor, 2010:246).

Research to combat racial ideologies and inequalities must pay attention to the “various, small, and detailed and complicated steps, cycles, cultural habits and professional practices” impacting upon the education of young people in multicultural society (Gurnah, 1992):

The little lies, the smartness of cultural deception, the historical procedures, the careerism of staff, the inflexibility of received knowledge, the defensiveness of the little informed, the training of teachers, the state and LEA resourcing design, the class and imperial attitudes, the recruitment and promotion of teaching and non-teaching staff, and many seemingly unimportant routines...

Curriculum reformation is necessary; the current neoliberal emphasis principally upon achievement and preparation for employment, with students perceived “as subjects” who are “given what they need by adults who know best” does not help students to become “engaged and participatory members of society”, (Gamman, 2004:143). Neoliberal pedagogies, in contrast to Freirean philosophies and practices, “separate teaching from learning” (Gadotti, 2009:31).

Resistance is possible, on the part of teachers, through critical analysis of policy agendas and political initiatives, ensuring society moves forward (Haste, 2010). Perhaps students need encouraging towards cosmopolitan and universal values, in this quest for open-mindedness, rather than their vision being delimited through calls for nationalism (Nussbaum, 1996). Trainee teachers believe that encouraging students to learn about respect, tolerance, human rights and diversity are key values that schools should teach (Jerome and Clemitshaw, 2012). Although there is no agreement on how to define nation or national identity, combining Anderson’s notion of *imagined communities* with Billig’s ideas about the physical, legal, social and emotional situating of oneself within a homeland (Billig, 1995, Jacobson, 1997, Grube, 2011) seems a helpful approach to the study of national belongings. Jacobson reminds us “any definition of what it is to be British necessarily encompasses an understanding of what it is not to be British”

(1997:187). My research participants also expressed boundaries of Britishness when mulling over Britishness. Some students in my study explicitly referred to exclusionary notions of Britishness in relation to racial, civic and cultural boundaries proposed by Jacobson (See Chapter Six). My research has added to the field by presenting ways that Britishness teaching and learning can be explored in schools. I found that Britishness exploration involves studying how we might perceive ourselves (and Others) as belonging to a nation – to an *imagined political community* – and it is frequently defined in opposition to the Other (see Chapter Six). My research also supports the ideas furthered by Breslin et al. (2006), that when exploring Britishness, the concept of identity is more useful than nationality, as I demonstrate and provide arguments for schools to provide students with safe spaces to develop their perspectives on multiple identities.

The strange amalgam of the local and the global that Hall discussed in 1989 is just as pertinent today – and the “insistence on ‘positioning’ (still) provides people with co-ordinates” in the changing landscape where the local and the global are forever uniting and re-uniting (Hall, 1989: 133). Crucially, almost two decades ago then, Hall told us that “a politics which neglects the moment of identity and identification – without, of course, thinking of it as something permanent, fixed or essential – is not likely to be able to command the new times” (1989: 133). Hall was speaking about the early 1990s, about the pre-Blair government, about the need for political discourse to recognise the meaning of identity and identification. Almost twenty years later, and we see that never have such moments of identity and identification been as pressing and as poignant.

Identity, whether ethnic, religious, or national, can only ever be defined in relation to the Other, and thus, the notion of identity reveals tensions of power and politics, as people feel imposed upon by the dominant group, accept the categorising, or attempt to produce their own self-definitions (Rew and Campbell, 1999). Ethnicity is also a political notion for it concerns the “attribution of identity to a minority by the majority”, a process “intimately connected to issues of power, hierarchy, stratification and indeed to the nation-state” (Rew and Campbell, 1999:11). Embracing nationalism can become a way of establishing exclusivity and excluding the Other. Gilroy (2003:59) warns about embracing of nationalism as notions of Englishness have often been “constructed by alien outsiders like Carlyle, Swift, Scott, or Eliot”, and as a result:

the most heroic, subaltern English nationalisms and countercultural patriotisms are perhaps better understood as having been generated in a complex pattern of antagonistic relationships with the supranational and imperial world for which the ideas of “race”, nationality and national culture provide the primary (though not the only) indices (Gilroy, 2003:59).

When considering notions of Britishness, race - and nowadays also religion, will matter. Muslims living in Britain are urged by politicians to adopt British values, but what happens when a British teenager such as Victoria (see Chapter One) adopts Muslim values? Is the transition relatively smooth or are there points of conflict? The cases of young people converting to Islam can provide crucial new ways of understanding religious and national identities of young converts in London<sup>30</sup>.

