

THE  
MONKEY'S  
MASK

*identity • memory • narrative • voice*

by  
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*Abstract:*

This thesis is a largely ethnographic analysis of the life histories of six bilingual, second generation settlers in Britain, from different language communities. All have been academically successful within the English educational system ie all possess at least a first degree from a British university. In the thesis I analyse common patterns in their experiences and chart the complex changes to their view of their own identities. From this I am attempting to trace common patterns in identity formation in complex and plural societies.

Following phenomenographic approaches, I conducted a series of unstructured 'interviews' or dialogues, which concentrated on the individuals' views of their own histories and identities. These consisted of anecdotes and vignettes of what they considered as significant episodes from their lives. Each narrative is contextualised within patterns of migration and settlement of their particular 'community'. They are also located within the broader context of the political and social conditions in Britain throughout the time of their parents' settlement and their own lives. Moreover, they are set against the changing background of legislation and public policy in Britain, particularly educational initiatives in the area of multiculturalism, anti racism and multilingualism.

I use three levels of analysis: the identification of common patterns and discontinuities, analysis of the process of identity formation and analysis of the cultural aspects of narrative style. Using such analyses I attempt to 'unriddle' the process of identity formation and discuss this against the existing literature on culture and identity. For this I draw on work in the fields of ethnography, literature, cultural studies and social psychology. I argue that there is a need for more complex theoretical conceptions than are currently employed. In the final chapter I consider the implications of the research in the light of recent educational policy in Britain.

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*Part One: Conflicting Loyalties:  
Personal and Theoretical Perspectives*

## *Chapter 1: The Monkey's Mask: Identity and Autobiography*

*year upon year  
the monkey's mask  
reveals the monkey  
Basho*

### *1.1 An Introduction to the Research*

It is documented that the children of exiles returning to Chile, after the advent of democracy, suffered a strange sense of displacement (Hite: 1991). Although they had grown up in households where their parents and grandparents celebrated the virtues and the beauties of the homeland and their strong cultural traditions were evident everywhere, these children also drank from other streams: the street culture of European cities, coupled with American films and M.T.V. Giving these up was difficult. Hite argues that most of those who grew up in exile eventually abandoned their idealisations of Chile "in order to redefine who they were and where they belonged. As adults today, often with bicultural families of their own, they cannot imagine more than a visit to their former home, despite the end of dictatorship." (Hite: 1991:4)



Since the end of the second world war easier, faster and more effective communications and a proliferation of material goods have altered our sense of identity and belonging. Our social life and our own values have undergone massive changes, rifts and fragmentations. Scarcely any community or any person is untouched by the attractions of individualism, romantically purveyed by Hollywood and the music industry and more insidiously underpinned by the financial process of the market. To some extent in the modern world we are all exiles. We are all living in translation. Alongside a steady determination to get what is ours, the great majority of us need wide cultural and linguistic repertoires, merely to survive.

My interest in such questions can be traced back to my own childhood and adolescence. My own confusions were real despite my growing up through a period of relative affluence and being relatively successful within the state education system.

In terms of my own identity I feel I have inherited sets of paradoxes and ambivalences, which are by no means rare in the modern world. My cultural heritage is predominantly Catholic Irish. From my earliest glimmerings of memory, this was apparent through the litanies of family histories, the stories and the humour. Despite this, we by no means participated in an active Irish culture. Although I was Christened a Catholic, my parents scarcely attended mass and I was sent to non-denominational state schools. The only words of Gaelic I know are "Pogue Mahone" and these were taught to me by a roguish uncle, who had very little of the tongue himself. We never attended any social gatherings or belonged to political organisations, yet I knew about the violence of the Orange parades in Liverpool and heard of the heartless exploits of 'the black and tans' and even of Cromwell's crimes at Drogheda, long before I understood their significance.

As I have grown older I have found myself increasingly drawn to Irish music and literature and am proud of that part of my heritage; proud to belong to a culture which since 1169 has been invaded and oppressed, but never truly conquered. It is only relatively recently that I visited Ireland for the first time, since my sister now lives there and my mother lived there for the last years of her life. Yet I still have no desire to be part of it. So many things irritate and depress me about it; parts of which I continue to find in myself, from time to time. An insincere gregariousness and forced hospitality. A maudlin sense of self pity. Compulsory gaiety and good humour in public places. An oversensitivity at the comments of others. The list is almost endless.

This complexity is compounded by issues of class, which set up similar paradoxical reactions within me. My grandparents were Irish lower middle class. I suppose they would have had much in common with those which Joyce delineates so vitally in "Dubliners". Quite different from their English counterparts. By the time my parents were growing up during the years following the Great War, they were poor. Ruined by a combination of poor financial judgment, alcohol and unremitting unemployment. Both my parents left school

when they were fourteen. I grew up in what would have been described as a working class neighbourhood.

Irvine Terrace in New Ferry was a row of ten three-storey Victorian houses. They had large rooms and had once belonged to middle class people. They crouched on the edge of the Wirral bank of the Mersey, between Bromborough Docks and Cammell Laird shipyards. By the time my parents rented the top two floors of number two, the sea had already begun to reclaim the gardens. As children we played on the broken sea wall. The most derelict part served as a everything from a climbing frame to a shop counter. A place for fighting and role play. It was here that I began to learn that class was not so simple and that community can be a misleading term. Some of the most affluent people in that area were fiercely working class and some of the poorest had "ideas above their station."

Although they were never parochial in their attitudes, both my parents had great faith in education, to provide a way out of poverty. With their encouragement, both my sister and I were successful. Still I didn't feel totally comfortable at Wirral Grammar School. Most of the children I had played with went to the secondary modern school. But gradually I made new friends and like many of my generation found common ground through the music of the sixties and the styles of expression which grew out of it. Reading Salinger was a profoundly liberating experience. It seemed to free me from the constraints of the past. This continued throughout my time at North Western Polytechnic, where the attractions of the counter culture, focussed our attention on a range of radical possibilities informed by a tradition which went back past the beat poets, to Dickenson, Pound, Yeats, Beaudelaire, Rilke and Blake. It was an era full of contradictions. Radical, egalitarian politics coexisted (often uneasily) with eastern and western mysticism. It is difficult at this point to describe with any conviction the sense of possibility and optimism which characterise that era.

This was the personal baggage I brought to my work as a teacher in Hackney in the early 1970s and later in Tottenham. Here I encountered a range of further complexities and contradictions. Many of the children seemed alienated from the work we were trying to do. At that stage few teachers had much knowledge of the lives of the children in our classrooms. It was through this experience that many teachers began to discover other ways forward. Looking back, many of our approaches were naive and often patronising. But we were learning. Throughout the 1970s, teachers began to develop and extend their knowledge. The growth of anti-sexist and anti-racist perspectives were often supported financially by sympathetic Local Education Authorities. Resources were built up and authors and publishers began to address the issues and begin to fill the gaps. The process was one of continual debate and refinement of our sensibilities. Still they were difficult areas full of dilemmas and contradictions. The more I looked at the issues, the more I was drawn to the idea that lack of motivation was connected to issues of identity, particularly as they are refracted through the sensitive medium of language. I wrestled with this idea

for many years, through my own practice and through my readings of Margaret Meek, Harold Rosen, Tony Burgess, James Britton, Jane Miller, which in turn introduced me to the work of Clifford Geertz, Lev Vygotsky, Mikhail Bakhtin, Paulo Friere, Antonio Gramsci as well as poets and novelists from all over the world. But our greatest teachers were the pupils themselves. The children taught us a great deal, once we were prepared to listen.

For me this process helped to link conceptions of identity which are complex to the idea of repertoires, which we can use in various social settings. I realised, as with my own experience, identity is not fixed or predetermined. It also demonstrated for me that we needed to thoroughly examine the political perspectives which underpin the relationship between identity and education and its effect upon children with complex social identities, who lack status and power within the existing social order. My own M.A study centred around these problems, as they were realised in schooled literacy. As such it is the pilot study to the current project. (Kearney:1990)

### *1.2 Living in Translation: The Pilot Study for the Project*

My initial interest in issues of culture and identity as refracted through the sensitive medium of language emanated from my work in Hackney and Haringey. As a class teacher, in several primary schools, I realised that there were many intelligent children who were sharp and streetwise. Their minds operated like quicksilver. But they achieved little at school. They had wit and were articulate. But not in ways likely to endear themselves to examination boards and other such gatekeepers. There were others who had learned to keep quiet. Hoping for a kind of comfort and safety through invisibility. Many in this category were pupils whose home language was not English.

My work as an advisory teacher offered me the opportunity to work in many different multilingual classrooms. It was here that I began to realise that my rather static conceptions of culture and identity could not contain the wide and apparently contradictory manifestations, I was encountering in the classroom. I was often surprised by how infrequently some of the children seemed to make any acknowledgement of their home culture. This stood in marked contrast to the few (mainly boys as I now reflect) who seemed to have expert knowledge of the history, language and often religious customs of their heritage culture. At that point in time I began work on my M.A. at the Institute of Education. This enabled me to examine more closely the relationship between language, culture, identity and schooling. I was particularly interested in how monolingual teachers like myself could build on the children's out of school experiences in constructive and uncondescending ways.

As much of the literature at the time seemed to concentrate on failure, both in terms of schools' inability to get to grips with the issues of culture and identity and the well

publicised problem of underachievement of so-called 'ethnic minority' pupils, I thought it might be beneficial to concentrate on success. This was the basis of my MA dissertation, which is an examination of three case studies. In this endeavour I was fortunate enough to encounter Christos. He was a ten year old, from a Greek Cypriot family. He proved to be a fluent bilingual who had strong links with his own community and a strong sense of cultural identity.

Up until this point he had been thought of as a reluctant learner. However, as I worked with his class, he engaged deeply with the class project which was based around the *Odyssey*. An account of this was published in 'English in Education'. (Kearney: 1990: 3-13) It shows how with some acknowledgement and validation of his own cultural traditions he was motivated to produce some exceptional work, both in English and Greek. This culminated in his production of a home made model of a Greek library, which contained his retelling the whole of the *Odyssey* in Greek. His retelling was presented on scrolls which he had artificially aged by burning the sides. He had completed this at home in his own time with the help of his uncle. The episode demonstrated how much potential remains unfulfilled in many multilingual classrooms.

It also produced some insights into the relationship between language, culture, identity and schooling. For my second case study I examined the case of Kofi, whose parents were brought up in the Caribbean. He was also successful. But here I noticed significant differences from Christos. Whereas for Christos there was a certain congruence between "where he was at" and "where he was from" (to borrow Paul Gilroy's (1992) phrases), similar explanations did not work in Kofi's case. Instead I was confronted with more complex manifestations of identity. He appeared to have several layers to his sense of self and could draw on an array of linguistic and cultural resources.

These puzzles led me to a variety of sources to help unriddle them. I found the most useful to be interpretative ethnographers such as Clifford Geertz (1973, 1983, 1986, 1988, 1995) and Shirley Brice Heath (1983), who helped me view culture with an understanding and enjoyment of such complexity and contradiction. Geertz' work in particular crackles with insight and inspiration, especially in his investigations of such concepts as art, religion and common sense, which he examines as cultural systems. He moves us towards new insights into 'taken for granted' phenomena.

Cultural commentators like Raymond Williams (1976, 1977, 1981, 1983) and Stuart Hall (1980, 1988, 1991, 1997) helped locate such findings in broader historical, geographical and political frameworks. Gramsci's (1988) notion of hegemony provided further insight into the relationships between culture and the deployment of power within complex industrial societies. Social psychologists such as Vygotsky (1978, 1986) demonstrated how our understandings are formed through the mediation of culturally acquired symbols and signs which we internalise and use as tools for our own ways of coming to know the world.

The work of Bakhtin (1981, 1984, 1986, 1986a) extended this understanding further by illustrating how 'many voiced' our consciousness is and how we have to appropriate the words and meaning of others to make our own meanings. His particularly powerful insight is that culture is dialogic and always being created afresh as part of an ongoing struggle and dialogue. It is not separate from such struggles but is integral to them. The work of Ginzburg (1976, 1980) gave me insight into how new cosmologies develop and how the human imagination can invent new possibilities through alternative and subversive readings of powerful and apparently oppressive texts.

This helped me understand how people are able to operate and function in complex societies and manage to negotiate sets of apparently contradictory networks. It also held out hope for teachers in multilingual and culturally diverse classrooms. In particular I was drawn to John Hardcastle's (1985) idea that they were active agents in this process of rapid cultural change. Classrooms *can* be sites of cultural making.

But to effect this there needs to be a conscious recognition of the paradoxes and the diversity which extends far beyond what many of us had previously imagined. We also need to be aware of the economic and political constraints operating on our work as teachers and how these impact upon curriculum and other aspects of policy and practice. My own concern was (and is) the issue of voice and silence. I still believe that the most important part of our project is to direct our energies into seeking ways of releasing that creative energy which is often left latent in our classrooms. For me Christos' and Kofi's stories point towards some of those possibilities.

The MA study itself was divided into two sections. Part one consisted of 3 case studies of children who had overcome constraints to engage with a largely Eurocentric and masculine literature. In addition to Kofi and Christos, I studied Claire who also had to come to terms with an 'oppressive' masculine text. Their stories demonstrated to me that, the text was not so important in itself as the way it was mediated and the opportunities offered by the teacher for the children to appropriate the model to serve their own purposes. In the second part I used four interrelated perspectives to help 'unriddle' the case studies (or as Clifford Geertz would say give them a 'thick description'). These perspectives were: power, language, narrative and heresy. For this section I drew heavily upon the work of the theorists mentioned above. What emerged was a very complex picture of our relationship with texts and a conclusion that it is possible that we can rewrite supposedly oppressive stories translating them to our own contexts and dilemmas. In this way they can serve to liberate rather than oppress. I also the enormous educational potential in the rather mundane act of retelling stories. Moreover I realised the intimate connection between this act and the construction of identity.

For the present study, I take these investigations further, by examining a series of life histories from multilingual people who have been brought up in Britain and have been successful within the school system. Through this I examine the possibilities and constraints, which they faced: how they dealt with them and the internal conflicts this experience brought. Initially I had hoped that this would afford an opportunity to discover common patterns and examine more thoroughly complex issues of identity. Part of it, I thought, could inform classroom teachers and hopefully improve current practice. Part of it is interesting in itself since it deals with an issue which has become an important facet of everyday life for many people in a period of rapid, profound and potentially dangerous changes. All of the people I approached to take part in the research embraced the idea enthusiastically. All said they would welcome the opportunity of exploring this facet of their lives.

My starting point was to find connections between success and teachers who were able to connect with their cultural backgrounds. However because the issues are more complex than I initially thought, it has led me to a more basic and complex set of questions which surround the nature of changing identities in modern cosmopolitan cities. In brief they are:

- What are the changes in the notions of self identity and culture in educated second generation settlers in London?
- What aspects remain the same?
- What is the nature of and reasons for those changes?

Although there has been a great deal written on these questions in recent years in the areas of cultural studies, ethnography and social psychology, much of the literature remains abstract and speculative. On the other hand more detailed empirical studies tend to rely on concepts of identity which are limited and draw on simple and straightforward notions of identity. The few ethnographic studies which have been conducted in the area have concentrated on single cultural groups. Those which deal with several groups tend to be positivistic in approach. As yet there is no systematic, phenomenological, cross cultural study of adult self narratives in this area.

## *Chapter 2: Deep Excavations: A Statement of the Research Problem*

*...the question, and the theorisation, of identity is a matter of considerable political significance, and is only likely to be advanced when both the necessity and the 'impossibility' of identities, and the suturing of the psychic and the discursive in their construction are fully and unambiguously acknowledged*

*Stuart Hall (1996:17)*

### *1.1 Introduction*

During the 1970s and early 1980s, there was a growing awareness among many teachers about the need to provide support for children's home languages, cultures and identities. Many Local Education Authorities (LEAs) set up centres and ran in-service courses, which raised awareness among liberal teachers working in mainly inner-urban settings. In retrospect, the concepts of culture and identity were too narrowly focused and were premised on exotic and overgeneralised views of culture. This was unsurprising since such views of culture came mainly from anthropologists whose practices still bore the hallmarks of their 19th century colonial origins. Moreover, many of the methods and approaches used in schools implicitly built upon instrumental and behaviourist approaches to learning. Issues of stereotyping in children's books were raised, but were often dealt with in crude and rather insensitive ways. The result was sanitised texts which ignored the messy and contradictory nature of social reality and sidestepped uncomfortable issues, for fear of appearing racist (or sexist).

In the 1980s structuralist approaches to literature seemed to offer more critical ways forward, but again the desired values were still implicit in the selection and framing of the texts. These were perhaps inevitable stages in the construction of a more sophisticated consciousness. Moreover they were developed in a hostile political climate where, in Britain, there were moves afoot to implement a conservative and Eurocentric National Curriculum. As I pointed out in an earlier paper (Kearney, 1996) these values were backed by interlocking legislation and a diversion of funding away from support of children's community languages and home cultures and towards the learning of English language. The effect of these policies has operated on a deep and subtle level. As Tomlinson (1997) has argued, recent market driven forces, operating under the rationale of extending choice operate against the children of 'ethnic minority' families.

As a counterbalance to this, research by Eve Gregory (1996) has illustrated how little regard we have had, as liberal educators, of the diversity of approaches to learning, which children bring from home or their community schools (often run through religious organisations.) As Geertz (1995:3) points out:

Not only have societies changed dramatically over the past three or four decades, our concept of culture and identity (ie how we intellectually frame them) has also altered so that we no longer have the cosy certainties of the past. (If, indeed, they ever really existed for everyone).

The burgeoning of cultural studies, from its antecedents in the work of Richard Hoggart and Raymond Williams (1958), through the work of Stuart Hall and the Centre for Cultural Studies in Birmingham (1980) to the current time in the work of bell hooks (1990, 1996), Paul Gilroy (1992), Homi Bhabha (1992, 1996) has not only helped us to understand Gramsci's notion of the organic intellectual, it has, also, shaken fundamental conceptions of culture and identity and problematised methods of researching culture. Its genesis is charted in Stuart Hall's largely autobiographical piece, "Cultural Studies and its Theoretical Legacies" (1992). By dealing with the complexity of identity in the wider context of recent economic, social and technological changes, such writers are developing more sophisticated frameworks for us to interpret such slippery concepts as culture and identity.

What has altered is that we can no longer think of culture as related to a 'natural way of life'. Because cultures and identities had previously been built up slowly over long periods of time, in pragmatic and largely unselfconscious ways, they had acquired an essentialist feel. In the modern, mass mediated world, this viewpoint is untenable. Movement of people, dispersal (or diaspora) has exacerbated this uncertainty, as Ien Ang (1994:16) notes:

Since diasporas are fundamentally and inevitably transnational in their scope, always linking the local and the global, the here and there, past and present, they have the potential to unsettle essentialist and totalising conceptions of 'national culture' or 'national identity'.



During the last three or four decades anthropology has come home; diluting the ethnographic distance between the “home” and the “field.” As Samadar Lavie and Ted Swedenburg (1996:154) put it:

Fieldwork becomes homework as differences between ethnographer and the subject under study are broken down as the ethnographer is incorporated into the text, and as theory and text reflect and participate in the multipositioning and fluctuating realities of quotidian life

This “self-consciousness” of the fabricated nature of culture has precipitated calls for a radical reappraisal of notions of culture and identity which incorporates:

- the idea that new cultural webs are possible and necessary (What Homi Bhabba (1995) refers to as the third space)
- that it needs to be informed by a transnational radical political base (Chantal Mouffe, 1995; Ernesto Laclau, 1995; bell hooks, 1996)
- that it needs a more honest exploration of issues involving cultural memory particularly as it articulates with the mythologies of diaspora (Ien Ang, 1994; Paul Gilroy 1992)

This is not to play down the part played by communities in the construction of an individual’s identity or their ways of coming to know the world. It is rather an attempt to contextualise and critically appraise such influences. In educational terms consideration of the above points pose profound questions, some epistemological (what’s worth knowing?), others pragmatic (what approaches work best?)

What has been surprising is the exclusively eurocentric nature of the curriculum in compulsory schooling experienced by all six people involved in this study. Particularly as five of them had experienced schooling in the London area, often viewed as being the bastion of multicultural and anti racist education. The situation is unlikely to have improved since the introduction of the narrow and prescribed National Curriculum. However, it may be a romantic and inaccurate generalisation to view the 1970s as a golden age in terms of multicultural education. Certainly it was far better in terms of funding and governmental support. However, the concepts of culture and identity were for the most part crudely conceived. They were based on John Locke’s notions of culture and identity as fixed and consistent. (See Aronowitz, 1995)

This approach gave rise to some of the cruder educational initiatives in that period, such as the ‘black and white doll test.’ A more complex theoretical framework is necessary to make sense of the concepts of culture and identity.

To understand the emerging patterns I have found it more useful to refer to modern cultural theory and interpretive ethnographers like Clifford Geertz (1986:15), when he states:

Like nostalgia, diversity is not what it used to be; and the sealing of lives in separate railway carriages to produce cultural renewal or the spacing of them out with contrast effects to free up moral energies are romantic notions, not undangerous. Moral issues that used to arise...mainly between societies...now increasingly arise within them.

The stories presented here are testimony to this complex view. They also articulate Stuart Hall's (1991: 47) view that

...identities are never completed, never finished; they are always, as subjectivity, in process

Education is part of that process. But part of the problem has been in finding a theoretical base and conceptual frameworks which both acknowledge specific heritages, whilst at the same time avoid the pitfalls of overgeneralisation. bell hooks (1995) makes the point that:

Nationalist attachment to a narrow vision of black identity is often as rigidly conservative as racist white stereotypes. Narrowly focused black identity politics do a disservice to black liberation struggle because they seek to render invisible the complex and multiple subjectivity of black folks

This point is echoed by Paul Gilroy (1992) in his arguments against ethnic absolutism, which emphasise the historical inaccuracy of such overgeneralisations, even during the colonial period. All of the interviewees have come to see very forcefully how concepts of culture and identity are not essentialist but socially constructed, underlining Homi Bhabha's (1995: 49) view that

The transnational dimension of cultural transformation-migration, diaspora, displacement, relocations-turns the specifying or localising process of cultural translation into a complex process of signification. For the natural(ized), unifying discourse "nation", "peoples", "folk" tradition-these embedded myths of culture's particularity-cannot be readily referenced. The great, though unsettling advantage of this position is that it makes one increasingly aware of the construction of culture, the invention of tradition, the retroactive nature of social affiliation and psychic identification.

For Bhabha this allows a creative space to work through notions of culture and identity, but one which needs to avoid a saccharine vision which ignores the realities of power and struggle. As Stuart Hall (1997: 34) comments, when discussing this problematic:

Ethnicity is the only terminology we have to describe cultural specificity, so one has to go back to it, if one doesn't want to land up with an empty cosmopolitanism-'citizens of the world' as the only identity...The diaspora has a line through it too: in the era of globalisation, we are *all* becoming diasporic

The stories related and analysed in later chapters demonstrate people in the midst of these complex changes, making difficult and often painful decisions about their own locations and vantage points. Their stories have a particular resonance for teachers as curricula in Britain and many other parts of the world are becoming more narrowly and rigidly defined in cultural terms. The stories themselves raise sets of questions relating to public education, particularly regarding the curriculum. In recent years the education agenda has been dominated by the corporate voice of multinational business, which articulates the utilitarian need for a skilled workforce. What have been sidelined are debates about the personal and social aspects of the educational process. In the US and Britain there have been vigorous attacks on multicultural and anti racist education. 'Politically correct', which was coined as healthy self criticism has now become a universal term of abuse. This is underlined by the white middle class values which dominate the mass media, which are in many ways becoming more pronounced. In his book, "Information Inequality" Herbert Schiller (1996) places this in a broader context of the lack of accountability of large corporations, the concentration of the media control in fewer hands (dominated largely by the concerns of corporate America through advertising revenue) and the destruction of public sources of information such as libraries and the public education service in the US.

Therefore, it is necessary at this point to probe the nature of the changes occurring in systematic and empirical ways. In this I seek to discover patterns which are common across different cultural groups. Where significant differences appear, I wish to explore the reasons for this. I also seek to understand the nature of new cultural formations and explore the often underestimated role of the mass media in the transformations. To achieve this it is necessary to achieve some clarity in terms of understanding the complex issues surrounding notions of identity.

In Chapter 4, I shall review the literature to establish how current notions of self and self identity have arisen in Western scholarship. But before I do that I wish to describe my methodological approach (Chapter 3). In the chapter I shall examine critically the research tools and approaches which have been used to examine the concepts of culture, community and identity from ethnography and the use of what is variously described as autobiography, life history, self narrative and self creation. I shall discuss the problems and dilemmas involved in establishing an authentic picture of the complex changes which second generation settlers such as the six participants are currently experiencing. I shall also investigate the ethical dilemmas which confront any researcher who undertakes such research, before going on to examine their personal, heartfelt and sometimes painful accounts of living through such profound transitions.

Both culturally and technologically, education seems to be becoming distanced from people's lived experiences. As the life stories show there is a wealth of experience to be built upon and explored, which should inform our teaching. The world *is* in the classroom. It can only be translated into new cultural webs if we enter into dialogues and explore people's lived experience.

This research addresses the need for a more systematic examination of life stories which are contextualised within current political structures and complex social histories. It is clear from the existing research that, although a great deal of valuable work has been conducted at a theoretical level, very little has been conducted with academically successful people. Moreover, those that have (eg Eade (1993, 1997) have tended to take a strictly ethnographic approach, concentrating on a single community. Therefore, in Part Two, I shall attempt to examine the stories from people of different heritages in order to seek patterns and discontinuities in the stories themselves. I shall also make an analysis of patterns in the ways of telling, examining rhetorical devices to ascertain not only what changes but also what stays the same when people cross borders and increase the scope of their social networks. In short, I shall attempt to reveal how a sense of coherence and continuity is carried and maintained across generations.

As Linde (1993:3) points out :

In order to exist in the social world with a comfortable sense of being a good, ...  
and stable person, an individual needs to have a coherent, acceptable and  
constantly revised life story

In the maelstrom of modern living, it is probably more essential than ever to 'have a firm foundation when the winds of change do shift' (Dylan: 1974). My argument is that most of us have a more coherent and continuous sense of self than those who support a strong reading of postmodern thought would suppose. I also argue that the key to understanding this lies in an examination of the interrelationship between narrative, memory and history.

*Chapter 3: Honour and Authenticity: An exploration of some methodological problems encountered when analysing life histories*

*Full accountability, of course, like the dream of self knowledge, is elusive*

*James Clifford 1997:11*

*Introduction*

In the current interconnected and mass mediated world, notions of culture, community and identity are complex, multifaceted, often contradictory and difficult to describe. Furthermore, ways in which research is conducted are becoming increasingly problematic. This is particularly true of those ethnographic studies which seek to provide a platform for dispossessed and marginalised groups: those within the community whose voices are sidelined or diminished through powerful institutions such as the media. Although most educational systems speak the rhetoric of equality of opportunity, turning this into a reality in terms of either the recruitment and retention of 'ethnic minority' teachers or the content of the curriculum seems to present persistent problems and dilemmas. At one point it appeared that educational research may present a solution. I am thinking particularly of the rise of anti-racist initiatives and the development of sociolinguistics. Often such works, particularly in the field of ethnography have attempted to present a collaborative approach. This research project itself follows such a pattern.

Collaboration has a cosy ring about it. But like its travelling companion, partnership, it has some troubling aspects. Both notions raise deeper and more aggravating questions. Questions which probe the aspects of power which tend to lie, unexamined, at the heart of the research.

In conducting ethnographic research some of the major issues are:

- Who owns the research?
- What is the role of the university based researcher?
- How can the work be conducted ethically?
- How far can it be truly collaborative given the in built discrepancies in the power relationships?
- How can we ensure that our joint efforts compose as authentic a picture as possible of such a complex social reality which links history, culture, identity through the mind and memory maps of individual consciousness?

As Clifford Geertz (1995:2) put it:

When everything changes from the small and immediate to the vast and abstract - the object of study, the world immediately around it, the student, the world immediately around him, and the wider world around them both - there seems to be no place to stand so as to locate just what has altered and how.

It is clear that such research must be deeply contextualised. Therefore I shall give a brief outline of its genesis, before examining the methodological issues.

### *3.1 The story of the research*

It is clear from my opening chapters that the roots of the current project are deeply embedded in my personal history and the complexity of my own identity. It also connected with my professional work as a teacher and teacher educator. Moreover, the riddle of identity had also intrigued me throughout my own theoretical reading and my MA study 'Living in Translation' (1990), which was the pilot study for the current project. However, I admit that I didn't perceive it as such at the start of this research. As with the participants in their stories, it is only hindsight that enables me to make a coherent narrative of that particular sequence of events.

My original intention had been to study the professional life histories of mentor teachers, with whom I was working. Two events changed the direction. First I changed jobs and my new employers were not going to pay the fees for me to study at a different university, with my original choice of supervisor, who had supervised my MA dissertation. He recommended a colleague at my own college to take over the role. Her interests, research and publications were in the field of multilingualism.

The second event occurred at almost the same time. I had been invited to run a workshop at Middlesex University on the topic of the place of multilingualism in the 1995 version of the National Curriculum following the Dearing review. At the end of the session one of my ex-students came up to express interest in my talk and told me that, if I wished to conduct further research in the area, I should contact her to interview her about her own experiences as a bilingual. She became the first participant in the current project. It was this combination of events which altered the direction of the study.

### *3.2 Conduct of the interviews*

At that stage I realised that I wished to look at the issue of academically successful bilinguals which I had begun in my MA dissertation (cf Chapter 1). I wanted to look more closely at how issues of culture and identity are framed in research, which I had begun in the dissertation (see Kearney: 1995) and to examine in more depth the role of narrative in this process. Again these were intuitive 'hunches' it is only with the benefit of hindsight that I am fully conscious of this pattern.

I took up "Alikis'" offer to be interviewed in April 1996 but did not complete the final interview with "Michael" until March 2000. During that period my theoretical understandings gradually became more sophisticated and the interviews found a comfortable pattern. Because I was following Hazel Francis' (1993) approach of unstructured conversations which allows the participants to set the agenda, a productive rhythm for the interviews emerged and I was able to find certain enabling questions and approaches.

But there are other dimensions to difficulties we face. In the course of collecting life stories from people in Britain from so called 'ethnic minority' groups (the term itself is problematic) I have encountered several dilemmas. Some are ethical. Others are pragmatic. Most of my 'collaborators' have been brought up in Britain and have achieved success within the state education system. All possess at least a first degree. My original intention was to discover how their success linked to their experience of schooling. I wanted them to be able to set the agenda. This is why I followed the phenomenographic approaches recommended by Hazel Francis (1993: 70).

The aim of the interview is to have the interviewee thematise the phenomenon of interest and make the thinking explicit (1993:70)

The risky nature of this approach calls for a more spontaneous and conversational attitude on the part of the researcher. Although, superficially, this seems less rigorous than the formal structured interview, it has yielded rich results. Much of this has forced me to reappraise the original direction of the study in fundamental ways. For example, I noticed that as my interventions became less sure and articulate, the interviewees become more sure and fluent. I also realised that, through my reading and previous experience in this area, I have access to information which the interviewees do not have. They on the other hand have a lifetime of lived experience and deep and often painful reflections upon what it means to negotiate complex networks of people and signs, within layers of history and sometimes conflicting traditions. Where we both connect is that we are trying to unriddle these complex processes of cultural change we are living through. What concerns me is how we can as researchers, engage in a fruitful dialogue in which we neither overplay our knowledge and stifle the conversation nor underplay it and miss opportunities to widen the parameters of the picture. In short, how can such encounters be as authentic and honourable as possible?

I wish to argue that some of the problems which we face lie in the methodological tools which we use. It is not they are no longer fit for purpose. However, we need to examine some of the purposes they have been put to in the past and adapt the tools to our own uses. In particular I wish to follow James Clifford's (1988) clear-eyed critique of certain ethnographic methods and approaches. For me, the tools themselves are not neutral or innocent but have accrued notions of investigating culture which derive from their colonial heritage. Therefore they must be handled with care.

### *3.3 Partial Truths and Serious Fictions: an outline of the methodological problems of analysing life histories*

*Even the seemingly most individualistic interpretations of the world are never ruly and thoroughly individual and unique. On the other hand, the 'deep structures' of culture only exist as people act and behave in accordance with those structures or make use of them in their activity. Indeed the line of inquiry known as cultural studies is perhaps best described as a crossroads, the arrival, through the application of concepts from various disciplines, at a shared view that it is useful to study cultural distinctions and meaning systems from the point of view of both actors and structures.*

Alasuutari, P (1995:35)



Let me state at the outset, notions of cultural purity have little interest to me. My argument is that issues of culture and identity are messy and puzzling phenomena. Constantly in motion, they are difficult to pin down and describe. Many of the theoretical tools we have at our disposal are crude and blunt. There are no conceptual nets fine enough to capture such complexity. However, they are the only tools at our disposal and if we apply them with sensitivity and are candid about how we apply them, then we can build up helpful and distinctive pictures of the period of profound social and cultural change, we are currently experiencing.

In this chapter I shall describe the methodological problems which I faced in attempting to 'unriddle' the interviews with six bilingual/bicultural people. I shall explain why I have preferred some research methods over others and I shall discuss some of the strengths and limitations of those I have chosen. This is because I think we need to be as full and candid as possible about the conduct and context of the research. In my view a 'warts and all' approach to our writing which includes an admission of the messiness of the process can only help to do justice to the complexity of the phenomena we are describing. We are an important part of the research and it is much more useful if we do not cover our tracks. Those tracks are, in my opinion, central to the story.

There are 6 broad sections to the chapter:

- **Being here:** an examination of some central problems in conducting the research
- **'Unriddling':** choosing the right tools; the place of positivistic and non-positivistic approaches to the work
- **A real predicament:** an historical and critical survey of the strengths and limitations of ethnographic approaches
- **Life history? Whose story?:** the strengths and limitations of autobiographical approaches through life history or self narrative, problems of validity and reliability.
- **Honour and authenticity:** context and conduct of the interviews. Issues of power. Authentic voice.
- **Conclusion:** The role of the researcher

### 3.3.1 *Being here: Research as a problem of writing*

All research is our account of 'what is going on around here/over there' or 'what was going on around here/over there'. Our attempt to get to grips with a phenomenon which fascinates, irritates or obsesses us. Sometimes all three simultaneously. It is generally a problem of writing, since writing is not only for other people. As Vygotsky (1978) pointed out, it is a scaffold for our own thought. Italo Calvino (1996) gets to the heart of this matter. In his final and incomplete book 'Six Memos for the Next Millennium', he points to a fundamental dilemma of being human, which illuminates the central problem we face in conducting our research:

Mercury and Vulcan represent the two inseparable and complementary functions of life: Mercury represents *syntony*, or participation in the world around us; Vulcan, focalisation or constructive concentration. Mercury and Vulcan are both sons of Jupiter, whose realm is that of consciousness, individual and social...Mercury and Vulcan are both contrasting and complementary, I have begun to understand something...about myself and how I would like to be; about how I write and how I would like to write and how I may be able to write. Vulcan's concentration and craftsmanship are needed to record Mercury's adventures and metamorphoses. Mercury's swiftness and mobility are needed to make Vulcan's endless labours become bearers of meaning.

Calvino, I (1996:53)

This is the dilemma which faces all researchers as they choose their research tools and write their interpretations. A healthy balance is required because if we veer too far into *syntony*, we could end up with 'undifferentiated continuity' of living spontaneously. On the other hand the extreme of *focalisation* can end in 'egocentric isolation'.

I quote this section at length because I think that consideration of these two aspects is helpful to us in our choice of research tools. It also helps in bridging the somewhat false dichotomy between quantitative and qualitative approaches. As Alasuutari (1995:2) points out, '...the real gist of cultural studies is to make use of all useful theories and methods in order to gain insights about the phenomena one studies. By avoiding the accusation of being eclectic, one may end up theoretically correct but intellectually boring...Cultural studies methodology has often been described by the concept of bricolage: one is pragmatic and strategic in choosing and applying different methods and practices'. It is not about seeking out absolute truths but contributing interesting viewpoints and insights to an ongoing public discourse. Therefore we need to be clear about when quantitative and qualitative methods are useful in 'unriddling' a given phenomenon.

### 3.3.2. 'Unriddling': choosing the right tools

If we take on board Foucault's view that we should view methodologies as a toolbox we need to make an analysis of the various categories of tools. In a chapter entitled, 'Ethnographic Methodologies', Kamil, Langer and Shanahan (1985: 72) provide a useful table which distinguishes between experimental and ethnographic research methods.

Table 1

#### Major distinctions between ethnographic and experimental enquiry

Ethnographic inquiry	Experimental enquiry
A. Phenomenological base Seeks to understand human behaviour from participant's frame of reference	A. Positivist base Seeks to learn facts and identify causes
B. Systematically observes recurring patterns of behaviour as people engage in regularly occurring activities	B. Sets variables that need to be understood in relation to each other - some (independent) can be manipulated to determine their effects on others (dependent)
C. Identifies and describes phenomena from beginning to end across cycles	C. Tests relationships
D. Develops hypotheses grounded in the event and driven by the conceptual framework of the study	D. Preformulates research questions or hypotheses
E. Uses field setting that can be further tested with naturalistic experiments	E. Uses laboratory or field settings
F. Confirms findings across a variety of information sources, contexts and time	F. Computes interrater and statistical probability

Each of these viewpoints emanates from a different philosophical tradition. Experimental/ empirical approaches tend to stem from the positivist view (Comte 1973: Durkheim 1956), which seeks to identify 'facts' and causes. Such scientific approaches have their roots in 18th century European speculations from such thinkers as Newton, Locke and Descartes. Such notions continue to have a powerful position in defining what is hard, scientific and valid in academic research in academic circles. They continue to be seen by many as the only systematic scientific approach. Although the table above provides a broad set of distinctions, which are useful the link between ethnography and phenomenology is by no means simple and straightforward.

In the current research a wholly empirical approach would be inappropriate, since it could not capture the level of complexity of the transformations and translations which I wish to observe. Moreover, many of the aspects which the empiricist wishes to leave out: the anecdote, the dialogue, the creation of the narratives, the power relationships between the participants, the exceptions, the subjectivities of both the researcher and the researched, the nature of that relationship and, above all, the complexity, contradictions and general messiness of concepts of culture and identity are the very aspects which fascinate me most. Having said that however, statistical survey data on the migration patterns of different groups of people, surveys on the extent of bilingualism in urban areas in Britain, patterns in public policy often provide rich sources of background information to studies in the field.

Alasuutari (1995:47) refers to the empirical/positivist approach as a 'factist' approach, which can be used to analyse both quantitative and qualitative data. For him the distinction between positivist and phenomenological approaches is not so clear cut. In fact he rarely uses the terms. He, also, acknowledges that there may be times when a 'factist' approach is useful in 'unriddling' the issue or problem. This is in recognition of the fact that not all empirical research has a positivistic base. Qualitative research also wishes to describe social realities as accurately and clearly as possible. However, he identifies three main characteristics of the 'factist' approach:

- it makes a clear-cut division between the world or reality 'out there' on one hand, and the claims made about it on the other. ie. does not consider the *context* of the 'facts' or the *social interaction* of the participants to be important considerations. It also eschews anecdote or folklore.
- the researcher must reflect on the truthfulness of given information and the honesty of informants ie ' a measure of trustworthiness is expected as a qualification for useful data'
- at the base of this approach is a common sense, pragmatic view of what constitutes the truth or the reality which is being observed. 'One wants to find out about the actual behaviour, attitudes or real motives of the people

being studied, or to detect what has happened.'

(All quotations are from Alasuutari: 1995: 47)

However, it is necessary to be aware of the philosophical bases each researcher is working from since they may use similar research methods or material in distinctly different ways and for totally different ends. In terms of analysis of qualitative data, the factist approach tends to be used for organisation of the material into types. The examples Alasuutari gives are from interviews he has conducted and demonstrate how qualitative data can be analysed from a factist perspective, according to the grounded theory approach developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967: Strauss 1990)

...the researcher would first find two extreme cases...that would differ from each other as much as possible. Then he or she would ponder on what made them different. The next step would be to see if all the data could be divided into two in terms of this dimension or criterion. If not, other dimensions, within which cases differ from each other would be sought. Finally he or she would come up with a typology in which every case fits in a box....This kind of typology should not be a result as such, but only a starting point for analysis and interpretation...at its best this kind of analysis makes sense of the relations between variables-that is, why different people live in different ways.

Alasuutari, 1995:49

But as Alasuutari is careful to point out, this approach only works in qualitative research when it is grounded in an understanding of the context and the meanings produced, ie when the complexity of the situation is acknowledged. In other words when a factist perspective is underpinned by a phenomenological methodological base. If we as researchers have this awareness then we are likely to choose better tools for the work, or use existing tools in more meaningful ways.

In the case of the factist approach, interviews can be interpreted in two ways which Alasuutari calls *indicator* or *testimony*, which again reveal a difference in methodological and philosophical approach. He says the same account could be used as both an 'indicator' and a 'testimony'. This distinction was first introduced by Droysen (1960).

These two source types coincide with two methods used to check or improve the truthfulness of the information people give. Let us call them the mechanistic and the humanistic method.

The idea of the mechanistic method is to attempt to avoid 'reactivity of measurement'

This type is related to a predisposition to secure objective knowledge, in which, 'sometimes, people are misled or even cheated' in pursuit of the 'truth'.

The humanistic method is the opposite. The key concept is 'rapport' (Berg 1989, 29-30; Bogdan and Taylor 1975, 45-48; Georges and Jones 1980, 63-64) It is thought that if the researcher makes friends with the informants, and the informants trust the researcher, they will also be honest with the researcher.

Alasuutari (1995:52)

These two approaches are based on positivist and phenomenological/ethnographic methodologies respectively.

In the current research a positivist approach would be inappropriate, since it could not capture the level of complexity of the transformations and translations which I wish to observe. Equally, although there is an awareness that there should be an internal consistency in the narratives themselves, much of what is told in life histories cannot be 'factual' in a strict sense, it is a largely a matter of selection and creative construction. The narratives themselves present a highly partial and subjective view of the situation, individual's interpretations of their own existence. It is this viewpoint, the sense the individual is making of it which interests me, not that every minute detail can be verified or cross referenced. I shall discuss this aspect more fully in the section on 'life histories'.

### *3.3.3. A real predicament: an historical and critical survey of the strengths and limitations of ethnographic approaches*

The approach I have taken is predominantly, but not exclusively, ethnographic. This is because ethnography's phenomenological base enables the researcher to examine issues of complexity and interconnectedness. However, it is not a strictly ethnographic approach since I am not concerned with a single cultural group, neither am I looking at the 'pure' form of the culture. My 'informants' would be considered unreliable by many earlier ethnographers, such as Griaule (1948, 1957) since they do not claim to articulate an unambiguous and authoritative view of their own culture. However, ethnography is not a monolithic phenomenon. There are heated debates within the discipline. My own approach is closer to Michel Leiris (1934), in that he thought that the line between the subjective and the objective in the conduct of ethnographic research was an artificial distinction and in some senses amounted to academic sleight of hand. As Clifford (1988:142) comments:

Why, he (Leiris) wondered, are my own reactions (my dreams, bodily responses, and so on) not important parts of the data produced by fieldwork?

I have also been strongly influenced by the more dialogic approach to understanding in the constructions of meaning espoused by Bakhtin (1981).

In the 'Predicament of Culture' (1988) James Clifford provides deep insights into the limitations of ethnographic approaches. Conceptions of culture, community and identity have evolved predominantly from ethnography. Of course, the words themselves have a complex and contested history. In his book Clifford traces the development of ethnography in both the US and Europe and demonstrates, both its strong link to colonialism and, its attempts to achieve scientific respectability through using research methods imported from natural science. It is interesting to note that Franz Boas was a physicist before he was appointed as the second agent in the field, working for the United States Bureau of Ethnography. The original brief was to gather information on Native American communities. During the closing decade of the nineteenth century anthropology rapidly gained ground as an academic discipline, in Britain and the US.

In 1883 E.B. Tylor was appointed reader in anthropology at Oxford University. He cultivated long term relationships with sophisticated researchers in the field. He encouraged them to gather ethnographic data in systematic ways. As Stocking (1983) states this event marked the beginning of an important phase in the development of British ethnographic method: the collection of data by academically trained natural scientists defining themselves as anthropologists. These 'scientists' were seminal in the formulation and evaluation of anthropological theory. It also led to a rise in the status of fieldwork, which reached its apotheosis in the work of Bronislaw Malinowski.

In a sustained and critical analysis of ethnographic methods employed by Malinowski (1916, 1922, 1932, 1935, 1967), Mead (1939, 1971, 1977) and Griaule (1933, 1934a, 1934b, 1937, 1938, 1943, 1946, 1948, 1952, 1953, 1957), Clifford describes the main devices of fieldwork. He draws upon Stocking's work (1968, 1983) which analysed 'the various literary artifices of 'Argonauts' (Malinowski, 1932) (its engaging narrative constructs, use of the active voice in the "ethnographic present", illusive dramatisations of the author's participation in scenes of Trobriand life), techniques Malinowski used so that "his own experience [might] become the readers's experience as well" (Stocking 1983:106). Malinowski in this process became more and more concerned with problems of accountability and verification. (Clifford 1989:29)

This view of ethnography is very much from the positivistic, 'factist' viewpoint, implicit in Boas' work. It is also largely premised on the enlightenment view of the individual as a bounded and unchanging phenomenon. That is, it was underpinned by an 'essentialist' notion of identity. (This view is analysed and discussed in Chapter 4.) However, it is interesting to note that recent revelations about both Mead's and Malinowski's work demonstrate that their quest for scientific consistency led them to be less than candid about

their own research problems. In order to show precise patterning they left relevant information out of the picture. For this reason the publication of Malinowski's diary caused a minor scandal. As Clifford (1989:97) notes:

The diary is an inventive, polyphonic text. It is a crucial document for the history of anthropology, not because it reveals the reality of ethnographic experience but because it forces us to grapple with the complexities of such encounters and to treat all textual accounts based on fieldwork as partial constructions.

On the other hand, it is also true to say that the diary does at times explicitly reveal Malinowski's colonial mind set. It also demonstrates how even with the most rigorous scientific framework an author's values and predisposition are an integral part of the text. There are crucial gaps in this narrative. In discussing Griaule's work Clifford notes:

Direct evidence of the interpersonal dynamics and politics of research is largely absent. Moreover there is an enormous gap in all histories of fieldwork: the indigenous 'side' of the story (Clifford 1989:59)

Despite this, Clifford does not ignore the fact that ethnography was a developing discipline, and as such ethnographers were raising questions and responding to criticisms. Therefore Griaule moved away from studying artifacts to a use of informants. However, he still held rather essentialist views on identity. Clifford notes that he merely exchanges one set of over generalisations for another. After 1950 he came closer to the Martinican poet, Leopold Senghor's view of 'negritude'. However, Senghor's vision was still of a romanticised, essentialist nature and was very different from by Aime Cesaire's (1983) 'more syncretic, impure, inventive conception of cultural identity' (Clifford 1989:59)

What is particularly salutary about Clifford's analysis is that he reminds us that issues of cultural mixing, power and creation of new and often subversive forms of expression are neither new or rare. It is perhaps only recently that such thoughts have entered into the lifeblood of academic thinking. This is amply illustrated in his analysis of the long trial where the Mashpee, a group of Native North Americans, attempted to prove a continuous cultural identity, in order to regain control of 16,000 acres of land which had been stolen from their ancestors. It raised complex and difficult issues surrounding notions of culture and identity. There were certainly continuous narratives and at the time of the trial a certain amount of reinvention of the culture. However, there was clearly a great deal of movement across boundary lines:

The Mashpee trial seemed to reveal people who were sometimes separate and "Indian", sometimes assimilated and "American." Their history was a series of cultural and political transactions, not all-or-nothing conversions or



resistances. Indians in Mashpee lived and acted between cultures in a series of ad hoc engagements.

(Clifford 1988:342)

What is significant, however, is the reliance of the court on ethnographic methods which derive largely from Boas. So although in certain academic circles the positivist approach has been criticised as a crude instrument, it continues to exert a powerful and dominant influence in public life.

In summary, Clifford's work (1989,1997) provides an interesting critical framework by which we may be able to mitigate the worst excesses of the colonial legacy in the ethnographic method. This is because he:

- locates ethnography in its historical context
- provides an overview of the strengths and limitations of its main theorists
- situates ethnography inextricably within colonial forms of discourse
- is transparent about ethnographers and their "baggage" of assumed values and beliefs
- links his thinking to notions of polyphonic discourses, which were developed by Bakhtin
- links it to major movements in Western Art and literature particularly surrealism to provide some understanding of cross cultural creation
- is specific about the influence of power on conceptions of self and identity
- sees deliberate constructions of identity as ways individuals balance and accommodate such competing discourses
- encourages us to see travel as important an ingredient of culture as settlement

If we temper our ethnographic methods with these notes of both insight and caution, they may still prove to be useful tools. He concludes:

In the last decades of the twentieth century, ethnography begins from the inescapable fact that Westerners are not the only ones going places in the modern world....But have not travellers always encountered worldly "natives"?

Strange anticipation: the English Pilgrims arrive at Plymouth Rock in the New world only to find Squanto, a Patuxet, just back from Europe (Clifford: 1988: 17)

#### *3.3.4. Life History? Whose story? : the strengths and limitation of life histories*

Although the current study is not strictly ethnographic (I am not studying a single cultural group) there are strong ethnographic elements. Each of the interviewees has strong links with a well defined community group. It is ethnography in a comparative sense. I am probing ethnographic issues such as culture, community and identity, through the life histories of individuals. From their stories we gain a great deal of information on the families and communities which share sets of assumptions and values which are described, sometimes critically by the individuals themselves.

As with ethnography there are problems and dilemmas involved in making sense of the stories themselves. To begin with it is worth examining the obvious advantages to this approach.

Life history and narrative offer exciting alternatives for connecting lives and stories of individuals to the understanding of larger human and social phenomena (Hatch and Wisniewski 1995)

A life history is composed of self-referential stories through which the author-narrator constructs the identity and point(s) of view of a unique individual historically situated in culture, time and place

It is also a critical approach. As Goodson (1995) states

These approaches offer a serious opportunity to question the implicit racial class or gender biases which existing modes of enquiry mystify whilst reproducing (See Giroux, 1991). Storying and narratology are genres that move researchers beyond (or to the side of) the main paradigms of inquiry with their numbers, variables, psychometrics, psychologisms, and decontextualised theories

But he warns us to be vigilant of 'the tyranny of the local' (Harvey: 1989) and cites Denzin's timely advice that:

The cultural logics of late capitalism valorize the life story, autobiographical document because they keep the myth of the autonomous individual alive..The logic of the confession reifies the concept of self and turns it into a cultural commodity... The recent return of the life story celebrates the

importance of the individual under the conservative politics of late postmodernism. (1992: 8-9)

This is one of the major problems of postmodernist theorising. The lack of a 'grand narrative' or even a clearly delineated set of common political and social aims or values can put you in the camp of the people who have come to dispossess you. This view is examined in more detail in Chapter 4.

As with the problem of 'informants' in ethnographic research we must be cautious about generalisation we can make from these sources. In their paper, 'Life history and narrative: Questions, issues and exemplary works', Hatch and Wiseniewski (1995) asked narrative and life history scholars to comment on their own work. The analysis of their responses resulted in them raising a number of interesting issues and perspectives ie:

- life histories as a type of narrative
- stories as ways of knowing
- life histories as individual, contextually situated stories
- how life histories are distinguished from other types of qualitative research by their:
  - focus on the individual
  - the personal nature of the research process
  - the emphasis on subjectivity

It is also worth noting that, in common with ethnography, life history is also a genre developed through a Western/European literary tradition. It is not natural and unselfconscious, despite its personal form. In the earliest writings, lives of public figures were formal and exterior, revealing little of the individual's private and personal thoughts. As Bakhtin (1981) notes the Ancient Greeks did not use the form extensively. It was only during the later Graeco-Roman period that autobiography developed. Even then Ovid, Horace and Juvenal tended to treat the form ironically. Confessional literature only really began with St Augustine. So that the model we have internalised stems directly from this source. Much of the commentary on this aspect has been from the field literary criticism. It is closely related to the autobiographical novel, or "spiritual autobiography" of such writers as Defoe.

Eighteenth century excursions into this form bear all the hallmarks of the enlightenment conception of a human being. Karl Weintraub (1978) in his book the 'Value of the Individual' saw the genre emerging in parallel to Western culture's celebration of the individual. This point is endorsed by Buckley (1984) who sees it as the development of the subjective impulse in literature since 1800. Rousseau's philosophical autobiography attempts to move in two directions simultaneously:

- tracing a historical succession of experiences, which formed his character
- attempting to discover in the same experiences his transcendent “natural” soul

Spengmann (1980) traces the evolution of the autobiographical form and notes that:

...we must view autobiography historically, not as one thing that writers have done again and again, but as a pattern described by various things they have done in response to changing ideas about the nature of the self, the ways in which the self may be apprehended, and the proper ways of reporting those apprehensions.

He summarises the historical evolution of the genre, from Augustine’s ‘Confessions’ onwards and identifies four categories, which have developed:

- Historical self explanation. “To say more than human things with a human voice” : originating in the Renaissance and enlightenment period. eg Dante, Bunyan and Defoe. Linked to the rise of individualism.
- Philosophical self-scrutiny. “To say human things with a more than human voice”: which developed in the later 18th century. eg Rousseau. The enlightenment dichotomy of mind and spirit, it represents a critique of the society of the time
- Poetic self expression
- Poetic self invention. “To speak humanly from the height or the depth of human things” both of which developed through the 19th century. eg Dicken’s several past and present selves are worked through the characters in his novels in a poetic form

He is quick to point out that these developments were cumulative and have added to the richness of the genre. Equally they reflect the preoccupations current at the time and place of their invention. He makes the interesting point that Augustine’s work posed problems in the conduct of autobiographical writing. They are ones which are only too familiar to me as I attempt to ‘unriddle’ the interviews. They are:

How can the self know itself?

