Reflecting critically on a Ghana-Scotland school partnership:

a rhizomatic narrative approach

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Abstract

Drawing on my own lived experiences, this research examines the complexities and conundra of an international school partnership (ISP) between two primary schools in Scotland and Ghana. The study is a response to questions that arose having completed extensive South-North school partnership project work, years of quiet wonderings, and numerous entries in a personal research and travel journal.

Previous research has called for the importance of inclusive spaces for building critical and ethical engagement around different perspectives. The relational and socio-emotional aspects of ISPs, and global citizenship education more broadly, have not yet been widely researched. In addressing this gap, the research applies a narrative approach and uses rhizomatic analysis of personal reflections, memories and lived experience stories. Despite 'good' intentions, the analysis reveals glimpses of neo-colonialism at play within our partnership, alongside material and knowledge inequalities. The analysis highlights the potential role of school partnerships in decolonising teacher thinking through 'unlearning'. As a researcher and practising teacher, the research has involved critical reflection and reflexivity to challenge assumptions, develop criticality, and transform (colonial) thinking.

In this study, the research uses professional and personal lived experiences as a starting point for a critically-informed rhizomatic narrative analysis. This approach generates new ideas that address the need for more inclusive educational partnerships between South and North. Significantly, the research's insights add new understanding to the known paradox of simultaneous connection and distinction between oneself and the Other in partnership working between countries. Firstly, this study posits that informal spaces, as a 'Third space' (Bhabha, 1994) or 'place of displacement', may be more conducive to mutual and transformational learning than more traditional formal settings. Secondly, the research develops a key insight that relational transformation is more likely to happen when teachers engage with difference through authentic, personal relationships and 'moments of sharedness'

with one another. Lastly, the findings support the need for new forms of inclusion based on a plurality of knowledges within ISPs, rather than being driven by Western ways of being and knowing. Further derivable research in this area can help develop new decolonial practices and a more radical and inclusive stance across future South-North ISPs.

Acknowledgements and dedications

When I embarked on a teacher fellow secondment at the University of Stirling, I never envisioned that this would lead to a doctoral study. However, I worked alongside a team of people who were/are enthusiastic and committed to educational research, and they both inspired and encouraged me to further my studies. I was delighted that two of these people became my supervisors and that they continued to inspire and encourage me. HUGE thanks to Professor Dalene Swanson who supervised me during the initial stages of this study, to Dr Maureen Michael who supervised me through the final stage, and to Professor Greg Mannion who has patiently guided me through the entire thesis journey.

Prior to my secondment, I had presumed academics to be distant and slightly intimidating humans. It turns out though, that the vast majority of you are kind and generous, particularly with your time which I know is precious. As such, I have several other academics to acknowledge and thank:

I would like to thank Dr Frances Hunt for inviting me to write a Connecting Classrooms Global Learning (CCGL) research report. Had I not done so, this thesis would not have evolved. And thank you Dr Fran Martin for contacting and encouraging me having read the report – that meant a lot! I thank Professor Peter Higgins and Dr Alan Britton, for directing me to Scottish policy documents in the initial stages of my thesis. Sally Romilly, from the One World Centre in Dundee, thank you for sending me a parcel of books – I promise to return them!

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Figure 1: Grace Juliet.

Figure 2: Khendra Keri.

Photos shared with permissions.

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Abbreviations

BLM Black Lives Matter

CAP Creative Analytical Practices

CCGL Connecting Classrooms Global Learning

CfE Curriculum for Excellence

CGCE Critical Global Citizenship Education

DFID Department for International Development

EdD Doctorate of Education

ES Education Scotland

FCDO Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office

GC Global Citizenship

GCE Global Citizenship Education

GTCS General Teaching Council for Scotland

HMIE Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education

ILK Indigenous and Local Knowledges

ISP International Schools Partnership

ITE Initial Teacher Education

MDG Millenium Development Goals

MOOC Massive Open Online Course

PTA Parent Teacher Association

RMF Rhodes Must Fall

RRI Responsible Research and Innovation

RRSA Rights Respecting Schools Award

SC Scottish Government

SDG Sustainable Development Goals

UCL University College London

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PRELUDE: Reflecting on Self at the beginning of the research process

This chapter locates my starting point in the thesis journey. I share some of the events and discourses that have circulated around me, both professionally and personally, and led me to this place.

A personal connection

Throughout my teaching career, I have been fortunate to have spent short periods of time teaching in France, Germany, Turkey, Japan and Ghana. But it is a school in Ghana that has made the greatest impression on me (probably more personally than professionally), and our schools have sustained an international school partnership (ISP) over several decades. It is this partnership that I focus on within the thesis.

While writing this thesis, during the first Lockdown of the pandemic, I spent a Sunday afternoon tidying our attic. I came across my long-forgotten Sixth Year Studies English dissertation based on Nigerian author Chinua Achebe's 'Arrow of God'. I also found a pile of books I had forgotten about, including a handful written by Nigerian authors, mainly Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and Helen Oyeyemi. These forgotten discoveries reminded me that I have always been drawn to the continent of Africa. Like many others though, the images I was exposed to growing up were limited to a modern/colonial notion of Africa. And admittedly, I think it was probably a sense of other worldliness/exoticism that initially attracted me.

My mum told me about the school in Ghana, through a friend of a friend, knowing that teaching in Africa was something I had wanted to do since I was very young. I thought I would visit the school once and that would be the 'African school experience' out of my system. But people were right: Africa got into my system, specifically one very special rural school and the remarkable people in it.

My professional positionality

I have taught in the primary sector for three decades and have worked in my current post as Principal Teacher for over twenty years. Throughout my teaching career, I have also enjoyed a number of interesting secondments. One of them was working as a Teacher Fellow at the University of Stirling which involved co-ordinating a module on Global Citizenship for Initial Teacher Education (ITE) students. Rewriting the module encouraged me to reflect on Global Citizenship Education (GCE), ISPs and my own particular stance.

Martin (2005) discusses how our attitude to ISP linking reflects our attitudes to education and active citizenship. This could also be turned around in that our attitude to education and active citizenship reflects our attitude to ISPs. Either way, our attitudes play a significant role in how and what we teach, both formally and informally. I recognise that my worldview and relational positioning have been continually revised through international and intercultural teaching experiences, and that they have played a role in developing a sense of social justice and active citizenship, long before they were terms explicitly written into the curriculum. I have shared some of my experiences in the classroom in order to bring learning to life and to stimulate questions and discussion; for example, I have shared photos and stories on slave trade, fair trade, concentration camps and the Nagasaki bomb, depending on the context for learning.

Similarly, I am aware that our pupils' lives are already caught up in the wider social, economic, cultural and political world too. In my experience, taking global learning that occurs within and around their lives as the 'point of departure' (Biesta and Lawy, 2006) can be powerful and transformative. However, pupils come to school with different 'funds of knowledge' (Moll, 2019); different experiences from outside and inside school, so learning can be perceived differently among pupils. Recognising pupils in context, and responding to where they are and what they bring with them, demands a more nuanced and facilitating role for the teacher – and a curriculum and pedagogical approaches that allow flexibility. Thankfully, the current Scottish curriculum provides opportunities for this and promotes a process-based curricular approach, rather than focusing on outcomes. The Scottish Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) encourages pupils to lead their learning and learner participation.

Much of the work I do in school involves the pupils leading their learning and taking action, from critical debate to campaigning for social justice/change. My own reflection as a primary teacher is that if learning motivates pupils to want to learn/do more and/or take action, then the teaching has been successful. Within our ISP projects, listening to what the pupils in our Ghanaian partner school are campaigning for – and why – widens and deepens the learning of my pupils, and I hope this is reciprocal. As a teacher, I recognise the importance of encouraging pupils to think critically and question what is being taught (including texts) and to make informed judgements. This involves teaching and modelling critical thinking and encouraging pupils to question and debate. For me, this is what makes teaching exciting and learning meaningful, and our ISP has provided real and relevant contexts to learn through.

As a teacher working in Scotland, I sense a shift towards a more critical approach being encouraged in schools. For example, having worked with pupils in the lead up to COP26, there were many educational materials (and training opportunities) available that explored issues around climate justice in depth. Over the years though, I have come to realise that not every teacher teaches critical thinking, despite school curricula. This may be because there is an element of allowing the pupils to lead the learning, which I think some teachers may find hard to do. In moral terms though, surely it is our duty to explore global citizenship issues openly with our children; to challenge narrow thinking and fear of 'otherness' and to raise awareness of our interconnectivity and interdependence.

Rainbow as metaphor

Throughout this thesis, I refer to the rainbow as metaphor. This is partly because much of my writing was carried out through the pandemic, at a time when so many windows displayed rainbows as a symbol of hope.

SETTING THE SCENE: SURVEYING THE GARDEN FROM THE 'OUTSIDE'

Introduction

Alongside other narratives, this thesis refers to 'memory stories'. These memory stories are based on extracts from a personal travel journal, which I have written in during my eight visits to our partner school in Ghana. They record the lived-ness of my experiences and I share one here as an example. This story recalls a memory of a parent meeting that I set up during my second visit to Ghana. It was a small moment, but one that stopped me in my tracks and unsettled me, making me rethink my (Western) ways/assumptions:

> Where are the parents? I put a poster up outside the school office days ago and the headteacher has spoken with several parents, including some Parent Teacher Association (PTA) members. I look at my watch (there is no clock in the room). The meeting was supposed to have started at 11.00am and it is now 1.30pm. Feeling disappointed, I pick up the pens and paper and start to pack them away, worrying about how I will gather the views of the parents for the British Council evaluation. Madam sees me and assures me they will come…

> At 2.30pm the first parent enters the school reception area. The shutters are closed on one side to keep out the heat, a child has swept the floor and the 'good books' are neatly displayed alongside photographs of school life and several (broken) computers. By 3.30pm there are around ten parents in the room, some seated and some standing. There is a quiet murmur of informal chatter, lots of handshakes and some (approving?) smiles from women as they gesture towards my African-print skirt. Bags of water have been offered and I wish I had bought in some minerals[1]. I am warmly introduced to each parent and every parent tells me who their child(ren) is/are and asks if I have

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[1]Fizzy juice is commonly referred to as 'minerals' in Ghana.

taught them. A few photographs are taken with the school leadership team and the PTA chairperson. There appears to be no rush.

Keen to get on, and feeling a little nervous, I ask if we should start. The head teacher nods. The parents take a seat, a few wiping their forehead with a handkerchief, and I remember feeling annoyed at myself for never remembering to put a handkerchief in my bag. Having introduced myself and spoken a bit about our partnership, I explain that the purpose of the meeting is to seek the views of parents in both schools as part of the partnership evaluation process. I then distribute the questionnaires and pens. As I give out the last sheet of paper, I turn to speak with the head teacher. But he is no longer standing beside the doorway. He, and the other four teachers, are kneeling beside parents and making notes. Puzzled, I wait for a conversation to end and then ask what the teachers are writing, trying to emphasise that it is the views of the parents we are seeking, not the teachers. He calmly explains to me that not all the parents can read and write in English. And gently reminds me that most parents work during the day and have come to the meeting as early as they could. Some too, do not own a watch.

(Personal travel journal, Reid, July 2007.)

Purpose of the thesis

In 2021, I undertook a small-scale research project through University College London (UCL) which explored the perceptions and applications of GCE within our Ghanaian-Scottish ISP. On completion though, rather than experiencing a sense of closure, I was left feeling that the research was incomplete. I began to recall memories that did not appear to fit into the research context, the introduction to this chapter being an example of one. I felt pulled to explore the contradictions and conundra within them – without the restriction of predetermined research questions – and this became the intention in embarking on the doctorate. This thesis therefore applies a slightly less traditional format, drawing influence from a rhizomatic methodology. Using the metaphor of a garden, the study is structured around the four seasons, where each season mirrors the traditional structure of literature review, methodology, findings and discussion. I present 'memory stories' as findings and apply writing-as-method to critically think, reflect and analyse. There are elements of an auto-ethnographic nature in the writing which interweaves formal research with passages of informal or 'minor' writing. Taking this approach has allowed me to follow and conjoin connections and ruptures within our partnership.

Globalisation and its impact on GCE

I was warned by others who have completed a doctorate that there would be interruptions along the way. Based on the examples they shared, I had expected such interruptions to be of a personal nature – and they did occur – but what I had not anticipated was international and political events impacting on my doctorate journey. I wrote this thesis amidst a global pandemic, an uprising from the Black Lives Matter (BLM) and Rhodes Must Fall (RMF) Movement, a Scottish-based COP26 and an outbreak of war in Europe. Such global events interrupted and influenced both the physical writing of the thesis, and my thinking around the place and importance of GCE. Of course, many more international events have happened too, but these events brought home to me the accelerated developments of globalisation and the impact they have. The exigencies of a pandemic, climate change and war do not just threaten society, the economy, and the planet

collectively; they affect us as individuals. As an optimist, the events highlighted the potential underlying threads of humanity and hope. As a teacher, the events emphasised the importance of teaching a critical GCE, and the value of ISPs. I recall an email from a parent of pupils in the youngest class at the beginning of the first UK Lockdown, just weeks after our Ghanaian colleagues had returned to Ghana following a visit to our school. It said:

> I have to say the work you have been doing with everyone with the Global Goals and the Ghanian partnership has made all conversations about BLM so much easier. The boys are totally bewildered why there is so much unfairness in the world dependant [sic] on skin colour. We used the eye colour example and said to --- that because he had brown eyes and --- had blue then he would get pudding, plaster for his cuts and tops marks in his work but --- wouldn't. It sparked a huge conversation and outrage. They have so connected with the Ghanian teachers and all the work that you have done with the school. Thank you so much.
> (Email from a parent, 22 June 2020.)

As a researcher, the activism and decolonial cries of the BLM Movement heightened my awareness of globalisation, coloniality and racism and, alongside my reading, developed my postcolonial thinking to include decolonialism.

An ethnocentric positioning

Decolonialists argue that globalisation presents itself as a hegemonic neoliberal model, founded in colonial rationalities of modernisation, racialisation and domination (Fúnez-Flores, 2022). They posit that coloniality and racism, "continue to determine social relations, political exchanges, cultural hierarchies, epistemic erasures and strategic silences in normalising a predominantly white, Euro-American world order" (Parashar and Schulz, 2021, p. 1). This thinking extends to the dominance of a Western academy as the 'centre of knowledge' (Spivak, 1998). Indeed, my ideological foundations and methodological orientations remain inexorably

embedded in Eurocentric epistemology. While it was not my intention to privilege a partial interpretation, or present a reconstruction of past moments to 'fit' with current thinking, my ethnocentric positioning has undeniably influenced my reading, thinking, interpretations and writing. I am more aware of this ethnocentric positioning at the end of the thesis process than I was at the beginning! Applying a rhizomatic narrative approach, which includes critical and reflexive thinking, has helped me see how entrenched in Western ways of thinking and doing I was/am. It has helped me begin a journey towards becoming more decolonial in my outlook.

A rhizomatic narrative approach

My original intention was in keeping with a far more traditional research format. However, this study takes as a starting point the completion of the small-scale research report mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. Feeling compelled to explore feelings of 'unfinished business', I began to look back at past events in our school partnership. In remembering and rewriting my memories, I found my researcher writing 'voice', which seeks to find its place within a poststructuralist rhizomatic narrative. The rhizome is an ontological framework which simultaneously attempts to 'overthrow ontology' (Deleuze and Guatarri, 1987). This research draws on Deleuze, who intentionally unsettles traditional research assumptions about methods and writing. Taking a rhizomatic narrative approach has allowed me to develop my travel journal notes into 'memory stories' (Honan, 2007). Recognising that her own stories were always part of her journey, Honan introduced memory stories to her thesis.[2] She used them to "capture the images, senses and sounds of a particular moment that I call on to help me describe the way I felt/am feeling as I am constituted as a subject of and in a discourse" (p. 534). I borrow the term 'memory stories' for my own thesis and use them to capture the remembered stories of our ISP and my place in it. I group the memory stories across three 'Movements' as a way to rhizomatically write my way through some of the interrelated and convergent threads and themes. In line with Deleuzean thinking, the memory stories are partial

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[2]Similarly, Aamodt (2016) applied 'self-stories' to her thesis as she sought to explore her own personhood identities through autobiographical self-writing.

and entangled. I present just one mapping of events, but there exists a plurality of connections and the cartography remains open-ended and unfinished. The Movements and stories within them need not necessarily be read in a specific order. Whilst working with memory stories through writing-as-method may not fit into the reductionist process of a traditional research framework, I believe it fits the purpose of this study. My experience is that "writing *is* thinking, writing *is* analysis, writing *is* indeed a seductive and tangled *method* of discovery" (Richardson and St. Pierre, 2005, p. 967).

A Deleuzean approach allows for a tetralinguistic[3] approach to language, which blurs language boundaries. In chapter five, I share my reasons for including less traditional 'minor' or 'mythos' language alongside more traditional and vehicular 'major' or 'techne' writing, encouraged by the likes of Aamodt (2016), St. Pierre (2005), Ellis and Bochner (2000) and Honan and Bright (2016). The latter refer to Sutton and Martin-Jones (2008) who posit that if the ontological framework is of a rhizomatic nature, then the languages form an assemblage where the edge of one language is always encountering the other in a becoming process, rather than replacing one form of writing with another. The shifts in writing style not only highlight my researcher-writer journey, but also help me to articulate my shifting thinking, knowledge(s) and understandings. I trust that this adds richness and 'thickness' (Atkinson, 2012) to the study and creates a more literary, personal and reflexive orientation to the research. Like the different hues of colour in a rainbow, each language/writing style is valid and sits within a bigger narrative.

The metaphor of a garden is used to shape the text. Each section of the thesis explores a different season in the garden, beginning and ending in autumn[4]. *Season One: Autumn* is presented through traditional major language. This articulates where I was in my becoming-researcher-writer journey early on, and it also emphasises the major (and often Western) techne discourses that dominate the GCE field. In *Season*

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[3]Honan and Bright (2016) refer to the work of Deleuze and Guatarri (1986) who developed Gobard's (1976) 'tetralinguistic' model of language. Such a model incorporates a blending, or blurring, of language use – vernacular, vehicular, referential and mythical – and considers the relationship between language, social context and discourse.

[4]When I first planned to use this garden metaphor it conjured up images of Frances Hodgson Burnett's 'The Secret Garden'. Reflecting on this towards the end of my thesis journey, I see my entrenched Eurocentric positioning and its influence on my writing/thinking, including the use of four (western) seasons...

Two: Winter, I begin to weave more minor language into the narrative and include extracts from my personal research journal. They serve as a record of the nuances of my messy thinking and my grapples with my ingrained Western academic thought patterns. Extracts from my research journal also feature in two of the intermezzo passages where I continue to question the impact and legitimacy of the dominant epistemological discourses. I also include some poetry that describes some of the violence that was inflicted on Africans by European colonisers – not to shock, but to bring to the surface and remind the reader of the terror and injustice of colonialism. In *Season Three: Spring*, reflective story narratives move between past and present and are also future-looking. My own positionality as the writer shifts too; I write as the professional and personal Self… as an outsider and insider … sometimes as both within the same text. I do all this intentionally, recognising that space, time and identity are not isolated states but always moving and interrelated.

Knowing that my stories are part of a thesis that will be judged by a reader has surely influenced the selection, placing and writing of memory stories. The writer can always be read into the writing, but writing is also influenced by the reader (O'Grady, 2018), or 'gaze of the Other' (Foucault, 1997). This is quite a daunting thought, particularly when sharing so much of myself through my writing. I do not seek to persuade or convince though and appreciate that the reader will read my stories through a lens made up of different experiences, perspectives and perceptions. Rather, I invite the reader into the research, almost as a 'coparticipant in dialogue' (Ellis and Bochner, 2000), as opposed to a passive receiver of knowledge. I hope that my writing evokes further questions, rhizomatic thinking and dialogue within the field of GCE, and that it helps to reshape ISPs in particular.

Thesis overview

The metaphor of a garden represents the field of GCE and one group of plants, irises for example, represents the memory stories of our ISP. Each story can be considered a rhizome. The roots are rhizomatic; they interconnect and interweave with one another. Just like the growing roots and the cyclical seasons, the rhizomatic

thinking (re)presented in this study will continue to move on after (and despite) the writing of it.

Season One - Autumn

Season One reflects my initial exploration around the landscape of GCE and the place of ISPs within that landscape. This helps me to situate our own ISP. As I take my first steps into the garden, I am instantly surrounded: trailing branches, towering trees, thick bushes and clumps of flowers and weeds. Eddies of leaves swirl round me in different shades of autumn. It is hard to see clearly, to distinguish the shape of landscape; no boundary walls are visible, and I feel bombarded by the sheer scale of it all. This describes my initial feelings within my research journey as I commence reading the literature around GCE and the place of ISPs.

However, autumn is a season for cutting back, sweeping, raking, and generally clearing the ground. Only then can I begin to see the garden more clearly and acknowledge its vastness, shape and potential. As I work, I become more aware of where I stand in the garden, and I begin to consider my position in it.

Roots and conceptions of GCE

In this chapter I discuss some of the difficulties around the definition of GC and explore some of the tensions that conflicting and converging forms of GCE can create. The challenges and barriers of teaching GCE in schools are considered, before looking specifically at the development of GCE within the Scottish context. Cosmopolitan citizenship and critical, democratic, and participatory GC approaches are examined.

The planting and positioning of ISPs

This chapter presents an overview of the positioning of GCE and ISPs in the UK context and more specifically within the Scottish educational context. I discuss the importance of challenging teacher worldviews and the role of professional learning. The second part of this chapter provides a short summary of the experience of ISPs from schools in the Global South, before situating our own ISP.

Season Two - Winter

There may not be much to look at in a garden in winter, but silent and invisible activity continues to take place *beneath the surface*. It is also a season to take stock and reflect, with the narrative taking a minor turn. I take time to reflect on the cold cruelty of the colonial slave trade and the frozen narrative of colonialism. Throughout Season Two, I contemplate post and decolonial theory which helps to prepare the ground for my methodology.

Raking out the assumptions of prior research

This chapter reflects on my prior research experience, which left me questioning (my) Western assumptions; rethinking too the purpose, shape and methodology of my thesis.

A frozen colonial narrative

While the academic writing I have read on post and decolonialism is passionate and inspiring, my experience is that the histories of colonialism are often assumed and swept over. This chapter opens with a poem and uses extracts from my travel journal. It attempts to bring the violence of colonialism to the surface, as a form of 'rememory'[5] – for myself and the reader – and to create a pause.

Intermezzo 1: The abandoned boat

An extract from my research diary opens this short interlude, followed by some reflective thinking about my prior research and the influence this has had on my thesis/writing.

Season Three - Spring

Spring is a time of planning, preparation and planting. In this section, I consider the research tools I plan to use. I share my struggles and thinking around method, methodology, Self and knowledge.

Intermezzo 2: Messy Thinking

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[5]Bailey (2005) describes rememory as the way in which past memories of events have a huge impact on our present and future, without us even realising.

I introduce the section with extracts from my research journal which demonstrate my grapple with the contradictions and conundra of traditional research and bring postcolonialism and decolonialism into play in productive tension with poststructuralism.

A narrative approach

I am aware that I am the gardener/narrator and therefore have a lot of influence over what grows in the garden and how it looks. Here, I use a memory story to illustrate the power of storytelling and how stories can open up spaces for empathy, reflection and challenge. I discuss how using memory stories and applying writing-as-method allows me to critically reflect and analyse my lived experiences.

Reflections and refractions of lived experiences

This chapter is a reflexive discussion of my place in the research. In this chapter, I reflect on my EdD Professional Practice dissertation which helped shape my thinking on positionalities, identities, difference and reflexivity. I acknowledge the postmodern notion of a heterogeneous Self that is multivoiced, proleptic, discontinuous and fragmented and the impact this has on my research writing. My struggles with rigour, validity and the place of emotions within a narrative research are shared through extracts from my research journal.

Intermezzo 3: Unlearning knowledge

A short intermezzo passage captures my shifting notions around knowledge.

A Rhizomatic Narrative

This chapter provides a rationale for applying a rhizomatic narrative and I introduce the concept of 'Movements'.

Season Four - Summer

Summer is a busy and productive time in the garden, with our ISP plants in full bloom, bursting with stories. Season Four situates three 'Movements' as the central nodes in the rhizomatic narrative, bringing the abstract explorations of the previous chapters into something lived and experienced. The memory stories within each Movement are described as experienced and/or remembered in a moment in time,

from where I, the gardener/narrator, have stood. Following each story, I then dig more deeply and reflect on some of the rhizomatic roots, tracing lines of flight.

Acting out (of) an African stereotype: Illusions of (in)equality?

The remembered moments within this Movement lead to an exploration of the plurality of identity within our lived experiences, and the 'I'affectation' created in the overlap. Other lines of flight include power, (in)equality and (in)equity, and reflect sociocultural (un)learning, knowledges and understandings.

Beyond the garden walls

This Movement develops some unexpected findings from my CCGL research around the themes of togetherness, friendship/love and 'moments of sharedness'. It acknowledges the place of emotions and informal spaces in making connections between oneself and the Other.

The weed of colonialism

Here, the threads of narrative tug at the weed of colonialism that is often referred to, but not necessarily addressed, in ISP discourses. Gently picking away some weeds from the surface will not stop their regrowth. Their seeds can spread rapidly, and their roots may be deep. The entry point for this chapter recalls an unspoken rupture in our partnership journey. It was a small incident which led to several rhizomatic paths being followed: namely the legacy of colonialism on education and alternative, more decolonial approaches to viewing GCE.

Digging deeper: A synthesis of the rhizomatic thread roots

In this chapter, I pull together some of the rhizomatic roots from the Movements. In doing so, I acknowledge that I am emphasising themes selected by me and so the narrative voice is sustained in this section. Inequalities and the dominance of Western knowledge/ways of doing are discussed. Informal spaces and moments of sharedness are also reflected on as potential places for building relationships and (un)learning.

Harvesting fruit: A discussion

This chapter examines the rhizomatic threads of the previous chapter more closely. It attempts to put them in a GCE context through looking at a colonial past, a neo-colonial present and the possibility of a decolonial future. Looking forwards, this chapter discusses the place of the relational and socio-emotional aspects of our partnership. It also reflects on the impact of 'unlearning' and highlights a need to reconceptualise knowledges.

Season Five - A return to autumn

As we return to autumn, I take time to tidy and reflect on what summer has presented – the fruits, the flowers and the seeds of hope that they have produced. As I stand in the garden, I hope that having nurtured it, I have helped it to grow better. As I stand in the garden, I see that it has nurtured me and helped me to grow in understanding as well as knowledge.

Seeds of hope: A conclusion

This chapter summarises my contributions to the field. It emphasises the transformative power of 'unlearning' as part of a becoming process. Informal spaces and moments of sharedness are highlighted as potentially enhancing and transforming relationships between teachers from the Global South and Global North. The final chapter also points to other rhizomatic lines of flight and leaves the stories as rhizomes open for future entry points for others to engage with.

Postlude: Reflecting on Self at the end of the research process: a nomadic journey of (my)Self (becoming)

I end the thesis with a brief reflection on my own decolonial journey.

Adinkra

Adinkra symbols are pictograms and ideograms, traditionally used on cloth, metal and wood by the Akan people of Ghana. I use the adinkra symbols in this thesis to contextualise the content of each chapter, from Section Two onwards. As in other indigenous visual writings, the adinkra symbols represent knowledge in a visual form

(see Appendix 1). They communicate codes that evoke meanings – proverbs, anecdotes, stories and historical significance – and they exemplify cultural values, philosophical concepts and codes of social conduct. Of course, the way I interpret and use adinkra reflects the way I 'read' the symbol, based on my own learned knowledge system and experiences. And I encourage you, the reader, to read both the adinkra and the stories within the chapters through your own learned knowledge system(s) and experiences.

SEASON ONE: AUTUMN

"For man, autumn is a time of harvest, of gathering together.

For nature, it is a time of sowing, of scattering abroad."

(Edwin Way Teale)

Chapter One: Roots and conceptions of global citizenship education

Introduction

International school partnerships (ISPs) are located within a global citizenship education (GCE) discourse. I therefore feel it is important to purview the landscape, gathering together and considering the concepts and thinking around GCE to help situate our own ISP. Most ISPs are funded and facilitated by agencies in the Global North, and this applies to our ISP too. This chapter therefore focuses primarily on global citizenship (GC) and GCE in the Global North.

In this chapter, I begin by highlighting some of the difficulties in defining GC and GCE. I then discuss some of the distinctions and shared features of GCE typologies, exploring some of the tensions that conflicting and converging forms can create. This leads me to consider the challenges and barriers of teaching GCE in schools, before looking specifically at the conceptual development of GCE within the Scottish context. Following this, a cosmopolitan citizenship is explored. Lastly, I reflect on critical, democratic, and participatory GC approaches.

Much of the literature relating to GCE and ISPs refers to the dichotomous terms 'Global South' and 'Global North'. I recognise that the terms assume power and resource inequalities and, as such, can be deemed as binary, divisive and oversimplified (Pieniazek, 2020). Within the thesis, I apply the terms with caution and refer to them as a way of making a geographical distinction between countries.

Early approaches to GCE

GCE is a contentious field which encompasses a diverse range of multidimensional and multidisciplinary concepts. Despite this, GC and GCE are now familiar terms in many education systems across the world. A global dimension is not new to education, UK schools having taught global education since the 1970s through World Studies or Cultural Education. However, the term 'global citizenship' is relatively new, implying a change to previous conceptions, and a move away from a

national to a more global notion of citizenship. After the second World War there was a general understanding of citizenship being a static status of rights and duties. Since then, society has continued to change and there are now multiple globalisation processes (economic, technological, environmental and political) that contribute to the transformation of traditional GCE concepts (Tawil, 2013). In recognition of the impact of such globalisation, the terms GC and GCE are increasingly referred to (Bourn, 2014). We now live in a world that is more interconnected and interdependent than in previous decades, due to technology and migration. While citizenship has always been a 'site of social and political struggle' (Bassel and Isin, 2022), it is perhaps more difficult to recognise the situatedness of citizenship now and, consequently, more difficult to agree a definition of GC and GCE.

A lack of consensus as to the definition of GC is acknowledged within the field, resulting in much debate around its concept, purpose and universality. 'Global' suggests being part of a world beyond borders of state, while 'citizenship' can imply that it is grounded in the nation state (Swanson and Gamal, 2021). Some therefore view GCE as merely an enhanced local and national citizenship education[6] (Tawil, 2013; Camicia and Franklin, 2011). It is believed that such a nation-citizenship-state model originates in the West (Shindo, 2022), which raises issues around the historical hubris of the West. Indeed, Freire (2000) problematises citizenship to frame citizen/non-citizen Othering. Others point out that the terms globalisation and GC could be perceived as leaning towards a political ideology of a world order (Scheunpflug, 2023; Davies, 2006). Of course, a ruling world government does not exist, and research warns us that such a world state would be remote, undemocratic and oppressive (Parekh, 2003; Camicia and Franklin, 2011; Sant et al., 2019), creating too many challenges, particularly from a legal and human rights perspective (Tawil, 2013).

While critiques of GCE emphasise that the world is not a polis and should not be viewed as one, many school systems in the Global North appear to reflect elements

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[6]Parekh (2003) puts forward the term 'globally orientated citizen' which infers a home from which the citizen can reach out. He states that such an approach accepts the concern for one's own community (unlike cosmopolitanism???way too broad a claim) but also extends to other communities. Alternative terms for GCE include Tawil's (2013) 'education for local and global education' which embraces both local and global/national and international elements.

of cosmopolitanism[7] in their approach to GCE. For example, GCE in schools often reflects assumed universal and liberal Western values that may evoke discourses of inclusion, but more often serve as a form of cultural assimilation within a framework of modern/colonial/imperial imagery (Pashby and Costa, 2021; Jefferess, 2012). This could be a response to intergovernmental organisations, such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), who promote a rather cosmopolitan view of GCE. UNESCO do, however, acknowledge that shared values may not always be possible or positive, and suggest that tolerance, human rights and democratic citizenship should be present in a 'quality education' (2013, 2015, 2017). Despite 'good' intentions though, this is interpreted by some scholars as the reinforcement of cosmopolitanism being aligned with imperialism (Oxley and Morris, 2013; Pashby, 2012), due to the Western hegemonic assumptions around a 'quality education'.

One can see how the lack of definition around GC and GCE can increase the risk of regenerating notions such as cultural supremacy and inequalities (Anastasiadou, 2021), but it could also be argued that a consensus of a universal definition is equally dangerous. Perhaps it is not the lack of definition that creates such risk, but rather the lack of debate around it. More critical cosmopolitanism encourages a move away from searching for consensus towards a more divergent discourse and dissensus (Bourn, 2020; Shah and Brown, 2010). Indeed, a lack of consensus need not be viewed as a troublesome unresolved issue, but rather as an opportunity to engage productively with the inherent tensions of GCE: a 'productive tension' (Swanson and Gamal, 2021). Mouffe (2005) suggests that rather than striving for the imagined place of utopian justice, we should instead embrace the more realistic place of disagreement and of social agonism. Camicia and Franklin (2011) refer to Todd's (2008) agnostic form of cosmopolitanism which views the concept of a global

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[7]'Cosmopolitanism' comes from the Ancient Greek idea that we all belong to the one 'cosmos' (universe) and is based on the legitimacy of universality. The principles of cosmopolitanism reflect a commitment to pluralism and respect for diversity. A cosmopolitan citizenship promotes teaching about democracy, peace and human rights and strives for moral cosmopolitanism. Bhabha (1994) discusses the unquestioned neoliberal forms of governance associated with the term global cosmopolitanism. He differentiates between cultural diversity and cultural difference, emphasising the 'right to difference-in-equality'. Similarly, Appiah (2008) refers to 'universality plus difference' (cited in Tawil, 2013) and highlights an ethical need to engage with structures of inequality (cited in Jefferess, 2012). It is interesting to note that Appiah's father was Ghana's representative at the United Nations between 1977 and 1978.

community being ethically grounded in the acknowledgement of difference and embraces Andreotti's (2010) 'epistemological pluralism'. Working from a place of difference can help us to critically understand local and global inequities and this in turn can help humanity work in solidarity towards imagined *futures* (Hauerwas et al., 2021, italics added) as opposed to one imagined place of utopian justice. A critical approach to GCE has been encouraged over recent decades, with post- and decolonial scholars questioning the underlying assumptions of GC and GCE (Andreotti, 2006; Pashby, 2011; Wyness and Martin, 2013) and highlighting a need to regularly discuss the possible interpretations of (global) citizenship education (Biesta and Lawy, 2006; Khoo, 2021). I now go on to explore contemporary conceptions in more detail.

Contemporary conceptions of GCE

The lack of consensus around GCE is reflected in the diverse conceptions and implementations at all levels, from the socio-politico context to the teacher and pupil in the classroom. Over the decades policy makers, academics and practitioners have attempted to systematise approaches to GCE. Despite differing interpretations, most scholars acknowledge GCE as an 'essentially contested umbrella term' (Drerup, 2019) – a framing concept that encapsulates interacting components of globalisation, global learning, intercultural understanding, interdependence, human rights, peace/conflict, diversity, social and economic justice, environmental and sustainable development. Within schools, research reinforces an ambiguous approach to GCE (Disney, 2012; IDEAS, 2018), recognising that the terminology used in schools is often influenced by the organisational or political driver. Even with the ambiguity around the term, teaching is generally concerned with the knowledge, skills and values that enable pupils to contribute to societal development, both locally and globally, and to connect the impact of local actions on the global (glocality).

There are a number of robust typologies of GCE. For example, Tawil (2013) categorises features of GCE into three approaches: identification of citizenship, understanding and awareness, and commitment to act. Similar categorisation is reflected in Other related research and typologies. Below is a table which builds on

Westheimer and Kahne's (2004) well-known framework, summarising some of the analogous categories of citizenship and approaches to GCE. It highlights the range of interpretations and could be used as a tool for professional discussions. Clearly, depending on which interpretation a school and/or a teacher leans toward will affect how GCE is taught. This reinforces the importance of professional dialogue around the purpose of GCE.

Table 1: Understandings of GC and approaches to GCE.

	Understandings of GC and approaches to GCE		
Westheimer and Kahne (2004)	**Personally Responsible Citizen**	**Participatory Citizen**	**Justice Oriented Citizen**
Anastasiadou et al. (2021)	Qualification - emphasis on skills, knowledge and competencies.	Socialisation - associated with neoliberal ideologies in addition to human rights, peace and sustainable development education.	As a 'stance' that embraces criticality in and of GCE.
Halstead and Pike (2006)	*Informed Citizen*	*Committed, Active Citizen*	*Autonomous and Critically Reflective Citizen*
Description	**Acts responsibly in his/her community. Works and pays taxes Obeys laws. Recycles, gives blood. Volunteers to lend a hand in times of crisis.** *Focuses on gaining information on citizenship.*	**Active member of community organisations and/or improvement efforts. Organises community efforts to care for those in need, promote economic development, or clean up environment. Knows how government agencies work. Knows strategies for accomplishing collective tasks.** *The focus extends to moral and social responsibility, values*	**Critically assesses social, political, and economic structures to see beyond surface causes. Seeks out and addresses areas of injustice. Knows about democratic social Movements and how to effect systemic change.** *The focus being a more active citizenship that critically considers action around social justice and human rights.*

		and community involvement.	
Sample action	**Contributes food to a food drive.**	**Helps to organise a food drive.**	**Explores why people are hungry and acts to solve root causes.**
Core assumptions	**To solve social problems and improve society, citizens must have good character; they must be honest, responsible, and law-abiding members of the community.**	**To solve social problems and improve society, citizens must actively participate and take leadership positions within established systems and community structures.** *A criticism of this approach is that it can lead to just a passive citizenship that merely reinforces existing thinking.*	**To solve social problems and improve society, citizens must question, debate, and change established systems and structures when they reproduce patterns of injustice over time.**

Pais and Costa (2017) present GCE approaches as binary discourses, positing that although the naming of the discourses may vary, they all refer to the Marxian idea of class struggle and are presented as either communism or capitalism ideologies. There are many more, but their list below provides a succinct summary:

- critical democracy and neoliberalism (Camicia and Franklin, 2011)

- ethically driven and market-driven (Khoo, 2011)

- social justice and technical-economic agendas (Marshall, 2011)

- globalist and internationalist missions (Cambridge and Thompson, 2004)

- critical and soft agendas (Andreotti, 2006)

In contrast, some research views GCE as more nuanced. For example, Pashby et al. (2020) identify three major discursive orientations as neoliberal (reflecting commercialisation), liberal (reflecting academic rigour for the public good) and critical (reflecting social justice and challenging the status quo), while also recognising underlying commonalities across the approaches. Other researchers refer to a continuum to capture the diversity and movement of approaches in schools. This helps to consider conceptions and approaches to GCE as shifting constructs, rather than something determined and static. Viewed this way, the binary discourses (and the categories depicted on Table 1) can, and do, move and interconnect with one another. UNESCO (2013 and 2015) refer to divides such as these as a tension between 'global solidarity versus global competition.' They describe such tensions as empirical obstacles that can be overcome through research and authentic dialogue, suggesting that the two discourses can work together in a non-contradictory manner. As a teacher, I can empathise with the struggle of working within two opposing binary approaches at the same time, mainly critical democracy and neoliberalism. My teaching strives towards a critical democracy approach while simultaneously feeling constrained within a neoliberal discourse. Pais and Costa (2017) discuss how the critical democratic discourse can, and does, function alongside the neoliberal structure of higher education. My own experience would suggest that parallels can be made with primary and secondary education.

Tensions between critical democracy, neoliberalism and neo-colonialism

Critical democracy (Pais and Costa, 2017), or deliberate democracy (Camicia and Franklin, 2011), is emancipatory in nature and aims to uncover inequalities and exploitation. It promotes social justice, critical awareness and responsible active citizenship and would be situated in the third column of Table 1. A critical GCE (CGCE) entails more than just passive learning *about* global issues. It encourages experiential learning *with* pupils, and fosters a more transformative, participatory and active role that empowers learners to think critically, problem solve, work collaboratively and *be* agents of change (Le Bourdon, 2020; UNESCO, 2015; Davies, 2006; Andreotti, 2006; Hauerwas et al., 2021; Mannion et al., 2011). CGCE

does not support solely economic, human capital and ethnocentric understandings of GC, but also focusses on interconnectedness, humanity and solidarity.

A neoliberal stance is situated in the first column of Table 1. For the purpose of this study, I apply Martin and Griffiths' (2012) description of neoliberalism[8]. Such a stance focuses on teaching *about* citizenship. GCE has been critiqued as reinforcing an individualistic and competitive neoliberal context which promotes performativity and national (economic) development. A neoliberal approach fails to acknowledge the power differentials that are used to influence (and manipulate) trade. Conflict theory a citation? takes this further, perceiving the national curricula of schools as a means to promote national identity and a dominant ideology where we are socialised. This echoes Foucauldian notions of subjectification through the 'technology of Self'. Schools are viewed as playing a key role in the socialisation of social, civic and political functions (Tawil, 2013; Biesta and Lawy, 2006), with educational policies that promote pupils to be competitive, entrepreneurial and individualistic (Pais and Costa, 2017; Camicia and Franklin, 2011).