When it was realised that the Black diasporas were definitely here to stay in Britain, and that a place once considered a temporary home, was now a permanent place for these migrants, the “politics of racism really emerged” (Hall, 2000a:148). As Black people were being excluded from British society, denied British identity, and reminded they did not belong here in Britain, they needed to create their own sense of collective identity, perhaps by mentally returning to their homeland, preserving their language, recalling their roots (Hall, 2000a). If national identity is not static nor stationary, but frequently requires revision as we grow individually and collectively as a society, then “to freeze it, to refuse to evaluate and change it, out of inertia, uncritical pride or a mood of nostalgia, is the surest way to subvert it” (Parekh, 2000a:6). Instead my research shows teachers and students benefit from critically examining and reviewing Britishness to understand its contradictions, ambiguities and multiplicities (See Chapters Five and Six). Critical appraisal of historical contexts that have contributed to the modern story of Britishness featured in Art students Joe and Kadisha’s conversations on British identities.

To begin comprehending the realities and dilemmas of contemporary cities, examining the socio-historical context of the place, as well as the social and historical changes taking place in British cities is advised (McLoughlin, 2006). My research supports the perspective that places “used, inhabited and associated” (Hopkins, 2010:1973) with youth are important in understanding their multiple identities. Ideas on “exclusivist interpretations of place and people” were contested in the 1990s by many leading academics such as Gilroy, Modood, Back and others who advocated “more open and flexible interpretations of place and people” (Eade, 2000:12). Critical pedagogy recognises context by emphasising how struggles experienced by students are specific to their communities and contexts (Giroux, 2013). Students like Ellie, Chris, Joe and Kadisha frequently raise place-based attachments and conflicts when they negotiate the

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<sup>30</sup> Wohlrab-Sahr identifies conversion as often stemming from women’s concerns about issues regarding sexuality and gender, social mobility, and nationality and ethnicity. WOHLRAB-SAHR, M. 2006. *Symbolizing Distance: Conversion to Islam in Germany and the United States*. In: NIEUWKERK, K. V. (ed.) *Women Embracing Islam: Gender and Conversion in the West*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

meanings of Britishness, belonging and home with their peers. Place and people therefore still need re-interpreting and re-defining without adhering to exclusionary discourses.

My research with young people shows complex notions of home and belonging feature in their conversations on Britishness. Students from diverse backgrounds – White British, Mixed heritage, ethnic minority and so on – were able to embark on individual and collective Britishness journeys through their Art lessons. They developed a deeper understanding about the fluid and evolving nature of identities. They learned that identifying with ethnic or religious heritage does not “imply a loss of national identity”, as Britons are capable of multiple identifications (Nandi and Platt, 2014:42). They discussed how migration results in “multiple loyalties and identities” (Osler and Starkey, 2003:243). Importantly and interestingly, my research shows, students and teachers are often in a position to educate one another by reflecting upon diverse experiences of the multiple identities, belongings and attachments voiced by families and friends. My research highlights that as well as researching ethnic minority youth’s notions of home, to move forwards, we must also begin to reimagine the national narrative to include the perspectives of White British students (Commission for Racial Equality, 2005).

By interrogating both stable and mobile notions of home when researching migrations (Ralph and Staeheli, 2011), we can also similarly learn about stable and mobile notions of home expressed by indigenous young inhabitants of cities like London. Trying to avoid this stereotype of only questioning ethnic minority communities about their national identity and belonging is important, nevertheless marginalised and discriminated voices need to be articulated and heard. Otherwise we will remain in a position where “discrimination undermines a sense of belonging”, yet “a sense of belonging is a prerequisite of participative citizenship. If it is missing, so too is a sense of citizenship. This has implications both for those who feel left out and for the wider community and its elected representatives” (Osler and Starkey, 2005:12). The onus cannot solely be on ethnic minority communities to self-examine identity:

I think for black people who live in Britain this question of finding some way in which the white British can learn to live with us and the rest of the world is almost as important as discovering our own identity. I think they are in more trouble than we are. So we, in a curious way, have to rescue them from themselves - from their own past. We have to allow them to see that England is a quite interesting place with quite an interesting history that has bossed us around for 300 years [but] that has finished. Who are they now? (Stuart Hall, taken from ‘After dread and anger’, BBC Radio 4, 1989) (Back, 1996:127).