Can it be achieved:

- by surveying in the memory its completed past actions from an unmoving point above them
- by moving inquisitively through its own memories and ideas to some conclusion about them
- by performing a sequence of symbolic actions, through which the ineffable self can be realised

Such problems are closely linked to the identified categories: historical, philosophical and poetic.

Olney (1972) refers to autobiography as 'metaphors of self'. He refers to Heraclitus' view that every cosmology begins in self knowledge. This chimes in with Gramsci's view (cited in Said, 1978:25) that:

The starting point of critical elaboration is the consciousness of what one really is, and is knowing thyself as a product of the historical process to date, which has deposited in you an infinity of traces, without leaving an inventory...therefore it is imperative at the outset to compile such an inventory.

There is, of course, a central paradox in autobiography that:

Without a self one cannot write about it, but whatever one writes will be about the self it constructs (Olney:1972)

Because 'our actions write an autobiography, which is of course a fiction,' (Regis Michaud) the particular interpretation we make tells us about the self which is being described. Tagore (1917: 3) underlines the creative process involved in autobiography:

...it is almost a truism to say the world is what we perceive it to be. We imagine that our mind is a mirror, that is more or less accurately reflecting what is happening outside us. On the contrary, our mind is the principal element of creation. The world, while I am creating it, is being incessantly created for myself in time and space.

Michel Leiris (1946:13) raises an interesting point over the purposes of writing autobiography, which is essentially confessional literature:

What I did not realise was that at the source of all introspection is a predilection for self contemplation, and that every confession contains a desire to be absolved....To expose myself to others...was an attempt to seduce my public into being indulgent, to limit the scandal by giving it an aesthetic form.

In terms of the history of the genre it is also worth noting that for most commentators autobiography was, until the 1960s seen as a sub-category of biography and that it is only since the 1960s that interest has focussed on the text itself. At the present time it is a complex and pervasive genre. Rosen (1998) identifies a wide range of manifestations and variants. He subdivides types of autobiographical discourse into three sections: written autobiographical acts, spoken autobiographical acts and types of approaches to the study of autobiography

#### 1. Written autobiographical acts

- the major literary work
- memoirs
- diaries, journals, collections of letters
- embedded autobiographical writings
- autobiography in canonical literary genres eg:
  - autobiographical fiction
  - autobiographical poetry
  - autobiographical drama eg Wesker
- autobiographical travellers tales
- some forms of journalism eg Tom Wolfe
- the curriculum vitae

#### 2. Spoken autobiographical acts

- attempts to speak a life eg Studs Terkel's work
- framed episodes
- oral personal story on demand or under duress eg police interview

#### 3. Types of approaches to the study of autobiography

- literary criticism/ theory
- the ethnographic tradition
- the psychological tradition
- social and cultural history

Life histories are not exclusively autobiographical texts, although they contain strong

autobiographical elements and it is apparent that individuals employ most or all of the narrative conventions analysed above. However, interviews add another dimension and make the process a dialogue rather than a monologue. In other words different sets of problems emerge. Equally, different sets of possibilities also become apparent.

Miller and Glassner (in Silverman (ed) 1997:101) identify a basic dilemma in gathering life histories through interview.

The language of the interviewing...fractures the stories being told. This occurs inevitably within a storytellers narrative, which must be partial if it is not to be unbearably boring. In the qualitative interview process, the research commits further fractures as well. The coding, categorisation and typologising of stories result in telling parts of stories, rather than presenting them in their 'wholeness'

Although analysis of common patterns make this problematic, I have found that, even from the rather brief interviews I have conducted, a coherent account of people's lives emerges. The brevity of the exchange often makes it more important for the interviewee to give as many details as possible.

In their paper Hatch and Wisniewski (1995) identified some other issues connected with life history or narrative work. In short the issues which I raised at the beginning of this paper: Who owns the stories? How authentic is the representation? Whose voice is privileged? How do we balance individual stories and the social context? What criteria do we have for judging quality?

The question of ownership is a difficult one. As Paul Munro notes (cited in Hatch & Wisniewski (1995: 119)

...a central tension in life history is the desire to 'give voice' without producing the very unequal power relations we are critiquing. How does the notion of 'giving' voice actually underscore our perceptions of those with whom we conduct our research

How collaborative is this act?

How do we carry out a collaborative, mutually beneficial project while working through issues of knowledge, power, control and privacy: how as a researcher, can I contribute as much as the subject of my work is giving?

These are questions which have been uppermost in my mind as I have conducted the interviews, transcribed the tapes and written-up my version of events. The slow, laborious

process of transcription, revealed a different dimension to the stories of the transitions. What comes forward very strongly is the pain of the process. What is our responsibility here? Linda Tillman Rogers (in Hatch and Wisniewski: 1995: 119) charges researchers with the responsibility.

Reflection is a powerful tool; the researcher, simply by being there causes a form of knowing an "event" differently. Many people survive or, indeed, endure by deliberately not being aware of all the complexities and dangers...The reflective act does make clear the nature of the problem, but existential reality-what we really do and really know-- is often not comforting...

Life histories, if they are to have any depth, need to enter unknown and potentially dangerous territory. Although we need to tread sensitively and carefully, there may be a way of reading the oversensitivity of the statement above as condescending, as if the interviewee has neither the strength or desire to discuss difficult issues and dilemmas. It misses the point that, handled with sensitivity, making sense of difficult aspects of their own life may be the richest reward for the individuals themselves. This is the point which tests all our integrity not as only researchers but also as human beings.

### *3.3.5 Problems of validity and reliability*

Issues of sensitivity are important, but work on self narrative always encounters the more common problem of validity and reliability. Therefore I need to state my position on this matter before proceeding with the analysis. As Langer (1952) and Carr (1986) argue memory of any event is always something of a fiction. I would suggest that this could be extended to include even the most rigorous positivistic laboratory experiment, where selection often precedes the event. However, personal accounts of experience differ in so much as memory is considered to be notoriously unreliable in terms of accuracy of recall. People forget chronological details, invent reported dialogue and in extreme circumstances maliciously distort events and actions. Moreover, they will often present a rather idealised and favourable version of themselves. Even self deprecation can be seen as an engaging narrative device, which seeks to portray the speaker as modest. In fact there is no harm in this. We become the hero (or even anti-hero) of our own stories. However, it could be argued that this invalidates research of self narratives. It could be justifiably asserted that it will not give an accurate picture of the person telling the story. As Gide (1955) says in his autobiography:

The most annoying thing is to have to present as successive steps, states that occurred in confusing simultaneity. I am dialogical; everything in me fights and contradicts itself. Memoirs are only half sincere, no matter how great the concern to tell the truth: everything is always more complicated than one



supposes. Perhaps we get closer to the truth in the novel (1955: 245)  
My memory of a place does not often fail, but it confuses the dates. I am lost  
if I confine myself to chronology (1955:22) (*translated by Suzanne  
Nalbantian:1997:18/19*)

By way of reply to those who seek objective truth in autobiography, I need to make several points. Firstly there is the issue of 'good faith'. By this I mean that I am well aware that in the space of a short dialogue I am not going to have anything resembling a complete life story. It will be a selection of a limited part. Therefore, the major issue in conducting this kind of research is one of establishing veracity or validity. In such intrinsically subjective territory, this is a minefield. The 'factist,' positivistic approach is, again, an inappropriate tool. Although the narratives have to be a fictional reworking or, at the very least a highly selective sorting exercise, we are able to recognise internal consistency of the narratives.

The narratives are also constrained by the nature of the encounter. My own interests which I made clear to all participants at the outset obviously did much to frame their responses. Allied to this there will also be the consideration of audience which is common to all utterances, whatever the level of formality. The fact that all participants were familiar with my professional persona, having been taught by me will also have a greater or lesser effect upon the stories. Moreover, the narratives are co-authored, in that we both shaped the narrative through the course of the conversation. No one had any real idea of the outcome as we progressed through it. However, although this act of shaping is spontaneous and improvised, it is not random.

Moreover, there are positive aspects to working with people I already knew. I can attest to their 'trustworthiness' and ethical outlook. The people I selected are not likely to deliberately mislead me on any major issue. I took what they said in good faith and gave some degree of editorial control by returning the full tapes so that they could amend, add or ask me to omit details which they felt were not appropriate, damaging or potentially embarrassing. I do not share the mass media's (even the broad sheets') current enthusiasm for conflating truth with voyeuristic entertainment.

In terms of recall there are constraints in terms of selection of episodes and rendering experience through narrative. My view here is that the constraints of time can actually sharpen up the selection process so that the most powerful or significant memories will come forward in the narratives. Listening to the narratives in detail and transcribing them I was impressed by the amount that the individuals were able to share in such a short space of time. This concentrated potency is the underrated characteristic of the narrative genre as a resource for research. The narratives are richly contextualised and many layered. They are also holistic connecting all aspects of experience the physical, the cognitive and the affective into an accessible framework. They are densely packed in terms of information.

However, there is still the question of accuracy. Neisser (1982) illuminated the problem in an original way when he coined the term 'episodic memory'. At the time he was analysing testimony on the Watergate scandal. He was particularly interested in John Dean's testimony. Dean acquired some celebrity for his apparently acute memory. In fact he was known as the 'human tape recorder' since his recall of dialogue appeared to be exact. However, on close analysis the tapes revealed that his version of events was substantially inaccurate both in terms of the words used and their gist. Neisser found that, although reconstruction played an important part in his account, he compressed regular routines into a single dramatic episode. Nevertheless, his account was an accurate account of the real situation, in terms of the events, motivations and actions of the leading players in that particular drama. In other words he was truthful, but not accurate. Of course it is not uncommon for lawyers to do the reverse ie compile narratives which whilst being factually accurate are neither faithful nor true representations. However, when we are recalling events from various periods of our own lives most of us tend to use 'episodic' memory.

Lastly and perhaps most importantly, I realise that I am working with texts and that my task is an interpretive one. I am seeking pattern and illumination, not irrefutable abstract 'truth'. As Freeman (1993:30) points out:

..life historical knowledge, in so far as it is predicated on understanding rather than retrieval of isolated facts, should never - indeed can never- be judged according to its correspondence with what was... Furthermore when considering autobiographical texts, texts for which the interpreter is at once reader and writer, subject and object, it becomes clear that the meanings one arrives at are as much *made* as *found*, the process of autobiographical reflection: a new relationship is being created between the past and the present, a new poetic configuration, designed to give greater form to one's previous and present experience. The text of self is thus being rewritten.

For such reasons I am much more interested in other criteria for the narratives such as apparency and verisimilitude (Van Maanen:1988); transferability (Lincoln and Guba: 1985) an explanatory, invitational quality, authenticity, adequacy and plausibility (Clandenin and Connelly: 2000)

Reissman (1983:64) articulates this position well when she states

The historical truth of an individual's accounts not the primary issue. Narrativisation *assumes* point of view...Narratives are laced with social discourses and power relations over time...*Trustworthiness* not 'truth' is the key semantic difference. The latter assumes an objective reality, whereas the former moves the process into the social world. (my emphases)

Kohler's position like Bakhtin's and Vygotsky's assumes that human consciousness is a deeply social creation. Therefore, she suggests that in our research we seek illumination of this complex phenomenon and do not limit our investigation to the construction of narrow paradigms, which exclude 'point of view'. She goes on to suggest four criteria for approaching validity in narrative inquiry:

**persuasiveness:** is it reasonable and convincing?

**correspondence:** can it be taken back to the researched?

**coherence:** does it provide a coherent picture of the situation described?

**pragmatic:** to what extent can we act upon it?

I think there are ways forward with this type of research which can avoid the twin dangers of the recklessly risky and the condescendingly anodyne. I argue that we need to establish relationships with the individuals which encourage mutual trust and respect. To my mind it is not about method, but that we need as interviewers to put ourselves in as much of a position of risk as our 'subjects'. Bearing in mind the methodological problems outlined above I wish now to return to the interview with Aliko, which illustrates the ethical and epistemological issues raised earlier.

### *3.3.6 Honour and authenticity: context and conduct of the interviews*

Aliko is in her late twenties. Her heritage is Greek Cypriot. She was born and brought up in Hackney and is now Head of Drama at a Secondary School. Her story is analysed more fully in Chapters 5-7. In the spirit of candour which I am advocating I need to give a few background details to the interview. Firstly, I knew Aliko reasonably well before I interviewed her. She was a student in my educational drama classes at Middlesex University. Secondly, it was she herself who initiated the interview and, in many ways, got me started on the research.

She had attended a talk I had given on the implications of the National Curriculum Review of 1994 in Britain on the education of bilingual pupils (see Kearney, 1996) I had developed an interest in issues of culture and identity over many years and Aliko knew this and obviously knew something of my position on the main debates in the area. I am being frank about this because I feel that these factors are important for any reader to know in order to make their own sense of what follows. It is also a dimension which is missing from most academic writing.

When I began the work I was aware of some of the dilemmas involved and I wished our conversations to be as informal as possible, but also I had questions and hunches of my own

which I wished to explore. The approach which attracted me most was Hazel Francis' (1993) phenomenographical approach. She advocates unstructured interviews, in order to allow the interviewee to have more control of the agenda. Even here I did not follow her prescription to the letter, since I felt that it was not sufficient for Aiki to set the agenda of the conversation. Although, as the interview transcripts demonstrate, I tried to my contributions as minimal and as unobtrusive as possible, I was also keen to be clear about my own interests. In this way the terms of the conversation are explicit. To this end I sent her a copy of questions which I wished to explore. However, I wanted her to feel free to take up any angle she wanted, so the conduct of the interview was unstructured, with me trying to ask open questions.

The interview took place in a room at the top of the Mansion House in Middlesex University. I already had experience of unstructured ways of investigating issues from my work in educational drama. For example I was not afraid to wait for replies. I knew that this often led to fruitful and thoughtful responses from drama sessions. Complex ideas often need careful thought.

My first question elicited a response that, in retrospect changed the course of the study. After a false start I reformulated the question, I had really wanted to ask

C:...What I really wanted to do is to ask you to try to do is to ask you to travel back in time to your first glimmerings of memories. What are they?..You know...to do with culture and language and identity. What are your first remembrances?

After a long pause, lasting more than twenty seconds, she gave an unexpected answer

A:...mm...very first? ...I think... I know what's happening here. Because I'm thinking, 'Oh, is that because of my sister?' Cos you know I've got a sister who has cerebral palsy...erm...and I think this is something, I'm still coming to terms with. Trying to work out in my own head, years and years later. When I think of my behaviour or how I was as a child, I either put it in terms of culture...Right? That was because I was of that culture and I didn't feel that I fitted into that culture. Or that's because we felt... I felt uncomfortable not being part of a normal family. Because I had a sister who could not walk. So, we didn't do normal family things. So I think you're going to have a problem with me because some things relate to my...in terms of my language and ...erm...ability and confidence and self image and some of it relates exclusively to my culture, but it's just trying to identify which ones do, but...

Although my original intention had begun with a basic set of premises about the nature of identity. At that time I saw it as neither fixed nor rigid, but a set of repertoires.

However, I had still underestimated the kinds of ambivalences which stem from conflicts within the layers of her personal identity. I was not until I started to transcribe the materials that I began to understand the extent of the pain involved in those processes.

My stumbling line of questioning produced several insights for me which, in retrospect, changed the course of the research in fundamental ways. Although it was in no way conscious and deliberate, when I transcribed and analysed my interview with Aiki, I began to trace the genesis of my approach. My "technique" originated from my own work in educational drama and as a practising teacher interested in encouraging sustained oral responses from children and students. From Dorothy Heathcote's work, (See Wagner, 1976) and Johnson and O'Neill, 1984) in particular, I had learned to take on different positions within the drama often encouraging children or students to assume 'the mantle of the expert'. Dorothy Heathcote was always seeking ways of repositioning herself at different levels of power within the work, while still assuming responsibility for the shape of the drama and the social and psychological health of the group. The mainstays of her approach were: allowing people time to formulate responses; taking the role of 'naif'; asking participants in the drama for directions and advice; challenging contradictions by playing the 'devil's advocate'. Her strongest tool in the creation of meaning was the reflection upon the action, the teasing out of dilemmas contradictions and knotty ethical problems, by asking that small, but all powerful, question, "Why?" These are all approaches which align her work strongly with Brecht's conception of theatre. Each of these approaches are apparent, albeit unconsciously, in my approach to the interviews.

Researchers always bring their own histories to the work and this was mine. Educational drama was also a history I shared with Aiki. I don't claim to have known her well. I only taught her for one term. However, we did work with a shared set of assumptions and values, which perhaps explains why she responded in deeply reflective ways from minimal clues in the questions. For my part the stumbling nature was not merely because it is difficult to formulate interesting questions whilst simultaneously engaged in listening to interesting and highly personal responses. I was being tentative in my probing further in order not to abuse the power position I had as 'the interviewer'. I was signalling my interest and at the same time allowing an escape route for Aiki should she need it.

The other main lesson I had learned from my interest in educational drama was that the best sessions happened when students took control of the direction of the drama. They had ownership, which is the cornerstone of motivation. This a difficult path since it means that we must tolerate experiment, 'failure' and find ways to edge the work forward tentatively. Once teachers have taken a leap of faith, these approaches can yield very exciting possibilities in terms of learning. I find evidence of the same things in the interviews. It is often when I am at my most tentative that a sudden, articulate and profound response arises from the other person. I could cite many examples of this throughout the interview. One of my favourites is when she puts a stop to my over-

tentative ramblings by saying firmly "Go for it!"

In the early parts of the interview she alludes to several times when she either wanted to be English or that she was jealous of friends who were blonde and blue eyed. On the second separate occasion she brought this point up, we have the following exchange:

C: That's the second time you've brought that up...

A: Yeah

C: There's that image that you wanted to be like this other...the other..

A: Yeah..yeah..

C: It must have been...I know that it couldn't have been quite like that...but it must have been distressing in a way..

Here, I border on incoherence. However, in the context of the interview, this is a real turning point. From here on, Aiki takes over. Her stories become more confident and candid. Her unprompted observations and reminiscences become longer and more detailed. They also give a deep insight into how she is learning to maintain a sense of integrity and dignity within the web of conflicting forces which are influencing her. She is making sense of her personal history. In the interview she charts the changes in detail. In response to my rambling she replies:

A: I think I carried that through all the way through until the end of my degree.

C: Really?...That far?...

A: Yeah And it wasn't until I came to do the PGCE that things started really, really changing...rapidly erm..I came out of a long term relationship that was quite oppressive in that...you know...and I think that has completely changed me absolutely now.

When I probe this further one strand is that her teaching helped her recognise her own situation clearly. She describes how her teaching:

...suddenly made me realise that you couldn't put people in boxes and deny them who they were. Because with some kids I'd think, "I know why they're doing that" and in terms of drama, I know why they've got their sentences mixed up there and it sounds awkward and gawky and that's why the other kids don't want them in their group. And then it just clicked and I

thought, "That's me!" or "That's how I perceive myself! and that's why I can't move forward because I let everybody else...sort of say, "No you can't come in because your sentences aren't..I mean but that's really extreme but that's the example I could think of.

She goes on to compare this with the oppressive relationships she was in with a middle class English man who told her she was aggressive.

Whereas now I look back and when I started changing I started thinking, "Well actually it's not aggression, it's just me and it's part of my culture. We're like that, y'know.

Although the interview and consequent analysis tends to fragment the narrative, viewed as a whole the stories and reflections provide a coherent and surprisingly detailed account of the whole of her life. It is also interesting that she also fulfils the three different strands of autobiography described above.

**Historical elements** are apparent through an elaborate chronology which follows her early childhood in Stoke Newington, the move to Tottenham and finally to Enfield. This coincides with the traditional route out of the city to the suburbs of many Greek Cypriot families in North London.

**Philosophical elements** are apparent through all of her narratives which trace her political and ethical understandings as they grow and develop through analysis of her personal experiences and her work in drama.

Drama also provides examples of her **poetical** working through of experiences. Three major and illuminating works are described on the tape:

- Her first memories as a baby in her cot and her early relationship with her mother have been written up as a play
- In the face of an instance of racism at her drama college she wrote a play which tells of sweatshop workers from different cultural background who work together but do not get on (analysed in Chapter 7)
- In her final year at college she wrote a one-woman piece set in Cyprus in the future in which she articulates the dilemmas and choices facing those who have diverse cultural and linguistic repertoires and are subject to complex political, social and economic forces (See Chapter 5)

I have concentrated on Alikí's story mainly because it was the first and most exploratory of the interviews. In the process my focus shifted from language to broader issues of culture

and identity. One of the reasons for this has been because many of my respondents have lost a great deal of facility in their 'heritage' language. More importantly Alik's story alerted me to levels of complexity of which I previously only had an inkling. It also forced me to examine my methodological tools more closely. There are parts of ethnography and of life history which are useful and productive. I have also found cultural studies an invigorating and exciting field. My work is to make connections between their speculations on the bigger picture, the broad sweep of recent history and how this articulates with the lives of individuals.

My subsequent interviews followed a more structured beginning since I would always ask them to tell me something about their family histories. It has been a productive opening, since it gets to the heart of the matter quickly and painlessly. It also gives them the initiative quickly. Several have said how interesting this process has been. They have never done it before. Asif, in his interview, spontaneously breaks off midway through his narrative to exclaim, "This is quite interesting, actually!" This is praise indeed from Asif, the master of understatement!

### *3.3.7 Conclusion: The role of the Researcher*

Even though I have taken a highly critical view of the academy in this kind of research, I am not at all dismissive of the important role we play in bringing these complex narratives and perspectives to the light of day. We have a great deal of knowledge and experience in unriddling these complexities and contributing to the ongoing dialogues. There are as I see it several preconditions which can help to make our work more exciting and effective.

- firstly we must examine the tools we use critically
- secondly we must be as open and candid with the people who agree to collaborate with us
- we must seek ways of diminishing differences in the power relationship
- we must genuinely seek to work towards practical resolutions of dilemmas unearthed by our research. We must be participants, rather than merely participant observers in a political sense. This demands courage and commitment. We have a responsibility not to let it slip into mere voyeurism or careerism
- we must be aware of the epistemological issues raised by our work and work to more democratic notions of what's worth knowing



As Dorothy Heathcote used to say we must take responsibility in shaping the work in ways which put ourselves at much risk as our collaborators. Such a route is exciting and illuminating. It is play and fun. It is a never ending story. It is being human.

## *Chapter 4: Pure is a Bore: Review of the Literature on Identity*

*...identities are never completed, never finished;...they are always, as  
subjectivity, in process*

*Stuart Hall (1991)*

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### *Introduction: Setting the Context*

Part of the problem in theorising issues of culture in education in the past three or four decades has been the difficulty of finding conceptual frameworks which acknowledge specific heritages, but at the same time avoid the pitfalls of over generalisation. The way educationalists have traditionally framed issues of culture and identity, and how they impact on work in classroom has tended to be based on empirical research.

During the sixties and seventies, this led to oversimplifications of how children operate at home and school (see, for example, the black and white doll test (Asch,1956)). Although the research was intended to counter racist stereotypes, one set of misleading generalisations was often replaced with another set. The main reason for this is that the bulk of research was carried out by behavioral psychologists who were attempting to construct universal paradigms and precise and unambiguous definitions of complex and often contradictory phenomena.

A sense of context or social change is absent from their approach. Such conceptions came from earlier positivistic readings of anthropology and psychology. The concepts of culture and identity were often conceived in fixed and biologically determined ways. (see Rotheram and Finney, 1993). As a consequence much of the research which was conducted during that period seemed to present a mirror image to static conceptions of the openly racist genetic scientists, who sought to justify colonialism, through quasi scientific assertions of the genetic inferiority of the 'other'. In terms of developing an antiracist approach, in educational policy, this has been a necessary, perhaps inevitable, stage. It exposed the poverty of arguments and methodology, of those who, for example, saw IQ as biologically fixed and culturally inflected (Jensen, 1969). It was also necessary to celebrate diversity and question ethnocentric approaches in the field of education.

In the field of educational research there has been little rigour in exploring the related concepts of community, culture and identity themselves, particularly as they impact on the curriculum. This is more surprising since, in other fields such as art, anthropology, sociology, social psychology, literature, history and primarily in the relatively new and still largely untamed area of cultural studies, such considerations have been a central and invigorating force. Far from being viewed as fixed and immutable, community, identity and culture are seen as fluid, multiple, hybrid, syncretic and often contradictory. Many theorists (eg Pieterse and Parekh, 1995) are now recognising that, like globalisation, these are not necessarily new phenomena, but have been part of a shared and common history of conquest and colonialism. The concepts of culture and identity being born out of, and defined by, those very conflicts.

It is apposite that community, culture and identity have been foregrounded in recent decades. From certain perspectives they appear to be under threat, through the massive rifts, fragmentations and realignments are taking place in our social reality. Cultural theorists are in the process of analysing such complexity. However, debates by cultural theorists are generally conducted at fairly high levels of abstraction. What is missing from the research are detailed examinations of how this process is working through the lives of second generation adults.

#### *4.1 Pure is a bore: The Literature of Identity*

In this chapter I will trace the history of the research from the crude accounts of the concept of identity in the early works to the more recent theories which articulate more complex and contextualised viewpoints. However, like all such chronologies, it is messy. One development does not neatly follow another. Therefore I will attempt to isolate the different movements. They can be organised into four broad viewpoints:

- **the rationalist view** which derives from the enlightenment philosophers and posits a bounded subject, with a theoretically unproblematic relationship to his/her culture and community
- **the socially constructed subject**, following the works of Freud, Marx, linguists ( eg Saussure) and the study of anthropology
- **the postmodern view**, which eschews grand narratives of historical progress and sees culture and community as mutable, hybrid and diverse.
- **the social psychologists' view**, which examines the notion of how collective memories are constructed, how predominant narratives gain a purchase on individual's sense of self and, following Vygotsky, it questions the distinction between individual and social identity. Many see it as continuous narrative. Sarbin coined the phrase, 'storied lives'

##### *4.2.1. The Lone Ranger: cherishing individual souls*

Rotheram and Phinney (1987) draw on a wide range of research studies to explore the concept of children's ethnic socialisation. Here, they attempt to define a variety of terms which are used in such debates: ethnicity, ethnic identity, ethnic self identification, ethnic awareness, and ethnic attitudes. The conception of identity, which they espouse is of a self contained individual with a direct and largely uncomplicated relationship to his/her culture.

In attempting a definition they cite Shibutani and Kwan (1965) who define ethnic group as "those who conceive of themselves as alike by virtue of a common ancestry, real or fictitious, and who are so regarded by others." They follow this by suggesting that, "It patterns our thinking, feeling and behaviour in both obvious and subtle ways." The conclusion which they reach is that "(e)thnicity includes group patterns of values, social customs, perceptions, behavioural roles, language usage, and rules of social interactions that group members share."

In contrast, Wagley and Harris (1958) see ethnicity in relation to “minority” groups within the dominant culture and indicate that they are a subordinated group and characterised by traits held in low esteem by the dominant group. This Eurocentric perspective is countered by Phinney and Rotheram, who assert that not only minority groups, but also dominant groups in a country, for example White Americans, are ethnic groups. It is in such statements that we can perceive the mirroring of ideas. Rotheram and Phinney’s (1987:12) conceptions are equally crude and stereotypical and they conclude in a tautological fashion that ‘the term ethnic group is used to apply to any collection of people who call themselves an ethnic group and see themselves as sharing common attributes.’

This view underlines the problematic of the notions of identity. They are premised on the assumption that there is a clear cultural identity, which is in opposition to mainstream culture in consistent and unproblematic ways. Minority and mainstream groups both are depicted as sharing sets of common values and common language systems, based on a common history of struggle. Each hermetically sealed from the other.

In such a framework the way minority and mainstream groups relate to each other are described in similarly unproblematic ways. Generally it is assumed that there are three types of contact (Padilla, 1980): assimilation, acculturation or accommodation and pluralism.

- **assimilation:** This is linked to the idea of a ‘melting pot’, where minority groups values and identities are subsumed into the national majority culture
- **acculturation/accommodation:** This implies reaching some form of equilibrium after contact conflict and adaptation
- **pluralism:** This assumes a valuing and recognition of the various customs, languages and traditions of different cultural groups. They are not seen as being intrinsically superior or inferior

In their own time, these were useful categories for articulating a certain kind of strategic cultural politics. Use was made of such approaches in the formulation of multicultural and antiracist policies. They provided an analytical framework in struggles for social justice. However, they were crude conceptualisations of the social realities. They could not capture the messiness and contradiction of such phenomena as mixed race children, complexity of personal histories or asymmetries of power and wealth both within and between so-called minority and mainstream cultures. Whilst there is little doubt that many subordinate groups do articulate resistance to dominant values and approaches, they do not occur in such neatly defined ways. The danger is that there may be a residue of crude

stereotyping in research which espouses a liberal view. For example Sue and Wagner (1973) have suggested that Asians are a 'model minority' since they have an achievement orientation, which coincides with the values of corporate America.

Phinney and Rotheram (1987) identify several components to ethnic identity:

- **ethnic awareness:** understanding of one's own and other groups
- **ethnic self identification:** the label used for one's own group
- **ethnic attitudes:** feelings about one's own and other groups
- **ethnic behaviours:** behaviour patterns specific to an ethnic group

Again, their arguments and definitions are generally drawn from positivistic research studies which proposes a static conception of self and/or culture. They quote Erikson (1968) who 'outlines identity as an evolving sense of the individual that is expressed differently at each developmental period, but that is rooted in one's culture.' Frances Aboud, who still uses doll test approaches (1987) takes as one of the criteria of ethnic self identification "that one's ethnicity must remain constant, that is, to be both consistent across changes in the context, and to be consistent over time". It is not merely that conclusions from such empirical approaches often attribute children's choices to the researchers preferred interpretations, they are ultimately blunt and crude instruments for investigating a phenomenon which is so dynamic and sensitive.

Such positions are eloquently critiqued by Hall (1991:42)

The old logics of identity are ones with which we are extremely familiar, either philosophically or psychologically. Philosophically, the old logic of identity which many people have critiqued in the form of the old Cartesian subject was often thought in terms of the origin of being itself, the ground of action. Identity is the ground of action. And we have in more recent times a psychological discourse of the self which is very similar: a notion of the continuous, self-sufficient, developmental, unfolding, inner dialectic of selfhood. We are never quite there, but always on our way to it, and when we get there, we will at last know who we are....That logic of identity is, for good or ill, finished. It is at an end in the first instance because of the great decenterings of modern thought.

As Aronowitz (1995:125) notes the positivist/rationalist approaches to identity derive from John Locke in "An Essay Concerning Human Understanding":

...since consciousness always accompanies thinking, and thereby distinguishes himself from all other thinking things, in this alone consists personal identity, i.e. the sameness of a rational being; and as far as this consciousness may be extended backwards to any past action and thought, so far reaches the identity of the person; it is the same self now it was then; and it is by the same self with this present one that now reflects on it; that the action was done

This connects to his view that the mind is a 'tabula rasa' upon which experience writes, making the link between culture and identity a simple one involving memory and experience. We see this view echoed by the empirical researchers whose work is described above. Although such ideas maintain a strong currency in educational circles, they were being challenged from the end of nineteenth century by such thinkers as Marx, Freud and, in the early years of twentieth century, Saussure. In cultural terms the works of Vygotsky, Voloshinov and Bakhtin challenge the notion of the self contained persona at its very core.

#### *4.2.2. Legion live in us: Culture and Identity as Social Constructs*

*Legion live in us  
I think or feel and don't know  
Who is thinking, feeling  
I am merely the place  
Where thinking or feeling is*

*I have more souls than one  
There are more 'I's than myself  
And still I exist  
Indifferent to all  
I silence them: I speak*

Ricardo Reis (Heteronym for Fernando Pessoa)

As Hall (1991) notes Marx unsettled the essentialist notions of identity:

...having lodged either the individual or the collective subject always within historical practices, we as individuals or as groups cannot be, and can never have been, the sole origin or authors of those practices.

This is further unsettled by Freud's investigations into the great continent of the unconscious. His concept of the super ego emphasised the social aspect of the construction of consciousness. This go beyond Locke's notions of Laws which constrain individual action:

those of “God...politic societies...and the law of fashion or private censure.” For Locke the latter was more pressing than the former two. He states that “no man escapes the punishment of their censure and dislike who offends against the fashion and opinion of the company he keeps”, in short “the condemnation of his own club”. Locke’s view mirrors the views of other philosophers of the Enlightenment such as Descartes who proposed, a dichotomy between the individual and society.

Freud produces a more complex theory in which views of significant people and important events are internalised and become important parts of an individual’s psyche in ways that the person is often only dimly aware. William James (1890) views the issue from another perspective which is particularly relevant to the present case studies. It is the question of how individuals in complex societies negotiate different social networks. Since industrialisation people have had to form into groups which are not organic. It is often described as social fragmentation. We often have little or no knowledge of the lives of people we work with and only a superficial understanding of their beliefs or values. Different groups may hold different values. Yet most people manage to belong to various networks and maintain an integrated identity.

Properly speaking, a man has as many social selves as there are individuals who recognise him and carry an image of him in his mind...He generally shows a different side of himself to each of these different groups...from this there results what practically is a division of man into several selves; and this may be a discordant splitting... or it may be a perfectly harmonious division of labour (1890: 295)

It is not merely coincidental that James should choose to use an industrial metaphor to describe the phenomenon. In 1887 the German sociologist Ferdinand Tonnies (1971) analysed the effect upon the construction of individual identities of the rational approach to labour brought on by industrialisation. Comparing pre industrial to post industrial forms of social organisation in Europe, Tonnies made a distinction between two forms of social organisation, which he called *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*.

*Gemeinschaft* refers to the kind of organisation prevalent during the Middle Ages. It consisted of an organic community form of social solidarity, based on the fact that individuals shared a common history and common traditions. *Gesellschaft* on the other hand describes the rational relationships of industrial production, which is reflected in the contractual and instrumental relationships which form the bedrock of corporate society; Western industrial society.

As Scollon and Scollon (1995:136) point out this is a useful framework to analyse the different discourse systems prevalent in the West.



One learns one's community, one's gender, and one's generational place in life processes through processes of socialisation or enculturation; that is one learns to be a member largely through naturally occurring non institutional forms of learning. On the other hand, membership in goal directed discourse systems such as the academic discourse system or a corporate structure comes more often through formal education, training and institutionalised learning.

Since the end of the Middle Ages, Western individuals have had to negotiate a variety of different situations in which they have to build up multiple repertoires of identity, depending on the formality and the cultural framing of the context. To add to this they should also not be seen to be behaving out of character.

Rose (1989) takes this point further in his analysis of profound changes in our psychological understandings of the human subject brought on by the industrialisation of European life in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Although he steers away from any deterministic conspiracy theory, he points out how the need for different types of social organisation affected the expectations of human behaviour and how the rise of the disciplines of psychology, psychiatry and psychoanalysis began to formulate normative expectations of human behaviour.

These practices required for their operation new modes of codifying human individuality; they entailed the invention of devices that enabled human beings to be individualized, and to be differentiated from one other in terms of that individuality. The systemisation of files, records and case histories is contemporaneous with the transformations in the organisation of asylums, prisons, hospitals and schools in the nineteenth century. This routine notation and accumulation of the personal details and histories of large numbers of inmates identifies each individual through the construction of a dossier consisting of those features of his or her life that are accorded pertinence by the institution and its objectives. The individual enters the field of knowledge not through any abstract leap of the philosophical imagination, but through the mundane operation of bureaucratic documentation. (1989: 125)

If both psychologists and philosophers had already unsettled essentialist notions of identity, linguists added a further set of complications. Experience is almost always mediated by symbolic forms. The Seventeenth Century rational view espoused by Locke and the Port Royal Grammarians that there was a direct correlation between language and experience was unsettled by both Humboldt and Saussure. In fact they called into question the existence of an objective reality so beloved of the rationalists. They achieved this by noting that language was already there. That to say something of our selves we must enter a pre existing discourse.

This raises the complex issue of how identity relates to culture and cultural memory. Language is one of the most sensitive indicators of our identity. Goodman (1989) once remarked that, "The way we speak is an emblem of who we are." Both Vygotsky (1978, 1986) and Bakhtin (1981) inform us of the deeply social nature of the process of learning to mean. We internalise the symbolic forms we have learned in social situations and use those signs and symbols to construct our own independent meanings. As Bakhtin (1981) remarks, we do not learn our words from the dictionary, but from other people's mouths, serving other people's intentions. It is from here that the speaker must take the word and make it one's own. Vygotsky (1978) makes a similar point. The symbols we learn in social contexts operate as both tools and sign. Although the signs are socially constructed, they are not immutable. We use them as tools for gaining an understanding of the world. For Vygotsky they are the cornerstone of memory. This in turn is the key element of the perpetuation of the phenomena of culture and identity.

The place of memory, both individual and collective, and how these two aspects relate to each other, in the formation of personal identity has not, as yet, been well researched. Even where it has the role of the emotions in it remains largely unexplored. Rosen (1996: 21) in his paper on Autobiographical Memory revisits the work of Bartlett who:

restored to the study of memory the context in which remembering is done.  
Where and when we remember affects how we remember. From what  
sociocultural location do we speak?

Bartlett's (1932) work involved asking people to retell a quite complex Native American tale. They brought different cultural and individual understandings to the process. That is they were active interpretations. In turn this led him to the view that:

such actual traces of the past become interwoven with reconstructions of  
memory...that memory functions by interpreting the past in order to give it  
meaning. Moreover, that interpretation and meaning, conscious and  
unconscious, emerged from the culture of the person telling the past  
Rosen (1996: 22)

An examination of the process of recreating and reflecting upon their lived experience from their current vantage point, to examine aspects of identity is largely missing from the current research. A point that Rosen (1996: 23) illuminates further when he says:

This is memory structured somewhat like geological strata, each with its  
own characteristics and fractures but collaged together in conscious and  
unconscious manoeuvrings and therefore posing a hermeneutic challenge to  
anyone attempting to dissect and analyse it

The problems of understanding and elucidating the notions of culture and identity are further exacerbated by the fact that they are both moving targets. Not only are they intimately interrelated, they are, also, in a process of constant flux and change. Moreover, it is not only through the symbolic forms that we achieve a sense of belonging, but in the day to day experience of our lived existence which we frame within those symbolic forms. Because it is essentially 'dialogic', it is not a static phenomenon.

As Berger and Luckman (1966:194) point out, identity evolves out of social processes, but it is not wholly determined by them.

If one is mindful of this dialectic one can avoid the misleading notion of 'collective identities' without having recourse to the uniqueness, *sub specie aeternis*, of individual existence

Identity is Janus faced. It not only indicates belonging, it also signals difference. It is not only how I describe myself, it is how others describe me. It is not only how my social group expect me to behave, it is also influenced by wider institutional expectations and constraints. It is not only of the moment and in a continuing stage of development, it also has a history and a continuity beyond the boundaries of my own life. It is not only influenced by the intimate detail of my everyday life, it can be profoundly altered by events that take place far away and beyond my immediate control.

We are born into a pre-existing situation, which is not only where we learn our language and what is allowed and prohibited, what is valued and what is despised, we are born into a site of struggle. Our sense of place is not merely geographical, it is also hierarchical. Our life chances are constrained or privileged by accident of birth. We learn through this not only where we are at, but also where we are from. We learn about the power differential between ourselves and others. How we choose to negotiate these aspects is a key element in the construction of our identity.

Such Marxist views of dialectical materialism have deeply challenged the psychological, philosophical and sociological understandings of issues of culture and identity, particularly in relation to class. Further eruptions came from those most directly involved in the study of the concepts: the anthropologists. As Lavie and Swedenburg point out (1996) early excursions in the field were imbued with the values of the colonial enterprise from which they sprang. Notions of high and low culture permeate the works.

They had divided their world into the world 'Here' and the world 'Out There'...The world Out There was "scientific culture"...It was colourful, but only in shades of dark. This world of tribes was governed by principles of kinship and recitation of genealogies to sustain them. It was a world of orality and tradition.....we were taught rows of books with titles such as

Anderman Islanders, Coming of Age in Samoa, The Lele of Kassai, Bedouin of the Negev. Between the covers we found maps and photographs that fixed culture into a given, well-bounded place.

It is, of course, such a tradition which also informs the work of Eyesenck, Arthur Jensen (1967) and to a slightly lesser extent the work of Phinney. Lavie and Swedenburg trace the historical process of anthropology as a discipline. In their view it never was able to shake off its colonial antecedents. In its development they assert that it developed a pseudo scientific aura in order to garner respectability in the academy. After listing the various 'schools' from evolutionism, functionalism and structuralism to cognitivism, psychoanalysis and hermeneutics, the authors conclude that even the critical approaches of ethnographers enhanced rather than undermined the colonial project.

The scientific allegory served as a textual vehicle to rationalise and legitimate the US-European colonial hegemony of the West over the Rest

This was because of the creation of the non European 'other' who exists in the works as an objectified and racialised subject. The narrator becomes invisible in the cloak of pseudo-science.

This was a process whereby essentialising the relation of a culture to a place positioned it beyond history and time. People were then abused as analytical tools for cross cultural comparison...Thus the various alleged primitives were textually produced as hermetically sealed entities adequate unto themselves and explicable solely in terms of their own dynamics.

These are notions which are examined from a slightly different angle in Geertz' "Works and Lives: The Anthropologist as Author" (1988) in which he views the texts as creative constructions. Through analysis of their methods and their approach to the writing, he reveals the authors to light and in the process unearths their underlying presumptions and values. In this way he is able to unearth, for example, that "[n]ot only does Levi Strauss hope that Rousseau's Social Contract alive and well in deepest Amazon...but he thinks that among the Nambikwara, he has actually and literally done so.." He also identifies in the writing a moralistic text which, "makes Fanon sound positively genial" and, at another level, a symbolist text. Through this process he reveals the dangers of viewing the anthropological writing as natural, unproblematic and objective. Even the work of Levi-Strauss, who had himself fundamentally questioned the colonial project, bears the hallmarks of Western thought through implicit values and preconceptions.

Geertz' work has been seminal in posing a fundamental questioning of the terminology of ethnography. Although 'Local Knowledge' (1983) is, at one level, a comparative ethnography, Geertz uses the papers to explore underlying philosophical issues. The very

structure of exploring such things as art or common sense as 'cultural systems' allows him to consider in depth the problems of cross cultural understandings. He not only recontextualises ideas in complex and interrelated ways, he is also able to point ways out of the cul-de-sacs which seem to appear. In the process he is continually debunking essentialising myths about culture. At the same time he is careful not to ignore the immense variety of ways that human beings get things done. In 'After the Fact' (1995: 23) he makes the following observation which pinpoints the difficulties of writing about culture and identity:

Coming to a country, any country...is an experience palpable enough to be felt on the skin, and penetrant enough to be felt beneath it. The difficulty lies in articulating that experience, making it available to the common view. Impressionism produces an ethnographic telephone book. And thematicism...produces historical opera.

*4.2.3. Identity crisis: Postmodernism: a point in every direction is the same as no point at all*

Throughout the sixties and early seventies, in many fields of Western European academic life, fundamental understandings were being questioned. This was precipitated through the rise of social movements intent on forms of social justice: eg feminism and ecological movements. There were struggles over the form and content of curricula. In the arts and humanities there was a grudging recognition that previously marginalised voices should be included. As Brah (1996) reflects many of these movements were, in retrospect, somewhat naively optimistic in their approach. However this should not diminish recognition of real achievements, notably in feminist thought and writing.

However, the breakdown of the post war liberal consensus in the late 1970s and the rise of multinational companies, coupled with the explosion of highly sophisticated technological inventiveness, provoked a crisis, which is profound. The phenomenon of globalisation has altered the geopolitical arena in fundamental ways. The collapse of directed economies in the former Soviet Union and Eastern bloc, the pervasiveness of market system, the success of the capitalist project in dismantling the institutions which traditionally protected the interests of the poor (at least in Western democracies) and the dynamism of what Giddens (1991) has called 'High modernity' have had profound effects on our notions of identity. As Giddens observes, that the construction of identity is increasingly a 'self reflexive project'. He notes that

The self is not a passive entity, determined by external influences; in forging their self identities, no matter how local their specific contexts of action, individuals contribute to and directly promote social influences that are global in their consequences and implications (1991:2)

He talks of the dynamism and the pervasive nature of capitalism. He also talks about the disembodied mechanisms of the international standardisation of time and space, through mass media and the mechanical clock, which facilitate the notion of interconnected globalism. In such a context, it is no accident that identity has become a preoccupation of academics from many major disciplines. It is quite simply symptomatic of a crisis of identity. As indicated above we can no longer rely upon the apparent certainties of the colonial era to define ourselves. Using the theoretical work of French structuralists and the psychoanalytic theories of Lacan (1981) a more fluid, mobile, hybrid concept emerged. Responding to this changing context in the 1970s a 'new' discipline of cultural studies was formed. It is within this field that some of the most exciting ideas on identity are being generated. However, it is a young discipline and there are many conceptual problems to be faced. Like anthropology before it there are dangers that its findings may unwittingly serve the power structures it seeks to undermine and criticise.

Cultural Studies is in itself a hybrid. The political struggles of the late sixties in the US and Europe had highlighted areas of difficulty, which emphasised cultural differences which could not be dealt with through simple 'melting pot' analogies. People brought different histories and subtly different values and expectations to the struggles. As Avtar Brah (1996) points out, this could have debilitating consequences. Issues of personal history, class and gender lay submerged, but not resolved. It is out of such dilemmas that cultural studies is born. Stuart Hall in his paper, 'Cultural Studies and its Theoretical Legacies' charts the development of an area which 'has multiple discourses; it has a number of different histories...it include(s) many different kinds of work...Although cultural studies as a project is open ended, it can't be simply pluralist in that way.'

Before outlining the main preoccupations of cultural studies it is worth outlining the broader context in Britain, with particular regard to educational issues. In Britain from the 1960s onwards, there was a growing awareness among many teachers about the need to provide support for children's home language and cultures. They took place in the contexts of public battles and debates, which had three main focal points:

- Political battles over immigration and race relations, which were generally framed in a negative light and formed the basis of increasingly draconian policy and Nationality Acts.
- Extensive documentation of racial disadvantage, underachievement and racism often commissioned by official bodies
- Movements in education and Education policy, particularly in relation to language and culture, often supported by Local Education Authorities, who were responsible for education and the curriculum until 1988

Such movements in education and education policy contributed to the development of a more sophisticated consciousness, in relation to multicultural and antiracist education. Moreover they were developed in a hostile political climate where, in Britain, there were moves afoot to implement a conservative and Eurocentric National Curriculum. As I argue elsewhere (Kearney:1996) these values were backed by interlocking legislation and a diversion of funding away from support of children's community languages and home cultures and towards the learning of English language. The effect of these policies has operated on a deep and subtle level. Tomlinson (1997) has pointed out, recent market driven forces, operating under the rationale of extending choice operate against the children of ethnic minority families.

For cultural theorists like Stuart Hall the notions of culture and identity have always involved and included issues of power. Although he had some misgivings about some of Gramsci's notions he recognises his debt to Gramsci in the work of the Centre for Cultural Studies in Birmingham. The idea of the 'organic intellectual' is one which holds sway in cultural studies. Using a variety of disciplines from politics to literary theory, attempts are made to unriddle the complexities of questions of culture and identity in this era of globalisation.

It is worth noting the changing global scenario that provides a backdrop to the rise of cultural studies as an academic discipline. Following on the heels of sixties radicalism in the west was a vigorous response from the New Right, particularly the reformulation of political power structures. This was both manifestly ideological and strategic. In Britain, it became known as Thatcherism, and in Gramscian terms it was a hegemonic struggle, which culminated in the destruction or reduction of the power of major institutions, (eg trade unions and welfare state) to protect the poor from the worst excesses of capitalism (now redescribed as the 'market'). It also was a cultural enterprise. As Hall (1988) indicates, it was a strange amalgam of nineteenth century liberalism and traditional conservatism. It is testimony to Thatcher's skill and energy that she was able to articulate these two somewhat contradictory positions as a coherent philosophy with widespread popular appeal. Its appeal was due to in part to the energy and sense of possibility it seemed to promise.

There was an appeal to individual greed and enterprise. This was welcomed by people who welcomed the wealth such individual endeavour promised. A major contradiction of Thatcher's approach lay in the fact that although there was an appeal to Victorian values in terms of culture and tradition, in the market place it did not matter 'where you were from.' If you had the energy and enterprise, you could succeed.

This era was characterised by enormous social, political and cultural change. This is particularly evident in the changes in the nature and scope of paid employment. These changes have been precipitated by shifts in social, political and economic power. Such

changes have been intensified and sustained by the rapid development of sophisticated and pervasive technologies which are relatively cheap to produce. Borders of countries are now, in certain respects, more porous to the flow of goods and capital. Moreover, we now have only one system of financial process. In such circumstances the nature and purpose of the nation state becomes more ambiguous. This in turn threatens the security of the idea of a national identity. Hence, the very public debates about these issues in relation to the National Curriculum. Moreover, in cosmopolitan centres the sheer variety of personal histories which collide on a daily basis in the school, the workplace or the job centre unsettle easy and self contained notions of community. We are cocooned in media technologies, often controlled by a handful of wealthy individuals and largely based in the US. (Postman:1985, Fitzgerald: 1996, Shiller: 1996. Everard: 2000, Klein: 2000) At present we are only dimly aware of how we relate to each other through the new technologies, or how this process affects us and our social reality as it reflects a highly selective surface of our world back to us. In terms of identity we are only beginning to be aware of the influence of media and the fashion industry in framing important aspects of our daily lives. Giddens (1991:103-108) has pointed to the correlation between the rise of supermarkets and eating disorders such as bulimia and anorexia, which occur predominantly in young women. Klein (2000) examines the insidious intermarriage of media, fashion, big business and popular culture.

Such a context takes the complexity of issues of culture and identity way beyond, the distinctions of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*. In educational terms this has precipitated a hegemonic struggle within the academy itself. The debates around 'the canon' and issues of 'political correctness' are at the heart of the struggle. In her paper 'Multiculturalism and the politics of identity' Joan W Scott (1995) states:

What we are witnessing these days is not simply a set of internal debates about what schools and universities should teach and what students should learn. Journalists and politicians have joined the fray and added a new dimension to it. There is more at stake in their campaign against political correctness than a concern with excessive moralism, affirmative action and freedom of speech in the academy. Rather the entire enterprise has come under attack, and with it the aspect that intellectuals most value and that the humanities most typically represent: a critical, skeptical approach to all that society takes most for granted... We are experiencing another phase of the ongoing Reagan-Bush revolution which, having packed the courts and privatised the economy now seeks to neutralise the space of ideological and cultural non-conformity by discrediting it. This is the context within which debates about political correctness and multiculturalism have taken place. (1995: 3-4)



Although cultural studies has embraced this sense of complexity and many of its adherents, like Hall have approached it from a leftist perspective, it has not as yet articulated any arena of political engagement. In fact one of the greatest achievements of the New Right is that they have obscured the areas of productive political engagement. The mechanisms of the market are not only pervasive, they appear uncontested in more than peripheral ways. This poses a central problem in the question of identity. If the independent nuclear family is the basic unit as was reiterated by the Thatcherite, if the workplace is disappearing as a place of organisation of struggle, then who do we relate to. If as Klein insists shopping malls are privatising what were once public spaces, where is there room for dissenting voices. If the curriculum is driven by content which leaves teachers little autonomy, where is their space for intellectual engagement and debate. How do we articulate not only 'where we are from,' 'where we are at' and relate those understandings to 'where we want to go'

The strength of the postmodern dimension of cultural studies is that it identifies and describes diversity and growth in the current climate. It recognises that the powerful consumerist forces have a deep effect on our notions of identity. Its weakness is that it does little to describe or articulate a counter-hegemonic strategy. As I indicated earlier the postmodern, sometimes breathless, celebration of diversity, whilst being exhilarating can end up in the enemy camp. Its celebration of individual creativity disguises the pain of the current transformations in the lives of individuals. It often avoids uncomfortable issues of values in favour of an empty rhetoric of pluralism. As Harry Nilsson once intoned, 'a point in every direction is the same as no point at all.' It is scarcely different from Fukuyama's 'end of history' arguments. It mistakes defeats in hegemonic struggles for a permanent condition. Klein (2000) helps to explode the postmodern myth which equates the predominance of radical and black urban style as a cultural victory, by revealing that it does little to alter the powerless condition of the majority of black youth in the US and that the production of the fashion items are sustainable only through the most ferocious and wilful exploitation of young women in such places as Indonesia and Mexico.

Sometimes this aspect is recognised by cultural theorists such as Hannerz (1992: 107) when he states:

Because of the great increase in traffic in culture, the large scale transfer of meaning systems and symbolic forms, the world is becoming increasingly one not only in political and economic terms, as in the climactic period of colonialism, but in terms of cultural construction as well: a global ecumene of persistent cultural interaction and exchange. This, however, is no egalitarian global village. What we see now is quite firmly structured as an asymmetry of centre and periphery. With regard to cultural flow, out there is a distant territory, is more a taker than a giver of meaning and meaningful form. Much as we feel called upon to make note of any examples of

a distant territory, is more a taker than a giver of meaning and meaningful form. Much as we feel called upon to make note of any examples of counterflow, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that at least as things stand now, the relationship is lopsided.

Rattansi (1996:15) gives a critical overview of the 'postmodern frame' in which he looks at both its strengths and limitations as a critical structure. He acknowledges that 'there is much bold, innovative theorising..the relevance of which for understanding racialisation and ethnic and national mobilisation is becoming apparent and is clearly in need of greater exploration and development'. He also values 'the greater interdisciplinarity in social sciences and humanities, since it creates 'opportunities which allows old questions to be considered in new ways and points up the manner in which racialisation and ethnic identifications may be taking new forms.' He goes on to summarise the main features of the 'post modern' frame:

1. The postmodern condition as a reflection on the nature and limits of Western modernity
2. 'Modernity' as an analytical category:....especially the constitutive dualities of Western modernity
3. The role of Western modernity's Others, both internal and external, real or imagined, in the formation and continuous reconstruction of Western identities, in particular by processes of marginalisation of others as binary opposites
4. An exploration of the profound impact of new phases and conceptions of globalisation
5. The project of decentring and de-essentialising both 'subjects' and the 'social'
6. Analyses of temporality and spaciality as constitutive features of the social, of subjectivity and of processes of identification
7. A reconsideration of the relationship between the psychic and the social

In common with other commentators he points to a central, 'performative contradiction' in Lyotard's founding text. In eschewing the 'grand narrative' approach to history, he is in effect creating his own meta narrative: postmodernism, itself. Rattansi critiques the postmodernist debate from several perspectives, not least because of the ethnocentrism of their arguments and the contradiction that although, for example Giddens, Baumann, Foucault and Derrida discuss the limitations of Enlightenment rationalism, they continue to use it as an analytical tool. He goes on to raise a number of epistemological issues. He asks:

- is there a contradiction involved in interrogating the nature, foundations and limits of Western modernity while still using some of its own logics and devices?