Postcolonial research warns that the narrative within this neoliberal discourse is a form of neo-colonialism which can be perceived as playing a part in reinforcing colonial thinking (Andreotti, 2006; Pashby and Costa, 2021). Postcolonialists view schools as places that can reinforce subjugation (Camicia and Franklin, 2011), through aspiring to an assumed universal goal, and by continuing colonial thinking and actions (Shah, 2010 cited in Martin and Griffiths, 2012). For example, Martin and Wyness (2013) note the promotion of the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) (UN, 2000) in schools and demonstrate how well-intentioned policies can lead to exploitative and paternalistic activities. Applying a postcolonial lens to the MDGs reinforced a modernisation and Eurocentric approach to development and schooling

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[8]In the early 1980s, capitalism re-surfaced and neoliberalism was introduced. Neoliberalism has an economic focus based on modernisation and human capital theories. This shifted the focus of citizens being considered part of a nation/community/society towards a more global outlook, where citizens were viewed as individuals competing in a global free market, regardless of circumstances. Of course, the global market is not equal and such an approach increases social and economic inequality, rather than ameliorating unequal power relations. Martin and Griffiths (2012) provide a clear description of neoliberalism through the discrete forms of 'political' and 'economic'. The former refers to seeking the prevention of conflict and social injustice. The latter is based on the belief of a free-market economy and competition with the aim of achieving the highest potential. Consequently, the political economy has influenced education and curricula, including GCE, with schools serving a human capital function.

(Martin, 2010, Leonard, 2015), with the MDGs being drawn up "by the West for the Rest" (Van Norren, 2022, p. 2). Research claims that even the term 'development' has strong modernist and Western connotations (Van Norren, 2022; Nwozor et al., 2021; Hughson, 2022). Spivak (1998) claims that it is from Western denial, a 'sanctioned ignorance' of colonialism, that the development project of the Other is justified.

Similar surmises have been made around the promotion of the subsequent policy initiatives of the more recent Sustainable Development Goals[9] (SDGs) in schools, which are also broadly endorsed by the United Nations. The SDG 4 (quality education) target places GCE high on international policy agendas, with a view to empowering pupils to contribute locally and globally to sustainable development. International policy also promotes the inclusion of all seventeen SDGs as the means of doing so (UNESCO, 2016). However, research highlights a modern/neoliberal and neo-colonial imaginary framework and this problematises SDGs. For example, there is a reluctance from the international development sector to address the structural and political causes of inequalities and injustices that are entrenched in the goals themselves (Bryan and Mochizuki, 2023). Many academics regard the framework as one which assumes a univocal and supreme Western scientific knowledge – a framework of "impositions of Eurocentric discourses on postcolonial societies" (Parashar and Schulz, 2021, p. 5). Questions have been raised over how inclusive and relevant the conceptualisations of the SDGs are to civilizations and communities who live by different knowledges and value systems from the Western-orientated concepts. The exclusion of non-Western knowledges which reinforces the subalternity of many social groups has been highlighted (Druker-Ibáñez and Cáceres-Jensen, 2022; Brown et al., 2023).[10] Depending on theoretical stances,

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[9]The MDGs were introduced in 2000 by the United Nations with the aim to promote global development through 8 goals and 18 targets which included a commitment to address extreme poverty, reduce child mortality, develop global partnership and promote primary education and gender equality. Despite the UN reporting good overall progress, not much progress was made in lifting African countries out of underdevelopment in many areas. The SDGs cover a broader range of goals than the preceding MDGs. They act as reference goals for the period 2015-2030 and are made up of a network of linkages which include 17 goals, 169 targets and 303 indicators (Nwozor et al., 2021).

[10]See Appendix 1 for the work of deGraft-Yankson, who adapts the UN's official SDG icons and uses Adinkra symbols as part of his work in an *Exploring Visual Culture Project* using trans-cultural image mobilisation and interpretation.

some decolonialists describe accepting the universal viewpoint and ignoring/excluding non-Western knowledge systems as 'epistemic violence' (Spivak, 2003) or 'attempted epistemicide' (Santos, 2018). They also argue that global educational drivers such as the OECD continue to promote Eurocentric epistemologies and values (Gearon et al., 2021). Indeed, the OECD's recent 'Learning Compass 2030'[11] has been described as embracing "a colonial rationality where the Global Northern onto-epistemological position is the ideal to be aimed at worldwide" (Hughson, 2022, p. 13).

Within a curriculum, Camicia and Franklin (2011) stress that such discourses can also promote notions of 'imagined consensus', in which education perpetuates national myths in the name of national unity. Due to the underlying occidental power and assumptions, some view this as neo-colonialism and a phenomenon that pervades current GCE policy and practice (Andreotti 2006) encompassing ISPs. Earlier research highlights a strong colonial legacy permeating teaching and learning in UK schools (Martin, 2010; Disney, 2004), with schools often mirroring the advice and actions of the government and non-government organisations (NGOs) which ask for money to be given to the Global South. Today, there are still many UK educational programmes that come under the heading of 'global citizenship' (for example, Comic Relief and Mary's Meals) that are charity-based and focused on fundraising. Countries in the Global South are portrayed as 'needing help', thus reinforcing a paternalistic/donor-recipient relationship and reinforcing a neo-colonial discourse (Pashby et al., 2023). Disney (2004) warns of the extent to which ISP work may be developing a new form of colonialism, where schools in the Global South are used as a resource for UK school curricula. Fundraising for 'the poor' will change neither mindsets nor global economic, environmental or social issues. Teachers are not exempt from forming (neo)colonial underlying assumptions and, unless these are brought to the surface and challenged, colonial behaviour and thinking will continue to pervade ISPs in both the Global North and the Global South. Following the RMF protest in 2015, there is increased awareness around the term 'decolonising the

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[11]'Learning Compass 2030' is a tool which serves to assess national curriculum reforms across the globe. It guides thinking around the knowledge, attitudes and values required of students preparing for their future.

curriculum'[12]. For this to happen though, we perhaps first need to decolonise the minds of teachers.

To illustrate how the critical democracy and neoliberal binaries co-exist, Pais and Costa (2017) refer to the 'place of 'enunciation' (p. 7). This is a Lacanian term used by Žižek, which highlights the gap between the enunciated content of a teaching programme /curriculum and its actualisation in a context. We can place critical democracy as the place of enunciation: that is the place from where someone speaks and where critical democracy is valued and upheld, for example, UNESCO. UNESCO's (2015) strategy reflects a critical democratic approach and emphasises the high values of social justice, solidarity, diversity and communitarian engagement in schools. However, as Pais and Costa (2017) point out, the enunciated intentions cannot be implemented in schools without an element of 'misrecognition' due to the political neoliberal structuring of education. The implementation of critical democracy therefore becomes entangled with/constrained by the more neoliberal discourse of school systems. UNESCO (2015) also highlight the implementation gap between policy and practice and point out a lack of conceptual clarity in the formation of policy, lack of coherence in implementation and lack of teacher support. This leads me to explore the challenges and barriers experienced by teachers and schools.

Challenges and barriers to GCE in schools

Teacher confidence and worldviews

Regardless of political stance, there is consensus that teachers should be prepared to teach about global issues that include societal, environmental, economical, humanitarian and political perspectives (Howitt, 2019). However, many teachers express a lack of confidence and avoid teaching more complex global issues, such

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[12]Attending a recent Pedagoo event (informal grassroots meetings, run by teachers for teachers, where we share pedagogy and practice), Sadia Hussain-Savuk (2024) described a decolonised curriculum as "an inclusive curriculum by recognising and addressing the legacies of disadvantage, injustice and racism that have arisen from historic global domination by 'The West', and the consequent inherent 'whiteness' that is present in our curriculum today."

as conflict, through feeling ill-equipped (Pigozzi, 2006; Davies, 2006; Leonard, 2012; UNESCO, 2015; Anastasiadou, 2021; Le Bourdon, 2020; England, 2022), perceiving big/tough issues as 'political' or inappropriate (Disney, 2008).[13] Teachers in Scotland report similar apprehension (IDEAS, 2018). In cases where teachers do include more complex issues, Martin (2010) refers to Edge et al.'s (2009) findings which highlight that most teachers present just one universal knowledge about the world based on their own cultural lens. Cultural education has traditionally been about 'us' and 'Others'. Throughout history, humans have created a 'phantom image' of the neighbours that they do not know, viewing them as a 'demonic Other' who threatens their own peaceful society (Pigozzi, 2006). Teaching through this narrow lens which focuses on just one viewpoint, one knowledge and one future, rather than on multiple options, is ethnocentric and can reinforce colonial thinking. Research acknowledges that critical interculturality thinking is needed and that teachers need to move beyond dualistic/otherness thinking. Such concepts are beginning to be challenged due to migration, hybrid identities, connectivity (Yamashita, 2006; Hauerwas et al., 2021), interdependence and technology (Martin, 2011).

Earlier research also identified that teachers in the UK may not be aware of resources available to them, and of a lack of training/support (Davies, 2006; Yamashita, 2006). This may no longer be the case in Scotland today as there are currently many high-quality professional learning opportunities open to teachers. The pandemic moved a lot of training online which has made it even more accessible than before.

Link?

What and how do we measure?

The educational policy narrative across the globe reflects a neoliberal outlook that values competition and economic success, where 'quality' is measured within a performative and comparative agenda. Regardless of how GCE is taught, it remains

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[13]'Learning to live together' was identified as the biggest challenge in the 1996 Delors Report (UNESCO, 2013) and as such, there has remained a strong focus on culture and cultural conflict within the UNESCO discourse. The second UNESCO Forum on Global Citizenship Education (GCED) in 2015 developed the theme of building and sustaining peaceful societies and focussed on exploring the links between education and peace.

difficult to measure its impact (Livingston and Doherty, 2020), particularly in the long-term (Edge and Khamsi, 2012). This may be partly due to the lack of consensus around the definition and purpose, and/or that the impact is measured in terms of the short-term, rather than long-term. Other reasons include the difficulties of assessing values and attitudes when they are not included in an outcomes-driven framework (Lawson, 2002 cited in Davies, 2006) and the difficulty of measuring learning which happens outwith school. Research acknowledges that GCE is not, and should not, be confined solely to schools but also includes informal learning outside school (Biesta and Lawy, 2006; Camicia and Franklin, 2011; UNESCO, 2015 and 2017), with some suggesting that other societal factors can be stronger than that which is taught in school (Pigozzi, 2006). Also, there can be inconsistencies between the intended and observed (enacted) GC curriculum (Oxley and Morris, 2013; Livingston and Doherty, 2020). Davies (2006) points out an attribution gap when she poses the question, if we teach towards achieving a more peaceful society, and it appears to become more peaceful, how can we know how much of this is due to our teaching? GCE is therefore generally understood to be a lifelong learning experience which requires holistic and long-term consideration.

But does it really matter if we cannot measure impact accurately? Livingston and Doherty (2020) argue that efforts to measure such learning can distort and undermine the power of both formal and informal learning. Is it not enough to trust we are contributing towards the development of more informed and questioning citizenship through an enrichment of the curriculum? UNESCO (2015) propose that there should be less emphasis on seeking targets that have measurable outcomes and more emphasis on the content of education and how it can help address global issues. They advise against 'ranking' based on indicators, stating that measurement should enhance learning and teaching, rather than be comparative.

Having explored the place of GCE in schools generally, I now go on to examine the place of GCE within the Scottish context.

GCE in the Scottish curriculum

Ethics around the rights of the child

Scotland was the first devolved nation to directly incorporate the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)[14] into domestic law and current Scottish educational policy promotes the UNCRC. Schools are expected to incorporate the rights of the child in their teaching and are encouraged to be actively involved in UNICEF's Rights Respecting Schools (RRS) programme. The RRS programme supports Klein's (2001) claim that a rights framework can introduce more critical understanding and attitudes around being a global citizen. Many educators agree that such programmes "share moral premises and good intentions, shaping the child into a responsible and caring citizen of the planet, the globe or the community" (Livingston and Doherty, 2020, p. 2). While not contesting this claim, it does beg the question as to what kind of global citizen(ship) is being referred to/promoted. Much of the programme incorporates cosmopolitan approaches such as political, moral and economic GC and it reflects the assumption of a moral universalism of universal rights. It is important to bear in mind that children's (and human) rights originated in the Global North, based on Eurocentric values and within European epistemological, cultural and political contexts. The post-World War II expectations of modernity promoted the provision of equal and universal rights to create a more democratic (and Western?) society[15].

Some scholars argue that the current focus on children's rights potentially reinforces a form of neo-colonialism. For example, Andreotti (2006 and 2007) discusses how a global professional elite promote 'ethnocentric and developmentalist mythologies', including human/children's rights, on to countries in the Global South. Parashar and Schultz (2021) highlight the work of Omach (2020), who provides an insight as to

[14]The UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill was passed in March 2021, which means the Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland and Scottish Human Rights Commission have powers to take legal action to protect children's rights. Scotland also supports an active Children's Parliament.

[15]Society has changed since the introduction of the Rights of the Child, and it is perhaps time to revise the articles within the UNCRC. This could provide opportunity for more diverse and less Eurocentric discussion, as well as addressing issues of the times such as digital rights.

how imposed women's and children's rights in Uganda clashed with Acholi traditional norms and were perceived as an assault on their cultural values. Similar 'civilising missions' have been documented elsewhere, notably by Spivak and Andreotti. Jakimów (2022) recognises and discusses the problematic nature of Western/non-Western and democratic/authoritarian binaries and emphasises the close relationship between cultural and political contexts. She argues for 'acts of citizenship' that allow for a move away from the fixed legal-ideological features which characterise citizenship in Europe and includes rights. So, while political and geographical colonisation may no longer exist in the physical sense, such thinking suggests that a form of cultural colonialism may still be apparent.

In contrast, Drerup (2019) critiques traditional postcolonial thinking which criticizes the Western dominance of children's rights. He highlights the problematic misuse of pseudo-universalism, pointing out that universal values need not be perceived as a simple deductive process allowing one cultural orientation to dominate. Parekh (2003) appears to recognise this and proposes general and special duties owed to human beings, the former to all and the latter to some. He argues against the ethical universalist reductionist interpretation of special duties being just a smaller part of general duties. Instead, he posits that this should vary, depending on the social norms of cultures and societies. For example, in some societies it is expected that parents will be financially and/or physically supported by their children in hard times. Furthermore, Parekh points out that liberal universalists overlook the importance of merging a single morality with a multiple ethic. He reminds us that globally orientated citizenship requires a global ethic and proposes there are universal and non-universal components within such an ethic. The former should be available to all, such as access to basic needs and freedom from terror. The latter ethical component should allow for diversity across communities according to their ethical traditions, moral values or 'thick' moralities.

Within the Scottish educational context though, a cosmopolitan view is promoted, with an expectation that children's rights will be taught through and across the curriculum.

A Curriculum for Excellence

The Scottish Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) aims to support the development of four interrelated capacities – Successful learners, Confident individuals, Responsible citizens and Effective contributors (Scottish Executive, 2004). While global citizenship runs through all four capacities, it perhaps plays a more prominent role in the latter two. The curriculum provides a 'broad general education' which views discipline areas as interrelated. It sits within a flexible and process-led framework for learning, as opposed to being led by outcomes. Embedding an international/global focus was planned from the inception of CfE (LTS, 2010). Learning for Sustainability (LfS) features as an entitlement in the refreshed CfE (Scottish Government, 2019). CfE states that learning should include issues that are meaningful to local contexts and beyond, and should consider the geographical, historical and political factors involved. It values ethical understanding, creative thinking and the development of values and attitudes, not only knowledge, skills and understanding. The CfE views both the pupils and teachers as curriculum developers and agents of change, with a participatory and advocacy approach being encouraged. The General Teaching Council (GTCS, 2020) promotes learning contexts to be developed through learner-led research and enquiry, where pupils participate meaningfully in decision-making.

GC is not described as a discrete subject in CfE, rather it is embedded within the Experiences and Outcomes across each of the eight curricular areas. CfE also supports an interdisciplinary approach to learning. Interdisciplinary learning (IDL) is encouraged as a practice that is participatory and future-orientated; it allows for skills to be developed, connections to be made and it encourages the application of prior learning. Taking a multidisciplinary and/or interdisciplinary approach is recognised as a way of integrating GC issues into the curriculum (UNESCO, 2015, 2020; Tawil, 2013; Anastasiadou et a., 2021). This means that GC can be woven into and across the curriculum, rather than being an add-on subject. Such an approach acknowledges the curricular links and the potential impact on attitudinal and behavioural change (UNESCO, 2015; Tawil, 2013): a form of transformational education that can create transformative action. While not unique to GC alone, Scottish teachers report that related GCE pedagogies contribute to increased pupil motivation and critical thinking, and a deeper awareness of their place in the world (IDEAS report, 2018; Concluding Report for LfS National Implementation Group, 2016; Scotland's Learning for Sustainability Action Plan, 2023).

Educational values

The same research also claims that teaching through a GCE approach can increase awareness of social justice issues and actions. Indeed, CfE documentation refers to GC alongside brief references to social justice and personal and collective responsibility. The Scottish Executive (2004) states that these values are woven into the values inscribed into the inscription of the Scottish Parliamentary mace: wisdom, justice, compassion and integrity.[16] On the surface, such values come across as inspiring and outward-looking. Related Scottish educational documents certainly present a successful and outward-looking Scotland that upholds strong humanitarian/social justice values. In my experience as a teacher though, there is a lack of discussion around the values and related political and ethical dimensions involved. As Anastasiadou et al. (2021) point out, a lack of clear definition, elaboration and discussion within documentation reduces such ideals to instrumental goals. Some research posits that a more political and universal neoliberal goal of social justice is often hidden behind the rhetoric of GCE discourses which also helps to fulfil neoliberal agendas[17] such as being seen to be world-leading/'in the lead' (Martin and Griffiths, 2012; Swanson and Gamal, 2021).

A neoliberal agenda?

A possible example of being seen to be 'in the lead' within the international education arena is through the OECD's 2018 Programme for International Student Assessment

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[16]Interestingly, these words were chosen by the silversmith, Michael Lloyd, who designed the mace.

[17]Scottish government claims that its principal purpose is to "create a more successful Scotland with opportunities for all to flourish through increasing sustainable economic growth." (Scottish Government, 2008, p. 3). Early CfE documentation states that part of the purpose of citizenship is to develop a workforce with the necessary skills to work in a global economy (Scottish Executive, 2004). Similar statements are referred to in many Scottish educational policy documents. The language used tends to position itself within an inward-looking and neoliberal agenda, where the aim appears to be to equip learners to effectively contribute to the economy and Scottish society.

(PISA). This included an assessment of global competence[18] for the first time. Findings were based on pupil and teacher questionnaires about global competence, attitudes, beliefs and classroom practice. Scotland participated and performed above average. While Scottish Government (SG) may feel proud of its ranking, there remain ethical questions concerning the purposes and processes of the evaluation, not least the neoliberal framework that PISA sits within. For example, is one test capable of measuring a range of pedagogical approaches and who decides what should be measured to determine 'good GCE practice'? Does it lean towards a normative and performative agenda that focuses on a set of pre- and Western-defined skills and competencies? And could it impose a colonial sense of inferiority among nations/cultures who may have different worldviews and values?

Arguably, a further potential example of underlying neoliberalism at play is the current emphasis on Learning for Sustainability (LfS) in Scottish education. SG have promoted critical and creative thinking, with reference to global challenges such as climate change and the loss of biodiversity (Scottish Government, 2020). Again, not many would dispute such aspirational goals, but it could be argued that policymakers are looking for a criticality and creativity that increases economic and/or political success. It is interesting to note that GC has been overridden by LfS in more recent years and I believe it is worth taking time to reflect on this curricular shift.

Learning for Sustainability

In Scotland, GCE has been replaced with the newer adjectival of LfS which could be described as a new 'nodal point'[19]. GC currently sits under the overarching policy

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[18]The PISA definition of global competence is "a multidimensional capacity that encompasses the ability to examine global and intercultural issues, understand and appreciate different perspectives and viewpoints, interact successfully and respectfully with others, and take action for collective well-being and sustainable development" (p. 5).

[19]Mannion et al. (2006 and 2011) explored the bringing together of environmental education, development education and citizenship education in the UK to form 'education for global citizenship' (which was later termed GCE.) They refer to Laclau and Mouffe's (1985) 'nodal point' which works as a privileged reference point to attempt to bring together different discourses and fix meanings.

framework of LfS[20], wrapped up with and alongside sustainable development education (SDE) and outdoor learning. The three core areas of LfS have been an entitlement for all pupils in Scotland since 2013. Under this new umbrella term, GC remains embedded in the revised Professional Standards for Teachers (GTCS, 2020). Both are referred to in several sections of *How Good is our School 4?* (Scottish Government, 2015), the national framework for school self-evaluation and self-improvement. They also feature in the National Improvement Framework (Scottish Government, 2016). Currently, sustainability education is framed by Agenda 2030 (UNESCO) which defines strategic priorities for the world in the form of seventeen SDGs. Definitions[21] of LfS are provided for teachers by SG, UNESCO and the GTCS. A common thread within the definitions is the mix of science and humanities which invites teachers to take anthropocentric and ecocentric positions in their teaching.[22] Teachers are responsible for "inspiring and motivating learners to address the challenges of learning to live within the environmental limits of our planet and to build a just, equitable and peaceful society" (p. 2, GTCS, 2020a).

Scotland was the first country to sign up to the 2015-2030 United Nation's SDGs. The importance of SDG 4.7 to bring transformational change at system level is recognised by government and academic bodies, and teaching around and through the SDGs has been encouraged from Education Scotland (ES), the governing body of Scottish education. Again, the language they position the SDGs in lacks critical approaches to social issues such as injustice and poverty (Anastasiadou et al., 2021). This suggests the current LfS discourse in Scotland is driven by environmental/ecological elements of GCE. Is this subtle shift towards LfS due to a perception that LfS may be perceived as a 'safer' umbrella term, in that it embodies a

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[20]LfS was developed and informed by work of the 'One Planet Schools Working Group' and the 'Learning for Sustainability National Implementation Group'. Their work culminated in a 'Vision 2030+' report in 2016, which recommended strategic objectives for educational establishments and was accepted by Scottish ministers. The aim of Vision 2030+ is to build a socially-just, sustainable and equitable society through transformative learning. The Learning for Sustainability Action Plan (2019) sets out how the Scottish Government will implement the recommendations. More recently, Target 2030: A Movement for People, Planet and Prosperity was launched by the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills in June 2023 which has resulted in a national Call to ensure all learners receive their entitlement to Learning for Sustainability and every 3-18 school and setting becomes sustainable by 2030.

[21]https://www.gtcs.org.uk/professional-standards/key-cross-cutting-themes/learning-for-sustainability/

[22]For more insight into the place of LfS in Scottish education see Christie and Higgins' (2020) literature review: The Educational Outcomes of Learning for Sustainability: A Brief Review of Literature on LfS.

feeling of us all working together towards a common planetary 'good'? Certainly, both LfS and GC encompass social and ecological justice, but does the latter suggest too much criticality, and therefore discomfort, around the social justice and political side of GCE? For some time now, scholars have expressed unease around the emphasis on sustainability for this reason. Swanson and Gamal (2021) suggest that the shift in emphasis was deliberate, and they highlight distancing strategies deployed by the SG to draw attention away from the more problematic nature of GC. Nevertheless, growing concerns over the current climate emergency have prompted many young people in Scotland, and across the globe, to step out of their schools and to take action, locally and globally, and acknowledge the more problematic aspects around climate, social justice and the politics involved.

Towards more critical, democratic and participatory global citizenships

At the time of writing, a growing number of young people across the globe are participating in Friday school strikes to demonstrate their concern about the climate emergency. At the same time, I am also very aware of COP26 taking place not that far away from me. Both the action and event reflect Griffiths' (1998) 'shared agenda' characteristic which views 'Planet Earth' as the shared concern. This indicates a shift towards a more 'Earth Jurisprudence' approach to GCE, which considers the rights of the planet and nature. It challenges the more traditional Western GCE approaches, which separates humans and nature, and provides opportunity for engagement with indigenous knowledges, many of which emphasise inter-species interdependence (de Souza, 2012; Moraes and Freire, 2020). Such thinking reflects elements of Misiaszek's (2021) ecopedagogy which, based on the work of Freire, recognises our limitations and our need to better understand Nature to "disrupt falsities portrayed as truths in order to uphold Development" (p. 5).

Lovelock and Margulis (1974, cited in Oxley and Morris, 2013) refer to the 'Gaia hypothesis' which portrays the Earth as a living thing that needs protected. This concept of global citizenship reflects features of cosmopolitanism and accentuates rights, responsibility and action. It also reflects elements of a world culture GCE discourse which takes a humanist approach and emphasises connectedness,

interdependence and shared universal attributes of humankind. The 'Gaia hypothesis' outlook views pupils being educated as citizens of the Planet Earth, rather than educated about citizenship. The common identity is proposed as an ethical one, as opposed to something cultural, political or economic. However, as Freire (2000) points out, an apolitical education is impossible. While such a shared global concern about the planet can create a moral community, it can also create features of a more political community, with one country being asked to support another through global obligation (Parekh, 2003). The social justice aspect therefore becomes a dual discourse that is both educational and political.

In 2006, Biesta and Lawy posited that there remained an individualised conception of citizenship which focused on teaching planned outcomes about GC, rather than on 'pupils-in-context' as global citizens. They argued for a GCE that takes the actual learning that occurs within young people's lives as the *point of departure* to develop democratic dispositions and cultures. Both my experience and reading would suggest that we have moved on in (some) schools and that there has been a shift towards a more critical democratic GCE where *points of departure* are more recognised and facilitated. The Climate Change school strikes and marches exemplify this. While research over the last two decades would indicate an element of disengagement with political and social issues, perhaps pupils now have a 'distinctive new political agenda of their own' as described by Jowell and Park (1998 cited in Biesta and Lawy, 2006). Pupils are not just learning *about* democracy and citizenship, but *through* it, playing a participatory role in it. Even if they choose not to participate in such strikes, learning and critical thinking can still be stimulated. This reinforces the notion that GCE is not something that is 'done' to pupils, but rather that they are already playing a part in their learning, and that it is the context in which they live and learn that provides the 'point of departure' for deep and relevant learning.

Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted that there are many conceptual understandings of GCE and it should not be assumed that the more dominant are universally shared: as we

are all situated in different contexts that are historically, socially/culturally, economically and politically grounded and influenced. Neoliberalism clearly influences current education in the UK, including GCE, and this is reflected in documentation related to the Scottish CfE. Alongside references to creativity, critical thinking and pupil participation, educational policy also explicitly and implicitly promotes a curriculum driven by neoliberal goals. In Scotland, LfS is now the umbrella term in GCE. While LfS encompasses social and ecological justice, it is argued that the social justice and political elements of GC are demoted. However, within the LfS discourse, there remain opportunities for teachers to take a more critical and glocal approach to explore these issues, even if they are not made explicit. My own professional experience concurs that teachers who actively engage in, and reflect on GCE, recognise the potential of adopting a more critical and democratic pedagogy, and do so regardless of a curriculum's enacted (and hidden) intentions, and without referring to a linear neoliberal-liberal 'solutionist' approach (Pashby and Costa, 2021). However, as stated, many teachers continue to report a lack of confidence in addressing controversial and political issues. If we are striving to develop GCE as a 'stance' that embraces criticality in and of GCE, then more teachers need to move beyond dualistic/Otherness viewpoints and pedagogies. There are hopeful observations that this may be happening in Scotland due to the sheer number of GCE webinars and modules being carried out in more recent years. Time will tell… Regarding the difficulties and ethical dilemmas around assessing GCE, UNESCO (2015) make a valid point in proposing more of an emphasis on the *content* of education and how it can help address global issues, rather than being focused on the performative and comparative aspects.

The response to the current climate emergency in schools across the globe, alongside the emphasis on LfS in current Scottish education, led to a discussion around the planetary perspective of GCE. This shift suggests a more critical democratic GCE that encourages critical thinking around economic, social and political issues, where the causes of climate justice are considered as well as the effects of climate change.

My personal and professional response

Having read and reflected on different viewpoints, and having considered my own practice and views, I can relate to striving towards Anastasiadou et al.'s (2021) definition of GC and GCE. They describe GC as "an understanding of our position in the world as an ethical responsibility towards oneself, others and the environment" (p. 1). Their definition of GCE supports UNESCO's transformative and transformational thinking, where GCE is presented as something that should "move beyond cognitive knowledge and skills to find ways to resolve potential or existing global issues that menace our planet" (p. 1). Anastasiadou et al.'s definition appeals to me, because it does not mention resolving issues or finding a solution. Yes, there is a climate emergency, but there are no quick fixes to something so big. And if there are, I doubt that a primary or secondary pupil will find them while in our classroom. What we can do though, is teach our pupils about the eco-social complexities around the climate emergency – the ethical conundra, inequalities and injustices. In doing so, we can help equip our young people with not just knowledge, but also the understanding and criticality that transformative and transformational thinking requires.

My reflection on the broader context of GCE has reiterated the postcolonial argument of the tendency to assume modern and universal Western knowledge, values and thinking, rather than a critical examination of them. If we apply the metaphor of looking at GCE as a garden, then it is a garden situated in a very European climate. This is something that concerns me due to the exclusivity and supremacy that such a posture hints at. My thinking has been challenged further as I have (re)considered the origin and ethics around children's rights. Such reflection has stirred me to question the Western binary, oppositional and hierarchical way of thinking and knowing. While understanding that my assertions could be contested, I take as a basis in this research that *not* addressing different interpretations results in "the uncritical reinforcement of notions of the supremacy and universality of 'our' (Western) ways of seeing and knowing, which can undervalue other knowledge systems and reinforce unequal relations of dialogue and power" (Andreotti and de Souza, 2008, p. 23).

Through the reading and writing of this chapter, I have developed a more critical, postcolonialist[23] and particularist stance. This has led me to frame the thesis within postcolonial and decolonial theory. Postcolonialism highlights a break away from the dominant, hegemonic discourses and focuses on specificity rather than universality. It recognises the plurality of knowledge, and that no one knowledge system is privileged over another. In line with post-structural thinking, I am beginning to understand knowledge to be both socially constructed and relational. I now view it as contextual, subjective and inter-relational, rather than universal or neutral following Mignola, 2000; 2008; Cremin, 2018 and Braidotti, 2018. In this respect, I concur with other postcolonialists that the plural term 'global citizenships' is perhaps a clearer term to use. As a teacher, I believe it is crucial that we explore global themes through different citizenship lenses and that ISPs can provide this opportunity. As a researcher, I have learned that my own lens, no matter how wide and encompassing, will always be limited. This realisation has come about through consideration of the literature discussed in this chapter, and reflection on prior research I have carried out which I share in the next section.

Much of this section was written while in lockdown, when almost every window displayed a rainbow. My conclusion to this section is that GCE is like a rainbow. A rainbow reflects multiple colours and perspectives. The colours of the rainbow can be compared to the lineages of GCE concepts and traditions, each full of "nuances, linkages and trajectories over time between and among them" (Mannion et al., 2011, p. 445). Like the many colours of a rainbow, different concepts, adjectivals and understandings intersect and converge at points creating a recognisable, albeit hazy, effect that can be identified and seen by everyone. There is no definitive end point, and as we move forward, it appears to move with us. Similarly, while the term 'global citizenship' may be interpreted differently by different political and educational stakeholders, it may be best explained as a 'travelling' policy (Oxley and Morris,

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[23]Postcolonialism originated from the post-structuralist movement in the mid-twentieth century and developed out of Said's (1985) Orientalism and the construction of the 'Other'. During colonial times, Europe perceived herself as superior and privileged, and the world was divided into two categories of 'West and the Rest'. Postcolonialism highlights the oppression and injustice caused by Western worldviews/thinking. Using a postcolonial theory framework allows us to expose and examine such assumptions.

2013). Pieniazek (2020) quotes Stuit (2016) regarding his work on ubuntu strategies, and the same sentiment could be applied to GC more generally in that:

> (she) reminds us concepts are never constant; rather they are continually developed through movement through time and across various disciplines, where they encounter new contexts, new objects, and also other concepts' (p. 86).

One of the 'colours' that take a place within the rainbow of global citizenship is that of international school partnerships, which I go on to explore in the following chapter.

Chapter Two: The planting and positioning of ISPs

International School Partnerships

In this section I explore empirical findings around knowledges, understandings and experiences of International School Partnerships. For consistency, I refer to the term International School Partnership (ISP) while acknowledging that scholars use other terms such as intercultural partnerships, international partnerships, North and South partnerships, school linking and school exchanges.

I present a brief overview of the positioning of GCE and ISPs in the UK context before locating them more specifically within the Scottish educational context. This leads to a discussion around the importance of challenging teacher worldviews and the role of professional learning. Following this, I provide a short summary of the experience of ISPs from schools in the Global South. I then situate our Ghana-Scotland ISP and end the chapter by sharing some concluding thoughts.

The place and purpose of ISPs in the UK

Over several decades, the place and purpose of ISPs in the UK has shifted in line with changing policies. Historically, the driver for ISPs has been the enthusiasm of individual teachers to broaden their pupils' worldviews, often starting from a charity perspective, and the notion among policymakers that they can help to develop more understanding and inter-connectedness between countries (Bourn and Cara, 2013; Bourn et al., 2017). Following a push from the UK government and Department for International Development (DFID) in 2000, there was an increase in Global South-North ISPs, with government viewing ISPs as a vehicle to develop a workforce with the necessary skills to work in a global economy and to highlight global development themes (Bourn and Cara, 2013, Bourn, 2014). ISPs remain an agreed key vehicle in driving a global dimension in UK schools (Martin, 2005 and 2007; Edge and Khamsi, 2012; Bourn and Cara, 2012 and 2013; Martin and Wyness, 2013; Bourn, 2014; The British Council, 2020). This move towards more formal global learning was reinforced in UK policy documents, mainly *Developing a Global Dimension in the*

School Curriculum (Department for Education and Skills [DfES], 2004) and *Putting the World into World-Class Education* (Developing Education Association [DEA]/Department for International Development [DFID], 2005). The policy shift was reflected in the DFID funding application process for ISPs, which required curricular projects to focus around one or more of eight key concepts based around development education: global citizenship, conflict resolution, diversity, human rights, interdependence, social justice, sustainable development, and values and perceptions. The emphasis then moved towards sustainability themes, and this was reflected in our own ISP journey.

Despite funding specifications, the motivations and benefits prove to be varied among schools and not necessarily based around development education objectives (Bourn and Cara, 2013). Schools can, and often do, manipulate their plans and priorities to fit the definition of GC portrayed by ISP funding providers (Disney, 2008). Similarly, the funding bodies themselves will be expected to fulfil specific criteria which will influence their interpretation of GC and presentation of ISPs. As discussed in the previous chapter, despite a substantial body of policy and research around GCE, there is no one agreed concise definition.[24] ISPs, which sit under the umbrella of GC within school curricula, tend to reflect a narrow, limited and an assumed universal interpretation of the term (Brown, 2006; Edge et al., 2009).

Since 2010, there has been less political impetus on global learning and levels of funding have been reduced. Not surprisingly, this has resulted in a decline in ISP activity (Bourn et al., 2017).[25] UK Government closed DFID in 2020, and it has merged into the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO). Prior to further discussion, I feel it is important to note that ISPs are not the only stimuli to address GCE in schools. Indeed, there is limited evidence to suggest that ISPs create more knowledge and understanding than other curriculum-based projects, despite assumptions made by funding organisations and policymakers (Bourn, 2014).

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[24]This is reflected in Scottish education too, where there is also ambiguity around the term among teachers (IDEAS, 2018).

[25]The decline in ISP activity is also reflected in the decline of ISP research.

The place of GCE and ISPs within the Scottish policy context

Research recognises that Scotland is traditionally well supported at policy level, and from within the curriculum, to learning through ISPs[26] (IDEAS, 2018; Bourn and Cara, 2013; Livingston and Doherty, 2020). The Scottish CfE recognises ISPs as relevant and engaging learning contexts where discussion of issues that are meaningful to their local settings and beyond, can be explored and discussed. The curriculum also supports an interdisciplinary approach to learning which supports the participatory and future-orientated learning discussed in the previous chapter.

However, as also discussed in the previous chapter, the curriculum sits within an educational discourse which is driven by neoliberal ideals, and so? ISPs are usually located within the same discourse (Martin, 2005; Wyness and Martin, 2013). As previously stated, the narrative within the neoliberal discourse can be perceived as a form of neo-colonialism which can play a part in reinforcing colonial thinking patterns (Andreotti, 2006). Despite the opportunities for ISPs to promote inter-cultural understanding and broaden pupils' horizons (Edge et al., 2009; Bourn et al., 2017), many UK schools show paternalistic notions towards their partner school, particularly African schools (Bourn and Cara, 2013; Andreotti, 2006; MacKenzie et al., 2016; Lewis, 2016). Research also highlights concern that partnership schools in the Global South may be viewed and 'used' as a resource for schools in the Global North (Bourn, 2014; Disney, 2004) and the *Civic Links with Malawi* briefing (2015) reflects elements of this deficit model. How teachers in the Global North view the world, specifically the Global South, therefore plays a significant role in the nature and quality of ISPs.

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[26]While many schools in Scotland are involved in international school partnerships across the globe, it is worth noting that Scotland shares a partnership history with Malawi. This is due to the Scotland and Malawi Cooperation Agreement (2005) which promotes partnership working between the two countries, including education. The partnership aims to "combine skills and expertise from both Scotland and Malawi, based on principals of equality, reciprocity and mutual benefit" (MacKenzie et al., 2016, p. 3). The 2015 Scotland's *Civic Links with Malawi* briefing reports 152 schools across Scotland are partnered with schools in Malawi. On reading the report, the benefits appear to be different in each country.

The consequences of unexamined assumptions and beliefs

Throughout this section, I have referred to teacher viewpoints and worldviews. I acknowledge that the notion of a worldview is often ocular and positioned from the Global North[27] (Amad, 2012, Mannion et al., 2010). Indeed, our perceptions are rooted in emotions about the Self, the external world and cultural ways of seeing the world (McLaughlin, 2003). For the purposes of this study, I apply Martin's (2005) definition of teachers' worldviews being their assumptions, beliefs and values. Such attributes contribute to an ideological lens through which many teachers view their ISP. Worldviews, including those of teachers, are informed by societal messages (Humes, 2008). In the UK, societal messages are usually positioned from the Global North and, as Houser (2021) notes, teacher beliefs are often unarticulated beliefs. The assumptions, beliefs and values of a teacher surely influence our pedagogical practice and ultimately influence pupil attitudes and learning, whether intentionally or unintentionally. Historically, GCE research left assumptions unexamined, and ignored how GCE might be interpreted in other contexts (Andreotti and de Souza, 2008)[28]. Thankfully this is changing. At the time of writing, the phrase 'decolonising the curriculum' is often referred to in educational settings. My understanding of the term 'decolonisation' is grounded in the original meaning of an "effort(s) to challenge and overturn the legacy of colonial structures" (Walker et al., 2023, p.6). My understanding of the term 'decolonising the curriculum' is defined by Zavala (2016) who describes education as a site of struggle and rupture, and where decolonisation "comes into being as people engage in dialogue and in response to the coloniality of power" (p. 1). Bringing (Western) worldviews of teachers to the surface, examining and challenging them, therefore plays a vital role if we are to decolonise the curriculum.

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[27]Ahmed writes in more detail about the links between the (Western) development of aerial photography and European colonial-capitalist-consumer expansion.

[28]Of course, teachers in the Global South may also be locked into colonial patterns of thinking and being. Indeed, Chando (2021) highlights a need for further research to be carried out on ways of 'deprogramming the African mind' (p. 90) from the psychological fetters of colonialism. This opens an ethical debate around who is programming whom…

Within the field of ISPs, some research has been undertaken to study the effect of (UK) teacher visits on teacher worldviews; and that which has been undertaken acknowledges that this as an important issue to consider. Bourn (2014) warns us that there is a tendency to assume links between ISP involvement and the impact on personal and social change. Research confirms that it is not as simple as this, and that intercultural contact should not be assumed to lead to intercultural learning. For example, a study undertaken by Merryfield (2000) posited that different meanings were taken from the same intercultural visit by different teachers from the UK, depending on issues such as power, identity and experience. Unchallenged, many teachers will continue to filter their ISP experiences through assumptions and biases. Consequently, establishing an ISP does not guarantee a more critical and social justice perspective within the partnership, or across GCE more generally (Leonard, 2012 and 2014; Martin, 2005; Edge et al, 2009).

A lack of criticality allows inequality and injustice to remain unexamined and hidden under a concept of care and benevolence towards the 'Other' (Jefferess, 2008). The dominant discourse about the 'Other' (Said, 1985) is often the 'frozen narrative' (ibid) or 'single story' (Adichie, 2009) of Southern economic poverty and stereotypes. This neoliberal discourse portrays the good global citizen as someone who helps the poor through a prescribed form of action such as fundraising (Disney, 2003; Brown, 2006; Bourn and Cara, 2012). Such actions reinforce negative stereotypes and colonial thinking (Burr, 2008; Martin, 2007; Martin, 2005) and contribute to creating 'passive empathy' (Tallon, 2012), where liberal and uncritical 'ethics of care' (Jefferess, 2008) are acted out. It is from this viewpoint that Martin (2005) illustrates the controversial nature of ISPs and problematises an area that is traditionally perceived as 'good' and uncontentious. Around the same time, other scholars also began to problematise the assumed 'good' around aspects of GCE in a similar vein, notably Vanessa Andreotti.

Initial teacher education and teacher professional learning clearly play a vital role in moving thinking beyond a neoliberal and colonial discourse. In response to research findings, more recent professional learning programmes have been revised to challenge and shift paternalistic viewpoints of ISPs and to support criticality. This is discussed next.