*Who are we now?* Britishness examination need not be the sole domain of ethnic minorities. Like their ethnic minority counterparts, the White British youth, in my research, also find it

helpful to critically analyse negotiation of everyday belongings, multiple attachments and intersectional identities in modern multicultural Britain. Sometimes, White students tend to find the curriculum creates a “deficit or residual British/English identity” (Maylor et al., 2007:8). Interestingly research participant Joe had embraced the project and found it very exciting, thus contradicting his point that studying Britishness is for ethnic minority students only, not White students. The Art project was able to “illuminate the complexity and sometimes paradox of lived experience” through the words and actions of the students (Chilton and Leavy, 2014:403). That national identity is not just problematic for minority ethnic communities, but indigenous Britons also find it difficult to “negotiate a culture which is fuzzily defined” (Vadher and Barrett, 2009:443), was evident in the complex and fascinating identity work conducted with the London GCSE Art classes. The diversity of London’s demographics, though an asset, does not reflect Britain overall (Bryant, 2009), thus more research about British identity and belonging is needed in diverse British regions with school students from different age groups. Moving forward, we need to remedy schools lack of provision to learn more about White British diversity, for example diversity of Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland (Maylor, 2010). Students can fully explore the distinct ways nationalism operates in contemporary Britain by contrasting the Scottish National Party’s inclusive and “progressive” identity with the far right British National Party’s exclusive and heavily racialised identity (Bragg, 2006:17).

Not only is the definition and analysis of national identity problematic, but thinking about where concepts such as nationalism and nation are headed in our future is fraught with uncertainties (Anderson, 2012). Belonging to Britain has never been a fixed identity, but fluid and flexible: “...a contract that requires constant renegotiation” (Rosaldo, 1996:251). Politicians’ speeches about Britishness might be “naïve” and “misguided” in positioning Britishness has a straightforward and singular meaning to the British people (Bechhofer and McCrone, 2010), but the political discourse on instilling a sense of national consciousness in students seems here to remain for now, as we observed with initial proposals to teach Britishness in schools by the Labour government in 2007/8, while today schools are obliged to actively promote Fundamental British Values (FBV). Therefore researching British identities and the classroom pedagogies involved in teaching and learning about Britishness is timely, exciting and significant, particularly as the research in this area is lacking. This study on the teaching and learning of Britishness therefore contributes to opening up this area of study. The Prevent duty (2015:11) ironically claims to support schools in creating “safe spaces” for students and teachers to examine “sensitive” topics. In the 2015 National Union of Teachers conference, strong concerns were raised about the Prevent duty (Kenny and Ghale, 2015), legally obliging teachers to report

students who express “vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values” to Prevent officers (HM Government, 2015:2).

Teachers are reluctant to promote this obvious political ideology (Cooper, 2014), recognising “the dubious notion” of FBV is “deeply alienating and offensive in its suggestion that Britain is somehow a unique source of democracy, respect and social justice” (Reclaiming Schools, 2015). Britain did not invent concepts like ‘freedom’ and ‘tolerance’, thus cannot simply focus on such universal concepts, but the rhetoric of FBV must also take into account “British imperialism, slavery and racism, which are fundamental characteristics of the British Empire” (Iordanou, 2014). Concerns have been raised about children as young as two or three expected to learn vague and subjective FBV (Baxter, 2014, Adams, 2014), such as “traditional British food including "roast dinner", "fish, chips and peas", and "seasonal fresh fruit", as well as behaviour and traits including "eating with our mouths closed", "using cutlery and napkins", and "saying please and thank you" (Hooper, 2015). My research participants embarked on a journey together to reveal the contestations, (re)negotiations and debates relevant to their social experiences of Britishness. They presented multiple facets to Britain, proving nations are “not permanent and unchanging”, but subject to “constant recomposition, renegotiation, contest and debate” (Ward, 2004:12). My recommendation is for teachers and students to approach the teaching and learning of Britishness using this framework of multiple facets to British identities, as emphasised by my consistent argument, throughout this study that, it is highly important to research young people’s changing, negotiated and contested debates on Britishness.