- to what extent does the questioning of modernity and its characteristic rationalities and epistemological foundations-...of many of the post moderns as defined here collapse into a self-defeating relativism, an 'anything goes' nihilism and 'irrationalism'?
- how strongly can the 'postmodern' frame be specified as a form of theorisation separate from other modes of analysis current in the social sciences and humanities?

In short there are many benefits to the postmodern frame in terms of analysing the profound changes occurring in the conceptualisation of personal and social identities in the face of the relentless onslaught and global reach of contemporary capitalism. The pervasiveness of late capitalist production and distribution of goods, which are symbolically inflected; eg Levi jeans, Coca Cola, designer labels. Their mediation through television, newspapers and advertising. The fact that they connect on an emotional level with our deepest dreams, desires and our sense of self and worth cannot be ignored. (See Klein: 2000)

Secondly postmodern frames help us to understand that notions of culture and identity are not fixed. This allows space for the creation of new cultural forms and expressions. Alongside this is the celebration of diversity, cross cultural invention and the possibilities for change and renewal. There has also been a blurring of genres and a loosening and interpenetration of academic disciplines. In short there is an implicit set of attitudes which are culturally liberal.

However, it is, by its nature, not a coherent philosophy. Although there are common strands and similar areas of interest, there is lack of political strategy. Interesting ideas are generated but fundamental questions are often sidestepped. There are profound political questions to be asked. In terms of identity the notion of hybridity epitomises the contradictions in many ways. Is the notion of hybridity, assimilation by another route? Does it encourage us to ignore the asymmetries of power here? To begin with, hybridity is a curious metaphor for an approach which eschews essentialism. It is a genetic metaphor. The notion is both essential and deterministic. Ironically it implies static and uniform conceptions of culture and identity.

There is a general refusal to problematise issues in political terms. It avoids any critical response to the rational marketplace. It notes responses through cultural invention, but has lost sight of the battleground. It lacks any thoroughgoing political analysis of the role of mass media in the construction of identity. Fitzgerald (1996:112-113) sees this development as precipitating a fundamental change in the way we relate to each other:

Groups whose place was formerly shaped by physical isolation...are no longer segregated from larger social groupings. Aspects of identity that were once

dependent on particular physical places and experiences available to them have been permanently altered by electronic media (Meyrowitz 1986:125) The concepts we use to define ourselves are influenced today by the media as a symbolic place

By not accepting the notion of 'grand narratives', there seems to be a lack of recognition in postmodern theory, that the individualism of the enlightenment, the essential self, remains the dominant narrative, purveyed through film, television and the popular song. Klein (2000) demonstrates that this manipulative aspect is not an unconscious accident, but is central to the thinking of executives in corporate America, some of whom want to sell us Branded Lifestyles. She cites Levitt (1983) (see Klein 2000:116) who argues that 'the world's needs and desires have been irrevocably homogenized...The global corporation operates with resolute constancy-at low relative cost- as if the entire world...were a single entity; it sells the same thing in the same way everywhere...Ancient differences in national tastes or modes of doing business disappear.' Klein also demonstrates how such channels as MTV, set up by American Express and Warner Communications feed into this branded culture. The paradox is that underpinning this homogenisation is that the goods themselves promise choice and a rugged individualism

Goodson (1996:90-98) examines how this celebration of individualism adversely affects news reporting. He demonstrates how individual narratives preclude any discussion of wider cultural issues. Social issues are sidelined by 'human interest' stories which are focused on individuals and designed to leave the viewer with a warm comfortable feeling. Far from being accidental these are very much deliberate decisions in terms of programming. As the prominent news reporter John Simpson (1992) points out in the US news reportage, as other forms of representations of reality, are now in the financial grip of multinationals, with devastating effects. He concludes with the bleak observation that:

Earl and Irma...are still in front of their television sets, serenely unaware of what is happening around them. Decisions which affect their lives are being taken every day in Frankfurt, Tokyo and London, but no one tells them about it. Most of the companies which advertise on television just want them to feel good so, therefore, do the people in charge of providing them with the news. The freest society in the world has achieved the kind of news blackout which totalitarian regimes can only dream about (1992:9)

But such developments are not new in the US. Holstein and Gubrium (2000:5) trace the genesis of this isolated sense of self through the conditions of economic liberalism in the United States during the nineteenth century. It is a curious combination of independent self reliance and extreme conformism where:

Individual agency combined with social feedback yielded a self which could move completely and confidently through the world both reflecting and

responding to changing needs and circumstances...The social self was remarkably versatile...a mutable self was essential for complex and changing times

Here we experience an eerie sense of *deja-vu*. Similar arguments are being put forward today. It is not that people like Stuart Hall, Paul Gilroy or Homi Bhabha do not have a sophisticated political grasp of the issues at hand. In recent years those issues have become fuzzy and unclear at the edges. Forms of dominance and oppression in the New World Order have become more complex and contradictory. This is why the issue of identity has become foregrounded in recent years. Where does the individual locate himself or herself, within the new and rapidly changing alignments of political and economic power? How does that relate to individual or collective histories? For illumination it is worth consulting the social psychologists who are currently exploring these facets.

#### *4.2.4. Storied lives-new moves in social psychology.*

However, things are never so simple. The work of the cultural theorists is not always ahistorical. The structuralists and post structuralists did much to demystify the uses of language in the perpetuation of power. As Barthes writes in the Preface to the 1970 edition of his seminal work, 'Mythologies' (1957,1973: 3)

I had just read Saussure and as a result acquired the conviction that by treating 'collective representations as sign systems, one might hope to go further than the pious show of unmasking them and account in detail for the mystification which transforms petit-bourgeois culture into a universal nature

Much useful work has emanated from this position. Foucault's deconstruction of institutions, which lays bare the process of normalisation and exposes how powerful discourses gain predominance. Feminists like Julia Kristeva, Valerie Walkerdine and Judith Butler have used similar approaches to deconstruct patriarchal oppressions. drawing particularly on the work of Foucault and the psychoanalytic theory of Lacan. Moreover such insights have destabilised essentialist notions of culture and identity seen in the work in the field of cultural studies. Homi Bhabha takes this view further. For him deconstruction implies the possibility of reconstruction.

However, little is written about what that process actually looks like. It is obvious that most academics seek to politically oppose and theoretically challenge patriarchal and racist discourses. Deconstruction has been a powerful tool in helping us understand the constraints in terms of the oppressive social forces which constrain and shape our sense of self. But as Stuart Hall (1996) indicates:

It has never been enough-in Marx, in Althuser, in Foucault- to elaborate a theory of how individuals are summoned into place in discursive structures. It has always, also required an account of how subjects are constituted....

Missing from the much of the research is any systematic analysis of the influence of collective memory, the role of the media and affective aspects of social groupings on identity. Kenneth Gergen (Shotter and Gergen 1989: 70-80) poses the question

How are we to understand the origins of our vocabulary of self understanding and the elaborated discourse into which it is woven?

Taking this as his starting point he examines the problem of how certain discourses become privileged and how this, in turn affects our sense of self. He goes on to propose:

that in important measure the mental world becomes elaborated as various interest groups within a culture seek to warrant and justify their accounts of the world. In effect our vocabulary of self shifts as pragmatic exigencies dictate...given the range of competing constructions, and sufficient stakes in the outcomes, there may be brisk competition over whose voice is honoured. Whose voice prevails in a sea of alternatives may be critical to the fate of the person, relationships, family life, community, and in a significant sense to the future of humankind.

A similar case could be made about the tendencies which in recent decades have come to underpin the ideals of the rational marketplace. Certain warranting discourses have always been predominant in the mass media. They have intensified since the collapse of communism in the Eastern bloc countries. In her paper, "Values in a World in Transition" Maria de Lourdes Pintasiglio (1993) enumerates them as:

- competitiveness, which permeates all spheres of doing
- the centrality of the ego
- a confrontational mode of expression
- having rather than being
- a dilution of the frontier between what is and what appears to be
- the marginalisation of the weak, vulnerable and disorganised as some form of dysfunction in society

She goes on to argue:

Overarching economy and politics, the archetype of the winner shapes aspirations and desires. The spiral of power and visibility, having the winner at the centre, conveys equally with it the marginalisation of the

weak, vulnerable, disorganised. The freedom leading to the struggle towards democracy creates, paradoxically, social zones of dependency or of outcasts. Both mechanisms are driven by the motto of 'always more': more things, more freedom, greater speed. The empire of MORE, of quantity annihilates judgment. In the name of freedom (there) ceases (to be) the evaluation of each new situation and its components.

These underpin the prevalent discourses which inform our present world view. The main source of power in the construction of dominant discourses lies with media institutions. Although they are far from monolithic, they do set certain norms and values, which have a great influence. Media institutions certainly have a role in manipulating desire and manufacturing consent. There is a powerful connection between media and desirable material lifestyles. (see Klein (2000); Herman & Chesney (1997); Miller (1989); Wolf (1999)). They inform attitudes and habits of speech. Gergen (1989) even gives examples of how various schools of philosophy have constructed dominant narratives to safeguard their own position.

The problematic of identity is central to any resolution of these issues. How we orchestrate the competing and conflicting voices, how we find effective and collective ways of resisting the untrammelled wishes and desires of the powerful and how we attain any meaningful way of ensuring social and economic justice are dependant on how we resolve such a set of dilemmas.

What recent work in social psychology has added to our understanding in this debate is the recognition of the central place of self narrative in the process of identity formation. Through its emphasis on memory, there is a recognition of a continuous, yet changing sense of self. In many ways this has been a result of an ongoing debate within psychology concerning the nature of memory. Laura Otis charts this debate in her book 'Organic Memory' (1994), where the argument for genetic memory, which rose rapidly in the 19th Century, has been steadily been losing ground to more social constructions. During the past hundred years the arguments for genetic or race memory have been used to justify the rise of nationalism since the mid nineteenth century. Many social psychologists now argue that our lives only achieve meaning as stories, life histories, self narratives or autobiographies (Holstein and Gubrium (2000); Rosenwald and Ochberg (1992); Sarbin and Schiebe (1983); Freeman (1993); Ezzy (1998); Randall (1995); Linde (1993) Carr: (1986)) and that the 'self is constituted in and through language usage, and more particularly through self narration' (Kerby 1997:125). We do have an active role in the construction of our identity, through the narration of self. However, we need to keep in mind the central paradox in this process as it is illuminated by Suzanne Langer (1952:262):

Virtual life as literature presents it is always a self-contained form, a unit of experience in which every element is organically related to every other, no

matter how capricious and fragmentary these items are made to appear that very caprice and fragmentation is a total effect which requires a perception of the whole history as a fabric of contributive events. Actual experience has no such closed form. It is usually ragged, unaccentuated... But there is a normal and familiar condition which shapes experience into a distinct mode, under which it is apprehended and valued: that is memory...

Memory is the great organiser of consciousness. It simplifies consciousness and composes our perceptions into units of personal knowledge. It is the real maker of history...to remember an event is to experience it again, but not in the same way as the first time...most events are recalled as separate incidents, and can be dated only by being thought of in a causal order in which they are not 'possible' except at certain times.

This is why even conversations focusing on life stories have a defined and coherent narrative shape. Without such shaping and polishing they would be essentially meaningless. David Carr (1986) gives narrative a central place in our shaping of experience in general. Like Hayden White he argues that we don't experience reality as 'a mere sequence without beginning or end'. That the whole process is a quest for meaning:

..what stories and histories represent is not purely physical events but human experiences, actions and sufferings, including the human activity of projecting meanings onto or finding meanings in physical and other events  
(Carr: 1986:19-20)

This chimes in with Barbara Hardy's famous assertion that 'narrative is a primary act of mind'; a primary way of organising experience. I wish to argue that such narrative shaping is culturally learned (cf Neisser:1982) and is not, as a strong reading of Barbara Hardy would suggest, a natural, biological impulse. I argue this aspect more fully in Chapters 7 and 8.

The approach of the social psychologists is much closer to Bakhtin's (1981) dynamic, organic and elaborated view of the interrelationship between language and individual consciousness. Bakhtin throughout his work emphasises the social nature of consciousness. His work is a response to the structuralists and formalists, whose work deeply influences post structuralist and postmodernist ways of thinking. It is a more sophisticated and less mechanistic view than Saussure's, the founder of structuralism.

This is why I have based my own analyses of the life stories (in Chapter 7) on a framework which is based upon Bakhtin's view that individual consciousness results from the interplay of three elements or perspectives:



1. **Others for self:** How we are influenced by other people or dominant narratives
2. **Self for others:** How we present ourselves to the the world. Our social persona
3. **Self for self:** How we view ourselves from the inside

One of the main strengths of using such a framework to analyse the narratives is that it makes the process of integrating the competing forces and of identity construction clear. If memory is mainly rendered, maintained and reworked through culturally learned narratives as some researchers argue (Schank and Abelson: 1995; Barsalou: 1988; Barclay: 1986, 1996; Barclay and Smith: 1992; Gergen and Gergen: 1988) then the framework described above has the potential to make the process visible since it reveals the relationship between the social and the individual in their narratives. In fact it is premised on the understanding that the narratives are a product of complex inner dialogues where the different, often conflicting discourses, are orchestrated into a coherent sense of self. As Rubin reports:

The narrative structure of autobiographical memory appears indistinguishable from the narrative structure of other social communication, and the recall of autobiographical memories is usually a social act (Hirst & Manier: 1996) that can define a social group (Bruner & Feldman: 1996)...An especially interesting social situation is that of parents teaching their children narrative conventions used in telling and therefore having autobiographical memories... For example Fivush et al 1996) observed longitudinal changes in parent child recall of unique family events such as trips taken during vacations. The style the parents used to draw out the children's autobiographical memories when the children were three and a half

Such research confirms Bakhtin's assertion that 'I realise myself initially through others; from them I receive words, forms, tonalities for the formation of my initial idea of myself.' It is interesting to note that in Rubin's (1999) review of recent research studies on the biological and physiological dimensions of memory, including studies of the brain remain, at best, inconclusive.

### *Conclusion*

In summary the debate concerning the self rages in many academic areas, each with a different approach. In this chapter I have tried to isolate and analyse four main approaches, which affect our work as teachers.

- **The enlightenment concept** of a self contained individual acknowledged that we experience reality in a unique body which has a certain degree of continuity. This released people from the notion of a natural order of things. It undermined the oppressive nature of the philosophy Great Chain of Being (ie that we occupy a preordained position in the world) with its deeply hierarchical and entrenched view of power. What it didn't account for was the social nature of identity
- **The social models of identity** attempted to address the problems of the nature of identity and in many cases overestimated the social nature of identity. The more negative forces worked against a recognition of the individual's ethical responsibility for their own actions or their part in the construction of their own identity
- **Postmodernist models of identity:** This creative notion has been taken up by the postmodernists who have posited a creative and constantly changing view of self as we repond to rapid social and technological changes. However, they underestimate the force of cultural memory and the need for a coherent and continuous self
- **Social psychologists** have posited theories of 'storied' identities by which we make sense of our past life and the present by constantly updating our narratives to produce coherent narratives of self.

This current thesis takes aspects from all four viewpoints and tries to unriddle the enigma of self through an empirical investigation of the life histories of six individuals who are negotiating complex social identities. Most current empirical research concentrates on single groups and often looks at youth culture, much has been written about rap and dance music. Very little work has been done with second generation settlers. Moreover, what is missing from the research is any systematic cross cultural study which seeks to analyse how these complex constructions of identity are achieved in second generation settlers, who have reached adulthood and have integrated the various competing forces acting upon them in a way which is rare in adolescents. In Part Two I shall put some flesh on the bones by analysing the life stories of people who are experiencing this process at first hand.

## *Part Two: Orchestrating Contradiction: The Research Project*

### *Introduction to the Research Project*

*Every age in the history of philosophy has its own preoccupation. Its problems are peculiar to it, not for the obvious practical reasons-political or social- but for deeper reasons of intellectual growth*

*Suzanne Langer:Philosophy in a New Key*

*All my work, my life, everything is about survival. All my work is meant to say, 'You may encounter many defeats but you must not be defeated.' In fact the encountering may be the very experience which creates the vitality and the power to endure*

*Maya Angelou*

Before beginning to analyse the stories I wish to set out the broader contexts of the work. To unriddle the stories it is necessary to set them clearly in contexts ranging from the local to the global. In the next three chapters I intend to examine the stories from different perspectives. As I have already argued, the concept of identity has undergone many changes in a host of different disciplines over the past three centuries. At present it has come to the forefront of thinking in the West. A possible explanation of this is the fear of erasure. We quite often focus upon things which are in danger of disappearing in order to preserve their memory. Susan Sontag (1976) has argued that this has been a primary

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function of photography. Certainly, over the past few decades the problem of identity has become central to our intellectual and social life. In my view, this has been precipitated by the enormous social and technological changes since the middle of the last century. On one hand we have witnessed the pervasive reach of global capitalist economics, which have transformed working practices and marginalised dissent in profound ways. On the other hand there has been the strengthening in some areas of nationalism and religious fundamentalism, rising to counteract the fear of erasure of traditional cultures and identities. Moreover, there has been a cultural questioning of traditional values in most societies. Most people now have to manage several, sometimes deeply conflicting, identities, belonging as they do to many different networks each with its own unwritten rules, language forms and subtle etiquettes.

To complicate matters further, networks are not equal in terms of power. Moreover there are often great power differentials and consequent struggles within networks. For example, within all groupings there will be battles revolving around questions of ethnicity, class, gender and disability. Moreover, the so called 'host community' also belongs to a range of professions, factions, clubs, cliques, and networks. Likewise they represent a spectrum of political viewpoints, identities, etiquettes, interests, habits, preferences and attitudes. They read the mass media in a multiplicity of ways and bring individual and collective memories to the process. Although there has been a great deal of immensely valuable work done in this area particularly in the fields of ethnography and cultural studies there are, at present, few studies which look at the issue of identity construction in an empirical and systematic way.

For the past five years I have been engaged in this research examining the life histories of 6 bilingual people who have been brought up and educated in the UK. They have all achieved academic success, having gained at least a first degree from a British university. They belong to a variety of cultural heritages. Initially I had hoped to find the key in the types of education they themselves had received and how teachers had connected with their home cultures and identities. However, this was not the case. However, I discovered patterns and congruities in their experiences. More importantly their stories showed to me that, far from being a negative experience, they had grown and gained through conflictual experiences. Often working through painful struggles to reach a kind of temporary equilibrium. Sometimes you hear them doing this spontaneously in the taped dialogues where they explicitly weigh the relative importance of their various memories.

To trace this process of self expression and self creation I employed three frameworks or layers of analysis.

*The First Layer (Chapter 6): The content of the narratives:* the stories are studied for 'patterns which connect.' Common factors in the narrative which contribute to their constructions of Identity are analysed thematically and exemplified by quotation from the interviews

*The Second Layer (Chapter 7): How identities are structured in the narratives:* An analysis of how they recount the formation of their current conception of their own identity. The second layer is explored through a framework which was devised by Bakhtin for analysing character development in the novel. He sees this development as a triad of motivations and influences which he identifies as others for self, self for others and self for self. He uses the triad to explain the complex interrelationship between the individual and social aspects of the process of identity formation. It is a complex, interrelated and dynamic model which I shall describe in more detail later. The framework has enabled me to look more closely at how their identities have developed. It has also allowed me to observe how, through their narratives, they gave shape to their lives. In short it allowed me to examine more closely how the participants' complex syncretism is achieved. It provides a window into the mechanism for orchestrating the voices of inner speech as they reinvent and rewrite themselves. In Chapter 7 I analyse the narratives and present my findings.

Whilst examining their stories in this way, I have been struck by several things. Firstly, although the conversations were not formally structured most of the participants generally stuck to a chronological pattern. Flashbacks were often initiated by me when I wished to return to a previous story to clarify some detail or deal with an apparent contradiction. The second thing I noticed was that there were similarities in patterns in relation to Bakhtin's triad, for instance that stories of their early life tended to fall predominantly into the others for self and self for others categories ie those describing external influences. Very few items were included in the self for self category at the early stages. Where this occurred it was usually a metanarrative a comment offered with the benefit of hindsight. I shall explore these findings more fully in the Chapter 7.

*The third layer: Narrative style and the question of voice.* Often there were remarkable congruities between their experiences and reflections. Where they differed most was in the way of telling. The more I listened the more there seemed to be a consistent narrative style ie that each individual used consistent rhetorical devices. This observation led me to question whether there was an internal coherence about this, perhaps some linguistically visible notion of 'voice'. This, in turn led me to a second analytical framework, which I found in Hymes (1996). He had borrowed it from Tedlock (1972) and Gee (1989, 1991, 1992, 1996). To analyse oral stories they transcribed them using stanza form, an idea originally used by Labov. Using this approach it is easier to observe the way the narratives are patterned and to make some demonstrable judgements or hypotheses about that slippery concept, voice. I explore this aspect at length in Chapter 7.

However these analyses need to be placed in the context of the people's lived experience and the conduct of the research. The first part of this chapter describes the conduct of the research and teases out the issues and dilemmas in my approach, and relates the approach to the methodological issues raised in Chapter 4. In the second part I give an introduction to the six people. I do this to retain a sense of each person's narrative as an integrated, continuous and relatively coherent whole, before embarking on an examination of the patterns, the similarities and discontinuities of how they construct their identities through the narratives and the

rhetorical devices they employ to achieve this.

### *The conduct of the research*

As I pointed out earlier, one of the problems in analysing life histories is to maintain a sense of coherence and continuity, thus avoiding the fragmentation which often comes whilst analysing patterns. In fact, the whole thesis needs to be seen as providing that context.

This must include:

- a broad overview of the global and local context to the research in historical, social and cultural terms
- my own standpoint as a researcher
- my research questions ie how the research is focused
- an examination of my methodological tools and the conduct of the research
- the global perspectives and an historical view of the existing research on the analysis of the self in a variety of different disciplines
- an introduction and biographical background to each of the participants, tracing emerging patterns, both individual and general
- an analysis of the themes raised in the narratives to point out similarities and subtle difference
- an analysis of the narratives to identify a pattern in terms of self creation using Bakhtin's triad: others for self, self for others and self for self
- a further analysis of individual participants' narrative styles focusing on individual stories, based on the work of Labov, Gee and Hymes in an attempt to discover which aspects of cultural traditions persist through narratives and narrative styles
- an examination of the implications for educational institutions

In my analysis I shall start with the participants' own stories, but first I need to describe the progress of the research: how the stories were gathered transcribed and analysed. As I explained in Chapter 3, I believe that such analyses are not a quest for universal truths. The very nature of narrative would preclude such grandiose ambitions. It is worth reiterating Kohler's (1993: 64) criteria for assessing the quality of narrative analysis, which were more fully discussed in chapter 3

- persuasiveness: is it reasonable and convincing
- correspondance: can it be verified by the people researched
- coherence: is there a believable sense of continuity to the accounts
- pragmatic use: would we be able to act upon the information

In such research I argue that it is imperative for the researcher to be very clear and candid about their own approach and the conduct of the gathering of narratives and the part they played in the construction of the stories and the methods of analysis.

However, although I followed the spirit of Francis' (1993) approach (See Chapter 3) I adapted it slightly since I did have particular questions and aspects I wished to explore. In preparation I sent a list of questions to the participants, because I wished to be as candid and open as possible about my intentions, whilst not wishing to exclude interesting things they wished to develop. By the second interview I had realised that a fruitful approach was to ask them about their parents' lives leading to them settling in Britain. This may have been partly accounted for by the chronological approach they took.

The sessions were taped and lasted between about 40 minutes to two hours. The actual length of the sessions was dictated by time available or in one case faulty recording equipment. Most took place in the participants place of work. A neutral territory. This was more by accident than design. One took place in a participant's home and one in my study at the university. In the event these different venues do not appear to have influenced the outcome, since all give very fluent accounts of themselves. The full tapes were returned very soon after the sessions to allow them to check for accuracy and exercise some editorial control. The tapes were transcribed and analysed in ways which I describe in Chapters 5-7.



## *Chapter 5: Growing through Contradiction: The Life Stories*

*There is a long tradition in Jewish literature...of bearing witness through telling stories...In this way, history is preserved as personal history; history is given shape and meaning through the interpretation of individual lives. And just as history is made up of personal histories so too are personal identities formed in relation to a larger ethical and cultural context*

*Victoria Aarons (1996:60)*

### *Introduction*

What follows is an examination of six narratives on issues of identity and schooling. As I intimated earlier their stories demonstrate very diverse attitudes and approaches to negotiating various social networks. However, before I begin the three layers of analysis (Chapters 6-8), I need to introduce the people individually. In this I am following advice from Miller and Glasner (1997:99-111), who point to the danger representing individuals as 'subjects' who become mere 'data', where their individual identities suffer a severe dismemberment, emerging only as theoretical patterns. This is something I wish to avoid. I wish to remain true to the spirit of their narratives and present them as the complex

individuals they are. Therefore, I will discuss each separately, before considering continuities and discontinuities in their individual reminiscences and reflections. In this chapter, they appear in the order in which I interviewed them. Where I have to refer to them rather impersonally and collectively I shall call them individuals. However, I am not even completely comfortable with this epithet. It seems preferable to 'participants' or 'subjects'. They are warm, human beings who are diminished by such abstraction.

### *5.1. Aiki-Ending a period of self-doubt*

Aiki is in her late twenties and was brought up in Hackney. She is currently head of a drama department in a Secondary school. Her family are from a small village in Cyprus. Although her family are Greek Cypriot, by descent, their village was occupied by Turkish troops after the invasion. During this time in Britain her father has worked mainly in the catering trade. In later years, as the family prospered, they moved several times and her parents now live in Enfield. She grew up in a street where many of her neighbours were from the same village in Cyprus. Although her family did not seem to have strong ties with their original community, her stories indicate how they followed the everyday habits of the community and participated in larger cultural events.

Her narratives are punctuated with deep ambivalences towards Greek Cypriot culture, in general. Early in life she felt a sense of difference from the culture of white, middle class, English people. This emerged at the start of our conversation when I asked her to recall her earliest memories of her own culture:

A: I think a wedding...weddings. I really hated weddings.

C: Why?

A: There were so many Greek people and I found them so different to people at school and I used to feel embarrassed about that. About the fact that, you know, I was part of these people in this hall. And you know why couldn't we be out in a tent in the garden like English people.

C: ...what was the source of that embarrassment?

A: Because I wasn't English. I wasn't like my friends. I didn't talk like them. I didn't have the same ...I think at the time I probably categorised it as, 'I'm not posh.' But when I look back now it's, 'I'm not that culture.'

C: ....was it school that reinforced that?

A: I think so yeah, yeah...school and television. Particularly with television, which may be why I was into drama and film and theatre. The fact that the images on television were not related to, you know, the images around me, in my home with

my family. And if you think that television is the be all and end all of how a child might see it, I probably thought, you know, at the time, 'How come we're not on the television?' ...and whenever we were, we were funny..... I used to think...oh...'This is unfair... I'd rather be English so that I could be on television, and if I was English, I would be on television.' And I think that translates into school, because I thought that, 'Well, none of my family are academic. None of my family have proper jobs. They either work from home on a sewing machine or they drive an ice cream van,' as my dad did....

This reminiscence illustrates the complex forces operating on her as a small child. It is complicated by the dimension of social class. Her parents are engaged in working class occupations. However, also contained within this reflection are the seeds to her future ambitions, the key to her motivations to succeed at school. In a later part of the interview she talks of a significant moment from her infant school when a teacher showed the picture of a performer on an overhead projector screen and she said she wanted to be the person on the screen. She also talks of her desire to become famous through her acting, a dream she pursued until shortly before she decided to become a teacher.

These anecdotes illustrate some of the misunderstandings she had at the time. Some of these misunderstandings involve aspects of English culture. She was under the impression that all English wedding receptions were held in a marquee. The reality is that most would be held in halls, the same as the Greek ones she despised. The other misconception she refers to at several points in her narratives is that she thought that English people had their meals at set times. This led to a deeper misconception, which demonstrates how little children understand of each others culture at school. One of her greatest friends at school was called Kula. However, later in her life she was shocked to learn that Kula was Greek, and that her family came from the same village as her own parents.

A: This is really funny, but I didn't realise that they were Greek. ...I used to go around her house and her parents used to speak Greek and I didn't realise they were Greek..

C: *How was that then?*

A: I don't know....they were different to us. They had their meals at set times, which is what I thought English people used to do...I thought they were English or another country... But I never knew they were Greek until I heard my mum talking about her mum. And I asked her, "Do you know her then?" and she said, "Of course! She's a fellow villager"

At the start of the interview, she demonstrated how other factors have become entangled with her own sense of identity. I asked her to think back to her first memory. After a pause lasting twenty seconds, she says:

I think..er..I know what's happening here because, I'm thinking, "Is that because of my sister? Because you know I've got a sister who has cerebral palsy and this is something I think I'm still trying to work out in my own head, years and years later. When I think of my behaviour or how I was as a child, I either put it in terms of culture..that I was because I thought of *that* culture and didn't feel that I fitted into *that* (meaning the other (ie English) culture. Or ...that we felt..er..I felt uncomfortable about not being part of a normal family unit, because I had a sister who could not walk so we didn't do the normal family things. ... in terms of, language and ability and confidence and self image. I think that some of it relates to my sister and some of it relates exclusively to my culture, but it's just trying to identify exactly which ones do...

This passage reveals how complex the issues of individual identity are. There are dimensions of social class and an awareness of how many people had negative views of disability. It also illustrates the strong normalising effect of the media.

Later she talked of more subtle manifestations of racism. This is not just a matter of ignorant habitual racism encountered on the street or in the school playground, but also by liberal white people she had encountered at college. She describes a project at college where students on her Community Drama degree course were left to organise themselves into groups and devise their own project. At the end of a week all the white students had organised them into groups, leaving most of the non-white students without a group. When Aliko brought this to the group's attention one student remarked that they could form a group of their own. To which she replied, "Just because we were from ethnic groups doesn't mean to say we get on". They took the matter to the tutor, who apologised but suggested that they make the best of it. Aliko's solution was to write a play about sweatshop workers from different cultural background who did not get on.

The interesting point about her work in drama is that she uses her creative work to explore complex issues of identity and particularly her ambivalences towards her home culture. In her final year at college, Aliko wrote a one woman play in which she deals explicitly with such dilemmas. They appear to mirror her internal conflicts. This is how she relates it:

It's set in the future, in Cyprus. And the future is...that they've taken away the buffer zone, the green line, the separation line between north and south, between Turks and Greeks. They've taken that away and they've said to the whole country, "Do what you want!". And the woman...this is the night before she has to go back to her village. Not (the one) she grew up in, because she was only a small child... She was seven when she left. Now she's in the south, with her uncle in the south, because her parents.... Her mother died and her father just disappeared.

And it's the night before [she is due to leave]. And the thing about Greeks is, that every single one of them will say, (even the little kids, will say) "Yeah...One day

we'll go back to our land," And this girl has grown up with that, from her uncle... And she's packing and, as she's packing, she's packing the things she's brought down with her from her own village, like her mother's apron. And she's remembering things about her parents. And as she's doing that she's kind of, like, realising... Because, it's twenty years later, and she's grown up and she's established herself down in the south. She's kind of thinking, "Well? Do I really want to go back? And if I do go back, what will be there for me? *That's* old. *That's* past ...*That* was when I was a child. But I'm a woman *now*. And my parents are dead, (or they're not there any more). And if I *do* go back, what will there be there for me? The Turks have left the area more or less derelict, so I'm going to have to start again, and do I want to start again?"

She, also, has a relationship, at the time, with a British soldier. And they don't actually speak a language together. She doesn't understand English and he doesn't understand Greek. So their whole relationship revolves around: "Yes" "No" "Yes" "No". Which is quite quirky! But they, somehow, manage to realise that they love each other. They understand *those* words. And the night that she leaves to go back to her village, (because it is always assumed that she will go back, one day), he says to her, "Let me take you to England."

So, it's either a choice between going back to her village, where her ghosts [are], (and, that is past; that is history), or going with this Englishman to another country, which is foreign to her, that is alien to her, but she still loves him....Does she love him? Or is it just a fantasy, a dream of being something else?... Or does she stay put, where she is; where she's grown up? [With] things that she knows; things she identifies with?

She chooses to stay

I quote this at length because it illustrates with great clarity the internal dilemmas faced by many second generation settlers and explains why many take what she describes as the negative choice. She is forced to decide between a difficult situation which she knows; a romantic fresh start in an unknown place and culture or a return to a mythologised homeland. She chooses to stay. When Aliko commented that it was a negative choice, I asked her to elaborate. She reiterated the point that all Greeks even young children say that they will return. Her decision separates her from this popular view.

Throughout our conversation, she expresses her distaste for the behaviour of Greek men with regard to women. She is determined never to marry a Greek man. When I asked whether this is an extreme form of stereotyping, she replies that perhaps there may be Greek men who do not behave in sexist ways, but she has yet to be proven wrong. Although she now feels more comfortable and confident, having established her independence, the cultural concerns of marrying a Greek man still bother her. It is this point where her conflict with her own heritage comes into sharpest relief. She cannot return to a state of acceptance, even if she wished. It illustrates the dangers of the idea of a mythologised homeland. Speaking as it

does to a utopian condition there is a danger that it can be used as a way of silencing voices for change within communities, by representing dissent as a threat to the community. On one level this is understandable. In the face of the onslaught of the mass media, identities outside the mainstream are in a vulnerable position. While this is the case, the dilemmas for people like Aliko remain. How are they to reconcile the aspects of their identity, when there are conflicts of value on fundamental levels?

When we spoke, Aliko was moving out of a long period of uncertainty and appeared to have reached a sense of equilibrium between 'where she was from' and 'where she was at'. She wanted to learn to speak Greek to properly communicate with her mother who speaks very little English. Moreover she expressed a desire to work in Cyprus for some time. She was proud of many aspects of her heritage and was at ease with those aspects of her personality and her social behaviour by which others would identify her as Greek Cypriot. Yet she was challenging some of the oppressive features of that tradition. In this she is similar to Nandine, who had a radically different relationship with her family and community as a child.

### *5.2. Nandine - At crisis point*

Nandine is thirty, and works in North London as a primary school teacher. Her parents are from Sylhet, the furthest, north easterly point in Bangladesh, where many British Bangladeshi's families originally emigrated from. The irony is that it is the part of the country which is furthest from the sea. Although this migration started with seamen in the 1920s, it accelerated in the 1950s and 1960s, when there was a need for labour in Britain. In her M.A. dissertation, Nandine studied the history of migration from the region.

Following a conventional pattern, Nandine's father came to Britain first. Although he had been a teacher in Sylhet, he secured a clerical position in the Pakistani high commission. At that time her father owned several properties in the Mile End area. After a period of time her father returned home and married. He was thirty and Nandine's mother was sixteen. It was a traditional, arranged marriage. A year later Nandine was born in East London. Nandine mentioned that her father had difficulty in finding work, so for a while he worked as a bus conductor. In her early years, her family lived in Newham. Later, as the family prospered they moved to Gants Hill in Essex, an affluent suburb of London.

Her upbringing was, in many ways, conventional for a fairly well heeled Bangladeshi family. Her parents wanted their children to succeed at school and were very supportive in this direction. Contrary to a common misconception about Asian girls, her parents were always supportive of her education. However there are contradictions here, since as the eldest daughter, Nandine always played a very strong nurturing role within her family. Despite this, in the later years of her schooling she was released from many of her household duties to allow time for her studies. She attended the local primary school and later the comprehensive school. As the family's fortunes improved her brother was sent to private

school and on their move to Gants Hill she was sent to a Roman Catholic girls' school to complete her sixth form education.

The dimension, which her story adds to this complexity, is that of social class. While Aliko could recognise that "she was not posh", Nandine's family had middle class values and her life has little in common with academically successful Bangladeshi's, from lower income families, who told their stories to John Eade (1995) and who lived in the Spitalfields area. It was not until she attended college that she was really aware of the living conditions of the Bangladeshi community in Spitalfields. She knew less about the effect of the class based constraints to their hopes of academic achievement. In her interview, she says that her family knew of them, but thought of them "as a bit of a lost cause."

At this stage there was no conflict between the values of home and school. She was an avid reader, who had a flair for languages. By the age of eight she was a "free reader". In English schools this meant that she had finished all of the reading scheme books (primers) and was deemed to be an independent reader. Her parents encouraged her achievement at school. Contrary to the stereotyped view, many Asian girls are encouraged at school. Although in common with many of John Eade's informants (1995) Nandine expresses this negatively. She was not obstructed and later she was released from some of the duties which would have been expected of her as the eldest daughter. Nevertheless, in many other sections she speaks of her passive and dutiful behaviour. It is also interesting to note that as the family prospered, it was her brother who was sent to private school, which her family perceived as guaranteeing a better education. At school, like Aliko, she had support from her peer group, which consisted of Asian girls from several different cultural and religious backgrounds. At the earlier stages there was no conflict between home and school since, as she says she had not begun to formally learn about the Qur'an. Her parents wished for her to achieve and she was a willing and enthusiastic student. One anecdote is testimony of this when she has to choose to reject one set of friends.

I wanted to do well at school and I was called 'a walking dictionary' and a snob because I wanted to separate myself from a lot ...In the second year of secondary school I changed my friendship group because the girls I was hanging around with started smoking and I just wasn't interested and I just changed groups and became part of another group who were more serious about their work.

I suppose I wasn't a rebel in the sense that the other girls were and I had that very much drummed into my head that I was at school to learn and not to muck about and I enjoyed work you know and I enjoyed learning.

Throughout the taped conversation she talks warmly about most teachers, but at no stage does she talk of any who acknowledged her cultural heritage. Her reading material at school is predominantly Eurocentric. Her decision to take English is because teachers praised her written work. She attended a local comprehensive secondary school. In the sixth form she transferred to a Roman Catholic all girls secondary school. It was only at this stage that she

had difficulties with her school work and the family employed a private tutor.

But schooling and education do not occur in a vacuum. Inevitably conflicts of values arose. Whilst education can be viewed as a commodity and a passport to material advantage, as recent governmental initiatives have emphasised in Britain, Western education is imbued with liberal and individualistic values, which tend to conflict with hierarchical and collective values which often feature strongly in families from non European backgrounds. In their book, "Intercultural Communication"(1995), Ron and Suzanne Scollon analyse such distinctions in relation to the Chinese communities from Hong Kong. Following the work of the German sociologist Ferdinand Tonnies, they use the terms *Gemeinschaft* (community) and *Gesellschaft* (society) to explain such cultural distinctions.

Tonnies (Scollon and Scollon:1995) argued that the problems of modern industrial society had arisen, because of a split with the traditional, community based social organisation (*Gemeinschaft*) of the Middle ages based on a common history and common traditions. This he contrasted with the corporate organisation (*Gesellschaft*) of modern industrial society where relationships are more contractual, rational or instrumental. Using this as a point of departure, they make the observation that businesses in Hong Kong and Taiwan are run more along the lines of *Gemeinschaft*, being family owned and controlled. Although they see this as a useful distinction to make and perhaps helps us to understand issues of identity relating to community, generation and gender, they add a word of warning:

No modern culture or discourse system, of course, is purely organised as *Gemeinschaft* or *Gesellschaft* alone. In any social structure we will see a mixture of elements of both forms of organisation. What is important in understanding intercultural communication is to understand in which contexts one of these forms is preferred over the other. (Scollon and Scollon: 1995: 137)

They are useful distinctions to make in the case of Aliko and Nandine whose parents came from predominantly rural backgrounds. In the present study there is, however, a further dimension: how the two forms of thinking and sets of values interact and how they manifest themselves in often painful decision making. This could be seen in Aliko's case where many values of her 'community' were challenged. This could also be applied to Nandine. Certainly, as she tells it, her role within the family as eldest daughter was clearly defined and she states that she was a dutiful daughter, who fulfilled her communal obligations fully and entered into an arranged marriage, which is a strong tradition within the Bangladeshi Muslim community. However, her marriage broke down and after the break up the family offered a great deal of support. She returned to the family home.

She continued her formal studies completing a BA in Education (a standard teaching qualification in Britain) and a Master's degree, in which she studied the history of Bangladeshi settlement in Britain. However, conflicts were appearing between her own aspirations and desire for independence and the demands of family life and the traditions of the community. Through her education she had begun to question certain aspects of her own



tradition, particularly the business of the arranged marriage. This is a growing phenomenon in several cultures. In her book of short stories entitled 'Arranged Marriage', Chitra Bannerjee Divakaruni (1997) illustrates the complexity of such issues in the context of the United States. She herself runs a helpline for women of South East Asian origin. Similar dilemmas are reported from women from other cultures, such as Greek and Turkish Cypriot. It is here that the tension between the demands of the family and community on the one hand and the freedom of the individual are brought into sharpest relief.

In Nandine's case, the decision to stick her ground has been particularly painful. She has formed a relationship with a man of Irish descent and has been rejected by her whole family. They feel that she has discredited the family in the eyes of the community. It is particularly painful as she had formerly had an extremely close relationship with her mother.

However although she has broken with her own cultural background in dramatic ways, she feels that people who have gone into commerce and law are much more in danger of losing their heritage culture, because they enter into English middle class culture in unreflective ways. Although she has experienced her dissent in personally painful ways, her identity is still strongly grounded in her Bangladeshi Muslim origins. She has always maintained a fluency in Bengali and has immense knowledge of Bengali culture and history. The school she teaches in has a large Bangladeshi community who come from a predominantly poor socioeconomic background. She sees herself as a role model for the children.

As with Alik, her conflict with her community revolves mainly around what she perceives as gender issues and differences in generational attitudes. At one point she states that the Bangladeshi community needs a liberalising set of changes like Western societies experienced in the 1960s. As the next portrait shows, in many ways this more liberal approach is often easier for the men within the communities.

### *5.3. Asif: a fluid, self assured approach to identity*

Asif is twenty nine and has just left his teaching post in an inner urban secondary school, where he used to teach media studies. He has a Master's degree in this subject. When I interviewed him he was working in a Secure Unit, dealing with young people who have broken the law. In contrast to Alik and Naima, his parents come from different cultural backgrounds. His mother was a midwife from Delhi who, in 1948, after Partition did the 'long walk' across to Pakistan, ending up in Karachi. His father was from the Punjab. He was a pharmacist. They met while working in the same hospital. His father came to Britain first in 1963 and his mother followed three years later. Asif was born in 1968.

His father could not get a job as a pharmacist so he got a job digging 'footings' (tunnels for the pipes) for the Water Board. Within five or six years he was in charge of the site, which comprised sixty workers. In this capacity he experienced a great deal of racism. As Asif states,

Not the best time in Britain, to be doing that. You've got the 'Keep Britain White' campaign...Enoch Powell in '68..The ethnic-racial context is quite tricky at that point. It's the first time you're really seeing Commonwealth Immigrants in a position of power as he was then. With quite a heavy duty lot of people. These weren't middle class people..or liberals.

His job was to check their work. Often lodged within the pipes were little messages containing racist abuse. Later the men went on strike, complaining about his work. The Water Board promoted him out of trouble, which was a surprisingly liberal move. However, he couldn't settle in the office job and shortly after he began his own business. Asif told me,

There are two things you can do as an immigrant: There's the shops and there's textiles. Both of them need a little bit of capital and don't have an awful lot of labour intensivity. Hence the proliferation of those two...

After having moved around the country during his time with the water board, Asif's father settled in Swindon. It was here that he set up the business with his father and two of his brothers. They bought a Halal butcher's shop and began an interesting trade catering for the needs of various communities. Beansprouts, rice and peppers for the Chinese restaurants. A wide variety of pasta and even grapes from Southern Italy for the Italian Community's wine making season in early autumn. Meat, spices and herbs for the various communities of the Indian sub continent. The shop was a focal point for non-white cultural exchanges, in addition to the occasional middle class white customer with an interest in international cuisine.

At home the family spoke a mixture of Urdu and English. Although, especially in the children's pre-school years, English tended to predominate:

because they were very keen that we would be able to cope with school. With my dad being away a lot, my mum would do a lot of the education. Because we moved a lot so I wasn't stable in nursery. So she did the early stuff. And when I actually got to nursery schools I remember, she was a bit distressed, because the other kids didn't know their times tables and I did.....Theirs is a very set traditional way of doing it and I could do it. And it was arithmetic, spellings and writing. And I could do a lot more than most of the other kids. So it was tricky for her to put me into this system which she didn't know anything about, and had an awful lot of respect for. Her expectations of the system were much higher than she felt were actually delivered....We had extra tuition. It was deemed necessary even at six or seven

At school although he was successful, he didn't seem to reach his full potential. At sixteen he achieved only four passes in his Ordinary Level, General Certificate in Education. Also he had a wide range of social contacts. As there were only two Asian boys at his secondary school many of his friends were white. Paradoxically, some held strongly racist views. At one point during the early nineteen eighties he speaks of sitting in a friend's bedroom reading his

brother's fascist magazines. At the time he belonged to a group who described themselves as 'mods' and listened to various types of pop music, which included Tamla Mowtown, the Jam and the Specials. His lived experience shows a development of wide social networks. This contrasts with the experiences of the three women, who don't refer to this social aspect, being centred much more closely around the home and family. However like them he has a detailed and intimate knowledge of the history and culture of his origins. When he speaks of his own identity a very complex picture emerges:

I'm at that stage where I'm sort of...I've never been I've never been quite able to clearly say, because there are so many other factors. As an immigrant whose dad dug footings, am I working class, am I middle class (being an educated person)? ... and then the class divisions within my own family... So, I mean locations in terms of class, in terms of career, as I am now, also in terms of race ...there's the question of Mirapuri kids [not achieving high scores] in the league tables [of examination results] ... if you look at those...yet dad's from a Mirapuri background.. and if you look at kids from an Indian background in the league tables, they're usually quite high. That's my mum's side. So there are inherent contradictions of me trying to locate anywhere. And then tying that in with my English identity and Nationhood. And then with the idea that I half reject nationhood. And I quite like the idea of being a European traveller... So its actually quite convoluted...

He has similar difficulties in describing his religious identity. His current position is one of atheism

I like the idea of religion and what it provides for people. But I also think in terms of a sociological perspective of religion, the Marxist ideas of religion and that I find a major block to it. And also this idea of faith. I don't feel it. So it's not working for me on an emotive level. But it could work on an intellectual level to counter things when people say, you know, that this is Islamic and I could say, "Well no it isn't actually. That's why I quite like the idea of reading the Qur'an, because I can say, "But where does it say that?"

Most of these ideas of identity and religion are referred to in relation to ongoing discussions he has with his father and his uncles. There are limits to his tolerance of dissent from this cultural heritage which demonstrate further complexities. He is a great admirer of the works of Salman Rushdie and it surprised him that, as an atheist, he could be shocked by the irreverence of "The Satanic Verses." But he said that, in his opinion it was blasphemous and he fully understood how offended some people could be by the work. Although he is more outraged at the idea of 'fatwa.' Later he told me that he was similarly disapproving of a Hindu friend who was willing to convert to Christianity to have a white wedding in an Anglican church. What offended him was that she was willing to do this merely to satisfy her vanity.

Like Nandine he thinks that those who opt for business careers are often more likely to lose their sense of history and heritage. He cites his brother-in law as an example. As a barrister he has taken on many of the habits of his colleagues and drinks with them regularly, but hides this from the family. What disturbs Asif is his lack of integrity and his insincerity.

In common with Aliko and Nandine, his attitude towards his heritage culture is ambivalent and often contradictory. Like Aliko he has toyed with the idea of working for some time in his 'home' country, but ultimately rejected it as a romantic and nostalgic idea. He realised that the realities of daily life would not suit his current predisposition. His partner is English and his home is in Britain. He is aware of his political allegiances and the complexities of his own identity. Like Aliko he sees this as a process which he is working through which has many sources. All three have broken from their tradition in a quite fundamental way. The next group of three demonstrate different kinds of links with their own heritage groups. Nevertheless the conversations reveal an equally complex view of identity.

#### *5.4. My: A quiet fire*

My was one of the "Boat People" who fled from North Vietnam in the late seventies. Her family had been Chinese settlers in the northern part of Vietnam. Her father and mother had been educated in China and had moved to Vietnam as merchants trading mainly in silks and other rich fabrics. By 1979 the situation was becoming desperate for the Chinese-Vietnamese. The Vietnamese wanted to establish the supremacy of their own language and culture.

My remembers. In the middle of the night the children were woken and, together with other families, they boarded horse drawn carriages. The procession, led by soldiers who had been bribed, left under cover of darkness and headed silently for the mountains. They left behind most of their belongings. Not even taking food. My's father carried a suitcase containing rich fabrics, which he hoped to trade when necessary.

My recalls her bewilderment at having to cross major obstacles in the dark, often in rainstorms. On one occasion they had to cross a rope bridge spanning a deep ravine. A pebble, or anything, dropped by accident would fall through the darkness for at least a minute before it reached the bottom. Her baby sister was being carried by her older brother. Midway across the bridge the baby began to cry. The soldiers ordered the family to throw her over the edge for fear that they would all be discovered and killed by enemy soldiers. Thinking quickly, My's mother took the baby and fed her. Her brother filled the baby carriage with a heavy object and let it drop into the ravine.

After several days they reached a mountain, which My remembers having to climb in the rain and the wind. At the summit they put up tents and rested for a few days. My's father took out his suitcase and opened it. Inside, in place of the bolts of silks and rich fabrics, was a rock wrapped in rough cloth. Soldiers had robbed them.

A kindly farmer gave them food and sustenance before they headed for the port. Even here

their difficulties were not over. At the port they did not have sufficient money to bribe the guards. Somehow My's father was able to borrow some from relatives and secured a place on a boat. It was an old Chinese junk with scarcely enough room for them all. Cramped, and without any real knowledge of their destination, they set off. My remembers a violent storm where they did not know whether they would survive.

Eventually they reached Hong Kong and were kept there for months while they waited to see where they could settle. Their plight was publicised sympathetically in the media. Many countries offered help. My's family chose Britain. On arrival they were kept in a centre to learn basic English. Then they were sent to different parts of Britain. Her family settled in Cornwall.

In terms of the people I have interviewed, My's case is exceptional. Unlike the initiatives for bilingual support described by the others, it was consistently planned and coordinated. They had a period of initiation, in immersion schools.

**M:** And from Hong Kong...erm...we stayed in a refugee camp and we learned a tiny, tiny amount of English. Just the basic A,B,C,s and all that. And then I stayed in Hong Kong for about three months in the refugee camp. And then once our visas were y'know organised and that, we moved to Thorny Island..I think it's in Sussex....and we stayed there for almost half a year were they gave us basic English and we were actually taken to primary schools and it was..er.. the local area in Sussex actually made...started a new primary school in Sussex for the refugees, who came to England...so we're talking about probably a thousand or so families in that area going to the same school...and they had coaches in the morning to pick us up taking us to primary schools and ...the whole class probably twenty of us in a class were all Vietnamese and the teachers were all English And they taught us basic.. Hi, how are you? My name is... and taught us just, like learning to read ABCs and that depending on what level we were at and after a year...my family moved to a place called Launceton..So we went to the primary school... they thought it was good if we could stay together...we can still have our culture. We can still talk our own language, yet we were immersed into a class full of English speakers as well.

My added that her teacher had really worked to connect with their culture, preparing work which was relevant to her background and showing an interest and curiosity about their lives and culture. But more than this she had encouraged them to share their experiences as refugees, so that the Cornish children would understand their courage. She is full of praise for this approach and recalls learning English in a very short time; three months after arriving in Cornwall, about a year after arriving in Britain. By way of contrast the other five people tell of having to struggle if not with the language then to have their own heritage valued or even recognised by the school.

But it was not just at school that My received a great deal of support. Her parents, particularly

her father were also anxious that she should succeed and guided them firmly to this end. This is a phenomenon of cultural transmission which Michael Coles (1996) calls 'prolepsis'. That is, the parents shape the children's futures by offering strategies and priorities which they think will serve them well in adult life. In terms of My's story it is characterised by its lack of conflict she seems to have gone along with all those in authority expected of her. She does not even voice any complaint about her father's authoritarian approach to them as children. There is no mention of racism. Perhaps she did not experience discomforts and dissatisfactions. Perhaps the real reason for the silence is cultural. Perhaps it is a question of etiquette in her narrative style. Even when she is describing moments of great danger, she relates it in careful measured tones. Perhaps it is disrespectful for her to criticise her father to an outsider and a relative stranger. Perhaps the moments are too painful to discuss. As Maya Angelou noted when discussing her own approach to autobiography:

Some (events) were never recorded because they were either so bad or so painful that there was no way to write honestly and artistically without making them melodramatic (in Tate 1985:7)

In Vietnam, the Chinese settlers maintained a clear sense of identity and My tells of the language that was spoken called Dong, which was central to the Chinese-Vietnamese identity:

...It has a history...from, you know last century or something like that, but it's actually slowly dying out. Because when we left in 1979, there was a war because the Vietnamese who didn't want to become communist were becoming anti Chinese... The sanctioned the schools..all our tradition and slowly all our whole identity was being erased. They were trying to make us Vietnamese rather than ethnic Chinese- Vietnamese. So that's when it started...that we had to move out.

This adds another level of complexity since already on her family's arrival in Britain My had a hyphenated identity. In terms of education her parents were keen for them to develop all sides of their identity, not for ideological reasons but in pragmatic ways. They themselves were multilingual in Cantonese, Vietnamese, Dong and Mandarin.