Teacher professional learning

Taking a more critical approach to teacher learning within ISPs can support more critical reflection and challenge assumed worldviews (Martin, 2007; Martin and Griffiths, 2012; Bourn et al., 2017). This, in turn, creates more criticality when teaching around development issues (Martin, 2007; Martin and Wyness, 2013; Bourn, 2014), sustainability (Martin, 2010) and controversial and political aspects (Disney, 2008). Teacher professional learning is recognised as playing a key role in raising awareness of, and in challenging postcolonial issues such as power and representation (Martin and Griffiths, 2012; Martin and Wyness, 2013), paternalism, and relationships (Bourn, 2014; Bourn and Cara, 2013). Examples of revised professional development courses include the DFID/British Council's Global Learning Programme (2013-2018), Connecting Classrooms (2013-2018) and Connecting Classrooms Global Learning (2018-2021). Across the UK, there are now professional learning programmes in place which include GCE and ISPs. Increasingly in Scotland there are professional learning programmes, including Learning for Sustainability (LfS) Masters-level modules accredited by GTCS. More recent programmes highlight interdependency and encourage criticality.

At the time of writing, the professional learning of teachers remains a strong focus of the Connecting Classrooms programme with learning open to teachers in both the Global South and Global North. Modules are free and, before the pandemic, were offered as a blend of face-to-face and online. The design and development of the e-courses draws on the thinking of teachers from the Global South.[29] Having completed several British Council modules, I am aware of a real effort having been made to avoid a prevalent Western rhetoric. Looking back, I can see evidence of non-binary and non-paternalistic awareness in the tasks we were asked to complete. Teachers were challenged to reflect on representation and stereotypes. Research

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[29]Our own involvement with DFID and subsequent CC projects has encouraged and supported teachers in both schools to attend/participate in professional development courses run by the British Council. In the early days of our partnership, visiting teachers in both schools undertook a series of face-to-face workshops organised by the British Council. They focussed on establishing ethical and effective partnerships. Teachers in both schools have also undertaken online workshops through the Connecting Classrooms programme. Modules I have completed include: international learning – getting started, education for global citizenship, inter-cultural and global awareness, sustainable partnerships, and a mandatory child protection module.

warns that many related teacher professional development documents and courses present a hegemonic Western image (Leonard, 2012; Martin and Griffiths, 2012). However, a range of documents were referred to which promoted and encouraged equity, and the importance of a negotiated partnership agreement was emphasised. There was opportunity to reflect on readings and to share responses with teachers from across the globe through a digital forum. The internet has also allowed for massive open online courses (MOOCs) on GCE to be developed, allowing for educators from across the globe to come together to learn about and share thinking on GCE. Again, the one I participated in through UCL encouraged engagement and a range of views. Of course, access to the internet can be problematic, particularly to many teachers in the Global South.

The ISP experience in the Global South

Although the research landscape is certainly changing, there is still a paucity of literature about ISPs in Global South countries that focuses on the experiences of schools in the Global South and that is authored by local researchers. The research that has been carried out among some schools in Global South countries does however identify several emerging themes. The most robustly evidenced theme is the positive influence on attainment and achievement across the curriculum; not just within citizenship subjects (Leonard, 2012), but particularly in literacy and ICT (Edge et al., 2009 and 2012; Bourn and Cara, 2012 and 2013; Bourn and Bain, 2011). Other themes include some attitudinal change (Bourn and Cara, 2013): teachers gaining a wider range of teaching strategies through professional development and a positive impact on social attributes and motivation of pupils (Edge et al., 2012; Bourn and Bain, 2011; Leonard, 2010). It is propounded that ISPs provide an approach that can give voice and space to the Global South to present their viewpoints and experiencesa; an approach which can challenge stereotypes and promote social justice (Bourn, 2014; LTS, 2001).

Next, I describe our ISP and attempt to situate it in the related literature.

Our situatedness within an ISP model

In this section, I provide a brief background story to our ISP. This is followed by a description of the two schools; one in Scotland (where I teach) and one in Ghana.

Two schools, one partnership

As with many ISPs, our school partnership began through my own personal interest, hearing of our partner school through a friend of my mum. Following a DFID-funded teacher reciprocal visit in 2006, we subsequently secured three more DFID funded curricular projects which included teacher travel. There were a few years where we continued to work together without funding because the Global Schools Partnership programme stopped and the alternative British Council[30] programmes funded only UK teachers. Then in 2012, the Connecting Classrooms programme reinstated teacher visits from the Global South, and we secured funding through this refreshed version of the programme. The programme has evolved in line with changing policy and has moved from a focus on environmental and/or intercultural education to a focus on the SDGs. This shift is reflected in our own ISP journey. As the co-ordinator of our ISP, I did sense a shared and genuine care and commitment to improve the lives of people across the world, which Martin (2010) proposes can contribute to a global ethical nature.

Scottish school context

The primary school I teach in is a small, rural school. As Principal Teacher, I work with pupils and staff to develop a social justice approach to teaching and learning.

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[30]The British Council is a UK-based cultural relations establishment and a key player in the ISP landscape. While DFID funded the original Global Schools Partnerships Programme and now fund the current Connecting Classrooms programme, the British Council manage the programmes. The British Council co-ordinates the Connecting Classrooms programme which was launched in 2012. Due to DFID funding, the Connecting Classrooms programme is aimed at DFID priority countries.

This includes making links with children's rights, the SDGs, Fair Trade and global citizenship. We worked with Eco Schools Scotland for many years, often including our partner school. While not our sole focus, we have maintained our Gold Level Rights Respecting Schools Award and Fair Achiever Fairtrade Foundation award for a decade. We have also maintained the Full International Schools Award since 2012. This is a British Council accreditation that is encouraged through the Connecting Classrooms programme and celebrates schools that embed international awareness and global issues into the curriculum, accrediting the depth and quality of learning and teaching within ISPs. It is interesting to note that schools in the Global South cannot apply for the award, despite British Council representatives working in DFID priority countries. We have also been recognised nationally through Education Scotland's Learning for Sustainability awards[31] and the Scottish Fair Trade's Molly McGavigan Award.[32]

Ghanaian school context

Our Ghanaian partner school is a large, rural primary school which also consists of a nursery and a junior high school. The primary school was set up two decades ago by two women, one Ghanaian and one British, who became close friends while the British woman was out teaching in Ghana for a year. This has created an unusual school setting in that it is both private and charity funded. Attending pupils come from a wide mix of social class and the school embraces a blend of Ghanaian and Scottish pedagogical approaches. This is most likely due to the influence of the British director and the many teacher visits to and from Scotland through our partnership. Since our ISP began in 2006, around 18 teachers have visited from Ghana, with similar numbers of teachers (and former pupils) having visited Ghana from Scotland. The teacher visits have focused on the funded project work, but have also included the exchange of teacher ideas and discussion around pedagogy and practice. The school in Ghana has a good reputation within and outwith the local

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[31]https://education.gov.scot/news/scotland-s-inspirational-achievers-are-awarded-recognition-for-learning-for-sustainability/

[32]https://www.scottishfairtradeforum.org.uk/news/winners-of-the-scottish-fair-trade-awards-2023/

community, with teachers having been asked by the inspectorate body to share their adapted teaching programmes across their own, and surrounding, districts.

I now attempt to situate our ISP within literature in the field.

Situating our ISP

ISPs differ and require careful, collaborative planning, open dialogue and consistent leadership and commitment (Edge et al. 2012). Throughout our partnership, there have been many changes regarding teaching staff, leadership teams and pupils moving through the school. However, the co-ordinators of the partnership in both schools have remained the same, which has contributed to sustaining and driving the partnership and ensured consistency (Bourn, 2014; Disney and Mapperley, 2007). Leonard (2012) warns that if a co-ordinator leaves (or is too controlling), then this can negatively impact the ISP. Over the years, I have undertaken several secondments outwith school and our ISP has continued. Congruent with the work of Morrison (2020), I believe this is due to the enthusiasm and commitment of the teachers who remained in school during these times. There have also been periods of 'linking fatigue' (Leonard, 2012) where we have remained in communication but not committed ourselves to a big collaborative project, as the paperwork and time involved in funded projects can be demanding if undertaken every year. Despite the obstacles, we have maintained our partnership and the British Council consider our partnership to be a 'successful' one; have featured in various British Council documents and have helped to promote ISPs through the media.[33]

While some researchers criticise ISP activities as reinforcing stereotypes, colonial thinking and dependency, others posit that they can challenge and disrupt stereotypical preconceptions and thinking (Disney, Martin and Griffiths, 2012; Bourn and Cara, 2013). Evidenced through ISP evaluations, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) school inspection reports and my own prior research (Reid, 2022), our ISP reflects many of Leonard's (2012) themes and Edge et al.'s (2012) key

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[33]One example is an interview set up by the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) who were keen to use our partnership story to promote the CCGL programme in Scotland. They launched a media release featuring us on World Teachers Day, along with the Foreign Secretary, through social media and the press in Oct 2020. https://twitter.com/Deweygirl1/status/1329549069195370503 A more recent example can be viewed at https://vimeo.com/919973147 (2024).

distinguishing factors of High Momentum Partnerships (HMP) (see Appendix 2). These include a positive impact on the wider school community, learning and teaching, and increased understanding and engagement (Edge et al., 2012; Bourn, 2014). Our experience aligns with other research findings regarding school improvement: it enriches the curriculum and broadens pupils' horizons (Livingston and Doherty, 2020), and brings learning to life (Bourn and Cara, 2012), particularly around global and sustainability issues (Bourn, 2014). Pupils in both schools appear to gain a broader knowledge and a more global outlook on development education issues (Reid, 2022; Bourn and Cara, 2013; Bourn, 2014), where learning occurs within a real and meaningful context of 'real world contacts' (Bourn and Cara, 2013p?). A significant number of Ghanaian schools have been involved in ISP projects with UK schools for several decades (Bourn and Cara, 2012 and 2013), with one report highlighting that this led to Ghanaian teachers using more participatory approaches in their teaching practice (Bourn and Cara, 2013). Again, this is something I have observed in our Ghanaian partner school.

Leonard (2015) differentiates between a school 'link' and a school 'partnership', the latter being considered as more reciprocal and embedded within and across the school curriculum. At the outset of this research, I hold the view that the relationship between our two schools is one of 'partnership'.

Concluding thoughts

This chapter has reported on the shifting perceptions around the purpose of ISPs within education in the UK. Building on the findings highlighted in *Chapter One: Roots and conceptions of global citizenship education*, it is evident that ISPs often sit in tension with overarching neoliberal policy aims. Research warns us that this can lead to reinforcing neo-colonial assumptions and a charitable mentality of the Global North towards the Global South. It was noted that ISP visits do not necessarily challenge and/or alter such assumptions. This naturally led to a discussion around teacher worldviews and the need for professional development programmes that adopt a critical stance through highlighting inequalities, and encouraging social actions that promote social justice. Within this chapter, I have referred to the work of Edge et al. (2012) and Leonard (2012) to locate our own school partnership (see

Appendix 2). It is tempting to present our partnership as 'successful' based on the statements referred to, but my experience would suggest that our ISP is more nuanced. While understanding that the researchers never meant their frameworks to be used as a tick-box exercise, I do wonder if educators use them as such? Frameworks are often constructed in a linear and arborescent fashion – a model that features a lot, and informs, Western education.

While there is evidence of a growing body of research around GCE coming from researchers in Global South countries, there remains a paucity of research that focuses on ISPs from a Global South perspective. The few research initiatives that do so have generally been commissioned and authored by Northern government agencies and NGOs and demonstrate Western hegemony (Leonard, 2012; Edge et al., 2012). Indeed, it is often Western knowledge that sits at the centre of wider global educational policy and practice (Angyagre, 2020; Martin and Griffiths, 2012; Andreotti, 2007). The ISP literature I refer to in this chapter is both valid and rigorous, with researchers all too aware that they are presenting the views of teachers in the Global South from a Global North perspective. Similarly, writing this chapter has increased awareness of my own Western insider-researcher positioning, not just within an ISP, but also within a Western academy. It therefore feels appropriate now to reflect on a prior small-scale research report which attempted to explore our ISP from the perspective of my Ghanaian colleagues (Reid, 2022). It was through this report, and the reflections that followed, that this thesis evolved.

SEASON TWO: WINTER

"I prefer winter and fall, when you feel the bone structure of the landscape - the loneliness of it, the dead feeling of winter. Something waits beneath it, the whole story doesn't show."
(Andrew Wyeth)

Chapter Three: Raking out the assumptions of prior research.

Introduction

> Thinking it may be useful to my research, but mainly out of curiosity, I watched an unedited (and unused) film extract of an informal chat between the Ghanaian school director and me. I am embarrassed to witness myself interrupt my colleague three times in the first five minutes! It appears clear (to me) that I am trying to control the direction of the conversation, trying to pull out the points that **I** think should be heard. This reminds me of the ethical responsibility of avoiding a form of imperial and epistemic violence in research. It also emphasises the power I hold as the person who asks the questions, whether informally or formally. Why do I ask certain questions and not others? What I ask influences the answers. Before and after the interviews, what did the teachers really want to talk about and tell me? I look again at the recorded interviews to remember the informal chat we had before and after the interviews. There was nothing of a professional nature. The teachers talked to me about Precious' mum's funeral, I was introduced to Mr Owaare's mum, we discussed Faith's engagement party and wedding dresses… I suspect there are other untold stories, and memories, that reinforce – and even contradict(!) the professional interview responses? What then am I ignoring/silencing/omitting, or just **missing**, through the formal research process? Perhaps I shouldn't even be led by questions in my thesis. Would that be allowed?

(Reid, personal research journal, January 2021.)

This is an extract from my research journal which was written not long after I had submitted a research report about our partnership. I had always known that the report would be shared publicly on the UCL website, but feelings of self-doubt crept in through a growing awareness that other people would be reading my work. At the same time, I was left with doubts about the research process itself, a real crisis of representation. Writing in my research journal helped me to situate where I was/am

as a researcher before re-embarking on the thesis journey. I think it reflects the beginning of the unravelling process of 'learning to unlearn' (Spivak, 1988).

The aim of the Connecting Classrooms Global Learning (CCGL) research report was to explore teacher perceptions of our ISP from a more Southern perspective.[34] The report is traditional in approach, partly due to the stage I was at as researcher, and also because of performative expectations of writing within a specific structure. Undertaking the research was undoubtedly a good learning experience, but one that left me with questions and doubts, as I go on to share. My original thinking for this thesis had been to compare teacher perspectives in both schools through an autoethnographic case study. However, reflecting on the research experience, alongside my reading, encouraged me to reconsider both the purpose and approach of my thesis – and a new inquiry evolved.

The CCGL report (Reid, 2022) acknowledged my Northern bias, and in response I applied Martin's (2010) approach of conceptualising aspects of a North-South partnership in an attempt to avoid colonial patterns (see Appendix 3). Martin's framework encourages a move away from traditional/Western views of knowledge, the curriculum and pedagogy within an ISP context, and provides more relational ways of perceiving them. The interviews and participatory activities aimed to facilitate an exploration of the discourses drawn on, that construct my colleagues' understanding of GCE and ISPs. However, I was still left feeling that my research approach, and presentation of it, was steeped in Western thinking/knowledge/interpretivism. Had I imposed the term 'global citizenship' on the Ghanaian teachers by using the term and providing a pre-determined list of (Western) definitions as to what it constitutes? Rather than opening up a new conversation around GCE, I fear I merely maintained a Western and linear focus and, in turn, assumed neoliberal and/or neo-colonial ideologies. The more I read, the more I began to see that the Western model of GCE had dominated my research and therefore influenced my findings. Critical education theorists would suggest that the mainstream conceptions of GC *do* impose a Western hegemonic and homogenising understanding of GCE, and that colonial power relations are still

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[34]https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/10146036/

present. Indeed, I did not take into consideration how GC and GCE is presented in the Ghanaian curriculum, or in African cultures more widely.

In addition to my predetermined list of GCE definitions, I was also left feeling unsure as to whether interviews had been a good way to gather data. Looking back, I felt the interviews changed the relationship/power dynamic between the teachers and me. Originally, I had planned to carry out all CCGL research activities in Ghana. In response to the pandemic, I realised that I would have to diversify my research methods. Researching digitally provided some of the flexibility required and I considered the pros and cons, and ethics involved in doing so (see Appendix 4). However, the shift in dynamics of relationship during the interviews (from teacher-teacher to researcher-teacher) was palpable. I had anticipated this, and the same could be said if the interviews were face-to-face, but I was left feeling that the digital emphasised a sense of the distant white-researcher-gaze-with-technology/power. Of course, this shift in role/relationship/power potentially altering the way the stories are told is not a new concern among researchers, particularly within autoethnography and ethnography more widely. It did, however, make me question if there was also an element of 'performed participation' (Pells, 2012 cited in Jamieson, 2022). Did my colleagues perform as (perceived) 'good' research participants, providing pleasing 'correct' answers for me and/or a wider academic audience? In addition, our Ghanaian colleagues are very polite which would appear to be part of the Ghanaian culture.[35] I do not doubt the validity of responses, but I recognise that they most likely highlight truths bound within that momentary research context. This is an area I consider in chapter six.

I had originally included more participatory research activities, having observed that the staff in Ghana really enjoy working collaboratively, and work well together. Due to the pandemic though, teachers could not all work together in the same physical space. Surprisingly, it was the informal sharing of photos and memories on WhatsApp, from teachers in Ghana and Scotland, that created the most natural and, I believe, rich data. This research activity was completely open and had no restrictive

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[35]This was confirmed through email correspondence with Dr Peter Akyeampong, a Ghanaian academic who now lives in Scotland. He shared with me that, within such a formal context, confrontation would generally be avoided as it is deemed disrespectful.

words, phrases or images. It was also a collaborative activity where teachers appeared to feel relaxed/safe to express themselves and they were able to build on one another's memories/ideas. Again, it was interesting to note that the exchanged comments were more personal than professional. As researcher, I did not participate in the activity but sat in the background, as opposed to being in the driving 'interviewer' seat.

While trying to capture a more 'Southern' view of our ISP, I was conscious of wanting to avoid 'ventriloquism' (Novo, 2018)[36] when presenting the views of the teachers in Ghana. In an effort to validate the research and reduce ventriloquism, I invited the teacher participants to evaluate and discuss the data analysis and findings through an online meeting. The meeting was a positive experience, and I genuinely shared my outputs and invited participant feedback. However, despite my genuine attempts, I still think that the voice of the researcher was louder than the voices of participants within it. Did the meeting provide yet another context/stage that subtly sought a further performance of approval in which the teachers/actors were keen to please? I may not have been speaking for my colleagues, but had I indirectly and unconsciously directed the teachers/actors/conversation and created a form of 'imperial validity' (Scheurich, 1997)?[37] Was there an element of me playing the part of

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[36]Guerrero (2010 cited in Novo, 2018) coined the phrase 'ventriloquism' based on the colonial tradition of non-indigenous people representing indigenous people in court and in front of state officials. Novo (2018) describes ventriloquism as the 'child of inequality' which she claims is still present and is supressed by a form of paternalism.

[37]Scheurich (1997) refers to 'imperial validity' being used when the researcher controls the research subject, whether consciously or unconsciously, transforming the Other into a homogenised Same through 'incessant deciphering' (Spivak, 1988), as opposed to accepting the polyvocality of multiple paradigms. This need to sort the Other into a theory of (Western) knowledge/'truth' to be judged is the traditional, and Western, approach to research. He proposes that the Same/Other discourse is a problematic power binary, as it creates a boundary line drawn by set, Western validity criteria.

This resonates with Levinas' thinking on existential phenomenology which emphasises that we are merely beside the Other and not above, nor in a reciprocal relationship. He reminds us that we are as much a subject as the Other. As such, we can never reduce the Other by questioning the Other by the Same (by Me). The Other remains unknowable, never fully actualised, and outside of the Same's totality. Levinas' philosophy suggests that totality includes the totalising knowledge system of Western imperialism which by its nature contains 'implicit violence' and 'ontological imperialism'. He points out that as the 'I' in research, we have more responsibility than the Other and he asserts the ethical relationship with the Other. This realisation made an impression on me as I reflected on my completed research report and encouraged me to approach my thesis in a less traditional Western way.

the 'benevolent outsider' researcher (Spivak, 1988); the researcher who uses data from the Global South as another form of cultural imperialism in which the Global South provides resources for the Global North? This led me to consider ethics at the outset of the thesis as I queried how authentic this validation process was. Was it perhaps more about ticking the 'participant validation' box and easing my own researcher conscience? Leonard (2015b) expresses similar doubts in her reflections on her doctoral research. She also invited teachers from Ghana to offer input and feedback through an arranged meeting to ensure triangulation in her research. The success of the meetings was described as 'minimal', and Leonard refers to Holliday's (2010) explanation in that such triangulation can be regarded as Western or Northern-centric practice. This has led me to rethink and reframe how I validate my research in the thesis.

Throughout the interviews, I was also quietly aware of the binary referencing used in our speaking (of both Ghanaian and Scottish teachers) as we all slipped into the terminology of 'they/you' and 'we/us'. I appreciate that this was most likely done to make a distinction between schools. As indicated in my report, there were no overt references to colonial thinking. However, at the onset of my thesis, this created a point of concern around the ethics of ignoring the possibility that such thinking may have been present. While it may not be recorded in the formal research responses, it may be lurking in the background, in the informal and unrecorded settings. My concern was that carrying out a traditional comparative study was likely to reinforce binary and essentialist paradigms, rather than capturing the nuances of the relational/emotional aspects that my findings hint at, such as informal teacher relationships and emotions. My hunch is that our partnership is more complex than the research suggests and that the neat research framework was too restrictive. By its very nature, I wonder if the research outcomes were constrained within a framework of contingency, drawing out almost predictable responses and behaviours from the participant teachers – and me as researcher. Are the findings therefore wholly veridical, or veridical just in the context of the research report? Did the research process do the teachers, or the research, justice or did it contribute to maintaining a Eurocentric epistemology?

During the report writing process, I caught glimpses of forgotten stories and memories; relational conundra that clash with the spoken words recorded in

interviews... These glimpses and conundra were not addressed in the short practice-oriented report. Consequently, the satisfaction of having completed a research report was closely followed by a niggling desire to re-search the research, and me in it. I now recognise that there are different interpretations of what it means to be critical in GCE. As Pashby and Costa (2021) point out we need to be mindful of what status quo we are interrogating. Regarding being critical in GCE research, I would add that it is also important to be mindful of what status quo we are *not* interrogating… How much Western thinking am I assuming, rather than interrogating, regarding our ISP? I have therefore changed my methodological approach to allow me to explore what was not included/left out. De Sousa Santos (2018) describes such erasures as the 'sociology of absences'. In doing so, I hope that opportunities for the 'sociology of emergencies' will open up and transform thinking and knowledge.

Looking forwards

The purpose of this thesis is therefore to present a deeper exploration of our partnership. To do this, the study includes the recalling and retelling of the memories that I have been reminded of as I wrote both the CCGL report and this reflective chapter. The essences of the memories are recorded in a personal travel journal which has accompanied me on all my visits to Ghana. It is full of thick descriptions of my lived experiences (both professional and personal), observations, feelings, reflective thoughts and wonderings. I share extracts from my journal within the thesis and believe that this is apposite. Hence? there are undoubtedly hints of an autoethnographic nature within the research writing.[38]

I hope to explore the more nuanced aspects of our partnership: the conundra and narratives that lie under the surface. The memory stories lie beneath the surface of

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[38]Delamont (2009) describes autoethnography as being about things that matter to the researcher, and their feelings, as opposed to reflexive ethnography (where the researcher studies social settings and actors, other than themselves).

the CCGL report like messy and knotted roots. They are entwined and tangled – and rhizomatic in nature. They bother me because I recognise their juxtapositions; their points of encounter and points of conflict. But they have lain trapped beneath a formal and traditional research structure that favours univocal coherence over polyvocality (Cirell and Sweet, 2020). Honan and Bright (2016) quote Deleuze (1995) to remind us that one of the purposes of writing rhizomatically is to "bring things to life, to free life from where it's trapped" (p. 141). Accordingly, applying a critical rhizomatic lens to unearth and examine the memory stories is deemed apt. This research remains positioned within a postcolonial framework and also embraces a decolonial stance. Before moving on too quickly though, I feel it is important to take some time to consider the colonial roots of the phrases postcolonialism and decolonialism.

Introduction

'Sankofa' is a word from the Akan people in Ghana and derives from the aphorism 'Se wo were fin a wosan kofa a, yenkyi'. The literal translation of the word and the symbol(s) is "it is not taboo to fetch what is at risk of being left behind' or put more simply 'go back and retrieve'. The Sankofa symbol uses two images. One is shown as a mythical bird that has its head turned backwards, a valuable egg (the future) in its mouth and its legs firmly facing forward as it flies. The Other is a stylized heart. Together, the symbols represent wisdom, knowledge and the people's heritage. Both symbols reflect the Akan belief that the past serves as a guide for the future and that the wisdom learned from the past can be used to build future achievements. Effectively, 'sankofa' reminds us that every experience in life should leave you wiser than before, even if it was a bad experience. It highlights the Akan's quest for knowledge which is founded on critical reflection, intelligence and patience.

Martin and Griffiths (2012) remind us of the distinction between post-colonial and postcolonial; the former being the period of independence following colonial rule, and the latter being the critical lens through which to analyse colonialism. My understanding of postcolonialism, at this point, is a stance that challenges the inherent assumptions of modernity and the underlying Enlightenment principles based on Western worldviews. This chapter takes time to pause and reflect on the violence of (historical) Western assumptions. It takes time to turn our heads

backwards and recentre on Ghana's colonial history, before being swept along by the familiar academic words and phrases associated with the terms 'postcolonialism' and 'decolonialism'. The chapter opens with a poem to set the tone. I then reflect on my own experience of visiting slave trade castles in Ghana. Finally, I include an extract from my research journal which provides some insight into a growing awareness of my own Western way of seeing and knowing.

'The Old Sea Chain' by Joseph Coleman de Graft

(Joseph Coleman de Graft was a renowned Ghanaian writer, playwright, actor, poet and educator. He produced and directed plays for radio, stage and television.)

At the end of this slip-way,
Beyond the foaming breakers,
The old sailing ships used to rest
Preening their white wings in the breeze
As they waited for their cargo.

Look now, how the green sea-weed
Covers all the slip-way!

Now feel,
Feel with the sole of your infant feet
The fierce dragon rock beneath the silken weed,
Teeth-of-dragon rock stained red-brown
As with ancient blood –
Blood not all the waters of the sea can wash away.

Then look across the ocean;
Look beyond the breakers,
Far out beyond the curve
Of meeting sky and ocean,
And tell me what you see.

Nothing?

Yet in those ancestral days
There was a chain –
A chain of flesh and iron wrought;

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And it held beyond this slip-way,

Reaching out to sea

Far, far beyond the curve

Of meeting sky and ocean,

On to the other side of the Atlantic.

Reflecting on the colonial past

Bhabha's (1994) notion is that of a fixed idea of the 'Other' and that this can only be deconstructed through acknowledgement of, and reflection on, the colonial past. Growing up in Scotland, when I read the word 'colonialism', I tended to think of imperialism[39] and one nation ruling over another. Most often, I would have a picture in my mind of controlling, 'privileged' white men in uniform imposing their rules and way of life over a community of non-white people, with an air of supremacy. What I did not often think about are the former centuries of global slave trade that colonial rulers practised, which robbed millions of African people of their lives, their freedom, and their dignity. Between the 16th and 19th century, the transatlantic slave trade transported between ten and twelve million Africans across the Atlantic Ocean. The reality of Ghana's historical epoch of slavery became more real to me when I visited Cape Coast Castle and Elmina Castle.

For me, part of my own decolonisation process has involved reflecting on this violent past. The process has helped me to deconstruct not just the 'Other' but also the 'Self' and become my own personal 'sankofa' journey. It has helped me to reconcile the past and present and has strangely given me hope for the future too. The visit has continued to stay with me (and my husband) still, and I am glad that it haunts us. I feel it is important not to forget the ghosts of colonialism, but to acknowledge a shared history, which serves as a reminder of the capacity for human cruelty. Therefore, the violence of the slave trade should not be silenced. Nor should it be 'sanitised' (Bailey, 2005) by and for public memory, or swept under the carpet in

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[39]Pashby (2012) refers to the work of Said (1994) to help distinguish between colonialism and imperialism. The former is described as imposing settlements on a distant territory and the latter relates to the practice and attitudes of a dominant ruler over a distant territory.

'sanctioned ignorance' (Spivak, 1988). If we ignore the colonial past, then I fear we may ignore the existing inequalities and exploitation that have come out of that past, including the South/North binaries which remain present in many GCE discourses.

I visited two slave trade fortresses (see Appendix 5) with my husband, who joined me during my third summer in Ghana. Below is an extract based on my journal input that evening:

> What a sombre day. Such strong and magnificent whitewashed castles, set in such picturesque natural surroundings. Covering up centuries of violence and cruelty; human beings held captive and 'stored' upright in blood-stained, disease-ridden dungeons. No amount of whitewash will ever cover up what happened there.
>
> Derek dropped us off at Cape Coast Castle first and then took us out to Elmina Castle. Even the thumping highlife music could not drown out the guilty silence that Lindsay and I experienced on the drive to Elmina Castle and back to Cape Coast. We phoned Madam Precious when we got back to the motel and tried to explain our day and our wretched emotions. In typical Precious-style, she said that it was not the fault of the whites, that many Ghanaians were equally involved[40], and that we should not forget the good that has come out of such badness! I don't know if her gracious words have made us feel better or worse…
>
> Where to start? At Cape Coast Castle alone, around 30,000 slaves a year were forced through the 'door of no return', right up until 1814 when the Dutch slave trade was abolished. The numbers alone are appalling, but it's the human beings that the numbers represent, and the conditions that they existed in, that made me feel sick. Even before they had reached the castles, men, women and children might have walked for weeks and months tied, chained or yoked together. On arrival, the males and females were separated. The guide at Elmina Castle told us that the two dungeons held up 1,000

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[40]Several nations along the Gold Coast captured and traded slaves. When the Europeans arrived as colonisers, they became even more wealthy. Akan, Ashanti and Yoruba people were the main traders, without which the scale of the transatlantic slave trade would not have been possible.

males and 500 females at a time. I don't know how they fitted them in, they must have been crammed in. There was no space to lie down. Not that I imagine anyone would have wanted to. We were told that the dungeons were never cleaned and that over the centuries, and to this day, over half a metre of human waste, sweat, sickness, blood and bodies has been hardened into the ground. The only ventilation or light that came into the dungeons was through a few small holes in the ceiling and when the doors opened. Women (and men) were raped and beaten. If anyone tried to rebel against or resist their captors, they were put in the confinement cell which was small and pitch-black. The men there usually died of starvation. Those in command of the castles often selected African females to serve their sexual desires (and to become a different type of slave in their home continent) and a school was set up for the children this produced. If the woman refused, she was beaten and chained to a cannon ball in the courtyard in the heat. She either gave in to her fate or died there. The image that I think will haunt me the most is that of mothers banging their babies against the walls of the dungeon to put them out of their misery…

Men and women could spend up to three months 'living' in such inhumane conditions before being transported across the Atlantic in conditions that were no better. Above the dungeons were comfortable living quarters for the governor and officers. A stark contrast. And a chapel. Which I struggle to comprehend.[41]

(Reid, personal travel journal, July 2008.)

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[41]Throughout this thesis, I have continued to struggle with the part so-called Christianity has played in colonialism. The missionary work carried out in colonial times is often referred to as "the pious moralizing of the 'civilizing mission'" (Wright, 2012, p. 50) where Europeans have viewed the colonised as unfortunate souls to be educated and civilised (Jefferess, 2012). Bailey's (2005) rigorous research also includes missionaries who opposed the slave trade and paid ransoms for slave children. Of course, such actions open up more questions around colonialism, modernity and power… I also took some comfort in learning that a key element of West African indigenous religions is an openness to change and adaptation (p. 191). This is not to infer fickleness but rather an openness to new perspectives based on "a critical consciousness vis-à-vis inherited perspectives" (Santos, 2018). Many Africans fought to keep their own cultural identities in the Christian church. For example, having read the Bible for themselves (as opposed to the abridged versions that some colonisers were known to share!), they found no law against drumming (or dancing) and have incorporated this into worship through "their own understanding of the Christian experience" (Bailey, 2005, p. 216).

I should note that despite the horrific history, the film we watched in Elmina Castle was delivered with a promise of renewal and hope. Since that visit, I have often reflected on that day. I know that slave trading was/is nothing new to the world and I understand that this trading has been viewed differently in different times. What I think makes the experiences I share so awful are the appalling conditions, the degradation of people, and the length of time such conditions and treatment remained. What happened is part of a shared history and, if we are to move forward as a post or decolonialist, a nation or as humans, then we surely need to acknowledge and reflect on our past to move beyond it.

Retrieving colonialism to move forwards

O'Riley (2007) refers to the work of Hallward (2001) and cautions the returning to colonial memory sites as being:

> a singular project, one that establishes its own privileged, oft situated, and frequently mythical version of the Other that excludes those encounters that really affect our relationships with Others. (p. 12)

Similarly, Bhabha (1994) warns of society's compulsion to "turn the present into the 'post'" (p. 26). While I understand such concerns around a rather singular orientation to colonialism and the Other, our visit has made me think *more* relationally about the Other. Rather than being the ineffective and aesthetic haunting experience that O'Riley alludes to, my increased awareness has forced me to think of the Other not just in past terms, but also in present (and/or 'post') terms within our school partnership work. Reading about and reflecting on Ghana's colonial past, along with my reading from the previous section and reflections on prior research, has encouraged me to embrace not just postcolonial theory, but to also strive towards a more decolonial stance. Contrary to postcolonial theory as an academic practice that lacks political action (Gearon et al., 2021), I now recognise its potential ~~research~~: it can involve the individual looking outwards at a wider world that is inclusive and egalitarian, full of diversity and knowledges, rather than the individual bringing a world inward towards a (usually dominant) universal way of thinking or knowledge.

Specific to the field of ISPs, Martin and Griffiths (2012) speculate that taking a postcolonial epistemology stance that is situated, multiperspectival and relational, can provide alternative ways of understanding areas of intercultural partnership learning. Moreover, taking a decolonial[42] stance not only challenges the epistemological foundations of colonialism, but also strives to delink from Eurocentric knowledge and thinking. Reflecting on both my professional and personal experiences in this section has encouraged me to reconsider my original (Eurocentric) research aims and methodology.

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[42]Zavala (2016) describes decolonial methodologies in education in depth. He characterises the decolonial project as encompassing three major strategies to overcome the struggle for "an-other world beyond colonialism and capitalism" (p. 2) First, through deconstructing the traditional concept of modernity as an expression of Western rationality. Second, through *border thinking*, a re-envisioning from the margins which embodies the colonial matrix of power embedded in everyday lived experiences. Third, through re-envisioning and developing diverse knowledges that have previously been colonised and silenced.

Intermezzo 1: The abandoned boat

Blue sky above, soft morning sunshine on my shoulders and hearing the soothing sound of the ebb and flow of the sea, I feel a million miles away from the UK winter – and everyday life. Putting down my pen and research journal, I take a deep breath and lift my head. The holiday blurb had described our hotel accommodation as being set in a tranquil and pretty rural setting. Sipping my coffee, I have to agree that it certainly was. My eyes are drawn further down the peaceful coastline, and I see my husband and daughter waving to me and gesturing me to come join them. My 'quiet time' is up and so I pick up my bag, drain the last of my coffee and walk along the stony beach towards them.

They have been looking at an abandoned boat, just round the corner. It was clearly once an expensive boat, boasting speed, size and power. It now sits on the shore, broken and in bits. There are great chunks out of the body, holes punctuated along the side and a smaller lifeboat lying beside it, also in a state of ruin. An empty water carrier dangles on a piece of rope from the main boat and inside the smaller one lies a discarded sweatshirt and facemask.

"Why hasn't anyone removed them?" asks my husband, ever practical. "The owner must be really lazy just to leave it here."

It certainly looked as if it had been left derelict for a while, and to many tourists it probably did spoil their peaceful holiday view.

Later that day, we asked the barman about the boat. In broken English, he explained to us that the boat had arrived a few months ago. Carrying refugees from Syria. No-one knew who/where the owner was. No-one was claiming responsibility to remove it.

Blue sky above, the evening sunshine on my shoulders and hearing the soothing sound of the ebb and flow of the sea, I feel a million miles away from everyday life…

(Reid, personal research journal, October 2022.)

As I later reflected on the above incident, it brought home to me that the way we 'see' something is only ever our version of a truth. The 'knowledge' of the scene I enjoyed that morning fitted with the holiday blurb; a place of tranquillity and peace. I looked at the same coastline that evening, through the same eyes, but with a different 'knowledge' of it. Sitting with the new knowledge, I saw a place of desperation and sadness. It showed me that there is always more than one knowledge/way of seeing. It showed me that the knowledge of peace and violence can sit side by side, in the same space. But perhaps it is the knowledge we (choose?) to sit with that determines our actions – or inaction. Often the weeds of violence, that are never a million miles from us, are ignored/overlooked. No-one wants to take responsibility for them being there, or their removal. I wonder what happened to the people on the boat. Were they left abandoned like the boat – great chunks of their lives removed, punctuated by violence and in a state of ruin? Or were seeds of hope found in a new garden, a new home?

Andreotti and de Souza (2008) discuss how literature 'sees' the Global South. They refer to the terms of missionary, teacher, tourist and anthropologist to highlight how partner schools might be framed by teachers/schools in the Global North. The terms relate to Spivak's (1999) view that a colonial heritage frames Otherness in a way that 'subalternises' difference. More than ever, I am aware that I cannot ever really 'see' our partnership through the eyes of my Ghanaian colleagues, as was part of the original aim of the thesis. This was emphasised as I reflected on my own prior research in the last chapter. It aimed to gain some knowledge and understanding as to how our ISP is perceived/received in our partner school. The report is 'true', no lies have been told, but perhaps the landscape that is described has remained fixated on the traditional research viewpoint and not seen what lies on the fringes/round the corners/off the research path? Having completed my report, I was left remembering other knowledge, outside of the research process. As with the scene above, this knowledge altered the way I 'saw' (my) research.

My 'rainbow as theory' metaphor extends to how I now view knowledge. Just as there can be more than one rainbow, there can be more than one knowledge, or way of knowing. As with a rainbow, we can chase knowledge, yet never reach its end or find its beginning. A rainbow is really a full circle, but we only ever see its arc; it is only ever an optical illusion, a transient trick of the light. As such, we can never be sure that what

we 'see' is really there, or the complete picture. It is said that no two people see a rainbow in exactly the same way – each person has a different antisolar point and a different horizon. So, I strive to discover and consider partial truths, acknowledging that my view of the rainbow is from a Western gaze. As a Westerner, there is an element of accepting what is seen and thinking in a linear way. For example, I 'know'/'see' a rainbow as an arc. It is worth highlighting that other epistemologies think in more cyclical ways and may, for example, 'know'/'see' the rainbow in its full circle.

Spring

Frost-locked all the winter,
Seeds, and roots, and stones of fruits,
What shall make their sap ascend
That they may put forth shoots?
Tips of tender green,
Leaf, or blade, or sheath;
Telling of the hidden life
That breaks forth underneath,
Life nursed in its grave by Death.

(Christina Rossetti)

This short intermezzo section serves as an introduction to the subsequent methodology section. Below are extracts from my research journal which highlight my thinking/writing through the possibility of a narrative approach to research:

> I need to be mindful of linguistic devices /structures. I started writing this thesis in major writing but now feel it is apt to develop a more minor style. My memories (many of which are recorded in my travel journal) highlight aspects that the formal research process missed/didn't reach/didn't deem relevant. The formal research was aimed at the professional selves and fore-fronted my professional Self… The memories are more personal and are more about the personal sides of others, more relational. Perhaps sharing extracts from my research journal would be a way to share my messy, ever-changing thinking, my dilemmas and fears? If so, they also don't suit a vehicular representation, they are of a more Deleuzian vernacular nature. Can I then present both major and minor writing? Would this be part of following lines of flight 'that allow transgressive blurring of generic boundaries' (Honan, 2007)? It **feels** 'right' to include both, but is it right for a thesis? Or, would this be more navel-gazing and of no academic value? Would it confuse the reader or demonstrate my learning journey? Oh, the relentless boomerang thinking between worrying about what is worthy/fitting for the research and what fits and is worthy to the reader/Centre. Do other researchers worry about this stuff?!

(Personal research journal, Reid, November 2020.)

Several months later, my supervisor emailed me an article written by Ellis and Bochner (2000) who describe their views on the use of personal narrative in autoethnographic research:

> As they zoom backward and forward, inward and outward, distinctions between the personal and cultural become blurred, sometimes beyond distinct recognition. Usually written in first-person voice, autoethnographic texts appear in a variety of forms … In these texts, concrete action, dialogue,

emotion, embodiment, spirituality, and self-consciousness are featured, appearing as relational and institutional stories affected by history, social structure, and culture, which themselves are dialectically revealed through action, feeling, thought, and language (p. 739).

I recorded my reflections in my research journal:

This description of autoethnographic narrative appeals to me as a way to research deeper into our ISP because I strongly recognise my situatedness **in** the research. I may not label the final thesis as autoethnographic, but I imagine it will bear elements of an autoethnographic nature. As Ellis and Bochner hint at, reflexivity will play a vital role in addressing reliability/validity. I think my research is pulling me in the direction of a more personal narrative…

(Personal research journal, Reid, July 2021.)