**It is not enough to inform people that they must feel British.**

To belong to a nation necessitates *identification* with its culture, but also *recognition* (Gellner and Breuilly, 2008). Essentialist and reductionist education policies and pedagogical practices might attempt to dissuade students from affiliating with their cultural heritages, through imposition of a British identity onto them. My research shows this is not how identity works. Social cohesion cannot be achieved through enforced homogeneity where students’ languages, cultures, religions and identities are slowly stripped away. The Art teachers and students went on a collective journey learning that multiple identifications and the postcolonial belongings were caught up in the modern story of Britishness in which they featured. Empirical research conducted with young people is necessary if we are to fully understand which aspects of national identity matter, for they are the future of Britishness. National identity “constructed essentially from above” cannot be fully comprehended without investigating from below: “...the

assumptions, hopes, needs, longings and interests of ordinary people, which are not necessarily national and still less nationalist” (Hobsbawm, 1990:10). In spite of its complexity, we can investigate Britishness through contemporary cultural and media texts, or through the way history is taught in schools, or by examining how our national institutions play a role in contributing to the concept of national identity (Jacobson, 1997).

My research shows that students embrace the opportunity to discuss their experiences of belonging to Britain as they reflect upon their evolving individual and collective interests as young Londoners and young Britons. The students’ discourses on identity are sometimes conflicting and other times come apart (see Chapter Six): their identities are not “sealed and closed”, but reveal “contradictory” notions: “composed of more than one discourse, as composed always across the silences of the other, as written in and through ambivalence and desire (Hall, 1991:49). The classroom can be a dynamic site for empowering students personally and socially: “schools have not just the right, but also the obligation, to create an atmosphere of intellectual and political freedom that uses genuine public controversies to help students discuss and envision political possibilities” (Hess, 2009:6).

Nation is inevitably intertwined with exclusion of minorities as well as “those considered foreign, heterogeneous, who are racially or culturally stigmatized” (Balibar and Swenson, 2004:8). A Britishness that embraces multiculturalism encourages Britons from diverse backgrounds belong to Britain, however belonging to Britain is not straightforward and not uncomplicated, for it necessitates *identification* and *recognition* through “experiences, values and aspirations” of ethnic minorities validated and included in the *national culture* (Hall, 2000b). Minority ethnic communities *identify* with being British, indicating a willingness to integrate in Britain, often retaining their ethnic identity too through hyphenation (Meer and Modood, 2014b). If ethnic minorities do not see themselves in the national identity discourse then *recognition* is lacking, even if *identification* with Britishness is present (Hall, 2000b):

Since the routes by which the minorities have travelled to this identity are different in some crucial respects from that taken by native people, they are unlikely to feel 'British' in exactly the same way. That is why the hyphen - Black-British, British-Asian - persists. Does the idea of 'Britishness' have room to accommodate these differences?

Britishness must, therefore, continue to accommodate *difference*, and include the ethnic minority experience in its national story, all the while questioning how the British nation is imagined by the people (Parekh, 2008). Even if awkward and difficult to discuss, working out a new definition of Britishness is the way forward (Hall, 2000b). The future of Britishness lies in how “racially and religiously motivated victimization” is handled for though at the moment

diverse ethnicities lay claim to British identity, increasing marginalisation and demonization will disrupt “their ability to access a sense of Britishness and the potential for this Britishness to be maintained alongside other ethnic/cultural/religious identities” (Karlsen and Nazroo, 2015:19).

There is no unique notion of Britishness that can be taught, if anything, those values that are purported to being British by politicians, are universal values (Grube, 2011). Nevertheless my research has demonstrated Britishness can be explored meaningfully from a critical, personal and educational perspective, particularly if indoctrination - “the promotion of single, unassailable views and the shunning of evidence”(Sears and Hughes, 2006:4) – is avoided by allowing students to explore complexities of identity issues. The students’ discourses on Britishness focus upon Bermondsey’s geographical and socio-political location in London, its historical legacy, and its racist reputation. Britishness in Bermondsey is inextricably linked with intersecting issues of race and social class. Race, not just in terms of visible markers of belonging to ethnic minority groups, but importantly Whiteness has too become a crucial marker. Students Joe and Ellie’s discourses of White Britishness in multicultural London are significant contributions to the *ethnoscape* of modern Britishness. Thus multicultural policies cannot avoid the issue of Whiteness (Nayak, 2009) as inequalities of class, race and gender impact upon young people (Archer et al., 2010). A critical awareness of how Britishness intersects with notions of race and social class is urgent and necessary, and must be achieved in an inclusive way that is accessible to all students, regardless of their own class, cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Debating Britishness inevitably raises controversial topics of social importance such as race and class.