For my father and mother, they knew English was important...But they knew that if we let go our language, then they wouldn't understand us. So what my father did, instead of ..erm.. We were talking our home language, but because there's no written form of our home language... my mother and my father actually saved up a lot of money and bought us a video and through that they rented videos...Cantonese videos and that's how we learned Cantonese... And when we moved up to London, my father enrolled us into Saturday schools.

Coupled with this was real sense of urgency that they should also do well in English. My relates how her father bought a book by Enid Blyton from a second hand shop, which she had to copy for handwriting practice. This chimes in with Eve Gregory's work (1993) which explores different culturally formed conceptions on the nature of literacy. Getting the

characters drawn very precisely is essential in Chinese ideograms. A slight difference can reader a wholly different set of meanings.

...So he was really huge into neatness. and even though he couldn't hear us read, once we finished our writing he told us to go next door and read it to the neighbours.

Her father also supervised the homework in a very formal way:

Each night, after we had dinner...he would set up the table..a huge table and I've got...three brothers and three sisters...We would sit around the table, the six of us and he would sit there and watch us do our homework. And he would help us out with our maths and when he couldn't with our English we had to work it out together...

This communal approach is very different from the more individualistic approaches which is usual for many English and American children, although My seems to see it as her father's individual idiosyncrasy rather than a culturally specific approach.

I don't think it's part of a tradition...more my father being scared that we wouldn't do well in our...education. He knew that being in a new culture we had to work extra hard. And that was his way of making us do it. So he was very strict on us and if we didn't work properly then we were punished for it

As My tells it, this mixture of coercion and self sacrifice on her parents part coupled with proper attention to her culture and identity in her schooling has enabled her to feel comfortable with all aspects of her identity. She could see value in each of the different cultural approaches. She mentioned that although she admired the individual freedom implicit in European culture, she thought the Chinese respect for elders was a value which should be retained. As I was leaving she put it succinctly

I have three strands to my identity: my Chinese strand, my Vietnamese strand and my English strand. If you take one away there is no My.

### *5.5. Olgun: Contradiction and conflict*

As in the case of My, Olgun's story is of an identity born out of civil strife. What is different is that he moved backwards and forwards between Cyprus and England. His family are Turkish Cypriot and he grew up in a place where the Greek Cypriot population were in the majority. 'There was about a thousand Turkish Cypriots and about ten thousand Greek Cypriots'. Because of the continuing conflict, his family felt overwhelmed. His father was an Anglophile, who with immense energy and enterprise had built up a business making quilts:

He would actually make them...a single or a double one. Have any kind of design

and her would make it with his three fingers...some incredible designs... That's how he started off...at the age of twelve.. then he went into sorts of food...and other utensils. He had three shops before '63

He lost everything in the war of 1963. Starting from scratch he rebuilt his business and in less than 10 years had five shops. Olgun describes the outcome of the war in such an enclosed community as somewhat surreal. They had to move to a different part of their own town.

Some people were living in a big school and they just had sheeting between them. So they were almost refugees in their own town... Families were living and cooking in a hall. Different families and this is obviously coming from an Islamic kind of thing where women and men have their separate...you know women are protected by their culture.

Olgun spent his formative years in this environment. As a result he has an identity which has been defined against Greek Cypriot people, who he saw as the enemy, denying his family basic amenities such as electricity. As a boy he remembers when he and his friends used to smash the porcelain cable holders on the pylons which diverted the electricity to the Greek villages.

He was taught in a small village school. One of his uncles was a teacher there. It was a very traditional education with a strong nationalist ethos

...incredibly nationalistic. I mean the Turkish flag and all the Turkish books from Turkey...Attaturk and the war of independence in Turkey and we were all part of that ... a continuation, an extension of Turkey....we weren't Cypriots

Although his identity is strongly defined against the Greeks, his family were traditionally great Anglophiles. His grandfather was in the British army. Ironically he was fighting for the Greeks. His uncle was also in the British army and had settled in Charlton in South east London. His father also had a profound respect for British medicine, which he thought was the best in the world. Therefore it wasn't surprising that when , Olgun needed an operation, at the age of eleven, he came to Britain for the necessary surgery.

Olgun found life in London surprisingly different. He had been used to living in a relatively small rural community. Now he found that he lived in a very built up area which had a different set of sights and smells for him to become accustomed to. His uncle owned a fish and chip shop and a dry cleaning business. He found it strange that people queued for cooked food in the middle of the day. He also found it difficult to settle in school. Although the teachers were friendly and welcoming, he found the rowdiness of some of the pupils difficult to understand.

The school tried to pair him up with another Turkish Cypriot boy, but it didn't work out since the boy had been brought up in England. He could not speak Turkish and knew very little about Turkish culture. This demonstrates the complexity of the notion of diaspora. Olgun made good



friends eventually with two boys who had been adopted. Being isolated from his own family, he possibly had found a different kind of common experience and thus a common identity. Later on it was suggested that the aunt and uncle adopt Olgun.

At school he encountered several racist bullies, one of whom later became a bank robber and ended up being shot. However, he stood up to the bullies who subsequently left him alone. It was at school that he found some comfort in his academic success and by the time he was sixteen, he had become first in his class.

It was at this point that he returned to Cyprus. His aunt and uncle had decided to emigrate to Australia. They intended to visit Cyprus, driving through Europe down to Turkey and visiting Olgun's family in Cyprus. In Turkey the car broke down and Olgun had to spend some time with his aunt, whilst his uncle tried to find someone who could fix the car. It was here where he realised differences which disturbed him deeply. He was disgusted by the harassment his aunt received on the street from Turkish men.

...Even though they were from the same culture, they were different to us...we felt very threatened by it...It was awful...I've never felt like this in Britain

When they finally arrived in Cyprus, he decided he wanted to stay with his family. 'This is where I belonged. I wanted to stay there,' Not long after this he was sent to a boarding school where again he found some aspects of life different and difficult. It is interesting to note that he defined himself against the other boys in the school and he missed the privacy and the material comforts of living at his aunt's

I never felt so lonely and depressed...I went to that place and there were sixteen of these dirty boys in this room...'Cause here, I was at my aunts, I had my own room. I had my own encyclopaedias. I had my music(al) instruments. I had everything I wanted. It was mine... I had my own television...everything you know..

However, by contrast, he thought the education there was of a far higher quality. He said, 'I feel that, if there was a peak in knowledge absorption, that was it.' He settled into his new surroundings and was about to take examinations when a devastating event occurred. His village came under attack from the Greek Cypriot forces and he was conscripted into the army.

Just give me a gun and the next thing I know I'm like in the army fighting the Greeks...I was taken prisoner of war for three months...and I was beaten up and I saw people wounded next to me...I was about 16...17...yeah, I didn't even have a beard

Although it must have been a terrifying experience, he went numb. 'It wasn't (terrifying),' he told me, 'you're not there...you're outside...you're there..' Reflecting on the experience he still has very ambivalent feelings. He has a rational and political opinion on the events. He doesn't generalise these negative feelings to all Greek Cypriots. However, he has some real

doubts too:

It was just weird looking back...all those events...and when I came here I was involved in left wing politics...I wasn't...I couldn't...you know say if the Greeks was you know ... people... brothers...then why was this happening ? ...yeah...even though I met at college...Greek Cypriots who were friends...there was this part that I couldn't just throw away

His identity is complex and contradictory. It is an unfinished story which he is still trying to understand fully. He is currently completing an MA course and has chosen Cyprus as the focus of his dissertation study. Although his identity has a strong Turkish element, his liberal values lead him to question a narrowly defined view of this identity. Like most of the others in this study he says he received no confirmation of his identity in school. Towards the end of our conversation he declared without bitterness or irony:

No confirmation on the part of the school. I was just another face, you know.

In this respect his story has considerable overlap with Michael, who is in his mid thirties and was born in Dominica in the Caribbean.

#### *5. 6. Michael: resisting racism*

In Britain the statistics concerning black African Caribbean boys and schooling make extremely depressing reading. They are the single largest group to be excluded from school. Official statistics estimate that they are four times as likely to be excluded as their white counterparts. They consistently underachieve in examinations and are under represented in most professional jobs. So Michael is truly exceptional. He works as a research fellow at a college which is part of London University and has embarked upon a PhD, in which he is studying the reasons for the level of academic underachievement among black youth.

His father came from the Dominica, where Michael spent his early years. As well as English his family spoke a French based Creole. In his story he points to the extreme contrast of his father's life in the Caribbean and the conditions in England he had to face when he came to join his brother. In the Caribbean Michael's father had been the manager of a large estate. He was a keen gardener who worked in the botanical gardens. He was a well respected man in the Caribbean:

He had a very outward personality. Well liked...Everyone knew him from one end of the island to the other...Very popular... They called him 'The Brain' because he seemed to ...well...was knowledgeable about most things... The problem was when he came here...he had different things to contend with...and his status declined dramatically and his self perception declined...how he perceived himself declined. Because he was no longer the big man. He was no longer the person he was in the Caribbean. He was looked down on. He was abused. He faced a lot of physical and

verbal abuse. He ended up in a job he didn't like. The job he wanted he couldn't get. Absolutely couldn't get.....He became a changed man.

Michael sees that this is a common story for people from the Caribbean, who had to suffer extreme racist abuse:

We lived in Canning Town. A very racist place. Extremely racist and...erm... I mean..there are times...as a kid, as a child growing up.... I mean I came across a lot of it myself. I mean, at school, I came across a lot of racism. Extreme racism..

This was from 1971 onwards when the flames of racism were being fanned not only by far-right organisations like the National Front, but similar messages were coming from Members of Parliament like Enoch Powell. Michael describes an incident when he and a friend were badly beaten by a gang of racists. They were travelling home from school, when they were involved in an argument with a man who accused them of throwing a stone at his car. They denied they had done anything. Several minutes later, they were:

....surrounded by these people...Grown men. I would have thought that these people knew better...you know...kids...We were kids, you know, we've come from school. Typical. We got books and stuff like that...So they surrounded us and really laid into us...Broke my friend's arm, broke his jaw...Struck me with a metal bar across my head. I lost consciousness...Nothing happened with the police... My father was beaten up twice...and throughout their life in Britain they had to put up with that

This situation proved doubly frustrating since the family had to deal with the results of his father's frustrations:

So, you're doubly abused...What that does to you is you feel yourself constantly under siege...Because you go to school...you face racism. Out in the outside world you face racism. You come home you have to face up to your father who feels that all his..you know his belittling at work...he's got to find an avenue to let it out.

Despite this Michael still respects his father enormously. In a later part of the conversation he states that. 'My father taught me everything I know.' Moreover, at this stage he has a deep understanding of his father's intolerable position. He dealt with the dilemma by withdrawing:

I mean you have friends and they rally round. But you know ...the only way I feel ...how I dealt with it, I think, was to go into myself... I became withdrawn...I kinda became totally absorbed in myself...I read a lot...I wrote...I drew...you know... Anything that meant that I was alone and I could speak to myself...I read a lot of fantasy books... If it wasn't reality based...I liked it. If I didn't have to face up to reality...what was around me. I mean if you gave me a book...a realistic book, I

would throw it back at you...I had to feel I was somewhere else. I had to feel that I was different...

Despite all the constraints upon him Michael did well at school. He attributes this mainly to his love of reading and his father's strong belief in education. This belief was not founded on the premise that it would be an automatic passport to a better material existence or a more interesting job. Experience had taught him differently.

Education as a way out doesn't always get you what you want, because it didn't get him what he wanted...because it didn't get him what he wanted...Because you still have to face up to prejudice. But education in itself is good...

His conception of education is that of self-knowledge:

You know who you are. You know what it is that you're about. I can deal with you on an equal level. I don't have to put up with your nonsense.

This chimes in with Gramsci's view:

The starting-point of critical elaboration of what one really is, and is 'knowing thyself' as a product of the historical process to date which has deposited an infinity of traces, without leaving an inventory...therefore it is imperative at the outset to compile such an inventory

(Cited in Said: 1978:25)

In reality this manifested itself in the form of a 'crisis' where Michael had to resolve several contradictions, mainly between schooled learning and his own experiences. Despite his success, he did not stay on at school after 16, but embarked upon an electronics course. He quickly became bored with that and went to college to study three subjects at 'A' level. Again he dropped out of the programme, because he was experiencing what he describes as a 'crisis'. This centred round his fundamental questioning of basic issues regarding the way he was being taught history. It was also something of a crisis in terms of religious imagery. He felt that the school and the church had 'fed (him) too much nonsense'.

Having been brought up in a Roman Catholic family, he had been surrounded by the standard iconography, which portrays all the principal people as white, blue eyed and blond haired. He saw a contradiction that 'the very image which oppresses me, I have to go home and worship. The image is the same as the person who is oppressing me on the street'. Much of this he worked through and continues to work upon in his writing and art. I talked to him in his home and the walls were covered with biblical images featuring black people. He now believes that history and religion are not embedded in rock. This also caused him to question the dominant historical discourses. It was at this time that he began reading more internally persuasive writers, Malcolm X's autobiography, Water Rodney, and Franz Fanon. He also

mentions Karl Marx as a significant influence. For him Marx put things into a context enabling him to see social relationships and to examine 'why things are the way they are'.

This 'epiphany' caused him to change direction and study literature. His MA was in literature and dealt with the Western canon, examining the representation of black people. Although he sees his own identity as a complex management of many different strands he feels there needs to be a central core to a person's identity:

You need to have a concrete identity. You need to have a core identity. Like a sun and all other identities revolve around that sun

Whilst he thinks that even that core is not finalised and determined, he believes that there has to be some stability and continuity. Although superficially he seems to have an essentialist view of himself than the other participants, his narrative of his own identity is not simple and is certainly not unproblematic.

Obviously I wanted to find 'patterns which connect' the six narratives to borrow a term from Gregory Bateson.(1979:) In the next section I shall describe the initial patterns I have identified and in the next chapter I shall go on to examine the process by which I am analysing their stories. Moreover I shall describe some of the difficulties posed by the model and some initial findings. I have spent some this chapter focusing on the broader aspects of the six interviewees stories to retain a coherent, complex, contextualised and, hopefully, faithful view of their courageous, candid and deeply reflective accounts of their lives. I want to conclude this piece by delineating some emerging patterns, before examining how they have created their identities through their narratives in the following two chapters.

### *5.7 Emerging patterns and questions*

All six stories demonstrate the complexity of the process they have lived through. All six seem to echo Ien Ang's (1994:18) conclusion which she articulates in her elegant paper, "On not speaking Chinese":

This postmodern ethnicity can no longer be experienced as naturally based upon tradition and ancestry, it must be experienced as a provisional and partial site of identity, which must be constantly (re)invented and (re)negotiated....In short, if I am inescapably Chinese by descent I am only sometimes Chinese by consent.  
When and how is a matter of politics

I cannot claim that the group is a representative sample. However it is interesting to note the connections, especially as they are from different heritages. It is also interesting to note the issues of class and gender which are raised by their stories. All of the sample are qualified teachers and half of them have broken from family and community traditions and values in fundamental ways. This marks them as exceptions rather than the rule. However, the detail of the stories do show those tensions in a clearer light. Considering that they come from such

different cultural backgrounds there are remarkable similarities in several significant areas. All demonstrate:

- Similar patterns of family settlement-rural to urban
  - economically supported by family and community
- Conceptions of identity as fluid and mobile
- A strong sense of history and affiliation with heritage cultures
- Ambivalence and questioning of value systems of the heritage culture and wider society
- Looking outside 'community' for life partners
- Influence of the mass media on their sense of identity
- Strong influence of peer group, as a support network
- Frequent visits to 'homeland'
- An ambivalent attitude to living in the 'homeland'
- An enjoyment of schooling and learning, but no ostensible examples of how this connected to their daily lives
- Liberal, tolerant values and a critical outlook generally associated with aspects of a Western, liberal humanist education
- Identification with other oppressed or marginalised groups

The first three people whom I interviewed had all been born and brought up in Britain. At that time I noted that they exhibited a critical distance from several aspects of both their home cultures and the discourses of the dominant culture. Although the final three exhibit a critical stance it has a quite different inflection, they are more firmly located within the traditions of their group. Some of this, could be explained by them spending a substantial part of their childhood in the country of origin. In the next Chapter I shall explore these patterns in more detail.

When I embarked upon the research, I wished to investigate the idea of cultural change and the complex syncretism involved in that process. The following exchange between James Clifford and Stuart Hall (Clifford;1997:44) suggested that it might also be fruitful to examine the corollary. Hall asked: What remains the same when you travel? Clifford replied:

What stays the same even when you travel? A lot. But the significance may differ with each new conjecture....Are we to think of a kind of kernel or core of identity that is carried everywhere with them? Or is something more polythetic, something more like a habitus, a set of practices and dispositions, parts of which could be remembered and articulated in specific contexts?...Obviously the issue is a crucial one in discussing diaspora cultures. What is brought from a prior place? And how is it both maintained and transformed by the new environment?

This led me to seek out frameworks by which I could discover what persists over generations of settlement. My argument is that family narratives play a central role in the process of maintaining continuity across generations. Furthermore I argue that this process entails not only

the what (the content) but the how (the form). These considerations will form the basis of Chapters 7 and 8.

What has been interesting for me about the life stories I have collected during the course of my dialogues with the six individuals has been the wide variety of approaches they exhibit in dealing with their dilemmas. Although they appear to have reached similar points in their lives and share very similar political viewpoints, their routes are different and highly individual.

They also vary according to their widely different approaches to the telling of their stories. Their narrative styles range from the measured to the passionate. They appear to retain a music and cadence which relates to their cultural heritages, as they creatively rework their memories.

As I said in my introduction to Part Two of the thesis, one of the frameworks I have used to analyse the narratives is based on ideas developed by Mikhail Bakhtin. He suggests that individuals develop through the dynamic interaction of individual motivations, appetites and desires and the social forces operating from outside. These external influences come from significant individuals and through cultural forms. They also come from their successes, sense of belonging, oppositions and defeats. Much of his work concentrates upon cultural forms, particularly language which he argues are not only deeply social, but are our only means of articulating our perceptions of the world to ourselves and others. In 'Discourse in the Novel' he describes the process of appropriation of other people's words to make our own individual meanings.

The word in language is half someone else's. It becomes one's own only when the speaker populates it with his own intention, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention. Prior to this moment of appropriation, the word does not exist in a neutral and impersonal language (it is not, after all, out of the dictionary that the speaker gets his words!), but rather it exists in other people's mouths, serving other people's intentions: it is from there that one must take the word and make it your own

Bakhtin:1981:293-294

He adds a word of caution, which also holds for the development of identity.

Language is not a neutral medium that passes freely and easily into the private property of the speaker's intentions; it is populated-overpopulated-with the intentions of others. Expropriating it, forcing it to submit to one's own intentions and accents, is a difficult and complicated process

Bakhtin:1981:294

In my view the creation of identity result from a similar process. This argument will provide the basis of Chapters 7 and 8.

## *Chapter 6: The Patterns that Connect*

*To return to the past is not sufficient, nor is it possible in the dynamic process of cultural formation. However, the past does supply powerful and important connections that are essential to the revisioning of...identities*

*Terry de Hay*

*Narrating memory (1994:29)*

### *Introduction*

In this first layer of analysis, I shall be examining the common factors in the narratives. To achieve this I shall be organising the findings thematically. Obviously there is some overlap with the previous chapter where I gave more coherent and holistic portraits of the six individuals. However, I attempt to keep repetition to the minimum. Identifying patterns in human behaviour is always a complicated business. Patterns tend to imply precise congruences. When applied to human affairs they can mislead and make life appear tidier than it actually is. With moving targets like culture and identity it is even more problematic. However, we have to engage in this pattern making to create even the most basic meaningful propositions. Abstracting formal patterns that connect is therefore useful only as far as we remain alert to the limitations of such an approach. Clifford Geertz (1996:3) considers the problem in this way:



To form my accounts of change, in my towns, my profession, my world and myself, calls not for plotted narrative, measurement, reminiscence or structural progression, and certainly not for graphs; though these have their uses (as do models and theorizings) in setting frames and defining issues. It calls for showing how particular events and unique occasions, an encounter here, a development there, can be woven together with a variety of facts and a battery of interpretations to produce a sense of how things go, have been going and are likely to go. Myth it has been said, I think by Northrop Frye, describes not what happened but what happens. Science, social science anyway, is much the same save that its descriptions make claim to solid ground and sounder thought, and aspire to a certain dispassion

Bearing this in mind, I shall attempt to trace the patterns by orchestrating the participants' own thoughts and insights into thematic patterns. To reveal the complexity of those patterns I shall use a great deal of direct quotation. This is to ensure that I represent the six individuals faithfully and do justice to the fact that there is a rich diversity of motivation and action beneath what appear to be broadly similar stances and viewpoints. As with all self narrative such quotation is not merely descriptive it is interpretative. Freeman (1993:29) reminds us

Memory, therefore, which often has to do not merely with recounting the past, but making sense of it-from 'above' as it were- is an interpretive act the end of which is an enlarged understanding of the self

Although this chapter concentrates on the *content* of their self narratives, embedded within the anecdotes are their own well articulated and evaluative arguments. Self narrative is always about point of view. This is what makes it such a rich resource. The layers of context, action and evaluation, reflection, philosophy and standpoint are contained within the attractive, familiar, ordinary and accessible framework of story.

To analyse the common patterns in the narratives I shall be organising the work thematically. I present them as sets of the relationships. I have chosen to begin with the family, which is generally where the most intimate and formative relationships occur, and worked outwards in what I consider are widening spheres of influence. Throughout the chapter I shall consider them under the following headings

- Relationships with families
  - Fathers as a dominant influence
  - Families' interest and involvement in education
  
- Relationship to cultural heritage
  - Patterns of family settlement
  - A strong sense of history of heritage culture, involving formal study

- Regular visits to 'homeland'
  - Ambivalence and questioning of the heritage culture
  - Ambivalent attitude to living in the homeland
  - Ambivalent attitudes towards community schooling
  - Finding life partners outside the community
- Relationships with peers
    - Gender differences in attitudes to peers
- Relationship to the dominant culture
    - a) General
      - A liberal, tolerant attitude and critical approach
      - Ambivalence and questioning of values of dominant culture
      - An explicitly political and critical view of capitalism. Identification with other marginalised groups
      - A wide knowledge of the debates surrounding culture and identity
      - A varied experience of racism and adoption of different strategies for dealing with it
    - b) Mass Media
      - A recognition of its powerful influence
      - Differing attitudes towards it
    - c) Education:
      - An enjoyment of schooling and learning, but only one ostensible example of how it connected to their daily lives
      - A period of crisis with dominant educational values and precepts in late adolescence

I shall then conclude with a comparison of how they explicitly describe their own identities

Obviously these narratives are constructions of their individual identities at the time the interviews were conducted. In the next chapter I shall examine how the participants articulated such constructions of self through their conversations. In the final chapter I make a textual analysis of the rhetorical styles and narrative devices of one of the individuals to discover the stylistic qualities which give his narrative its distinctive and characteristic, yet culturally acquired flavour.

I need to point out that all of the individuals are familiar with current academic research in the area of identity. Moreover, all have a detailed knowledge of the history of complex post colonial struggles as a basis to their identity. Additional knowledge of those struggles is garnered from family histories. Moreover, all have researched them as part of their formal

education. As a result they are highly informed about the mechanisms of power and espouse a similar political position in relation to this. By the same token all are critical about aspects of both their own heritages and the dominant discourses. A really complex syncretism is achieved through their stories. In this chapter I shall be analysing the constituent parts of those syncretic process and in the following chapters I shall look at how those syncretic process work through the lives of the individuals. How they orchestrate the different and often conflicting elements into a coherent sense of self.

### *6.1 A review of broad patterns in the context of the dialogues as a whole*

What I find striking is that such a level of congruity exists between six people from a diversity of cultural heritages. The most striking feature for me has been the confirmation of the profound influence of family members, especially fathers, evident in the narratives. By comparison, other supposed socialising influences, such as peers and schooling, pale into insignificance. Sometimes I had to actually try to draw information about school teachers and school friends from them.

### *6.2 Relationships with Families*

#### *6.2.1 Parents as a dominant and often pervasive force in the narratives*

*I realise myself initially through others; from them I receive words, forms, tonalities for the formation of my initial idea of myself. The elements of infantilism sometimes remain until the end of life (perception and the idea of oneself, one's body, face and past in tender tones). Just as the body is formed initially in the mother's womb (body), a person's consciousness awakens wrapped in another's consciousness.*

*Bakhtin (1986:138)*

The seminal influence of families and particularly fathers in the narratives poses a formidable challenge to many postmodern thinkers. It would seem that the 'grand narratives' of family life, certainly seem to have a profound and pervasive effect on constraining the self conscious reconstruction of identity. I argue that the postmodernist theoretical viewpoint grossly underestimates affect in the development of self. Desire is sometimes mentioned but there is far more to affect than desire in the complex politics of family life. Moreover, there are significant gender differences in how fathers are portrayed in the narratives. All of the women's fathers tend to be portrayed as authoritarian patriarchs, and insensitive in many ways. Nandine demonstrates the truth of Bakhtin's remarks when she says:

*I've always felt this sense of responsibility towards my family or...In communities where it's very close knit, you know it's rural...sort of traditional family set ups or behaving to parents in a certain way...because I think outside of that I can be*

assertive with people older than me...(but)...Even now when I've spoken to my father, I just cannot express myself articulately...Because I'm still bound by all that...

The ambivalences run deep since she says shortly after this in a very quiet voice, 'Although in other ways, I don't have very much respect for my father.'

Aliki's narrative is characterised by similar deep ambivalences towards her father. She has a strong distaste for his macho attitudes. At one point she draws this relationship as one of confrontation between her sisters and mother on one hand and her father on the other. It has certainly deeply coloured her world view. A basic theme which is reiterated throughout her conversation is that she will never marry a Greek man. Nevertheless their relationship is complex and ambivalent. Since she has become successful and has achieved the post of Head of drama in a large secondary school, her father's attitudes towards her have changed. His respect for her has grown and they now have a much better relationship.

By way of contrast, My reports her father's autocracy with a neutral, dispassionate tone, when she describes the family homework ritual:

We would sit around the table the six of us with my father at the top end and he would sit there and watch us do our homework. And he would help us with our English we had to work it out together. He knew being in a new country, being in a new culture we had to work extra hard. And that was his way of making us do it. So he was very strict on us and if we didn't work properly, then that was it. We were punished for it as well.

The men's attitudes are much more ambivalent and their responses vary widely. Michael acknowledges his father as an extremely powerful influence in his life, even at one point declaring: 'My father *was* my school'. His whole narrative is soaked in references to his father who he sees as a quite exceptional human being despite having had difficult period with him when he first came to England.

My father, despite everything that happened, was a good man... there was something fantastic about him, but something, I think, in this society poisoned him.

Asif describes his father as energetic, enterprising and courageous in many respects, particularly as he dealt with racism experienced whilst working for the water board. On the other hand he also has deep disagreements with him particularly in relation to his view of traditional heritage values, which manifest themselves in discussions and arguments about culture and religion.

Olgun admires his father's energy and ambition.

...he was an intelligent man. After losing that business in '63...he came to Turkish side and he built five shops and several houses...and he wanted every one of us to succeed

But this energy and enterprise also had a negative side:

My father had always...(indecipherable..very quiet)...and he was such a strong domineering sort of person and he dominated my life. He dominated everything you know. ..For example in Cyprus he wouldn't let us play ball or anything like that and I'm not into sports now at all because of that.

Even when he came to England and stayed with his aunt and uncle in Charlton, his father continued to exercise a great deal of control.

In comparison mothers are portrayed as almost invisible. They certainly assume minor roles in the narratives, in comparison to the fathers and in some, (Olgun's, Michael's and My's) are reduced to mere ciphers. At one point Olgun declares that he never knew his mother, but he must have lived with her until he was at least eleven and again upon his return to Cyprus.

Asif's mother also has a subordinate role in his story. Born in Delhi to a family of wealthy socialites she studied medicine. By 1948 she had become a midwife. Her family lost everything following Partition, when she made the Long Walk to Pakistan. When her father died her mother had to take in sewing to feed her family. It was in Karachi that she met and married Asif's father who was working as a pharmacist in the same hospital as her. He was from the Punjab. However, on coming to Britain she appears to have assumed a completely domestic position. Early in the conversation Asif talks warmly of how she presided over his early education. Following this she disappears from his narrative almost entirely.

Nandine had a close relationship with her mother during the years when she assumed the traditional role of the dutiful eldest daughter in her Bangladeshi-British family. On reflection it is a position she held with great resentment. She pinpoints the moment of this realisation vividly, when she first took on these responsibilities:

Well my mother was ill or she was having the baby, so I had to do that (hoover the dining room). And while she was in hospital I had to take on that role. I was very angry about it.. Even now I remember I was very angry about having to Hoover the dining room...It seems weird doesn't it, but I just remember it so vividly

Her resentment is compounded by the fact that she thought that she got scant recognition for her work from her mother:

It's funny because, you know, often people would come round and say, 'Oh..your daughter works so hard..' and my mother would turn around and say, Oh, she's

only doing that because you're here' or 'They have to learn' and I used to think, 'She never ever praised me in front of my face. Never ever!' and I used to resent that so much.

Obviously such observations have to be taken in the context that shortly before the interview, Nandine had been disowned by her entire family for not submitting to a second arranged marriage. Instead, she decided to marry out of her cultural and religious tradition. She is now married.

Aliki's mother figures much more prominently. Again this was an arranged marriage, as is true for the majority of the cases presented here.

That's really undermining to my parents' relationship...when I look at it there's nothing apart from obligation to each other and the children

She is portrayed as long suffering having to put up with her father's absences from home and general neglect or subservience to him.

Dad was never around. There was no father there. It was my mum all the time. Dad used to go on gambling binges and stuff like that away from London and when he did come back mum and dad were either arguing or he'd be down the road at his brother's house

Her mother speaks very little English. So she feels isolated. This has been compounded since Aliki has lost her facility with Greek and at the end of the interview she reflects that her main reason for wanting to learn Greek is so that she can have a proper conversation with her mum.

I feel really ashamed when I go to Cyprus. I can't have conversations with my family...It upsets me that I can't do this with mum.. The main reason (for wanting to learn Greek) is so that I can talk to my mum properly.

Language could be seen as a factor in this case in terms of the invisibility in the narratives, but it does not really fit with the patterns of language competence for all of the others. My and Olgun are, by their own estimation fluent bilinguals, who would find little difficulty communicating with their mothers. Both Asif's and Michael's mothers are fluent in English. Nandine's mother has a high profile, yet their relationship is at its lowest ebb. Ironically, it is Aliki, who has most difficulty in communicating with her mother, who mentions her more than anyone else. One can only conclude that there are other reasons why they have such a low profile, which are not explicitly stated.

It is interesting that families continue to exert such a powerful influence on each individual's sense of self. It demonstrates very clearly the limits of postmodern thinking. Theorists such as Iain Chambers and Homi Bhabha (1996) and others who regard identity as a social construction

need to be aware that there are limits to how far we are able to consciously construct or reconstruct ourselves. Holstein and Gubrium (2000:4) begin their book, 'The Self We Live By' in the following way

Hopefulness versus disintegration, presence versus imagery, narrative inventiveness versus discipline. How can we reconcile these competing messages? What's the point? Is it that the self continues to significantly inform experience, but is now more narratively complex than ever? How can we be both selves and the stories of selves? What social processes make it possible? These are questions this book aims to answer, beginning with a story of a social self that some say has retreated from the spotlight of social psychology into nihilistic postmodern disarray...

The production of new discourses is possible, of course, and new attitudes are often born out of the kind of ambivalences, resentments and dissatisfactions these stories witness. However, these are difficult moves. Those influences have deep roots and change is a painful process, since it has profound social consequences. Dissent can be a lonely and trying business. It is also significant that fathers still remain a dominant force in the narratives, often embodying the very conservative attitudes which are limiting to social and cultural change.

It is remarkable that families continue to exert such an influence, even though all are highly critical and analytical people. All have independent means and are successful in their careers. This affective dimension is grossly underestimated by many postmodern theorists. Desire is often mentioned in such theory, but there is more to affect than desire. A force field of influences constrains our ability to merely reinvent ourselves afresh without great psychic cost. The roots of tradition are very deep and pervasive. Even in this era of the supposed disintegration of the family, families continue to exert a mysterious almost primal power, over our creation of identity.

### *6.2.2 Families interest and involvement in education*

Apart from Alike all of the stories bear witness to their parents' desire to see them succeed at school. But here again there are different emphases. Olgun, Asif, Nandine and My all had parents who were very concerned that their children should do well at school in order to enhance their chances of a better material standard of living.

Asif talks about the time when at primary school his mother was dissatisfied with the educational system and hired a tutor. His mother's expectations of the system were actually far higher than actually she felt were delivered.

That was tricky for her and that was... I can remember being 5 or 6 and there was a retired teacher in our road and one or two afternoons a week my sister and I would be sent there to go and do things and so we carried on with that. It was

deemed necessary even at 6 or 7, because I think there were concerns about my primary school.

Nandine not only speaks about how she explicitly told that she needed to achieve at school, when she encountered difficulties with her 'A' level studies a tutor was promptly recruited. As described earlier (6.2.1) My's father not only closely supervised his children's studies, he arranged for them to read to an English neighbour and sought out English reading material for them.

Olgun also speaks of pressure from his dominating father to succeed at school. When he came to England he talks about his aunt taking over this role. All of this demonstrates classically the phenomenon of prolepsis, described by Michael Cole (1996) It is only Michael whose father had a different idea of the purpose of education.

At one point in our conversation, Michael makes the rather surprising statement, 'My school is my father.' His admiration for his father is apparent throughout the conversation and certainly his father was keen for him to achieve in school. In fact apart from Alike prolepsis in relation to educational success is common to all. However, when I probed Michael to see if his father saw education as a passport to material success, a much more complex view emerged, which was located in issues of history and identity. Again this sprang from his father's attitudes:

There was something in him that made me and my brothers realise, and my sister realise that education was important. You had to succeed..er...and there was no... You simply had to move on. You can't sit on your butt

But education is good in itself, not for advancement because

...as a black person you can have as many certificates as you need...it often doesn't get you where you want to be. You always have to end up slightly lower....but it is good in itself...because if you've got it then you know who you are. You know what it is you're about. I can deal with you on an equal level. I don't have to put up with your nonsense...I will see you for what you are and I can chose to deal with you or not. I've got that freedom. ..That is one of the things my father taught me

So even though the parents were generally keen for their children to succeed their emphases are slightly different.



### 6.3. *Relationship with their Cultural Heritage*

#### **Transference**

*My ancestors talk  
to me in dangling  
myths*

*Each word a riddle  
each dream  
heirless  
On sunny days  
I bury  
words*

*They put out roots  
and coil around  
forgotten syntax*

*Next spring a full  
blown anecdote  
will sprout*

*Diana der Hovanessian: 'Learning an Ancestral Tongue'*

#### 6.3.1 *Patterns of settlement*

Memories framed in stories are integral to identity. Some stories extend beyond the borders of our own lives, so that 'our histories begin not in memory, but in the stories told to us by others. Indeed these become our past.' (Freeman:1993:53) As a child Michael only knew his father by his impressive reputation, as he had already settled England.

In the Caribbean he was the big man. He was called 'the Brain', because he had a personality... He had a very outward personality. Well liked. Everyone liked him. Everyone knew him from one end of the island to the next.

Although others did not experience this early separation all have close connections with their parent's 'homeland'. Their patterns of family settlement are similar. They all moved from a rural location to an urban one. Their migrations were economically supported by their families and communities. The period they have lived through has also coincided with a general and continuing expansion of agribusiness. Wedded to fast and pervasive technology, it is mediated through a kind of bare knuckle marketplace capitalism that responds rapidly to privileged consumers' whims. This in turn has transformed the production and distribution of foods, forcing many rural communities off the land often to eke a meagre living in a variety of demeaning

ways in the cities. This pattern of migration to Western cities has characterised the post colonial period since the end of the Second world war. Flight has often been accelerated through civil strife in post colonial states. All of the participants' family histories are framed in some way, often directly, with such struggles. All report that their parents initially had to find work which was substantially below the standard of the careers they had followed in their country of origin, both in terms of salary and status. Apart from Aliko they all came from fairly middle class backgrounds. Even Asif's father who had come from a farming family had become a pharmacist. So the pattern in terms of class backgrounds coincides with the majority of successful pupils in Britain. Even here class appears to be a strongly determining factor.

### *6.3.2 A Strong Sense of History of their Heritage Culture*

Demonstrating the importance of wider events, Asif begins his narrative with allusions to Partition and the Great Walk, which effectively dispossessed both parents. Similarly My, describes her experiences as a five year old when her whole family had to make a harrowing journey out of Vietnam. (The journey is described more fully in Chapter 5) Aliko's parents fled Cyprus, when Turkish troops invaded their village. Olgun's family were based in an area which was predominantly Greek Cypriot, who denied them basic amenities such as electricity. At sixteen, on his return to Cyprus he was conscripted. He was taken prisoner during the fighting and witnessed violence and brutality at first hand. These events have coloured his sense of self and belonging in profound ways:

I'm not saying all Greek Cypriots but those extremists were actually...electricity pylons passed through the middle of our town, but we didn't have electricity'

His experiences raised profound doubts that have continued to plague him

It was just weird looking back...all those events...and when I came here I was involved in left wing politics...I couldn't...you know...say if the Greeks was you know...people....brothers...then why was this happening? ....yeah...even though I met at college...Greek Cypriots who were friends....there was a part I couldn't throw away...

It is particularly difficult to discard the memory of such events. They tend to become inscribed in family histories and often acquire almost mythical proportions. On the other hand Nandine's and Michael's families came to seek a better or, at least a different, way of life, although in the long view their own histories are also realised against a background of colonialism. Throughout his narratives Michael, like the others, demonstrates a strong sense of history and affiliation with his heritage culture. His identity which is powerfully defined by the extreme racism he and his family encountered in Canning Town has even deeper roots in the Caribbean. He talks of Dominica with exceptional fondness, makes frequent trips to the Caribbean and is the only person in the sample who would still want to live in the homeland. He also sees the whole issue of racism in terms of deep historical connections

The relationship that our ancestors, both black and white, carved out something for us. For good or ill they locked us into this kind of struggle....My history is your history...So whether you repatriate me or not you will always be conscious of me... History is memory and you know... You will hear about me in books and you will see me in films. You will also be conscious of the other

Here he demonstrates that, far from assimilating the dominant discourses of history and culture in the West, he is examining the process critically and drawing on other black intellectuals, such as Fanon to articulate his own perspective and political point of view. He represents what Gramsci calls an 'organic intellectual' (Gramsci:1988:300-311). This committed, critical and knowledgeable approach to the history of their respective heritages is a common strand through all of the narratives. Each of the six has made a formal and critical study of their own historical and cultural location. (Asif also cites Fanon as an author whose arguments he found 'internally persuasive'). Their narratives are suffused with a deep knowledge and understanding of 'where they are from'.

In fact, this aspect has for many determined the direction of their later academic work. Michael's MA concerned the representation of black people in the canon of English Literature. His comments carry the resonance of his study. My studied the language teaching in Britain received by Chinese-Vietnamese settlers who fled Vietnam at the same time as her own family. Nandine studied bilingual Bangladeshi- British children in Tower Hamlets and worked on a research project which compared differences in conceptions of reading between mainstream schools and Arabic classes in the Mosque schools. Olgun's current MA dissertation involves close study of his own background. As described in Chapter 5 Alik's theatrical work is an exploration of identity, which draws very much on the history and tradition of her own cultural heritage. Although Asif has not engaged in study for an award bearing course he describes how he systematically read widely in the area.

All of this adds to the rich complexity of their understandings which is also probably read through countless recountings of family histories, in informal settings. It is easy to imagine conversations full of amusing anecdotes, farcical encounters, misunderstandings, family disagreements, tragedies and scandals. Each anecdote would be redolent of context, people, events, foods, smells, sights and sounds. Each would be described and savoured. Such stories may also be a source of mirth or embarrassment to adolescent sons and daughters. They will eventually be weighed against their actual experience gathered during their, often frequent, visits to their parents' homeland. A truly polyphonic inner speech. In the next chapter I will attempt to demonstrate how such, often conflicting, discourses are orchestrated into a coherent narrative of self.

### *6.3.3 Regular Visits to the 'homeland' and Ambivalence towards living in the 'homeland'*

All have visited their parents' country of origin many times. However, it is precisely in the parts of the conversations referring to their visits to their parents' 'homeland' where the most powerful ambivalences arise. Asif explains it well when he is discussing the issue of how his father sees the postmodernist position of identity as shallow and rootless.

..this idea of broadness... it's a strange...or is it that you've dissipated identity so much that you have nothing and you're lost, which is what my dad would suggest to you...

However he is wary of returning to his mythical homeland

I wouldn't mind being buried on our plot on our farm in the Punjab...So I like holding on to that idea of a base, but not an awful lot else. I think it's more of a romantic notion and nothing else

At one point he did toy with the idea of return to Karachi where many of his relatives live, taking the Civil Service Exam. However his distaste for the political situation and the day to day life prevented him. He talks about the bribery and corruption he experienced from even minor officials and the extremes of poverty and resulting brutality. Comparing it to Britain he says 'I do get very angry about the poverty in Britain but when you see people with their limbs hacked off by their junkie dads which is what you see a lot of in Karachi. Karachi is where my dad's family is from, is the major heroin export. It came from the Afghan thing. So there's a lot of drugs, a lot of crime and it's a very, very dangerous city.'

Whilst not so dramatic, Nandine similarly expresses a problem with regard to day to day life in Bangladesh:

I've thought it would be nice to go back and teach there but I'm very particular about things like...my grandparents now live in Dacca, but they've got open drains and ..I just can't...I found that very hard when I went last time...The last time was '92....I just thought there's no way I could put up with things like that and the dust and the heat...I suppose that's a bit superficial, but...and you don't quite fit in anyway. It's not like ...it's your motherland, but it's not really your...you are sort of straddling two countries. And I know this one infinitely better than that one and again I do stand out as well...

She goes on to say that she identifies more with young Asian people here

With the younger Asian generation coming up...and other peers I have.. What I see in the media and what I see in Literature, I see the emergence of a young Asian culture that's changing and new and I can identify with

This contrasts quite strongly with Michael's attitude. Having spent his childhood in the Caribbean, he carries an image which he cherishes and describes in a lyrical way. The Caribbean landscape fills him with wonder and nostalgia. He describes it almost anthropomorphically:

My playground was the sea...the rivers...the forests...the birds were my friends...your pets and you would go in the mountains and make traps with your friends and you would trap a bird which would become your pet and other animals...Space ... and sunshine...Colours, ... colours you know...Green, gold, you know... fantastic! I lived... I mean my house was there... and five seconds you're in the sea. You can hear the sea washing...while I'm sleeping....Then if you contrast that with here. It's like you've entered a dark tunnel... You can see the light at the other end. But then you're walking, walking, walking, walking, a totally different...way of living and way of being.

At another point he talks about witnessing traditional storytelling and dancing during his childhood which left an indelible and far reaching impression on him:

Well every day at a certain time the villagers would gather in the square and the storytellers would tell stories, traditional stories and the kinds of stories and other kinds of stories. And there would be dancing; traditional dancing. And this would happen with the moon. which I remember being really bright, as a kid. It was as if you didn't need any other kind of light. It was so bright. And with the sound of the sea in your ears and you would sit there really kind of enthralled by it, really kind of awed and listen and soak it all in.... And today I still hear the stories. I still visualise those images in my mind and again they are sustaining things. And being a creative person a lot of those things have crept into my stories.

It is interesting to note his difference from Aliko, who also uses her knowledge of her own heritage in her creative work to explore dilemmas of identity. Michael's experience of virulent racism has possibly meant that he recalls his homeland in a closer and more affectionate way. In fact, this marks out a significant difference which exists between those who were born in this country (Aliko, Nandine and Asif) and those born in their parents country of origin (Olgun, My and Michael), even if they came to Britain at a relatively early age. They remain much closer to the heart of the tradition, in terms of both their bilingualism and their attitude. It is also interesting to note that those born here have either made partnerships with people from outside their own community (Nandine and Asif) or intend to (Aliko).

However, Olgun's story adds another layer of complexity. Although he has very close connections with his own heritage and has married within his community he does demonstrate ambivalence toward his own cultural background on two occasions. The first is where he describes his journey with his aunt and uncle through Turkey, when he was sixteen. The car broke down and whilst it was being repaired Olgun was delayed in a hotel in Istanbul for

several days. What comes out most forcefully in this section of his narrative is his deep distaste to the treatment his aunt received from the Turkish men on the street.

...we couldn't go out... How shall I put it? We were really afraid of going out...the Turkish men...we tried to go out with my aunt one day and all the men were just looking at her...I don't know it was weird...Even though they were from the same culture, they were different to us...We felt really threatened by it....and Istanbul is such a massive place, you know, and my uncle had to be out there, just trying to get this part and you know when you walk down the street and they were just looking at us...just looking... and you know you feel really threatened...And these Turkish people and I thought ...you know... and I thought, you know, "I hate you...Leave us alone" and we went in a restaurant..and a man came and he was chatting up...trying to chat up my aunt. I hated him, you know...

The second time was on his return to Cyprus when he had to attend a boarding school in Nicosia. He disliked having to share a room, especially with 'sixteen of these dirty boys in this room...the room wasn't dirty but they were'. Like Asif and Nandine he missed the comfort and privacy of his life in England. However, he thought that the standard of education he received was far higher than in Britain:

I was ... I feel that, if there was a peak for knowledge absorption, that was it...I could just take the English and the Turkish just give me anything and I'll you know...I really got into education

Aliki's ambivalences to her own heritage run much deeper and are a prominent theme throughout her narrative: her distaste for many aspects of Greek Cypriot culture, her determination not to marry a Greek man and the poor self image she had for a large portion of her life. However at the end of her narrative she reveals that she is beginning to reconnect with that aspect of her identity in more positive and constructive ways. But she needs this to be on her own terms:

As soon as this year's out I want to go to Greek school and learn my language properly. I also want to spend weekends with my mum getting the recipes from her so that I can cook Greek, but that doesn't mean to say that I want to marry a Greek man. And that's what I keep telling my mum, because she keeps... Every time I get encouraged about my culture, she says 'Oh yes. A nice Greek man is in sight, I feel" and I say , "No, that's not what that's about. That's, you know, about me having to identify with my identity, and that's part of my identity....

I think I want to work in Cyprus for a few years. I want to teach out there for a couple of years. Not forever. But I would like to d some sort of drama out there... Something ....That's not the main reason. I think the main reason is so that I can talk to my mum properly.

So perhaps this too is a romantic notion of return. In fact, it is only Michael who harbours any serious notion of return and this would be for only half the year. My's position is different since as migrants to Vietnam from China they do not have the same attitude towards the 'homeland'. However, the Chinese Vietnamese community has one of the strongest infrastructures in terms of community schools. One of the first things that her father did on moving up to London from Devon was to enrol the children in Saturday schools. Many of the Vietnamese settled near Deptford. My's narrative is very different to the others in so far as she voices no discontent with either her heritage culture nor her experiences of Western culture. She readily admits to an English strand to her identity, but nothing further is specified. However, when asked directly what she thought were the relative strengths of each of the facets she replied that the good thing about Chinese culture was respect for elders, whereas the good thing about English culture was the amount of individual freedom it allowed.

#### *6.3.4 Ambivalence towards community schools*

In terms of maintaining language and identity, community schools have always been regarded as important resource for many communities. Up until the late 1980s local authorities gave space in state schools for classes to be conducted during the evenings and at weekends. Generally they did not charge for this facility. The first Greek school was set up in Camden Town as early as 1935. They are often well subscribed and well attended. However, there has never been a close connection with mainstream education in terms of administration or teaching style. The state is reluctant to officially fund such schools. Equally, communities seem to wish to maintain independence in terms of curriculum and teaching approaches.

Neither Olgun nor Michael attended community schools in this country. They arrived when they were about ten or eleven years old. However, Olgun had attended Turkish school in Cyprus with a very nationalistic outlook.

incredibly nationalistic. I mean...the Turkish flag and all the Turkish books from Turkey...Attaturk and the war of independence in Turkey and we were all part of that... a continuation, an extension of Turkey...we weren't Cypriots.

Out of the four people who attended community schools, only My sees it as a positive or at least unproblematic phenomenon. She attended from a relatively early age and her parents were keen for her and her siblings to maintain their home language and culture. My describes it as part of her parents wider agenda or 'prolepsis' as Cole calls it.

For my father and my mother, they knew English was important... But they knew that if we let go of our language, then they wouldn't understand us. So what my father did, instead of ...erm...we were talking our home language, but because there's no written form of our home language...He actually...my father...my mother and my father actually saved up a lot of money and bought us a video and through that they rented videos out...Cantonese videos out and that's how we

learned Cantonese, through listening, through the films and all that. So that's how we learned our speaking Cantonese. And when we moved to London...my father enrolled us into Saturday schools. It was to learn Cantonese. So I can write a little Cantonese now and I do speak Cantonese fluently.

I had assumed that Nandine had learned Bengali in a similar vein. This preconception was based on the fact that she had worked on a research project on reading styles in community language schools and acted as an interpreter. However, when she talks about it a different picture emerges:

C: What about... Did you ever get into Bengali literature or...?

N: I can't read Bengali!

.....

C: I didn't realise, I thought you were biliterate as well... No?

N: No...when I was at school there weren't many Bengali.... and there weren't any community schools at that time. And my parent were just more keen that we were learning English and we started with the Arabic later

In contrast both Aliko and Asif have late, brief and negative experiences of community schools. With the benefit of hindsight they are now highly critical of the methods of teaching, which were highly structured and formal. Asif remembers teasing the elderly teacher to relieve the boredom:

...dad sent me to the local mosque to the Islamic school...(laughs)...which was a complete riot...We'd just have some poor duffer who was about 60, who could barely stand with a big beard and a stick. And he had about 30 of these 8-10 year olds who just wanted to play and run around. And it was quite good fun to be chased by him with his walking stick. You know. He liked to use it a lot and we enjoyed being chased by him

As for the teaching methods he says:

It was.. ' Sit down. Everybody get the same thing out. I'll read a line. You read a line. You follow with your fingers.' So it was a sort of sing song

However, he was not aware of the differences in terms of learning as a child . He continues:

But...erm...I don't think it struck me as odd. At that point as a child I didn't really have set views on what learning was. I assumed that this was learning, I guess and I was prepared to trust the adults that that was happening. But now looking back I think it's very odd that; one, it wasn't in Urdu, it was in Arabic. The language we were singing to each other in was Arabic. I had no idea what it meant.



He didn't attend for long. His parents were not so committed to the idea of the schools as My's. Again it points to the dangers of visualising a community as a uniform and homogenised whole. It was very different aspects which prompted several ambivalences and discomforts for Alik. Alik and her sister were sent to their local community school when she was about eleven or twelve:

We were there every Saturday for a whole day and we hated it because we hated the Greek girls and we said we hated the Greek boys but we kind of fancied them. But me and my sister Maria would never admit to each other that we did...erm... and we used to bunk off and erm...there was a place where they had 'Space Invaders' and we'd spend the afternoon in there. Then we'd quickly go back and wait for mum to pick us up or get the bus back

Later in the conversation she talks explicitly about her negative feelings towards the other Greek girls:

Because they were...they all looked so Greek and the way they dressed was all so... They were confident... (pause)...I think that's the word...they were confident and we weren't. You know they talked to the boys with ease...You know they talked to the teachers with ease. They felt comfortable about being held by their parents and we didn't.

Their relationship to their culture is therefore a complex internal dialogue. What both Alik and Asif cannot understand or engage with is the bland unquestioning nature of the process from *their point of view*. For Asif the meaninglessness of chanting in a language he doesn't understand is odd. They are however both insiders to the culture and in Adorno's terms they are 'hating tradition properly' and attempting to achieve a new synthesis. This is not to say that My's approach is solely one of total compliance, that may be a facet of her narrative style an issue I shall explore in more detail in the next two chapters.

#### *6.3.5. Life partners*

One of the significant differences between the people who were born in Britain and those born in their parents' homeland is the issue of partners. Those born in Britain have either committed to someone outside of their own cultural heritage or intend to. Throughout her narrative Alik is insistent that she will not marry a Greek man. Nandine has been ostracised by her family for refusing to agree to a second arranged marriage and Asif lives with an Englishwoman. Both Olgun and Michael have married women from their own cultural backgrounds. My did not speak about her personal relationships.

#### *6.4 Relationships with Peers*

In the mythology of popular psychology, peers have a great influence on the construction of our identity. Peer pressure is seen to exert a powerful force, especially during the maelstrom of

adolescence. Certainly the importance of social belonging during this period of many people's lives in the West is a troubling and confusing experience. The fashion industry and the 'star making machinery behind the popular song' (Joni Mitchell:1975) certainly plug into this facet very successfully. So again I was surprised how little it is mentioned by the 'thirty somethings' in this study. I was even more surprised how little such peers reflect any sense of their own cultural heritage. Perhaps this second point delineates one of the dilemmas. Perhaps there are elements of one's own heritage that are traded off for academic success. Perhaps the norms of the dominant culture force people to be so embarrassed that they conceal their allegiances with their own family. This is certainly true in Alik's case, as is evidenced from anecdotes explored earlier.

When I asked about this explicitly she replied:

A: Yeah...I think so. Because if I'd have gone for my own culture. I'd be married now... I didn't want to go that way (pause)

C: Do you think there was anything conscious in there even at that very early age?

A: Yeah...about I don't want to get married and I want to be academic or I want to achieve something before I get married... Yeah

C: Where did that come from?

A: Dad was never around. There was no father there....

So it links back to the same quotation I explored earlier in this chapter. The result in terms of her peers was to surround herself with a group of school friends from different communities one of whom was Kula, who she didn't realise was Greek (See Chapter 5).

This becomes less surprising when she explains that:

We never talked about our families. Our mothers, our dad. We never talked about our brothers and sisters with friends.... don't know what we talked about but we never ever...I certainly remember not talking about mum and dad and I can't remember them speaking about mum and dad

Nandine goes further with the surprising statement:

N: I don't have many Bengali friends or friends from my background

C: Yeah?...Does that go back a way or is it recent really?