Chapter Five: A narrative approach

Introduction

The Ghanaian adinkra symbol 'Mate Masie' represents four linked ears and translates as: *Deep wisdom comes out of listening and keeping what is heard.* The implied meaning of the phrase is 'I understand'. Understanding, in this sense, involves wisdom and knowledge, but it also represents the prudence of taking into consideration what another person has said. The symbol originates from story-telling sessions and ceremonial occasions, naming ceremonies for example. At such events moral and social values of the community and family would be reinforced. 'Mate Masie' reminds us of the importance of listening and communicating, especially in oral histories and cultures. Throughout the years of colonialism, the act of listening and keeping what was heard was crucial to preserving the history, culture and knowledges of African communities. This included the passing on of traditional stories.

Listening to and telling stories is something that has, and still is, enjoyed within many cultures. For centuries, stories have played a powerful and effective role in how we communicate with one another and with ourselves (Satchwell et al., 2020; Clandinin and Huber, 2010). This chapter explores the place of re-membering and retelling stories in/as research. It opens with a poem followed by an extract from my travel journal. The subsequent reflections explore using stories as/and writing-as-method.

An extract from A. Kayper Mensah's 'Nation Feeling'

Have you ever looked out up the night sky

At the moon eclipsed

In Africa, away from city lights,

And felt alone

Yet expanded in bright company

Holding in your very being

Stars, milky ways, Universes

In a sky you form

With other beings of your kind?

In this poem the Ghanaian poet, Mensah, writes about the unity among African people and people of African descent. This verse brought back memories of my own experience of a similar scene. While I understand that Mensah is referring to African people and people of African descent in the final line, I remember feeling that I was 'with other beings of your kind'. The moment may only have been fleeting, but it was strong and real to me. It may very well have only been experienced by me, and not by others towards/around me. But in the darkness, under the stars, colour was cloaked and, in that evening, I felt a sense of unity/togetherness.

The following text is based on a diary extract about that night under the African sky during my first visit to Ghana in 2006 (when mobile phones were just mobile phones and had no camera or mirror functions). Towards the end of my visit, the British director was also visiting the school and had organised a whole staff trip to the mountains in the Volta region. For many of the staff, this was the furthest they had travelled from their home village (around 235km). The extract serves not only as an example of a memory story but also as an illustration of the 'simple complexity' of a story; how a simple story can simultaneously present both the contradictions and connections that can be at play within one memory and illuminate 'moments of convergence', for example, oneness/otherness and togetherness/difference:

This beautiful mountain resort is run by Ghanaians – but serves European dishes, red wine and fresh coffee! It is not just the food and drink that remind me of my European-ness though, there is a mirror in the bathroom… I got such

a fright when I looked in it. Not so much my curly hair gone wild in the humidity, but my whiteness! Of course, I know I am white-skinned, and am reminded on a daily basis by the local children's chant of 'obroni', but it still caught me off guard…

Stomach full again, I sit around the campfire with the others. The air is like a warm blanket around me, and I feel cocooned in cosy contentment. We are high in the mountains of the Volta region. Night has temporarily pulled her curtains of darkness over the impressive mountain views. It is an intense darkness and, above, the sky is scattered with stars. I **feel** we are high up, remote, far from urban and village life. I take time to look around and soak up the moment… As the campfire has heated up, so has the party atmosphere. The loud syncopated sound of chorusing insects has been drowned out with the melodies of women singing. Harmonies begin and soon a djembe drum[43] is found. Elijah is quick to grab it and instantly begins playing a strong rhythmic beat which is rewarded with whoops, clapping and a crate being upturned and used as another drum. Sarah picks up the torowa[44] she bought earlier in the day at a roadside craft stall and rattles out a steady beat. The fire crackles, flames begin to spark like the fireflies and soon staff are on their feet, dancing and singing songs and hymns, some in English, but most in Twi. I smile and think "these Ghanaians can sing and dance for hours! We sang most of the four-hour journey here!".

I hadn't realised that for many of the school staff, this is the furthest they have travelled. On the way here, I spent a bit of time noting down the names and declarations on the shops, taxis and tro-tros that we were passing (Jesus Never Fails hair salon, With God all Things are Possible fast food, Pray without Ceasing coffins…). Further along the minibus bench I noticed one of the school labourers also writing in a notebook. Before showing him my filled pages, I asked what he was writing. He showed me a page that was filling up with tally marks, explaining that he was marking all the villages and towns that we were

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[43]A traditional Ghanaian hourglass-shaped drum, often made from the fast-growing wood of the Tweneboa tree, an African cedar. The drum skins are made from strong goat skin.

[44]A rattle made from hollowed out gourd with the seeds on the outside and tied in a net.

passing through. This was the furthest he had been from home, and he wanted to show his family how far we had travelled…

Towards the end of the evening, the mood changes. We are tired after the journey, the altitude, the food and general air of festivity. Through the flames I can make out the shadowy shapes of sleepy staff. Most are seated now, some with blankets and/or jackets over their shoulders, some heads resting on the shoulders of neighbouring friends. The choir of voices has been replaced by the occasional soft solo song and a general murmuring of voices. And then the stories begin…

(Personal travel journal, Ghana, Reid, July 2006.)

The power and pleasure of story-telling

Over the years I have learned many West African traditional tales. I have enjoyed hearing about the antics of Anansi the mischievous spider and the two crocodiles with one stomach. Like many traditional tales, they usually have a moral. Most of the tales are very old and steeped in cultural tradition. Time has not altered the essence of the stories, despite many of them being passed down through generations orally, rather than in written form. The sharing of traditional stories, often through a form of 'orature' (Santos, 2018), is something that humans have enjoyed and connected with throughout the ages and across cultures. The spoken word can be powerful and, arguably, more memorable than the written word. There is an innate aesthetic pleasure in sharing and listening to stories. A well-told story can capture our attention, paint a picture in our mind, evoke emotions and stimulate /interrupt our thinking. Indeed, I have found the reading of novels and poetry about Ghana's colonial past to be more powerful and moving than reading textbooks (see for example Gyasi's *Home going* (2017) or Aidoo's *No sweetness here* (1988). As Awoonor[45] (2014) points out, there is power in the words we use to tell a story:

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[45]Kofi Awoonor was a Ghanaian poet and author. He blended the poetic traditions of his native Ewe people with contemporary and religious symbolism to depict Africa during the early period of decolonisation.

> The magical and mysterious relationships defining only the very simple and the mundane have, beyond time and place, their anchorage in **words**. Our people say the mouth that eats salt[46] cannot utter falsehood. For the mouth is the source of sacred words, of oaths, promises, prayer, and assertions of our **being**, presence, affirmation. This is the source of my poetry, the origin of my commitment – the magic of the word in the true poetic sense. Its vitality, its energy, means living and life giving. (Awoonor, 2014, p. 294)

The assertions of our be-ing that Awoonor refers to are strongly experienced in relation to others and in remembering the past. A narrative approach to research acknowledges this and highlights the importance and power of words and how we use them. I also find writing-as-method/narrative research (such as Richardson, St. Pierre, Ellis and Bochner) engaging to read, perhaps because outside of my researcher Self, and as a parent and a primary teacher, I enjoy reading/hearing/telling a good story. I find a narrative approach brings both the research (and researcher) to life, adding the vitality and energy that Awoonor refers to.

Ganz (2008) summarises the power of stories well, stating that:

> In a story, a challenge presents itself to the protagonist who then has a choice, and an outcome occurs… but because the protagonist is a humanlike character, we are able to identify emphatically, and therefore we are able to feel, not just understand, what is going on. (p. 2)

Re-membering and re-telling memory stories

St. Pierre's description of writing as thinking, analysis and a method of discovery resonates with me (St. Pierre, 2005; Richardson and St. Pierre, 2005). Writing helps me work things out/think things through and I have kept journals since childhood. About twenty years ago, I began using a professional learning journal for reflective writing as part of my first postgraduate study to encourage reflective and experiential

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[46]In traditional Ghanaian christenings, the minister touches the baby's lips with a little salt and water to symbolise truthfulness.

learning (Moon, 2004). Before my first visit to our Ghanaian partner school, colleagues gave me a travel journal and I have recorded my experiences and thoughts in it over the seven summers I have visited. The journal writings are part of me and have, in turn, become part of my research journey. It should be pointed out though, that they were not written with research in mind and so are not traditional fieldnotes. However, I have selected and edited some of my travel journal extracts to create 'memory stories' (Honan, 2007): remembered stories that help me to describe the images, senses and feelings I have experienced. The memory stories, based on extracts from my travel journal, are presented as research material, method and thinking. They provide a 'thick' medium (Atkinson, 2012) that encapsulates natural and freer moments; where the characters (including me) are acting out of everyday environments, as opposed to performing 'research activities' under the formal/scrutinizing gaze of research/researcher. Because the memory stories are lifted from my travel journal, they are situated in a form of personal narrative; embodied stories that allow for the personal Self to be fore-grounded. I hope that by incorporating stories based on journal entries that were written at the time of the story, that the transformations of the lived experience may be reduced a little. The stories reflect personal relationships with Self and Others. Davies et al. (2004) discuss 're-membering' stories in reference to the construction and reconstruction of ourselves and Others within the act of remembering. Indeed, while journal extracts may be of a personal nature, the editing of them as research-writer will always be present. I am centrally involved in the research material, process and product and there is very much a ME in the MEmories!

Of course, working with memory stories is particularly subjective and memories are not necessarily fixed. They can be altered, both intentionally and unconsciously, by competing discourses, events and emotions. Bochner reinforces this viewpoint, asserting that "[s]tories show us that the meanings and significance of the past are incomplete, tentative and revisable according to contingencies of our present life circumstances, the present from which we narrate" (Ellis and Bochner, 2000, p. 745). Indeed, the rhizomatic path allows us to view the rhizome as an 'image of thought' (Deleuze and Guattari, [1987] 2004), and showcase 'illusions' (Sermijn et al. 2008) of (possible) true stories that are local and temporal. In a similar vein, I understand my re-telling of memories as being like taking a snapshot of a scene taken from a certain

angle, or through a certain lens, which creates one image of a real, lived moment. I am aware that through my re-telling of a memory, the same moment could have been captured from a different angle, or through a different lens, which would have altered the snapshot image a little. Someone else may have framed the same scene in a different way, throwing a different light on what was happening. Indeed, there are multiple realities within one singular lived event (Walford, 2009; Masny, 2013), and a multitude of possible stories could be constructed depending on the I/eye telling it, the language used and the discourses surrounding the story. Furthermore, there is no one way of reading the stories (Masny, 2014) and "no such thing as 'getting it right', only 'getting it' differently contoured and nuanced" (Richardson, 2005, p. 962). Stories can also be interpreted multiple ways (Ellis and Bochner, 2000) depending on each reader's (mis)interpretation, (mis)understanding and (mis)translation, which lie at the heart of narrative writing (Shindo, 2000). So, both the retelling and reading of memory stories reduces them to 'scrupulous and plausible misreadings' (Spivak, 1996). Nevertheless, they come from a personal travel journal, and while subjective and biased, they are also natural and 'un-staged'.

Having reflected on the power of words in story-telling and the subjectivity of re-telling memories, I now go on to highlight the importance of language in narrative research.

The influence of language in meaning-making

Rather than *re*presenting stories from a distance, I acknowledge the fact that I am rooted and present both in the stories and the writing of them. As discussed, a narrative research is temporal in that we are continually revising our autobiographies as we move through time (Clandinin and Huber, 2010). This, in turn, affects *how* I write about my memories, not just *what* I write about them, emphasising the link between language and meaning. Both the method and product of the research are part of a 'meaning-making' process (Ellis and Bochner, 2000). As such, the research text will always be entangled, and often masked, in language, politics and power (Cirell and Sweet, 2020). Writing is constructed and in context; our meaning-making is influenced by the culture, language, place and materials that we navigate from

(Perry, 2020). Therefore, language is not neutral/apolitical and never completely transparent. Even the selection of the memory stories is an un-neutral process. Alejandro (2020) notes that the language we use (both explicitly and implicitly), and the discourses we produce reflect our internalised socio-political order within the Self that we have internalised through socialisation. How I write about them will always be influenced tainted by my own internalised worldview – a partial view of (possible) realities and of (my) Self (Richardson, 2005, parenthesis added).

Like a musical composition, how a text is interpreted/experienced is coloured by the dynamics I emphasise in the manuscript, for example, where I choose to pause, apply crescendo and/or create dissonance. *How* I write has the capacity to provoke reflection, criticality, further dialogue… and create new connections. As the composer of my memory stories, I therefore hold an element of socio-political power and my selection of memories, words and language are a constitutive force in the meaning-making and influence a particular way of reading. Why am I re-telling this story? What is its usefulness – for me, the participants, the research and the reader? This reinforces the need for the discourses (and contexts) that shape the retelling of the memories to be brought to the surface and reflexively reflected on. It also stresses the importance of validity and verisimilitude which are discussed in more detail in the subsequent chapter.

Untamed memory stories and messy writing-as-method

The memory stories are nomadic in nature and do not synthesise into the temporal, linear and coherent characteristics of the traditional story structure. They include the 'monsters' of postmodern stories, or 'untamed stories', which includes nonlinear time, lacking a fixed central point and no clear cause and effect (Sermijn et al., 2008). I have tried to include, not ignore, the rawness, twists, and contradictions of the memory stories, as opposed to re-presenting them to fit a theory/framework. They thread in, around and through one another, as does my thinking and writing around them. As discussed above, each memory story portrays small and everyday lived experiences, presenting one of many possible context-bound *re*-presentations. As

each small story is embedded in a wider discourse context, the stories simultaneously play a part in revealing wider professional and socio-political stories.

In addition to temporality, Clandinin and Huber (2010) remind us that sociality and place are further dimensions which create a conceptual framework in a narrative context, and that attending to such dimensions allows us to study relational aspects of people's lived experiences[47]. The sociality dimension includes personal conditions (feelings and reactions) and social conditions (cultural and relational) which I reflect on through my memory stories. The personal narrative writing style of the memory stories is purposely descriptive, refers to the senses, evokes emotion and strives to invite the reader to share my lived experiences – and to reflect on their own. The memory stories are written in both past and present tense. I use the present tense to evoke remembered embodied moments which I hope encourages the reader to imagine what I remember feeling/seeing/hearing at that time. I hope that sharing experiences through memory stories/narrative will make the reader feel and think more deeply. Place is also recognised as being inextricably linked to our experiences and identities, and not all the memory stories I share take place in the Ghanaian school. This has been done intentionally to allow for more than just teacher identities/selves to be present(ed), allowing also the more complex personal selves to be exposed and explored.

I apply a minor, narrative style of writing to the memory stories. Deleuze and Guattari (1988) discuss minor literature as a process that interrupts the expectations of more traditional major literature; its point being less about making clear, structured conclusions and more about expressing intensities, struggles and thoughts.[48] In my opinion, describing and presenting the memory stories as 'data', through the more traditional vehicular language of academic writing, would distort the memories beyond recognition. Using a minor literature approach permits me to 'express myself in full' (Honan and Bright, 2016), and allows for the real and naturalness, the mess

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[47]I would argue that all qualitative research is influenced by the aforementioned dimensions and as such, is only ever 'temporary renderings' (Sermijn et al., 2008) and partial perspectives. For example, the interview responses within my CCGL report can be viewed as temporary in that they are context-bound and, I believe, influenced by our positionalities within the process.

[48]Bogue (1997 cited in Honan and Bright, 2016) proposes 'minor writing' as a more useful term, which places a greater emphasis on the power of structural linguistics.

and confusion, of the lived experiences to shine through. I also share my intensities, struggles and thoughts through extracts from my research journal which remain in their original becoming-minor tone. In line with Deleuzian thinking, Lecercle (2002) points out that writing in a more minor tone allows for a blurring of non-fixed identities. Indeed, I write from the often blurred/dual positions of the doctoral student/researcher, the teacher/colleague, the Other, the friend and/or the personal 'just me'. This is discussed further in the following chapter.

Applying writing-as-method therefore feels a natural and viable way to explore my lived experiences within our ISP. Writing-as-method is a post-structural approach that recognises the power of language and its links with subjectivity, social organisation and power (Richardson and St. Pierre, 2005). It acknowledges that, as researchers, we can only ever claim partial and local knowledges. In using (my) writing-as-method, I do not ignore human subjectivity. Rather, I bring it to the surface and share my tussle with it: I share extracts from personal travel and research journals, critically reflect on my memory stories and write/think reflexively. My writing is a method of thinking and I write my way through my thinking. Sometimes my writing/thinking is reflective, sometimes it is critical and sometimes it is analytical. But my thinking process is not categorised into linear paths of reflection, criticality and analysis. It is messy, spiral, full of questions, doubts and moments of clarity. Throughout this research writing journey, my thinking has changed. To me, writing-as-method allows me to share all this, both my struggles and growth, which I hope adds to the study's verisimilitude.

Unfinished stories

So, I share stories of harmony/unity and stories of discord/rupture within our partnership. I once again acknowledge that it is from the perspective of the Western teacher(s), a monocultural perspective. Despite writing from/composing a dominant Western score, I leave the score open and unfinished. I invite a more contrapuntal perspective, through sharing the memories with the reader. As in music, different instruments, musicians and melodies within the same piece of music can work together and create rich and complimentary sounds. The memory stories may be

viewed as the melodic themes, but they are open to contrapuntal melodies. A reader who is familiar with aspects of the field being explored may be compared to a musician who is familiar with the genre of music and is able to add their own experience to enhance the music. This may be through lines of harmony, a fusion of style, a dissonant chord or a well-placed rest/pause. In keeping with the musical metaphor, the finished thesis ends on a sustained chord rather than a resolved one. A sustained chord can hold an element of tension and hints that there is more to come… that it is unfinished. The thesis itself is merely a small section of a much larger composition. If the manuscript has been written well, it should create some "l'affect" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988/2021); stimulating emotions, thinking and imagined (and hopeful) futures.

To conclude, I believe that we all lead storied lives, and a narrative research approach allows me to enquire into experiences as stories. It recognises that the stories are part of ongoing and non-linear experiences and that the retelling of them will be influenced by differences in perception of realities, knowledges, relationships between experience and context, and relationships between researcher and participants (Clandinin and Huber, 2010). It is hard to alter, or break away, from our storied lives. To do so requires questions/an interruption of underlying assumptions, time to critically think, and a conscious decision to change/become transformed. I hope that the subsequent memory stories will provide some post-modern provocation which prize open "spaces of possibility for troubling and challenging colonised meanings" (Swanson, 2007, p. 54).

As with any good story, I write them not to tell the reader what to think, but rather to bring to the surface the relational conundra we/I have experienced and to invite the reader to recognise, and reflexively contemplate, the wonderful and complex messiness of a school partnership; to reflect on your own experiences that the stories evoke. I do not intend my writing voice to be authoritative, but rather one that invites other voices and further dialogue: an invocation for further stories and thinking.

"The purpose of a storyteller is not to tell you how to think, but to give you questions to think upon. Too often we forget that."

(Brandon Sandeson from 'The Way of Kings')

Chapter Six: Reflections and refractions of lived experiences

Introduction

'Mmere Dane' translates as 'time changes'. It represents the temporariness of any situation and the transient nature of our lived moments. The 'Mmere Dane' symbol, and the essence of its meaning, reminds me of a transient rainbow. Our eyes may see seven colours, but a rainbow is made up of over one million colours. Likewise, humans are complex, transient and ever-changing beings, reflecting different selves at different times, depending on socio-environmental factors such as where we are and who we are with. Rainbows are the temporary result of water refracting and reflecting a ray of light. Light is retracted, reflected and retracted again, producing a spectrum of colours from different angles. Memories, and our retelling of them, could be viewed in the same way (or light!). As we relive memories, they may become slightly altered, like light being refracted as it enters a water droplet. In a rainbow, the multitude of colours blur and merge with one another, rather like the blurring and shifting of impressions/memories and selves. The environment and conditions change the intensity of the rainbow and we each 'see' it differently depending on where we are positioned when we look at it. How we remember memories is also influenced by our positioning as we remember, and I have strived to be mindful of my own positionality and identity in the re-membering and re-writing of each memory story.

Building on this metaphor of 'theory as a rainbow', the colour through which we see each story depends on the light thrown at it, emphasising the need for reflexivity. Reflexivity has involved reflecting and refracting my thinking/writing within and about the memory stories, and with the relationships at work, including my own relationship with the memory. Lastly, a rainbow is really a sphere, but we only see an arc from the

ground. This reminds me that each memory story is only ever partial. As such, they cannot be generalised.

This chapter refers to prior work from my EdD journey, which contemplated the professional Self, alongside extracts from my research journal. I reflect on the notion of multiple selves in the research context. I then consider the importance and place of reflexivity and ethics, before discussing rigour, validity and the place of emotions within narrative research.

Multiple selves and their positionality in the research

My understanding is that the age-old philosophical contemplations over 'me, myself and I' play a crucial role in qualitative research, probably even more so when applying a narrative approach. Throughout the EdD programme, the notion of multiple selves and identity has always interested me. Reflecting on its place within this thesis, I was prompted to read over my professional practice dissertation around teacher professionalism. The following excerpt from it demonstrates my own grapple with my different selves/identities. It highlights how my thinking has shifted over my EdD journey and how I now embrace the multiplicity of selves and recognise the power of contradiction as a place of growth:

> Within philosophy and anthropology, much has been written about multiple selves and identities. Similarly, research indicates that professional identity is multifaceted; a plurality or split, sub-identities where teachers can take on different identities depending on the social setting (Beijaard et al., 2003; Berger and Lê Van, 2019; Sachs, 2001; Stronach et al., 2002; Vogt, 2002). Aware of the 'inherent tensions' (Forde et al., 2006) of being a teacher, I am beginning to recognise that it is in the struggles and dilemmas, through the contradictions and in the in-between times that I can gain a bit more character and grow in my professional identity. I often feel like I am wearing too many hats and can associate with Roberts (2000) description of the multiple selves at work being the personal, professional and institutional. I rather like the notion of 'inner diversity' (Stronach et al., 2002); an identity which allows for the differences, movements and particularities of being a professional. With this in mind, perhaps it is time for me to acknowledge and integrate an emerging researcher identity. Viewing my roles as 'dual', rather than 'split', could help to contribute to a shared sense making across the profession. I take heart from Schön's (1983) encouraging view of practitioner and researcher roles being able to coexist and intertwine. Perhaps I can embrace being both the governor and the governed and use this awareness as a power to search for the truths within my profession! (Reid, 2019, p. 21.)

Reading this back several years later stimulated further reflection on my selves and the selves of others in my research. I used my research journal to record my thoughts:

> I think my thinking is quite rhizomatic in that it does change direction a lot and often gets tangled – and is why I use a journal at times, to help me 'un-tangle' stuff! I know I am easily influenced by what I read/am told/have experienced. I therefore need to be aware/mindful of my own contradictions and write my contradictory (and incoherent) selves into the text… and make my embodied experiences and their effects on me, and my writing, visible… We now live in such a fast-changing world and with many more influences bombarding us than in the past – images, adverts, social media… Others in the research will be living contradictions too; multiple selves, frequently changing our minds, continually being socially constructed…. lively aspects. We are be-ing**,** we embody the and… and… and…

> Like the research itself, which is beginning to include both traditional research and less traditional re-searching, I think there is room to allow for our multiple selves, for the professional and personal Self and multiple positionalities. Most?Social science is not a positivist science and/because it allows for the complex fluctuation, multiplicity and adaptability of human beings. And researchers are human beings, not robotic thinking machines programmed to think through only one lens. So, we need to make space for, and bring to the fore, our multiple positionalities and selves; not just within ourselves but also with the reader, so that the reader too (a fellow thinker) can consider both the positionality of the researcher and their positionality as reader. Surely, our positionalities, as writers and readers, impacts not just the research being read, but also the future research that it contributes to?

> Both those in the research writing and the researcher become part of the rhizome and part of the (re)construction process. But we are not fixed, rather we are in a constant state of both 'becoming' and 'being'. The 'interviewed Self' may have responded differently in a different context or on a different day or with a different interviewer. The 'interviewed Self' will also be different to the son/daughter/mother/friend/visitor and this must influence how we speak,

behave and even think?[49] I need to try and make all this visible – capture the contradictions – and trace the struggles and dilemmas, the 'stumbling spaces of selves' (my own term), or ruptures, as I suspect these are the spaces where growth and transformation can happen… And not just the growth/transformation of 'Self', but also the development/transformation of the research. Is this then the purpose and power of reflexivity? And does reflexivity apply to both my relations with the research process itself and my relations with me, as well as those in my memory stories? I think it does!

(Personal research journal, Reid, March 2020.)

My thinking reflects the postmodern notion of a heterogeneous Self that is multivoiced (heteroglossic), proleptic, discontinuous, fluid and fragmented/not something fixed (Ko and Bal, 2019; St. Pierre, 2005; Guba and Lincoln, 2005). Throughout the writing process, I have been aware of the multiple selves/identities and positionalities within me, to-ing and fro-ing between the researcher, the researched, the (Western) teacher and the friend. Reading over my writing has been like looking through a mirror and I see the ever-present positionalities and selves as transient be-ings. They are entangled in both methodology and theory, and act as a "form of analysis in and of itself" (Rose, 2020 cited in Folkes, 2022, p. 2). Recognising that my positionality impacts the research, the researched and me as researcher (Folkes, 2022), my understanding remains that this need not be viewed as a 'problem'. While it may disturb the more linear modernist approach to identity (Honan, 2007), my experience is that the social and the literal cannot be divided (Barthes, 1986 cited in Davies et al., 2004). I have experience of being both an insider and an outsider (both Self and Other?) within our partnership and the research. The positionalities are nuanced; they interweave and merge with one another rather than being two separate/binary/dualistic identities.

Multiple selves are present in the research process, but they are all part of the same 'me': I am a teacher, an insider-researcher, an English-speaking female, a Christian, mature in age(!), a family friend. I am also the 'privileged' Other; the visiting 'obruni'

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[49]More recently, Jackson (2023) coined the term 'rhizovocality', positing that "voice can be understood as an inauthentic, unstable, and a continually emerging phenomena which can never be fully pinned down by a research text or encounter" (cited in Facca and Kinsella, 2023, p. 1535).

(white person) – 'Western' in physical appearance, thinking and culture – who holds the British Council money and, as such, is most likely perceived as holding a lot of power within our ISP. in addition, I recognise my embeddedness as a teacher researcher who encounters multiple viewpoints and experiences each day via pupils, parents, colleagues, family and friends (Clarke and Parsons, 2013). As such, I am located within multiple discourses and communities, both personally and professionally, as are the participants in my research. Rather than trying to eradicate or ignore the multiple selves, I instead strive to be aware of their presence and use the intentional awareness to challenge my (biased) thinking, examine power (relations) and reduce *some* ethnocentrism. I make a conscious effort to ask myself (and share) which Self (or selves, as even as I write, I may become 'plurivocal') is/are acting out/dominant as I remember, interact with, and write about my memory stories. I also acknowledge my complicity within a Western academy and commit to seeking out which privileged position is being fore-fronted within different contexts. Such 'vigorous self-awareness' (Lather, 1986) of position and power reflects aspects of Spivak's (1999) challenge to 'unlearn privilege' so that we can '(un)learn to learn', which requires reflection and reflexivity.

Reflexivity

Reflexivity, sometimes referred to as critical subjectivity, draws on post-structuralist[50] thought which suggests that being aware of our positioning/location at the time of writing is important and that this should be shared with the reader to allow their knowing and telling to be transparent (Lincoln, 1995). It is an active, ongoing process and Guillemin and Gillam (2004) remind us of Bourdieu's suggestion of continually taking two steps back; first to observe the subject, and second to reflect on the observation itself. Others describe this reflexive gaze as a 'bending back' on Self to look more deeply at Self-Other relations (Ellis and Bochner, 2000) or "turning language back on itself to see the work it does in constituting the world" (Davies et al., 2004, p. 36). While there is no clear consensus of an exact definition of

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[50] I note that it is not just the purview of post-structuralism and that reflexivity is common to a number of research genres, for example, arts-based, post-qualitative or post-critical research.

reflexivity, my own understanding is summed up well by Alejandro (2020) who defines it as "the practice of making conscious and explicit our practices, beliefs and dispositions" (p. 3). This has resulted in a lot of messy 'thought-writing' (my own term) in the form of a research journal, and re-writing. In a sense, the texts act as a form of self-reflexivity, as they magnify ethical and moral choices/behaviours/thinking within myself, and in relation to Others. Accordingly, I recognise the role reflexivity can play in establishing rigour, which I discuss at the end of this chapter.

Of course, self-reflexivity has its limits. Accepting this, I have tried to step back to view the 'framings of reality' (Denzin, 1997), and myself in them, from a dialectical 'helicopter vision', particularly within the memory stories. But the recalling and retelling of memories is subjective, and not necessarily veridical. As Derrida (1994) posits, the subject will always be an effect of subjectivity to some extent. I am professionally and emotionally attached to the partnership I am researching, and the people in it. The reflexive tone of writing is therefore more confessional than realist (Darawsheh, 2014). Because the memory stories evoke personal emotions (and Western rationalities), I have found it impossible to keep the moral (and colonial/imperial?) I/eye out of the retelling of stories. As discussed in the previous chapter, I also acknowledge that my words and I are part of a subjectification process, and that we create a constitutive force. This leads me to consider further ethical aspects of the research.

Ethics

As a researcher, I have an ethical responsibility towards the research and the people in it. In many ways, this thesis has felt like an ethical quest to understand our ISP, and the relations within it, more deeply. The relational and narrative aspects of a rhizomatic approach present ethical considerations that differ from more traditional research. Traditional ethical principles tend to regard research participants as data sources which can be limiting within a more narrative context. Writing personal narrative texts in/as research involves writing from an ethic of care and concern (Denzin, 1997; Ellis and Bochner, 2000). The substrate of my ethical concerns has been that the research participants within the narratives are friends who trust me. To

create some anonymity, I have changed the names, and sometimes the gender, of the people within the memory stories, but the school is recognisable, and the teachers will undoubtedly recognise one another in the stories and discussions. Thankfully though, they are quite happy to be recognised and acknowledge. Ethical concerns sit around my positionalities within relationships, particularly the shift from friend and colleague to researcher. I imagine this ethical tension exists in other forms of qualitative research methodology, for example when carrying out interviews, but is writing about my professional and personal memories through a researcher lens an abuse of friendship/power? This thought became an 'ethically important moment' (Guillemin and Gillam, 2004) to me and led to further ethical decisions in the writing of each memory story. Should I include it? Will sharing it cause any damage to those in it? Then, does the discussion surrounding it shed my colleagues in a 'bad' light? Am I making sweeping assumptions about the words, thoughts and actions of others? Furthermore, reading around post and decolonialism has highlighted my Western 'way of seeing' (Swanson, 2007) which is also an ethical concern. Smythe and Murray (2000) refer to similar concerns within the narrative research field and highlight the interlinked issues of 'narrative ownership' and the 'multiplicity of narrative meaning'.

Spivak (1999) discusses the importance of establishing ethical relations with the Other through critical 'negotiation from within', where one engages in a persistent critique of the dominant discourses and representations one inhabits. Throughout the memory stories, I emphasise that the re-membering and reflections are only my perceptions, or 'standpoint judgements' (Lincoln, 1995p?) and I do not claim to have a 'God's-eye view' (Amad, 2012p?). I have also shared my writing with the teachers in the stories and invited them to talk back to it. I tried this twice via email but only the British director responded. There are many possible reasons as to why my Ghanaian colleagues did not respond to the email, but I do not know the reason. I would still like to hear their views and will hopefully do so when I next visit. The fact that the thesis will have been submitted by then does not matter – the rhizomatic roots of the research will continue to grow. Another way of alleviating my ethical concerns has been to write reflexively, and to present my stories as stimuli, as opposed to truth claims or a master narrative. And as discussed in the previous chapter, there is no one correct way to tell or interpret a story. This research is open

to the acceptance of multiple interpretations of reality and contributes a more realistic approach to social research, as opposed to applying paradigmatic and nomothetic understandings.

Rigour, validity and the place of emotions

Due to the nature of the thesis, I have sought to consider evaluative criterion that are relevant and fit for purpose. Below are extracts from my research journal which illustrate some of my thinking as I grappled with issues around rigour and validity:

> Ellis and Bochner (2000) comment on the tradition of earlier academic writing that stresses a third-person narrative. They assert that such writing values abstract and categorical knowledge and is suspicious of a direct testimony of personal narrative written in the first-person voice. Indeed, Walford (2009), among other academics, questions the rigour and validity of autoethnography, particularly in relation to the use of stories and personal narrative in research. Walford argues against a writerly approach to research, where an emotional reader response is encouraged to be written in/become part of the research story. He claims that research reports should take a readerly approach, where multiple meanings and ambiguity are reduced, and where precise claims are exhibited. He goes on to state that telling stories lacks factual evidence (rigour), and that the knowledge the reader takes from such writing is not predictable because it is not a fixed form of knowledge. But is there ever really such a thing as 'fixed knowledge', particularly in the field of social science? My reading and becoming-researcher-thinking suggest that knowledge is fluid and that there are multiple knowledges to consider…

Walford's (2009) article really made me think about the place of emotions in research:

> And can I, do I want to, keep emotions out of my writing? We humans are complex, relational and emotional beings… never really static… We experience emotions, as do our research participants, and our emotions impact on others because we are relational beings. While the emotional

domain of research has traditionally remained unnoticed and/or taken-for-granted, there is increasing recognition of the role emotions play in shaping action and reaction in the social world. Coffey (1999) acknowledges that research is "personal, emotional and identity work" (cited in Folkes, 2022, p. 2). As a teacher who has undertaken and tutored on professional enquiry, my experience is that emotions, thinking and research are interconnected. This correlates with the work of McLaughlin (2003), who highlights the emotional and cognitive processes involved in research and describes the polarisation between reason and emotion as 'unhelpful'. The emotional aspects of research are increasingly acknowledged as being 'rich sources of creativity' (Bondi, 2012) and even "an essential part of the living texture of the research process" (Weeks, 2009, p. 6). Regarding academic rigour, Darder (2018) suggests that this need not be just a cognitive or abstract process, but that it could involve and evoke physical, emotional and spiritual activity, particularly regarding more decolonial research methodologies. So, while I do not aspire to intentionally manipulate the emotions of readers of research, I do believe there is power in reflexively sharing stories *and* emotions. Often, it is when emotions are stirred that action follows, even if that action is of a reflective/critical nature. And surely this plays a crucial part in the role of research? Is it not critical reflection that drives thinking/research forward, stimulates creativity, opens up dialogue, promotes understanding – and ultimately creates change?

This led me to consider how I might ensure validity within a narrative research approach:

But how do I ensure validity? Is the purpose of validity to ensure truths are being presented by the researcher? If so, then as a narrative writer, how can I ensure that I am writing my truths as truthfully as I can? Each memory story is partial and effected by my present situation as I look back to the past. I will use my travel journal (written in the past) and/but could add 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973) in the present? Would sharing my representation of events with someone who was with me create some reliability? Or would that muddy my own memory? Perhaps the purpose of a narrative researcher is slightly different to that of a more traditional/positivist researcher in that we aim not to

present fixed truths and knowledges, but to "encourage compassion and promote dialogue" (Ellis and Bochner, 2000, p. 748).

I have questioned whether the findings of my CCGL report were wholly veridical, or veridical just in the context of the traditional research report. Scheurich (1997) refers to traditional research validity as being something 'cooked' so to become visible and knowable. This makes me think of me, as researcher, being like a cook and following a recipe for validity. Following a recipe may well work – if I want to replicate a known dish. But what if the cook is creative with the ingredients and moves away from the traditional recipe? In keeping with Scheurich's cooking metaphor, a narrative research approach warns against making causal links/assumptions and so does not follow a set recipe with pre-selected and measured ingredients to create a pre-planned dish. A narrative approach has the freedom to select their own ingredients and to create multiple, polyvocal dishes of their own – without a recipe! How will the onlooker know if it still a 'good'/authentic dish though? Perhaps this is where/why reflexivity and writing-as-method need to be folded in and constantly worked at, like kneading bread.

As I read, write and think I find myself increasingly questioning how validity/reliability can be achieved. I want to avoid the fuzziness around validity that Lather (1986) observes. But a rhizomatic narrative and its epistemological foundation differs from the traditional social science approach, so a traditional method of validation, such as triangulation, is not necessarily apposite. What criteria are applicable and relevant within a narrative research study? Is a set of fixed criterion really relevant or should it be something broader/more flexible? The material and contexts within my research are unique to the daily reality/lived experiences of the researcher, participants – and reader…

Poststructuralist research practice does not produce validity, but rather innovation (Davies et al., 2004). Would it then be more appropriate and meaningful to use alternative and/or emerging criterion/terms such as 'apparency' (easy to understand?) or 'verisimilitude' (the appearance of being real or true) or 'authenticity' (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990) which resonates

with Lincoln and Guba's (1986) foundational work? Or should I discuss and reflect on Leavy's[51] (2016) criteria: 'it could have happened' instead of 'validity'; 'aesthetics' rather than 'rigor'; 'resonance' as opposed to 'trustworthiness'; 'verisimilitude' in relation to 'authenticity' and 'author's personal signature' rather than 'reflexivity'? Ellis and Bochner (2000) apply verisimilitude as an alternative means of validity. Verisimilitude focuses on evoking readers to feel that the experiences described are real/believable through our detailed descriptions of them. They propose questions around trustworthiness, significance and validity, such as: What are the consequences my story produces? Does it convey a sense of emotional reliability?... I hope that my narratives resonate with the reader, perhaps through a similar experience, and/or that the writing creates a 'naturalistic generalisation' (Stake, 1994 cited in Ellis and Bochner, 2000) where the reader experiences the events shared vicariously.

(Personal research journal, Reid, April 2020.)

In response to my own questions and thinking, it felt right to go down the postmodern route. Postmodernism disrupts authorised knowledge, distrusts truth claims and accepts the situational limitations of the 'knower' (Richardson and St. Pierre, 2005; Ellis and Bochner, 2000; Swanson, 2007). All knowledge(s) is/are partial and incomplete, temporary, constructed through contexts, cultures and experiences (Anastasiadou et al., 2021; Andreotti, 2006; Clandinin and Huber, 2010). The memory stories are not attempts to mirror facts. It is not my intention to arrive at final truths and, as such, the thesis itself will never be entirely 'complete' or capture the 'true' story. Instead, I present an exploration of 'temporary renderings' (Sermijn et al., 2008) and partial perspectives. As Bochner (2000) points out, the question within narrative research writing is not about how accurately the stories reflect my past. Rather, narrative research writing focuses on the consequences the stories may produce and the uses they can be put to.

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[51]Satchwell et al. (2020) used collaborative story-making in their research with young people who are disabled, care-experienced and disadvantaged. Rather than using traditional qualitative research criterion, they referred to Leavy's (2016) criterion.

Reflecting on validity, I found myself identifying with Richardson's (2005) notion of 'crystallisation', which deconstructs the rigid traditional notion of validity. Richardson describes how a crystal can grow, change, and be altered while reflecting externalities and refracting within themselves. A crystal is a prism that casts off an array of colours and light in different directions. In keeping with the rainbow metaphor, there is no one right way of viewing a crystal, but rather a multitude of ways. How we see it depends on our position, or 'angle of repose' (Richardson and St. Pierre, 2005), and the positioning of the light. As a social science researcher, I have the responsibility to continuously and reflexively reflect on my positioning – and the language I use to describe what I 'see' – as a means to ensure validity and rigour. Richardson (2005) goes on to share four of the criteria she uses to measure more creative analytical practices (CAP): substantive contribution, aesthetic merit, reflexivity and impact. I apply the criteria to this thesis and hope that the research will be considered rigorous, transparent, and faithful. Echoing the essence of Richardson's 'crystallisation', Odelle, the narrator voice in the novel 'The Muse' contemplates:

> but is there ever such a thing as a whole story, or an artist's triumph, a right way to look through the glass? It all depends where the light falls (p. 438).

Chapter Seven: A rhizomatic narrative
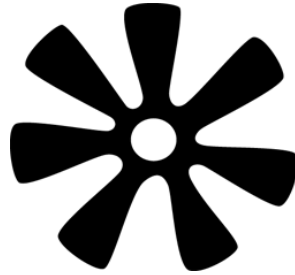
Introduction

Ananse, the spider, is a well-known character in West African stories. 'Ananse Ntontan' symbolises wisdom, creativity and the complexities of life. The web-like symbol reminds me of the complexity of social science research and the multiplicity of threads that run through and across it. It also reminds me of the nuanced differences within ourselves… as researchers, participants and human beings… and our relations with others. Like the spider weaving his web, we are constantly moving, changing and becoming, all the time interweaving with and influencing/creating a bigger picture.

In this chapter, I share the reasons for adopting a rhizomatic narrative approach before providing an overview of the figure of the rhizome. I then justify my veering off the traditional rhizomatic path to take a more critically reflective and analytical route. Finally, I give a brief overview of the memory stories and introduce the concept of 'Movements' as a way of presenting the stories and reflections.

Why a rhizomatic narrative?

Pre-pandemic I had assumed a traditional auto-ethnographic approach involving more interviews and participatory activities with teachers in Scotland and Ghana. However, my reflections in *Chapter Three: Raking out the assumptions of prior research*, left me questioning if I had merely rebuilt the (colonial) master's house using the master's tools? (Lorde, 1984) And if so, perhaps different and more critical (research) tools should be considered for my thesis. The realisation that I would not be able to travel to Ghana, alongside the niggles I was left with on completing my CCGL report, forced me to re-examine my methodology and methods. Rather than go down the line of viewing the challenges of researching amidst a pandemic through a deficit lens, I chose to embrace the opportunity to research more creatively.