Intersectionality is crucial when examining national identity (Yuval-Davis, 2011). My research shows Britishness exploration demands an intersectional lens in order for coverage to be fair, far-reaching and fruitful: “` Race’, class and gender always articulate with each other. The particular consequences of these articulations are complex, changing and often unpredictable” (Gillborn and Kirton, 2000:285). Social class, gender and race/ethnicity are still salient categories present in society (Archer et al., 2010, Hollingworth and Williams, 2009). Just as Whiteness is “intertwined with family histories, gender, place, class, region and locality” (Nayak, 2003a), so too I have found notions of Britishness to be tied up with these aforementioned categories. Definitions of Britishness cannot ignore race and racism, as these intimately sit within any discursive exploration of Britishness; problematising race by focusing on how it “would not exist without racism” is crucial (Lewis, 2004:625). Moreover caricatured identities, for example the *chav* referred to by Ellie, also need to be deconstructed in the classroom with reference to race

and class. White working-class identity is described by society using “language which is so frequently dismissive and contemptuous, and based on assumptions of deserved disadvantage”(Bottero, 2009:11). The pejorative language of class needs urgent and critical dissection in schools, and teachers need to acknowledge class and race to give students the confidence to dissect and deconstruct these social categories. Students in my research emphasised place and race in their discussions of Britishness, particularly belonging to Bermondsey, and to London; my study supported notions of identities as limited by boundaries but also expansive through strategies of resistance.

Critical pedagogy aims to resist and challenge hierarchies of power and privilege, and adapt to and contest the dominant curriculum and school policies (Fischman and McLaren, 2005). The “discourse of hope” in critical pedagogy entails “alternative modes of teaching, social relations and imagining” (Giroux, 2013:6). My core recommendations for working on identity projects with young people, that have emerged from my analysis of the key findings of this research on teaching and learning Britishness, stress the importance of fostering critical classroom cultures where we:

- (i) elevate students’ stories/experiences through the arts,
- (ii) challenge the Eurocentric curriculum by giving students opportunity to explore intersecting classed and racialised histories/identities,
- (iii) examine post-colonial ramifications on modern multicultural societies.

Until now the literature on Britishness has mainly focused upon politics and identity, whilst critical pedagogues have also not examined Britishness in detail. Current discourses on Britishness invoke the problematic nature of defining, teaching and learning Britishness. My study, whilst detailing the complexities of Britishness teaching, also provides solutions and ways forward, whilst showing that Britishness exploration can be a unifying experience and process for students and teachers. This study has therefore produced a much a useful new approach to move forward in the teaching and learning of Britishness by combining exploration of Britishness with critical pedagogies. My research on identity highlights how exploring identity is significantly liberating for the students and teachers alike, once the initial cautions have been overcome. An exploration of Britishness need not be a hegemonic act where teachers uncritically impose dominant discourse of Britishness on students. Schools need to be environments where teachers and students are supported in developing safe spaces to work on identity issues. My research has shown discourses of hope and possibility were alive in the students’ and teachers’ work on Britishness as they explored everyday experiences of Britishness collaboratively and

critically. Students and teachers, therefore, have the tools to critically examine Britishness. The Art teachers explored notions of belonging and identity with their students with critical consciousness. My research has led me to understand that teachers can encourage meaningful participation through adopting relevant, important and innovative ways to ensure students are benefitting educationally, socially and emotionally. Critical consciousness is necessary to develop a future generation that is awake and alive, and more than willing to challenge hegemonic networks, as well as critique and disrupt elitist, racist and sexist institutions preserving social inequalities.

What is a better way of teaching and learning Britishness? Rather than legislating for a fixed Fundamental British Values duty, we need to ask more questions. Rather than imposing stale or conventional definitions of Britishness onto our students and their identities, exploration of Britishness through critical pedagogy would better encourage individual and collective questions about British identities and belongings. Rather than transmit policy descriptions of Fundamental British Values upon young people, we need to give them the safe spaces to confidently and critically ask questions about how their multiple social identities intersect with their conceptions and everyday experiences of local, national and global Britishness. My research methodology of utilising critical urban educational ethnography with arts-based educational research allowed a space for teachers and students to collaborate on a journey filled with slow burning questions rather than hurriedly sought answers. The arts-based pedagogies provoked creative and imaginative ways of asking questions and interrogating answers. The teachers' employment of critical pedagogy strategies also provided teaching and learning approaches informed by asking complex questions of identities and belongings rather than offering straightforward and simplistic answers. When given the space to mull over Britishness, the young people in my research asked pertinent, powerful and personal questions about classed and racialised identities and belongings. We need more *questions*, not answers.