N: No, it goes back a long way really because you could never really trust someone

from your own circle...So none of my close friends have been Bengali

C: Right...why did that happen?

N: You just knew if they were from another family... Families were the most important thing and your friends came second. So if you were making friends..And I did have my fingers burned, because there were some girls who I was friendly with when I was younger. So one day I was moaning about my mum. 'My mum always makes me do the housework.' They'd go back and tell their mum, who'd tell my mum and then... So then I began to realise that you can't trust someone in your own circle

Again, although these stories are superficially similar, the motivations for avoiding any relationship between their peers and their cultural background are distinctly different and individual. One is to do with self image the other represents a desire for privacy in a close knit community. Olgun's narratives adds another twist which demonstrates the complexity of the notion of diaspora. When he arrived in Britain, the school showed concern and thought that it would be a good idea to pair him up with another Turkish Cypriot boy called Hussein. However this did not work out as planned, since 'he couldn't really speak Turkish, he was born here..' However the first day went well. Hussein knew how to say hello in Turkish and taught the class this greeting. Olgun confirms this as a good experience, 'the fact that Hussein was there and they all looked and smiled...and they tried in my language to say "Hello" to me was something special,' School was generally a positive experience:

apart from the ...Well, I didn't know about the bullying but that came later...But, as I say I didn't know any English, so I didn't know what was going on. It was a class of 25..26.. and I was sitting with Hussein and ..er..he wasn't telling me all the things...and he couldn't anyway...

They fell out because Hussein submitted to the school bully and was giving him 'lots of money':

So I said 'I'm not giving him money' ...I just started moving away from him, Hussein and I think it was then that I...and there were two brothers and they invited me to their home, Ian B and Victor B. They weren't really brothers. I found out later.. They were actually adopted...

It would, of course be wrong to read too much into this in psychological terms, but the two new English friends were in a similar position to Olgun. The friendship lasted some time

During the four year period that I was at secondary school I was in the same class with them...Of course, we had our bust ups now and again but generally we were sort of , like together..(but)..again my aunt was very strict with me and she wouldn't let me go out in the evenings and on Saturdays I had to go and work with my uncle

As with many aspects of this study there appears to be significant gender differences in the stories of their relationships with their peers. Aliko and Nandine talk of their relationships with their friends in closer and more affectionate terms. Asif scarcely mentions them and Michael is rather dismissive, often preferring his own company. It is a surprising aspect of their self narrative, since as adults all are gregarious and sociable people.

Following the brutal attack on him by racists on his way home from school, Michael retreated within himself. Throughout he preferred to deal with this situation in isolation. He gives lukewarm responses to questions of friendships:

I did know a lot of kids...you know...your friends came for you. You didn't really want to go, but you went. And when you went you had a good time. You got up to mischief...er..er.went to discos. The usual stuff...If you were to ask, I would have preferred to be on my own. But I did anyway. And when you did it, it was fun you had a laugh. you came back I would prefer to be on my... This is still the same today, you know. I see myself to be very much of a lo...I mean I socialise when I need to (laughs)

As a boy from an Asian background Asif found himself in the minority in a predominantly white school in Swindon. He talks of some rather humiliating comments he had to tolerate to become included in the social life of the school, which I guess is common to many 'survivors' in such situations. It had at least a temporary effect on his fluency in his home language. Following a question I ask about maintenance of Urdu, his heritage language, he replies that although he did maintain his home language at primary school:

I think in Secondary...When there's that social identity finding: Where do I fit? What do I speak? What am I? And being one of two Asian boys in this school in Swindon and...'You're not a Paki, you're just like us, really!' and I sort of bought into that, wanting to be part of the group, so I'd subsume my national identity to be part of that group identity. I think that had effect on my language...Even now I'm out of practice, but I make a point now when I go home..but say the turbulent stage of teenagehood from thirteen to about seventeen

However repellent this manifestation of racism was, in the long term it has not had a totally negative effect on his sense of identity. Like his father he seems to have dealt with it with both integrity and dignity, never surrendering completely to the ignorant and superficial view from the outside.

Then suddenly the use of Urdu again is a cultural thing that I'm trying to grab hold of once again to sort of rein that in...I'm not rejecting it as a blanket rejection of whatever this cultural melee is, but I'm very clear of where I fit within that, but I use my parents, my father in particular to bounce ideas off and to clarify those ideas for myself...

As an adult the experience has given him a sharply critical understanding. His experience has also given him a facility and the strategies to be included.

English has had ...*occasional* detrimental effects on me or being exclusive and not including me through other means. So that through race I've been excluded. Through speech, education, personality or whatever reasons I've been included. So it's a complex one there. But you know it's also the way it's excluded my family. So I identify very much with the excluded groups, ie. so, all non white groups really. So ideas of racism are quite strong for me and I'm very conscious of that...

Both Alike and Nandine have encountered similar experiences which have put them in a similar position but unlike Michael or Asif or even Olgun, they have used their network of friends for support. As was clear from the last chapter they both had networks of friends in primary school. At a later stage both experienced more indirect forms of institutional racism which they dealt with together with their friends and established a sense of social solidarity, which they express in less abstract terms than the men.

During her sixth form years Nandine attended a Roman Catholic Private School. Her parents thought that this would enhance her chances of success. Having been thought of as good at English in her previous state school, it came as some surprise that her abilities were regarded at a much lower level by her teachers. But even from the first day she experienced the negative attitudes of her fellow pupils. She describes the humiliating experience:

I can remember the first day. I was taken to the sixth form common room and Miss D, the Headteacher, introduced me and no one came and spoke to me and I just wanted the earth to swallow me up. I was just one of the most awful experiences I've had. And I just walked over to the window and stood there...Because they'd all...They were all in their cliques and there were five of us who had just joined the sixth form and we made our own...kind of outcast group

These were important friendships for Nandine:

I'm still in touch with one girl and she's Hindu...She's a doctor now... And there's a Ugandan girl and I've lost touch with her... She's a lovely girl... She was one of my best friends. Another Afro-Caribbean girl. She went to Scotland...

For the first time in her school life Nandine found difficulties with her work, particularly in her favourite subject English. She could not understand the cultural references in the text they were given to study: Blake, Gerard Manley Hopkins and Browning. This was exacerbated when the teacher predicted low grades for her and her African-Caribbean friend, Tracy.

...we were predicted. Both of us... Tracy was predicted an E and I was predicted an E. The other girls were predicted Bs and As. I was just beside myself, you know. But they kept saying, 'Well you know...' just talking about the difficulties I was

having interpreting 'x' and blah. blah... My essay writing was poor...

As in Asif's case a suitable tutor was found and she succeeded in getting a B. The episode however left a bitter aftertaste

I went back the next year and told Miss O (that she got a B) who said, 'Well I knew you'd do that anyway' ... It was an outrage... Tracey got a B as well and I was so angry, because I just thought... if I'd have had a bit more encouragement and a bit more prompting, it would have just meant so much more to me

The effects of teacher expectation are well documented and there is no need to rehearse those arguments here. What is clear is that those students from marginalised groups need a great deal of grit, determination and support from other sources to overcome deeply embedded and subtle forms of institutionalised racism. Although peer group support has worked well for the women the men see the struggle as a very individual one. It does form their basis of how they view the dominant culture themselves.

### *6.5. Relations with the dominant culture*

#### *6.5.1 Liberal tolerant values and a critical outlook*

As can be seen from the values implicit in their arguments, all six individuals have a liberal, tolerant attitude and a critical outlook generally associated with the Western liberal humanist education. Their critical outlook means that they question many aspects of the dominant discourses, which have been gathered from the mass media and through their education. It is most likely that all have encountered racism with varying degrees of intensity. I say most likely because it is not common to all the narratives. Five speak of this aspect openly, but it entirely absent from the transcript of My's conversation. In this section I wish to examine their attitudes to schooling then look at the thoughts that some of them have on the media before looking in some detail at their different ways of coping with racism

#### *6.5.2 A critical questioning of the values the dominant culture.*

Most have found the eurocentric educational experience interesting in its own way. Helped by the attitudes of their parents, they have been prepared to go along with this approach, being on the whole willing and well motivated pupils in the school system. However, all view the dominant culture in critical ways. There is a common pattern of crisis in late adolescence, which has been witnessed from many of the anecdotes and reflections cited so far. There is also evidence in the evaluative parts of their narratives that they have a great deal of knowledge of the power relationships in the history of colonialism. The three men and one of the women explicitly refer to the way that Marxism and other socialist thinking has influenced their own world view. Moreover three explicitly talk about the effect of the media in terms of (mis)representations of marginalised groups. Two explicitly talk about success as being personal success, not merely as academic achievement.

The crises talked about by Aiki, Michael and Nandine have been provoked by profound dissatisfaction with both their heritage culture and their experience of dominant white middle class culture, which permeates the media and schooling. Michael articulates this candidly and forcefully. Being a religious person he also includes, within his account, his crisis of faith.

You were being taught historical facts which when you begin to grow up...you begin to question those historical facts and I want more. I don't want you to say to me..'Well, this happened.' You need to tell me more. You need to tell me why and how.

Like many others in a similar position, being dissatisfied with the dominant discourses he began to look elsewhere for alternative, internally persuasive discourses

... I began to read..Malcolm X...Things that were not really in keeping with things that I was taught at school as the facts... You had to accept certain things, but I've never been a person to accept things. So after a while you question. You say to yourself. 'Is that so? Is that the way things are? And of course, Karl Marx..strangely enough...He put things into a context I was able to use and to really kind of see the social relationships which govern...

Here he rearticulates a position which is close to Aiki and Asif, in its perceptions and reiterates a political standpoint held by four out of the six. They all have a deeply critical take on the power mechanisms of capitalism in its current form. They have an equally critical view of their heritage cultures. Asif's arguments with his father and uncles over religion focus on the political dimensions (see Chapters 5 and 7). Some of the more explicit questioning of dominant values comes through discussion of the media.

### *6.5.3 Schooling*

Although they have all entered the teaching profession themselves, their experiences of being at school are not entirely positive. Whilst most agree that their schooling was on the whole a pleasant and enjoyable experience, there is only one instance where teachers are seen to have connected with the cultural experiences they brought as children. This is surprising since the majority of their schooling took place in the late 1970s and early 1980s, a time when money was being invested in multicultural and anti racist initiatives. When I embarked upon this research, I had expected My's positive experiences to be more common. Following her immersion classes in Thorny Island her family moved to Launceton in Devon, (which was described in the last chapter). The local education authority (LEA) had organised a thoughtful and enlightened approach to the education of the Chinese-Vietnamese children, where they were allowed to use their home language for part of the time and were also put into contexts where they had to speak English. Together with this their whole sense of culture and identity was supported. My's teacher encouraged the children to talk about their experiences and she also took the time to inform herself. However, My says that this was also an isolated experience. For her dissertation at university she interviewed Chinese-Vietnamese peers who had been educated in London. They had experienced less thoughtful and less sensitive

programmes and took much longer in achieving fluency in their second language than she herself did.

Olgun has some fond memories of his schooling in England. He was treated kindly by all of the teachers and given a great degree of understanding by the Head teacher, However, he refers to it as a tough school. He was very uncomfortable with the disruptive behaviour of some pupils and disrespectful way that they interacted with the teachers. Nevertheless, he achieved a great deal in the school, and after only three years scored the highest marks in the class in his examinations. Despite this he feels that school did not really acknowledge him as a person or any connections with his culture: 'No confirmation on the part of the school. I was just another face you know'

If individual teachers are remembered at all, they tend to be from primary school level. Aliko has vivid memories of two of her teachers. She even remembers the name of her favourite infant teacher, who would play the guitar and sing songs. It was in her class that she first began to have ambitions to act, which she sees as a turning point in her life:

A: And those are really like quite vivid. I can even remember an image on the projector screen which is of a person a little person erm doing that (makes a gesture) and I remember saying to the teacher, "Oh! I want to be that person on the screen" and that *really* sticks in my mind.

C: Why did you want to be that person on the screen?

A: Oh... I don't know. That's a can of worms. I don't know

C: What do you mean can of worms?

A: I think it's to do with my perception of my sister and my family and me and how others perceive me and I don't know if it's possible at such a young age to have that...maybe...I don't know...I certainly didn't enjoy going shopping at Sainsbury's at that very very young age, because people would look at *us*.

Aliko's memory is deeply but indirectly linked to questions of identity and how to hide her embarrassment of her other sister's condition and the fact that her mum spoke Greek. Despite the obvious impact of the teacher mentioned above, at this point in time she feels that school had failed her and her sisters. She does not believe there was any connection with her own heritage:

I can't remember anything in terms of books or class discussions or...ever relating to any other culture apart from English and that sticks in my brain. I don't know if that's just me as a grown up person sort of being defensive about it but (pause) I always thought that up to the end of secondary school that the whole thing had failed me and failed my sisters..erm..because I always had this "But what about



me?'..Kind of thing...'What about me? Aren't I special? And if I am special, why am I special?' And I never identified that it was because I spoke another language or that I had another culture.

When her family moved to Enfield, she moved to a secondary school which was even more eurocentric in its approach. She "just went completely mad and rebelled against everything... I kind of just lost hope". Towards the end of our conversation I ask her what difference it would have made if teachers had understood and acknowledged her identity.

I think my self image...of my self and my family would have been a lot better than it has been because...Not really by saying you're the best thing but someone acknowledging and respecting ...Not that it was disrespectful...But in a sense it *is* disrespecting if you're not acknowledging it, not taking it into consideration, not encouraging it...er, ...I think it would have made a huge difference...I really do...Yes!

Interestingly she has a different take on success in this context too:

I think...erm...I think I would have been personally more successful, because I think being academic makes no difference to me any more. I think it's about knowing who I am. What I'm about... If I had had that initial input I think I would have felt better about myself. And therefore I would just naturally achieved any way. I would have been more confident. I would have gone for things more... I wouldn't have given up every time I came to confrontation or conflict....

(.Formerly)..it was frustrating. I couldn't do it...I wanted to be good at the academic stuff but I couldn't because I didn't have the peace of mind and the confidence to do it...to...to see it through

Michael has a similar take on the issue of success at school but gives it a slightly different spin. He is quite explicit about his views on teachers:

C: Are there any teachers who stand out, who gave you support?

M: No

C: No?

M: Not one.....I did very well at school. No thanks to teachers

Paradoxically, he talks throughout of his love of school and particularly his love of books.

I loved school... when I was at school...I loved...you get me a new book..right..I just loved the feel of it...I'd smell it and I couldn't wait to open it...something fantastic to

me and I couldn't wait to peek inside and see what's in it...and yet I don't feel that the teachers did enough for people like myself to enable us to deal with school life

Part of this was the failure of teachers to acknowledge the complexity of Caribbean creoles and recognise that they do constitute a different language system. This applies especially to his own linguistic background which was the French based creole of Dominica.

It can't be just a different accent because the language I speak has nothing to do with English....

In common with many Caribbean children of his generation, he was not clear about the rules of the game and the majority of teachers were uninformed about these linguistic subtleties. Therefore they were never given the appropriate support with their language.

...when I first came here I was... I'm bilingual I speak two languages and whilst I spoke English I still found English very daunting. Because when I came here ...if you was speaking to me now some of what you're saying would pass me ... you see what I mean, because my accent and my way of saying things would not be the same as...So if you shoved a book in front of me ...there are certain things in it... I would recognise it but... That wasn't recognised you know. And there were quite a lot of Caribbean people in my school who did not have any other kind of support, who were not taken through the process. You were simply recognised as an English speaker and that was that.

This has had a profound effect upon his own personal and professional identity. The focus of his doctoral research is in this area.

Since Asif was one of the only two Asian pupils in his secondary school, no one found it necessary to build upon his cultural identity. In fact he felt he had to subsume this just to get by. I shall take this point up in more detail in the next chapter when I analyse this particular narrative.

Similar things happened to Nandine at her school. She remembers individual primary teachers and was an avid reader, but the examples she gives are exclusively eurocentric favourites such as Roald Dahl:

When I was younger I used to like reading lots. Even when we went to someone's house I'd end up finding a book and just sit there reading. So I was antisocial in a way.....The usual stuff: comic books or novels erm...I was reading things like Charlie and the Chocolate Factory and other Roald Dahl texts from when I was about.er..I suppose 8 or 9

In a similar way to Michael, but for very different reasons, Nandine used reading as a means of escape. When I asked her what appealed about those books she replied:

Imagination. Just so much...so much magic...My life was so mundane and boring...I'd just rather have my nose in a book...Yeah, it sort of helped me balance the fact that I couldn't go out with my friends very much...play on the streets...things like that...

She also enjoyed C.S. Lewis

...or there's something like 'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe'  
Sometimes...we used to have this old big wardrobe and I used to think, 'God, if I could open that and disappear into this other land, you know

There appear to be close parallels with Michael, who talks of his love of reading fantasy, at a slightly older age:

I was about ten ... eleven...erm... I loved comics..Superman...I loved fantasy books. I just chewed them up. One after the other I loved science fiction. Anything that didn't have to do with...If it wasn't reality based...I liked it. If I didn't have to face up to reality, what was around me. I mean, if you gave me a book..erm...a realistic book I would throw it back at you, because I didn't want to face up to anything that had reality in it. But it had to transport me somewhere. I had to feel I was somewhere else. I had to feel different.

However, the similarities are only close at a superficial level. Michael's comments connect both to his earlier life in Dominica, listening to traditional stories suffused with 'magical realism' and as an escape from brutal and violent racism he experienced in Canning Town and having to face the results of his father's frustrations.

In terms of what that does to you is you feel yourself constantly under siege.

In contrast it is boredom and drudgery that leads Nandine towards fantasy fiction

It wasn't that I was unhappy, that I was being abused or anything...it was just, you know, the same old routine at home helping out. You sort of get into that. But I didn't question it at the time,'Why do I read so much?' I just did it.

The by-product of this love of reading was that they both found it relatively easy to succeed at school work. Nandine was encouraged at primary school. She was told by many teachers that she was good at English. However, there is no indication from her own narrative that teachers made any connection with her own heritage. In fact, when at sixteen she transferred to a Roman Catholic school for her sixth form studies, she experienced real difficulties for the first time and her parents hired a tutor for her. On the whole, however, there is no reference to any overt racism in the early years of schooling in any of the narratives.

In summary, the most common feeling is that they have made it on their own, without a great deal of help from teachers, when asked to talk about those issues explicitly. However, there is a significant gender difference when it comes to accounts of individual teachers. The men mention very few. Only Olgun mentions one by name; a head teacher who was particularly kind to him. On the other hand the women's narratives contain warm anecdotes about several teachers. My found her schooling a completely productive and positive experience. Having said that, five of them explicitly talk about their love of school. Asif doesn't talk much about the detail of school, but concentrates more upon describing his interaction with his peers at that stage. I found it very surprising that five out of six, very successful people should have found nothing which connected with their heritage in their school life. Maybe this is in fact inaccurate, but as I said earlier, I am not concerned with the accuracy of their memories so much as the narratives they have constructed. *Their* point of view. The stories they tell to others. *Their* history. In those terms they retain the *impression* that there was nothing. So that even if they did have teachers who intended to follow such an approach the point was completely missed by those for whom it was intended. Moreover, these were not reluctant students. They were the kind of students who would be most open and receptive to such an approach. Therefore, *because* it is an unrepresentative sample it has wide implications for our profession. I shall return to this point in my concluding chapter.

#### 6.5.4 *The Mass Media*

Although Asif is a media studies teacher there is very little explicit reference to the media in his conversation. One oblique reference is in his discussion of Islam. He is particularly scathing about the simplistic notions held about Islam by Westerners. In his view there is a tendency to conflate it with a particular style of fundamentalism. The media tends to concentrate on such aspects. These chime in with Said's notion of Orientalism (1978). The Western media tends to perpetuate such mythologies. Asif observes that:

...when I have discussions with my dad and his friends it's about interpretations...ie Turkey.. Non alcohol..Well it doesn't actually say non Alcohol (in the Qu'ran) it says 'Don't get drunk.' So the Turkish people drink...yet it's an Islamic country...So Attaturk and whatever he did in the twenties 'modernising' Turkey. Is it still an Islamic state and so on or, you know do we have to look to the Saudi experience? Who are the authentic holders of Islam?...Or Singapore? Malaysia? There are lots of those countries which were not actually aware of. Particularly in British culture, we tend to pick on a few...

This question of stereotypical representation is one which bothers Alike. From her childhood she remembers that, if they appeared on television at all people of her heritage were often lampooned in crude ways. After speaking about her poor self image at the beginning of our conversation I asked her whether that was reinforced by school to which she replies:

I think so yeah, yeah... School and television, which may be why I was into drama and film and theatre. The fact that the images on television were not related, you

know to the images around me, in my home and with my family... And if you think that television is the be all and end all of how a child might see it, I probably thought, 'How comes we're not on television?' or our type isn't and when we were, we were funny... I used to think, 'Oh, this is unfair... I'd rather be English so that I could be on television' and if I were English then I would be on television and I think that translates into school,...

As she describes it, this search for representation and a voice, this quest for inclusion and acceptance strongly influenced the direction of her life.

Michael took this further in two directions. Part of his personal crisis as a religious person, brought up in a Catholic family was the popular image of Christ as a blue-eyed, blond-haired white man. This ubiquitous image, occurring even on the walls of his own home, troubled him deeply. It is a powerful image and continues to exert a powerful influence over many people even in these supposedly secular times. For Michael, combined with his experience of racism it was a profoundly disturbing one. He articulates the contradiction :

I go out into the world... I'm beaten up by white people. I'm oppressed. I'm told I'm a particular way. But that very image of whiteness is up on my wall. The very image which oppresses me, abuses me, I have to go home and worship. Now I've got to go in a church and worship him and I'm told that, 'That is OK'. That doesn't fit well with me. Do you see what I'm saying?

When I interviewed him in his home the walls were covered with representations of Christ and other biblical characters as black people. This problem of representation remains deep and powerful, although there has been some progress since the seventies when all the participants were at school. However, he sees that the media has extended the powerful dominant discourses of the United States, especially in the Caribbean, which has undermined the sense of community:

...what has happened is you have different cultures...you have an American way of looking at things. Because what has happened is (that) before the American culture was not so dominant. Now you have a way of looking at life which is influenced by outside. So the unity and closeness, the way of looking at things is not the same...it's crumbling away

However, he is quick to assert that he is not against change *per se*:

I think things will never stay the same. I'm not someone who believes that everything should stay. I think things change and they need to change. What I feel is that there are certain things that I'm seeing that are not very good...I think they're destructive

He talks of the values which come through soap operas:

..it comes with all other things...There is a glorification of certain values...selfish values

He links this world wide phenomenon with the observation that there does not seem to be a viable alternative for the young at present.

Nandine, on the other hand does not see the media as a homogeneous phenomenon. In her own position she has found alternative discourses which have been helpful and supportive in her dilemmas with her own parents and community. She talks about the comedy programme, 'Goodness, Gracious Me', which is written by Asian people and lampoons aspects of the British-Asian lifestyle.

I mean there's some parts that are very badly done...not very funny. But just the fact that there are, here, now a set of people that can laugh at things that are wrong with our culture without people being offended....and there's a lot to go against

She also talks about a documentary called 'Inside Story' which in which the filmmakers interviewed 'three Asian women who had chosen to be with English partners..' It had powerful resonances for her

...the actual emotion they felt I could identify with...you know, that separation. You know, having the complete...being completely ostracised from your family...and just to know that there are other young women out there who have experienced things like that...Not having any sense of revenge or...Just wanting to get on with life wanting them to accept and recognise that they have chosen something different, they haven't changed...I just think it's very sad. But there are other women out there that are like...

C: And does that personally give you a lot of strength?

N: Mmmm..It does...It does...I felt very empowered by it.

Our relationship with the mass media is extremely complex, but it is maybe an extension of media which have always existed. Plato criticised the medium of writing for precisely the same things that we apply to current technological advances.

The dilemmas outlined by Strange (1994:120), in her review of the 'knowledge economy' are certainly ones which need to be addressed and reflect the thoughts explored by the three participants.

Firstly there are changes in the provision and control over information and communications systems. Secondly there are changes in the use of language and non verbal channels of communication. And thirdly there are changes in the

fundamental perceptions of and beliefs about the human condition which influence value judgments and, through them political and economic decisions and policy

The question of value is a fundamental element in their ability to create a coherent and satisfying sense of self throughout this complex period of change. The role of the media in the process of identity formation is obviously a powerful and ambiguous one. As yet research into it is at very early stage. As Kathleen Hall (1999:13) points out there are inherent limitations of what the media can do in its representations of 'real life':

Media representations of 'real life' create a public 'space' where viewers in the privacy of their homes are brought into a zone of 'time-space compression'. In this space a fiction is created which seduces audiences into believing that they can know other realities by simply encountering them in a decontextualized media world...programmes produce selective and partial...views and interpretations of the complex cultural worlds they represent

### *6.6 Explicit views on identity*

All six individuals have a fluid and mobile sense of identity. Through their study and reading most are aware of the current debates in the area. Being 'organic intellectuals' (see Gramsci: 1988: 300-322) they also read these debates critically in the light of their own experiences. Obviously they locate themselves in slightly different positions from each other. In terms of allegiance some such as Olgun, My and Michael seem to be nearer to their 'traditional' heritages, whereas Nandine, Asif and Aliko have broken with some of the basic premises of their heritage culture. It may be merely coincidence that the former group were born in their parents' homeland whilst the latter group were not. Nandine is in the midst of profound, painful and fundamental changes in her sense of self. My says very little, yet her pithy comment that 'I have three strands to my identity, my Chinese strand, my Vietnamese strand and my English strand. If you take one strand away there is no My', points to a complex and intertwined sense of self.

Others are more explicit. Asif's musings have been detailed in both this chapter and the last. His view embraces all aspects, but is informed by a critical stance. He sees himself as a 'European traveller'. His sense of self is complex and unfinalised and he has no respect for those who have merely taken on an English persona uncritically. A critical awareness is a fundamental element for him. In this he has a similar viewpoint to Aliko. Her theatrical work explores her own dilemmas in powerful ways. This working through was not an altogether deliberate or conscious act. When I asked her if this exploration of identity links to her quest for peace of mind she replies:

I think so...Yeah...Maybe I'm ..I feel I'm trying to make sense of them for myself or... I don't know...I think it is...Even when I do them., I don't realise I'm doing them. I mean, when I wrote it, that play, it didn't have as much significance to me as it does know

As with Asif, this is further complicated in so far as both have made reconciliations with their families and the cultural legacy of their parents, but clearly on their own terms. Both see it as unfinished business. Aliko articulates this way:

The way that I feel about it now is I don't think it's over. I think there's more to come. I don't know if it will rear its head when I'm in a position to marry, settle down with someone...

Olgun continues to explore his sense of self, particularly his relationship to Greek Cypriots through study for his MA:

I mean...I chose to do it on Cyprus to understand why it happened and what are the reasons for it. I'm reading Greek books, British books, Turkish books and my experiences. I know more than..what I thought I knew...

This formal analysis of history, memory and narrative is a validation of his own experiences in Bakhtin's words, 'an internally persuasive discourse'.

In terms of what this complex syncretism looks like, Michael gives an extended overview of how he sees his own identity, which is far more complex than the theorists' picture of mere identity construction. In his view there must be coherence and continuity. However, he does not completely dismiss the postmodernist position:

'...you can slip in...because I slip into identities...But you need to have a concrete identity. By that I mean you need to have a core identity around which...like a sun and everything else all other identities rotate around that sun...

C: What does that core consist of?

M: It's my Caribbeanness...fused in with a little bit of my Britishness and that creates...but it's not..

C: But it's not an essentialist notion, then?

M: It's something more abstract..it is an abstract treatment.. It is the sum of my experiences that I have chipped away at..throughout my growing up. I have fashioned a sense of who I am. Now that sense of who I am is something I have worked at. Chipped away at all the fogginess. Chipped way at all the nonsense. Chipped away at all the things that I feel are unnecessary...What is left is me... You know I have chipped away at all the nonsense values I was taught. I've chipped away all the nonsense histories. The nonsense religions. I chipped way all the nonsense things about what British is, all the nonsense about what it is to be Caribbean and what I am left with is something I feel is me. It is the core. It is all the crap thrown away.



...It is being grounded in a way of being that I feel is me. My ideas of what life is is not based on what others have told me, but what I have come to find out for myself..and that has grounded me. It has rooted me like a tree.

...Now that rootedness does change, but then you'll always find your way back to that rootedness. That core of who you are.

So his view of the core identity is many layered and paradoxical. It does change, yet there is coherence. It is like our ever changing physical appearance. It is neither random nor arbitrary. There is pattern. There is continuity. There are strands which persist and endure over time. Memory is the link. Memory is culturally learned and mediated. It is soaked in the grammar of our experience. It is shaped through the cadence of the narratives we create to make sense of it and to render it meaningful and manageable. How this is achieved will be explored further in the next two chapters.

### *Conclusions*

Although there are unmistakable patterns in each of their experiences, what is emerging is a fascinatingly complex picture, which demonstrates how they are reworking their understandings of each of the strands of their identity. Such identities are not hybrid grafts, where they wear their English identity merely as a mask or a flag of convenience. I argue that they are working through complex internal and external processes by facing dilemmas which confront us all.

In summary the six conversations have unearthed a complex set of allegiances and ambivalences regarding their heritage cultures. All take a critical stance and have balanced the issues in profound and individual ways. All 'bring home forcefully...the paradoxical sense that ethnicity is something reinvented and reinterpreted in each generation by each individual...Ethnicity is not something that is simply passed on from generation to generation, taught and learned; it is something dynamic, often unsuccessfully repressed or avoided.' (Fisher, 1986:195) I have given detailed exemplification to demonstrate that even within the unmistakably common patterns, there are subtle and intricate differences woven through the fabric of their daily lives. They hold similarly complex allegiances and ambivalences to the dominant culture too; through schooling, the media and their differing experiences of racism and their very different strategies for coping with this disturbingly pervasive aspect of modern cosmopolitan living.

So the pattern is complex and uneven. It certainly seems that routines learned early in life have more persistence and allow people to engage with aspects of their heritage in routinised and unthinking ways. This is not to say that they aren't genuinely comfortable with this but it does chime in with Bakhtin's view of two types of action which he calls rhythm and loophole. Rhythm consists of routinised patterns of behaviour which we engage in without being fully

aware of what we are doing. Most have some practical imperative. The danger with rhythm is that it becomes an uncritical way of behaving, conventionalised and where we do not take individual responsibility for our actions. It can be a dull and uncreative way of living. Loophole, on the other, hand means being fully aware and looking for ways of resolving the problems of living in ways which are dynamic, creative and ethical.

The problem the stories raise is whether it is actually possible to radically and consciously change our identity. Whilst identities *are* constructed, some elements appear more basic to its constitution than others. Also, although changes do take place over time the difficulties involved in consciously changing our identity should not be underestimated. Although it is liberating that 'postmodernist' thinkers have unsettled essentialist notions of identity and shown the creative possibilities offered by playing with identities, they have not considered sufficiently the 'residual' aspects of identity formation. Identities are still constructed within layers of historical experience and within specific political structures, hierarchies and struggles. As in Nandine's account, identities cannot be shed for pragmatic reasons without great psychic cost.

Memory plays an important part in the process. The act of remembering is an active, dynamic and creative one. They are continually 'modernising the past'. (Yourcenar: 1957/1994) On the other hand memory's dark shadow, forgetting, is less amenable to conscious change. Often memories flood back unbidden to disturb our view of ourselves and the world. Several of the people involved in this study report disapproval for people they know, family or acquaintances, who try to alter their behaviour to gain material advantage in the workplace. They are seen as denying aspects of their own history and heritage merely to gain promotion and recognition. All feel that contradictions need to be faced and dealt with. There is a difference between 'hating tradition properly' (to use Adorno's phrase) and submitting uncritically to the dominant discourses of the powerful.

'Hating tradition properly' means maintaining a courageous and critical dialogue with our own heritage. Being able to weigh and balance the positive and the negative of all the networks we belong to. In other words to maintain integrity. Integrity is also the root of integration in terms of personality. Questions of differing values are a central problematic to cross cultural understanding. At present we appear to want to leave such difficult aspects of pluralism to one side unexamined. However, these are the issues which the people in this study are grappling with, in their various ways. Throughout the narratives I have detected a strong emphasis on values. Many of the dilemmas which they face centre round ethical issues, which is fundamental element in the construction of their identities. This is not to diminish the problems which exist in terms of power and struggle. These are the most challenging questions of our time.

All feel they are richer in a human sense for confronting their dilemmas with honesty and integrity. Having detailed and intimate knowledge of a range of cultural possibilities, gives them distinct advantages:

- a critical distance on social and political issues and an ability to make comparisons
  - a more complex, yet integrated view of the self
  - explicit understandings of the issues of identity
- 
- a broader and deeper understanding of the current global situation. As Stuart Hall has commented 'We're all diasporic now'
  - an understanding of the relationship between culture and power
  - the development of radical values which go beyond and often conflict with values of both the home culture and the dominant culture. These often draw on existing academic discourses and debates, most notably feminist discourses

As their stories demonstrate, new formations in terms of identity are neither unproblematic, nor painless. However, far from being disadvantaged by this situation the six individuals are open to a wide range of influences and making critical sense of them. In the next chapter I wish to delve more deeply into how they are actually constructing that sense of identity through their narratives. To look at the patterns of their 'storied lives' (Rosenwald & Ochberg:1992) and to examine how they use basic narrative devices, ie emplotment, character, scene, time and point of view, (Clandenin and Connelly:2000:19) in order to recount and make sense of their lives, I shall use a framework I have developed from Bakhtin's work (1979) in which he considers character development in both the novel and life.

*Chapter 7: Inventing Mythologies: analysis of life stories using Bakhtin's triad as a framework*

*There were three men went down the road  
As down the road went he  
The man he was  
The man folk saw  
The man he wished to be*

*Source unknown*

*As the poem points out, our awareness of ourselves is at best problematic. In fact it is a thoroughly complicated affair: many levelled, multi-faceted, and ever changing*

*Randall (1997:345)*

*The flow of events forms our external life, while within us a series of pictures is painted. The two correspond but are not identical.*

*Rabindranath Tagore (1917:17)*

*7.1 Why Bakhtin's triad?*

In this second layer of analysis I examine how the varying elements, influences, discomforts and ambivalences identified in the last chapter are woven into a distinctive identity. It is clear that the construction of identity consists of much more than slipping in and out of roles to negotiate many different social networks. Nothing works in isolation. Each facet of a person's identity impacts on the other. It results in complex inner and outer dialogues. My argument is that such syncretism is achieved by the orchestration of different influences and significant events into a coherent sense of self. I further argue that this process of orchestration is clear within the self narratives of the six individuals.

To analyse this aspect of identity I have constructed a tool to throw these aspects into clear relief. I call this **whole dialogue analysis**. As there were no existing frameworks to analyse identity construction, I had to devise my own. I required a framework which was simultaneously sophisticated, flexible and dynamic. I also needed one which was relatively simple and straightforward to use. Finally, I needed a framework which was open enough to allow categories of self to emerge, particularly as I see the process as polythetic, not falling into neat or predictable categories.

For this purpose I drew upon Vygotsky (1978, 1986) and Bakhtin's (1979, 1981, 1984, 1986, 1986a) idea that human consciousness is a product of the interplay between our internal consciousness and the external forces acting upon us, mediated by socially generated symbolic systems ie gesture, language, art, music, dance etc. For the purposes of this study I shall concentrate upon language. Such an approach avoids the overdetermination of rationalist/behaviourist models by returning to the individual responsibility for their own actions. It also mitigates against the extremes of postmodernist thinking, which affirms that identities are constructed, but greatly underestimates the power and influence of external forces to constrain and shape our thoughts and actions. These are issues I have already argued more fully in Chapter 4 and Chapter 6.

For the framework for analysis I turned to an early work of Bakhtin (1979). Bakhtin first posited his ideas of the relationship between insidedness and outsidedness in the development of human consciousness in an early work entitled, "Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity". As Morson and Emerson (1990:179) point out:

Bakhtin extends his ethical concepts into the realm of the aesthetic. Now his primary concern is not so much with individual responsibility and the ways we answer for ourselves in an act as with the ways in which we come to create images of others and ourself for others... Bakhtin examines the process of self formation in both art and life...

## *7.2 A Description of the Framework*

Bakhtin suggests that the development of consciousness consists of a triad comprising the following elements:

- **self for self:** ('the man he was') how I perceive myself from the inside
- **self for others:** ('the man folk saw') how I appear to others (my social persona)
- **others for self:** ('the man he wished to be') how others appear to me  
(influential people, role models or the reverse)

I used Bakhtin's categories to sort the interviews to demonstrate the development of identity in the six individuals. The patterns are uneven. Although there are similarities between the

ways they construct their identities through narratives, there are also differences. These, in turn, appear to be linked to narrative styles and subtleties of social and cultural etiquettes. For example some of the people describe their struggles and discomforts forcefully, while others have a quiet and understated style of unfolding their tale.

In both this chapter and the next, I argue that narrative styles have a connection with traditional cultural priorities and practices in storytelling. Such practices are learned in families and form a very basic constituent to our individual identity. As we have observed in the last chapter, the past exerts a much greater constraining force on cultural change than has been recognised hitherto by many postmodernist theorists. Using Bakhtin's categories to examine their life narratives, it becomes apparent how deep the roots of tradition are. The participants work through contradictions and ambivalences to gain an authentic and balanced sense of identity, whereby they acknowledge all areas of their social belonging. I argue that this process consists of a constant rewriting of the self. Although identity is always in the process of change, it does have a recognisable consistency and continuity which persists throughout the life of the individual. This coherence is achieved through the narrative devices by which we 'story' our lives and create our own mythologies of self.

### *7.3 A preliminary word about narrative*

I must point out that throughout these analyses I use the term narrative in its most inclusive and broadest possible sense. During the twentieth century the narrative genre became very blurred indeed. In fact this tradition goes back at least as far as Melville, or possibly even Sterne. "Moby Dick" does not begin with the famous line, "Call me Ishmael" as is generally supposed. It starts with an etymology of the whale, 'supplied by a late consumptive usher to a grammar school... who loved to dust his old grammars, it somehow reminded him of his own mortality.' This is then followed by a long compendium of 'extracts' from sources ranging from the Bible and Pliny to King Alfred and Thomas Jefferson, as well as Natural History Journals. This introduction prepares the reader for many such digressions that constantly interrupt the 'story' such as it is. For this reason, I shall not follow Longacre's (1976), otherwise useful, classification of spoken language into narrative, procedural, hortatory and expository, since for the present purpose the other three categories are often subsumed within the narratives. Therefore, I consider the themed conversations to be long narratives, in turn made up of shorter narratives.

### *7.4 Sorting the narratives*

Once I had transcribed the conversations and coded various sections of the narratives using Bakhtin's categories, (see above 7.2) I then transferred contextualised versions of this information onto grids for analysis. This clarified the developmental processes considerably. More specifically it demonstrated how the different elements interact within the narratives. In short it became a window upon the syncretic processes which were taking place in the life of each person as they weighed and balanced the often contradictory events and discourses. Full transcripts of the grids appear in full as Appendices 1 to 6 and appear in the order in which the

interviews were conducted.

This framework enabled me to trace the development of identity as it progressed through our whole dialogues. My original plan was to organise the material chronologically. However, this became unnecessary since, in most cases, the stories tend to be told in roughly chronological order, allowing for the usual amount of room for flashbacks or projections into the future that occur in even the most straightforward narrative. Only in Alikí's case does this pattern vary considerably.

Another reason that I decided against presenting the narratives in a chronological order is that, in common with many long narratives, the effect is cumulative. A good example of this is contained in a coda to my conversation with Michael, when I asked him to redescribe a memory from his childhood in Dominica. In it he recalled his experiences of watching traditional stories and dancing being performed on a beach in the moonlight. After describing this he went on to connect it with his earlier analysis of his own identity and his current work in fiction and poetry. He also connected the experience and the stories he heard with the magical realism of Gabriel Garcia-Marquez and Isabel Allende and the African writer Ben Okri. To try and separate these reflections out would destroy not only the important connections being made, it would also destroy its beauty and its meaning. Therefore I have decided to let the chronology of the recorded event take precedence over the chronology of the life described. It tells us more about the nature of memory.

*7.5 Whole dialogue analysis:* As a graph or a table was out of the question, to examine the broader patterns, I had to devise an approach which would allow me to examine the patterning of the whole dialogue. Most available tools examine oral language of conversation at the level of short exchanges. Conversation analysis (Sacks: 1972, 1974; Jefferson: 1978; Schegloff: 1978; Ryave: 1978 and Godwin: 1984) looks at turn taking, adjacency pairs and overlapping. Other tools look at pauses, hesitations. These devices have been very useful in examining such factors as how power is distributed and how agreed meanings are negotiated. However, they have generally been concerned with small utterances. The longest analytical approach looks at story. (eg Labov: 1972, 1972a, 1972b, 1972c, Gee: 1989, 1991, 1996, Tedlock: 1983, Hymes: 1996). I shall be using some of these approaches in Chapter 8. Both Cortazzi (1993) and Reisser (1993) review the literature in this area, which draws on such methods of narrative analysis used by various researchers in several disciplines eg sociology, social psychology, linguistics and ethnography. As far as I am aware no one has yet looked at the structuring of life narratives over the entire interview.

### *7.6 The Advantages of Whole Dialogue Analysis*

My approach is premised on the understanding that whole conversations on a single topic have a cumulative effect akin to a novel. That is, once the conversation is underway, certain basic premises and understandings emerge which are built upon and developed throughout the conversation. Viewed from this perspective, it becomes clear that far from being shapeless and arbitrary, whole conversations have a definite architecture and follow quite precise

narrative patterns. Although there are obvious differences in the narrative approaches of each individual, there are clear patterns too. By colour coding the stages of development, I was able to summarise the information contained on the original grids ie using the headings which had emerged in my original sorting. (See Appendices 7-12)

This form of analysis has given a different perspective to the stories and links it to much of the recent research in social psychology, which views the self as something which is continually being reinscribed. (Freeman:1993) The same events are continually being rewritten from new perspectives.

### *7.7 Development of personal identity and the demands of the narrative genre*

In my close examination of the conversations it has become apparent that the requirements of the narrative genre make it necessary to present the memories in a rhythm of causal sequences. Personal development can be viewed most readily in the 'self for self' column. It becomes immediately apparent that periods of discomfort and crisis invariably precede moments of 'epiphany' or temporary resolution. Crises are almost always precipitated by a dissonance or discomfort regarding demands made by the social group which the individual finds uncomfortable or unsettling. With the six individuals, this often takes the form of responses to racism, as can be seen in the stories told in the previous section.

### *7.8 Finding meaningful categories*

Once I had coded the stories according to Bakhtin's categories, I gave each a heading which seemed meaningful. I wished for the categories to emerge, rather than allowing myself to get trapped in a too rigid framework to begin with. Initially, I found that the categories I had used were not of the same order. eg 'role model' is not of the same categorical order as 'influence'. Therefore, I refined them, subdividing them into 'Aspects of outsideness' and 'Stages of Development'. (See below, Figure 1) I also found that it made more sense to employ them as a dyad eg Role model/Influence; Dominant culture/Discomfort etc.

<b>Aspects of outsideness/influences</b>	<b>Stages of Development</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Role model/ Parent (RM)</li> <li>• Heritage:Community / history / tradition (H)</li> <li>• Alternative norms/ role model(AltRM)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Influence</li> <li>• Prolepsis</li> <li>• Ambition</li> <li>• Discomfort</li> <li>• Ambivalence</li> <li>• Reflection</li> <li>• Epiphany</li> </ul>

**Figure 1. Categories for coding the narratives**



Most of the categories are self explanatory with the exception of 'epiphany' which I appropriated from James Joyce, since I think it best describes the breakthrough to a temporary and unfinalised sense of equilibrium between both the internal perceptions and the outside forces which result in an authentic sense of self. For example when Michael realised that he did not have to put up with 'the nonsense he was being fed', he had found alternative models which in turn enhanced his own way of expressing himself, and contributed to his clear and distinctive individual voice.

### *7.9 The Rejection of Quantitative approach*

Obviously these aspects differ from person to person. Not all categories occur in each person's account. For example, Alik's grids demonstrate a great deal of 'ambivalence' and 'discomfort', whereas these characteristics are entirely absent from My's grids. These represent the most extreme polarities in terms of structure. I had initially thought that it might be interesting to quantify this information in some way, but I have decided against it for a number of reasons:

- being decontextualised the information would be fairly meaningless
- that approach would be misleading in terms of a picture it gave of their individual personality. For example a prevalence of the codings 'discomfort' and 'ambivalence' may appear to some readers to be evidence of a confused or depressed character, which in all cases would be far from the truth.
- it is not be in keeping with the holistic and contextualised basis of the model itself

### *7.10 Analysing the Narratives*

#### *7.10.1 General observations*

There are some consistent patterns which emerge from the grids:

*a) All begin with outsidersness:* With the exception of My the movement of the narrative over the space of the conversation is from 'outsidersness' ('others for self' and 'self for others') to 'insidersness' ('self for self'). The imperative of the narrative means that the external scene has to be set before any internal exploration could become contextualised and meaningful. Moreover, it becomes clear how those external influences become orchestrated in the narratives into a coherent sense of self. The really significant finding for me is that this pattern occurs irrespective of whether the narrative follows a strict chronological sequence or not. However, most do follow a chronological pattern. This could be because I generally asked them to begin by telling me something of their parents' history. Obviously there is some movement backwards and forwards as themes are taken up and related to different parts of their lives, or sometimes I intervene to ask them to elaborate on something they said earlier.

*b) There are distinct gender differences:* in the construction of the narratives, particularly as the individuals see the influence of the dominant culture (English) upon their sense of identity. The women's narratives concentrate mainly on family and friends whereas the men consider their life 'out in the world' in much more detail. If we consider the relative impact of the different influences in terms of gender there are distinct differences and some paradoxes. Whilst the narratives of the women concentrate on the domestic arena, they also acknowledge the influence of the norms and values of the dominant culture on their sense of self in much more direct and explicit ways than the men. As demonstrated in the last chapter the influence of families, particularly fathers, has a considerable resonance in all of the narratives. Although all of them have questioned such discourses in fundamental ways, it is interesting to note the powerful effect, which they still exert on their sense of self. Nandine's and Alik's stories bear witness to the psychic cost of breaking away from their heritage.

*c) Some of the values from the heritage culture remain in their final assessments.* Both Olgun and Nandine talk about the subtle etiquettes that still influence their day to day lives

*d) Most narratives contain explicitly political metanarratives.* They are all extremely critical of the discourses of both the dominant culture and their own heritage. It is here that their construction of self goes against the prognosis of theorists like Giddens (1991) who overestimate the impact of technological change in our constructions of self identity. Certainly, the sophisticated technology of 'high modernity' (Giddens:1991) allows the economically powerful to survey, seduce, bully and control whole populations in ways which would have been unimaginable even fifty years ago. However, one of the lessons of events in Eastern Europe must be that such control does not always change consciousness in the way that the powerful anticipate.

*e) Most conversations demonstrate a complex, yet critical consciousness:* Certainly these life histories bear witness to a complex, yet critical consciousness emerging. All of the maps of the conversations reveal some differences in their individual patterning but I need to deal with My's first as it is exceptional in several senses.

#### *The exception of My*

The map of my conversation with My is exceptional. There are no entries in the 'Self for Self' column. Her entries are remarkable since she only displays 'influence' and 'prolepsis' in all her narrative. The others all register frequent ambivalences to the dominant culture, the heritage culture or both. They also register some personal opinion about their parents or community. In her talk My does none of these things. Her talk is even and measured and her narrative delivery is neutral and factual. She acknowledges the influence of the dominant culture and her parents. Not only is she uncritical concerning her own schooling, she is positive about her teachers' approaches. Her parents' prolepsis, explicitly examined in the last chapter, shows that she was expected to submit unquestioningly to the discipline of the school in order to achieve success. There is a sense of thoroughness in the father's approach. Home

culture is valued and developed, yet it is portrayed as a separate and essentially private business. As she comes from a Chinese background it is tempting to make links with the philosophy of Taoism, Buddhism and Confucianism, which are quietistic in essence and are predicated upon the annihilation of the individual self. In his book, 'Zen and Japanese Culture' D.T.Suzuki (1959) indicates that this is precisely the transformation Buddhism underwent when it arrived in China from India.

### 7.10.2 *Factors in the construction of Identity*

#### *i) Insidedness/Self for self*

Patterns in the construction of identity are most marked if we examine the column which charts their internal view point. (Self for Self) Apart from My, the patterns are clear and consistent. Periods of discomfort are interspersed with periods of epiphany. In all cases there are reflections, usually in the form of a metanarrative and this is frequently political in nature. In four out of the five cases, identity is discussed explicitly, near the end of the conversation, sometimes at my request.

There are differences in the sources of discomfort, which do not divide readily according to gender. They are much more closely related to individual experience. Michael's discomforts are predominantly with the dominant culture, which is unsurprising given his experience of racism. However, his personal crisis is precipitated by the fact that he has problems with *both* his own heritage *and* the values of the dominant culture. Olgun's column has a roughly equal number of discomforts and ambivalences and here they are roughly equally divided between the heritage culture and dominant culture as he travelled back and forth between England and Cyprus.

Asif's discomforts and ambivalences tend to be focused on the heritage culture rather than the dominant culture, as do Alik's. However, there are far more instances of epiphany in Alik's 'Self for Self' column. In fact these take up most of the space in her column. Her discomforts lie predominantly in the 'Self for Others' column. This is because her narrative focuses predominantly on her poor self image which she discusses many times throughout her conversation. It is reasonable to connect this with to her working class roots, as she does explicitly when she talks about her experiences at college. Unsurprisingly, Nandine's discomforts and ambivalences are exclusively centred on her heritage. Because she had been ostracised by her family, they were the factors uppermost in her mind when we spoke. The patterns reflect and confirm the analysis of content of their narratives in the previous two chapters. They represent the results of their orchestration of the conflicting influences to maintain a coherent, critical and continuous sense of self. In their epiphanies they celebrate all aspects of their identity in terms of both time and place. The most significant finding for me is that they seem to be more preoccupied, at this period in their lives, with reintegrating their own traditions into their view of identity than accomodating to the dominant culture. This is clearly a common dilemma for their stage of development. It is possibly because they had to subsume this part of their lived experience to achieve academic success.

During the transcription I was continually impressed by the fluent and articulate way that each individual was expressing these complex processes. I now realise that this rewriting of self is a continual and everyday process they have been engaged in for a very long time. They are continually rehearsing and updating these narratives. As Michael states at one point:

Now, if you don't reinvent yourself and try to find that core, where are you gonna end up, except you know a place where you really don't want to be... Now it's an invention of an invention of an invention. Do you see what I'm saying? The process of invention is still going on but it's less than before..

and Nandine concurs:

I suppose I'm just rethinking...especially now I'm having to re-evaluate everything...what something stands for and what something means...the way I interact with people is one but...am I losing things?

## *ii) Outsidedness*

What the outsidedness columns show is how the six individuals acknowledge the influence of families, friends, their heritage community and the disparate forces of the dominant culture upon them. They also chart the ways they tried to fit in socially with various networks they belonged to. Without exception they begin their narratives by discussing the influence of parents or tradition or both. Part of this stems from the fact that I asked them to begin by letting me know something of their family histories. It is interesting to note a gender division between the men who talk predominantly about their role model, usually their father; and the women who tend to talk about their heritage or in the case of Aliko and My, the influence of the dominant culture. There is however a clear difference between My's attitude towards the dominant culture and Aliko's view point. My tended to comply, but maintained a strong sense of her Chinese -Vietnamese identity too. Aliko felt herself inferior and was envious that she and her family could not belong to a culture who she thought had weddings in marquees and meals at set times. She felt an emotional need to be part of the dominant culture but she also felt a resentment that she was not.

In some of the maps of the conversation, there are 'alternative role models', More often than not, these came from 'secondary sources' They mention significant books, films and television programmes. They also tend to mention these factors in their narratives at about the time that their ambivalence and discomforts are about to precipitate an epiphany of sorts.

Aspects of their stories which I have classified as 'self for others' are generally concerned with the heritage culture or the dominant culture. In the narratives they tend to discuss the benefits of belonging or what action should be taken if they are rejected. Sometimes they wonder whether they want to be included at any price. As Nandine remarks at such a point in her dialogue:

I think there are a lot of professional women who have a certain amount of you know...economic and intellectual independence may feel that they have ...erm...That it is the realms of possibility to move out of that community if it's making them unhappy...I suppose that if you do make the break there will be that pain there won't there? You've broken out of....Enduring that pain is better than what you've left behind...I suppose it takes..I suppose emotionally something has to happen to you and you start to think, 'No, look something's not right'

These outside influences are also very significant in determining many aspects of the internal processes ('self for self'). The framework allows us to observe this intricate process. The development of their discomforts and ambivalences in relation to their own internal processes is revealed. It demonstrates how their narratives describe the subtle interplay between all of the elements. Moreover, it makes it clear that similar influences do not have the same weighting for each individual. It is not always easy to reconstruct your own identity consciously to conform with your own desires. Events as powerful as Michael's beatings or Olgun's experiences as a prisoner of war obviously have a profoundly limiting and lasting effects on their sense of identity.

### *7.10.3 Examination of the processes*

In this section I examine those dynamic processes at work in the narratives of three of the six individuals. For this I have chosen excerpts which centre round their individual epiphanies. This is where syncretic influences gain at least temporary closure. The maps themselves help us locate these crucial moments in their current constructions of identity. They also reveal both the broader and more immediate contexts in which they occur. In what follows, I shall examine them in detail to observe how the different and often conflicting aspects are internally orchestrated in their narrative accounts to give an integrated sense of self

For the sake of clarity I shall begin with a brief summary of the relevant section of the conversation to be analysed. This will be followed by the table showing a summary of the analysis of the section of the conversation. The detail of the analysis will follow the general maps.