Rethinking the 'how' of the research forced me to think more deeply about the purpose of the research, the 'why'. As discussed in chapter three, the 'why' of the research was tangled up in feelings of incompleteness around my prior research report. While I do not doubt the validity of the positive outcomes from it, I was still left with fragmented memories and ambivalent emotions all gnawing away at me. We tick the boxes of what makes a 'good' partnership and are portrayed as one within ISP circles (see Appendix 2), but what do we *really* think/understand and feel about it? Is it a mutual partnership about 'us', or a binary one about 'you and us'? Are there hidden discourses at play? The journal I have kept of my (seven) visits is full of meandering thoughts and I have experienced a range of emotions over the years regarding our ISP. I imagine that all the teachers involved, in Ghana and Scotland, will also have experienced a range of thoughts and emotions. What are they? Are they similar to mine? In this thesis, I wish to explore, and perhaps challenge, any homogenizing assumptions about our 'successful' ISP. This may disrupt the successful narrative that is portrayed in social media about our ISP, but I do not envisage that it will be harmful to it. My intent is not to destroy our partnership or bring harm to those in it. It is to unearth some of its unseen roots, with a view to making our partnership stronger/better in ways I do not yet know.

Rethinking the 'why' of my research led me to read more around post and decolonialism. This helped me to understand how a tradition of 'enlightened' Western thinking has dominated modern knowledge systems, including many in the Global South (Gearon et al., 2021; Pillay and Karsgaard, 2022; Fúnez-Flores, 2022). Indeed, research around ISPs is often commissioned by Northern agencies and reflects Western hegemony (Leonard, 2012; Edge et al., 2012). Again, I acknowledge that my research, and me, are part of the Western knowledge system and academy. However, it would be foolish to discard Western knowledge and research completely. In reference to the questions posed above, I cannot speak from a Ghanaian perspective, and recognise the danger I face of containing difference and reducing my writing to us-and-them. Nevertheless, I still felt it was important to attempt to consider our multiplicities and differences. Further rethinking around the 'how' of my research led me to consider a more rhizomatic approach. Rhizomatic research is founded on the work of Deleuze and Guattari. It is not unusual in the academic world, but it is also not driven by inherent Western academia. So, while my prior research followed a more arborescent methodology, this study reflects a more rhizomatic nature. This is not to infer that one approach is more correct than the other: they can exist alongside one another and need not be viewed as a dualism. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) describe arborescent and rhizomatic approaches: "the first operates as a transcendent model and tracing, even if it engenders its own escapes; the second operates as an immanent process that overturns the model and outlines a map" (p. 2).

A rhizomatic narrative methodology and intent

Applying a rhizomatic narrative approach has allowed me to unfold and critically examine a map full of memories, niggles and conundra. I write my way through parts of the messy map, sharing my lived experiences through memory stories. There are no research questions to bind me to a linear path, and I follow my own lines of flight through critical and reflexive narratives. Sometimes the memory stories lead to lines of flight around power and social justice, other times they relate to deeper and more

personal assumptions about the Self and/or the Other. Ultimately, all the lines of flight are not finished/still moving and interconnected.

Throughout the critical thinking-writing process, I cannot help but become analytical in my reflections, although the analysis is only ever from a personal and particular viewpoint. As discussed in chapter five, taking a narrative approach and applying 'writing-as-method' has enabled the rhizomatic thinking/writing to be part of the research process as both material and analysis/synthesis (O'Grady, 2018), much like ethnography. Unlike ethnography though, my intent is not to render 'a theory of cultural behaviour' (Wolcott 1987), nor to 'use' experiences to make the familiar strange. Rhizomatic thinking is more concerned with haecceity: it views differences as a source of generative power to transform thinking, as opposed to deviations from normalcy (Ko and Bal, 2019), or theory. My intent is to bring our particular differences to the surface.

The study contains post-qualitative elements. It incorporates assemblages of travel and research journals, memories and reflections/observations, poetry and prior academic study. Post-qualitative works attempt to deterritorialise research and 'deparochialise the research imagination' (Appadurai, 2000). Indeed, using the figure of the rhizome to conceptualise my research has allowed for a disruption of traditional patterns. It has given me permission to let go of the notion that the aim of the research is to find answers or solutions, to questions and create a tidy conclusion or provide universal social generalisations. Rather than being restricted by pre-planned questions and following a highly structured paradigm of linear thinking, I have been able to let the process lead me. A rhizomatic approach moves us away from more orthodox analytical methods and allows the complexities, multiplicities and diversities to be made more visible. I have been free to explore the interrelated, non-generic and nuanced stories of our partnership which have been sitting in my mind like tangled rhizome roots. Indeed, exploring our ISP through a less traditional (but not new) rhizomatic approach has allowed me to examine the tangled roots more critically, revealing knowledges and understandings that may have otherwise been missed, or even dis-missed. The rhizome is a conjunction – and… and… and… which has allowed me to follow 'lines of flight', both connected and disconnected strands, dominant narratives and the in-between 'intermezzo' moments (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987).

Rhizomatic thinking takes a poststructuralist view; it acknowledges that there are no fixed answers and accepts the ambiguous. Like the shifting emotions/perceptions discussed in the previous chapter, it supports an ever-shifting multiplicity of knowledge that is multifaceted. As also discussed in the previous chapter, rhizomatic thinking brings to the surface perceptions and possible truths and realities that are socially constructed, and always changing. It recognises that we can never fully 'know' anything (or indeed anyone?) and, in a sense, emphasise a need to *un*learn and relearn. This realisation moved me from seeking more (fixed) knowledge, to becoming more open to multiple knowledges and understandings. Rhizomatic research is 'becoming' research that embraces the process over the product, and movement over stoppage (Honan and Bright, 2016). Problems are viewed as asignifying with becoming (Masny, 2015) rather than things that need fixed. Reflexivity and critical reflection therefore play an integral role in the research. As researcher, I am part of my writing and constantly 'becoming' alongside it; a proleptic becoming, where neither the research nor the researcher is static (Ko and Bal, 2019). I reflect not only on the research, but also my place in it. Thinking and writing rhizomatically has therefore developed a critical post-structuralist orientation to the research as I "[write] my way through the epistemological and ontological territory" (O'Grady, 2018) of it.

Proponents of rhizomatic research focus on percept and affect through presenting 'raw tellings' (Masny, 2014) of stories, its function being machinic and subject decentred. There is no place for representation or interpretation as both involve making judgements. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) posit that the most radical interpretation is 'an eminently significant silence' (p. 114). However, Deleuze and Guattari also acknowledge that a rhizomatic approach is not a method and that there is not one fixed way of doing it. I am therefore heartened by academics who assert an experimental encounter with Deleuze and Guattari: Facca and Kinsella's (2023) work on rhizo-ethics considers how a rhizomatic approach to research might reconfigure research ethic hierarchies, building on earlier rhizomatic research; Masny (2014) develops a rhizoanalysis approach to disrupt ethnographic research; Honan (2007) applies rhizomatic thought as a tool to analyse policy documents in

education, for example. Murris and Bozalek (2019) adopt a diffractive[52] way of reading Deleuze which encourages traversing boundaries and merging approaches in a relational and response-able way, rather than comparing one with another in a binary fashion. Each innovative adoption of the rhizome contributes to the ongoing critical discourse regarding the potentialities of the rhizome and introduces a minor, non-hierarchical and non-linear philosophy of educational research.

Encouraged, I experiment with Deleuzian thinking and choose to both present my memory stories *and* reflect on them. I understand this may be read as interpretive, even judgmental, and could be viewed as veering off the rhizomatic path. But even within the 'tellings' of memory stories, there will naturally be an element of interpretosis and representation. I am entangled in the research memory stories and therefore view the research from a 'plane of immanence' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). I am present in the world, not separate from it. As mentioned in *Chapter Six: Reflections and refractions of lived experiences*, I am not a machine but a feeling, critical and political being/Self – who can represent herself. I am with the Other and am the Other. I cannot decentre myself, nor would I find that natural/useful. Re-telling memories creates affect and is interpretive even as I write. As previously discussed, as researcher, and as a participant in the research, I select the language/words used and create the 'mood' of the text based on my experience in it. Due to my positionality in the research itself (as both researcher and researched) and through applying 'writing-as-method', there are interpretive moments as I try to make meaning out of my experiences. Indeed, as Barad (2007) states: "writing is not a unidirectional practice of creation that flows from author to page, but rather the practice of writing is an iterative and mutually constitutive working out and reworking of 'book' and 'author'" (cited in Murris and Bozalek, 2019). Does not then all writing create percept and affect?

While I can appreciate that leaving 'an eminently significant silence' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987) after the memory stories may well create percept and affect, remaining silent feels inappropriate/unfinished/unnatural. I want/need to critically reflect on them and find myself seeking out the dissonances. Critical reflection

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[52]Barad (2014) defines diffraction as breaking apart in different directions' (cited in Murris and Bozalek, 2019, p. 879).

enables me to examine hidden and complex discourses entangled in the stories, for example power and conscience, and bring them to the surface. Braidotti (2018) articulates and defines my own experience of critical thinking when she describes it as thinking that "slows down the accelerationist trend of proliferating discourses by drawing cartographies of the power relations operational in and immanent to the production and circulation of knowledge" (p. 2). Critical reflection also offers me a more affective[53] way of being in and with the research. As such, my writing becomes analytical, and I let the process lead me… There are elements of a post-critical nature as I think-write to explicate (im)plausible (im)possibilities. So, I share my critical reflections as analysis, understanding that knowledge is shared and situated (Semetsky, 2004) and emphasising that these are merely my thoughts unfolding. With and/or without my "scrupulous and plausible misreadings" (Spivak, 1988p), multiple other perceptions and connections can still be (mis)read and considered, by me as researcher or by the reader. But I still highlight my own, some of which may go unnoticed/un-noted otherwise. I encourage the reader to critically engage with my memory stories and reflections in a 'response-able' way and to be 'becoming-with' (Murris and Bozalek, 2019) me, the author, even/especially if that means following new lines of flight. I am interested in the multiplicity of the effects of the research as opposed to the 'originary' and 'correct meanings' (St Pierre, 2001). The aim of this study is about exposing sameness, difference, ruptures and aporias within our ISP to evoke more rhizomatic thinking and stimulate potential new knowledges and understandings in the field. A narrative approach is textured by particularity and incompleteness (Clandinin and Huber, 2010). The final section of the thesis should therefore not be read as an ending (of the research); it springs as a new rhizome, may be viewed as an 'open conclusion', and serves as a selection of potential entry points for the reader to connect with.

Richardson (2005) compares her narrative research writing (as a method of enquiry) to Zeno's arrow, in that it will never reach a destination. Similarly, I again find myself thinking of a rainbow; it has no real beginning or end. Poststructuralist thinking expresses the Self as a verb, always in process, rather than a static noun (Davies et

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[53] Drawing on the work of Deleuze and Guatarri (1988), Clarke and Parsons (2013) describe 'l'affectation' as being the state when the affected body and an affecting body meet. Rhizomatic research seeks to expose such intensities through letting go of controlled research and allowing the research project to lead the researcher.

al., 2004). In the same sense, the rhizome is not final (to be) but about becoming (in relationship with Others). A rainbow appears to move as we move, rather like rhizomatic research; it is always becoming and moving and never final. And…and…and… as readers and writers, we too are ever-shifting in our thinking, sometimes not even noticing our movement – and as such, we too are never fixed/definite colours, but blurred ones. Exposing this rootlike ongoing process of being and becoming, as opposed to tight and static binary thinking, is arguably more likely to open new perspectives and 'hopeful pathways' (Clarke and Parsons, 2013). Indeed, I hope that the more provocative methodological approach opens up dialogues and spaces for future inquiries and actions that go beyond mere Western knowledge/thinking.

Within the context of our ISP, taking a rhizomatic approach has encouraged me to critically examine some of the taken for granted and already defined aspects (Duncan and Eaton, 2013) and to consider new/other potential becomings. Like a rhizome, I believe our school partnership is strong enough to survive a 'teasing out' and a closer look at what might be going on beneath its surface, as opposed to more arborescent modes of viewing. A rhizome continues to adapt and grow against the odds, and produce shoots, and I hope to find elements of this transformative strength and energy through the research process.

Introducing three rhizomatic 'Movements'

One of my supervisors suggested that I note down the lived experiences of our school partnership that have niggled away at me. Many of the moments I recorded were fragments of memories/events that had evoked emotional resonances, and most of them I had already written about in a travel journal. I found the writing process to be a cathartic experience and it became clear to me that many of the memories were at the root of the ethical/relational conundra I was experiencing, and that they needed to become part of the research. Many of the memories related to issues around mutuality, reciprocity and equality which play a key role in the development of ethical ISP relationships (Wyness and Martin, 2013; Leonard, 2012; Ager, 2022). I therefore share some of my memories through a personal and storied

narrative, to create images of my lived experiences and to evoke a response. I then share *my* meaning-making thinking around them through my own lines of flight.

Similar to the work of O'Grady (2018) and in keeping with the references to musical terms within rhizomatic research, I present three 'Movements'[54] in the following section. Within the Movements, I orchestrate my 'memory stories' (Honan, 2007) and my thinking within/around them. After a brief introduction, each Movement opens with one or more memory stories based on a journal extract (an entry point), followed by short rhizomatic discussions (lines of flight). The discussions reflect my thinking and often follow more nomadic paths as they interrelate to/with other memories and observations. The rhizomatic nature of the narratives within and across the Movements allow me to reflect on the complexity and conundra within our ISP: the places that more traditional research often misses due to its limitations and 'modern-colonial' imaginaries (Pashby et al., 2020).

The *first Movement* picks up trails around the complex flow of multiplicity in identity, through four shorter memory stories. Our contradictory selves are taken into consideration through the rhizomatic thinking/writing process, mainly the professional and personal selves, and the in-between-ness of being-becoming-knowing. The *second Movement* focuses on one memory story which takes the writer and reader down a more personal path. It illuminates moments of convergence and leads me to contemplate the potential of informal and non-performative spaces in encouraging/creating 'moments of sharedness'. The *third Movement* also follows lines of flight that stem from one longer memory story; a quiet rupture in our partnership which leads me to reconsider the distribution of power, voice and knowledges within our ISP. The rhizomatic nature of the writing process is dialectic; throughout the three Movements the discourses are not linear as they merge, connect and cross one another.

Despite my initial self-belief of having a non-colonial mindset, the process behind the written presentation of stories has involved a deeper (and uncomfortable) examination of my *own* underlying assumptions – and shifts in thinking. My background reading has altered the way I read my past diary extracts and I now

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[54]Using the term 'Movement' also reflects the non-static nature and knowledges of the memory stories as rhizomes, a concept I discuss more fully in chapter five.

hear/see the whispers of my own Western assumptions. This has impacted on my re-writing, and so the stories as they stand now reflect some "turning language back on itself" (Davies et al., 2004). Such realisations emphasise that stories, memories and Self are never static, fully 'true' or complete, but are constantly being shaped by the discourse context and the gaze of the Other (Sermijn, 2008) – the Other being me, the writer – and you, the reader. Acknowledging this, I intentionally leave an unwritten page at the end of each Movement as a reflective space for the reader; a place to pause and consider further/other lines of flight and nomadic paths… to ask questions… to note memories of your own… and… and… I hope that this encourages the research to move/grow after it is written/read and, in doing so, contributes to the development of more equitable and ethical ISPs.

What is commonly called a weed.
(Jeremy Gadd)

"What is commonly called a weed
has pushed, wriggled and writhed
through a fissure in the concrete pavement,
seeking sunshine, photosynthesis, survival.
The tendril is weak, fragile, vulnerable,
its very being tenuous but, that stem
extruding from where its seed was blown,
accidently washed or lodged,
proclaims nature will one day reclaim its own.
Its roots will create cracks that, in turn,
will receive other migrant seeds or spores.
Organisms that will grow and expand,
crumbling the concrete around it into sand."

Chapter Eight: Movement A - Acting out (of) the African stereotype.

Introduction

The 'epa' symbol represents a set of handcuffs. Handcuffs were introduced in Ghana through the slave trade/colonial rule and they were adopted by some African communities who chose to preserve and enforce the rule of law. This symbol therefore symbolises slavery, captivity and law. It also conversely symbolises justice and a rejection of slavery. Similarly, the stories within this Movement reflect a tension between justice and essentialism. As the title suggests, the stories within this Movement have been selected because of their implication that stereotypical and colonial undertones may be at play within our ISP. Echoes of colonial power lurk in the shadows of the stories, hinting at (often unacknowledged) inequalities and assumptions.

The stories highlight the multiplicity of identity, mainly the professional and personal selves which, like 'epa', can be paradoxically intertwined. Similarly, I observe how both the affected and affecting bodies appear to simultaneously overlap and interact. Drawing on the works of Deleuze and Guatarri (1988), Clarke and Parsons (2013) describe **'l'affectation'** as being the state when the affected body and an affecting body meet. In my writing though, I make no distinction between the affected and affecting bodies as I perceive them as blurred/dual identities. My own lived experience is feeling/being both affected and affecting within the same 'story'.

Part of the motivation to undertake this research has come about through my frustration at how our ISP is portrayed by the media. While it is complimentary to be presented as a 'successful' partnership, I have at times experienced some annoyance at how journalists select, change and/or re-arrange my words and

emphasis. I understand that the purpose of the reports is usually to promote an ISP programme. But what aspects of ISPs are being fore-fronted and who benefits from the stories? Rarely are the voices of the teachers we are in partnership with included. However, the opening story within this Movement features Ghanaian journalists writing about our partnership from a Ghanaian perspective. It is based on an extract from my travel journal at the beginning of my second visit to our Ghanaian partner school. The journalists heard my voice and the voices of Ghanaian teachers. But did they (want to) listen? On reflection, I think this was the start of me becoming… becoming more critical. Questioning not just our own South-North school partnership, but also the conflicting interrelationships that lie behind the words and pictures of the static/posed 'success stories', our relationships in ~~with a shared~~ history, one another – and ourselves. I also reflect on the effect of my own selection and arrangement of words…

This Movement is made up of four short stories, which I perceive as being connected/co-joined in roots of stereotypical thinking, including my own. Following the opening story is another journal extract which recalls a social studies lesson in Ghana. Story three is based on a memory of a discussion between me and three visiting teachers from Ghana in 2019. In its first draft, this Movement included only three stories, but as I wrote and reflected on them, I began to question my own (hidden) assumptions. This led to another memory of an assembly with our very first visiting Ghanaian teachers – the then head teacher and depute. Including it in this Movement seems apt and allows me to explore why it has stayed with me.

Story 1: The newspaper men

It is morning playtime in our Ghanaian partner school. The two men from the nearby big town are dressed in suits and their camera, dictaphone and notepads seem to dominate the headteacher's brightly table-clothed desk. Their presence makes the small office feel even smaller, and hotter, than usual. Through the open shutters I can hear the rhythmic claps and sing-song voices of children playing ampé. The smiling face of one brave little boy pokes through the shutter and he waves at us before being shoo-ed away by the adults.

This scene takes place early on in our school partnership. A local newspaper has been invited to attend a special welcome assembly. Afterwards, the reporter is keen for his photographer to take a photo for the report. They ask what we have brought with us to give to the school – computers, PE equipment or boxes of books? I explain that our partnership is an equal and reciprocal one based on education, not charity, so I have not brought such items. I sense that my response is not going down well with the reporter, and I will forever remember the look he gives me – to me, it is a mix of disbelief and disdain – and it is the first time that I have felt like 'the white stranger' (Swanson, 2009). He certainly looks at me as if I am strange. I suddenly feel uncertain of my role, from my own point of view and through the eyes of the reporter. I figuratively step back from the interview, not sure how I feel – feelings of injustice (for me, my Ghanaian colleagues or all of us?) and at the same time not wanting to offend/get things wrong. The Ghanaian school leadership team step in.

I sit on the couch, eyes now fixed on the chequered pattern of the linoleum-covered floor. I sip my water quietly, chewing around the corners of the plastic water bag. The Ghanaian headteacher and depute sit at the table, on white plastic seats, and reiterate that our partnership is about education. Still though, both men (the reporter and photographer) don't appear to understand / accept (or want to understand / accept) what is being said. The voices grow louder and slip into Twi. I am on the outside, the foreigner… After ten or fifteen

minutes of lively exchange, we are instructed to stage a photo of me giving the Ghanaian staff and pupils some sports equipment that the school already have! I don't know whether to laugh or cry at the absurdity of the scene.

(Personal travel journal, Reid, July 2007.)

In this opening story, while it was the reporters, rather than the school, who were choosing to promote essentialist viewpoints and perpetuate global inequalities, the situation reinforces Bourn's (2014) observations that moving away from a charity mentality of ISPs is a complex one. He suggests that the starting point is possibly being at the point of realisation and understanding of the complexities. This was such a moment. I had not anticipated resistance to what I assumed was 'good' and 'forward' thinking. Nor had I considered that reinforcing essentialism (as I saw it) might sell newspapers. The situation left me feeling a mix of emotions, but I did initially feel quite righteous and indignant that I/'we' (the Ghanaian teachers and me) was /were 'in the right' and that the newspaper men were 'wrong' to present something that was false/untrue – and so full of stereotypical assumptions about 'the West'. While I felt justified (at the time) in my reasons for not giving the school PE equipment or computers, the incident has niggled at me, and I only now begin to question my reasons. Here I was, the 'benevolent outsider' (Spivak, 1988); the white female educationalist from the West; the key player in accessing the partnership funding, so holding much power – and bringing nothing of material value or use!

So why did I not give resources to the school? As discussed in Section 1 of the thesis, there are criterion to fulfil, to obtain ISP funding and our funding body at the time of the opening story was DFID. DFID advised that school partnerships should not be charity-based, to avoid fostering stereotypes and creating a power imbalance (See DFID, 2011 - Global learning, not charity),[55] and this was emphasised at related professional learning courses. I understood that funding from North to South could create dependency (Andreotti, 2007; Martin, 2007) and enthusiastically (and unquestioningly) embraced the 'good' intention of developing thinking (of teachers,

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[55]I should point out that DFID did not forbid fundraising and in the same document, the importance of shared planning and implementation of fundraising for a school is discussed. Indeed, we have fundraised for our partner school on several occasions. Also, the funding did allow for the purchase of resources that would benefit our curricular project work, such as digital cameras.

parents and pupils) beyond a charity mentality towards one that focuses on (shared) educational aims.[56] I had also shared my reasoning with teachers in our partner school. Looking back, I do not remember asking for their opinions. Nor did they question mine... Looking back, I now realise that simply stating 'the (Western) rules' changes nothing. Indeed, it could well have reproduced the dominating voice of Western knowledge/rule and intensified essentialist thinking.[57]

Reading over the original diary entry, and even the first draft of its adaptation, I can hear whispers of my own Western assumptions in the words of the texts. This realisation surprised me because, for as long as I can remember, I have considered myself to be open-minded and of a post/non/decolonial mindset. Through my reading, I can now associate with Andreotti's (2007) 'sanctioned ignorance', where I was guilty of not considering the subtler colonial discourses which may have been at play. Was the fact I had not taken resources across with me an example of (unintentional?) Global North/neo-colonial dominance; an indirect violence that quietly shouted 'West knows best' about how to ensure a 'successful' partnership? Who was I to announce that 'good' school partnerships should not involve charity? Was my talk of educational equality heard as a colonial voice, the 'dominant knower of the Global North' (Mitova, 2023), rubbing salt into a 'colonial wound' (Novo, 2018)? And were the Ghanaian teachers really convinced of what they were arguing for, or were their arguments being perceived as an example of complicity in maintaining a Global North/colonial dominance through imposed Western notions and knowledges? Even now, I still have no answers to these questions – there may have been all/none/some of these things going on, consciously or subconsciously. Years have passed, but it is only now that I consider that the reason the memory remains imprinted on my brain is because I may have been wrong… or at least, not completely 'in the right'. Maybe it was *me* who had not been listening… Looking

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[56]In 2008, Andreotti (cited in Martin and Griffiths, 2012) claimed that UK policy documents reflected a liberal multiculturalist approach to culture, where difference is depoliticised, and poverty is looked at only in economic terms. Perhaps the decision to 'overlook' material inequality was part of this outlook. Certainly, at the time of the incident, critical/political literacy did not feature explicitly in the Scottish primary curriculum. The curriculum has since developed and, at the time of writing, resources were available in Scotland to develop critical literacy in the lead up to COP26. Having already learned about Climate Change, my own class have used several resources to learn about critical literacy, including digital literacy, and climate justice.

[57]Researching around indigenous social welfare practices in Namibia, Brown et al. (2023) discuss the dark side of 'aiding', when Westerners assume what help/aid is needed in African countries and ignore and harm traditional ways of thinking and doing.

back, I can now see why the newspaper men in the opening story may have reacted in such a strong manner – a clash of l'affectation where the reporters and I are both being 'affected' and being 'affecting'.

Moreover, what the journalists portray in their report and photographs affects the readers of the newspaper. In the introduction to this Movement, I ask what might be promoted and assumed with regards to ISPs through the media, and who benefits from the stories. My own experience is that journalists have changed my words to put a certain spin on a story. Interestingly, it is usually an essentialist spin – much like the newspaper reporters who feature above. But am I any different to the newspaper reporters? What effect ~~affect~~ are *my* words creating – and who benefits from *my* re-telling of stories? In many ways, I too am writing my own 'single story' (Adichie, 2020), selecting words that carry with them a particular way of reading and evoking a response from the reader.

The following story was recorded in my travel journal during my third visit to Ghana, so at a time when our ISP was fairly well established. It records a lesson I taught alongside a Ghanaian P5 teacher, Mr Peter.

Story 2: Stereotypical (mis)understandings?

> Today I team-taught with Mr Peter again. We were teaching a civics lesson on good citizenship behaviours, based on a textbook activity. One of the answers offered was to help the poor and needy. A discussion opened up around ways in which we can do this e.g. helping our neighbours, church outreach and community care programmes. I started to talk about some of the charities we have in Scotland and mentioned homelessness. The children were amazed to learn that there are homeless people in the UK and had lots of questions for me! We then had a long discussion about the (shared) causes of homelessness and poverty e.g. unemployment, drugs, alcohol, abuse… Afterwards, Mr Peter said that he had also been surprised that such things are an issue in Scotland too. He explained that the perception of the UK is one of prosperity, where buildings, roads and schools are all in good order. The idea of poor and

homeless people living in the UK was not something he had ever considered. Why is this? Maybe it's partly because all the UK reading books in school portray a very middle class (and 1960s!) way of British life.

(Personal travel journal, Reid, July 2014)

The lesson described occurred after several years of our schools working together on curricular projects. Eleven teachers from the Ghanaian school had visited Scotland. I remember feeling surprised at the reaction of the pupils and the teacher because I really believed, at that time, that we had eradicated any stereotypes in both our schools… I now see that this was rather naïve/overly optimistic. Although there are newer and Ghanaian-published books, many of the library books have been donated from UK schools and are old-fashioned, depicting a stereotypical middle class British lifestyle that bears no resemblance to life in modern Ghana (or modern UK). I wonder about a child in the school reading such books – what thoughts are formed about the UK? And how do my interactions affect their thinking?

Reflecting on this story, alongside the opening story, I am left wondering how the pupils (and teacher) imagine the majority of UK pupils (and adults) view Ghanaian society… More specifically, how do the majority of Ghanaian people living in Ghana see themselves through the eyes of the Other? The story that follows speaks back to some of these questions. It recounts the memory of a discussion with some Ghanaian teachers during their most recent visit to Scotland, after almost two decades of our schools working together. I include this memory story because I found Stephen's thinking so completely at odds with what I thought I knew about him.

Story 3: Because we are from Africa

The teachers from Ghana have been shopping for gifts to take back to the staff in their school. We have also visited several phone shops, in pursuit of a more up-to-date mobile phone for Stephen. Having shopped for a few hours, we stop for a coffee at a cafe in a shopping centre. Once the many layers of jackets, hats and scarves have been removed (it is after all spring in

Scotland!), the teacher discuss their purchases and check that they have bought something for everyone. We sip our teas and coffees, and the conversation naturally turns to returning home to Ghana. While chatting, I ask the teachers if their experience of Scotland is what they expected. Stephen replies no, he had expected people and shops to stop and give him things for free. There is a short silence as I take in this unexpected response. Then, before I can stop myself, I find myself asking why he would think that. And he answers "because we are from Africa…"

This leads to an interesting discussion around his cultural 'translation' of the situation (Carter, 2004). My friend struggles a bit to put his preconceived perceptions, and reasons for them, into words. There is, however, an openness and willingness to meta-reflect on this (mis)conception, and our little group discusses, reflects and negotiates this socially, culturally and historically framed knowledge (sociocultural learning). I talk about how there are many different nationalities living in Scotland, including Ghanaians, and that they do not get things for free. We speak about stereotypes and how they can perpetuate global inequalities and create essentialist understandings about the world. I listen as one of Stephen's Ghanaian colleagues, who has visited the UK several times, shares with him some of the challenging social issues that exist in Scotland too – poverty, homelessness and addiction. Some of the 'frozen narrative' appears to melt and my interpretation of what I observe is Stephen experiencing several shifts of identity – of himself in relation to the cultural experience – and of others. Throughout the discussion I think I register surprise, disappointment, acceptance and a negotiated new 'social construction of Self' (Brock et al., 2006 cited in Martin, 2007).

(Personal research journal, Reid, March 2019.)

This memory has stuck with (affected?) me because I was so surprised by it. Stephen is the teacher who, in interviews for my CCGL report, had given no indication of essentialist understandings. Had I assumed there were none, based on our professional interactions? This exchange was outwith an educational context though, so a more personal Self/identity was foregrounded… And/or is the incident about power? Did Stephen assume a form of power and take on the identity of 'poor

African' to try and obtain a phone? Is the 'poor African' a projection of how he thinks the Other views him?[58]

Even as I read back my recount of this discussion, I catch myself making assumptions as to what Stephen may have been feeling/experiencing, and thereby reducing him through my own (Western) assumptions. While Stephen's response could be interpreted as supporting Alcock's (2010) assertations that the colonial legacy can affect the teachers in the Global South's worldviews of the Global North (cited in Bourn, 2014), it should not be assumed. Building on Alcock's remarks, I would also add here that the colonial legacy can affect the worldviews of teachers in the Global North on the Global South too. Over the years, I have observed similar shifts among visiting teachers from Scotland when they are in Ghana, particularly those new to the school and the partnership: surprise on arriving at a modern airport, surprise at the choice and large amounts of food, surprise (and delight) at the running hot water. This is despite teachers having been on courses, seen photographs and been involved in partnership work communication. Like Stephen, some teachers from Scotland have struggled to put their reasoning into words. Could this also be due to the personal-Self-thinking being interrupted and personal assumptions and stereotypical thinking being brought to the surface when outwith a school/educational setting? A process of personal unlearning?

Within the stories shared so far, my initial focus was on the words and actions of my Ghanaian colleagues. Writing and reflecting on the memories has made me look more closely at my own words and actions within the same contexts. Despite my claims of post and decolonial thinking, are there moments when my own words and actions speak otherwise? The following memory, alongside the memory story shared in the introduction of section one, has stayed with me because of the strong feelings I experienced – predominantly feelings of embarrassment. Both memories highlight my own deep-rooted assumptions. Furthermore, this final memory suggests possible

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[58]Interestingly, Andreotti (2006) asks similar questions in her PhD dissertation while reflecting on an award-winning UK-Ghana school link visit. While reflecting on a different scenario, she too asserts an uncertainty as to whether Ghanaian teachers were intentionally performing an essentialist role – or if they were unintentionally *"trapped within ontologies or epistemologies that construct them as lacking and inferior"* (p. 140 cited in Gallwey and Wilgus, 2014).

stereotypical notions among some pupils, regardless of having shared my own (non-essentialist?) experiences of Ghana.

Story 4: Welcome assembly (Scotland)

The Ghanaian teachers have arrived at last and the excitement in the air is palpable! The pupils file quietly into the hall, class by class, occasionally peeping up at Mr Elijah and Mr James who are smiling and seated beside the head teacher at the front. I introduce our special visitors to the pupils, and they are greeted with an enthusiastic 'good morning'. Once the head teacher has spoken some words of welcome, I ask the children if they have any questions for our guests. We have all learned a lot about Ghana since my own trip last summer. An older pupil asks about their favourite food. In a stereotypically British fashion, another asks about the weather in Ghana. Then, one of the younger pupils asks:

"How many bedrooms do you have in your house?"

Mr James answers first – one. Mr Elijah remains silent. What feels like several minutes pass, and I begin to feel slightly anxious. Have we offended him? Why are the children asking about bedrooms? Do they see our guests as 'poor Africans'? They have seen photos of the homes we visited! Just as I am about to say something, anything, to break the (awkward?) silence, Mr Elijah speaks:

"I can't quite remember. I think it is about eleven. But it may be twelve or thirteen?"

I sigh in relief. And the children let out a gasp of astonishment!

(Personal journal, Reid, June 2006.)

I remember the strong feeling of discomfort in the silence referred to above. Looking back, I wonder why it felt so awkward. Were underlying stereotypical assumptions being pushed to the surface? Or was it from a desire not to embarrass/offend our visitors? I like to think it was the latter… In the past, I think I have been so keen to demonstrate my belief that we are all equal, in that no person is better than another person, that I have quickly, and unquestionably, accepted the aims of DFID that educational ISPs should/can be equal. While DFID most likely did not mean this in such simplistic terms, I think I did (want to) believe that school partnerships could be educationally equal. Such a naive outlook is reflected in my first draft of *Chapter Two: The planting and positioning of ISPs*. I now recognise that in my firm personal belief of all people being equal, I have simplified difference and the real inequalities that exist in our partnership. I have been guilty of glossing over and romanticising aspects of struggle in the everyday life of many people living in Ghana, and this is reflected in my journal writing.

Indeed, all the stories within this Movement indicate that stereotypical and essentialist assumptions appear to hover over our ISP, in both Ghana and Scotland. I would like to note though that I can also recall examples which suggest a shift away from a charity/donor-recipient mentality. There was something very affirming in witnessing the director of the Ghanaian school haggling over the price that teachers from Scotland should pay to do a local forest canopy walk. She insisted that we were not charged the tourist price, but rather the local price that the Ghanaian teachers were paying, because we were visiting Ghana as teachers, not tourists. This could be perceived as a sense of equality being raised. Similarly in Scotland, during the last teacher visit, the Parent Council voiced to split the funds raised at a ceilidh 50/50 with the Ghanaian school PTA, whereas in previous years I believe that they would have given it all to Ghana out of a charity/benevolent mentality. If we consider that colonialism existed for hundreds of years, maybe it is no surprise that shifting stereotypical and essentialist thinking takes time – and encounters with the Other.

In summary, this Movement reflects deep-rooted stereotypical thinking and (neo-colonial?) assumptions around the character of the Other, despite working together on "collaborative" projects for over two decades. I place the word collaborative in inverted commas because I now question how collaborative they have really been. Reflecting on the stories, particularly *Story 1: The newspaper men*, confirms that our

ISP projects have been driven by Western knowledge/thinking, agendas and voices (see Reid, 2022). Moreover, the same story also suggests that this Western dominance goes beyond just our small ISP and is almost normalized/expected…

Introduction

'Nkonsonkonson' translates as 'chain links'. On its own, the individual components of the chain have no real value, but together they have the power to do much. The toughness of a chain lies in the smallest parts linked together and this Adinkra symbol emphasises the need to contribute to the community, suggesting that in unity lies strength. To me though, 'unity' suggests total agreement and, as such, I agree with Sermijn et al. (2008) who posit that unity is an illusion. I propose that strength lies in a place that recognises our sharedness. 'Sharedness' suggests elements of reciprocity; an experience where there is listening and talking, a to-ing and fro-ing[59], and respect. I suggest 'sharedness' over 'unity', 'oneness' or 'sameness' because, in line with Levinas' thinking, I do not wish to assume that I 'know' the Other, nor that the Other 'knows' me. To do so would be unethical. We may know one another partially, but never fully. We may come alongside one another and share experiences, beliefs and understandings, but we are not the Same. The existence of 'difference' ought to be acknowledged and respected.

Similar to my comments on feeling both affected and affecting in the previous chapter, this Movement describes a 'haecceity'[60] moment, in which I am aware of my association with both 'Otherness' and 'sharedness'. I experience the positions simultaneously; they are intertwined and interconnected. Many times, 'sharedness' is

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[59]Reciprocity derives from the Latin word 'reciprocus' which means to move backward and forward and is associated with exchanging things with others in a way that benefits all parties.

[60] In line with Deleuzian thinking, haecceity in rhizomatic research seeks to move away from a binary mindset and highlights the in-between site of relations, which are not able to be made separate. In contrast with more traditional research, it is more interested in what might be (in the future) and less interested in what is.

foregrounded in my original writing position, but 'Otherness' still lurks in the background, ever as? a quiet observer, as I write about memory stories from a (time and spatial) distance. The stories I share within this Movement have been selected because they highlight the potential power of 'sharedness' in developing friendships/relationships within ISPs. They unearth the possibility of informal and non-performative spaces as being the places where authentic connections and friendships are made. Emotions, touch and quiet actions appear to speak louder than words in such places. The memory stories include a culmination of journal writing, memories, findings from and reflections on my prior research report, and reference to a short film. The opening story is based on an extract from my travel journal during my first visit to Ghana. Our Ghanaian housemates, who were teachers at the school, had invited us to attend their local church service. I begin here because my lived experience of the service was a powerful one: one where strong connections were felt, both spiritually and physically, both within myself and towards/between Others.

Story 5: A spiritual belonging.

"*Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.*" Romans 12:4, 5 (New International Version.)

Even before the service has officially started, there is a sense of God's Spirit moving amidst the huge (Pentecostal?) church. Today, groups from surrounding churches are coming together for the Sunday service. I am introduced to a kind-eyed and elderly man who will translate parts of the sermon for us. He shakes my hand firmly and we are given a bottle of water each, before being seated near the front, beside Ishmael and Samuel, on the men's side of the church. As one woman sings out with great emotion from the front row, Sarah turns to me with tears in her eyes and whispers that she doesn't understand why she is crying. Despite not knowing the language the woman is singing in, I feel convinced that the woman is crying out to God and inviting His Holy Spirit into the place.

The noise level grows steadily louder. Voices are singing, praying, talking, laughing, crying/wailing. A keyboard and some brass instruments warm up and the sound equipment buzzes and squeals. I smile as I think of my husband who would not be impressed with the sound system… Despite the open windows and fans, the room feels hot, and I'm aware of feeling stuck to my seat, so I turn to shift position and look around me. To my right, the many rows of tired and faded plastic chairs are now filled with people and, as ever, my eyes are drawn to the colourful prints on the women's dresses and elegantly-tied headscarves. A group of women are wearing black and white, which I later learn means that someone close has recently died. Mourning colours. Toddlers are sitting quietly on knees, while older children appear to have gone out to Sunday School, a few faces occasionally peeking into the room through the tall, open doors. I notice that none of the women cross their

legs when sitting, only their ankles, and as I turn back to face the front, I rearrange my own sitting position accordingly.[61]

At the front of the huge church is the usual lectern with a microphone attached, a vase of gaudy, artificial flowers and a large, wonderfully ornate wooden table surrounded by six equally decorative chairs. Despite the simplicity of the church, its sheer size, fullness (of people) and feeling of anticipation creates a Godly grandeur that I don't always experience at 'home'. Sunshine streams through the wooden slats of the high windows and the light looks alive as the dust particles dance within the beams of light. And so, after an hour or so, the sermon begins…

My translator shows me the Bible verses being studied. It is a passage about David, following on from the passage we were studying in church the previous Sunday – in Scotland! Men and women speak about what is happening in their churches. A minister preaches. Songs and hymns are sung with great gusto and clapping, beautiful harmonies filling the room and reaching out into the streets. I can't help but sway and clap to the rhythmic beats. At times we can hear singing and music from neighbouring churches. Money offerings are called for and given, differing amounts of 'cedis' each time, all the while to music and dancing and waving handkerchiefs. Prayers are uttered; prayers of intercession, open prayer, and prayers and prophecies in different tongues which are duly interpreted.

At one point, Sarah and I are invited out to the front, and we are introduced to the congregation as visitors. We are asked to say a little about ourselves and why we are in the town. We talk about our work with the school, and I end by sharing greetings from my home church. I finish with "God is good" and there is a resounding and familiar response of "All of the time". I catch the eye of a woman in the front row. She sits in a relaxed pose – her back leaning against the back of her chair, ankles crossed, and hands folded neatly on her lap. Our eyes meet only for a second or two, but in that moment, I feel it… a

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[61]Why did I do this? I think it was from a place of respect and that I did not wish to offend anyone. I did not want to stand out as the Other. But I was/am. Even within this paragraph, where I was feeling such 'sharedness', my description of the church and the people in it positions me as the Other…

moment of connection. Not Sameness… but an unspoken utterance of understanding. And then we are invited to dance for the church!

(Personal travel journal, Reid, July 2006.)