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# APPENDIX ONE - About the School

The following contextual information about the school is taken from the Secondary School Self-Evaluation Form and the Ofsted Report that were the most up to date at the time of data collection.

## Secondary School Self-Evaluation Form (SEF)

Students from the local White working-class community are described as having traditionally had “low levels of academic achievement” and “limited aspirations”. Low aspirations and ‘undervaluing’ of education, particularly among the White British students, is identified as a barrier. The SEF also refers to a challenging, but generally supportive parent body, as well as the difficulties involved in retaining high quality teachers as staff recruitment is vulnerable in the London context. The school is presented as developing, raising standards and increasing opportunities. The school is heavily involved in the community. Local residents use the leisure, sports and recreational facilities. It is the highest performing school in the borough at KS3. Significant value is added from KS2 to KS4, particularly for boys. At KS4 the more able girls are not adding value to the same degree, but there are high levels of value-added for White British students. There is very strong performance against national standards in IT, Science, Geography and Maths for boys, and for girls, significantly good performance in Science and IT. At KS5, White British students perform less well at A2 level compared to other ethnic groups.

## The Ofsted Inspection Report

Number of students on the school roll      1068      Of which, sixth formers      184

Within three years the sixth form intake has expanded considerably from 120 to 184 students. The largest minority ethnic group in the school is African. The great strength of the school is the caring ethos. Students are proud of the school, committed to equality and are very understanding of cultural and religious diversity. The students’ spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is outstanding as is their contribution to the community. The school promotes community cohesion exceptionally well, for example, through partnering with the local authority and the police. A sixth form peer mediation service has made a real difference in the school and the local community. In 2009, the school achieved the full International Schools Award for fundraising for African charities and some students even travelled there to help with projects in link schools.

Attendance is above average for most groups, but only satisfactory for White British students, as it has not reached average. In 2009, attainment at KS4 fell, particularly for White British students. Most groups attained higher than similar students nationally, including students with Free School Meals, with Special Educational Needs and those of Black African heritage.

Questionnaires completed by students and observations made by the Inspectors reveal the students show mature respect towards each other and conduct themselves well around the school, but there is occasionally some restlessness in lessons. Students state rare instances of bullying are dealt with well. Students show strong confidence and ability to express themselves cogently, and have high aspirations. The promotion of community cohesion is excellent. Religious and cultural differences are openly explored and this underpins strong respect and relationships between students. The students told the Inspectors that they enjoy the school and learn a lot. A few said that the behaviour was not good. Most worked hard in lessons and behaved well, but occasionally someone’s behaviour held up a lesson. Some teaching is good but some students stated they do not have enough opportunities to work with others on challenging activities.