### *7.11 Asif*

When we spoke it appeared that Asif was in the process of making sense of how he related to his heritage culture. This was precipitated by recent events in his family, his father having recently returned to the Islamic faith, following a serious illness. I wish therefore to examine a series of epiphanies on this topic as they occur in his narrative. We can observe how he 'stories' the conflicting loyalties and understandings in quite a clear series of moves. Below I have summarised the section of the conversation and have printed an excerpt from the map of the conversation. A more expanded version of this summary can be found in Appendix 2. The transcription of this section of the conversation took up eight handwritten pages of my quarto notebook.

### 7.11.1 *Summary of the conversation*

In this section of the conversation, Asif begins by talking about the history of his family's migration to Karachi from Dehli. According to him it was a 'chain migration' of a large Urdu speaking community. He goes on to describe how the Urdu speaking community achieve economic power in Karachi and how this has caused friction with the indigenous population over the years, since 1948. He also speaks of the political movement the MQM which represents the interests of this Urdu speaking community.

He then goes on to speak about how he wanted to travel there and thought that he would fit in easily. It was at this point that he had the rude awakening . He realised he could not get by on his Urdu. At my request he talks about his fluency in Urdu , saying that he was fluent in primary school.

In the next section he moves on to describe how he rejected his linguistic and cultural background at secondary school being only one of two Asian boys in his school. He then describes how he is coming back to a recognition of his parents heritage but on his own terms. This involves a great deal of discussion with his parents and his uncles. He talks of his father's illness and how as a result he has returned to Islam.

He then speaks about his own experiences at Islamic school and how he didn't understand what was going on since the lessons were conducted in Classical Arabic. In the final section he describes his present position as regards religion.

### 7.11.2 *Map of the Conversation*

When I analysed this section a clear pattern began to emerge:

<b>Others for self</b>	<b>Self for others</b>	<b>Self for self</b>
	H/Influence H/Ambivalence	
	H/Influence H&DC/Discomfort	Epiphany
H(school)/Discomfort		(metanarrative)
	H/Ambivalence H/(school)/Influence	
H/Discomfort		Epiphany
	H = Heritage Culture	DC = Dominant Culture

### 7.11.3 *General comments*

The first thing to notice is the movement back and forth in the narrative from outsideness to insiderness. Moreover, most of the entries revealing outside influences are in the category 'self for others'. Unsurprisingly, they all have 'Heritage' as their main focus. This is an epiphany about belonging (or not) to his heritage. His view of outsiderness is also balanced equally between his influences and ambivalences. This reveals that this is no easy move, although there is no lack of clarity in the final outcome.

The way he presents this is also interesting. It is a conventional Western liberal humanist way of constructing an argument. He considers each side in an even handed and tolerant way and argues a rational outcome. A potentially controversial or seemingly insensitive remark often carries a rider. Where he speaks of his father's return to faith after a heart attack, he notes that it is a common phenomenon for people who experience serious illness, then adds, 'Maybe that's cynical on my part'. In his piece such evaluations are quite often in the form of a metanarrative, where he steps back from the story to give an additional, necessary context to the content or a reason for a judgment which will follow. Likewise he is keen to acknowledge the positive qualities of his heritage culture and in his first epiphany in the sequence he tells of his dawning understanding that he did not know his heritage culture as well as he thought.

### 7.11.4 *Detailed analysis*

If we break this conversation down further it becomes interesting that his argument consists of two moves. In the first move he distances himself from the way people behave in his parent's 'homeland'.

**Others for self**

**Self for others**

**Self for self**

H/Influence

H/Ambivalence

Epiphany

This is achieved in quite a complex way. He begins by describing his heritage with some pride. He outlines the positive achievements of his heritage community in the homeland. (H/Influence) He tells of the movement of his family's community from India to Pakistan, which he describes as a 'chain migration' He describes how '.. a lot of that was going on. One family would settle and say 'Life is good in Karachi' Come here.' So he sees this as an important part of his history and his heritage. The community became economically successful in Karachi and have formed a political group, the MQM (the Mahajar Qom Movement) whose leader was living in Mill Hill at the time of our conversation. So here he displays his knowledge of the political and economic background.

His narrative then moves on to chart some ambivalence in terms of his own knowledge, H/Ambivalence. He achieves this in a move which Labov (1972) would call 'complication', a

standard narrative device where some issue of doubt or conflict is raised. It comes in the form of what Aristotle calls 'anagnorisis' or 'discovery':

I was shocked actually because I had had assumed that all Pakistanis speak Urdu... I was going through a bit of independent travelling...I thought, 'I'll go to Pakistan I'll just wander... I look the part... I'll be able to go anywhere.' But it's only the top 8% who've Urdu

This first epiphany (Epiphany) is that he did not understand the culture as well as he thought.

Urdu is the 'language of the educated and everybody else has got Punjabi or Sindi or Beluchi ...It scuppered my plans a bit because Dad speaks Punjabi, but I don't.' He is learning something of the complexity and contradiction of the relationship between the 'homeland' and the 'diaspora'. Ironically this discovery came from a 'Lonely Planet' Travel Guide.

The second narrative move builds on the first:

Others for self	Self for others	Self for self
	H/Influence	
	H&DC/Discomfort	
		H/Discomfort
		H(school)/Discomfort
		(metanarrative)
	H/Ambivalence	
	H/(school)/Influence	
H/Discomfort		
		Epiphany

At my request he then talks about his competence in Urdu and he tells of how he maintained it at primary school and how this has given him a strong base.(H/Influence)

Within six months I'm sure I'd be speaking properly.

This leads to the next complication. (H&DC/Discomfort) Talk of secondary school triggers uncomfortable associations about conflicting loyalties between his own heritage and the dominant culture. In Aristotelian terms this rhetorical narrative device is 'Peripeteia' or 'tragic reversal'

I think in secondary, when there's that social identity finding, where do I fit? What do I speak? What am I? And being one of two Asian boys in this school in Swindon and 'You're not a Paki, you're just like us really' and I sort of bought into that wanting to be part of the group.



Here he demonstrates how he had to subsume the Asian strand of his identity in the face of racism from his classmates. (This was explored more fully in the Chapter 6). It is interesting to note that he follows this progression through relating it to his attitudes to his heritage language:

Say the turbulent stage of teenagehood from say thirteen to 17, I didn't speak an awful lot, but obviously I listened.

The conflicting discourses between his family and his schoolmates are difficult to resolve and his narrative moves forward to the present, but still with some discomfort. It begins with language:

Then suddenly the use of Urdu again is a cultural thing that I'm trying to grab hold of again to sort of rein that in

This then broadens out into a discussion of wider considerations and residual discomforts with his heritage, which he portrays as an ongoing internal and external dialogue

I'm not rejecting it as a blanket rejection of whatever this cultural melee is, but I'm very clear where I fit in within that. But I use my parents a lot, my father in particular to bounce ideas off and to clarify those boundaries for myself for what is and what isn't

He talks of this in relation to his father's recent enthusiasm for Islam

So he's doing that and it's good for him, but he feels very bad that I'm not. And he feels very much that it was his cultural duty to do that. To actually get me involved in religion from an early age. And he did make a few little attempts.

This in turn triggers two memories by way of illustration. Both illustrate Asif's ambivalences. (H/Ambivalence) One concerns the time when his father bought him booklets which were a children's introduction to the Qu'ran, which he seems to have enjoyed. The other is a discussion of his time at the mosque school, which bored him and was more fully explored in the last chapter. Both demonstrate how little Asif was affected by such teachings. He readily admits that that is not how he would have seen it as a child. At the time he was willing to go along with his parents wishes (H/(school)/Influence). However, in his metanarrative he is critical of such approaches from his own perspective as a qualified teacher, (H(school)/Discomfort (metanarrative), this shows the complex set of conflicting forces which are awaiting an internal resolution.

He then moves on to describe his own view. He still remains unconvinced that he should return to Islam and argues the point with his uncles and his father (H/Discomfort). This leads to the second Epiphany where he describes his current position. He cannot admit to faith because he simply does not feel it. His interest is from a sociological/cultural/political perspective. Although he rejects the premises his family put forward, he is also highly critical of the

stereotyped assumptions that are current in most of the dominant discourses in Britain concerning Islam. He is interested that the complexity of the Islamic diaspora should be recognised and not just the most narrow and illiberal manifestations which the media concentrate upon.

#### *7.11.5 Summary and Findings*

One advantage of analysing the conversation in the framework suggested by Bakhtin is that it reveals how the different elements of Asif's past experiences and present understandings are orchestrated in a complex and critical way. He is not simply shedding one set of self understandings for another, even though some of the situations have forced him to make tough decisions sometimes and make uncomfortable compromises. Cultural change as it manifests itself in an individual consciousness is a labyrinthine process. Both the internal and external dialogues are ongoing. The process is deeply social and complex.

For example, Asif's piece demonstrates him to be educated into Western discourses, since his narratives are built on the same structural basis as the academic essay. This formality of structures contrasts with the informality of many of his speech patterns, yet it gives credence and credibility to his narratives to his presumed audience. It also indicates the professional relationship he has with me in the conduct of this research. He is sensitive to the parameters of academic discourse. Although he rarely speaks of the influence of the dominant culture on his identity, it is clear that it has influenced him on a profound level in the very way he frames his discourse and the rhetorical mannerisms he employs. However, it would also be a mistake to depict the Western intellectual tradition as a homogenised whole, or to distance it from his own parents' experiences. As educated people they are likely to have encountered such discourse patterns in the curriculum of the universities in India. There never has been purity in terms of culture.

The second advantage to using the framework is that the whole dialogue approach allows us to identify gaps in the narratives. This does not mean that they are real gaps in the sense that they have never been considered or addressed. Any narrative is going to be incomplete in some way. For Asif there is little reference to the dominant culture and only one example of discomfort in this area. His dealings with the dominant culture are perhaps an area that he already feels that he's resolved to his own satisfaction. This is hinted at by the fact that he talks about strategies whereby he has experienced 'belonging' or 'inclusion' in areas where his family has been excluded. So, it is possible that his relationship to the dominant culture is not the issue it once was. It plays a smaller part in his current narrative of self. Moreover, there are no alternative role models mentioned although it is clear that he is widely read and he does identify with the struggles of other marginalised people. He has read and been influenced by the same authors as Michael. Again we need to be careful about drawing any definite conclusion, except to note that these issues are not high on Asif's current agenda. They appear to have been integrated into his world view. They are now normalised and taken for granted. What the extract does display is how he is reintegrating himself into his heritage on his own terms and that this is a very delicate process.

The other two examples I wish to analyse in some detail are Aliko and Michael. They demonstrate more explicitly how they deal with the conflict between their personal history and heritage and the dominant culture. What is interesting is that all participants have developed very different ways of approaching the many forms of racism they have encountered in their lives. Asif was in an absolute minority in his secondary school in Swindon and was forced to skilfully subvert the racism of schoolmates, by his humour and force of personality. By contrast, Michael retreated into himself due to the vicious and persistently physical nature of the racism he encountered. Aliko is different again. In her case the dominance of the cultural norms and the fact that she had a sister with severe special needs led her to become insecure about her own cultural background. She lost her self esteem. What the grids display is how all these complex and varied influences are balanced and analysed in the discourse of the individual.

## 7. 12 *Aliko*

### 7. 12.1 *Summary of a Conversation*

I now wish to turn to Aliko, who demonstrates a different approach in achieving her own syncretism. Like Asif she is attempting to reconsider her heritage on her own terms but her route is markedly different. If we consider the map of her whole conversation, there are, in fact, marked differences from all the others analysed. As I mentioned earlier her epiphanies occur more frequently and appear earlier, both in terms of the narrative and chronologically. Her first epiphany relates to an event that happened in school when she was six. The teacher showed a picture of a performer on an OHP screen. The memory is so vivid that she even remembers the teacher's name. Her reaction was to tell the teacher that she wants to be the person on the screen. This relates to her poor self image and as she interprets it now. At the time of the interview, she felt that it put her on the path to being a performer. This in turn led to her method of working through her dilemmas creatively. In the narrative she sees this as a real turning point.

Secondly, just before she related the incident which is analysed here she described two eidetic memories, obviously about a time before she would have learned to talk. She is the only one in the of the six individuals who did this. Eidetic memories are usually composed of images and sensations and do not have a narrative value ie there is no 'point' to them. No tension. No resolution. They are even harder to corroborate than those related as a narrative. But they are laden with affect, as are all her narratives. She really feels her past as she relives it.

The third point is that her conversation is the least chronological. It tends to be thematic. The section we are about to examine is a typical example of her approach. She begins by discussing the poor self image she developed at primary school. Her narrative then turns to how these negative feelings lasted for a long time, 'up to the end of [her] degree'. Then she gives an account of how the issue was resolved, by returning to episodes from different parts of her degree course. Part of this lack of chronology could be explained by the fact that this was

the first conversation in the present study. I had not developed the strategy of asking her to tell me something about her parents' journey to Britain. However, I did ask her to think about her earliest memories. So perhaps this is a characteristic of her narrative style. It would certainly fit in with the culturally based findings of Deborah Tannen's research (1980), with references to Greek women's autobiographical narratives, conducted in the US. She compared the narratives of Greek and American women after viewing a film and concluded that the Greeks seemed to be 'acute judges' who recounted events and interpreted them, ascribing motives to characters and offering judgments, whereas the Americans were 'acute recallers' who gave more detailed descriptive accounts and were more concerned with accuracy of detail and chronology. While Americans focussed on content, Greeks focused on interpersonal involvement. Whilst we must treat such generalisation with caution, Alik's narrative bears out this approach both in its overarching structure and the detail of her observation. It is worth noting that she is a Cypriot, whereas, Tannen's group were from Athens. In my analysis I wish to concentrate upon the series of epiphanies which happened during her degree course in Community Arts. It was as part of this course that she performed her one woman show described in Chapter 5.

### 7. 12. 2 *Map of the Conversation*

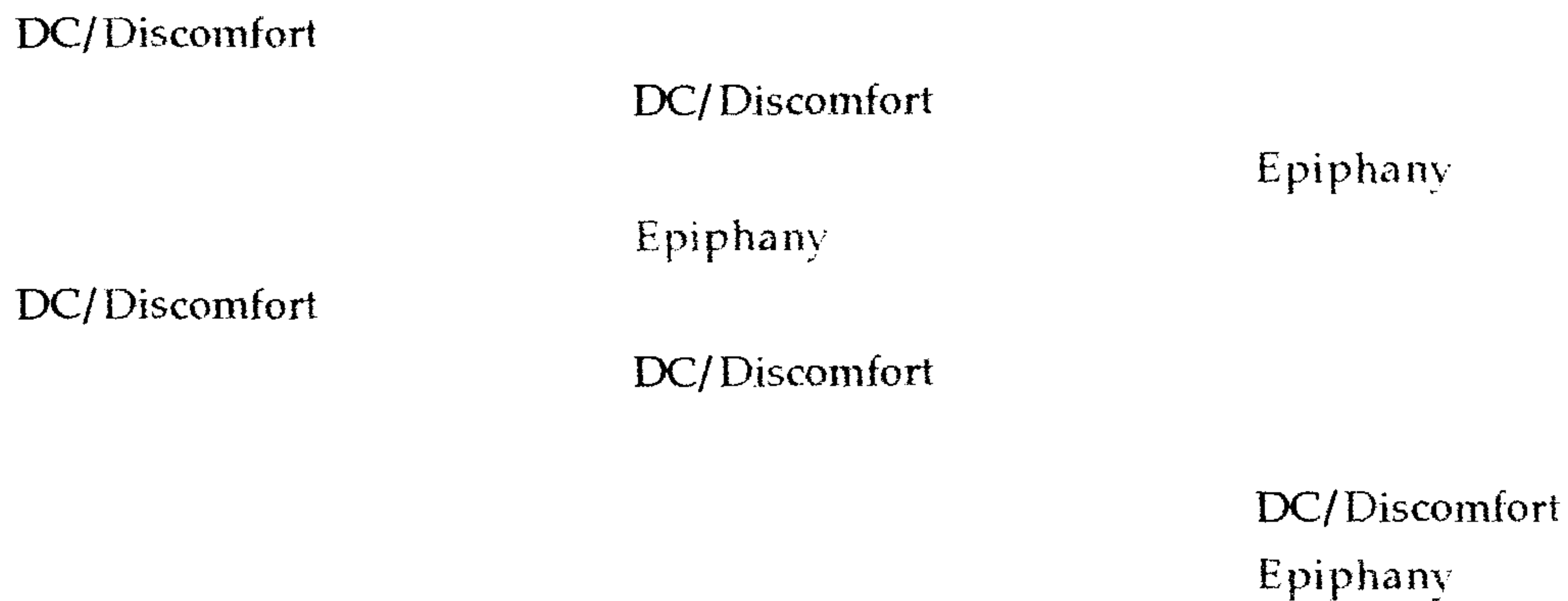
<b>Others for self</b>	<b>Self for others</b>	<b>Self for self</b>
DC/Discomfort		
	DC/Discomfort	
		Epiphany
	Epiphany	
DC/Discomfort	DC/Discomfort	
		Epiphany
AltRM/Influence		Epiphany
AltRM/Influence		
AltRM/Influence		Epiphany
DC/Discomfort		
	DC/Discomfort	
	DC/Discomfort	
DC/Ambivalence		Epiphany
	DC/Discomfort	
AltH/Influence		
	DC/Discomfort	
No role model		Epiphany

Although it is not much longer than Asif's in terms of time she took to tell it, there is considerably more movement. Her telling is energetic, complex and detailed. It is more explicitly thematic than Asif's. I am not implying that Asif's is less perceptive, rather it is a stylistic difference. By freeing herself from the chronology she makes explicit links with different parts of her experience. Themes are reworked and revisited. Her narrative consists of several layers.

### 7. 12.3 Detailed analysis

#### 7. 12.3.1 The first layer: Beginning with complication

The first layer summarises the whole pattern in three statements to do with her self image that have a direct movement from outside to inside and an internal resolution ie



Unlike Asif, she begins her narrative with a complication, which is a narrative technique used extensively by film makers. It immediately grabs the audience's attention. This device can be seen earlier in the weddings story, which begins with the potentially shocking statement, 'I hated weddings' She introduces this first section of her narrative with an account of her desire to be like the 'other' (DC/Discomfort). This is a recurring theme throughout the conversation. In this case it is:

an Irish friend who lived up the road...I was really jealous of her...because she white. She had blonde hair and she was ever so pale, but like porcelain looking.

This in turn affects how she would like to be for others (DC/Discomfort) and contrasts with her actual appearance

I think I just loved that sort of image and I thought 'Oh I want to be that' and you can see how it relates. I'm so dark and curly haired...

This state of affairs lasted a long time

I think I carried that all the way through until the end of my degree

She then moves forward to hint at her epiphany, where there is an anticipation that these discomforts will be resolved. She maintains the narrative interest. Her analytical approach drives her to isolate two causes to the changes. First:

I came out of a long term relationship which was oppressive

She goes on to explain that this had severely undermined her self confidence in terms of her own heritage. It was linked to also her own experience of teaching. During her school experience as a student she worked with pupils from similar backgrounds to herself. That experience added another level of insight, it

...suddenly made me realise that you couldn't put people in boxes and deny them who they were. Because with some kids , I'd think, I know why you're doing that' and in terms of drama, I know that they've got their sentences mixed up and it sounds awkward and it sounds gawky and that's why the other kids don't want them in their group. And it just clicked and I thought, 'That's me!' or 'That's how I perceive myself' and that's why I can't move forward because I won't let myself move forward...

This is also linked to the fact that she was in an oppressive relationship at the time (DC/Discomfort). She also realised that some of the criticisms her boyfriend made of her behaviour were actually culturally inflected. She elaborates:

...he was very middle class, but trying to be...trying to understand other people, which is positive ultimately....my mannerisms, my gestures, what I thought about things he put down to aggression and he told me I was aggressive. Whereas now when I look back and when I started changing I started thinking 'Well actually that's not aggression. It's just me! It's part of my culture. We're like that you know!' (Epiphany)

#### 7. 12.3.2 *The second layer: Alternative Role Models*

AltRM/ Influence

Epiphany

AltRM/ Influence

AltRM/ Influence

Epiphany

In the second layer, she elaborates further on this transformation and how it was aided by another person AltRM/Influence who had a genuine delight in diversity and helped her to accommodate those cultural aspects to her identity, which she had been trying so hard to bury or deny. Here she weaves in a second theme which is to contribute to the resolution of her discomfort

A: It came from another teacher who..er..told me that he thought it was great and I was so lucky to be Greek and so lucky to have such a culture and told me that I ought not to think too much about how I look or how other people see me and really encouraged, you know my family thing and he said, 'I bet you have really nice family meals. And I bet they're really loud and that's really nice' and I said, 'No they're not!'

C: And was he right?

A: Yes, absolutely, because you know, I go home and it doesn't bother me anymore ...I don't resent it. (Epiphany) I think a lot of times I resented it I just wanted to leave the room and not be around my family

Here again she merely hints at a resolution. She then returns to her second theme and elaborates on the influence of the other teacher (AltRM/Influence) to analyse the impact of this approval. This is made more forceful by the direct comparison of the two conflicting influences:

to suddenly have someone tell you you were really great for....in comparison to someone who says you're aggressive and you ought to be more ladylike and you ought to think about how you speak and you know maybe read a book so that you can articulate and learn more about language...I couldn't stop myself from accepting that kind of attention because I think that's what I was craving for years and years and years...it was a release..and ever since then I've phshhheeww.. (raises hand to indicate a rapid growth in her self confidence) (Epiphany)

She makes the sudden realisation that the cultural modes of expression learned at home were an integral part of her identity. At this stage anger replaces embarrassment. In her narrative is criticism of the 'liberal' middle class male who obviously sees his own viewpoint as essentially culture free. It has never excluded him from any public space, so he has no understanding of his own cultural presuppositions. It illustrates the normalising effect of the dominant discourses, which are backed by real social and economic power. It demonstrates the self confidence that such cultural inflections can bring to the privileged.

### 7. 12.3.3 *The third layer*

DC/Discomfort

DC/Discomfort

DC/Discomfort

DC/Ambivalence

Epiphany

Once again, Alikí's narrative then returns to the theme of alternative role models and how a female tutor's encouragement on the PGCE course bolstered her confidence. In terms of chronology this precedes the previously mentioned relationship with the teacher on her school experience. So she builds a picture of her development in thematic layers rather than chronologically.

Together the teacher and the tutor offer her three things as alternative role models::

- approval
- a different interpretation of her own behaviour
- new possibilities of how to live and how to be which are more compatible with her own desires and ways of being

This relates to Bakhtin's theory of loophole. He hypothesised that the individual is alive only 'in the sense of a constant possibility, a constant need to transform my life formally to insert new meaning in my life (the ultimate word of consciousness)'. (Bakhtin:1979:107) It also relates to Homi Bhabba's (1995) theory of the third time space (See Chapter 4). Both suggest that within constraints we can change. Yet as Alikí's story shows, this process becomes easier if we have allies. What Alikí is doing is reappropriating materials from her own heritage to fashion a new identity. This new sense of identity enables her to reach the next epiphany when:

(I) kept saying to myself, 'I'm not going to be how I was when I did my degree. I'm not going to disappear...and I'm going to have a voice

She feels that during her time on the community arts course, she was denied an authentic voice. So her narrative now returns by flashback to explore this process from yet another angle. She criticises the course, which she feels was governed by middle class norms which were never explicitly stated. Her flashbacks demonstrate that she was already working through these dilemmas in her creative work, before the alternative role models acted as a catalyst and gave her a new found confidence. This leads on to the fourth layer of her narrative, where she goes back to enlarge upon and summarise her struggles at college by using a single anecdote. It describes an instance of institutionalised racism, which denied her an authentic voice.

#### 7. 12.3.4 *The fourth layer: Reconnecting with the original complication*



By way of introduction she says, 'You're gonna be amazed by this.' She and her non white friends felt a great deal of discomfort from her fellow students' lack of understanding and sensitivity (DC/Discomfort). In her narrative she goes on to point out the contradictions:

And that's really funny because the degree course was in Community Theatre Arts and a lot of it was based around...erm enabling people from sections of the community that were (...) without a voice, but there were sections of the community that (laughs) had a voice. A very, very strong voice! And there were English people that had very rich fathers and mummies. And I think that was a contradiction...erm and they used their language skills to crush others

To compound this she had an ambivalent attitude towards the tutors (DC/Ambivalence)

I think I just felt patronised... they didn't have the skills as educators to do that in a way you believed them

She then embarks upon a narrative that has a classical structure, involving what Aristotle refers to as Peripeteia and Anagnorisis (reversal and discovery). She introduces her narrative with the statement, 'You're gonna be amazed by this.' She tells of a time during her second year when the students were left to elect their own groups to devise their own projects. In the second week she discovered that all of the white students had formed themselves into groups without really informing the non white students. The scales fell from her eyes when she discovered:

the people who were left was me, my Asian friend Luna, my African friend Zande, my Asian friend, Kaken and my West Indian friend, Cherry. And they were all the black, Greek, Asian people in our year...and we hadn't even spoken to each other... And everyone piped up and said, Oh that's great...you can form a group and do something about (laughs) minority groups..

It was then that her lack of self esteem boiled over into anger. She remembers 'completely freaking out' DC/Discomfort

...We were all in this room, I said' I think it's disgusting. I've not got a chip on my shoulder about being Greek and if I have then, OK fine, but look there's white people over there and there's all us bloody ethnics over here. If we're a Community Theatre Arts Course and we're trying to represent sections of the community that aren't represented in theatre, then why are we all together and you guys are all over there.

The tutors were, again ineffectual

..our lecturer came in and said, ' I can't do anything about this...Maybe you can use the experience as a way of inspiring some sort of theatre'

She realised there was no role model here, in fact this was the pressure which forced her upon her own devices. Her solution was to write a play, which represents her Epiphany

I wrote a play about a group of sweat shop workers who did not get on. Because I think that was our way of saying, "Just because we're foreign, it doesn't mean that we must all get on...or that we all share something, you know that's not the case. It's about people and it's about humanity...

Here she is using all of her experiences to make some sense out of her identity and her predicament, just as she does in her one woman play described in Chapter 4. She is sorting and organising the different strands to make a coherent whole, although it may have less significance when she is actually involved in the creative act... As she remarks later in the interview when talking about her writing of plays:

Even when I do them I don't realise I'm doing them. I mean when I wrote that play, it didn't have as much significance to me as it does now. And it's like when we read plays we don't know why the writer wrote them...The writers, when they first write them don't really know why. And then they look back and say, 'Oh, yeah. That means that and that's about that.' And you sort of analyse it that way.

So it is a continuous process of writing the self and reflecting upon what you have written. This may account for the fact that towards the end of each of the conversations with the six individuals there are passages of reflection, even if I didn't directly request her to engage in them.

Most of Alik's conversations have this cumulative narrative, which returns to similar themes and elaborates upon them. Her construction of identity is multilayered and complex, yet it is simultaneously coherent in both its narrative style and the values expressed. There is a distinct and culturally formed voice. If Asif's narrative is direct and succinct, Alik's is layered and analytical. She is aware of this aspect of her style and connects it to her continuing ambitions to follow a career in the legal profession. Michael's narrative is, by contrast, philosophical and hortatory. Its continual use of the second person has the resonance of a preacher or at least a skilled orator. Although he tends to be more chronological in his approach he, nevertheless, explores a theme in a constant layering of argument. In his narratives he returns to the same point and explores it from a different angle again and again. His attractive, almost poetic way of expressing himself lends his speech a particularly persuasive and powerful rhetorical force and resonance.

#### *7.13.4 Michael*

##### *7.13.4.1 Summary of his conversation*

An examination of his conversation as a whole reveals two important factors in the development of Michael's identity. First there is the powerful influence of his father and his

parents' Caribbean heritage. The second factor is the seminal effect of the racist attack, in defining the edge of his identity and precipitating his internally reflective and philosophical approach. Like Aliko he begins to talk about epiphanies quite early in the dialogue. Following the racist attack he retreated, not only into reading, but also into creative expression, particularly writing and painting. This may have enhanced his very developed and distinctive rhetorical speaking style. In his first epiphany he realises that he has creative talents. A significant gap in his narrative is that he never talks about the reactions of others to his work. This contrasts sharply with both Nandine and Aliko who both talk of teachers who praised their writing. Another major difference is that he is the only person to talk of the powerful effect of landscape on his construction of self. His description of the Caribbean is full of sensual longing and delight. Towards the end of the conversation he includes a very long, explicit and sophisticated description of how he sees his identity, which was discussed in Chapter 5. He concludes by setting his story in a broad historical framework and reflects upon the whole topic of identity both critically and politically. His conversation has an elegant shape that moves in waves, to a clear conclusion.

I now want to examine one particular episode from his conversation in detail. Following a long section where he gave a dystopic view of the influence of American mass culture on the Caribbean, I turned off the tape. But this is often the point when we relax that the best stories appear. As soon as I had switched the machine off, Michael launched in to a beautiful and magical description of his early experiences in Dominica, listening to folk tales and watching traditional dancing on the seashore. The scene he described was one which was lit by the bright Caribbean moon. The sound of waves was crashing in his ears. I asked him to repeat the story on tape. Obviously what I got was a pale shadow of his spontaneous outburst. However, he then went on to connect this with his own writing today. The section illustrates how he uses the past to review and rewrite the present. Linking current events to their source.

### 7.13.2 *Map of the Conversation*

H/Influence		H/Influence
H/Influence		H/Influence
		H/Influence
		H/Influence
DC/Discomfort		
		DC/Discomfort
		DC/Discomfort
No Alt RM/Discomfort		
		Political Reflection
		Political Reflection
H/Influence		
H/Influence		
		Epiphany
		Epiphany

Although this section appears to be very brief in its summary form it was in fact a really long and elaborate exposition of his views. As I noted earlier a distinctive feature of his narrative style is his cumulative approach. Like a preacher or a musician he returns to the same theme with variations again and again, so that he explores an area thoroughly and philosophically. There is a strong element of performance in his approach. When I talked to him explicitly about this he said that this was his father's style too. So perhaps it has deep traditional roots. He added that he was also greatly influenced by the traditional storytellers he had heard in his childhood.

### 7. 13.3 *Detailed analysis*

At the start of this section he goes back beyond his own time frame to talk about his family in the Caribbean and how certain definite values were inculcated into him. A certain pride in his ancestors is apparent here (H/Influence):

We've got to be proud of who we are...we've done things that are good and we have to be proud of that

Certain members of the family were wealthy and successful. To be part of this you had to observe certain codes of behaviour. (H/Influence) There was a certain way of looking at life. Unity in the family was important:

It's the struggles within the family, but then when you go outside, those struggles are put aside and you are one

This obviously entailed conformity (H/Influence) to codes of behaviour, etiquettes, duties and above all respect. Respect for elders was paramount in this scheme of things. Misconduct was named. Transgressors were shamed and punished. (H/Influence) A variety of people had a right to discipline children

(if) you're older than me and I say something to you, you have the right to hold my ears, drag me home, tell my granny I did something

In this, he describes in a slightly regretful tone the passing of these harsh but honourable values. That leads to his next move where he contrasts these values with the current cultural domination of the Caribbean, with the introduction of American liberal and libertarian values. (DC/Discomfort) He sees these as having a detrimental effect on the traditional sense of unity:

The American culture was not so dominant. Now you have a way of looking for life which is very much influenced from outside. So the unity, the closeness, the way of looking at things is not the same...it's crumbling away

However, he does not view this in a completely romantic light. He realises that there were things that were not comfortable in the traditional scheme of things

I think things will never stay the same. I'm not someone who believes that everything should stay, I think things should change. What I feel is that there are certain things that I'm seeing that aren't very good....I think they're destructive

He talks about the situation with respect to drugs and the selfish materialistic values promoted by American soap operas such as 'Days of Our Lives' which he feels are affecting the way of life. (DC/Discomfort) He believes there is a glorification of certain values, which he describes as 'un-Caribbean'. He also thinks that they precipitate a lethargic attitude. (DC/Discomfort)

He argues that there are no credible alternatives available for the young. (No alternative role model). He places responsibility for this on the government:

if you haven't got a far sighted government..who can change things because kids need things. You've got to give them something else

He sees this as a wider phenomenon in a long sequence of political reflections where he locates the situation in the predominance of 'warranting discourses' (Gergen:1989) in the context of post colonialism. (Political Reflection) He links this to the new media and how this is restructuring consciousness and making us more mechanical and less emotionally engaged in our relationships with each other. Here he rehearses the arguments which Plato famously used against writing which is discussed by Ong (1982) and more recently by Everard (2000). Michael sees it as a threat to identity too:

not only will we become more fragmented, we will get to the point that the humanness of who we are will have vanished because of machinery...the words we use to try and encapsulate the damage we've done to humanity...When we use words like 'collateral damage', you are commodifying the person. You're not talking about human beings, you are talking about things

Of course this argument is not new. It is the one which Jacob Bronowski (1974) counters in his work the "Ascent of Man'. He does this in relation to the Nazis' ultra efficient approach to genocide, which also employed sanitised quasi-scientific language. Bronowski points out that it was not science that produced the situation, but 'man'. However, as we have seen in recent history the technology gives a new and frightening capability to the powerful in terms of oppressing the weak in economic and political ways. There are many ethical challenges posed by the speed, efficiency and pervasiveness of the new technology which have not been addressed. Dominant media conglomerates have marginalised dissenting voices in powerful and pervasive ways (see Schiller :1998; Postman: 1985; Klein: 2000).

Chomsky has written about the manipulation of desire and the manufacture of consent. We are only at the beginning of our understanding of how our consciousness is being transformed through this ubiquitous presence.

After the elaboration of his dystopic views of the situation, the conversation moved to reminiscences about his early childhood, (H/Influence) listening with awe and admiration to the storytellers. (This was analysed in the last chapter.) Those stories for him link the past and the present and sustain him in his life and his work. (H/Influence)

The stories become part of you. They become more than stories. They become concrete things. And today, I still hear those stories. I still visualise those images in my mind and again, they are sustaining things. They sustain you. And being a creative person a lot of those things have crept into my stories. So when I write sometimes you employ the traditional oral way of telling a story. And also a lot of the stories you were told as a child are embedded in your own stories. You're reworking the stories and they are becoming your own

Perhaps he has developed a deep distrust of the US dominated media with its individualistic and libertarian values, because he understands the power and influence stories have over his own consciousness and sense of self. My own view is that he has not counted on the fact that to be so powerful stories need to connect deeply with our own existing understandings ie they need to be 'internally persuasive' (Bakhtin:1981). Certainly the traditional tales have become central to his own construction of identity.

I have become a writer of stories through listening to stories, but I wasn't aware when I was going through that process of growing up...Perhaps that's what made me pick up my pen because they were ringing in my ears.

In this he understands the deeply syncretic processes that are happening in his life. He links those elements of the traditional tales to the magical realism of some of his favourite writers, who are African or located in the Caribbean or South America; Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Ben Okri and Isabelle Allende. They are involved in similar processes. There is now a growing body of literature connecting memory, narrative, identity and cultural politics. (see Singh et al 1994, 1996) Some of it actually becomes film in various stages of dilution. *The Colour Purple*, *The House of the Spirits*, *Angela's Ashes*, *The Joy Luck Club* spring to mind. However the books often tap deeper veins:

But when you are reading Marquez, you are reading the Caribbean folk tales... I identify so much with Marquez, because he is weaving into his stories, myth and reality. I lived that and Marquez lived that...You've lived the real woven in with the magic (Epiphany)

In turn he links this back to his conception of self and self invention, mythologising the self:

I'm inventing mythologies...I believe strongly that at every stage of my life, I've had to invent myself. I've had to reshape myself. This is the thing about the core.. If I didn't reinvent myself throughout, I would have ended up somewhere else

This reinvention is a complex and layered process, where he is continually moving backwards and forward to make coherent sense of his experiences and his history. He is constantly mythologising. (Epiphany) In recent times myth has acquired deeply perjorative connotation. It is usually regarded as depicting an earlier more ignorant age. We are keen to dispel myths. But a mythology is actually an attempt to make sense of our experience. To create symbols for things we do not really understand. These are always fashioned out of materials and narratives from the past. The old stories can always be rewritten for other circumstances. Homer's tales are ubiquitous. Elsewhere, I have described the power of the Odyssey in terms of the primary curriculum (Kearney:1990.1995). A recent film, 'Oh Brother where art thou..?' uses the story and rewrites it as a comedy set in the depression based on a film which a fictional director in another film (Preston Sturges' 'Sullivan's Travels') failed to make. There are many layers and many possibilities to myth. Perhaps to keep a coherent sense of self, we all engage in this process of myth making continuously. Bakhtin's triad makes this process visible.

#### *7. 14 The Strengths of the Model*

Certain patterns and understandings can be gained by using the framework to analyse how the self has been constructed in the narratives of the six individuals. The framework helps to isolate and illuminate several aspects of the process of identity construction. In summary these are:

- The framework makes clear the relationships between the internal and external forces as they are produced in the whole dialogue ie:
  - there is a movement from the external to the internal factors
  - there are clear patterns which suggest that epiphanies or authentic understandings of self begin to appear at late adolescence about the age of 20. Perhaps they are the defining point of adulthood
  - epiphanies are always preceded by periods of discomfort and/or ambivalence
  - generally the epiphanies of the current group relate to how they can reconcile themselves to their history and heritage. Any which appear at an earlier age usually refer to a resolution of discomfort with the dominant culture

- The framework reveals the complex layering of narratives and the cumulative realisation of identity. The narratives are shaped like geological strata. They may consist of conventional anecdotes, but they are shaped in such a way that they revisit the same themes from different perspectives

- The framework demonstrates how the development of identity is the constant reworking of memories:

development rather than adhering strictly to the forward looking arrow of linear time was itself bound up with narrative and thus was thoroughly contingent on the backward gaze of recollection (Freeman: 1993: 224)

- The framework reveals the individual narrative structure by which such moves are expressed

- The framework reveals the orderly progression of the conversations as a whole

- The framework gives a clear demonstration of how the different voices and influences are orchestrated, how they are assessed, critically appropriated and fashioned into an individual voice and an integrated understanding of self

- The framework demonstrates how far reaching powerful individual incidents can be on the sense of self eg ~Michael's racist attack and Olgun's experiences as a prisoner of war

- The framework demonstrates that similar events or dilemmas will have different effects on different people. eg Asif's responses to racism are different from Alik's. in terms of self esteem

- Reveals self identity as a creative and conscious process, which is consciously engaged by all six individuals in profoundly critical and political ways

....the self despite its inability to be a sovereign origin of meaning was significantly more than a merely imaginary artifact of words. The fact is that "I" am often able to do something new with the words bequeathed me , thereby enlarging the scope of myself and the world (Freeman:1993:225)

It also reveals how they use all of the narrative resources at their disposal to achieve this

- It reveals that at this stage in their development their emphasis is upon reintegrating into the history and traditions of their heritage culture on their own terms



## 7.14 *Conclusions*

Although the description of the development of self in the novel occurs early in Bakhtin's writing it carries the seed of his later thinking on dialogism. As such it embodies aspects of his later extremely complex and sophisticated insights into human consciousness. Therefore the framework allows us to glimpse the relationship between the various outside influences and the orchestration of those influences within an individual's consciousness as inner speech. (Vygotsky). At best the framework can provide a kind of X-Ray view of this process. In fact an X-Ray is a suitable metaphor since although it lacks the precision of a photograph, it reveals things which are not readily apparent, but exist below the surface. The dynamic process of syncretism becomes apparent as we trace the push and pull of the various forces and examine how they achieved a resolution of these competing forces in their epiphanies.

The second dimension is that the information is deeply contextualised so that we know the time and place, that such events occurred. Narratives also provide other kinds of contextual information concerning the emotional and affective dimensions of such interactions. Narratives are not conveyed in neutral and bloodless language. These important factors that are absent from most postmodern theory. There is a whole gamut of feelings involved in our interrelationships with others. And our emotional needs go well beyond mere desire. There are also questions of how power is established negotiated, challenged and changed in the microcosm of family life with its unspoken attitudes, values codes and etiquettes. The framework reveals how deeply such factors colour our sense of identity.

The third dimension of the framework is that it allows us to note and form hypotheses relating to individual and cultural differences in the narratives both in terms of content and form. This question of form also operates on several levels. The first is at the level of the whole conversation. Like a novel, a conversation has a cumulative impetus with regard to meaning. As the conversation progresses, certain attitudes and basic information which is established early on, is then built upon throughout the conversation. It provides its own context. Once embarked upon it acquires a narrative direction. Causal links become established and events are framed in conventional narrative ways to maintain interest and coherence. So as the conversation progresses the meanings take narrative shape. Furthermore, the audience may not share all of the teller's cultural references and understandings. This is why the majority of conversations are punctuated by rhetorical devices which check understanding ("Do you see what I'm saying?; 'you know' etc)

This leads me to another point regarding form. Each speaker has a cohesive and recognisable, but not static or predetermined, narrative style. They often use basic rhetorical devices probably gained from their primary cultural setting; usually their family. Here Vygotsky is helpful where he indicates that words are learned and employed in a wide variety of contexts, so that the meanings themselves have a wide variety of emotional and cognitive associations and saturations. It's not a simple or straightforward process. This in turn is linked to Bakhtin's view that the word is only half one's own. Words are soaked with other people's meanings and intentions and it is from their that we must appropriate the word and make it

serve our own purposes. I suggest that narrative and rhetorical devices are also learned in this way. Rhetorical devices also have such cognitive and affective dimensions and associations. Indeed this would account for the cultural persistence of narrative styles and approaches across time and place. It would explain some of Stuart Hall's query of what stays the same when we travel. I shall take up this point more fully in my analysis of individual narratives in the next chapter.

What I believe the analysis shows is the intimate and continually problematic relationship between memory, identity and narrative. However it is through this process that the individuals attain and maintain an individual authentic voice, which uses the cultural resonances gathered from the past to solve the riddles and dilemmas of the present and perhaps point towards a more hopeful future. They are working the narratives of others to their own rhythms. They demonstrate what a difficult and complicated endeavour this is, even for people who are socially mobile, economically independent and adept. In the next chapter I want to look more closely at the rhetorical devices they employ.

### *7.15 Conclusion*

What I have tried to demonstrate in this section is how each of the three people rewrite the enigma of self; drawing together and orchestrating the influences, ambivalences and discomforts. Each one is intricately layered and complex and draws on preferred narrative styles of expression. All of those narrative styles will be influenced by their family storytelling traditions but it is also clear that they have also been influenced by other forms of discourse. The narratives styles and conventions also bear the hallmarks of academic discourse. In Alik's case there are clear narrative influences derived from film. The traditional resonances are revealed more clearly from an examination of the structure and rhetorical conventions of individual anecdotes which I shall examine in the next chapter

*Chapter 8: Beyond the Fragments: The persistence of rhetorical styles in the diaspora*

*The fact is that the values and traditions fed to the furnace of American life never disappear altogether-at least not quite. There remains always, in every ethnic tradition, in the generational legacy of every individual family, a certain residue, a kind of ash, what I would call 'ghost values' the tag ends and shreds and echoes of the past calling to us generations after their real force has been spent, tantalising us with idealized visions of a stability or order or certainty of meaning that we seem never to have known, and that we imagine can somehow be restored*

*Peter Marin: Towards Something American (1988)*

*Introduction*

*In the city of Chicago  
As the evening shadows fall  
There are people dreaming  
Of the Hills of Donegal*

*Christy Moore: Chicago (1984)*

This song not only speaks to the diaspora, it speaks for the diaspora. Christy Moore is something of a legend in Irish music. He is as popular in Ireland as he is in the USA where he can fill stadiums. He is very much in the tradition, but he is not

hidebound and has always experimented with the form. The musical tradition almost died out in Ireland in the 1950s. Moore was one of the leading lights in its revival in the late 1960s. The paradox is that many aspects of the tradition have been kept alive in the United States. Despite its reputation as a destroyer of 'authentic' culture and purveyor of commercial pap. Despite the fact that most Irish Americans have settled there for a century and a half. Many of the traditional dancers recruited for the highly commercial 'Riverdance,' including Jean Butler, were born in the US. Such contradictions and ironies are not confined to the Irish diaspora.

As James Clifford (1997:44) observed when we travel a lot stays the same.

Memory becomes a crucial element in the maintainance of a sense of integrity-memory which is always constructive... Oral tradition can be very precise, transmitting a relatively continuous, if rearticulated cultural substance over many generations

But how? I argued in the last two chapters that cultural change and development of syncretic identities is a slow and often painful process for the individual. It is only ever partial. Moreover, in recent years there has been an upsurge in interest in traditional culture. This has been coupled with a desire by many people to connect with their heritage and their history, but on their own terms. For much of the time it is because we are often 'fixed' by others, through our physical appearance, our accent, our name. Michael and Aliki demonstrate how powerful such forces are. As Nandine and Asif demonstrate, you can be fixed by your family and community as much as the dominant culture. In the last chapter we observed how these conflicting strands are orchestrated and partially resolved through narratives and mythologies of self, which we write and rewrite.

### *8.1 Narrating identities*

In this third and final level of analysis, I wish to argue that the narrativisation of self goes further than that and affects our language forms at the very marrow. It is well known that the last thing to alter when a person's accent changes is the intonation pattern. This musical element is one of the things we learn first and lose last. My argument is that our traditions of rhetoric are learned through listening to countless narratives from which we fashion our own ways of unfolding a tale. In short, those rhetorical devices and speech rhythms inhabit every curve and cadence of the sentences we speak. My own view is that this is a major conduit for what remains and resonates across the diaspora. I should like to begin by illustrating my point with two autobiographical anecdotes. The first connects with my MA dissertation, which is the pilot study for the current thesis. In a chapter entitled 'Mistaken Identity' I began the following story:

*look at this*

*a man in his early forties is staring at a t.v. set. In his hand is a remote control device for the video. He is keeps rewinding the tape and replaying it. On the screen is a recording of the same man telling a story to a group of children. They listen attentively, but the man's voice is barely audible. This is because the microphone was too far away. The story jumps in fits and starts where the controller of the machine followed his own agenda. The man finds this irritating.*

*What he sees on the screen is not the same event that happened when he told the story. In telling stories he consciously imitates storytellers and poets he has come to admire. Some professional, others personal friends.*

*But what he sees on the screen is a ghost, or many ghosts. Ghosts in the machine. What he sees is his father; twenty years dead...his uncle; ten years dead...his male cousins; still alive but rarely seen. He sees **their** gestures, **their** tone of voice, **their** preoccupations, **their** methods of unfolding a tale,...and he asks himself yet again: "Who the hell am I?"*

I am now in my mid fifties and still wrestling with these ghosts. The dilemma was compounded on reading 'Angela's Ashes'. I had the distinctly eerie experience of hearing my mother's voice in it again and again. Not only in the vocabulary of unfamiliar words like 'begrudgers', but also in the proverbs, the often wild superstitions and the ways of framing a sentence. Everywhere in the book I stumbled across turns of phrase, anecdotes, jokes, songs and a style of humour that took me back to my own childhood. Yet, this is a book written by a man who spent the vast majority of his life in America. To compound the mystery, neither myself, nor my parents, nor my uncles, aunts or cousins had ever set foot in Ireland in their lives. My mother's family had been in England for three generations, her parents and grandparents being born in Leeds. My father and his brothers and sisters were all born on Merseyside. We didn't belong to any social clubs or political organisations and yet here in the very workings of our day to day speech there was 'Irishness'. The Liverpoolian accents we used were that strange concoction made from varying parts of Irish, Welsh and Northern English, yet the rhetorical devices and the style of humour had more in common with the Irish. How?

I have found the most illuminating theoretical writings on this subject to be in the fields of social psychology and literature (explored more fully in Chapter 4). And these inform many of the arguments put forward in this thesis. Both areas deal with the way our lives are storied. They foreground the intricate relationship between narrative, memory and history. The early narratives we hear as children *are* our first epistemologies and as a consequence they hold the greatest resonance for us. As Cortazzi (1993) demonstrates in his exhaustive review of the research on narrative analysis, very few of the literature based approaches offer useful insights into analysing style and 'voice'. This is because many of the literary researchers are seeking universal patterns. For example, Propp's (1969) analyses of plot or Barthes' (1980) contention that, "Structurally, narrative shares the characteristics of the sentence without ever being reducible to the sum of its sentences ; a narrative is a long sentence.. ' are interesting observations but do not begin to penetrate the mysteries of style or voice. More rewarding are

the sociological and ethnographic approaches, which examine cultural inflections of the narrative form.

Cortazzi (1993) makes the point that:

As a discourse genre narrative is seen as a speech event and 'ways of narrating' involve variations according to components of narrative situation: the participants, setting, purposes of telling, communicating key and cultural norms...

Certainly, Longacre (1976), Labov (1972) and Brooks and Warren (1949) developed frameworks for looking at such elements of narrative structure. It is surprising how close those models are considering that they were arrived at independently. In figure 2 I have arranged them in parallel to emphasise the similarities. By analysing stories using these frameworks we can make connections between similar emphases in a person's individual style and observe differences, between individuals.

Longacre	Labov	Brooks and Warren
Aperture	Abstract	Exposition
Stage	Orientation	
Episode		
* inciting moment		
• developing conflict	Complication	Complication
• climax		Climax
Denouement	Evaluation	
Conclusion	Result	Resolution
Finis	Coda	

**Figure 2: A comparison of theories of narrative structure**

All three frameworks have a very similar approach and each elaborates on Aristotle's beginning, middle and end formulation. They have been criticised for their eurocentric approach (see Cortazzi:1993 and Reissman; 1993), and although it is possible that they could be used in prescriptive ways, most narratives probably contain most of these elements, albeit used in different ways for different purposes and with different values and premises. However, they remain useful frameworks for examining narrative styles.

Analysing narrative style has always been difficult. For many years transcriptions of narratives were represented in blocks of prose. This is problematic because such a form does not adequately represent, the rhythm and cadence of speech. Kate Millet (1971) stated the problem with some clarity her early feminist research concerning self narratives of women who had worked as prostitutes:

What I have tried to capture here is the character of the English I heard spoken by the four women and then recorded on tape. I was struck by the eloquence of what was said, and yet when I transcribed the words on to paper the result was at first, disappointing. Some of the wit of M's black and southern delivery had disappeared, gone with the tang of her voice...J's difficulty in speaking of things so painful that she had repressed them for years required that I speak often on her tapes, hoping to give her support, then later, edit myself out...

As Reissman (1993) points out Millet had to find a different way of representing the voices. It was an early signal of the legitimation crisis in autobiographical and ethnographic research which I examined more fully in Chapter 3. Millet's solution was to edit herself out of the conversation and present them as parallel texts. She saw their voices 'were instruments expressing their diverse experiences.' Therefore she attempted to represent them as musicians playing as an ensemble.

There has been a great deal of work recently in this area on the best way to represent our research findings (see Denzin, 1997; Tierney and Lincoln, 1997; Ellis, 1997; Mc William, 1997; Lather, 1997) These writers urge us to experiment using a variety of techniques drawn from film documentary, 'new' journalism, poetry and dramatic performance. This is a delicate matter. In the hands of someone skilled and creative the results can be powerful and moving. If mishandled it can end up sounding pompous and precious. In Michael's case I have chosen to represent his speech patterns in a poetical form.

It is not a new technique. It has been used extensively and effectively by Labov (1972, 1972a, 1972b, 1972c, 1980), Hymes (1997), Tedlock (1983) and Gee (1989, 1991, 1992). However it still contentious. Deciding where to start a new line has been a source of fruitful disagreement. Hymes (1997:144) believes it should indicate intonation patterns, breaths and pauses, whereas Gee (1991:22) favours an approach linked more closely to meaning. My own view is that it should represent the speech in such a way as to enable us to get a faithful picture of what we hear on tape. Because space does not allow me to analyse more than one of the individuals involved in the study, I have chosen to examine Michael's narrative style. Part of the reason for this is that he has a very distinctive voice, which is highly patterned and therefore relatively straightforward to represent in this way. In this approach I have used the poetical form creatively not adhering too strictly to the linguistic niceties debated by Hymes and Gee. My aim is that the reader gets a flavour of Michael's distinctive cadences.

Furthermore, I have worked with him on this process to check that it also makes sense from his viewpoint. I gave him a copy of his 'story' in the form of lines and stanzas and we agreed to

meet a few days later to discuss the approach. I also asked him to think about his own influences in storytelling. He also agreed to allow me to tape our conversation to use in the analysis of the story. I shall discuss his responses at the end of the chapter.

Trying to isolate the cultural dimensions of his narrative style is a more difficult process. For this I turned to the ethnographic approaches of Hymes (1996), which initially seemed a promising approach. The part of Hymes' approach that I find most useful and convincing is his belief that narratives are 'grammars of experience'. Here, he relates his work on Native American myths to a child's acquisition of language. He elaborates:

Narratives are undoubtedly part of a child's experience of language. These Native American texts turn out to be subtle organisations of lines. The lines are organised in ways that make them formal poetry, and also a rhetoric of action: they embody an implicit schema for the organisation of experience. The patterns may be more finely worked out sometimes in myths, but they are also found in personal narratives. In the serious and scheduled occasions when children are simply present when myths. Over and over again, at every level, an implicit organisation of experience into satisfying patterns and may be internalised. (1996:121)

For his analysis of cultural patterning, he draws upon Gee's (1989,1991,1992) work on lines and stanzas. He uses this for examining Native American myths, particularly the Coyote trickster tales. In this he attempts to demonstrate that there are narrative patternings of two lines and four lines in the narratives of the Zuni, Native Americans in New Mexico. He also asserts that in Western stories the patterns tend to be two and five. This would certainly hold for Michael's story. After my initial enthusiasm, I found this approach less convincing, since there is degree of arbitrariness in the decision of where to break the lines. In fact for most of the time, he critiques Gee's patterning of narratives and reclassifies them in his own terms. He even adds another subdivision of stanzas, which consists of verses. We can always be tempted to tailor such things to suit our purpose of finding neat patterns and correspondences. In several traditions there are patterns of three: three wishes, three sons, three pigs, three strong women etc. Often this is a mnemonic device for storytellers and fairly arbitrary. There is no reason that there cannot be two or four or five. I would also argue that this approach is premised on a static notion of culture, which possibly was even an oversimplification in cultures where traditional stories changed in more gradual ways. In the current research it does not really serve its purpose. It is not so useful for examining rhetorical styles of more fluid and syncretic aspects of culture. Moreover, in the poetic forms of most communities there is often variety in line length and line clusters, which would render such a prescriptive view meaningless or at least unhelpful.