The service described lasted around four hours but felt less. Since that first Ghanaian church visit, I have attended various Christian church services with different Ghanaian teachers. In all of them, I have felt a sense of belonging and of being 'at home', sometimes more at home than when I am in Scotland. In Scotland, I attend church but do not feel comfortable raising my hands, dancing or praying/praising aloud. In Ghana, I have danced with my hands (and remembered handkerchief) waving freely. I have sung harmonies to hymns and songs I do not know. I have prayed and praised aloud. I have felt a sense of complete sharedness.[62] Not acknowledging that the strongest moments of sharedness (for me) have come about within an everyday spiritual context would feel wrong/unethical. Most of the staff and pupils in our partner school practise Christianity[63], where everyone is believed to be of equal value. My (shared?) experience is that praying together to a shared God creates a solidarity and transcendence that goes beyond culture and language, where there is no Other (or Same). In those moments, I feel less like the visiting teacher and more like a visiting sister.

I identified a sense of 'sharedness' in my CCGL research report through a discussion on 'togetherness'. 'Togetherness' was a word that one of the Ghanaian teachers referred to frequently in her interview and here she talks about the change in some of the pupils in her school:

> "First, we have worked on togetherness. The children all know that the
> Africans and Europeans are one people, irrespective of their colour. They…
> they know that we are sisters and brothers… so that the togetherness is

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[62]Again, even while I am emphasising 'sharedness', I am simultaneously describing how the Ghanaian church experience is unfamiliar/different to my usual experience. Positions of sharedness and Otherness intertwine. Reflecting on the 'civilising mission' referred to in Part One, I am also aware that my experience of sharedness could be perceived as a form of a colonial legacy. Again, positions of sharedness and Otherness intertwine…

[63]There are also many Muslim pupils and some Muslim teachers. In my experience, there is respect for and among both religions. In recent years, the school has created additional school holiday days in recognition of Islamic festivals, such as Eid and Ramadan.

there. Formally they were afraid when they see you, they run away, but now they have taken you also as their own" (Reid, 2022, p. 16).

The same teacher makes similar observations about pupils in our school in Scotland during a [short film](#)[64] that we made with an online global citizenship magazine for teachers in Scotland. She refers to a (younger) child asking if they could pinch her skin and if it hurt[65]. I had not known about this incident but believe it happened during a playtime, rather than in class teaching time. Partnership evaluation discussions among pupils in our Scottish school confirm that a lot of learning *about* our Ghanaian friends is incidental and happens in the non-teaching and more informal times and places – playtimes, lunchtime and the general chats that are unrelated to planned lessons for example. Likewise, I have observed that the pupils in Ghana appear to really enjoy the times when the adult visitors from Scotland are in the playground. In both school playgrounds, games are learned and taught, hair and skin is touched, there is laughter, and there is usually at least one younger child who examines both the front and palm of the hands of a visiting teacher. In addition to the comment about pinching the teacher's hand, the Stride film extract referred to above also captures other sensorial experiences which, I think, intensifies pupil learning: drumming, dancing, high-fives, clapping and playing games.

Similar to pupils, 'togetherness' among teachers can often be observed when teachers are not acting out their professional role in a classroom environment, but rather when they are relaxed and sharing daily, lived experiences in natural, every day and informal settings. In both my CCGL report and the introduction to *Chapter Three: Raking out the assumptions of prior research*, I note that teachers spoke more about personal relationships and attributes than educational ones. The moments of sharedness that I can recall are usually small, micro-level moments of shared/lived human experiences and emotions that transcend culture and bring with them a shared, transient moment of understanding, empathy and belonging/acceptance. Like the church story, such moments are often unplanned and, at times, unspoken: laughing and crying about family life/relationships at a

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[64]A Scottish-Ghanian school partnership story: Muthill Primary and Juliet Johnston School - YouTube

[65]Yet again, while the focus of the dialogue is one about togetherness/sameness, Otherness and difference is also present and acknowledged.

kitchen table; sharing jokes and teasing one another; singing, dancing and praying together in the shade of a compound veranda; swiftly and unthinkingly lifting the toddler on my knee and feeding her so mum can eat… I acknowledge that these are my own observations and my own perception of sharedness. However, they are visceral moments that encompass an intangible sense of attachment/belonging. For me, there is a sense of lessening of (perceived or real) power in relationships. The moments are emotional and quietly transformative in terms of building relationships/trust, again, often involving a touch – an embrace, a hand reaching out for another's hand, braiding hair, or clapping hands together in a playground game. I can recall other small moments of belonging/acceptance. One is being allowed to help wash the dishes following a meal, after years of asking to do this! Another was being introduced to one of the teacher's fiancé. This may sound uneventful but, for me, it represented a shift in relationship, from a visiting UK colleague to a visiting friend.

The memories hint of a connectedness being experienced during moments of 'sharedness', creating feelings of togetherness, friendship (and a sense of belonging?). The moments also appear to happen in informal and unstructured settings, something that Le Bourdon (2020 and 2021) observes in her work with children. Her study of children's learning (within the area of GCE) at a Children's International Summer Village in the United States identifies the impact of unstructured, informal play on deeper learning and a natural/genuine connectedness among children, which she interestingly describes as "a feeling of togetherness" (p. 409, 2020). The memories I have shared support Le Bourdon's findings and could extend to adults too, both adult-child relations and adult-adult. Le Bourdon (2021) also recognises the power of sensorial experiences in global education. Once again though, the power of touch is not just observed among pupils in my memories, but among teachers too. Furthermore, I reflect that spoken words are not always present in the small moments of sharedness; they are usually emotional moments and would appear to play a significant role in building friendships, trust and understanding. I am left wondering if such moments of sharedness in the informal places, and the friendships/understanding they can create, are underrated in their power to gently erode traditional and/or colonial notions of difference?

As in many sustained ISPs, genuine and lasting friendships have been established throughout our partnership. This shone through the informal WhatsApp thread of my prior research. I have witnessed genuine and lasting friendships blossom between teachers in Scotland and Ghana, particularly when staying in one another's homes. I have observed Ghanaian and Scottish colleagues, who have become good friends, being able to tease one another about cultural rituals/habits[66], suggesting a sense of increased (inter?) cultural understanding. Lives have been shared; personal hopes and fears entrusted; creating feelings of solidarity, mutual trust, belonging and friendship/love.

In summary, the stories and memories shared within this Movement highlight the informal and non-performative spaces as being places where the personal Self is present and where 'moments of sharedness' have been experienced. It is in the informal settings that connections have been made and friendships have developed; where shared emotions, touch and quiet/unspoken actions appear to communicate just as strongly as the spoken word… sometimes more. The memories shared hint at moments of 'sharedness' as being quietly transformative moments; moments that have the potentiality to erode a layer of Otherness, bringing us closer to understanding, not just one another's cultures, but also to understanding one another – and Self, better.

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[66]For example, references to Scottish people offering and drinking so much tea and jokes about time i.e. 'African time' in relation to actual time (or 'UK time'!)
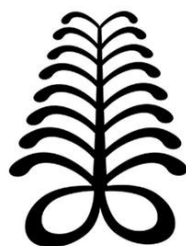
Introduction

'Aya', represents a fern. The fern grows in hardy conditions and symbolises independence, defiance against oppression, perseverance, autonomy and resourcefulness. It originates from the expression 'mensuro wo' which translates as 'I am not afraid of you, I am independent of you'. Ghanaian writer, Ama Ata Aidoo, captures this spirit beautifully in many of her fictional short stories. Reading her work helped me to understand not just the importance of acknowledging independence, perseverance, autonomy and resourcefulness, but also the internal conflict and confusion that often go hand-in-hand with such characteristics.[67] Similarly, Moisander and Valtonen (2006) observe that the stories we write in/as research often portray the internally conflicting interrelationships among people within society. The opening story of this Movement ends on a point of rupture; a small but potentially significant incident which creates a momentary dissonance in our partnership. The memory represents a quiet inter-relational conflict – and hints at the essence of 'aya' at play.

This story is based on a diary extract from my travel journal during the most recent visit to our partner school. I travelled with two other teachers from my school in Scotland (Maureen and Nadine), my niece and a former pupil. As I have strived to

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[67]Ama Ata Aidoo writes wonderfully insightful fictional stories about early post-colonial Ghana and describes some of the conflicting experiences, identities and emotions from a range of Ghanaian society. In her short story 'For Whom Things Did Not Change', the main character, Zirigu, shares his experiences and feelings and ends by poignantly asking the Ghanaian scholar he serves *"My young Master, what does 'Independence' mean?"* (1970, p. 29).

think and write reflexively, I have repeatedly read over, reconsidered, and questioned both the content and presentation of each memory story. At one point, I removed the following story, as I felt it was too long and descriptive ~~anecdotal in nature~~. However, the memory came up in conversation among the teachers from Scotland who were reminiscing about their visit to the Ghanaian school, remembering what happened as a poignant part of their visit. I then shared with them that I had written about our first morning in my thesis but had since removed it. Both teachers encouraged me to put it back in. When I asked them 'why', they had clearly reflected on what had happened themselves and a rich dialogue took place. Their viewpoints are reflected in this Movement.

Reading back my original journal entry highlights that I have been guilty of 'Othering' (Said, 1985) Ghana and its people and my descriptions often reflect a 'tourist' viewpoint (Andreotti and de Souza, 2008). However, I have chosen to share the observations and descriptions, as they were my lived experiences at the time. Reading the work of scholars such as Richardson, St. Pierre and Honan, has made me appreciate the power of description in 'setting the scene', and so I have also kept in the long, descriptive introduction in an attempt to invite you, the reader, into the moment. In response to this story, I also recall several other incidents which leave me contemplating the quiet dominance of Western knowledge and power – and my part in it.

Story 6: Great expectations?

What a welcome we received at school this morning! Being of 'Aunty' status[68] has its advantages. Despite feeling old (and loved) by the title, it allowed us all a later start (8.30am) and a lift in a minibus to school. Once on the small minibus, I felt a warm mix of peace and anticipation, a feeling of 'coming home'. For my travelling companions, the journey must have been unlike any other. The only sounds heard within the vehicle were the engine and the radio, as all eyes were fixed on the outside scenes that were unfolding before them. I tried to see things as they did – an outsider looking in – before reminding myself that I was an outsider too…[69]

Along the unmarked road we bump, clutching onto the backs of the seats in front of us. On first glance, the landscape presents itself as quiet and rural – a black tarmac road slicing through an endless sea of green trees, grass and bush. If you look closely, you can see the bright red feathers of the male northern red bishop flitting from tree to tree and a kaleidoscope of colourful butterflies dancing over the tall grass. Just the odd house or shop line the road – and yet there is lots going on, both on the road and in the village houses hidden behind it. To me, Ghana always appears full of life and vibrancy, ever busy, never still, always moving… The sun beats down on the business of morning rituals. There are the vivid colours of women's dresses as they walk home from school/nursery, with the easy, elegant poise of models on a catwalk; babies peeking out from cloths on their backs and toddlers running care-free alongside. A few of the women effortlessly carry a basket of wood on their heads too. One lady is carrying a tray of hard-boiled eggs, with accompanying small sachets of salt, packed and ready to sell. Men walk with a slow purpose (it is hot, despite being the rainy season),

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[68]'Aunty' is a term of endearment used to address a more mature woman, usually a relative or close family friend.

[69]My supervisor asked me to read back the paragraph that follows in front of him. As I read, I recognised how my description and language romanticise Ghanaian life. I found myself cringing at the words used and the assumptions they convey, for example, toddlers running 'carefree' and women carrying heavy baskets 'effortlessly'.

handkerchiefs poking out of pockets. Older family members sit on plastic chairs outside the occasional shop or 'spot' (small drinking place), some chatting, some chastising a cheeky child, some also watching the scene before them. (I wonder if we are something 'different' for them to see too?)

The open minibus windows create a welcome breeze and bring with it the sounds of the morning. As we head closer to the school, the birds and frogs, which sounded so loud on our arrival, have faded into the background and it is now a cacophony of human voices we hear; shouted greetings, playing toddlers/children, crying babies and the occasional singing (and rhythmic clapping) of a church choir practice nearby. There is always music; a brass band is practising outside a church behind the trees and the car radio blasts out the latest hiplife song. We turn off the main road and follow an even bumpier side 'road' of deep ochre earth. It is quite a contrast to the black tarmac, and it leads us like a winding secret path into a jungle and jumble of life. Chickens and chicks are strutting and squawking/chirping around compounds, goats can be heard bleating like new-born babies, and there is the occasional squealing of pigs. We can smell the last of the early morning fires and hear/see/feel the rhythmic sound of cassava and/or plantain being pounded by a tall, heavy 'woma (stick/pestle) in a small etu (mortar), the man thumping down on the starchy substance and the woman; calmly, repeatedly, turning it over, between thuds, a syncopated beat, in perfect, and practised, harmony.

We reach the school and excitedly step out of the minibus and stretch our legs. I remember thinking that it is unusually quiet. Precious, the school director welcomes us and introduces us to the ladies who run the tuckshop by the borehole. I buy some bags of nuts for later and an orange for breaktime. As the woman slices off the top of the orange with her machete, I smell the sweet, fresh juiciness and really want to eat it there and then. We turn to walk towards the main school building. The playground grass has been cut, the concrete path around the school has been swept and a cheery welcome banner is displayed along the outside office wall. The classroom shutters are open, but I do not hear the familiar 'sounds of school' (which sound the same no matter where in the world I am). Just as I am about to ask where all the

children are, there is a sudden explosion of cheers, and over one hundred smartly uniformed school children and their teachers march into their assembly lines, the school brass band leading the way amongst an array of waving paper Scottish flags on sticks! Laughing, we take our places beside Precious and the 'akwaaba' (welcome) assembly begins…

As always, it is a wonderfully happy and emotional event. We are formally introduced to staff and pupils, exchanging the traditional West African handshake-with-a-click with the teachers and class prefects, before being bestowed with welcome cards and Ghanaian beads and other jewellery. Precious has been up all night finishing traditional dresses for all of us, having met us late last night at the airport, three hours there and three hours back. Teachers speak, welcome songs are sung, children speak, and then the school pastor leads us in prayer and the national anthem is sung. The Ghanaian pledge is chorused, and before long, smiling children are marching back to their classes while singing 'Onward Christian soldiers'.[70]

Precious then invites us to the cool, dark school office, where we can leave our bags if we wish. We are offered water. We chat through the agenda for the week, which Precious has copied out for us, and she asks what kind of food we like. I naturally put in a request for red-red, my favourite Ghanaian dish. Precious then takes us a tour of the school. First, we are shown the new larder[71] and chat with the kitchen staff. Maureen, who lifts weights in Scotland, cannot believe the weight of the cauldron of boiling food that the two women are lifting (with bare feet)! We are then taken round each primary class and introduced, every class standing and greeting us with a bright and melodic

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[70]Again, the writing in this paragraph portrays a rather 'white tourist' view of the school. However, the assembly is a typical ritual whenever we visit, and we are welcomed as special visitors who have travelled far. A similar type of assembly is performed when Ghanaian teachers visit Scotland but, in recent times, without the hymns and prayers. Singing Christian hymns and marching remains part of everyday school life in most Ghanaian schools and the routine echoes a colonial and missionary past.

[71]The school had asked for help to fundraise for a new larder as the mice kept getting into the old one and eating all the maize. The parent body of the school wanted to use their funds for more educational resources.

"good morning" and "we are fantastic, and we hope you are fantastic too!"[72] After the tour, we separate and go to the classes that Precious has assigned us to. The three teachers among us go to an early, middle and upper class, according to the stages we teach in Scotland. Summer[73] and my 19-year-old niece walk down to the nursery. It was at lunchtime that the mood changes, and I had not seen it coming…

I arrive first at the table in the small office. A pretty, African-print tablecloth has been laid, topped with bottles of water and a plastic basket full of cutlery and paper napkins. I apply the hand sanitiser that has also been left for us, open a bottle of water and wait for the others to arrive. I have had an interesting morning learning about water diseases with the P5 class. They have a good teacher and I just know we're going to get on well. Several minutes go by and I take time to look at photos that fill the walls. Many of them are from previous ISP visits – some in Scotland and some in Ghana – and I smile at photos of my own family with visiting teachers. Hearing laughter, I turn to see my niece and Summer walk through the curtained door. They are talking animatedly about their morning with the 'wee ones' and I am relieved and happy that they are getting on well. Shortly after, two of the Ghanaian teachers, Faith and Hope, bring us pots full of school dinners, along with some extra fried plantain. A few minutes later, Maureen and Nadine arrive at the table, clearly having been talking together beforehand and looking a little uneasy. I catch their eye and Maureen whispers that she will fill me in later.

"Oh my goodness Keri, I feel terrible. Faith more or less said she had been told I would show her how to teach!" Nadine has had a similar experience. I now realise why my assigned teacher, Mr Oware, had been standing quite expectantly before I asked if I could just join in the lesson and get to know the pupils today. It transpires that the British director has told teachers that we will be doing some teacher training sessions, as well as carrying out our partnership work. We are aware of this and have planned some sharing

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[72] I think this may be a greeting unique to our partner school. However, unison chanting is a familiar teaching method used across many African countries.

[73] Summer is a former pupil of mine and was visiting our Ghanaian partner school for the second time.

sessions to look at how we teach literacy, which is part of the school's improvement plan. But from a reciprocal angle. Of course, we have not communicated this and now assumptions (?) have been made. And not positive ones. Apparently, Faith has been quite withdrawn and reticent, far from the cheerful and vivacious Faith I know, and we now understand why this might be. This is not a good start to our trip…

(Personal travel journal, Reid, July 2019.)

The incident above is a quiet rupture in the story so far. There lies within it the possibility of an unspoken message of Otherness, difference and unbelonging. But quietness does not equate to painlessness. This was a rupture… a tearing apart… of relationships – and it hurt. Despite all our media accolades of sustaining a positive ISP, is our partnership actually perceived as something non-mutual and non-reciprocal among teachers in Ghana? Speaking with Maureen and Nadine that evening, and again more recently, they spoke of feeling perceived as the 'know-it-all UK teachers come to show the African teachers how to teach'! This was not their motive though and they spoke of viewing our ISP as a mutual one. On asking why they had this viewpoint, they described our partnership as one that is embedded in a reciprocal culture through '*the way we talk about our partner school and the way we do things in school*'.

It should be noted that Ghanaian culture values respect and politeness, especially towards visitors (see reference to this in chapter four) and that the memories shared could have come from a place of showing respect. I will probably never know for sure why Faith reacted in such a manner to Maureen's initial presence in the classroom. Faith was not new to the school or our partnership. Her silence implies that something was upsetting her, but I know that asking her about the incident now could appear rude and judgemental, and it may even be something that Faith cannot articulate, or even remember. While the visiting teachers felt they were being perceived as 'visiting colonisers' (my own term), it could be that Faith did not feel that way. It may be that her professional pride was dented at the thought of having another teacher come to show her how to do her job?

I am reminded of two similar experiences that happened during my first visit to our partner school. Like Maureen and Nadine, I felt perceived as the 'know-it-all UK

teacher come to show the African teachers how to teach'. As with Maureen and Nadine, this did not sit easy with me, and I tried to make this respectfully and gently clear through my words and actions. For example, I was asked to run teacher workshops by the British director and so I did this, but I made them a reciprocal and participatory event, with a focus on sharing our aims and good practice. This was followed by team-teaching (teaching a class together).[74] The second memory I am reminded of is when I told the Ghanaian director about the DFID funding which would enable a teacher from her school to travel across to Scotland the following session. She asked who I would choose to travel. This question surprised me, although on reflection I understand that she probably saw me as the holder of the money and therefore the holder of power/decisions. My thinking was, and still is, that intentionally sharing power helps to build trust and relationships that are mutual/reciprocal. I therefore replied that I could not choose because it was a decision for her school to make. The school now have a system in place to ensure selection is carried out fairly, according to the school needs and values.

However, revisiting the opening story has forced me to reconsider the distribution of power in our school partnership. I am once again left contemplating if I unintentionally continue to enforce Western 'ways of being/knowing' onto our partner school, despite my 'good' intentions. Perhaps there are other 'ways of doing'. What I consider just and fair may not be how others see the situation. As I have written my Movements, I have shared my stories (via email) with both the Ghanaian and British directors of our Ghanaian partner school, asking for their perceptions and feedback. Having read the opening memory story, they were surprised by Maureen and Nadine's responses and described the situation as a 'simple misunderstanding'. The British director also wrote that the teachers in Ghana ask to learn about British teaching methods and are proud to adapt them to suit their school and curriculum. Even within this statement, I recognise the existence of power relations at play within our ISP. Research warns that power relations exist in ISPs, playing a major role in how and what pupils learn (Bourn and Cara, 2013). However, my observations and CCGL enquiry observes teachers in Ghana quietly challenging power and taking a

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[74]Both participatory workshops and team-teaching are things we have continued to do (in Ghana and in Scotland).

critical 'writerly' approach[75] regarding how and what pupils learn. There are many times over the years when they have rejected the suggested British Council's Connecting Classrooms lessons, explaining that they do not fit with their teaching approaches. Instead, the teachers have adopted a 'writerly' approach which acknowledges a Ghanaian curriculum, perspective and 'way of doing'. For example, they planned their own related lessons and relevant actions as to how to go about tackling some of the SDGs locally. Teachers and classes chose an SDG to campaign for; one that was important to them within their own local /national context. Similar 'writerly' thinking is discussed in the work of Parejo et al. (2022), where many student teachers speak about GCE not necessarily being a neocolonial/Westernising tool. Rather, they argued that the orientation given to it can emphasise and balance local, national and global thinking.

Regardless of the reasons behind what happened in the memory story, the situation thankfully altered over the week. While spending time with each other, both in and out of school, a genuine (and sustained) friendship blossomed between Faith and Maureen. A few days later, they were team-teaching (teaching together) in what I would describe as a reciprocal manner. Nevertheless, I am glad of the discomfort that this rupture created because it made me (and my colleagues) stop and reflect… and possibly strengthened relationships.

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[75] Martin (2010) incorporates den Heyer's (2009) 'writerly' approach within her postcolonial ethical framework which I applied to my CCGL research. A 'writerly' approach invites the reader to make their own meanings and connections within a text based on their own individual life experiences. In this case, the teachers in Ghana considered the 'master' (Western) SDG narrative through a global lens. They then chose to adapt the (UK) programme accordingly, applying pedagogic approaches that suited their teaching styles and local context.

The figure below is a rhizomatic cartography which attempts to map some of the/my possible rhizomatic connections between and across the different stories.

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Chapter Eleven: Digging deeper - a synthesis of rhizomatic roots
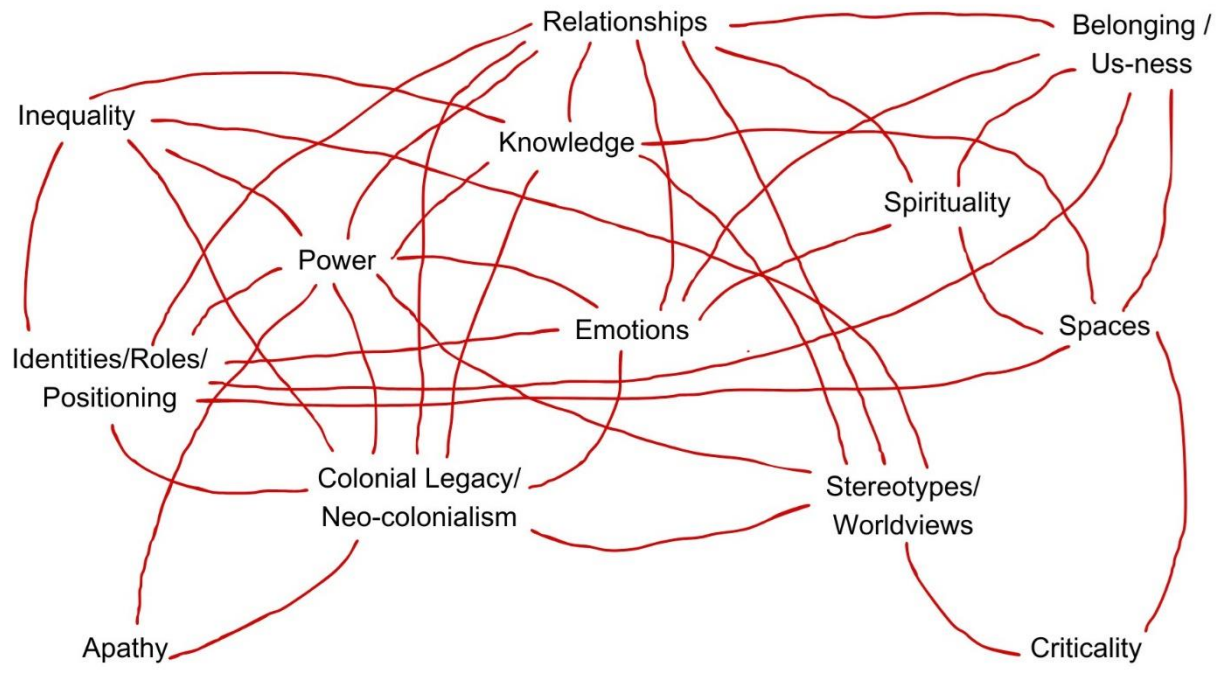
Introduction

The Adinkra symbol 'mako nyinaa mpatu mmere' translates as 'all the peppers on the same tree do not ripen simultaneously'. The Akan people acknowledge socially created inequalities. In the past, chiefs would redistribute goods among the community to ensure equity. I have selected this symbol because much of the reflective thought in this chapter comes back to inequality.

The Movements left me with observations and questions around our partnership and ISPs more widely. Some of the rhizomatic threads that rose to the surface spread across the Movements. In this section I attempt to untangle and synthesise some of these rhizomatic thread roots. While there are most certainly more threads running through the stories, I explore the threads that are pertinent to me as a participant in the stories and an observer/researcher of them.

In this section, I consider the neo-colonial impact of a dominant Western narrative on our partnership and the people involved in it, including myself (as a friend, teacher and researcher). The concepts of 'Otherness' and difference are explored. Material and knowledge inequalities are then discussed within a post-colonial context. This leads me to reflect on power, including the power of silence. I then go on to consider the influence of informal places on our Selves and our thinking, noting their potential for building relationships and transforming thinking.

A dominant Western narrative…

Across the Movements, hints of colonial undertones thread through the memory stories, and my retelling of them. Despite having worked together on curricular projects for almost two decades, the critical rhizomatic reflections suggest that stereotypical dispositions and assumptions lie buried in our partnership, particularly in Movements A and C. For example, *Story 2: Stereotypical (mis)understandings?* and *Story 4: Welcome assembly (Scotland)* reflect some deep-rooted and stereotypical assumptions about the Other, both in Ghana and in Scotland. Said (1985) conjectures that stereotyping (and prejudice) are outcomes of an 'Othering' process. The 'Othering' process acknowledges difference between one's own cultural group and that of Others, but the Other is simplified and distanced, with all Others being viewed different in the same way.[76] Reflecting on the Movements, particularly *Story 1: The newspaper men* and *Story 6: Great expectations?*, one can pick up on the confusion, tension and potential inter-relational conflict that Othering can create. The stories leave me questioning if all the characters are guilty of Othering to some extent… including me.

As I retell my memory stories there are elements of Otherness and romanticism, particularly in *Story 6: Great expectations?* Even while writing about moments of connection and sharedness in *Story 5: A spiritual belonging*, I note the quiet presence of Otherness as I read it over. Drawing on postcolonial thinking, de Souza [2012] (2014) builds on Said's thinking and describes the difference of Other as something that is 'contained' by the coloniser through reducing it to the sameness of the Self using Western epistemologies to do so. Despite my personal opposition to such thinking (I couldn't possibly think like this!), I now see that I have at times reduced the Other to the sameness of Self through my own tacit assumptions and (mis)understandings. These have come to the surface through the processes of

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[76]Interestingly, this is in sharp contrast to my experience with children. Throughout our years of partnership, I have noticed that the children I teach in Scotland are quick to zoom in on the similarities between themselves and the pupils in their partner school. For example, observations are made when looking at photographs, drawings or videos from our partner school. Pupils get excited noticing that outdoor games are similar, electronic games are the same, and a few (UK) pupils even comment on the makes of shoes and clothes. My experience concurs that this helps to create more positive attitudes and create a sense of connection among pupils (Martin, 2005). In contrast to this, I find that adults in Scotland tend to comment on the differences, and usually from a deficit viewpoint.

writing the stories, reflecting on them and reflecting on my writing/retelling of them. For example, in both *Story 1: The newspaper men* and the memory story I share in the introduction of the thesis, I note my own dominating Western agenda and 'ways of doing'. In the former story, while I do share my reasons for not bringing resources for our partner school, I also note that I never asked the teachers in Ghana their viewpoints on educational equality; I assumed agreement to this Western thinking through the silence of no questions being asked, reducing the teachers to the sameness of myself. Similarly, in the latter story, I assume Western knowledge (including literacy in English) and 'ways of doing' in both the planning and implementation of the meeting. This could be due to my lack of consideration of Ghanaian culture and need not necessarily be founded in a form of Western neo-colonial power, however, it may be perceived as such and therefore should not be dismissed.

Inequalities

I have spent some time reflecting on my reasons as to why I did not bring resources to our partner school in *Story 1: The newspaper men*. Many postcolonialists criticise the deficit position that aid represents, warning that funding from North to South can create dependency (Andreotti, 2007; Martin, 2007) and encourage 'politics of benevolence' (Jefferess, 2008), where the privileged global citizen gives aid to the needy Other in an unequal donor-recipient fashion. I understand that this is likely to have been the position of our funding body at the time of *Story 1: The newspaper men*, and it was my view then too. However, I see now that I ignored some very real inequalities around education in Ghana[77]. Material inequalities remain a reality within most Global South - Global North partnerships (Brown, 2006; Martin, 2010; Leonard, 2012; Ager, 2022). Admittedly, funders are usually aware of material inequalities and allow for part of the funding to be used for purchasing equipment to facilitate project work. So, schools in the Global South do gain access to some of the funding, but only if the money is used in a manner that the Western eye deems fit. But in

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[77]Tagoe et al. (2022) discuss this in depth, recognising the interacting impacts of poverty, gender and geography on access to education.

limiting/minimising the inequalities that exist, are we not creating more dependency/essentialism and pivoting back into a form of colonialism where we take what we need to enhance/strengthen our own curricula and give back/enforce a Western notion of partnership (and global citizenship)? Could it be that *not* giving much-needed resources creates another form of imperialism, or neo-colonialism, where the West has decided that this is the *right* 'way of doing' ISPs? Pashby and Costa (2021), in reference to Stein's (2015) work, warn that the anti-oppressive position, often rooted in exaltedness and a sense of moral agency, can overlook the possibility of retaining Western assumptions and unconsciously reproducing coercive relations. I now recognise that I may well have modelled this position in *Story 1: The newspaper men* and my thinking has since shifted. I now fear that I disempowered my Ghanaian colleagues by not acknowledging and working to rebalance a resource inequality.

Below is a quote from the British director of our partner school, in a response to *Story 1: The newspaper men*. In the email, she too questions the act of *not* giving material goods/resources:

> If the Ghanaian side of the partnership want 'stuff' as the reporters seemed to imply, I don't see why it's wrong to give them what they've asked for, so I don't see it as charity. The UK has huge wealth compared with Ghana so isn't it right for the UK to give material goods and services to Ghana if that's what they want? Why is charity wrong anyway? And isn't paying for flights to the UK and helping to improve teaching charity? Maybe we're all so busy having to be woke these days, 'charity' has become a bad word.

(British director, email, April 2023)

Surely, as a partner school, we should want to support one another, particularly if a need has been identified? I can think of several times when our partner school has expressed a need. The first time was early on in our partnership and both schools fundraised to buy the Ghanaian school a bus. Then, around ten years later, I was asked if I could help to raise money for a new school larder. Mice were getting into the storage space and eating the maize needed for school lunches, and the PTA wanted to spend their money on educational resources. I took time to reflect sensitively. Having examined my motives, I organised a fundraising event, outwith

school, to cover the building costs for the larder. It felt wrong not to offer material assistance when the need was great, and I was able to do something; not to have given aid and assistance when requested would have been unhelpful (and unkind). Perhaps then, it is more about *how* something is given and less about what, or how much.

Whose knowledge counts?

In addition to material inequalities, Martin (2016) raises the interesting question as to whether there is equality around whose knowledge 'counts' in ISPs. The aforementioned dominant Western narrative suggests that a Western knowledge may well 'count', and thus hold power, in and over our partnership. At the end of the final Movement, I am again left wondering if the teachers from Scotland are perceived as imposing a Western knowledge and 'way of teaching'.

Most ISP programmes tend to be led by a Northern driven agenda (Bourn and Cara, 2013; Ager, 2022) and this is true of our partnership work too. Like many schools in the Global South who are involved in ISP work, our partner school has had to adapt plans to 'fit' their curricula[78] (Disney and Mapperley, 2006). For example, our most recent partnership work focused on the United Nation's SDGs as this was a requirement for the partnership funding. As discussed in chapter one, even the SDGs themselves can be read as being framed within a Western discourse, with the teaching and language around them tending to be technocratic, hierarchical and siloed (Misiaszek, 2021).[79] Are then ISPs (including our own) mere microcosms of neo-colonialism, where we each read the Western script and act out roles to create a

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[78]As indicated in Chapter One, it should be noted that schools in the UK have been found to manipulate their plans to fit ISP funding criteria too (Disney, 2008).

[79]Misiaszek (2021) also observes how the language and communication around ecopedagogy often justifies dominant versions of 'development' and 'sustainability', which ultimately creates socio-environmental oppressions and planetary *un*sustainability. My experience in (primary) schools would support this and, regarding the SDGs, a quick fix/solutionism approach is often presented in resources, and an avoidance of acknowledging and tackling the complexities involved.

'successful' performance under a dominant Western and neoliberal 'gaze' (Swanson 2013)?

Postcolonialism highlights colonial power and dependency, claiming that many Global South contexts were forced to use the knowledge and language of the coloniser to gain and exert agency. Likewise, the stories within this thesis reflect Western knowledge as being that which 'counts' within our ISP. In colonial times a way to gain social advance and rise to local eminence was to be literate and educated in European knowledge (Manning, 2021).[80] Today, ISPs offer opportunities and benefits/resources for those who 'speak' the dominant Western narrative such as travel, teacher and school development, and esteem in the community. Research concurs that ISP teacher visits can create esteem within communities (Bourn and Cara, 2013) and this is something that many of our visiting Ghanaian teachers have referred to in informal conversations, alongside social elevation.

Power

In tension with speaking the dominant Western narrative, we read of the reporters in *Story 1: The newspaper men* challenging Western knowledge and/or Foucauldian 'pouvoir' or 'potestas' (power of domination/entrapment). The same could also be interpreted in *Story 7: Great expectations?* through Faith's silence. However, as I point out, we should not assume this is the case. Yes, there may be a (neo-colonial?) resistance at work, but through *knowing* Faith in an informal setting, I am not convinced that this is necessarily the case. My own lived experience leads me to believe that the Ghanaian teacher, whether consciously or subconsciously, may have reacted out of strong self-belief in her capability as a teacher. Nevertheless, Faith's

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[80]Following a highly informative phone call (2020) about colonial Ghana and its influence on Ghana/Ghanaians today, Professor Malcolm McLeod emailed some points that support Manning's (2021) work, saying that: "Literacy in English also became important once the colonial legal system was set up: being a UK trained lawyer was seen as a way to local eminence and to some extent to incorporation into the colonial elite… Since talking with you Archbishop Sarpong has sent me a copy of his autobiography. It reminds me that the Catholic church was also a way for a child of a poor family to rise to great heights through its own educational system. There, of course, was the image of a powerful international organisation with almost limitless resources at its disposal that stretched from the small village school through local seminaries to the Papacy itself."

unspoken words suggest that silence can speak loudly to power. While Maureen was (probably) perceived as having power by Faith, Faith's silence also held 'puissance' or 'potentia' (power to create movement and becoming/empowerment).

Silence features across the stories – not so much as a lack of voice, but more about what is chosen not to be voiced. For example, in *Story 4: Welcome assembly (Scotland),* I felt compelled to fill the (perceived) awkward silence by changing the subject to avoid the embarrassment it began to create (in my mind). I assumed a (deficit) difference (and power?) that was socially and historically constituted (Darder, 2018). Reflecting on *Story 1: The newspaper men*, I note that the teachers stayed silent on hearing my notions of educational equality. I now understand that silence does not equate to acceptance. And, as mentioned above, Faith chose not to speak about her feelings and views in *Story 6: Great expectations?* Reflecting on the place of silence in the stories suggests that silences in ISPs are important and worth paying attention to.

Many of the stories hint at other underlying grapples with power; power that is multi-layered and strategic (Braidotti, 2018). In the memory stories, power is often perceived by an individual (which makes it real to that individual), and this perceived power can complicate understandings and create conflicts in relationships. Similar to the quiet rupture of Movement C, the newspaper reporters in story one held power as they presented their own story for their own purposes. As the holder of the British Council's funding, I held power (whether I wanted it or not) and was most likely perceived as holding power by the reporters (and teachers). On reflection, I now identify as being part of the Othering process whereby the reporters probably perceived me as the Westerner come to wield power.

Postcolonial research warns that colonial era practices continue to hold power and that they shape notions of 'Self' in formerly colonised countries (Parashar and Schulz, 2021; Spivak, 1998). Furthermore, Spivak goes on to posit that this power imbalance allows Western supremacy to create inferior Otherness, where the Other wants to be like the Western Other. Therefore, one (im)plausible reading could be that Stephen in *Story 3: Because we are from Africa* in the first Movement became the African stereotype to obtain a mobile phone, whether consciously or not, acting out *of* a 'coloniality of being' (Quijano, 2007 cited in Fúnez-Flores, 2022). However,

another (im)plausible reading could be that prices in a Ghanaian setting can be haggled at times. I may be wrong, but sitting in the café that day, I do not believe that my Ghanaian colleague felt we should buy him a new phone, and neither do I believe that he felt inferior or wanted to be like the Western Other. Once again, it is through *knowing* Stephen, alongside having been with him during his exchanges in various phone shops that morning, that my understanding is that he genuinely desired to purchase a phone and was disappointed at how much they were. Of course, this is mere interpretation, but it has come about through having a friendship with Stephen – one which has developed not in the classroom or research context, but in the more informal settings.

Informal places and moments of sharedness

Similarly, in Movement C it is noted that Faith and Maureen develop a friendship through spending time with one another both in and out of school. As insider-researcher, I have observed that the times spent out of school, in moments of sharedness, were powerful in building the friendship… and trust. The place and power of friendship within ISPs is recognised (Disney, 2008; Bourn and Cara, 2012; Ager, 2022) but has not been widely researched, perhaps because it is a non-quantifiable outcome in project evaluations (Leonard, 2012). Despite this, friendship among teachers is particularly evident in Movement B, where moments of sharedness in the informal places play a powerful role in evoking emotions, a sense of belonging and developing relationships. Furthermore, the memory stories, specifically *Story 3: Because we are from Africa*, suggest that the connections made during teacher visits have the potential to challenge and transform the stereotypical and/or colonial thinking patterns hinted at in Movement A. Despite knowing Stephen as a friend, his "because we are from Africa" comment still took me by surprise. Stephen's comment suggests an awareness of the 'poor African' stereotype and its Otherness. The comment also reflects his awareness of the 'rich European' stereotype and its Otherness. As noted in the introduction to Movement B, sharedness and Otherness appear to intertwine; they move along a continuum of difference, and it is difficult to establish where one ends and the other begins.

This is reflected in my travel journal, which refers to over fifteen different travelling companions/colleagues and spans several decades. It confirms that a lot of reflection, self-reflexivity and learning has taken place in informal and relaxed settings. It is in the informal places, such as sitting on the motel veranda at the end of the day, where deep and emotive conversations and 'moments of sharedness' have occurred. It is in the informal settings where deep-rooted underlying assumptions have been gently, and naturally, brought to the surface. The dialogue is non-formal and often of a more personal nature. Certainly, Stephen's "because we are from Africa" comment sits in juxtaposition with his interview responses for my CCGL report, where there was no indication of any kind of essentialist(?) thinking. Nevertheless, each response and dialogue is valid, and the fact they may sit in tension emphasises the hybridity and multiplicity of Self and identity. *Story 3: Because we are from Africa* also highlights the notion of selves and /or identities being constantly re/deconstructed through interactions in the different social settings we are part of. This is a concept I can relate to as I write this thesis and is an area I examine further in the following discussion chapter.

A summary: sociocultural (un)learning and (mis)understandings

Reflecting more deeply on the rhizomatic threads that my retellings of the stories expose has made me realise how entrenched in colonialism our ISP actually is. Aware of my naivety, I admit that this has been a shock to me. The stories have revealed not just the real material inequalities that exist in our partnership, but also how I have at times been party to ignoring these inequalities. Furthermore, the stories have highlighted 'Otherness' and the dominance of a Western knowledge and 'ways of doing' within our partnership. While the formal ISP evaluations may invite the thoughts and opinions of teachers in Global North and Global South schools, the questions remain situated within the Western narrative with no place for non-Western knowledges. On a more hopeful note, the memory stories provide some insights into the place and potential of personal relationships and informal spaces. This is something I observe in the CCGL report (Reid, 2022) but examine more fully through the rhizomatic reflections as lines of flight. The lines of flight can also be read as a

culmination of sociocultural (un)learning and (mis)understandings if we consider three situational aspects.