## APPENDIX TWO - About the GCSE Art Students

Research Name	Gender	Religion	Ethnicity	Place of Birth	Where did you grow up?	Where do you live?	Are you British?	Area you feel you belong to?	Family Background	Title of Artwork	Artwork available	Questionnaire 1	Questionnaire 2
Bailey, Laura	F		White	London	Bermondsey	Bonamy Estate	Y	Bermondsey	England	London Guns	Y	Y	Y
Barry, John	M	Protestant	White British	London	Rotherhithe	Deptford	Y	Rotherhithe	England and Ireland	What Will Be	Y	Y	Y
Bennett, Teresa	F	None	White Asian	London	Peckham Rye	London	Y	south London	England, India and Scotland	This is Britain	Y	Y	Y
Carver, Maria	F		White British	London	Peckham & London Bridge	London				All my Life	Y	Y	N
Chapel, Jake	M										Y	N	N
Corner, Bradley	M	Christian	Black British	London	Bermondsey	Bermondsey	N	Bermondsey	England and Nigeria	Who Am I?	N	Y	Y
Dillian, Bob	M	Christian	White	London	Bermondsey	London	Y	Bermondsey	England	Millwall	Y	Y	Y
Earrey, Sammie-Jo	F		White British	London	Bermondsey	Neckinger Estate	Y	Bermondsey	Grandparents: Maternal- Wales/Scotland; Paternal - Ireland	Bermondsey Butterfly	Y	Y	Y
Ennor, Ollie	M	Christian	White	London	Bermondsey	Bermondsey	Y	Bermondsey	England	Wembley	Y	Y	Y
Harry, Jessica	F	No religion	White British	London	southeast London	Rotherhithe	Y	London Bridge/Borough	England	Seaside Memories	Y	Y	Y
Hoang, Mia	F	Jehovah's Witness	Chinese/Vietname	London	Bermondsey	Bermondsey		China Town, London	Vietnam/China	Culture Unknown	Y	Y	Y
Hughes, Stephen	M										Y	N	N
Hunt, Sally	F		English/White	London					Mother: Britain, Father: Ireland		Y	N	Y
Jackson, Ellie	F	Atheist	White British	Beckenham	New Cross & Brockley	Brockley	Y	southeast London	England	Stereotypes & Judgements	Y	Y	N
James, Jodie	F	None	White British	London	Bermondsey	Bermondsey	Y	Bermondsey	England	The Foreign Invasion 1- The English Dream 0	Y	Y	Y
Jackson, Ruby	F	Christian	Black British	London	Peckham & Camberwell	Peckham	Y	south London	England and Jamaica	London's Twin	Y	Y	Y
Johnson, Amy	F	Roman Catholic	White Irish	Bristol	Bermondsey & Rotherhithe	Lee, London	Y	Bermondsey	Mother: Ireland; Father: Ireland		N	Y	Y
Jones, Emma	F	No religion	White British	London	New Cross	London	Y	New Cross	Mother: Ireland; Father: England	Chav Britain	N	Y	Y
Jones, Kadisha	F		Jamaican	Luton			N		Jamaican		Y	N	Y
Miller, Chris	M	Christian	Dual heritage	London	Peckham, Brixton & Bermondsey	Bermondsey	N	Croydon	England and Jamaica	Jamaican London	Y	Y	Y
Ogbe, Tosin	M	Christian		London	Surrey	London	Y	Surrey	Nigeria		Y	Y	Y
Oakham, Katie	F	Christian	White	Bermondsey	Bermondsey	Bermondsey	Y	Bermondsey		Summertime	Y	Y	N
Owen, Brett	M	Christian	White British	London	Bermondsey	Bermondsey	Y	Bermondsey	England and Ireland		Y	Y	N
Pink, Lucy	F	Church of England	English	London	Peckham, Southwark	London	Y	Southwark	Paternal grandparents: Wales/Scotland	Bonfire Night	Y	Y	Y
Point, Julie	F		English	England			Y		England		Y	N	Y
Rogers, Kearin	M	None	Dual heritage	London	Peckham Rye	Peckham Rye	Y	Peckham Rye	England and Jamaica	The Box	Y	Y	Y
Slater, John	M	Atheist	White British	London	Bermondsey	Bermondsey	Y	Bermondsey	England	England National Team	Y	Y	Y
Smith, Amiela	F	n/a	Dual heritage	London	Forest Hill	Forest Hill		Forest Hill	England and Trinidad	Dreams of What London Can Give Me	Y	Y	Y
Smith, Laura	F	Christian	White	London	Rotherhithe	Rotherhithe	Y	Rotherhithe		Blue	Y	Y	N
Smith, Megan	F	No religion	English	London	Bermondsey	East Sussex	Y	Bermondsey	England	Bad Side of Britain	Y	Y	Y
Stacy, Dominique	F	Catholic	British/Italian	Bermondsey	Bermondsey	Bermondsey	Y		England and Italy	British/ Italian	Y	Y	N
Temple, Lily	F	No religion	White Caucasia	London	New Cross/Guyana	New Cross	Y	southeast London	England and Scotland		Y	Y	Y
Wayne, Joe	M	n/a	White	London	Rotherhithe	Rotherhithe	Y	SE16	Britain	Pride of Britain	Y	Y	Y
Yilmaz, Ece	F		Turkish	London			Y		England and North Cyprus		Y	N	Y

Number of Art students

Total number of students	Male	Female
34	12	22

Are you British?

YES	NO	(no response)
25	3	6

Religion of Art students

Christian	Atheist	Jehovah's Witness	None or no religion	Not applicable	(no response)
13	2	1	7	2	9

Place of Birth

London	Bermondsey	Beckenham	Bristol	Luton	England	(no response)
26	2	1	1	1	1	2

Family background

England	9
England/Jamaica	3
England/Ireland	3
England/Scotland	1
England/Nigeria	1
England/Italy	1
England/Trinidad	1
England/North Cyprus	1
England/India/Scotland	1
Ireland	1
Wales/Scotland/Ireland	1
Britain/Ireland	1
Wales/Scotland	1
Britain	1
Jamaica	1
Nigeria	1
Vietnam/China	1
(no response)	5

Where did you grow up?