However, as I indicated from in my autobiographical fragments, there are rhetorical devices for encoding experience and implicit values which are embedded in narratives, including the role, status and function of storytelling which characterise and shape an individual's own narratives. What I argue is that these narrative grammars become the cornerstone for our



storied lives and carry certain aspects of this socially learned practice across generations. Moreover, I believe it affects the way we use a second language. There are distinct flavours to Caribbean English, Indian English or even Irish English, which are recognisable to the ear, both in the accent and the rhetorical devices used. More research is needed to analyse exactly how and why this happens. In the constraints of the current study I have only space to analyse Michael's story in some detail.

## 8.2 *Michael's Story*

The section of Michael's conversation which I have chosen is his description of the racist attack. There are several reasons for this. To begin with it is a clear and self contained 'story'. Secondly it illustrates his very distinctive 'voice' which is consistent throughout our conversation. It has many features in common with other extracts quoted in the previous three chapters. Thirdly, in terms of identity, it represents a defining moment in his self narrative. In what follows I shall analyse it in some detail, using some of his own observations to draw out some tentative conclusions concerning the genesis of his individual voice. But first let us consider his story:

In prose it is effective enough:

We were coming back from school and we were crossing the road and...you know this car was coming down and this fellow went into a bump and because he was...because he heard, he felt something in the car. He thought we'd done something to the car. We'd touched it. He stopped the car. Didn't ask any questions. He came out and accused us of scratching his car or hitting his car or whatever it was. So we said 'OK' We give him...We told him we didn't do anything. But he felt that we did and he wouldn't let it go. And my friend was much bigger than me. He was also a year older than me, but also very... No he was two years older than me. He confronted this fellow and told him, 'We didn't do anything but simply we were walking in the road, your car passed and that was that.' And the fellow said, 'OK' you know, he'll be back. So we started walking. I told my friend, 'Let's run!'. He said, 'Why?' I said, 'It's this fellow, he's not going to let go of this issue.' And he says, 'No', he's not going to run. We were walking down the road (pause) and a few minutes later we saw this gang. Men. Coming down the road and I said, Let's run. But he says that he didn't do anything wrong and he didn't see why we should run. And we passed a bridge, near where I lived, and after we passed the bridge, we were surrounded by these people, grown men. I would have thought these people knew better. You know. Kids. We were kids. You know. We've come from school. Typical. We got books and stuff like that. So they surrounded us and really laid into us. Broke my friend's arm. Broke his jaw. Struck me with a metal bar, across my head. I lost consciousness. Nothing happened with the police. And my parents... My father was beaten up twice and throughout their life in Britain they had to put up with that. And you come along and you have to put up with it. Then the thing is what my father faced in this

country: the verbal abuse, the physical abuse. He had to put up with it, confront it. It did something to him. He became a changed man.

Certain aspects of his style are powerful and recognisable. However, when arranged in lines the poetical force of the language becomes instantly apparent. We can hear the Caribbean cadences of his speech.

Other dimensions also become apparent. The stanza form also reveals intricate patterning of the narrative not noticeable in the prose version. It is easier to observe the structure of the narrative which fits in to the patterns suggested as typical by several theorists (Brooks and Warren,1949, Labov,1972; Goodacre,1976), whose frameworks are detailed in fig 2.

In addition to presenting the story in poetical form I have included an indication of the structure and progression of the narrative on the right hand side of the page, using Labov's framework. I have also numbered the lines and the stanzas for ease of reference in my analysis.

1.		Orientation	
We were coming back from school and we were crossing the road and...you know this car was coming down and this fellow went into a bump			5
2.		Complicating Action	
and because he was... because he heard, he felt something in the car. He thought we'd done something to the car. We'd touched it.			10
3.		Complicating Action	
He stopped the car. Didn't ask any questions. He came out and accused us of scratching his car or hitting his car or whatever it was.			15
4.		Complicating Action	
So we said 'OK' We told him we didn't do anything. But he felt that we did and he wouldn't let it go.			20

<p>5.  And my friend was much bigger than me.  He was also a year older than me,  but also very...  No he was two years older than me.  and much bigger than me.</p>	<p>Complicating Action</p> <p>25</p>
<p>6.  He confronted this fellow  and told him,  ‘We didn’t do anything  but simply  we were walking in the road,  your car passed  and that was that.’  And the fellow said, ‘OK’  you know,  he’ll be back.</p>	<p>Complicating Action</p> <p>30</p> <p>35</p>
<p>7.  So we started walking.  I told my friend,  ‘Let’s run!’.  He said,  ‘Why?’  I said, ‘It’s this fellow,  he’s not going to let go of this issue.’  And he says, ‘No’,  he’s not going to run.</p>	<p>Complicating Action</p> <p>40</p>
<p>8.  We were walking down the road (pause)  and a few minutes later we saw this gang.  Men.  Coming down the road  and I said, ‘Let’s run.’  But he says that  he didn’t do anything wrong  and he didn’t see why we should run.</p>	<p>Complicating Action</p> <p>45</p> <p>50</p>

9.	Complicating Action	
And we passed a bridge, near where I lived, and after we passed the bridge, we were surrounded by these people, grown men.		55
I would have thought these people knew better. You know. Kids.	Evaluation	
We were kids. You know. We've come from school. Typical. We got books and stuff like that.		60
10.	Result	
So they surrounded us and really laid into us. . Broke my friend's arm. Broke his jaw. Struck me with a metal bar, across my head.		70
I lost consciousness.		
Nothing happened with the police.		
11.	Coda	
And my parents... My father was beaten up twice and throughout their life in Britain they had to put up with that.		75
12.	Coda	
And you come along and you have to put up with it. Then the thing is what my father faced in this country: the verbal abuse, the physical abuse. He had to put up with it, confront it. It did something to him.		80
		85
He became a changed man.		

This way of representing speech is far more effective. It captures the rhythm and the cadence more forcefully. This is because poetry maintains an unbroken link to earlier, exclusively oral tradition. (See Ong (1982) and Pound) It comes from song. (The Iliad begins, 'Sing, goddess...') Both poetry and song depend on the percussive and musical power of language to bolster the affective dimension of meaning. Prose uses different devices to achieve such effects. This is why speech represented as prose has the appearance of being flattened and rendered lifeless. Putting Michael's narrative in this form enables us to observe more clearly his rhetorical devices. It is fluent, well honed and bears all the hallmarks of his style which are instantly recognisable; his effective use of repetition, a tendency to cluster qualifying phrases in groups of three and the Biblical resonance in the language of some passages. It also reveals how ordered and balanced his speech is. Very little of this is captured in the prose transcription.

It is a very compact and well rehearsed story. Each part fits neatly into the next. It has a cumulative effect, gained by the mirroring of stanzas and occasional mirroring of lines within stanzas. In the last chapter we saw how this effect of layering was also an aspect of his style over the whole conversation. He has a rhythmic and confident voice, which even accommodates his single hesitation (line 7) and his correction of a factual inaccuracy, into his narrative patterning. As the analysis using Labov's framework shows it has a very conventional structure, which renders it fluid and accessible. There is a predictability about the form which lends to the power in conveying the ferocity of the attack. The calm narrative contrasts with the violence of the subject matter. A little like Primo Levi's descriptions of his time in Auschwitz, the understated and plain narrative is more effective, since it renders the horrors more believable and more shocking. Much is left unsaid, the threat is merely that 'He'll be back..' Tension is built by two missed opportunities for flight. Again it is told in a simple style.

What is remarkable about this fluent and almost faultless performance is that it is totally spontaneous. On closer examination the story unfolds through an intricate patterning, both thematically and in its form. This is because it has the themes which have affected him as an African Caribbean male living in Britain. He realises that these are not unique to him. As I said earlier his own research is involved with examining the mythologies created which 'fix' Caribbean boys, coming from the dominant culture through the media in the form of stories and statistics from various sources, educational statistics, police statistics etc. He is also interested in how they respond and the mythologies they create about themselves, which he feels are born out of this social reality. He talks about the daily experience of racism, particularly physical struggle and the grim choices which he characterises as 'fight or flight'. This is his apocryphal story.

My contention is that both the content and the form of the story come out of the Caribbean tradition, which has a long history of such oppressions. It is also a tradition, which has always put a high premium on verbal performance. This is evident throughout the West African diaspora. From 'playing the dozens' described in Labov's work in Harlem, to Shirley Brice Heath's analysis of the 'ways with words' in Tracton in North Carolina. From the sly, salacious and understated lyrics of the blues, to the Reggae toasters of the 1970s. From the

stories, songs and poems of Calypso and Carnival, to the fusion of secular desire, religious fervour and radical politics in the lyrics of Bob Marley. And on and on to the emergence of rap in the late twentieth century, as well as a long line of poets and writers who have transmuted this tradition into novels and volumes of poetry. Powerful, eloquent wordplay and performance has always had high status (see Singh et al, 1994, 1996). It represents an ever changing, yet unbroken, link with West African traditions, even though the relationship between diaspora and 'homeland' is never unproblematic.

I want to spend some time analysing Michael's performance, which I believe draws upon this tradition. The first thing to note about his speech is its close resemblance to poetry. This is taken verbatim from the tape. All pauses, hesitations are included in the transcript and there are no additions or subtractions. Yet we have a textbook example of narrative structure and closure. Secondly, in turning it into poetical form, I only had to attend closely to the pauses. Thirdly, the narrative itself proceeds at a very even pace. Stanzas tend to be of similar length and there is a very symmetrical aspect to them. The complications are layered and progressive. We feel the tension growing from stanza to stanza. It is shaped and symmetrical.

Before I begin the analysis I should like to note that the abstract is missing from the story. Earlier in the conversation he told me that he was once beaten up by racists. He stopped and said, 'You don't want to hear about this'. I then persuaded him to tell me the story assuring him that we could edit it out if he wished. He then pointed out that this was not the issue. He thought it would not be relevant to my research. As it turned out it was the lynchpin to his narrative of identity.

### *8.3 The analysis of the narrative*

For the analysis I shall begin by examining how the poem is structured stanza by stanza, to reveal the intricate patterning of the narrative. I shall follow this by making some general observations. I shall conclude by comparing it to one of the fight narratives collected by William Labov in New York in 1972.

The first stanza sets the scene from the point of view of his friend and himself. They are established as young, innocent and defenceless and on their way home from school. The second stanza moves to the driver's vantage point and what appears to be simply a misunderstanding. The third stanza heightens the tension with the driver making an accusation and 'fixing' the two boys as trouble makers. Michael uses the rhythmic and rhetorical device of listing the drivers complaint in threes. The final 'whatever it was' carries the implication that it was a trivial excuse to confront the boys and that if it was not that issue then it would be something else. The implication is that the driver's real reasons lie elsewhere. There is a racial motive. Significantly the cultural identity of all the characters are 'understood'

In stanza 4 the boys are represented as reasoning with the driver and the driver persisting unreasonably. The use of 'OK', here is placatory. We are then made to anticipate a tragic outcome because 'he wouldn't let it go'. The choice is 'fight or flight', which leads to the next

stanza. His friend is bigger and older and the implication is that it is harder for him to lose face. In terms of style, the first half of the stanza mirrors the second, even though it incorporates a hesitation. The repetition of 'bigger than me' and 'older than me' are effective emphases. Michael is the smallest and most vulnerable character in his story.

Stanza 6 mirrors many of the features of stanza 4. It reiterates the same argument, but there is a higher stake. It has turned from placation to confrontation. This time the driver says 'OK', but in this context it is a threat. So by using almost identical structures, Michael conveys a very different meaning and heightens the tension. This is really economical and powerful storytelling.

In stanza 7, Michael suggests flight, he reiterates, that 'he won't let go of this issue', by which he is implying his racist agenda. His friend stubbornly refuses. For him it is a question of personal honour. In Stanza 8, the real threat appears. Here he builds the picture with two words 'gang' and 'men' this is all that is necessary to denote the unfairness in terms of size and numbers. He reiterates flight and again the friend refuses, claiming the moral high ground. It is at this part of his narrative that his method seems almost biblical. There is the matter of sacrifice and standing up for what you know is right against impossible odds. Stanza 8 has a similar biblical cadence, particularly the lines 52-54

And we passed a bridge,  
near where I lived,  
and after we passed the bridge..

For me this has definite echoes of sections of the New Testament. The bridge is also acts as a symbolic marker in the narrative, it means there is no going back.

The outrageousness of the attack is emphasised, with the repetition of 'men, grown men' and the fact that they should have known better, which gives an inkling of what they were up against. This is echoed in the next part where it is contrasted with them

'kids...  
we were kids'

and the detail of

'we've come from school,  
typical  
we've got books and stuff like that'

This further emphasises the innocence of the victims and the scale of the attack. The description of the attack is equally succinct and powerful. Again he makes a list of three things. This is made more powerful since it echoes the three statements in stanza 3, for which this was retribution. This has the effect of making the injustice more stark. His passive role is emphasised by the statement 'I lost consciousness' gives it a wistful conclusion. This is

followed by a line that I could not really make into a separate stanza. It is related, but it stands alone, signifying that to seek justice was a useless endeavour.

Stanza 11 widens the context and demonstrates that this was a powerful but not isolated incident. The use of the word 'confront' again points to maintaining dignity in the face of such abuse. It acts as a powerful conclusion to the narrative. For the coda in stanza 12, Michael adopts a rhetorical device which again has connections with religion. He moves into the second person. This form of narrative is called 'hortatory' and is common in sermons and other religious discourses. This stanza echoes stanza 10, especially with the line that stands alone and has the tone of resignation, 'He became a changed man.' In terms of the whole narrative this connects with his first meeting with his father and how he was very different to the stories Michael had heard about him during his childhood in Dominica. It is the very phrase he uses to describe how this transformation had taken place.

When we examine it in this degree of detail, it is clear what an intricate construction it is. For all the simplicity of vocabulary, it is a beautifully structured poem. It was not intended as such and is unedited. Moreover, this narrative skill did not emerge by accident or from nowhere, it has been learned and refined. This is illuminated by the following argument put forward by Gee (1992:143), where he makes the link between the cognitive and the social:

...in our everyday lives and in much of traditional psychology, what we think of as 'mental' is in fact 'social'. Meaning and memory, believing and knowing, are social practices that vary as they are embedded with different Discourses within a society. Each discourse apprentices its members and 'disciplines' them so that their mental networks and their folk theories converge towards a 'norm' reflected in the social practices of the Discourse. These ideal norms, which are rarely directly storable, but only discoverable with close ethnographic study are what constitute meaning, memory, believing, knowing and so forth, from the perspective of each Discourse

The ease and assurance of Michael's well structured, spontaneous oral performance would seem to be evidence of it emanating from a strong oral tradition. According to Hymes (1996:167):

When texts come from a culture grounded in an oral tradition and a narrative view of life, it is not surprising to find text after text that shows thorough architecture and rewarding artistry. In a society such as our own, where narrative commonly competes with mass media amidst a perpetual circulation of paper, and personal experience is discounted as anecdote, it would not be surprising to find that architecture and artistry are often less. When texts come from experiences that lack personal identification or circumstances that discourage acquired modes of telling, effective shaping seems even less likely.

It appears, however, that effective shaping of stories is far more pervasive than one might expect, that the impulse to narrative form is far from paved over or drowned out, even in unfavourable circumstances..



He goes on to analyse three stories, told by African American children, which have rhetorical similarities to Michael's story. I should like to make a comparison with one, which has surprising stylistic similarities to his own. It is a fight story collected by William Labov in New York City in the 1960s (Labov, 1972, 1972 a). The young man interviewed by Labov's co-worker, is given the pseudonym of 'Norris'. Labov's famous narrative framework, used on Michael's narrative, came out of his analysis of the stories he collected during the research. The framework he devised contained a definition of narrative in terms of a minimum of two temporarily ordered sentences and for considering the narrative in terms of the listeners' question, 'So what?' The story has to have a point or a meaning. Labov calls that element evaluation. I have chosen to compare Michael's tale to the fight story, because it is a personal narrative, with a very similar theme, from someone in a similar context from a different part of the West African diaspora. The one thing we do not know is whether 'Norris' family originate in the Caribbean, since there has always been a large African Caribbean community in New York. His story was transcribed by Labov as follows:

When I was in the fourth grade  
no, it was the third grade

This boy stole my glove  
He took my glove  
and said his father found it  
downtown  
on the ground

[And you fight him?]

I told him  
that it was impossible for him to find downtown  
cause all these people were walking by  
and just his father was the only one  
that found it?  
So he got all (mad)  
So then I fought him  
I knocked him all out in the street  
So he say he give  
And I kept hitting him  
Then he started crying  
and ran home to his father  
And the father told him that he ain't find no glove

In his initial evaluation Labov (1972c:368) makes the point that this is similar to other stories he collected. The point is to make the teller look good in comparison to his opponent. For Labov, the story:

follows the characteristic two part-structure of fight narratives in the Black English Vernacular; each part shows a different side of his ideal character. In this account of the verbal exchange Norris is cool, logical, good with his mouth, and strong in insisting on his own right. In the second part, dealing with the action, he appears as the most dangerous kind of fighter, who 'just goes crazy' and 'doesn't know what he did'...his opponent is shown and dishonest, clumsy in argument, unable to control his temper, a punk, a lame, a coward..

Even when he runs home 'his very own father told him that his story wasn't true'.

Although, Michael's story is a richer, more accomplished telling, there are marked similarities in the rhetorical devices. The two part structure is evident. There is the source of contention and the resolution. The stance taken by Michael's friend mirrors the protagonist in Labov's story. In both stories they have the moral high ground. They both show physical courage, not backing down. Although Michael urges flight, he refuses to leave his friend to face the consequences alone. The protagonists in both stories keep their cool. The driver in Michael's story becomes so incensed by their resolve to not back down that he goes to gather a gang. So, although they do not win the physical fight, their courage and dignity remain intact. So the evaluation and the point have similarities. Being older, more experienced and more reflective, Michael locates his story in wider social and political contexts. In this way he places it in the daily routine of 'fight' or 'flight' which is common to many young males of African heritage throughout the cities of the world. It is perhaps unsurprising that their stories should have such equivalence when the social context which gives rise to them is depressingly common. It is part of the mythologising of self that Michael examines in his own research.

However there are also some noticeable similarities in the language used. If we look at the opening lines there are distinct resonances. Norris' orienting sequence (A) uses very similar phraseology to Michael's (B) and is common to countless openings I have heard from African Caribbean boys in my 18 years in inner city classrooms

(A) When I was in the fourth grade  
no, it was the third grade

This boy stole my glove  
He took my glove

(B) We were coming back from school  
and we were crossing the road  
and..you know  
this car was coming down  
and this fellow went into a bump

The first two lines set the scene in succinct and very similar ways. lines 3 and 4 in Norris' narrative and lines 4 and 5 in Michael's account are remarkably similar, being introduced by the same pronoun and signalling the first complicating action.

There are also obvious structural parallels. The next section of their respective stories casts doubt on their opponents' honesty. A third section brings the conflict to a head with both Norris (in Labov's story) and Michael's friend, refusing to back down. This effectively concludes the first part in both stories. The description of the fight is also achieved in short staccato phrases in both accounts. The coda is brief in both cases. The difference is that whereas Norris feel justified that the father vindicated him, Michael reveals that the police compounded the injustice. What is remarkable is the structural and rhetorical similarities of the two narratives which are separated greatly in terms of both physical distance and in time. The only common thread is the African diaspora. Of course we cannot erect a theory upon such limited evidence. Nevertheless the parallels are interesting and noteworthy.

Although there are similarities, there are of course significant differences. Whereas Norris presents himself as full of bravado in the face of opposition, Michael presents his own character in less reckless light. His has a distinctly different ethical evaluation of the situation. He is constantly counselling his friend to back off from this confrontational stance. He contextualises the story in broader social and political frameworks. Here he also alludes to his dislike of how young black males are trapped not only within the mythologies which the dominant culture construct for them, but also in the mythologies of masculinity which they construct for themselves. He is viewing the events from a different vantage point.

Also there is the question of style. Michael's story is a result of his own wide experience of a wide range of literature as both a reader and a writer; it is a more complex and syncretic piece. Although there is a strong Caribbean element, (more obvious in his intonation patterns on tape) there are other influences of European and American writers. Moreover, he belongs to a far wider and more varied set of social networks than 'Norris'. These are aspects I have explored in earlier works concerning children and schooled literacy (Kearney: 1990, 1995).

However, establishing convincing connections between his individual voice and cultural resources of the Caribbean remains a difficult matter. As I found Hymes' method of counting lines less convincing, I thought that a more fruitful approach may be to ask Michael directly about his influences. He had already detected the influence of the Dominican storytellers and his father (see Chapter 7). It also ties in with many of the observations in the Singh et al's (1994,96) collections dealing with memory, narrative, identity and cultural politics, by examining the work of poets and novelists from a variety of cultural heritages who are wrestling with issues of power and identity. I was particularly struck by the connection to the following observations of the native American novelist, N. Scott Momaday (in de Hernandez, 1996:49) who argues that 'his deepest voice' is:

lyrical and reverent and bears close relationship to the Indian oral tradition... It proceeds out of an ancient voice. It is anchored in that ancient tradition

His earliest memories are laced with voices; as an infant being rocked 'in a little hammock' where he hears:

the voices of my parents, of my grandmother, of others. Their voices, their words, English and Kiowa-and the silences that lie about them-are already an element in my mind's life (1969:4)

It also chimes in with Mary Gergen's view that:

Our cultures provide not only for the contents of what we say but also the forms. We use these forms unwittingly they create the means by which we interpret our lives. We know ourselves via the mediating forms of our cultures, through telling and through listening. (1992:128)

Michael makes similar claims, explicitly. In our conversation he commented on the transcription of his story using a poetic format. He acknowledged that it did reproduce his speech patterns faithfully:

The instant I saw it I recognised my voice and that is the way I write. It left a resonance in my head when I read it.

When I asked him to clarify where this resemblance was most obvious he replied

It's in the layout. Its in the rhythm as well, I think...

I also asked him about his rhetorical device of going into the second person. This is called a hortatory style and is common to sermonising. This is a characteristic quality of Michael's speech which has been noted by other colleagues. He relates it to his father, who was not a preacher, but he loved to talk, tell stories and debate issues:

My father, when he talks would have a way of talking...He was extremely articulate and he's very physical sometimes. He would get up and ...almost like acting out what he's saying...

It is my argument that this influence has penetrated Michael's speech at a very deep level and left an indelible mark on his style of discourse, his 'voice'. He also located this in the context that they belonged to a community which placed a high premium on verbal performance:

Extremely verbal, always a play with language...When you meet someone, there are so many ways to greet that person...always that versatility... It's bantering...most societies have an oral tradition...

The other predominant influence on his language was the storyteller from his childhood in Dominica and here he relates it to the music of the language, saying that

When the storyteller was telling a story he would sing. He would dramatise concretise that story...

He distinguishes this from singing songs which were also a part of the storyteller's repertoire, and as he points out were also an integral part to Classical Greek theatre, but adds that

Those songs, those melodies are intricately linked with memory

This connects with an aspect he raises earlier in the conversation, when he connects it to his own writing, which he sees as a musical experience

Language isn't solid...When I'm writing poetry, I try to make the poem sing...I see the language as song. For me, the words in themselves, they've got music. So if you choose a word instead of another word, you change the rhythm of that poem.

So we observe that his oral experience is very close to his experience writing poetry and the two feed off each other. At another point in our conversation he says that certain poems he has written bear a strong resemblance to his oral narrative of the racist attack. His voice is obviously composed of several elements and these three, his father's techniques, and the storyteller ("Whenever I write I see that storyteller") and his own writing remain a strong foundation for him to move into other forms of discourse. I would argue that those rhetorical forms also permeate those newer discourses. This is central to his idea of an integrated self. Linking back to his notion of a stable and coherent core to his identity, which was explored in detail in the previous chapter. At one stage he quotes Jung's opinion that 'the unconscious mind is filled with relics', to illustrate his view of the process. It is a continuing and complex process of syncretism. It is not a hybrid discourse. It is not a graft. Histories and mythologies are being woven, unpicked, examined and rewoven constantly, but there are distinct threads, which continue and change and adapt. The stories we hear and learn from and ultimately make our own identities from are fundamental to this process.

### *Conclusion*

Although I have space to examine only one story in detail, I would argue that similar threads could be found in the stories of the other five individuals. Moreover, just as Michael's style analysed here reflects the style of his longer narrative (see Chapter 7), I argue that the same holds true of Aliko, Asif and the others. Aliko's story, in particular, reveals how clashes with her middle class boy friend, centred upon differences in styles of narrative discourse. Both Nandine and Olgun speak explicitly of cultural etiquettes which make certain aspects of the relationships with their English friends problematic. Obviously more detailed research needs to be done, perhaps in relation to traditional tales from various heritages. In this way we could observe how different traditions make meanings through narratives. My contention is that these discourse styles persist from generation to generation, loaded with implicit values.

Family stories are coded in such narratives and although they are retold, they change and adapt to new circumstances slowly, and provide frameworks for dealing with our day to day reality. They are also framed within the power relationships we inherit, by being born into particular families with particular histories and particular, culturally inflected styles of discourse.

In turn such understandings could also address the point raised by Sara Michaels in her often quoted article about 'sharing time' (Michaels:1981) where she points out that the teachers she studied had predispositions for white middle class narrative discourses and could not readily see the point of other styles of narrative. Obviously I would go further than that and assert that they need to understand the complex syncretic processes which are happening before their eyes and attend to them closely. If one of the main aims in developing children's language and literacy is through the development of their authentic voice, then we need to be aware of the complexity of that 'voice'. For this, we need to be building children's range, not only in terms of genre, but also in different narrative styles. We also need to raise the status of autobiography within the curriculum and stop dismissing it as too subjective or too anecdotal. Instead, we need to recognise it as the powerful learning tool it is for both ourselves and the children we teach. In the concluding chapter I wish to draw out the implications of this research for educational institutions and policy makers.

*Chapter 9: Conclusions: Eyes Wide Shut: the Research in relation to current trends in Educational Policy in Britain*

*What I want is an accounting with all three cultures-white, Mexican, Indian. I want the freedom to carve and chisel my own face, to staunch the bleeding with ashes, to fashion my own gods out of my entrails. And if going home is denied me then I will have to stand and claim my own space, making a new culture - una cultura mestiza- with my own lumber, my own bricks and mortar and my own feminist architecture*

*Gloria Anzaldua*

*Introduction*

Conducting this research with six individuals has deepened my own understanding of the issues of identity construction considerably. For me it has confirmed the level of complexity argued by cultural studies theorists. However, it has also highlighted out the importance of memory and affect in the process, which is more evident in the work of the social psychologists. Vygotsky (1986) wrote of the emotional dimensions of language acquisition at the level of the word. I believe that this is also true of the acquisition of the rhetorical devices by which we narrativise our lives. This for me is the cornerstone of our identity and our basic method of reconstructing and reinscribing our identities. This affective dimension is apparent in the six narratives which have been analysed in the three previous chapters and obviously has profound

implications for the classroom. Both Michaels (1986) and Gee (1996) have demonstrated that teachers need to examine their own reasons for preferring certain narrative styles above others, but there are wider implications in terms of motivation that are connected with the content of the curriculum which I have examined in detail elsewhere (Kearney (1990a,1990b, 1995, 1996, 1998). As Alikı's testimonies demonstrate (Chapter 6) these exclusions have a profound effect on self esteem and are a considerable obstacle to academic and personal success

The second important revelation for me concerns the centrality of memory in the construction of identity. This is the dimension played down by much postmodern theory. Memory comes not only in the form of our individual reminiscences. This in turn is fed by family narratives and other such mnemonics as photographs, songs, personal diaries and journals. It also includes fictional representations These are also a resource for analysing collective histories. The irony lies in the fact that here at the supposed end of history we have greater access than ever to documents and artifacts which trace the history of our own families. The very technology which is supposedly destroying our sense of community enables us to restore it. The interest in where we are from is more pronounced than ever. Again it is important to realise that to be truly inclusive, a curriculum must consider ways to incorporate these alternative histories and viewpoints within the compass of schooled learning. Obviously much work has been done in this area and many teachers work hard even within the constraints of the current curriculum to build on what pupils bring to school. The salutary lesson here is that this is a difficult enough process when it receives support from those in charge of education. At present the constraints are galling. My argument is that autobiography merits a central place within such a curriculum.

### *9.1 Developments over the period in which the research was conducted*

Everything changes. Nothing stays the same. As the research has been conducted over a substantial period of time, my own thinking has grown and developed. Also, it needs to be noted that the life stories themselves are framed within the context of public policy in Britain in terms of education and immigration from the end of the second world war to the present. Obviously that context has changed over the duration of the research. To begin with Britain now has a government which, in rhetoric at least, has exhibited a less shrill advocacy of the crude and narrowly proscribed view of British/English identity, which characterised the Thatcher and Major administrations (1979-1997).

Another event which has precipitated a climate of change has been the public inquiry into the murder of Stephen Lawrence, a black teenager murdered by racists in South London. The consequent publication of the Macpherson report has resurrected the spectre of institutionalised racism and has had some effect on the policy pronouncements from government sources. However, I argue in this chapter that as well meaning as these



pronouncements have been, the complex issues regarding identity have become sidelined. They have been reconfigured as the apparently less contentious, yet equally problematic, concept of citizenship. Questions of identity have scarcely touched the statutory elements of the National Curriculum, which was revised in 2000. As a result the review itself has done little to placate those who advocate a more culturally sophisticated curriculum.

Despite the rhetoric on equal opportunities and a determination to introduce quota systems in respect of the recruitment of 'ethnic minority' teachers, recent government policy in education appears to be increasingly removed from the reality of many people's lived experience. The present study confirms ethnographic research and recent work in cultural studies which demonstrate the rich complexity of the way individuals and groups construct their identities in modern cosmopolitan societies. However, in the sphere of public policy making there has been a trend towards rigidity and homogenisation. This is most noticeable in the content of the National curriculum and the National Literacy Strategy.

The notion of 'quality' in education in the marketplace is very much like the "Ploughmans Lunch": the reinvention of a tradition which never really existed. Moreover, the concept of equality has been reconfigured as meaning the same treatment for everyone. The government speaks of an 'entitlement curriculum'. I wish to argue that this is a problematic and disguised form of exclusion. It is important to recognise what and who that curriculum 'excludes'. Successive governments have developed a homogeneous, anglocentric and increasingly rigid curriculum, tested through a narrow set of assessment procedures and policed by an inspection service with an equally narrow definition of "excellence". It ignores the the complexity of identity construction which I have argued throughout this thesis. More importantly it fails to link such complexity to issues of motivation and achievement.

As researchers we are continually being asked to justify our work in terms of relevance to the classroom. I want to question whether current education policy has any relevance to the diverse reality of modern life? How does it deal with awkward issues of culture and power?

### *9.2 Identity and public policy*

In this chapter I wish to argue that government policy is premised on crude and obsolete notions of culture and identity and, moreover, confuses the concepts of culture and citizenship. This lack of clarity is constraining educators from developing fully democratic curricula and instead we are becoming embroiled in the unequal and unfair game, where success is only defined by positions on league tables of test results. For those of us who are involved in teaching and teacher education and have a commitment

to culturally inclusive education, the past few years have been bleak. The national curriculum for teacher education is a particularly arid framework. Many involved in English teaching are uncertain exactly what benefits accrue to children if their teachers know what 'morphology' means. It is still not clear who decided upon the rather random bag of facts, detailed in the circular 4/98, 'Higher Status, Higher Standards', which now governs whether new recruits gain Qualified Teacher Status.

However, the picture is complex. The pronouncements from the TTA and the DFEE are often substantially different. Although there are, as yet, no substantive developments we can perhaps take comfort in some of the pronouncements that have come out in the wake of the Macpherson report (1999). The report itself put cultural issues back on the educational agenda. In what follows I want to examine the reasons why government policy is resistant to any meaningful engagement with the cultural complexity of modern Britain revealed in this research. To achieve this I shall consider three pieces which reveal the tensions which underlie the calm surface of the 'third way':

- What is education for? a paper by Nick Tate, Chief Executive, Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
- All Our Futures: Creativity, Culture and Education
- The review of the national curriculum: The consultation papers

Nick Tate's paper (Tate: 1999:14) is interesting since he appears willing to return to the most basic question regarding the curriculum: What is education? In this, he is willing to consider the issues of culture and identity. In the paper he highlights the differences between libertarian and liberal viewpoints. He argues that libertarian societies are morally neutral about the choices the citizen makes whereas 'liberal societies are those where the state is informed in its activities by a shared vision of the kind of civil societies its citizens wish to promote, while respecting individual freedom.' In this he draws on arguments put forward by Jonathan Sacks. (uncredited in his article). He states that 'Sacks's thesis is that for much of the last fifty years both here and in North America, we have inhabited a libertarian rather than a liberal culture. He was one of the first last year to welcome the new government as pointing in a different direction.' (1999:14)

From this he identifies 'three particular roles for education'

1. The need 'to find a way of combining our highly individualist culture, which emphasises autonomy and choice, with a reassertion of the place of community in our lives...in which there is a clearer sense of limits and shared values'

2. The need 'to find ways of helping ourselves come to terms with a world in which identities are being re-cast under the impact of globalisation'. Here he recognises that in comparison to France...'we have even more complex problems of identity to solve' including 'all sorts of legacies from our imperial past'
3. The need for education 'to shape civil society'. He elaborates. Talk of a common culture does not mean some stultifying uniformity which fails to respect the different traditions and allegiances which have existed and have always existed, in our society'

Whilst it is encouraging to hear such a key figure raising issues about identity in a manner which would have been unimaginable in the Thatcher/Major era, we need to scrutinise this liberal stance a little more closely. Earlier in his article he explicitly demonstrates that his view of culture is an 'elitist' one, when he states:

Striving to be an educated person...is of course unashamedly elitist, in the sense of trying to give as many people as possible access to the highest ideals by which people have lived and to what Matthew Arnold called 'the best that has been known and thought' (1999:9)

'These ideals,' he elucidates, 'are inherited from our Judeo-Christian and Graeco-Roman roots and in their essentials have remained remarkably constant.' Such statements must temper any optimism concerning the plight of those whose heritages do not stem from this tradition. However, despite this inconsistency in his pronouncements, they signal a major shift in government attitudes from previous conservative administrations. The central problem with his argument is that it contains a very confused view of identity and he makes no real attempt to unravel it. He is rehearsing the same viewpoint expressed by Matthew Arnold in 'Culture and Anarchy' and trying to apply the principles to a very different world. This is symptomatic of many government policy statements which confuse the notion of citizenship with other sometimes conflicting aspects of cultural belonging.

### *9.3 Identity and Citizenship*

Moreover, as a nation we have no clear and agreed description of our 'national' identity. There is a fundamental dichotomy between the notion of citizenship and the idea of belonging to various groups in more organic ways. Whereas the notion of citizenship is premised on human rights framed through legislation, the concept of belonging based on friendship, kinship or culture is more complex and much more difficult to legislate for. This is further exacerbated by the global reach of current capitalist economics, which

demands standardisation of manufacturing and working practices. Concurrently we have witnessed the development over the 20th century of fundamental human rights, enshrined in international legislation, which transcend the boundaries of local cultures and those with previously inscribed 'national identities'. I do not, however mean to imply that these rights are universally observed. But they do exist as a point of reference. As Cesarani and Fulbrook (1996:7) point out:

The concept of citizenship was always weak in England. Subjecthood was the preferred mode of belonging to a nation... The creation of the United Kingdom and the British Empire necessitated a flexible category of belonging which was supplied by perpetual allegiance to the crown... However, the emergence of the dominions and the entrenchment of racial thinking led to a bifurcation of white and non-white British subjects...mass immigration from the colonies and New Commonwealth after 1945 strongly accentuated the desire to draw the criteria for national belonging more tightly and to exclude non-white peoples. By the late 1970s, immigration controls and citizenship were overdetermined by considerations of 'race', even if disguised as cultural concerns. The struggle over the definition of an exclusive or inclusive national identity is still not resolved, but the treatment of immigrants and non-white citizens bears the marks of a dominant exclusivist ethos.

I quote this at length, because it helps us to understand the basis of the central sets of problems surrounding the issues of culture, identity and curriculum in terms of government policy, particularly as it impacts upon the curriculum. First, it helps to explain why the hegemonic projects undertaken by the Thatcherite governments were so successful in putting forward their curiously old fashioned of English identity, most particularly as it is realised within the English curriculum. It is a romanticised version of middle class life in the 1950s, despite the fact that Thatcher herself advocated Victorian values. New Labour don't appear to want to challenge that particular 'warranting narrative' but merely give it a 'modernised' gloss. Second, it helps us to understand the ongoing battle between multiculturalism and anti racism, which has been damaging in terms of consolidating any concerted counter hegemonic discourse or struggle.

Finally it helps us to understand why there is a great deal of excitement and interest in the notion of identity, particularly in exploring it as a many layered contradictory and complex phenomenon. In many areas of social life, subjecthood is being superceded by networks of contacts and relationships. This is evident in the work of cultural theorists and in the work of musicians such Talvin Singh, who are working on border art. By crossing and recrossing boundaries, they are creating new forms of expression to describe new types of relationships. Second and third generation settlers are forming new sets of identities. In the process they tend to be critical of traditional cultures both from the home/ community and the school.

The people I have interviewed for this study (See Kearney:1998:309-326) have been keen to discuss issues of power and politics which underlie such conceptualisations of culture and identity. The analyses in Chapters 6-8 demonstrate how complex the notion of identity is and how intricate and sensitive the processes of identity construction are. They are not susceptible to crude policies which are based on mistaken generalisations or the kind of confused thinking epitomised by Tate's arguments. However, as I shall suggest at the end of this chapter there are ways in which schooling can further this process in constructive ways. These arguments obviously are closely related to wider debates which are raging across many academic disciplines.

As I discussed earlier in this study, the notion of identity is being explored, re-evaluated and reworked in many fields of academic research, particularly ethnography (Geertz: 1973, 1983, 1986, 1988, 1995; Clifford: 1986, 1988, 1997) cultural studies, (Hall: 1980, 1988, 1991, 1997; Gilroy: 1992; Mouffe: 1995; Bhabba: 1995; Ang: 1994) media studies (hooks: 1992). This complexity and contradiction has also been explored through studies of literature (see Singh et al 1994, 1996) and through film and television. The successful British comedy TV show, 'Goodness, Gracious Me', taps this vein very well, revealing the range and complexity of values and attitudes within the diaspora; exploding myths and preconceptions. By comparison, many aspects of contemporary schooling appear hopelessly dated and irrelevant.

However, the role of the mass media is not a simple one, since it has to balance a range of forces some economic, some ideological. However, there are the important questions of agency: Who owns the media? Who controls what we see and what we don't? What values are promoted and which are excluded? (See Schiller: 1996 and Klein: 2000) Moreover, the mass media has to render itself accessible to a very wide population in terms of age, culture and class. As we have seen from the life stories, it has a powerful and potent influence in how they perceive themselves and their families. How they are fixed by the more powerful forces and how it, in turn guides how they are perceived by others. These forces also affect the ways the media is used by politicians and form the basis of public policy. In the field of education, this is clear in terms of terms of epistemology (What's worth knowing?) and pragmatism (Which approaches work best?). What we have is a 'ploughman's lunch', of the kind served up by people like Nick Tate. It is that reinvention of middle-class, prep school tradition, which is currently being marketed as education. In terms of policy we cling to a quaint and phony 'Englishness', to redescribe our national identity. All of this still infects the English curriculum in terms of both the canon and the emphasis on prescriptive and uncritical ways of examining language use. This is far removed from the everyday life of many pupils, especially those who are negotiating the rich and diverse repertoires of their own lives and identities. In short, people very like those examined in this study.

Two key aspects of policy have emanated from this. One is the 'consumption of tradition'. Wedded to a market system of funding schools, parental 'choice', a narrow and rigid inspection framework and a published league table of test results, schools now market themselves in curiously old fashioned ways. We have seen the return of uniforms. An extreme example of this approach was recently criticised by OFSTED, where inspectors discovered that the children were not allowed to speak during the lunch break for reasons of etiquette. (Sunday Telegraph, 26 July 1999).

The second is the notion of 'entitlement'. With the introduction of the national curriculum in 1988, equality was reconfigured as equality of access. This still appears as the cornerstone to the policy of the current government. In the 1999 review of the National curriculum, the secretary of State proposed an introduction to the curriculum which would include the following paragraph:

The national curriculum secures for all pupils, *irrespective* of culture, social background or gender, an entitlement to a number of areas of learning and to develop the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary for their self-fulfilment and development as active and responsible citizens. (my emphasis)

On the surface this appears to be a more equitable system than equality of opportunity, since it implies inclusion. However, the rhetoric conceals a rather different reality. The question which needs to be asked is 'entitlement' to what? As I have argued so far this narrow curriculum is one which would appear to exclude rather than include children from culturally diverse heritages and privilege white middle class suburban children. Of course there will be exceptions in terms of individual pupils or communities. However, any demographic analysis of the current league tables would suggest that middle class privilege is, if anything, more entrenched. More significant is the dramatic increase in the number of black pupils who are excluded from school. In such circumstances 'entitlement' becomes an ambiguous and misleading term.

In an earlier paper (Kearney:1996) I explored issues of policy with reference to multilingualism, after the Dearing review of the National Curriculum. In that paper I argued that public policy in education was providing galling constraints for teachers who were working with children from diverse cultural backgrounds. The interlocking legislation surrounding the national curriculum was diverting funds away from programmes of support. At that time funding came from the Home Office and had been narrowly targeted on the learning of English language. It was also part of the single regeneration budget, which meant that Local Authorities had to bid for it along with money for other purposes. This meant that distribution was uneven. Following the Dearing review, the curriculum was becoming more narrowly defined, Anglo centric and rigid.

Since then we have had a change of government. However, policy with regard to education there is little evidence that the emphasis has shifted in any ideological or practical sense. The Literacy Strategy, has become a central plank of government policy. Although it was devised by the outgoing Conservative government, it is, if anything, more narrow, prescriptive and rigid than the 'English' curriculum in the Dearing review. The approach of whole class teaching and of briskly paced lessons works against the interests of children at the early stages of learning English. (See NALDIC guidelines). With such a crude view of curriculum entitlement, teachers have to use a great deal of energy and imagination to curb its worst excesses. As with the previous conservative governments there has been an almost wilful ignorance of the wealth of educational research, which counters this approach and argues for interactive, holistic, collaborative approaches, thematically organised and drawing on the children's own experiences (eg Garcia:1991, Carter and Chatfield, 1989; Lucas, Henze and Donato, 1990; Pease Alvarez, Garcia and Espinola 1991). It also ignores the rich complexity involved in identity construction explored in this thesis and more importantly the diverse and exciting changes which are happening to our cultural life in Britain and elsewhere.

#### 9.4 *'All Our Futures'*

However, the recommendations of the Macpherson report (1999) have opened up a few spaces which teachers need to explore. In its attempt to deal with complex issues of identity, 'All Our Futures: Creativity, Culture and Education' (DFEE:1999) is a much more coherent and encouraging document. 'All Our Futures' examines in detail the relationship between education, culture, identity and creativity demonstrating how closely intertwined they are. The authors are explicit in their descriptions and definitions. It is well supported by recent research findings. The committee also take a view which is non-elitist, inclusive and informed. They recognise that the issues are deeply problematic and complex. It is much closer to complex ideas of identity, which have been explored throughout this thesis. I quote the following passage (DFEE:1999:47) at length to give something of its flavour.

...diversity is now central to the vitality of our national culture and a distinctive feature of it. There are immense benefits in this and there are deep problems...

Culture in the biological sense implies growth and transformation. This is true of social culture. One of the consequences of the dynamics and diversity of social cultures is an irresistible process of change. Some years ago a national newspaper campaigned with the slogan, "Times change, values don't". For all the reasons we have suggested, the opposite is true. Many of the values and patterns of behaviour in the closing moments of the twentieth century are wholly different from those of the late nineteenth century; as they were from the preceding century.

Contemporary ways of life are not only different from those of the Victorians, they were largely unpredicted by them and were essentially unpredictable. Cultural change is rarely linear and uniform. It results from a vortex of influences and events which is hard enough to understand and impossible to plan in advance.

...We have described contemporary cultures as dynamic and diverse. As a matter of urgency, education must help young people to understand these processes and engage with and respect cultural perspectives different from their own.

However, they distance themselves from an empty 'cultural relativism' by insisting on two core values:

1. a commitment to the unique value and central importance of the individual
2. the idea of contingency: the view that things might be different from how they seem or are currently believe to be... It is this that encourages us to question current perceptions, knowledge and practices and to believe in the virtues of openness in public life rather than closure and censure

They go on to identify four central roles for education in the cultural development of young people:

- a) To enable young people to recognise, explore and understand their own cultural assumptions and values
- b) To enable young people to embrace and understand cultural diversity by bringing them into contact with the attitudes, values and traditions of other cultures
- c) To encourage an historical perspective by relating contemporary values to the process and events that have shaped them
- d) To enable young people to understand the evolutionary nature of culture and the processes and potential for change

It would be difficult to find a better informed, better written and wiser document coming out of the DFEE in recent history. Furthermore, the committee question some of the central assumptions of the national curriculum in radical ways in terms of both content and assessment, suggesting ways in which it could be truly inclusive. It is clear that there are significant philosophical differences from Nick Tate's liberal views. Tate's still lean towards an elitist and transmission view of learning. What is particularly impressive is that the report contains detailed recommendations for all bodies concerned with implementation of policy.



Although the committee put in a great deal of energy, creativity and commitment, in terms of policy it has fallen on stony ground. It is clear that by 2000 none of its recommendations had been taken into account in the current curriculum. Although I have concentrated upon the values embedded in the pronouncements from official sources, there have been some very encouraging guidelines issued from various bodies, (eg QCA: A language in common: Assessing English as an additional language; TTA: Raising Attainment of Minority Ethnic Pupils and the National Literacy Strategy: EMAG Materials: Supporting pupils learning English as an additional language). However, they still do not tackle the fundamental issues of the curriculum in any real sense. Their response to Macpherson is that the curriculum is still configured in terms of citizenship issues not in the content of the curriculum. In the English section of Curriculum 2000 the equal opportunities issues concentrate on the recent moral panic about boys and reading. As such it leaves all those messy issues of culture and identity safely to one side.

### *9.5 Implications for Education*

If we are to have a curriculum which is truly relevant and inclusive then we need to ensure that (predominantly Anglo centric) content is not given precedence over process. We need to ensure space to explore difficult issues and work out creative solutions. We need to ensure that the aim of education is to encourage the development of creative, critical thinking adults with a sense of purpose and a 'voice'. We *can* embrace difference within equality, only if we stop reducing ideas of quality to the memorisation of 'facts'; if we recognise the multiple intelligences (see Howard Gardner:1983) which our pupils have; if we design curricula which allows pupils to build on their own experiences and complex identities and allow them to explore their interests and potential; if we harness the creativity of the majority of teachers instead of burying it under dull, repetitive routines. In short we need a dialogic curriculum, which prepares pupils for all their life, not merely for the world of work. The main implication of my own work is that self narrative should be at the centre of such a curriculum. We need to stop burying our differences and work towards resolving the difficulties and enjoying diversity instead of fearing it.

My research shows young people are working through the transformations of culture, language and identity. What I have attempted to chart is the nature of those transformations within the lives of young(ish) people. I am interested in not only what changes, but also what persists over time and space and the nature of narrative and voice in this experience. They are creating new and exciting forms of expression, questioning assumptions and values, yet maintaining their critical perspectives and their sense of history and struggle. Education needs to be an integral part of those processes. The prospect for all of us is exciting.

As Bakhtin puts it:

In the realm of culture, outsideness is a most powerful factor in understanding. It is only in the eyes of *another* culture that foreign culture reveals itself fully and profoundly...A meaning only reveals its depths once it has encountered and come into contact with another, foreign meaning; they engage in a kind of dialogue, which surmounts the closedness and one sidedness of these particular meanings, these cultures. We raise new questions for a foreign culture, ones which it did not raise for itself; we seek answers to our own questions in it; and the foreign culture responds to us by revealing to us its new semantic depths.

Without *one's own* questions one cannot creatively understand anything new and foreign (but of course, the questions must be serious and sincere). Such a dialogic encounter does not result in merging or mixing. Each retains its unity and *open* totality, but they are mutually enriched...We lack only scholarly, investigatory boldness, and without this we cannot rise to the heights or descend to the depths.

This is obviously a two way street and policy makers would do well to locate it on their own conceptual maps. Then education may have a part to play in the resolution of the social tensions highlighted by many reports in the past thirty years. In my view, the complex and highly politicised question of identity is possibly the most important single issue facing us in the modern world. It is about time those who decide upon curriculum policy stopped trying to avoid it.