Firstly, they illustrate the importance of building positive relationships to develop understanding, and not necessarily just cultural understanding as often the understanding gained is more relational than cultural. This was certainly the case in the days that followed the incident in *Story 6: Great expectations?* In contrast, there was no time to build relationships in the meeting of *Story 1: The newspaper men* and no resolution/reconciliation was reached. Secondly, the reflections suggest that the informal settings encourage more understanding through moments of sharedness. It was outside of school that relationships were built in the days that followed the incident in *Story 6: Great expectations?* In contrast, the meeting in *Story 1: The newspaper men* took place in a formal school setting. Thirdly, it could be read across the Movements that the informal spaces present/fore-front a different 'Self' and/or 'truth' in comparison to a more formal context. Could it be that the informal settings reduce Foucault's notion of panopticism in that no-one in professional authority is watching, and so no socialisation of the professional Self is felt (needed)? Could it be that the informal places and selves are more authentic and a better 'Third space' or 'inbetween space' (Bhabha, 1994) for relationships to develop, and for thinking to be gently interrupted and transformed through critical reflection? If so, imagine how such engagements could impact our teaching – and the learning experiences of our pupils!

SEASON FIVE: A RETURN TO AUTUMN

"For man, autumn is a time of harvest, of gathering together.
For nature, it is a time of sowing, of scattering abroad."

(Edwin Way Teale)
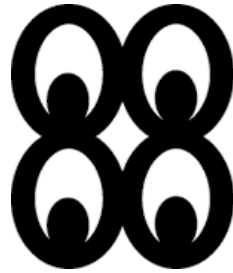
Introduction

I return to the 'Mate masie' symbol of wisdom, prudence, knowledge and learning. It is often translated as "*What I hear, I keep*" but the literal translation of its aphorism is "*In the depth of wisdom abounds knowledge and thoughtfulness. I consider and keep what I learn.*" While the implied meaning of 'mate masie' is "I understand", it means more than simple understanding though. It implies wisdom and knowledge, and it also denotes the prudence of taking into consideration what another person has said.

Reflecting on 'mate masie' reminded me of a text I was given several decades ago, while studying for a postgraduate qualification in educational leadership. It is the response of the Indians of the Six Nations to a suggestion that they send boys to an American College in Pennsylvania. It was written in 1744:

> But you, who are wise, must know that different Nations have different Conceptions of things and you will therefore not take us amiss, if our Ideas of this kind of Education happen not to be the same as yours. We have had some Experience of it.

> Several of our young People were formerly brought up at the Colleges of the Northern Provinces: they were instructed in all your Sciences; but, when they came back to us, they were bad Runners, ignorant of every means of living in the woods… neither fit for Hunters, Warriors or Counsellors, they were totally good for nothing.

We are however, not the less obliged by your kind Offer, tho' we decline accepting it; and, to show our grateful Sense of it, if the Gentleman of Virginia will send us a Dozen of their sons, we will take Care of their Education, instruct them in all we know and make Men of them.

Several centuries have passed since the words were written. But have Western educators really heeded them? Have they understood in a way that takes into consideration what another is saying? Or does a global and universal Western-Global North-centric knowledge continue to be assumed and promoted? Before embarking on this thesis journey, I would not have envisioned that a colonial legacy pervades our ISP. And my CCGL research concluded that there were no hints of colonialism within it. However, I also cautioned that it should not be assumed that there is none. Likewise, while there appears to be a form of neo-colonialism at play within the memories I have shared, we cannot assume this is a truth; assuming colonialism is ever present can become a form of neo-colonialism founded on Eurocentric and Western ideals and epistemology. Nevertheless, recalling and reflecting on the stories, alongside my reading, has highlighted how a latent neo-colonialism appears to cast its shadow over many aspects of our partnership, mainly around knowledge and material inequalities. I therefore feel it is important to examine the possibility of neo-colonialism in more detail.[81]

Consequently, this section uproots the rhizomatic threads that were brought to the surface in the previous chapter and examines them within a wider colonial setting. I begin with a brief look back on Africa's colonial past and its impact on active citizenship and African schooling. Following this, I discuss the current Ghanaian curriculum, specifically the place of GCE and criticality, aware that the majority of research around GCE has focused on the Global North, with minimal attention being given to education systems in the Global South (Angyagre and Quainoo, 2019). The place and power of silence is then considered before summarising possible knowledge and material inequalities within ISPs. The relational and socio-emotional aspects of our ISP are then reflected on, before sharing my own shift in thinking as

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[81]It is interesting to note that the term 'neo-colonialism' was coined by a former Ghanaian prime minister, Kwame Nkrumah (Nkrumah, 1965).

teacher and researcher. I conclude the chapter by highlighting the conflicting interrelationships of selves.

The impact of colonialism on active citizenship in Africa

Before examining the place of GCE in the current Ghanian curriculum, I believe it is important to look back at the wider colonial history. This helps to provide some context and is also an attempt to address the singularity of a Western and Eurocentric present (Sousa Santos, 2007). Ghana has the distinction of being deeply involved in the transatlantic slave trade that colonial powers ruled for over a century. It was the first of the African nations to gain independence from European colonialism and it also has a long history and association with Pan-Africanism[82]. Despite the abolition of the slave trade and independence, postcolonialists argue that the legacy of the colonial story lives on through the everyday storied lives of many black African people. For centuries, Africans were forced to live in subservience to foreign political domination which was exerted through violence, humiliation and intimidation. The power relations of colonialism thus dominated all aspects of life including the political, economic, cultural and, ultimately, the psychological (Parashar and Schulz, 2021). Postcolonialism notes how colonialism systematically eroded active citizenship in Africa through purposefully disarming African people of their confidence and personal agency (Chando, 2021). At independence, leaders of young African countries had only the legacy of a European and neoliberal governance as a model of state and government. The major focus of many new leaders was "the pursuit and achievement of development" (Nwozor et al., 2021, p7), a model steeped in colonial principles, oppression and individualism, and which failed to respond to the needs of the newly independent nations and the majority of African people. Such leaders were often those 'trained' by colonisers which created a dichotomy between them and their fellow Africans[83]. In a discussion around decolonialisation, Pillay and Karsgaard (2022) emphasise the complexities of distinguishing between the colonised and coloniser, highlighting that "those who may

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[82]For many in the Diaspora, African heritage is continental, rather than ethnic or nation specific.

[83] So as not to homogenise Africa's post-independence experience, it should be noted that some nations reacted against Western individualism and pursued more communal philosophies, for example Tanzania and Kenya.

be oppressed under one set of circumstances can become the colonisers in another"
(p. 8).

Chando (2021) argues that the active citizenship required of democracy has been
undermined, suppressed and eroded by colonialism, rather than nurtured and
reconstructed. He claims that colonialism brought with it forms of political
governance that have significantly impacted Africa's political psyche today and that
active citizenship, as a quintessential democratic norm, is therefore lacking in Africa.
Postcolonial thinking acknowledges that centuries of exploitation, through global
trade and power, have made autonomy and agency difficult tasks within the African
context (Swanson, 2007; Matsagopane and Luo, 2023). In this sense, independence
has continued to "marginalise and alienate communities through Western-driven
development approaches and values" (Brown et al., 2023, p. 4), thus creating a 'new
imperialism' (Pashby, 2012) and neo-colonialism. Boatcă (2021) agrees that a
continued coloniality of power of the Global North has engendered the coloniality of
citizenship in the Global South, believing that "contemporary forms of citizenship are
tied to histories of expulsion of indigenous and aboriginal groups across the 'Global
South', alongside far-reaching systems of slavery, indentureship and their associated
global migrations" (p. 14).

In light of this analysis, I feel it is worthwhile to now take some time to consider how
such a coloniality of citizenship has impacted on African education, and more
specifically, Ghanaian education.

The colonial legacy on African education

In pre-colonial sub-Saharan Africa, indigenous education (and social welfare) was
organised and community-driven (Brown et al., 2023). It included aspects of
citizenship and focused on specific societal values and norms (Angyagre and
Quainoo, 2019; Parejo et al., 2022). Much? Colonial schooling was based on a
Western system of individuality, which was at a disconnect with many African
traditional communal belief systems, and it excluded indigenous knowledges and
methods of learning that had previously been in place (Gearon et al., 2021; Nnama-
Okechukwu and McLaughlin, 2022; Adu and Olowu, 2022; Matsagopane and Luo,

2023), including criticality (Angyagre and Quainoo, 2019). As such, postcolonialists believe that the Eurocentric education system of the colonisers served as a powerful instrument of cultural imperialism which educated people without any emic perspective (Parashar and Schulz, 2021; Reinhard, Drerup, 2019). Following independence, governments across African countries prioritised education, elementary schooling[84] based on Western education expanded and attendance quickly rose (Manning, 2021; Matasci et al., 2021). With this in mind, alongside the synthesis of the three Movements, I now explore how this colonial past has influenced present-day schooling in Ghana, and more specifically, our partner school.

BEING: A neo-colonial present

A contemporary Ghanaian curriculum

More than half a century has passed since Ghana was declared an independent country and in the present day there is no visible colonial rule. However, in many schools across Africa, the colonial and missionary heritage is still visible (Bourn, 2014; Angyagre, 2020; Matasci, 2021) and glimpses of this can be observed in our partner school. For example, this can be seen in the uniforms, marching into classes while singing hymns, using English as the language for schooling and the general delivery of the curriculum. Many of the exercise books used by pupils have a picture of (a very young!) Queen Elizabeth or Lady Diana on their front covers.

Mignolo (2011) describes the 'geopolitics of knowledge' as a subset of colonialism, positing that all knowledge systems are situated within power relations that are historically constituted. Critics agree that power hierarchies remain embedded across education systems today (see, for example, the works of Freire, Spivak and Andreotti), alongside an 'annulment of Otherness' (Parra, 2016, cited in Druker-Ibáñez and Cáceres-Jensen, 2022). This indicates that the historical modernising mission continues to promote homogenous Eurocentric and Western ideologies. In discussions around the new Ghanaian curriculum, it has been referred to as 'activity-based' and 'child-centred' by colleagues in Ghana, with one teacher adding that "it

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[84]*Sukuu*, the Twi word for school derives from the English word. Before colonial rule, education was more communal and did not require a school building.

looks like that of the UK this time". Having read through parts of the curriculum, I was also left wondering if it had been based on a UK curriculum and adapted. Research confirms that Ghana is repeatedly reforming a curriculum that brings with it Western assumptions and models of schooling which are ill-suited to the economic and social needs of the country (MacBeath, 2010). The new curriculum does not take account of the infrastructure of many Ghanaian schools[85] (Aboagye and Yawson, 2020; Angyagre, 2020) and it lacks a response to the needs of students[86] (Gyamera and Burke, 2018 cited in Owusu-Agyeman and Amoakohene, 2020).

GCE in the Ghanaian curriculum

Prior to the new curriculum, elements of GCE were taught through Citizenship Education (or Civics) in Ghanaian primary schools. It now features predominately under the 'Our World/Our People' section of the revised Ghanaian National Curriculum Framework (2019). In the revised curriculum, GCE continues to reflect the 'lingering impacts of colonialism' (Angyagre, 2020, p. 328) and 'the increasing neoliberal grip on government education policy' (ibid. p. 333). Similar to Angyagre's observations, decolonialists posit that current?modern education is indeed situated within the normative principles and values of a Western hegemonic system and that this includes a Western knowledge and understanding of GC. They warn that this can act as a form of neo-colonialism and highlight the 'unconscious aspect' (Willinsky, 1998 cited in Pashby, 2012) of imperialism's educational project: an act of intellectual and/or epistemological colonisation which tacitly advances Western perspectives over all others; an 'epistemic violence' (Spivak, 1988) or 'epistemicide' (Santos, 2018).

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[85]Many of the curriculum outcomes assume access to the internet and so it will be interesting to see how curriculum policy transfers to practice, particularly in the many rural schools where resources such as laptops, internet access and electricity are often limited.

[86]Tagoe et al. (2022) provide a thorough account of lifelong education trajectories and futures in Ghana, highlighting the need to move away from the neoliberal Western models of education and to situate learning in an ideology based on social justice, equality and inclusion.

Indeed, Del Mar (2012) notes that within the Ghanaian secondary curriculum, indigenous practices have been denigrated, with a tendency to glorify the colonial past rather than looking more critically at its negative impacts (cited in Angyagre, 2020). The violence of a colonial history appears to be erased in Ghanaian secondary schools (Angyagre and Quainoo, 2019). My own limited experience of working in a Ghanaian primary classroom would suggest the same. Having observed Ghanaian primary textbooks, I have noted the absence of colonialism within the Ghanaian school curriculum. Reference to colonialism is (re)presented from the point of view as to how Ghana became an independent nation (see Appendix 6). There is no mention of the impact that the years of colonialism and imperial expansion had on Ghanaian (Gold Coast) people or their culture. Neither do there appear to be lessons that create space for criticality…

Criticality

And yet critical thinking is a core global competence within the Ghanaian NCR. Even so, recent research suggests that most teachers in Ghana do not (yet) encourage such criticality in their teaching (Parejo et al., 2022). The traditional Ghanaian social studies curriculum (where GCE sits) focuses more on inculcating a set of attitudes[87] and values in pupils around uniformity and conformity, rather than fostering the critical thinking required in active citizenship (Angyagre, 2020; Angyagre and Quainoo, 2019). Such an outlook reflects a rather deficit model of transmissive education, where the citizen is taught to be 'obedient, deferential and compliant' (Jickling and Wals, 2007). Indeed, active participation in globalization is unequally distributed (Scheunpflug, 2023) and, as discussed in the opening paragraphs of this

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[87]Ghanaian academic, Angyagre, notes that the traditional Ghanaian curriculum promotes attitudes of respect for authority, obedience, efficiency, fairness, honesty and self-control (among others). In 1993, the National Commission for Civic Education promoted democratic and constitutional values for Ghanaian people. Much of my wider reading (both fact and fiction) also reflects a strong emphasis on respect and duty to elders and the community within African cultures. The National Development of Planning Commission (2016) focuses on developing skill sets that will enhance the participation of Ghanaian students in the global economy.

chapter, this may relate to the historical focus on social cohesion and unity within many citizenship education programmes following postcolonial rule[88].

It was interesting to note in my CCGL research that teachers in Ghana ranked criticality as a low priority within GCE. They talked of a GCE that reflected a focus on social responsibility, supporting research which reports similar findings among teachers in Nigeria and Ghana (Adu and Olowu, 2022; Angyagri and Quainoo, 2019). Despite the low ranking of criticality in the research activity, all the teachers from Ghana were familiar with the term and recognised its place in the curriculum, particularly in our partnership work. We were filmed by an online global citizenship magazine when our partner school's teachers visited in 2019, and criticality was something that we discussed before and during filming[89]. It was evident in everyday classroom practice too, both in Scotland and in Ghana, as we discussed SDG related issues with pupils.

Several studies on senior high school students in central Ghana recommend that more active and critical citizenship is needed both within and outwith school regarding environmental (Potakey et al., 2022) and social justice issues (Angyagre and Quainoo, 2019), advocating that more critical pedagogies are required to develop a more democratic Africa (Chando, 2021). Chando refers to the work of Edelstein (2011) who recognises the importance of teaching co-operation, shared responsibility and the capacity to view the world from multiple perspectives, as opposed to the neoliberal focus of prosperity and preparing young people for service to the economy.[90] Angyagre (2020) claims neoliberalism is a driving force across the Ghanaian curriculum and proposes that this has contributed to a sense of the aforementioned civic apathy among Ghanaian youth.

Drawing on the analysis above, the rhizomatic reflections in this thesis suggest that this can change, and that ISPs could play a role in this change. As discussed in

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[88]This was pursued by many African governments to address the political and ethnic divisions that the colonial project left. In 1961 the Nkrumah Ideological Institute promoted teaching about freedom as a form of civic education in Ghana. In 1969 the African Social Studies Programme (ASSP) was established which promoted social studies as a school subject across many African countries.

[89] See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=54iSBj3hd0g).

[90] One should note that the same tension could be said to permeate the Scottish curriculum.

Movement C: The Weed of Colonialism, my prior research has noted teachers in Ghana taking a more critical and 'writerly' approach (Martin, 2010) towards planning and teaching collaborative project work. This has led to a practical application of student-centred, active and co-operative methodologies within GCE. Similar findings have been identified among student teachers in Ghana (Parejo et al., 2022). Both studies also indicate some moves away from the 'obedient, deferential and compliant' Ghanaian citizen towards a citizen who cares about, and takes action on, civic matters.

Furthermore, while research confirms 'colonial relations of power' (Pashby et al., 2023, p. 5) within ISPs, the stories and rhizomatic reflections within this thesis suggest a willingness to challenge neoliberal power structures. Yes, the Movements confirm that I hold power as the white Western teacher holding the Western money. However, in *Story 1: The newspaper men*, this power was challenged vocally and loudly. And in *Story 6: Great expectations?,* it may have been challenged through silence. I believe it is worth considering the place and power of silence.

The place and power of silence

Santos (2018) discusses 'ecologies of knowledges' and reminds us that different knowledges relate differently to power struggles and as such raise different issues which need to be listened to and reflected on. This thesis posits that we need to learn to listen to silences and interact with them, rather than ignoring them or talking over them, with a view to acknowledging and resolving potential inter-relational conflicts. Silence is powerful; it can both connect and distance people. This paradoxical relationship of positive and negative silence is recognised in research. A rhizomatic approach encourages thinking about power relations in new ways through deconstructing the traditional binary of voice/silence and good/bad. Jackson (2023) introduces the term 'rhizovocality', which accepts that vocality and silence are "detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modification… In their *becoming*, vocalizations are not reaching for a more full, complete, coherent status; rather they are opening up territory…" (cited in Facca and Kinsella, 2023). Hanna's (2022) work on silence focuses on the relationship between teachers and pupils, but many of her

observations could apply to adult relationships. She quotes the work of Glenn (2004) who notes that "silence can deploy power; it can defer to power" (p. 18). One example is the manifestation of silence in resistance and defiance to power. Another is the conception of silence as a refuge for dignity as a medium of power. One or neither observations may apply to Faith's initial silence in *Story 6: Great expectations?*, but I like to think that both do! It is interesting to note that the silences referred to in the stories lie around the inequalities within our partnership, specifically knowledge and material inequalities. I now go on to summarise these inequalities within a post-colonial context.

Inequalities

Material inequality

Having acknowledged and reflected on material inequalities within our school partnership, this thesis proposes a 'restorative justice' (Leonard, 2012) approach to ISPs. The approach draws on Ghanaian academic Quist-Adade and van Wyk's (2007) 'reassessment justice' which can be viewed as 'trading' or 'rebalancing' and an alternative to charity. Similarly, Nadler and Halabi (2006 cited in Brown et al., 2023) differentiate between 'autonomy-orientated help' and 'dependency-orientated help'; the former providing resources or skills for those in need to help themselves, and the latter providing aid that leaves the recipient repeatedly dependent on others. Proponents of a more restorative justice approach posit that viewing the '3As' (aid, assistance and action) as something restorative can create empowerment to schools in the Global South, who determine what is needed, thus respecting the school's autonomy, capabilities, values and practices.

My thinking since *Story 1: The newspaper men* has shifted, and I now believe that a school requesting resources need not always come from a paternalistic place. Rather, it may come from a sense of power and self-belief, where power is distributed rather than held on to, and with a view to creating more equity within an ISP. Could it be that the difference between 'charity' and 'restorative justice' is more about the place it is given *from*; giving from a place of empathy, rather than a place

of pity and giving from a place of social justice, rather than a place of supremacy? I am beginning to think that it could. And perhaps this is what the newspaper men in *Story 1* were looking for – a restoration of justice.

Knowledge inequality

Reflecting on the Movements has highlighted a dominant Western narrative within our ISP, in which Western knowledge 'counts' more than non-Western knowledge. Postcolonialists stress the need for the everyday experiences of all civilisations to be considered if we are to address global inequalities (Pieniazek, 2020; Wakunuma et al., 2021; Andreotti, 2006). Many academics recognise the need for, and the potential of, working with indigenous knowledges to enhance knowledge co-production, allow new knowledges to emerge and to ensure knowledges that are more globally-informed (Wakunuma et al., 2021; Swanson, 2007; Mitova, 2023). This includes listening to and engaging with indigenous and community-based knowledges in an effort to "rebuild what was destroyed and to build what doesn't yet exist" (Mignolo, 2011, p. 109). I note that postcolonialism may be critiqued for overemphasising colonial history and neglecting the precolonial histories and knowledges of communities. In response to this, it is worth considering some precolonial and indigenous knowledges of Western Africa in relation to ISPs (and GCE more widely).

Many indigenous African knowledges centre around the communal; the emphasis being on harmony over individualism, and relationality over rationality (Biesta et al., 2022; Brown et al., 2023). Many indigenous African knowledges are based on balancing the analytical mind with the feeling mind (Van Norren, 2022) and seek moral and social harmony (Swanson, 2007). In contrast, many Western knowledge paradigms are based on reasoning, verification and linear cause-result thinking. Discourses around educational frameworks that consider African wisdoms, traditions and knowledges are gaining momentum in the field of GCE, and their potential role in addressing the needs of global concerns and modern societies is being acknowledged (Assie-Lumumba, 2017; Chando, 2021; Pieniazek, 2020; Swanson, 2007). Examples include: 'baraza' (Chando, 2021), 'ondjabi' (Brown et al., 2023), 'botho' (Matsagopane and Luo, 2023) and 'ubuntu' (Assié-Lumumba, 2017). All these

ways of being and knowing emphasise values around empathy, reciprocity, humanity and dignity within the community. The latter, ubuntu, is currently gaining recognition in the field as a narrative for contextualising GCE, and not just across African countries. Assié-Lumumba (2017) argues that 'ubuntu' can provide a dialogue between African and European education systems. Van Norren (2022) posits that taking an ubuntu approach to the SDGs could shift the European modernist focus on individuality, growth and the separation of nature and humans, towards a less hierarchical focus based on community and collective agency. Furthermore, Swanson (2007) suggests that ubuntu opens up spaces for more democratic, ethical and egalitarian engagements and encourages the co-operation and mutual understanding that is necessary for a sustainable future (see Appendix 8). This research highlights the importance of listening to one another in order to 'unlearn' and suggests more informal spaces to open up dialogue and build relationships. This is discussed more fully next.

BECOMING: A decolonial future

Reconceptualising knowledges

This thesis proposes intentionally listening to non-Western knowledges and engaging with them; not just to create more equality, but also as a step towards decolonising ISPs and unsettling the Western hegemonic conceptions of GCE. Indeed, not engaging with indigenous[91] knowledges and understandings of citizenship insinuates a form of 'epistemic exclusion' (Fúnez-Flores, 2022), reflecting Mignolo's (2011) notions on systematic invalidation of Indigenous knowledges which he describes as a 'coloniality of knowledge'. Postcolonialism views epistemological freedom as a prerequisite for decolonisation; it challenges the assumptions that Western ways of knowing and doing are superior and emphasises the importance of including multi-cultural knowledges. Furthermore, decolonialism stresses that more knowledge is not enough to demobilise modern/colonial thinking; thinking needs to

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[91]There is increasing literature around the richness and diversity of indigenous and local knowledges (ILK). Very generally speaking, ILKs are complex, adaptive and dynamic in nature. They often link society and nature through place and are grounded in holistic understandings of reality, where the environmental, cultural and spiritual are integrated (Druker-Ibáñez and Cáceres-Jensen, 2022).

be challenged at an ontological level where tensions, violences and contradictions can be exposed and analysed (Pashby and Costa, 2021) through 'epistemic disobedience' (Mignolo, 2009). Resisting the universalist discourse of the Global North, a decolonial approach to GCE acknowledges the pluriversality of more southern and indigenous ways of thinking, seeing, knowing and being; a working towards a 'recentring of subjugated knowledges' (Santos, 2018), and creating a 'richness of repertoire' for acts of citizenship (Jakimów, 2022). Decolonialism can therefore be viewed as both resurgent, reviving knowledges and ways of being, and insurgent, intervening and creating to build more communal futures (Mignolo, 2011).

In many respects, the 'moments of sharedness' discussed in Movement B reflect elements of African knowledges and understanding. For example, in *Story 5: A spiritual belonging*, I highlighted a spiritual connection. A spiritual aspect is neglected in much traditional (Western) critical education. Yet across many indigenous epistemologies the spiritual plays a fundamental role and cannot be separated from the physical or psychological (Zavala, 2016). This includes the beliefs of the Akan people of Ghana. The 'moments of sharedness' focused more on the 'we' and less on the 'I' as they centred on the feeling mind (Van Norren, 2022) and harmony (Swanson, 2007). It was interesting to observe the effect of the moments on teacher relationships. The moments reflected a sense of comm*unity*; a coming together. They also involved the personal selves and feelings, and they took place in informal places rather than the school buildings. I now go on to discuss the relational and socio-emotional aspects of our ISP in more detail.

Relational and socio-emotional aspects

The power of informal spaces

Inclusive spaces are important for building critical and ethical engagement around different perspectives (Pashby and Costa, 2021; Druker-Ibáñez and Cáceres-Jensen, 2022). More specifically, ISP research identifies 'places of displacement' as

a type of supportive 'Third space' (Bhabha, 1994) where teachers can meet and sensitively discuss more challenging issues such as colonial history and power (Martin and Griffiths, 2012; Martin and Wyness, 2013). The aim of such spaces is to interrupt colonial thinking and behaviour patterns. Whilst the importance of informal spaces has guided my thinking from the outset of this study, what is now clear is that regarding informal spaces as 'spaces of displacement' may be less threatening than formal ones and more conducive for mutual learning to happen. This thesis has emphasised the impact of informal settings on teacher (un)learning and colonial thinking within ISPs. Moreover, it identifies informal spaces as potential assemblages for affective encounters; places where sociocultural (mis)understandings can be informally (un)learned through 'earnest interactions' (Le Bourdon, 2020). In her study of children's GCE learning, Le Bourdon highlights informal spaces and times, such as the children's 'down' time, as places of 'earnest interactions'. Like Folkes (2022), Le Bourdon observes that children experience more self-reflexivity and critical thinking in the spaces in between structured learning activities, noting that "they can consider their own positionality more deeply while also analysing wider power structures through the freedom of contemplation and relaxed discussion" (p. 407).

Similar to 'earnest interactions', this thesis has emphasised 'moments of sharedness' as being potentially transformative. Pashby and Costa (2021) describe a transformative global citizen as being "reflexive in understanding themselves as intricately connected to people and issues across different scalar boundaries" (p. 4). The 'moments of sharedness' discussed in Movement B suggest that ISPs can help to create such connection and self-reflexivity. The stories have highlighted that it is in the informal places during 'down' time, such as sharing a coffee in a shopping centre or chatting on a veranda late in the evening, that deep rooted assumptions and stereotypical thinking have naturally come to the surface and been gently challenged. This corroborates the work of Robinson-Miles (2017 cited in Morrison, 2020) who acknowledges the importance of teachers having time to meet informally to develop friendships. Movement B suggests that it is in the informal places and moments that personal and lasting friendships can develop; where the personal Self is more likely to be fore-fronted, as opposed to the professional Self.

Friendships and emotions

Within the previous chapter, I make comment that it is through *knowing* Stephen and Faith personally, beyond the restrictions of a solely professional relationship, that I come to my own conclusions around their actions. I have no evidence to justify my thinking, other than a feeling through knowing them outwith school and research settings. I realise that this is not the researchly way of reaching conclusions, although intuition as a way of knowing is acknowledged by some scholars (see McLaughlin, 2003). Nevertheless, this thesis shows that ISPs can be emotional and that the teachers involved in them can develop strong friendships which leave "an imprint on the hearts and minds" (Edge and Khamsi, 2012, p. 468). More recent research recognises that, alongside informal spaces, emotions and friendships play a significant but understated role in the process of (global) belonging (Le Bourdon, 2020 and 2021; Morrison, 2020). My own prior research remarks that teachers in interviews spoke more about personal relationships and emotions than professional aspects and the word 'love' was referred to even more so in the (more informal) WhatsApp thread (Reid, 2022). I would even go so far as to use the term 'love' to describe the friendship I have with the director of the Ghanaian school, whom I often refer to as my 'Ghanaian mum'. Interestingly, Alejandro (2021) proposes an alternative to the more socio-cognitive descriptions of love, defining it as "a **dispositif** led by transformative individual experiences and characterised by unifying social forces that reconfigure social organisation through the establishment of non-discriminative relationships, thereby overcoming group divisions" (p. 8).

Regardless of our definition of love, this thesis has reinforced that both love and friendships involve sharing experiences and being involved in shared experiences, and that this can be emotional – and, at times, transformative. Alejandro's description of love emphasises the transformative power of sharedness… as part of a becoming process… a way to engage with difference[92] through do-ing and be-ing

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[92]Within the field of GCE, De Souza [2012] (2014) points out the attempt to negotiate difference, at a supranational level. He highlights phrases such as 'intercultural understanding' and 'intercultural dialogue', stating that such phrases hint at assumed universal agreements of citizenship concepts and knowledge in general. These are familiar terms in ISP literature where there appears to be an underlying emphasis on 'learning about difference', 'learning from difference' and 'being taught by difference' (Stein, 2020). Indeed, many UK policy documents on GCE continue to reflect a liberal multiculturalist approach to culture, where

with the Other. Perhaps academia has placed too much emphasis on striving to know the Other and not given enough value to just *being* with the Other. It is through being with the Other that I have come to know the Other (and myself) better, but not completely. And it is through *being* with the Other, and *engaging* with difference, that has shifted my thinking and encouraged me to 'unlearn' and 'relearn'.

My 'unlearning' journey

At the beginning of the thesis journey, I had assumed I was seeking more knowledge through learning. Instead, I have followed routes of 'unlearning' and, in doing so, reconceptualised what knowledge means to me. Many of the Akan aphorisms have resonated with my Christian beliefs and personal values. Like rhizomatic roots, both my beliefs and values are entwined; I do not know where one begins and the other ends. I now view knowledges in a similar way, in that they may not always be set apart, individual and linear; sometimes they can be relational and communal; moving, coming together and twisting round one another, co-creating new knowledges. The roots of knowledges grow, are never finished/certain, continually reconceptualising… always becoming… Therefore, my refreshed understanding of knowledge is that deep knowledge sits hand-in-hand with movement and action. Such a notion is common to the Indigenous knowledges I have learned about.[93] My reflections reflected back at me suggest that I now seek to become 'knowing-with' through relationships with knowing subjects rather than 'knowing-about' subjects and objects (Santos, 2018). To me, 'knowing-with' implies 'heart knowledge' (my own term) meaning something deeper – deeper relationships and deeper understanding through lived-experiences – something more akin to wisdom. More 'knowledge-about' implies (to me) a more static 'intellect knowledge' which does not necessarily

difference is depoliticised, and poverty is looked at only in economic terms (Andreotti, 2008). I now understand how such simplified assumptions can appear to privilege us-and-them binary thinking and the static notion of identity that postcolonialism strives to challenge (De Souza, [2012] (2014). Difference is more complicated and nuanced.

[93]It is also part of ancient Jewish thinking: Western society makes the distinction between knowing and doing. However, there was no distinction in ancient Jewish thought; knowing was doing and doing was knowing.

lead to the same place. My journey of 'unlearning' has emphasised the importance of the 'mate masie' described in the introduction of this chapter. It has encouraged me to be more considerate of the perceptions of others and to '*consider and keep what I learn*'. 'Mate masie', alongside so many of the adinkra aphorisms highlighted in this study, distinguishes between knowledge and wisdom. The more indigenous emphasis on community, and listening closely, appears to encourage wisdom as opposed to merely passing on knowledges. My understanding now is that wisdom is multiple/collective/bigger – something that takes account of, and empathises with, other knowledges – whereas knowledge now appears to be something more individual…

Returning to the theme of the garden, transforming a garden requires hard work, as well as action. As does the transformation of Self. Writing this thesis has not always been comfortable. Discomfort has been experienced, sometimes in the writing and sometimes in the reading back of my writing. My supervisor encouraged me to 'read critically' and listen to myself listening (de Souza, 2012). Reading over and listening to my memory stories has exposed a dominant Western power at play in the shadows of our partnership. Despite this shadow of colonialism, there is also light. This supports the work of Mignolo (2011) who claims that the shadow requires light to become visible and that the light side is only possible because of the dark. Just as we need light to find and examine the roots of plants, we need light to shine on and explore the darker, hidden shades of our thinking. Working through the feelings of discomfort has been a transformative process; it has brought to the surface and challenged my own deep underlying assumptions of universal Western ways and thinking.

Unlearning postcolonialism

Re-reflecting on the stories within the Movements, alongside postcolonial literature, has challenged my thinking and helped me to 'unlearn' my original understanding of postcolonialism. My current research stance remains a postcolonial one; less centred on Eurocentric and Western thinking, but not turning completely against it either, for the sake of making a (postcolonial) point. Moreover, I no longer view

postcolonialism as something purely focused on post-colonialism. It is not as simplistic, nor as tightly defined, as my original initial reductionist thinking. My altered stance recognises the complexities of postcolonialism and includes decolonialism.

Contrary to de Souza's [2012] (2014) thinking around assumed universal agreements of citizenship, Drerup (2019) challenges post and decolonial theory, arguing that they often overlook the idea that many of the values and ideals that it criticizes can also be found outside of the Western tradition. Drerup postulates that rejecting ideals merely because of their Western origin reinforces the same Western imperialist values and ideals that it criticizes – the colloquial phrase 'cutting off one's nose to spite one's face' comes to mind. Indeed, the stories within Movement B highlight many possible shared values and partial ideals, which could be argued as being neither Western nor non-Western, merely being human. However, I cannot *assume* shared values and ideals. Drerup (2019) goes on to put forward a universalist conception of GCE, including epistemological universalism, arguing that different forms of knowledge acquisition *can* be integrated into a transcultural and universal epistemology which is grounded in human nature and a shared objective reality. Across the Movements, I recognise elements of shared knowledges and understandings/moments of sharedness, and can agree with what Drerup is suggesting. However, in *Movement B: Beyond the garden walls*, I highlight a cautionary note in that we can never fully know the Other, nor even the Self.

Postcolonialism is critical of modernity and essentialist notions and holds a more fluid understanding of identity that is hybrid and allows for more than one identity. As this thesis demonstrates, our identities are not static/fixed (de Souza, 2012, 2014) and we are continually evolving and being transformed through our experiences. So, while I agree that most people may share a common humanity, I am not convinced that humanity could ever agree a finite shared 'objective reality', as we are ever-changing selves, situated in different and ever-changing contexts and roles, constantly in a process of becoming. Similar to the work represented in Andreotti et al.'s '*Postcolonial Perspectives on Global Citizenship Education*' (2012), I now view postcolonialism as something more nuanced and dualistic, where both the historical and present Self/Selves can exist side by side and take an ethical stance towards the Other. Such an interpretation reflects elements of Appiah's cosmopolitan ethics, as discussed in *Chapter One: Roots and conceptions of GCE*.

Conflicting interrelationships of selves

Le Bourdon (2021) reminds us that our understanding of our own cosmopolitan Self is one that exists in the mind, shaped by imaginary identities and our own reflections/perceptions of belonging. Similarly, Andreotti and de Souza's (2008) work, which draws on Bhabha's (1994) relational construction of identities and Spivak's (1999) notion of 'learning to unlearn', highlights how our construction of identity (and knowledges) is influenced through "making connections between the socio-historical processes and encounters that have shaped our contexts and cultures" (p. 28). They go on to emphasise that 'learning to unlearn' is also about becoming more aware of the internal differences and conflicts that exist in all social groups and how this demonstrates "a dynamic and conflictual production of meaning in a specific context" (p. 28). Again, Le Bourdon (2021) observes similar internal conflict within the transformative process of (global) belonging, which she describes as a "personal, fluid and often contradictory process" (p. 32).

The conflicting interrelationships between others and ourselves extends to me as researcher-writer as I negotiate multiple, shifting and interconnected identities as researcher, teacher and the personal 'me'. As I write this thesis, I catch myself being a living contradiction too; like Stephen and Faith, my formal (researcher and/or teacher) Self is not always reflected back to me as I read over drafts of my informal personal Self's writing. But both are valid and true to me. Folkes (2022) notes the impact of informal spaces on the reflexivity of the researcher, referring to them as the 'waiting field'. In a similar vein, I now wonder if it is when we are in the in-between and informal spaces, or the waiting fields, when we are relaxed and not acting out a particular Self – not 'performing' (as the teacher, the researcher or the researched) – that the more personal (and mixed/hidden?) thoughts and feelings are brought to the surface. Perhaps it is in the in-between-ness that we become… whether in-between spaces and/or in-between identities.

Summary

This chapter has emphasised the very real material inequalities that remain in South-North ISPs, highlighting the place from which giving comes from as an important consideration. Inequality around whose knowledge 'counts' has also been identified, even within our own 'successful' partnership. The chapter has exposed only a cursory nod to the violence of a colonial past in the Ghanaian curriculum, and the same could be said of the Scottish curriculum. Perhaps it is too shameful to mention… However, I worry that an education that remains silent contributes to 'the sociology of absences' (Santos, 2018). I worry that an education that stands still in this position "elides the history of imperial politics that has shaped the current world system" (Jefferess, 2008, p. 30) and allows the weeds of colonialism to quietly grow around it, creating a shadow. Similar to Derrida's ghosts[94] in 'Specters of Marx' (1994), I worry that *not* learning about colonialism allows a spirit of colonialism to continue to (silently?) haunt us; where essentialist assumptions pervade our souls/selves and influence hidden thoughts, even if they never surface as intentional thoughts or words, and where inequalities remain unacknowledged and/or unchallenged in the background.

This chapter has highlighted the teleological futures associated with modern/colonial thinking. More hopefully though, it has also highlighted the place and power of criticality within the decolonial project. There have been elements of deep-rooted underlying assumptions being challenged, and thinking transformed, through 'unlearning'. More specifically, the glimpses of transformed teacher thinking have often appeared in the informal spaces and through more informal relationships. This chapter therefore positions ISPs as potential contexts for 'unlearning' and/through engaging with difference.

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[94]Derrida discusses the spectre of communism in depth, comparing its presence to a 'haunting' of Europe.

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Introduction

This alphabet Adinkra symbol represents being knowledgeable. However, the translation of the Twi aphorism emphasises that book knowledge and wisdom are two separate things, and that knowledge can be gained outside of formal schooling. It accentuates the importance of being a good listener because there is much knowledge to be gained from listening to others.

This thesis has highlighted that the knowledge and ways of being/knowing, promoted through ISPs, can perpetuate a form of neo-colonialism. Across the Movements, there are hints of an underlying colonial shadow at play; a deep-rooted and quietly invasive weed that has now blended into the landscape. It may go unnoticed, it may occasionally be cut back, but it is difficult to uproot. This study has reflected that part of the difficulty may be due to the dormant colonial shadows that lie within us all, including within me as researcher. Furthermore, the thesis has demonstrated that the transformative process of 'unlearning' is not always a comfortable one. Having our worldviews and deep-rooted assumptions brought to the surface, and challenged, forces us to examine our inner selves – the parts that others may not see. The research has reflected that 'unlearning' is not a quick fix. It is a becoming process which involves listening to the Other. Moreover, this study suggests that teacher 'unlearning' is a crucial process if ISPs, and the learning and teaching experiences within them, are to become more decolonial. As teachers' thinking becomes more decolonial, we are surely in a stronger position to challenge/disempower the dominating neoliberal discourse through empowering and equipping pupils to critically engage with global problems, such as social injustice and inequalities, and to bring about transformative change in society. This chapter summarises some potential entry points for the ongoing dialogue around decolonising ISPs. Rather

than being a final conclusion, it serves as both a 'gathering together' and a 'scattering abroad' within the ever-evolving garden/field of GCE.

"For man, autumn is a time of harvest, of gathering together.
For nature, it is a time of sowing, of scattering abroad."
(Edwin Way Teale)

Contributions to the field

Unlearning through the personal Self

Chapter One: Roots and conceptions of global citizenship education highlighted the need for a more critical approach to GCE and recognised that teachers are not exempt from forming (neo)colonial underlying assumptions. Literature also indicated the need for a less singular view of knowledge. Working through a critical and reflexive rhizomatic approach has encouraged and enabled me to view knowledge as plural, and something that can be unlearned and relearned, moving towards discovery and disruption, rather than remaining static and confirming. Applying a rhizomatic approach to my stories has demonstrated that 'unlearning' can develop through reflection and self-reflexivity. 'Unlearning' sits within the decolonial process; it is a verb – an ongoing and personal 'becoming' process which relates to all lived experiences and interactions – thinking, language, writing, knowledges, curricula and actions. The thesis has highlighted that 'unlearning' within an ISP context can lead teachers, particularly in the Global North, to reconsider dispositions towards difference. Merely acknowledging and respecting difference though, is not enough to bring about change; we need to embrace and engage with difference through an ethical engagement with the Other. In doing so, we can begin to reflect on different perspectives, knowledges and understandings, and find new ways of understanding the world and our place in it. Through this unlearning, epistemologies and identities can be reconstructed – a necessary process if we are ever to achieve more than the linear neoliberal-liberal 'solutionist' approaches (Pashby and Costa, 2021). If imaginaries are formed through "the myriad memories, experiences, knowledges, beliefs, and behaviours that a person is exposed to directly and indirectly in their lives" (Perry, 2020, p. 577), then this research positions ISPs as holding the potential to create 'imagined' or 'Otherwise' futures (Mignola and Walsh, 2018; Perry, Andreotti et al., 2012).