Bermondsey	12
Rotherhithe	3
Bermondsey/Rotherhithe	1
New Cross/Guyana	1
New Cross	1
New Cross/Brockley	1

Peckham Rye	2
Peckham/London Bridge	1
Peckham/Camberwell	1
Peckham/Brixton/Bermondsey	1
Peckham/Southwark	1
Forest Hill	1
Southeast London	1
Surrey	1
(no response)	6

Which area do you feel you belong to?

Bermondsey	11
Rotherhithe	2
South London	2
Southeast London	2
London Bridge/Borough	1
China Town/London	1
New Cross	1
Croydon	1
Peckham Rye	1
Forest Hill	1
SE16	1
Southwark	1
Surrey	1
(no response)	8

## APPENDIX THREE - Teachers' Perceptions of Britishness

### Ms Anderson

I'm really really passionate about this country, and I'm actually married to a South African so I think I've explored this issue quite a lot ... even within my own relationship. I really do feel... I love this country...but not so much for necessarily the politics...but more for the land and the landscape, and the beauty of the natural countryside and coastlines and so on. So I suppose I feel very passionate about Britain being a wonderful place to live... although a lot of the political issues concern me as well. Yeah, I would say... I feel very positive about this country and how I feel about it. So if I did my own piece of work, it would probably be based around that type of thing... about how I absolutely love the seasons and the changing light every year and so it's more about the kind of elemental side of it for me.

### Mr Martin

Mr Martin: I feel really privileged to be British in the sense that we are multicultural and we are made up of lots of different aspects and all of those have got their own sort of beauty and interest... I think about my parents... my parents are not British... they both are immigrants...

SH: Where are your parents from?

Mr Martin: My dad's Irish and my mum's Macedonian. So I'm bilingual because obviously when I was young... my mum spoke old Yugoslav so... and still speaks old Yugoslav, but it's sort of a Macedonian accent and dialect... so sort of always feel like I speak another language, so therefore I'm sort of you know half and half...

SH: Did you tell them that you had a Macedonian background?

MT: Well, no. I kept it a secret. It's not something I would share with a group. But at some point later on I'm pretty sure I did say... because obviously the clue is in my name. So kids have said to me, "You're Irish"... and I've said, "Well, no, I'm not actually"... so I have told them. I think the funny thing is they've been quite amazed about it as well... I suppose I feel... I'm proud to be British because I'm born here, and I teach here, and it's my life and I live here... and obviously I follow politics and I follow the state and everything... I don't feel a strong connection towards my mother's family... I don't feel a particularly strong connection to my dad who is Irish, so I think that ultimately I kind of have to be British... and that's what's exciting about it... I think the fact that one can be British but not just British...

SH: Do you feel Macedonian at all?

Mr Martin: I don't feel Macedonian at all because I don't really have any memory of being Macedonian because obviously I wasn't brought up in that country. I've visited the country... it seems like my mum's family or my dad's family... so I haven't inherited that..... and I think I'm still learning, and what I've learned I suppose, more important than anything else, is that I don't feel allegiance to any country really... I suppose I've... I can't say I feel more British because I have... I'm sort of equipped with different attributes...

## **APPENDIX FOUR – Questionnaires completed by GCSE Art Students**

### **Questionnaire 1 at the beginning of the project:**

- Research name, Ethnicity, place of birth, time lived in England, family background
- Are you British? What does Britishness mean to you?
- What did you include in your artwork and why?
- Had you thought about Britishness before doing the art project?
- The experience of exploring Britishness in lesson
- Is it a good idea to explore Britishness in lessons?

### **Questionnaire 2 at the end of the project:**

- Please provide a research name
- Gender, religion
- Which culture(s) do you belong to?
- Do you feel British? Please explain.
- If people ask “Where are you from?”... What do you reply?
- What did you include in your artwork and why?
- The experience of exploring Britishness in lesson
- Where were you born? Where do you live? Where did you grow up? Which area of London do you feel you belong to?
- What do you think Britishness means in the area you grew up in?
- How are your experiences of Britishness in school different from your area?
- Do you need to speak English to be British?
- How do you feel about Britishness?
- Do you think Britishness should be explored at school?