*Ghosts in the wind that blow  
Through my life  
Follow me wherever I go*

*I'll never be free  
From these chains inside  
Hidden deep down in my soul*

Lucinda Williams: 2001  
'Bus to Baton Rouge'

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# *Appendices*

*Appendix 1*

*Analysis grid*

*Aliki*

Others for self	Self for others	Self for self
<p><b>2. Dominant/Culture/Influence:</b> Her own views influenced strongly by dominant norms</p> <p><b>4. Dominant culture/Influence:</b> Wanting to be 'posh' or part of a different culture</p>	<p><b>1. Dominant Culture/Discomfort:</b> How people respond negatively to her accent/dialect</p> <p><b>2. Heritage/ambivalence:</b> Conflicting loyalties-embarrassment for mother and disabled sister, yet love for them too</p> <p><b>3. Heritage/Discomfort:</b> Judging own family through dominant norms. Conflict of values. Rejection of family.</p> <p><b>4. Heritage/Discomfort:</b> In weddings story. 'I hated weddings'</p>	

Others for self	Self for others	Self for self
<p><b>6, Role model/Ambivalence:</b> Talks warmly about her father. Contrasts with later narrative.</p> <p>Is physically similar to father. She admires his genuine concern for others</p> <p>Ambivalence about father's accent. Some defensiveness?</p> <p><b>7, Heritage culture/Ambivalence:</b> Part of a wider network &gt; Mother's distaste for living in Britain. arranged marriage</p>		<p><b>5. Dominant Culture/Discomfort:</b> Questioning of norms and values. Particularly in relation to media images</p> <p>Perhaps a reflection in hindsight.</p>

Others for self	Self for others	Self for self
<p><b>8. Heritage/Influence:</b> Family and community recreating village life in Stoke Newington</p> <p>Grew up with that- link with later stories</p> <p><b>Heritage/Ambivalence:</b> Distances herself 'the only ones to have moved away</p> <p><b>9. Influence:</b> Part of a wider network. 'hostile towards English people'</p>	<p><b>9. Political:</b> Sees herself as part of a wider network of oppressed people</p> <p><b>12. Heritage/Ambivalence:</b> bilingualism seen as unremarkable</p>	<p><b>10. &amp; 11. Eidetic memories:</b> Before language. Feeling outweighs narrative.</p> <p>Is such memory also a twice told tale?</p> <p>Childhood 3</p>

Others for self	Self for others	Self for self
<p>13. <b>Alternative approach offered:</b> ‘<b>epiphany</b>’ came from a model offered by teacher; another way of being, as a performer.</p> <p>15. <b>Discomfort:</b> reinforced by school. Could not remember anything relating to her own culture. ‘Felt the whole thing had failed me and failed my sisters’</p> <p><b>Ambivalence:</b> contrasts with her stories of two teachers who had influenced her</p> <p>Realises this in ‘<b>metanarrative</b>’ ‘I don’t know whether that’s just me as a grown up being defensive about it’</p> <p>“What about us?” Link with later discussion about Greek attitudes</p>	<p>14. <b>Discomfort:</b> Being perceived as not ‘normal’ ‘people would look at <i>us</i>’. Sister had cerebral palsy. Also ashamed of speaking another language.</p>	<p>13. <b>Epiphany:</b> Teacher showed a picture of a person on an OHP. This offered her a ‘trigger’ for her desire to act and be famous.</p> <p>‘I wanted to be that person on the screen’</p>

Others for self	Self for others	Self for self
<p>16. <b>Alternative model:</b> Network of school friends. None wanted to discuss culture of home. 'never talked about families'</p> <p>17. <b>Heritage/Discomfort:</b> desire to be the 'other'. Irish friend with blond hair and blue eyes.</p>	<p>15. <b>Discomfort:</b> at expressing such a non PC thing. Aware of my own and her current position.</p> <p>16. <b>Alternative norms</b> of peer group</p> <p>17. <b>Heritage/Discomfort:</b> poor self image and rejection of physical self. Lasted a long time.  'I think I carried that all the way through to the end of my degree'</p>	<p>17. <b>Epiphany:</b> Two sources:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Taught children who had the same constraints and dilemmas as her and who were using similar strategies to deal with them</li> <li>2. Came out of an oppressive relationship and met someone who affirmed her culture and identity in a genuine and uncondescending way</li> </ol> <p>Confronts self and has real support</p>



Others for self	Self for others	Self for self
<p>19. <b>Discomfort:</b> Oppressive relationship with liberal middle class male. Assumed himself to be culture free. Asked her to tone down own culturally learned behaviour</p> <p>20. <b>Alternative role model:</b> New relationship. Shows delight in diversity</p>	<p>18. <b>Epiphany:</b> becoming an alternative role model herself</p> <p>19. <b>Discomfort:</b> attempts to deny spontaneous and lively side of character and conform to m.c norms</p>	<p>18. <b>Epiphany:</b> analysed. ‘suddenly made me realise that you couldn’t put people in boxes and deny them who they were’</p> <p>I thought, “That’s the way I perceive myself and that’s why I can’t move forward..” Allowed others to define her.</p>

Others for self	Self for others	Self for self
<p>21. <b>Alternative role models:</b> offering</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• approval</li> <li>• different interpretation for the same behaviour</li> <li>• new possibilities of 'how to be'</li> </ul> <p>21.. <b>Affirmative role models:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PGCE course tutor</li> <li>• Teacher on school experience</li> </ul>		<p>19. <b>Epiphany:</b> Sudden realisation that cultural modes of expression were an integral part of her.</p> <p>Anger replaces embarrassment</p> <p>20. <b>Epiphany:</b> Profound and far reaching consequences</p> <p>23. <b>Epiphany:</b> 'I kept saying to myself: "I'm not going to be how I was when I did my degree. I'm not going to disappear and...I'm going to have a voice..."</p>

Others for self	Self for others	Self for self
<p>23. <b>Discomfort:</b> Degree course. Dominance of middle class norms. Not explicitly stated</p> <p>24. <b>Ambivalence:</b> ineffectual role models: Tutors.            ‘ I think I just felt patronised.’            ‘Some of them ..I’ve got a lot of respect for but...they didn’t have the skills as educators’            ‘They couldn’t understand where people like me and my friend Luna, whose Asian were coming from’</p>	<p>23. <b>Discomfort:</b> Conflict between appearance and reality. ‘They used their language skills to crush others’</p> <p>23. <b>Ambivalence:</b> contrast between friends and disillusion with college unstated norms</p>	<p>25. <b>Epiphany:</b> Finding her own voice in opposition. Unconscious racism of white students not electing to work with students from other cultural heritages            Inspired play on such a theme.</p>

Others for self	Self for others	Self for self
<p>26. <b>Sense of community:</b> forged through conflict with main group. Links with earlier experiences of bonding through oppression</p> <p>27. <b>No role model:</b> Had to invent a solution (loophole)</p> <p>28. <b>Discomfort:</b> White students defensive. Will not admit error/apologise. put it down to irrational behaviour. Cultural norms</p>	<p>26. <b>Discomfort:</b> rejection subconscious and subtle. In a context where you wouldn't expect it</p> <p>26. <b>Discomfort:</b> again rejection through mistaken and stereotyped viewpoint.</p>	<p>27. <b>Epiphany:</b> Anger gives her the strength/energy to confront other students honestly.</p> <p>Sharpens her focus. Allows her to articulate disatisfactions</p> <p>29. <b>Epiphany:</b> Creative solution. wrote play. Identity linked to work.</p>

Others for self	Self for others	Self for self
<p>31. <b>Discomfort:</b> Went to predominantly 'white' school in Enfield. 'Just went completely mad and rebelled against everything...I kind of..just lost hope'</p> <p>31. <b>Different norms and values:</b> 'we lost our friends and...the system in the school was very different'</p>	<p>31. <b>Discomfort:</b> Poor self image, especially regarding maths</p>	<p>30. <b>Epiphany:</b> Linked to earlier experiences eg at school. Not all cultural groups got on.</p> <p>30. <b>Contradiction:</b> 'I never had any Greek friends' and 'all my friends had to be English' is not consistent with other parts of her narrative</p> <p>32. <b>Ambition:</b> Wanted to become a lawyer. Kept her going in school. Even now wishes to become one.</p>

Others for self	Self for others	Self for self
<p>33. <b>Influence of teachers:</b> ‘ I remember all my English teachers saying to me, “you should either be a performer or you should write.”</p> <p>34. <b>Influence of friend:</b> Casually suggested drama (youth theatre).</p> <p>35. <b>Influence</b> of African teacher at primary school who encouraged the children to perform</p> <p>35. <b>Ambivalence/contradiction:</b> Teacher would not let her take the part of Olivia Newton-John (Grease). Chose best friend who was also Greek but had blond hair</p>		<p>34. <b>Ambition:</b> Still wants to be a lawyer ‘That’s what I’m gonna do when I decide to finish teaching. No matter how old I am. I want t go to law school.’</p> <p>38. <b>Ambition:</b> ‘I kept on telling myself that...I was going to be famous for something’</p> <p><b>Reflection:</b> more realistic and modest ambitions now, ‘I didn’t need to be famous to feel confident..feel good about myself.’</p>

Others for self	Self for others	Self for self
<p>39. <b>Sense of community:</b> ‘Greek people...Greek cypriots...since the war in ‘74 have always said, ‘What about us?...Nobody’s looked after us.’</p> <p><b>Sense of history and tradition</b></p> <p>41. <b>Discomfort:</b> Extreme distaste of mach attitude of Greek men. Related to mother’s relationship with her father, but generalised too. Interprets this physically.</p> <p>Particularly father’s neglect of mother having to cope with a child with cerebral palsy. Did not see it as his responsibility</p> <p>Father v. the women</p>	<p>41. <b>Discomfort:</b> Can’t deal with mother’s wish (prolepsis) that she finds ‘a nice Greek man’</p>	<p>39. <b>Epiphany:</b> Different view of success coincides with cultural breakthrough. See herself as part of a larger political movement. Identifies with that struggle. Particularly since Cypriots are often marginalised in equal opportunities questionnaires</p> <p>40. <b>Political:</b> Identifies with oppressed groups generally, ‘...I’ve never been really, really proud of my culture...I’m proud to be foreign...’</p>

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Others for self	Self for others	Self for self
<p>44. <b>Epiphany:</b> Father's attitude to her has changed. 'He couldn't quite believe that I was a teacher...I was academic</p>	<p>44. <b>Epiphany:</b> able to make contact with father emotionally He is open, "I know how you feel, I've had years and years of guilt"</p> <p>Major effect upon their relationship</p> <p>She is perceived as more assured and mature</p> <p>47. <b>Discomfort:</b> Still awkward about her academic qualification</p>	<p>44. <b>Epiphany:</b> Since gaining more confidence and independence, she has been able to get a different perspective on her father.</p> <p>Widens possibilities for both of them. Can emerge from culturally prescribed roles.</p> <p>48. <b>Epiphany:</b> Major breakthrough in creation of 'one woman show, which was about my culture'</p> <p>Creative articulation and resolution of many dilemmas involved in the construction of her identity. The discomforts, the dilemmas, the constraints and the opportunities</p>

Others for self	Self for others	Self for self
<p>55. <b>Discomfort:</b> Still sees her mother's arranged marriage. 'That's really undermining my parents relationship.. when I look at it there's nothing apart from obligation to each other and the children...'</p>	<p>52. <b>Discomfort:</b> Having lost many elements of Greek culture: language, cuisine etc.</p> <p>'I feel really ashamed when I go to Cyprus, I can't have conversations with my family... It upsets me that I can't do this with my mum...'</p>	<p>53. <b>Ambition:</b> Wants to rescue this important part of herself. But not marrying a Greek man. '...that's not what that's about. that's about me having to identify with my identity and that's part of my identity</p> <p>Wants to work in Cyprus for a few years and to learn the language</p> <p>'The main reason is so that I can talk to my mum properly'</p>

Others for self	Self for others	Self for self
<p><b>59: Heritage/Discomfort:</b> Disliked formal style of pedagogy. (Is this a later interpretation)</p> <p><b>62. Awareness of hierarchies</b> within the Greek culture which relates to language registers</p> <p><b>63. Dominant culture/Influence:</b>Feels that it would have made ‘a huge difference’ if schools had connected with cultural aspects. Especially on self image and being personally more successful. ‘I think it’s about knowing who I am. What I’m about’</p>	<p><b>58. Heritage/Discomfort:</b> Went to Greek school later than most. Secondary school age.</p> <p><b>59. Heritage/Discomfort:</b> Couldn’t identify with other pupils who were secure in their traditional role</p>	<p><b>54. Heritage/Ambivalence:</b> Complex set of issues surrounding identity. Some nostalgia. Return to Cyprus, but not forever.</p> <p>Can’t return to parents village, politically Explored in the play</p>

Others for self	Self for others	Self for self
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Others for self	Self for others	Self for self
<p><b>Others for self</b></p> <p>68. <b>Reflection:</b> Rejection of traditional attitudes from other Cypriot children at Greek school</p> <p>Complex mixture of rejection, envy and regret</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• envy of secure family life</li> <li>• rejection of the narrowness and insularity</li> <li>• regret that she has lost much of this tradition and its assets</li> </ul>		<p><b>Self for self</b></p> <p>64. <b>Reflection:</b> Importance of teachers' attitudes to home language/culture/identity on self image</p> <p>Different definition of success. Clear confident voice</p> <p>66. <b>Reflection:</b> Importance of 'peace of mind and self confidence'</p> <p>67. <b>Reflection:</b> Not wholly conscious that the play was a creative way of working through these issues</p>

Others for self	Self for others	Self for self
<p>69. <b>Reflection:</b> She traded culture for academic success. 'If I'd gone for my culture, I'd be married now'  'I wanted to achieve something before I get married'</p> <p>70. <b>Discomfort:</b> Deep disgust at father's behaviour towards her mother</p> <p>73. <b>Discomfort:</b> Kula anecdote. Wished to be more 'English' Family opted out of Greek things. A role model?</p> <p>75. Sense of community: Warm anecdote about 'going around the houses'</p>		<p>72. <b>Reflection:</b> Now proud of her heritage. Wants to communicate with mother realises that subtlety is lost</p> <p>78. <b>Reflection:</b> Sees identity as a process 'It's not finished yet'</p>

*Appendix 2*

*Analysis grid*

*Asif*

Others for self	Self for others	Self for self
<p><b>1. Tradition:</b> Locates himself within broad historical struggles and family history. Long march. Partition.</p> <p>Succinct and powerful resume</p> <p><b>2. Tradition:</b> Locates himself within a pattern of settlement which demeans immigrants</p> <p>‘The usual story...he couldn’t get a job as a pharmacist’ Dug footings for water board</p> <p><b>Metanarrative:</b> ‘Quite an interesting story actually’</p> <p><b>3. Influence of father:</b> Very positive. Admires courage and determination</p> <p>Stands up to racist in a dignified and determined way. Not intimidated</p> <p><b>4. π /reflection:</b> Shocked by attitude of water board. ‘Shockingly enlightened for the time’ as compared with racist work force</p>		



Others for self	Self for others	Self for self
<p><b>7. Influence:</b> Admiration of father's energy &amp; enterprise-setting up business</p> <p><b>7.- 8. Influence:</b> Mother is a large influence in early education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• admires her critical take</li> <li>• closeness implied</li> </ul> <p><b>9. Tradition:</b> Link to wider family network - visits to 'homeland'</p> <p><b>11. Prolepsis:</b> Tutor found at 5 or 6 Mother's discomfort at school system</p>	<p><b>7. Tradition/community:</b> Identifies with wider network. Business experience-links with other immigrants' survival strategies</p> <p><b>9. Tradition:</b> Family visits to homeland. Very much part of the family until he was 21</p> <p><b>10. Tradition:</b> Part of a language tradition 'We would speak Urdu at home'</p>	<p><b>5.- 6. Discomfort:</b> (metanarrative) Defines himself against racism. Setting it in political historical context.</p>

Others for self	Self for others	Self for self
<p><b>12. Contradiction (metanarrative):</b> In background interms of class</p> <p>Mother from upper class who lost everything in partition. Dad fro peasant background</p> <p><b>13: Prolepsis:</b> Stressed the importance of education</p> <p><b>14. Discomfort (metanarrative):</b> Has relatives who worked as civil servants for the Raj. Conflicts with current politics</p>	<p><b>12. Tradition:</b> Part of a wider heritage. ‘So I stayed with my grandparents, in the Punjab, that sort of extended family and lived as a goatherd for about a year and a half and my mum went back to Karachi’</p> <p><b>14. Tradition/community:</b> Identifies with community of Urdu speakers who settled in Karachi after partition and became financially successful</p>	

Others for self	Self for others	Self for self
	<p><b>15. Tradition/history:</b> Sees himself/is seen as part of a wider group. Has wide knowledge through own experiences, books and media</p> <p>Including political movements</p> <p><b>16. Ambivalence:</b> Realises that her will not necessarily be seen as part of the culture. 'I thought, 'I'll just go to Pakistan. I'll just wander...I look the part..I'll just be able to go anywhere''(but it's only the top 8% who've got Urdu</p> <p><b>17. Tradition:</b> Has maintained the language at primary school level</p> <p><b>18. Discomfort:</b> At school has to submerge this part of his identity to fit in with a racist framework. '...Being one of two Asian boys in this school in Swindon and 'You're not a Paki, you're just like us really' And I bought into that wanting to be part of the group'</p>	<p><b>16. Epiphany:</b> Realises that he does not understand the culture as well as he thought</p>

Others for self	Self for others	Self for self
<p><b>23. Discomfort:</b> argues with father and uncles about Islam</p>	<p><b>20. Discomfort:</b> Being sent to mosque school</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• couldn't understand it ie Arabic</li> <li>• no respect for teacher</li> </ul> <p>Only there a short time. Subverted it by teasing the teacher.</p> <p><b>22. Tradition:</b> Was happy to go along with parents wishes No real understanding of the Qur'an</p>	<p><b>19. Discomfort:</b> With certain parts of the tradition especially religious aspects</p> <p>'being an atheist'</p> <p>Disapproves of father's return to faith after heart attack. 'Maybe that's cynical on my part'</p> <p><b>21 Discomfort (metanarrative):</b> formal teaching style goes against current views</p> <p><b>23. Epiphany:</b> Currently has balanced and critical view of religion - would like more knowledge to strengthen arguments</p> <p>24. pragmatic view 25 eschews spiritual aspects. Is candid. Envious people with faith. Has Marxist/sociological perspective</p>

Others for self	Self for others	Self for self
<p><b>25. Discomfort:</b> Examines contradiction in Islam over alcohol</p> <p><b>26.</b> Also critical of Western attitudes which are built on limited knowledge of a few countries</p>	<p><b>29. Discomfort:</b> Has been able to circumnavigate/undermine racist attitudes towards him. and become included.</p>	<p><b>27. Epiphany:</b> Explicit, detailed description of identity</p> <p>Rejects many things in own background, yet still has a deep knowledge and interest</p> <p><b>28.</b> He sees identity as many layered. ‘a European traveller’ Looking for a label that’s free from racist associations of English identity</p> <p><b>29. Epiphany:</b> Strong anti racist position. ‘I identify very much with the excluded groups...so all non-whites really’ Looking for a less rigid (European) view of National identity</p>

Others for self	Self for others	Self for self
		<p><b>29. Epiphany</b> (continued): Sees danger in a strong reading of the postmodernist position</p> <p>‘this idea of broadness...it’s a strange...or is it that you’ve dissipated identity so much so that you have nothing and you’re lost, which is what my dad would suggest to you’</p> <p><b>31. Epiphany:</b> Rejects romanticism of the mythological homelands</p> <p>‘I wouldn’t mind being buried on our plot on our farm in the Punjab... So I like holding that idea of a base for my grave but not an awful lot else. I think it’s more of a romantic notion and nothing else...’</p> <p><b>32. Ambivalence:</b> Had made plans 5 years prior to the interview:</p> <p>‘I would not go and live in the Punjab and I have seriously considered sitting the Civil Service Exam.’</p>

Others for self	Self for others	Self for self
	<p><b>34. Community:</b> Felt part of the Asian Community in Swindon 'there were only a couple of Asian families'</p>	<p><b>33. Political/Discomfort:</b> Distaste for day to day political situation in Karachi where he would have settled, especially:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• bribery, corruption</li> <li>• extremes of poverty and resulting brutality</li> </ul> <p>Comparison with Britain, 'it's much more blatant there...when you see people with their limbs hacked off by their junkie dads' Karachi is centre of the heroin trade in the region</p>

*Appendix 3*

*Analysis grid*

*Nandine*



Others for self	Self for others	Self for self
<p><b>1. Role Model/Influence:</b> Strict Upbringing. Still has an effect today</p> <p>‘I’m quite conservative in some ways and I’m disapproving of other people</p> <p><b>1 Heritage/Influence:</b> Still has values learned from childhood</p> <p>‘I am liberal but in specific things...like social niceties or etiquette and behaving appropriately...(I’m not)</p> <p><b>2. Heritage/Influence:</b> Sense of duty and responsibility is still deep</p> <p>‘In communities where it’s very close knit, you know it’s rural...sort of traditional...family set ups or behaving to parents in a certain way’</p>	<p><b>2. Role Model/Discomfort</b></p> <p>Two contradictory images of self</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• with work mates confident and assertive</li> <li>• with family shy lacks confidence</li> </ul> <p>‘Even now when I’ve spoken to my father, I can’t express myself articulately’</p> <p><b>5. Heritage/Discomfort:</b> Resented duties as eldest daughter</p> <p><b>6. Role model/Discomfort:</b> Lack of acknowledgement from mother</p> <p><b>7.-8. Dominant culture /Discomfort:</b> Rejected by other children at school. ‘I wanted to play as well and they didn’t want me to be in the game.’</p>	<p><b>1. Role Model/Discomfort:</b> Strict Upbringing. Still has an effect today</p> <p>Sill has values and niceties learned from childhood</p> <p><b>3.-5. Heritage/Ambivalence:</b> Still trying to resolve dilemmas</p>

Others for self	Self for others	Self for self
	<p>9.. Dominant culture/Ambivalence: Exclusion, but not seen as racism. Relates this to other incidents  '... a so called best friend called me a Paki, but that's like the worst of it...it didn't really affect me for life or anything'</p> <p>11.Heritage/ Ambivalence  No Bengali friends. Anecdote of a friend giving away a confidence</p> <p>12 Heritage/ Influence: Unthinking attitude towards customs  'I agreed to the arranged marriage...it was like growing up with a fairy tale story'</p> <p>14 Heritage/Ambivalence: Anxious to conform:  'It was weird because I did on some level enjoy being dutiful , doing the right thing and the social etiquette..but on another level. I wasn't almost there'</p>	

Others for self	Self for others	Self for self
<p><b>15 Alternative role models/Influence:</b> Reading offers new horizons at a deeper level</p> <p>Not merely escapism. Linked to desire 'I remember reading 'Danny the Champion of the World' and I thought, Well he's really lucky to have such a nice dad.'</p>	<p><b>18.. Heritage/ Influence:</b> Visits to Bangladesh were enjoyable</p> <p>'...I've got quite young aunts and uncles and I got on really well with them'</p> <p><b>19. Heritage Ambivalence:</b> Does not romanticise 'homeland' Open drains etc 'and you don't quite fit in anyway...you're sort of straddling two countries and I know this one infinitely better...'</p>	<p><b>14. Heritage/Discomfort:</b> Escape into books</p> <p>In common with Colton for different reasons</p> <p><b>17. Heritage/Discomfort:</b> More boredom than real unhappiness. 'It was just...the same routine at home helping out'</p>

Others for self	Self for others	Self for self
<p><b>21. Alternative role models/Influence:</b> Positive role of all media, if they present internally persuasive discourses</p> <p>Examples from 'Goodness Gracious Me'</p> <p><b>22. Alternative role models/Influence:</b> One which is close to home, Inside Story: '..they interviewed three Asian Women who had chosen to be with English partners..Although in terms of the physical violence they had to endure..I had nothing like that..the actual emotions they felt I could identify with...you know that separation being ostracised from your family'</p> <p><b>22. Alternative role models/Influence:</b> 'Flight' about a Hindu girl, 'It's almost like you can generalise across lots of Asian communities'</p>		<p><b>21. Epiphany:</b> Realises there are other ways of constructing an Asian identity</p> <p>' I see the emergence of a young Asian culture that's changing and new and I can identify with.'</p>

Others for self	Self for others	Self for self
<p><b>26. Alternative role models/Influence:</b> Struggle requires courage deep roots of tradition</p> <p>'I've got a couple of Asian friends who are lesbians...Now one of them..her mother is liberal...but she still hasn't told her mother yet,,you know one of them is a radical right on lesbian feminist.'</p>	<p><b>25. Heritage/Discomfort:</b> Downside of close-knit communities, 'It is so closely knit and it gives you everything you need. And then if you...you want something that's not approved of it's just awful... You've had that whole blanket taken away from you'</p> <p><b>28. Heritage/Reflection:</b> 'I think my generation when they're older will obviously be less...but obviously there will be some who won't'</p> <p><b>29. Complexity of diaspora:</b> Rise of fundamentalism but with more visible women. Contradiction</p>	<p><b>30. Heritage/Ambivalence:</b> Clash of values. 'I've always questioned them. I remember when I was younger my mother always used to say,' Your notions of equality, they'll get you into trouble one day. You should just be happy with your lot'</p>

Others for self	Self for others	Self for self
<p><b>32. Heritage/Discomfort:</b> ‘ I don’t think they really think...stop and question why...’</p> <p><b>32. Heritage/Ambivalence:</b> Complexity of power relations within the diaspora. On young fundamentalists ‘ ...in some ways it’s another way for them to empower themselves, Because some young Bengali women you know in their traditional roles, they wouldn’t have had that sort of power or independence’</p> <p>33. ‘ ...and I don’t believe for a minute they would have that sort of freedom of speech and thought in Muslim states</p> <p><b>38. Role of the media:</b> Liberal values infiltrating everything</p> <p>Links it to Said</p>		

Others for self	Self for others	Self for self
<p><b>41. Role Model/ Influence:</b> My father was a teacher in Bangladesh....My mother reads novels in Bengali'</p> <p><b>41. Alternative Role Model/Influence:</b> 'I think a lot of professional women who have a certain amount of economic and intellectual independence may feel that they have...that it is in the realms of possibility to move out of that community if it is making them unhappy</p>	<p><b>40. Heritage/Ambivalence:</b>Reading and not understanding the Qu'ran cf Asif</p> <p>Not deeply a part of 'the community'</p> <p>'when I was at school there weren't many Bengali..and there weren't any community schools at the time and my parents were just more keen that we were learning English and we started the Arabic later'</p>	<p><b>39. Heritage/Reflection:</b> Trying to balance different elements of her identity. 'I suppose I'm just rethinking...especially now I'm kind of having to reevaluate everything...what something stands for and what something means...the way I interact with people is one but... am I losing things' cf Aliko and Asif</p>

Others for self	Self for others	Self for self
<p>1.</p>	<p><b>41. Heritage/Discomfort:</b> Breaking out of community, very painful  ‘ I suppose if you do make that break there will still be pain there won’t there?’</p> <p><b>42. Dominant culture/Discomfort:</b> Not being able to fit in at school. Lack of understanding of proverbs etc ‘cultural capital’</p> <p>43. Particularly at ‘A’ level not understanding religious references, ‘I felt very out of place...out of my depth’</p> <p>‘Browning makes references in his poems about..European aristocracy and I didn’t know anything about that</p> <p><b>45. Dominant Culture/Extreme Discomfort:</b> In minority at school covert and overt institutional racism.</p> <p>Exclusion from main group ‘made our own kind of outcast group’ cf Alike</p>	<p><b>41.Epiphany:</b> ‘ ...Enduring the pain is better than what you’ve left behind. I suppose it takes...emotionally something to happen to you and you start to think, ‘No, look something’s not right’</p>



Others for self	Self for others	Self for self
<p><b>47. Dominant Culture/Discomfort:</b> Institutionalised racism. Low teacher expectation black students predicted low grades at 'A' level</p>	<p><b>47. Dominant Culture/Discomfort:</b> Formed outcast group with girls of different heritages</p> <p><b>49. Heritage/Influence:</b> Sees herself as middle class. Compares this to children she teaches</p>	<p><b>49. Epiphany/Reflection</b> '... I thought, if I had had a bit more encouragement and prompting, it would have meant so much more to me</p> <p>Now sees herself as role model of Alike</p>

*Appendix 4*

*Analysis grid*

*My*

Others for self	Self for others	Self for self
<p>1. <b>Influence:</b> of father particularly is strong and clear throughout the dialogue</p> <p>4. <b>Affirmation:</b> Language and culture respected by all concerned with schooling. Special, effective provision made for proper immersion programmes</p> <p>6. <b>Affirmation:</b> She benefitted immensely. In comparison to peers in different parts of Britain. Learnt English quickly. Despite suffering great ordeals on journey to UK</p>	<p>1. <b>Affirmation:</b> Very grounded in the history of the culture. Belonging is unambiguous, yet not apparently limiting can see the relative value of each part of her identity</p> <p>2. <b>Political/History and tradition:</b> Resistance to people who were trying to erase the Chinese strand parents identity.. She is able to define her own and her parents' identity in complex terms</p> <p>3. <b>Sense of tradition:</b> Although her narrative is candid the style is detached. Expresses very painful experiences in a clear and forceful way</p> <p>5. <b>Sense of tradition:</b> She has made a formal study of her own experiences and her cultural background at university. Subject of her dissertation.</p>	

Others for self	Self for others	Self for self
<p>8. <b>Positive role models:</b> Teachers, family and friends. Did she encounter no racism?</p> <p>Very formal and supportive family network re education</p> <p>9. <b>Prolepsis:</b> Parents' families had been Chinese merchants in Vietnam. They knew the complexity of the situation</p> <p>9. <b>High expectations of father:</b> Gave support but also found support from neighbour</p> <p>'He really pushed us into learning'</p> <p>10. <b>Prolepsis:</b> Father was traditional patriarch: 'We would sit around the table, the six of us with my father at the top end and he would watch us do our homework'</p> <p>'He knew that being in a new culture we had to work extra hard.'</p>		

Others for self	Self for others	Self for self
<p>11. <b>Sense of tradition:</b> Community and family stronger than issues of privacy and individualism</p> <p>12 <b>Sense of tradition:</b> Also valued maintenance of mother tongue. ‘...they knew that English was important...but they knew if we let go our language then they would not understand us.</p> <p>Extended this and ‘..actually saved up a lot of money and bought us a video and through that they rented..Cantonese videos and thats how we learned Cantonese’</p> <p>‘When we moved up to London my father enrolled us into Saturday schools</p>		

*Appendix 5*

*Analysis grid*

*Olgun*

Others for self	Self for others	Self for self
<p><b>2. Ambivalence:</b> Mainly brought up by his uncle and aunt Anglophiles- Britain has best doctors etc.</p> <p>‘I actually came here when I was eleven, for medical reasons’</p> <p><b>4. Influence of father:</b> Very powerful throughout the narrative. Admires his skill and energy as a successful entrepreneur.</p> <p>Lost business in conflict in 1963</p>	<p>1. <b>Sense of tradition:</b> Sees himself as part of a long historical process.</p> <p>Anglophile family</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• grandfather in British army ironically fighting <i>for</i> the Greeks</li> </ul> <p>2. <b>Sense of tradition:</b> Defines self against Greeks ‘We were afraid of the Greeks and that allied us with the British...’</p> <p>3. <b>Sense of tradition:</b> Defined by conflict and a sense of being overwhelmed, ‘...it was only a small market town, There was (sic) a thousand Turkish Cypriots and about ten thousand Greek Cypriots’</p>	

Others for self	Self for others	Self for self
<p><b>7. Sense of tradition:</b> Completely separate from Greeks (language as well as religion)</p> <p><b>8. High expectations of father:</b> He was 'incredibly keen for all of us to go into education...'</p> <p><b>9. Influence of father:</b> '..he was an intelligent man. After losing that business in '63....he came to the urkish side and he built 5 shops and several houses...and he wanted every one of us to succeed..'</p> <p><b>10. Ambivalence:</b> Uncle also in British army. Allegiance not straightforward.</p>	<p><b>5. Sense of tradition:</b> Strongly part of that community. Witness to injustice and indignities. 'Some people were living in a big school...so they were almost refugees in their own town.'</p> <p>Vivid memories of that time. Muslim traditions, schooling etc. Taught by uncle</p>	



Others for self	Self for others	Self for self
<p>12. <b>Sense of tradition:</b> Defined against the Greeks. Not through personal experience but the narratives of others</p> <p>‘We would never go to the Greek side...I mean people would go there to trade...there were obviously times when there was an incident or something...when we were completely isolated from the Greeks’</p> <p>13. <b>Sense of tradition:</b> Reinforced at school. ‘incredibly nationalistic. I mean the Turkish flag and all the Turkish books from Turkey...Attaturk and the war of independence in Turkey and we were all part of that..a continuation, an extension of Turkey...we weren’t Cypriots’</p>		<p>11. <b>Ambivalence/contradiction:</b> Learned Greek from listening to parents, despite parents disapproval. ‘...they never let me speak it. they said, “No, you speak Turkish”</p> <p>Interesting ambivalence</p>

Others for self	Self for others	Self for self
<p>14. <b>Different traditions:</b> Contrasts with experiences in UK. ‘...it was a such an incredibly big thing..coming on an aeroplane, getting into a car was a big thing...I rode a donkey before I went into a car..and v/e didn’t have a television</p> <p>14. <b>Sense of community:</b> Defined against Greeks. ‘...we didn’t have any electricity..the Greeks wouldn’t let us have any..’</p>	<p>15. <b>Sense of community:</b> Taking part in ‘acts of loyalty’ Smashing porcelain cable holders on pylons with catapults. ‘..we hated the Greeks</p> <p>16: <b>Ambivalence:</b> Strong memory of kindness of British soldiers. Giving chocolate. WHAM</p>	<p>13. <b>Political:</b> Relates this to recent events..’the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and Bosnia’</p> <p>14. <b>Reflection:</b> Not overgeneralising ‘...I’m not saying all Greek Cypriots, but those extremists were actually...electricity pylons passed through the middle of our town, but we didn’t have electricity’</p> <p>15. <b>Reflection:</b> Qualifies in metanarrative. ‘Not now, obviously’</p>

Others for self	Self for others	Self for self
<p>17. <b>Different traditions:</b> Strangeness of uncle's fish and chip shop. Differences of routines, getting up at 10 o'clock, people queuing for 'fast food' etc. Contrasts with the rural way of life.</p> <p>19. <b>Different traditions:</b> School posed similar issues. ..It was a <i>massive</i> school.'</p> <p>Teachers were very welcoming. Attempt to recognise differences and help settle him in. Supportive headteacher</p> <p>20. <b>Different traditions:</b> Making baskets in class. 'What's going on here... Weirid people..they queue up for food and make baskets</p> <p>21. <b>Complexity of diaspora:</b> Teacher pairs him with Turkish Cypriot boy Hussein. An unreliable guide. Not bilingual. Didn't know much about culture</p>	<p>17. <b>Different traditions:</b> Not understanding new rules or experiences. Not knowing the 'rules' or expectations of how to behave. Confusions of A. '...it was weird because the smells were different and it was all built up.'</p>	

Others for self	Self for others	Self for self
<p>23. <b>Influence:</b> Strong influence of father. '...he was such a strong dominating sort of person. He dominated my life. He dominated everything you know'</p> <p>Even his attitude to sport-Prioritises work, ambition, money</p> <p>24. <b>Discomfort:</b> Fear of aunt finding out that he was pretending to be ill</p>	<p>22. <b>Sense of tradition:</b> Retains values from Cyprus/home - Hard work, energy, ambition</p>	<p>24. <b>Discomfort:</b> Dissatisfied with the set up at school. '...It was a pretty tough school...and I didn't want to be part of that'</p> <p>Coping strategies: Feigns illness</p> <p>25. <b>Discomfort:</b> With the lack of respect for teachers. '....I thought ...those kids, if they were in Cyprus they would get whacked.'</p> <p>25: <b>Breakthrough:</b> Starts to understand English and has some English friends. 'I still remember them and meet them when I can.' At the end of the year he came tenth in his class.</p>

Others for self	Self for others	Self for self
<p>28. <b>Influence:</b> Strict rules from aunt            Contradiction: Aunt has great influence. Mentioned more than uncle. Whereas he doesn't mention mother. But not a warm personal picture.</p> <p>29. <b>Discomfort:</b> Strong influence of father. Through relatives, 'Whatever they say you do'</p>		<p>25. <b>Contradiction:</b> Rejected friendship with Hussein. Found allies with friends who disliked the same things. They were adopted. This connects with later story which suggests that aunt &amp; uncle wanted to adopt him.</p> <p>A different kind of identification</p> <p>26. <b>Epiphany:</b> Found an identity in academic success. Being seen as clever cf. N</p> <p>27. <b>Epiphany:</b> Establishes himself as some one who wouldn't be bullied. Different values from Hussein</p> <p>27. <b>Epiphany:</b> Stands up to bullies</p>

Others for self	Self for others	Self for self
<p>30. <b>Influence:</b> Father had profound influence over his attitude to money and other values. By 16 had saved £200-£300. (a great deal of money in 1970s)</p> <p>31: <b>Influence:</b> In calling home contacts father, not mother</p> <p>32. <b>Discomfort:</b> resentment that father didn't allow him to express feelings properly</p> <p>33. <b>Discomfort:</b> No memory of mother</p> <p>34. Aunt and uncle decide to go to Australia via Turkey &amp; Cyprus</p>		<p>29. <b>Epiphany:</b> Academic success. No pressure from home. In fourth year he came first in his class</p> <p>31. <b>Discomfort:</b> Missed family. Forced to suppress feelings</p> <p>32. <b>Ambivalence:</b> Emotional reunion with father. Begs him to stay.</p> <p>34. <b>Contradiction:</b> Journey is a delight and adventure.</p>

Others for self	Self for others	Self for self
<p>37. <b>Positive role model:</b> Enjoys his uncle being in control.</p> <p>38. <b>Ambivalence:</b> Defines himself against mainland Turks. Particularly the macho element. Men staring at his aunt. ' ...Even though they were from the same culture, they were different to us... We felt really threatened by it.'</p> <p>40. <b>Discomfort:</b> Feels that important decisions are being made for him. Some suggestion that aunt &amp; uncle should adopt him</p>		<p>39. <b>Discomfort:</b> Anger at men's attitudes towards his aunt. 'I hated him.... It was awful...I've never felt like this in Britain</p> <p>40. <b>Epiphany:</b> Makes decision not to go to Australia. 'When I got there(Cyprus) I just forgot completely about going anywhere. This is where I belonged. I wanted to stay there'</p> <p>41. <b>Epiphany:</b> Contentment in his home town in Cyprus</p> <p>41 <b>Discomfort:</b> Boarding school in Nicosia. Defines himself against the boys in the school. 'I never felt so lonely and depressed...I went to that place and there were 16 of these dirty boys in this room...'</p>

Others for self	Self for others	Self for self
<p>46. <b>Influence:</b> Imitates his father who habitually swore in Greek. 'It feels so hateful... I don't know whether it's about my father swearing or whether it's something about Greece. Whether I've been brought up in fear, also'</p>		<p>41. <b>Epiphany:</b> Enjoys privacy &amp; material comfort above communal living</p> <p>43. <b>Ambivalence:</b> Prefers Turkish education system. Felt he learned more. 'I feel that if there was a peak in knowledge absorption, that was it.'</p> <p>44. <b>Epiphany:</b> Sees himself as a fluent multilingual. Including Greek</p> <p>47. <b>Ambivalence:</b> Not completely comfortable with English friends          ' I do have some close English friends, but not as close as if they had been Cypriot friends'          Matters of etiquette rather than language          cf. N          Understands the English viewpoint. 'But they don't know how much I can take'</p> <p>Complex and difficult relationship          ' I can't be really deep with them, because they can't really understand me'</p>



Others for self	Self for others	Self for self
<p>50. <b>Ambivalence:</b> Disliked the way people behaved in mainland Turkey, yet still felt 'really inferior because we can't speak like them... The language we listened to on the radio was this perfect Turkish..this Istanbul Turkish...was music to our ears'</p>	<p>48. <b>Ambivalence:</b> Borders and barriers difficult to negotiate. Doesn't wish to send wrong messages to English friends or end up in a position he doesn't want to be in.</p>	<p>53. <b>Reflection:</b> ' ... We're brought up with a strong sense of identity,, of being together and defending ourselves which we did..'</p> <p>54. <b>Sense of Tradition:</b> Conscripted into militia at 16 taken POW</p> <p>'Just give me a gun and the next thing I know, I'm like in the army fighting the Greeks..I was taken POW for three months...and I was beaten up and I saw people wounded next to me ...Iwas about 16..17 ...yeah I didn't even have a beard...'</p> <p>55. <b>Reflection:</b> Coped with terrifying experience: 'It wasn't (terrifying)..you're not there...you're outside...you're there'</p>

*Appendix 6*

*Analysis Grid*

*Michael*

Others for self	Self for others	Self for self
<p><b>1. Role model:</b> Didn't know who father was NB Doesn't speak of mother's influence Father becomes prime influence</p> <p><b>2. Influence:</b> Pride in father's achievement and popularity Recognition of worth, integrity and intelligence. Through reputation</p> <p><b>3. Discomfort:</b> father did not live up to expectations</p> <p><b>4. Ambivalence:</b> Deep and complex memory of his father. Experience of racism in Britain. 'He became a changed man'</p>	<p><b>5. Tradition (metanarrative):</b> Sense of community. Recognises pattern in father's story. Relates to other stories from immigrant communities</p>	

Others for self	Self for others	Self for self
<p><b>5-8. Extreme discomfort/defining moment:</b> Experience of brutal racism forces him into a strong position in terms of identity as a black person. Powerful and profound effect. Colours all aspects of his narrative.</p> <p><b>9. Role model (reflective metanarrative):</b> Realises the reasons for father's frustration without bitterness</p> <p><b>11. Alternative possibilities:</b> sought through role models in the form of fantasy fiction and art, writing and creativity</p>	<p><b>11. Gap in narrative:</b> No mention of other's reaction to his own creativity</p>	<p><b>5-8. Extreme discomfort/defining moment:</b> Experience of brutal racism forces him into a strong position in terms of identity as a black person. Powerful and profound effect. Colours all aspects of his narrative.</p> <p><b>10. Discomfort:</b> Internal escape. Feels under siege. Can only go into himself. Seeks refuge in fantasy books and science fiction</p> <p><b>11.</b> 'if you gave me a book..a realistic book I would throw it back at you because I didn't want to face up to anything that had reality in it.'</p> <p><b>11.</b> Preferred own company</p>

Others for self	Self for others	Self for self
<p><b>13. Discomfort:</b> As a child blames parents. ‘ “Why did you bring me to this country? Why did you bring me into this world?” ..blah, blah, blah..’</p> <p><b>14. Evaluation (metanarrative):</b> Understands constraints on parents. ‘My father, despite everything that happened, was a good man...there was something fantastic about him, but something, I think, in this society, poisoned him’</p> <p><b>15. Role model:</b> Admires his father’s strength in overcoming obstacles and difference in his image in the Caribbean and Britain</p>	<p><b>16. Distance/Discomfort:</b> Friends and family alluded to (never named). Sociable but distanced</p> <p>16. Had peer group but distanced and perfunctory. ‘you had a good time and got up to mischief..went to discos. The usual stuff’</p>	<p><b>13. Epiphany:</b> Develops self image as someone creative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• storyteller/writer</li> <li>• poet</li> <li>• artist</li> </ul> <p>A lifelong project. ‘I still find comfort in those things’</p>

Others for self	Self for others	Self for self
<p><b>Others for self</b></p> <p><b>25. Influence:</b> Overwhelming influence of his father: ‘My school is my father’</p>		<p><b>Self for self</b></p> <p><b>22. Discomfort and extreme ambivalence:</b> Unlike other participants, does not readily see a British part to his identity</p> <p><b>23. Epiphany:</b> Sees identity as something that’s absorbed</p> <p>...I don’t feel that with the Caribbean either. I don’t feel that there’s a particular thing I can’ leave behind. But then whenever you leave you take whatever it is you’ve gained with you’</p> <p>24. ‘ as you say you’ve absorbed them, so you take them with you, whatever and you start afresh’</p>

Others for self	Self for others	Self for self
<p><b>25. Discomfort:</b> Enjoys school but no real connection with learning</p> <p>‘I loved school...yet, I don’t feel that the teachers did enough for people like myself to enable us to deal with school life’</p>	<p><b>25. Tradition/language:</b> Sees himself as fluent bilingual. His creole was French based. Wide knowledge of Caribbean language systems.</p> <p>‘It can’t be (just a different accent) because the language I speak has nothing to do with English’</p> <p><b>26. Discomfort:</b> Not clear about the rules of the game in school</p> <p><b>26. Tradition/community:</b> Relates this to other Caribbean Children in same position. Focus of own research</p>	

Others for self	Self for others	Self for self
<p><b>30: Role model:</b> No teachers who gave support</p> <p>' Are there any teachers who stand out who gave you support  No  No?  Not one'</p> <p>32. 'I did very well at school. No thanks to teachers'</p>	<p><b>28. Tradition/language:</b> Sophisticated understanding of diaspora and its language. Is an 'organic intellectual in Gramsci's terms Relates this to wider perspective</p> <p>'I think there are stories galore about that kind of stuff</p> <p>29. Own work is in this area. Doing something for the community</p> <p><b>31. Tradition language:</b> Part of a group who did not receive language support, not seen as bilingual</p>	



Others for self	Self for others	Self for self
<p><b>32: Influence of father/Prolepsis:</b></p> <p>‘...education was important. You had to succeed...There was no... You simply had to move on. You can’t sit on your butt’</p> <p>33. Fathers view: Education for its own sake. Not to get a better job. A realisations that you may discriminated against even if you have qualifications</p> <p><b>36. Deep discomfort:</b> What was being taught at school and church in terms of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• religion</li> <li>• history</li> <li>• politics</li> </ul>	<p><b>34. Tradition:</b> Experience of discrimination with regard to employment</p>	<p><b>35. Epiphany:</b> realises that education for its own sake strengthens internal perspective and sharpens critical awareness</p> <p>Gives confidence and supports self esteem  ‘Because if you’ve got it, then you know who you are. You know what you’re about. I can deal with you on an equal level. I don’t have to put up with your nonsense’</p> <p><b>36: Deep discomfort/personal crisis:</b> problems reconciling what he was being taught with how people perceived him as a black person growing up in a racist environment.</p>

Others for self	Self for others	Self for self
<p><b>41. Alternative role models:</b> Different accounts of history and colonialism: Malcolm X Walter Rodney etc</p>		<p><b>38. Personal crisis:</b> As a religious person feels oppressed by a contradiction</p> <p>‘ I go out into the world...I’m beaten up by white people. I’m oppressed. I’m told I’m a particular way. But that very image of whiteness is up on my wall. The very image which oppresses me, abuses me, I have to go home and worship’</p> <p><b>42-44. Epiphany:</b> A political understanding. ‘So after a while you question. You say, ‘Is that so? Is that the way things are?..and, of course, Karl Marx..he put things in a context I was able to use and to really kinda see social relationships..</p> <p>44. Works through the religious contradiction in his writing a poem which questions the colour of God</p>

Others for self	Self for others	Self for self
		<p><b>49. Description of core identity.</b>  ‘Its my Caribbean-ness fused with a little bit of my Britishness...It’s the sum of my experiences that I have chipped away at...I have fashioned a sense of who I am’</p> <p><b>50.</b> Detailed description</p> <p><b>51.</b> Notion of <b>groundedness</b>: ‘You can bring all your nonsense and I will deal with it from that position’</p> <p><b>52.</b> ‘ It is being grounded in a way of being that I feel is me. My idea of what life is...It has rooted me like a tree’</p> <p><b>52.</b> Self identity is <b>not a location</b></p> <p><b>53. Comes in twenties or later,</b> ‘As a child I was here there and everywhere’</p> <p><b>53.</b> Understanding of <b>paradox</b>: ‘I’ve got many identities but there is a core that is (me)’</p> <p><b>54. Not static but stable:</b> you get up in the morning you’re never the same, but then there is always something you go back to’</p> <p><b>55. Based on parents:</b> Very much Caribbean people, but I’m much less grounded than they are because I’ve spent less time in the Caribbean</p>

Others for self	Self for others	Self for self
<p><b>56. Wider historical understanding:</b> ‘The relationship that our ancestors both black and white carved out something for us</p>	<p><b>57. Wider historical understanding:</b>  ‘For good or ill they locked us into this kind of struggle’  ‘My history is your history’</p> <p><b>58. Wider historical understanding</b>  Deep social/historical process of identity construction. Framed within historical contexts and struggles.</p> <p>‘So whether you repatriate me or not you will always be conscious of me .. History is memory and you know... You will hear about me in books you will see me in films. You will always be conscious of the other</p>	<p><b>56. Reflection:</b> Articulation of British part of identity</p> <p>‘Britain is as much my country as it is anyone else’s’</p> <p>Linked to own work re other black children.  ‘I’m interested in making it a reality for that person’</p>

Others for self	Self for others	Self for self
<p><b>59. Tradition/family:</b> Goes beyond own time frame-family history and values</p> <p>‘We’ve got to be proud of who we are...we’ve done things which are good and which we are proud about.’</p> <p><b>60. Tradition/family:</b> Members of the family are wealthy, successful</p>	<p><b>60. Norms:</b> conformity to codes of behaviour. Values must be observed.</p> <p>‘a certain way of looking at life’ a unity</p> <p>‘It’s the struggles within the family but then when you go outside, those struggles are put aside and you are one.’</p> <p><b>61. Norms:</b> Conformity to family codes, etiquettes, duties, respect etc</p> <p><b>62. Norms:</b> Misconduct shamed and punished. A variety of people have rights to discipline you: ‘you’re older than me and I say something to you, you have a right to hold my ears, drag me home, tell my granny I did something’</p>	

Others for self	Self for others	Self for self
<p><b>63. Discomfort:</b> Trouble by the dominance of American discourses and value systems in the Caribbean:</p> <p>‘The American culture was not so dominant Now you have a way of looking at life which is very much influenced from outside. So the unity, the closeness the way of looking at things is not the same....it’s crumbling away’</p> <p><b>65.</b> No alternative, credible <b>role models:</b> “ if you haven’t got a far sighted government..who can change things because kids need things, you’ve got to give them something else.’</p>		<p><b>62. Discomfort:</b> Mourns passing of traditional values</p> <p><b>63. Discomfort:</b> “I think things will never stay the same. I’m not someone who believes that...everything should stay. think things should change. What I feel is that there are certain things that I’m seeing that aren’t very good...I think they’re destructive.’ eg drugs personal anecdote of friend</p> <p>64. Glorification of certain attitudes and values which are ‘un-Caribbean’ Selfish values</p> <p>66. Precipitating a lethargic attitude</p>

Others for self	Self for others	Self for self
<p><b>68. Political/reflective:</b> Dominant discourses set in the context of the post colonial situation</p> <p><b>69.-74. Political/reflective:</b> Dominant discourses show an over reliance on things Human beings becoming like the computer cf Habermas, Virtual identities and JG Ballard story Long exposition Dystopic view</p> <p><b>Coda:</b></p> <p><b>75. Tradition:</b> Description of traditional rituals in Domenica experienced as a child</p> <p><b>76. Tradition:</b> Those stories link to a past but are used by writers located around the Caribbean and African writers using magic realism. They are used as frameworks for interpreting the modern world</p>		<p><b>76. Epiphany:</b> Connects to early experiences. Profound influence on him even today. Those stories are in his stories Writes with those stories 'ringing in his ears'</p> <p>Vivid powerful memories. 'I lived that and Marquez lived that.. You live the stories you are telling. You lived the real, woven with the magic.'</p>

Others for self	Self for others	Self for self
		<p>78. <b>Epiphany:</b> Understands the deep historical syncretism: ‘In listening to those stories...I have become a writer of stories...but I wasn’t aware when I was going through that process of growing up...Perhaps that’s what made me pick up a pen because they were ringing in my ears...’</p> <p>79. A process of mythologising the self:</p> <p>‘I’m inventing mythologies...I believe strongly that at every stage of my life I’ve had to invent myself. I’ve had to reshape myself. This is ...the thing about the core identity...If I didn’t reinvent myself throughout, I would have ended up somewhere else.’</p> <p>80. ‘Now it’s an invention of an invention of an invention...’</p>



*Appendix 7*

*Map of Conversation*

*Aliki*

**Shape of Conversation with Alik**

**Others for self**

**Self for others**

**Self for self**

	DC/Discomfort	
	H/Ambivalence	
DC/Influence		
	H/Discomfort	
DC/Influence		
	H/Discomfort	
		DC(media)/Discomfort
RM/Ambivalence		
H/Ambivalence		
H/Influence		
H/Ambivalence		
	Wider community/ Influence	

**Two eidetic memories described**

	H/Ambivalence	
AltRM/Influence		Epiphany
	H/Discomfort	
H/Discomfort (metanarrative)		
	Discomfort metanarrative	
DC/Discomfort		Epiphany
	DC/Discomfort	
DC/Discomfort		Epiphany
	DC/Discomfort	
AltRM/Influence		Epiphany
		Epiphany
AltRM/Influence AltRM/Influence		
		Epiphany
DC/Discomfort		
	DC/Discomfort DC/Discomfort	
DC/Ambivalence		Epiphany
	DC/Discomfort	
AltH/Influence		
	DC/Discomfort	
No role model		

DC/Discomfort		Epiphany
		Epiphany
		Epiphany
DC/Discomfort	DC/Discomfort	
		Ambition
DC/Influence		
H/Influence		
H/Ambivalence		Ambition
		Reflection
H/Influence		
		Epiphany
H/Discomfort		
	H/Discomfort	
Epiphany	Epiphany	Epiphany
H/Discomfort	H/Discomfort	H/Ambition
		H/Discomfort
H/Discomfort	H/Discomfort	
		H/Reflection
		H/Reflection
H/Reflection		
		Discussion of Identity

*Appendix 8*

*Map of Conversation*

*Asif*

**Shape of Conversation with Asif**

**Others for self**

H/Influence

H/Influence

RM/Influence

**Metanarrative/Reflection**

RM/Influence

RM/Influence

H/Influence

RM/Prolepsis

**Contradiction metanarrative**

H/Discomfort (metanarrative)

H/Discomfort

H/Discomfort

H/Discomfort

**Self for others**

H/Influence

H/Influence

H/Influence

H/Influence

H/Influence

H/Ambivalence

H/Influence

H&DC/Discomfort

H/Ambivalence

H/(school)/Influence

H/Discomfort

**Self for self**

(metanarrative)

DC/Discomfort

Wider historical understanding

Epiphany

Epiphany

H(school)/Discomfort

(metanarrative)

Epiphany

H/Discomfort

Epiphany

**Explicit detailed**

**description of identity**

Epiphany

Epiphany

Epiphany

H/Ambivalence

H/Discomfort

*Appendix 9*

*Map of Conversation*

*Nandine*

**Shape of Conversation with Nandine**

<b>Others for self</b>	<b>Self for others</b>	<b>Self for self</b>
RM/Influence		RM/Discomfort
Heritage/Influence	Heritage/Discomfort	
Heritage/Influence	RM/Discomfort	Heritage/ Ambivalence
	DC/Discomfort	
	DC/Ambivalence	
	H/Ambivalence	
	H/Influence	
	H/Ambivalence	H/Discomfort
AltRM/Influence		H/Discomfort
	H/Influence	
	H/Ambivalence	
AltRM/Influence		Epiphany
AltRM/Influence		
	H/Discomfort	
AltRM/Influence		
	<b>H/Reflection</b>	
	<b>Complexity of Diaspora</b>	H/Ambivalence
H/Discomfort		
H/Ambivalence		
<b>Role of the media</b>		<b>H/Reflection</b>
	H/Ambivalence	
RM/Influence		
AltRM/Influence		
	H/Discomfort	Epiphany
	DC/Discomfort	
	DC/Discomfort	
DC/Discomfort		
	DC/Discomfort	
		Epiphany/Reflection
	H/Influence	

*Appendix 10*

*Map of Conversation*

*My*



**Shape of Conversation with My**

**Others for self**

H/Influence (A)

DC/Influence (A)

DC/Influence (A)

DC/Influence (A)

RM/Prolepsis (A)

RM/Prolepsis (A)

RM/Prolepsis (A)

**Self for others**

H/Influence (A)

H/Influence (A)

H/Influence (A)

H/Influence (A)

**Self for self**

*Appendix 11*

*Map of Conversation*

*Olgun*

**Shape of Conversation with Olgun**

<b>Others for self</b>	<b>Self for others</b>	<b>Self for self</b>
H/Ambivalence	H/Influence	
RM/Influence	H/Influence	
H/Influence	H/Influence	
RM/Prolepsis	H/Influence	
RM/Influence		
H/Ambivalence		H/Discomfort
H/Influence		
H/Influence		
DC/Ambivalence		Political reflection (metanarrative)
		Political reflection (metanarrative)
H/Influence	H/Influence	
	H/Influence	
DC/Ambivalence		
DC/Ambivalence	DC/Ambivalence	
Complexity of diaspora		
RM/Influence	H/Influence	
DC/Discomfort		DC/Discomfort
		DC/Discomfort
		Epiphany
		Epiphany
		Epiphany
		Epiphany
RM/Influence		
RM/Discomfort		
RM/Influence		Epiphany
RM/Discomfort		
RM/Influence		
RM/Influence		
RM/Discomfort		
RM/Discomfort	RM/Ambivalence	
		Epiphany
RM/Influence		
RM/Discomfort		
		H/Discomfort
		Epiphany
		DC/Ambivalence
		Epiphany
RM/Influence		
DC/Ambivalence	DC/Ambivalence	
		H/Reflection
		H/Influence
		H/Reflection
		H/Ambivalence
		Identity discussed
		Reflection

*Appendix 12*

*Map of Conversation*

*Michael*

**Shape of Conversation with Michael**

<b>Others for self</b>	<b>Self for others</b>	<b>Self for self</b>
RM/Influence RM/Influence RM/Discomfort	H/Influence (metanarrative)	DC/ExtremeDiscomfort
DC/ExtremeDiscomfort		DC/ExtremeDiscomfort Epiphany
Alt RM/Influence RM/Discomfort RM/Influence	RM/Discomfort	Epiphany
Influence of Caribbean Landscape	H/Influence	DC/ExtremeDiscomfort Epiphany
Epiphany DC/Ambivalence	H/Influence	Epiphany Tradition/Language/Epiphany
DC/Discomfort		Tradition/Language/Epiphany
RM/Prolepsis		
DC&H/ExtremeDiscomfort	Tradition/Epiphany	DC&H/Deep Discomfort Personal Crisis Epiphany
AltRM/Influence	DC&H/Deep Discomfort	Epiphany Extended and intricate description of core identity
<b>Wider Historical Undertanding/Epiphany</b>	<b>Wider Historical Undertanding/Epiphany</b>	
H/Influence	H/Influence	
H/Influence	H/Influence H/Influence	
DC/Discomfort		DC/Discomfort DC/Discomfort
No Alt RM/Discomfort		<b>Political Reflection Political Reflection</b>
H/Influence H/Influence		Epiphany Epiphany