Furthermore, the study offers some theoretical insight into the significant role of acknowledging, and reflecting on, the *personal* feelings and interactions within ISPs, as opposed to a focus only on the professional Self's responses. Houser (2022) posits that teachers should internalise and develop their own *personal* philosophy

(emphasis my own) of citizenship education which should come about through "deep, ongoing, empirical, intellectual, and ethical search" (p. 3). Of course, deep personal searching (or 'unlearning') cannot be 'done' to teachers; it requires a willingness, an openness. The stories and reflections in this show that more informal places and relationships have the potential to create 'moments of sharedness' among teachers in the Global North and the Global South. Moreover, the stories and reflections suggest that such moments could encourage teachers to become more reflective and consider the perspectives of one another.

Relationships

Transformational approaches to GCE are recognised as a way of opening up new ways of negotiating local and global actions (Shultz, 2007; Andreotti and de Souza, 2012). In this study, we catch glimpses of teacher thinking being transformed through reflection and self-reflexivity, within the 'moments of sharedness'. The thesis highlights the importance and impact of relationships within ISPs, showing that building personal relationships (the glue) is more meaningful and lasting than a formal partnership agreement/contract (the sticky tape). This study suggests that reflecting on lived-experiences as stories of sharedness and rupture, within informal settings, is something that could be considered as part of the ISP process; a more original *self*-evaluation as opposed to the traditional evaluation of activities.

As referred to in Section Two, the term 'decolonising the curriculum' is often referred to in current educational discourses. But, as discussed, if educators are to decolonise the curriculum, we need to do more than just change the content of our curricula. Changes in awareness, or even resources, do not necessarily lead to attitudinal or behavioural changes (Heater, 1999 cited in Brown, 2006; Stein, 2015 cited in Pashby et al., 2023) and so teaching about colonialism and difference is not enough. This thesis has demonstrated that ISPs have the potential to play an important role in the decolonisation project and that they can decolonise/transform teacher thinking through 'unlearning'. The 'unlearning' discussed in this thesis has recognised the impact of active listening, critical reflection and self-reflexivity. Many of the stories within the Movements highlighted the relational and socio-emotional

aspects of engaging with difference through making real and personal connections with one another. Such aspects could then contribute to the understanding of difference as an ethical relationship towards one another, as proposed by Andreotti (2011). The relational and socio-emotional aspects also compliment Zavala's (2016) decolonial research which proposes decolonial educational practices are defined relationally, as opposed to a set of essential qualities. Moreover, the study suggests that rather than the traditional engagement through the professional Self in more formal contexts, there is transformational potential in engaging with difference through the personal Self, in informal settings.

Informal spaces

The importance of reflective spaces for teachers to search, make meaning and develop intercultural relationships is recognised (Martin and Griffiths, 2012; Leonard, 2012; Martin and Wyness, 2013; Bourn, 2014; Flint, 2022). My prior research suggested informal spaces as a reflective 'Third space' (Bhaba, 1994); spaces where hybridity, positionality and the relational construction of Self and Other can be explored. This research has considered a deeper understanding as to why this might be. Through rhizomatic reflections-as-analysis, informal spaces have been highlighted as being relational spaces where socio-emotional aspects are brought to the surface and can be critically and reflexively reflected on. Moreover, the research indicates that deep searches require 'down' time and informal interaction within the informal spaces. Reflecting on Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) concepts of smooth and striated space, the informal spaces could be considered as encouraging freer, more personal and 'nomadic' thinking. Nomadic thinking occurs in the in-between places and moves from idea to idea, like the blurring of colours in a rainbow, finding interrelationships and moving between past, present – and towards the future.

Informal spaces have been recognised as spaces that hold potential for reciprocal and communal interactions and knowledge exchanging, or 'transknowledging' (Biesta et al., 2021) to happen; spaces where power, knowledges and 'ways of doing' can be exchanged. Interestingly, Howitt (2019) notes that relational knowing and being is foregrounded and cultivated in an ISP that emphasises reciprocal

learning. However, the stories within this thesis reflect a slightly different emphasis, suggesting that it is relational knowing and being that cultivates reciprocal learning. At the same time though, a rather paradoxical awareness of *not* hearing my Ghanaian colleagues can be sensed throughout the rhizomatic reflections-as-analysis: in focusing on my own feelings, thoughts and opinions, I have not heard the frustration of the newspaper men… I have not heard the ways of running meetings… I have not heard Faith's silence… These reflections posit that communication and knowledge-exchange are not merely about exchanging questions and answers, highlighting instead the importance of active listening, which includes listening to silences.

Power redistribution

The synthesis from this empirical inquiry suggests that current conceptualisations of the ISP process continue to support top-down power structures and neoliberal governance paradigms, which sustain inequities and injustices. Certainly, the socio-economic conditions of schools ought to be considered. For example, do both schools have access to technology and/or the internet? More importantly though, what do both partner schools, particularly those in the Global South, really need – not just to participate in collaborative projects – but also to function better? If the distribution of power is restricted to the ISP project, then the ISP is surely reduced to another form of neo-colonialism, where the Global North make decisions about (and control) what the Global South school should be allowed – a power *over* others. However, if power is distributed through a more restorative justice lens, it would become power shared *with* and *among* others. This study has suggested that adopting a 'restorative-justice' approach could help decolonise ISPs and create more ethical partnership relationships. In many ways, incorporating this approach into ISPs compliments the critical GCE discussed in section one: the reasoning behind restorative justice is emancipatory in nature and it aims to uncover and address inequalities and exploitation.

Applying a restorative justice approach has the potential to embrace the more communal African ways of being and knowing; for example, 'baraza', 'ondjabi',

'botho' and 'ubuntu', as highlighted in chapter twelve. All these ways of being and knowing emphasise values around empathy, reciprocity, humanity and dignity. However, this study has identified alternative local knowledges as being unacknowledged, or unheard, within ISPs (and GCE more widely). As part of the 'unlearning' process, we surely have an ethical obligation to listen to and learn about/from other knowledges, understandings and ways of being/knowing. This may create disagreement and challenge traditional neo-colonial epistemologies and power matrices of ISPs. However, working from a place of difference and 'epistemological pluralism' (Andreotti, 2010) could help us to better understand local and global inequities, which builds on the discussion in *Chapter Two: The planting and positioning of ISPs*.

Limitations of the research

This thesis has focused on just one partnership between two rural primary schools: one in Scotland and one in Ghana. The limitations of such small-scale research should therefore be noted. The aim of the study has primarily been an exploration of the ISP that I have experienced, and less about making generalisations about ISPs. My role as researcher has been tangled and I have been both outsider and insider researcher, both the researcher and the researched. While I retell stories from a partnership with a school in Ghana, I do not claim to have any great knowledge and/or ways of 'knowing' Ghana; I can only write from my own limited experiences and partial, Western perspectives. This was emphasised through my reading which encouraged me to create 'ethical space'[95] (Ermine, 2007 cited in Sant et al., 2019) through reflection and reflexivity to consider my experiences of/with the Other. Nevertheless, the rhizomatic reflections and writing are still predisposed from a local and Western perspective which is situated in modernity. As such, I acknowledge my limits as a white Western researcher, insofar as I can notice them, writing about global citizenships and international school partnerships.

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[95]Ermine discusses the importance of an 'ethical space' framework, where the limits of the relevance of Western philosophy outside of Western cultures and institutions are recognised.

Implications for future research

Re-searching through personal memory stories has at times left me feeling vulnerable. I have taken encouragement from the work of researchers who have taken a similar approach in different fields, alongside my supervisors. In particular, I have valued the methodological reflections of Ellis and Bochner, Richardson and St Pierre, O'Grady, Honen and Bright. Decolonialists recognise the power of storytelling to challenge "the master storylines of modernity, Eurocentrism, and coloniality" (Zavala, 2016, p. 3). Using memory stories to examine our ISP through a rhizomatic lens has unearthed shifting cultural sensibilities and narratives at play. Through critical rhizomatic analysis, the relational and socio-emotional dimensions of our school partnership and their impact on teacher 'unlearning' has been highlighted. This 'unlearning' includes engaging with difference, but also engaging with sharedness. The stories suggest that partnerships that recognise and acknowledge 'moments of sharedness' can create empathy, self-reflexivity and potentially transform teacher thinking. While Le Bourdon has identified similar findings among children, this is an area that has not been researched in any depth regarding teachers. The place of friendship is absent in ISP literature, a mere 'unintended benefit' (Howitt, 2019). It would appear that the place of emotions and the impact of friendship have been overlooked/underestimated, particularly within the decolonial project. The thesis therefore presents potentiality for future research around the relational and socio-emotional aspects among teachers involved in ISP work. It suggests that there is much to be learned from indigenous ways of thinking, for example ubuntu, which does not denigrate relational and socio-emotional aspects of partnership work.

I hope that the stories within this study are read response-ably and diffractively (Murris and Bozalek, 2019) and stimulate a proliferation of more rhizomatic thinking and becoming. I hope they encourage others to share their experiences (both in the Global South and the Global North) as a way of reflecting on, and engaging with, different knowledges and perspectives. I also hope that researching/writing from a less traditional and more minor stance will make my research more accessible to

people beyond the academic field, and that the stories will be used by researchers, teachers and professional development programmes to develop ISPs and GCE.

A summary using the rainbow as metaphor

This research journey has allowed me to break away from a more traditional thesis structure. In a sense, not being restricted to specific research questions has given me the freedom to be led by the research itself and has often felt like chasing rainbows! It has taught me that a pot of gold need not necessarily lie at the end of the rainbow, but that nuggets can be found as we follow the light. One such nugget is discovering that the research journey has been less about chasing knowledge, and more about becoming wiser. The stories reflected on in this study suggest that there are benefits to finding moments of sharedness. However, the study also suggests that there is potential treasure to be found in engaging with difference. We may look at the same bow in the sky, but we can 'see' it from different angles and through different lenses. Like the colours of a rainbow, we need to embrace and globalise alternative knowledges and engage in meaningful dialogue, without one shade of colour dominating the rainbow; an 'ecology of knowledges' (Santos, 2018) to help us know and understand our world better. If we do not, then we surely restrict the growth of knowledge and understanding, and instead reinforce a monocultural GCE founded on Western epistemology rather than envisioning and creating more 'probable and preferable futures' (Hicks, 2008).

Taking the metaphor further, if the appearance of a rainbow depends on where we stand and where the sun (or other source of light) is shining, then research is also influenced by the researcher's positioning and the positioning of what they are researching. Both are moveable and can change what and how we see. When I researched through a traditional lens for my CCGL research report, it was professional rays of light that were refracted and reflected back to me. When I researched rhizomatically, I saw more personal rays of light. I am aware that my voice and choice of shared experiences, references, language and writing style throws a particular (and partial?) light on its presentation and interpretation. In keeping with my metaphor as rainbow, I strongly encourage you, the reader, to

consider your own position(s) to study what is written; I acknowledge that your gaze may 'see' the rainbow from a different angle and in a different light from mine. It is only through stimulating more questions and rhizomatic connections/thinking that more transformation can happen; where the research becomes something live and encourages change/development, whether in thought and/or action. The (Western) utopia discussed in Section One, or even a 'solidarity understanding of this world' (Scheunpflug, 2023) may not be possible (or welcome), but in listening to and learning from one another, we can experience more decolonial engagements and embrace the indigenous concept of *buen vivir*[96] – harmonious coexistence.

Leaving the garden…

I now view our ISP as a labour of love within a pedagogy of hope. Continual planting, pruning, feeding, and turning over the soil are needed to nurture and maintain a healthy garden, and like a garden, our partnership requires long-term commitment and hard work. The seasons change how the garden looks/feels: at times, certain plants will flourish, others will remain hidden, but they are all ever-present. Despite the threat of harsh elements, our partnership roots remain grounded, and plants continue to grow. As I depart from an ongoing rhizomatic journey, I know that we leave it with roots left unexplored or half hidden, but still living and growing. I have explored just some rhizomatic roots of our partnership. Semetsky (2004) summarises Deleuzian thinking well, stating "[t]here is always a space for further explication, for forming yet another transversal line" (p. 231). But for now, I lay down my tools and lift my eyes upwards and outwards, to enjoy what our entangled roots can create – a beautiful garden, representing life and hope. I now leave the garden, the gate left open for others to visit, explore and add to. This thesis is a rhizome and the stories within it are detachable and modifiable. They are part of an ongoing and diachronic decolonising project. As such, I hope they stimulate further rhizomatic thinking and doing; other lines of flight and new cartographies within the field of ISPs, and critical GCE. So, as indicated in the introduction, this work ends on an open and

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[96]See the work of Gudynas and Acosta, 2011 as referenced by Zavala, 2016. Mignolo (2011) also highlights similar indigenous convivial ways of being and thinking, where living in harmony with one another is more important than individual competition and capitalism.

sustained chord rather than a resolved one. Like the rhizome itself, it plays a small part of a bigger and continually growing assemblage of roots; a small section within a larger composition; a small link in a bigger chain.

Eka xoxoawo nue wogbea yeyeawo do

(This Ewe phrase translates as "*we weave the new ropes where the old ones left off*" – the underlying principle being 'continuity'. It reflects the ubuntu philosophy of everything being connected.)

Reflecting on Self at the end of the research process: a nomadic journey of (my)Self (becoming)
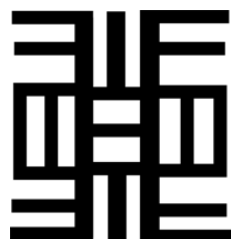
'Nea onnim' symbolises the life-long quest for knowledge, emphasising that only in searching for knowledge can one become wiser. While I have come to understand that there are many knowledges, and ways of seeing and doing, I have also gained more insight as to how I see and do. In many ways, what started out as an exploration of our ISP has resulted in an examination of my own underlying assumptions and dispositions – a mirror exercise rather than just a microscopic one! While exploring relational aspects within our ISP, I have also come to understand myself more, something that Ellis and Bochner (2000) discuss in their writing about autoethnography. I have learned not just through experience or knowledge alone, but through their connection with my own (nomadic) biography and Self (Scheunpflug, 2023). Taking a narrative approach has encouraged reflection and reflexivity, and this has impacted not just on the research, but also my becoming in/through/with it. I am part of the research, and the thesis has become part of my identity, through an assemblage of reading, writing, thinking… and becoming.

Throughout the reading, thinking and writing of the thesis, I have learned to recognise and 'unlearn' some Western privilege (Wyness and Martin, 2013). Spivak (1988) refers to unlearning one's privilege to establish an ethical relationship with difference. When I first started writing my memory stories and related discussions, I believed I had distanced myself from the white Other through an awareness of being the white Other. I rather arrogantly presumed that, because I have been to Ghana numerous times and have a friendship spanning several decades with a few Ghanaian colleagues, I must therefore know everything about them, including their worldviews and how they think (which is something that the original colonisers

probably presumed too!); a colonial way of knowing and perhaps a case of reducing 'being' to 'knowing' too (Andreotti et al., 2021). I did not realise that I was/am part of my own research problem. Mignolo's (2011) words, "I am where I do and think" (p. xvi) struck a chord with me as I began to understand my place within the colonial power matrix. As a researcher, my social and political positionings affect all aspects of my research (Guillemin and Gillam, 2004). Through (re)remembering, (re)writing and (re)reading, many underlying assumptions/biases, inherent in my positionalities, have been exposed and challenged. Writing this thesis has therefore been a journey of unlearning and recentring; a becoming otherwise process which includes the decolonisation of my 'Self' and continues beyond the thesis. Such unlearning and relearning can be described as a form of 'self-resocialisation' which transforms thinking and breaks the social and political order of socialisation (Alejandro, 2020).

Postcolonialism highlights Western expertise that has "colonised not just empires and governance, but knowledges and ways of understanding life and this planet" (Perry, 2020, p. 582). Decolonialism challenges the darker side of research, such as the political and economic interests around research as a commodity (Spivak, 1988; Darder, 2018) and the unspoken fact that it often earns the individual researcher merit and prestige, but not the researched (Lincoln, 1995). Similarly, Santos (2018) points out that epistemologies of the North and the concept of authorship are characterised by modern possessive individualism. This sits in contrast with epistemologies of the South which are seldom traced back to an individual and based on collective experiences and/or memories. As repeatedly acknowledged in the thesis, I am acutely aware of being part of a Western academy. I write in English which is my first language, recognising that language can be a political and contested site for maintaining a Western-Global North-centric GCE (Parmenter, 2018) and an epistemic barrier to decolonial knowledge production (Zavala, 2016). Wakunuma et al. (2021) suggest that one reason why innovation and research from the Global South grounded in non-western practices has remained invisible is because the practices do not apply the vocabulary associated with practices in the

Global North. They discuss the need to reimagine and reconceptualise Responsible Research and Innovation[97] (RRI) from a Global South perspective.

I wanted to incorporate a little of the local language of our partner school, Twi, into the thesis, not as 'exotic value' (Butt, 2011), but in response to the 'tradition of silence' (Anzaldúa, 2012 cited in Shindo, 2021) of non-European languages in traditional academic writing. It is my small attempt to reclaim a minority language and raise awareness of a quietly assumed linguistic imperialism. It is also a token of acknowledgement to the Ghanaian colleagues, academics and friends who have taken the time to engage with my research, both formally and informally. Medasi.

Sɛ yɛka no wɔ kwan foforɔ so a, kasa nyɛ adeɛ bi ara kɛkɛ a yɛde biribi ka ho ba abotene sɛ mmara. Kuro a ɛyɛ yɛn "nyinaa", na nyiyi mu san nso wɔ mu. Kasa di dwuma sɛ ɛpono ano weɛnfoɔ a osi gyianaeɛ fa obi a obetumi de ne ho ahyɛ nkommo twetwe a ɛrekɔso wɔ 'yɛn' kuro no mu nam kwan a yɛfaso de 'yɛn' kasa de dwuma so. Ne saa nti, sɛ yɛretwerɛ biribi afa sɛdeɛ obi betumi ayɛ omanba wɔ pɔtɔ kasa anaa borɔfo kasa mu a biribiara nsi ho kwan sɛ ɛde kasa ho nhyehyeɛ bi ɛto dwa, na ɛda kwan pɔtee bi a obi fa so tumi bɛyɛ omanba adi na wɔn di ho nkommo. Ɛnam akwansideɛ ahodoɔ a ɛba wɔ kasa mu nti, nwuma ahodoɔ a yɛn atwerɛ no wɔ kasa foforɔ mu no, yɛn mfa nni dwuma, na yɛka wɔn a wontumi nka pɔtɔ anaa borɔfo kasa no ano tu mu. Ɛsan sɛ wiase nyinaa de pɔtɔkasa anaa borɔfo kasa no di dwuma nti no, ɛkɔso bu wɔn a wɔyɛ nhwehwɛmu no aba mu sɛ wɔbɛtwerɛ wɔn nwuma wɔ kasa foforɔ mu a ɛnyɛ borɔfo kasa. Abere a borɔfo kasa anaa pɔtɔkasa koso di dwuma sɛ kasa a wiase nyinaa de di nkommo no, anidasoɔ wɔ nwuma a yɛn atwerɛ no wɔ borɔfo kasa mu sɛ ɛbɛnya akenkanfoɔ pii, deɛ yɛde ba abontene bɛtɔn pii, ne "ebia" "nsonsoansoɔ" kɛseɛ wɔ kuro no so. Abirabɔ a ɛwɔ mu nesɛ sɛdeɛ borɔfo kasa no agye din sɛ kasa a ewiase nyinaa de di dwuma no, kasa afoforɔ nkaɛ no deɛ nipa kumaa bi na wɔn de di dwuma. Wei mma ho kwan kɛse mma nwuma a yɛn atwerɛ no wɔ kasa a nipa kumaa

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bi de di dwuma mu no yentumi mfa nhyɛ borɔfo kasa abasobɔdeɛ a yɛde hwɛ obi wɔ sukuu no mu.

(Shindo, 2022, p. 653, 654. Translated by the Bureau of Ghana Languages, Accra.)

It should be acknowledged that Twi is mainly a spoken language and there can be variations in how some words are spelt. It is also very interesting to note that getting this excerpt translated into Twi was difficult because the words were described as "academic, traditional and Western-speak" by the translator. This supports the comment above (Wakunuma et al., 2021) and highlights the dominant Western narrative, its/my cultural positionality and the strong links between language and culture. In English, the above means:

> To put it differently, language is not just an inclusionary device to enact a community of 'we', but also an exclusionary one. Language functions as a gatekeeper that decides who can participate in conversations taking place in 'our' community through the medium of 'our' language. In this regard, writing about citizenship in English unavoidably creates a linguistic condition where a particular approach to citizenship is being introduced and discussed. Because of language barriers, materials written in other languages can be easily ignored, and the voice of non-English-speaking researchers muted. The global ubiquity of the English language further discourages researchers from writing in languages other than English. Since English continues to serve as a global lingua franca, writing in English promises a wider readership, more publication outlets, and a (supposedly) bigger social 'impact'. In contrast to English, which enjoys the status of a global language, other languages are given minority status. This leaves limited space for materials produced in minoritised languages to be included in English-speaking scholarship.

(Shindo, 2022, p. 653, 654)

Thankfully, even as I write this final chapter, I see evidence of more non-English academia in circulation. To conclude this postlude, I share my own hope for this academic study. It has been a labour of love and, while it may hold some academic authority, it should not hold power over anyone. It is my hope that this thesis will serve others rather than raise up the researcher.

"We know that 'We all possess knowledge.' But knowledge puffs up while love builds up. Those who think they know something do not yet know as they ought to know."

(1 Corinthians 8 v. 1-3.)

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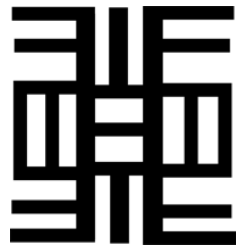
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APPENDICES

List of tables and figures

The symbol above is the adinkra symbol of knowledge, life-long education and continued quest for knowledge; 'nea onnim' – the one who does not know. It derives from the Akan proverb that translates as: He who does not know can become knowledgeable through learning; he who thinks he knows and ceases to continue to learn will stagnate; he who thinks he knows it all, knows nothing. The proverb portrays that to grow is to live and to stagnate is to die. Only through continuing to search for knowledge will one grow wiser.

In modern times, writing has been viewed as written speech and non-phonetically based writing systems have been marginalised. However, such a narrow viewpoint has more recently come under scrutiny and many indigenous writing systems are now being recognised. Many visual writing practices perceive knowledge as being more associated with the visual over the verbal. Knowledge is understood as something that can be both individually and collectively accessed. Some indigenous perspectives also view knowledge as equivocal, where what is perceived as knowledge by one may not be viewed the same way by another, with no one knowledge/perspective being privileged as 'God's-eye view'.

Adinkra symbols are pictograms and ideograms, traditionally used on cloth, metal and wood by the Akan people of Ghana. As in other indigenous visual writings, the adinkra symbols represent knowledge in visual form. They communicate codes that evoke meanings – proverbs, anecdotes, stories and historical significance – and they exemplify cultural values, philosophical concepts and codes of social conduct. In short, they express knowledges. Arthur's extensive research on the adinkra symbols highlights the importance of knowledge within Akan culture (1999). Arthur describes

how the source of the Akan knowledge system is rooted in forms of oral literacy. This includes proverbs, riddles, drum poetry, funeral dirges and story-telling, all of which should represent society's knowledge or provide insight into people's attitude to knowledge. As 'nea onnim' depicts, knowledge is important to the Akan people and searching for knowledge is considered a life-long process. Knowledge is gained through education and both formal and informal education are valued. 'Knowing' includes the empirical process of experiencing the physical and natural world around us, including social relations, and the intellectual process of logical understanding and interpretation of ideas. The Akan notion of education also includes instilling 'The Ancient Path' which inculcates values such as honesty, responsibility, obligation, duty, justice and a commitment to family/community. Reality is perceived as having spiritual and non-spiritual dimensions and human knowledge is therefore viewed as limited. Knowledge is believed to come from multiple sources. While the wise are considered knowledgeable, the Akan stories encourage knowledge (and authority) to be critically examined. A socially constructed linear structure of time is accepted alongside a more cyclical and infinite one. Arthur uses the illustration of a circle that has no definite beginning, middle or end, to demonstrate the eternity of the time, and the universe.

Adinkra symbols are said to be named after their original creator, King Nana Kwadwo Agyemang Adinkra. They have been traced back to the 17th century, when they were an accepted language and writing form by the Akan, the major ethnic group in the Gold Coast area of West Africa at that time. While the exact time of its introduction is disputed, historical evidence indicates that adinkra was quickly implemented by Akan victors to assert their culture and values (Arthur, 1999, 2001). By 1824, the Asante nation became the most powerful state of West Africa and the adinkra symbols strengthened the cultural, social and political identity of the Empire. Like any living language, Adinkra symbols have developed and there are now more than 500 adinkra symbols. They are still recognised and used in modern day through fashion (clothes and jewellery), art, craftwork and as industrial and business logos. It is interesting to note the fairly recent work of Ghanaian Professor Patrique deGraft-Yankson, who adapts the United Nation's official SDG icons and uses Adinkra symbols. This is part of his work in an *Exploring Visual Culture Project*, which promotes the SDGs through trans-cultural image mobilisation and interpretation.

Cultural, aesthetic and arts education are becoming more recognised as a way to open visionary dimensions through a more glocal 'individuo-sociality' (Scheunpflug, 2023).

deGraft-Yankson notes:

> For the realization of UNs commitment to leave no one behind in the mobilization of the citizens of the world to achieve the 2030 agenda (UN, 2020) therefore, I am of the belief that efforts at linking the relevance of the 17 goals to cultural manifestations of the people should be highly considered. The image shown above [below] is a demonstration of how various traditional symbols speaks to the SDGs in a language which is understood by the traditional Ghanaian. These symbols transcend language barriers and their meanings are inherent within their traditional belief systems, making the goals both physically and spiritually relevant to people.

(deGraft-Yankson, 2020)

Figure 1A: deGraft-Yankson's translation of Sustainable Development Goals (shared with permission).

Edge et al. (2012) provide a toolkit to support ISPs in the evaluation and planning process. They report on factors that contribute to High Momentum Partnerships (HMPs). Similar recommendations have been made following research into long-term UK and rural African ISPs (Bourn and Cara, 2012; Bourn and Cara, 2013). If used as a benchmarking tool, it would locate our ISP within the HMP category:

Table 2A: High Momentum Partnerships Toolkit.

HMP Factors	Edge et al. findings (2012)	Our School Partnership (My Northern perspective)
Partnership profiles	• No particular; just one shared demographic characteristic.	√ Both rural primary school settings.
Partnership formation	• Early exchange experience. • Deep personal connection between at least one teacher pair. • Whole-school involvement in decision-making process. • A clear purpose. • Supportive leadership. • A support organisation's assistance.	√ √ √ √ √
Support and training	• Core financial support. • Other organisational funding.	√ DfID/British Council. √ Raising our own funds to support curricular work e.g. song videos.
Leadership and management	• Strong leader. • Active school leadership support. • Strong staff support. • Teacher, student or parent partnership committees.	√ I am the co-ordinator and part of the SMT. √ √ √ And strong community support.

Partnership objectives	• Partnership objectives that meet the needs of the schools. • Broadening horizons/global citizenship/exploring cultures. • Student and teacher learning. • School improvement. • Fundraising/charity.	√ Note to self – although this is perhaps different in both schools. √ √ √ √ Only to fund curricular work. In early days there was a joint fundraising for bus – money still very much fairly split e.g. ceilidh money split equally. A charitable approach is common in early stages (Bourn, 2014; Leonard, 2012).
Student, teacher, staff and community involvement	• Teacher exchanges. • Student exchanges. • Community engagement.	√ N/A as primary school, although former pupils have visited. √ (Ghanaian school referred to as 'the obruni school' in local community.)
Curriculum initiatives	• Partnership-focussed curriculum initiatives. • Class lessons and whole school events. • Shared teaching of lessons.	√ √ √
Challenges and opportunities	• Communication with Southern school. • Funding (sustainability). • Commitment and time. • Leadership. • Bureaucracy.	√ √ Less impact in the years when no Ghanaian teachers visit. √ Less impact when co-ordinator away on secondments.

Leonard (2012) provides insight to one example of a Southern school's ISP experiences through an in-depth case study. The secondary school in Zanzibar had a twenty-year relationship with a secondary school in England. Our partnership shares many of the themes that were highlighted:

Table 2B: Leonard's (2012) findings.

Theme	Leonard's research (2012)	Our School Partnership (My Northern perspective)
Intercultural education.	Schools looked at the same topic through a different lens.	√ This has widened and deepened pupil learning about SDGs.
Locate learning within the 'real world.'	School partnership provides a 'real world' context to consider global issues more widely.	√ This brings learning to life and localises global issues.
Challenge assumptions and deepen understanding of the causes of inequality.	Partnership encourages pedagogical approaches that develop critical thinking. (Leonard points out that teacher engagement in an ISP can contribute to personal motivation and a wider world experience which helps to teach about complex development themes.)	√ Good relationships and trust create the conditions for this to happen, usually in an informal setting.
Assistance, aid and action.	It may be apposite for ISPs to provide such interventions.	√ We have done this to develop and enhance our partnership learning.

Table 3A: Martin's (2010) postcolonial framework.

Partnerships	Avoid South/Other as an 'object' of study as in colonial times; develop ways of working together through a process of mutual learning (Ballin, 2010) towards shared goals that are mutually beneficial.
Knowledge	Move from a universal view of knowledge, to an understanding that knowledge is socially, historically, culturally constructed. Similarly, move from a view of knowledge that is certain and unproblematic, to one that reflects a relational, multiperspectival understanding of concepts such as culture, identity, space, place, interdependence, sustainability – knowledges, not knowledge; futures, not future; geographies, not geography; histories, not history.
Subjects	Rather than viewing knowledge as a set of discrete disciplines, Gilbert (2005) argues that it should be presenting as a series of systems that have particular ways of doing things (and particular strengths and weaknesses). Reframing our approach to knowledge in this way may allow us to work with students to develop the systems-level understanding, the big picture, [and the] connected ways of thinking they will need to function effectively in the knowledge society' (Gilbert, 2005:175).
Curriculum	Move away from conceptualising 'curriculum as thing', a body of facts, ideas, skills and attitudes already decided by those in power to be 'delivered', to conceptualising 'curriculum as encounter' (den Heyer, 2009:28), to be created collaboratively between teachers and students who work towards shared sense making (Lambert, 2009).
Literacy	Taking literacy in its broadest sense, and 'text' as including film, novels, popular music, art and so on, den Heyer proposes moving from a 'readerly' to a 'writerly' approach to text. Readerly approaches assume that meaning resides in the text, whereas writerly approaches invites readers 'to make meanings through the context of their lives' (den Heyer, 2009:27). Any intercultural experiences, and encounters with texts will be interpreted through individuals' lenses; adopting a 'writerly' approach therefore requires recognising that selves are implicated in texts and vice versa.
Pedagogy	Morgan (2002) proposes a 'deconstructive pedagogy that begins to take apart the categories and meanings that have generally been thought of as fixed and stable' (p. 27). Things that Morgan suggests should be deconstructed in an explicit way with students are the various forms of representation that are used in geography classrooms (similar to Den Heyer's 'texts'); taking such an approach

	will enable a move away from generalisations and a 'master narrative' to multiple knowledges, perspectives and representations.

Taken from Martin, F. (2010) Global Ethics, sustainability and partnership. In Butt, G. (ed) *Geography, Education and the Future*. London: Continuum. pp. 206-222.

Reflections on researching digitally:

My initial response to setting up interviews within a digital setting did not sit easily with me. On reflection, this was primarily based on my reading around traditional social science qualitative research methods and ethnographic practice (auto-ethnography being my original planned research methodology), where face-to-face interviewing and co-location is promoted. Similar to any disruption, Covid-19 created a moment of 'dissociative dynamics' (Knorr Cetina 2001) and an opportunity for reflection and reflexivity. Reflecting on the need to transition to 'socially distant' methods forced me to re-examine my assumptions, methods and ethics.

Ethnographic research is traditionally understood as research that involves the researcher spending extended periods of time with the participants in their own setting. I may no longer be carrying out research activities in the Ghanaian field, but I do have experience of spending extended periods of time in the Ghanaian school. I began to think that there may be advantages to video-based online interviewing. I felt reassured to read that many other researchers had responded to researching through the pandemic similarly. A rapid response literature review undertaken by the NCRM reinforced that generating knowledge through online interviews had increased, as well as an increased emphasis on autoethnography which relates to personal experience, physical distancing and crisis (Meckin et al., 2021).

The digital is now part of our everyday lives, both in Scotland and Ghana, creating almost existential relationships with our mobile phones. This digital relationship must surely influence our thinking, being and knowing in research. Perhaps now more than ever, the digital is transforming social science; creating an alternative digital landscape, shaping the 'social world' and introducing new theories and methods of research (Buscher et al., 2011). Indeed, within the current pandemic situation, not using digital methods would limit and prolong my research. However, we need to be aware of the roles,

affordances and capacities of the digital and be reflexive. As Adams and Thompson (2016) suggest, we can also inter-view what we are working with, through heuristics.

Firstly, using the internet to interview can increase connectivity and reduce separation from the field (Back et al., 2013). Given that we can no longer meet physically, interviewing online provides an accessible (and familiar) platform to share and experience, where distance and time are no longer a barrier. As acknowledged earlier, speaking with colleagues as a researcher will be different, so perhaps speaking in this new online space (which is also different) will help to make this transition easier. Furthermore, the spaces inhabited by participant, researcher and the digital platform(s) used, can be viewed as creating a triple layer of space and place; an 'ethnographic space' which goes beyond the traditional bounded locality and understands that the site of research is not static but rather constantly changing (Howlett, 2021; Lupton, 2015). Such thinking reflects elements of Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) 'smooth space', where the rigidity and hierarchy of striated space gives way to a new territory of 'lines of flight' and 'movement of deterritorialization'.

Secondly, it was my original plan to interview teachers in their school setting, but video-based online interviewing gives the teachers a choice as to where the interview takes place, and it may not be the school. In addition, all the teachers have been in my home (where I will be interviewing from). Such factors, alongside the fact that we know one another, could help to reduce any sense of formality and create more balance of power. It appeared to do so during our informal introductory meeting, where two teachers were in their homes and one was at school. Co-presence was established and included social, mobile, locative and photographic practice (Hjorth and Pink, 2014 cited in Lupton, 2015).

Finally, video-based interviewing could be argued to be more equitable and transparent than interviewing in-person. The pandemic has emphasised that we are living in a digital era where digital technologies play an increasing part of our everyday lives. Lockdown has made me more aware of the flow of communication – we are more in touch with one another and less separated

by physical distance. Teachers in both Scotland and Ghana have mobile phones, have access to, and are familiar with using social media and video communication. As researcher, I can still experience 'co-present-immersion' (Urry and Buscher, 2009 cited in Beddall-Hill, 2011) as video-based online interviewing still reveals the 'angles of the field' (Howlett, 2021) that ethnographic research promotes – and it allows for local-level dynamics on both sides to be picked up (e.g. crying toddlers, phones ringing and window cleaners washing my windows!).

(Personal research journal, Reid, September 2021.)

My reflection has highlighted the affordances and effectiveness/opportunities and limitations of applying some digital methods. My reading has shown me that the pandemic has caused other researchers to question the dualistic categories such as home/fieldwork and personal selves/researcher (Howlett, 2021) and to seek more flexible and creative methods (Gratton et al., 2020; Kara and Khoo, 2020). Indeed, a more blended approach may remove traditional barriers and generate more balanced, holistic and richer conversations and material. Where I am when I conduct the interviews is perhaps not such an important issue: the Ghanaian teachers will still be in Ghana. The what (I ask) and the how (ease of technology and questioning) will probably play more salient roles.

I therefore concluded that it was important to carry out some synchronous interviews to capture responses that were not overthought, and online interviewing still ensured that I was co-present. I also opted to still use participatory activities asynchronously, despite my CCGL tutor suggesting that I be present and to make use of technology, such as padlets. My reasons were in line with Braun et al. (2020) in that the technology would be unfamiliar and overly complicated for teachers, thus limiting engagement and taking the emphasis away from the research. I also want to give my colleagues time to think and reflect without the distracting 'gaze' of the researcher. Even if I had been physically present in Ghana, that was always going to be the awkward part. Being forced to remove myself has helped me understand that I do not have to be present for research to happen. Likewise, my thinking around synchronous and asynchronous approaches has helped me to appreciate that the site of research is dynamic, rather than static (Lupton, 2015). A responsiveness

aspect of the research was meeting (online) before the research activities were undertaken, to chat informally and to discuss the research process. I intend to do the same at the end of the research process to share and discuss findings.

Reflections around ethics when researching digitally:

Reading around digital methods in research highlighted the importance of considering the socioethical opportunities and challenges involved (Braun et al., 2020; Kara and Khoo, 2020). I therefore attended webinars run by the National Centre of Research Methods that focused on researching (digitally) through the pandemic.

Our Ghanaian colleagues are 'au fait' with the technology required for video-based online interviewing. However, a 'digital divide' proved not to be a simple binary, in-keeping with other researchers working within pandemic circumstances (Kara and Khoo, 2020) and this was highlighted through the infrastructures that support internet access in Ghana. Electricity is not readily available in school and broadband packages are purchased via mobile phones which can be expensive when participating in an international Zoom call. I therefore used some of my British Council research funding to cover such costs.

Once the Ghanaian teachers had put forward Zoom as their preferred platform, I explored the pros and cons with ethics in mind, particularly technoethics. Technoethics remind us that using technology brings with it the responsibility not only to a profession, but also to the 'public good' (Bunge, 1975 cited in Krutka et. al., 2021) Zoom has been used extensively by social science researchers (Lobe et. al., 2020) and is compliant with General Data Protection Regulation. I took note to ensure I applied the advice given from other researchers, for example ensuring our meetings were password protected and used the waiting room facility, so that I had control over who entered the meeting. I also opted for the upgraded account which allowed for unlimited time and more privacy features.

Cape Coast Castle began as a trade lodge constructed by the Portuguese in 1555. Following Sweden's conquest of the Cape Coast (formally known as the Gold Coast) in 1653, it was made into a wooden fortress for trade in timber and gold. A decade later, the Danes seized power and the fort was reconstructed in stone. In 1664, it was conquered by the British. By 1700, the fort had been made into a castle and operated as the headquarters of the British colonial governor.

Figure 5A: The male dungeon (right) and the confinement cell (left).

Figure 5B: Looking down on the spot where women were chained if they fought against rape.

Elmina Castle lies around 13 km away from Cape Coast Castle. Its construction began in 1482, following the Portuguese's arrival in 1471, and it is the oldest European structure in Ghana. It was built as a trade lodge too, but by the 17th century most of the trade was in humans. When the Dutch seized control of the Gold Coast in 1637, they continued to use the castle as a place to 'store' slaves. They too made some changes to the castle, including the introduction of a marketplace where slaves were auctioned.

Figure 5C: I stared in horror at the floor of the women's' dungeon for a long time…

IN EVERLASTING MEMORY

OF THE ANGUISH OF OUR ANCESTORS

MAY THOSE WHO DIED REST IN PEACE

MAY THOSE WHO RETURN FIND THEIR ROOTS

MAY HUMANITY NEVER AGAIN PERPETRATE

SUCH INJUSTICE AGAINST HUMANITY

WE THE LIVING VOW TO UPHOLD THIS

Figure 5D: Photo of sign in slave castle.

Appendix 6: Example contents page from a Ghanaian textbook.

CHAPTER 5: ONE PEOPLE, ONE NATION
Lesson 1: Common cultural practices of the ethnic groups in Ghana

Lesson 2: Cultural similarities among the Ethnic groups of Ghana

Lesson 3: Our cultural differences constitute a source of strength to the Nation

CHAPTER 6: HOW GHANA BECAME A NATION
Lesson 1:
  (A) Local Groupings
  (B) The coming of Europeans
  (C) British Rule

CHAPTER 7: GHANA'S INDEPENDENCE
Lesson 1: People who helped Ghana to achieve independence
  (A) Formation of political parties
  (B) The 1948 disturbances or riots
  (C) Formation of the C.P.P
  (D) The 1956 elections and independence

CHAPTER 8: SUSTAINING OURSELVES AS A NATION
Lesson 1: Patriotic citizens of the country

CHAPTER 9: ATTITUDES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR NATION BUILDING
Lesson 1:
  (A) Positive attitudes needed for nation building
  (B) Aspects of our social lives which need strengthening and continuity

Lesson 2:
  (A) Responsibilities of citizens towards nation building
  (B) The need for citizens to perform their civic responsibilities

SECTION 3 (AUTHORITY)

CHAPTER 10: GOVERNANCE IN GHANA
Lesson 1:
  (A) Government and Governance
  (B) Importance of Government
  (C) Fundamentals of Good governance
  (D) Good governance and National development

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Figure 6A: Example contents page from a Ghanaian textbook.

Assie-Lumumba (2017) positions ubuntu as part of a wider African ontology and the foundation of African knowledge. Ubuntu is a South African example of a worldview that is different to Western thinking, at both an ontological and epistemological level. It originates from the isiXhosa proverbial expression '*umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*' which is often translated as '*a person is a person through their relationships to others*' (Swanson, 2007). Ubuntu emphasises the value of compassion, human relations and life as mutual aid. While the nuances of these values (and the words used to describe ubuntu) differ across different ethnic groups, its essence remains focused on what it is to be human, and its philosophy accentuates living with dignity and identity through mutualism, empathy, generosity and community building (Swanson, 2007). The communal ideology encourages respect for cultural diversities and social cohesion (Nnama-Okechukwu and McLaughlin, 2022) with the strength of daily communal living centred around community support, linking the individual with the collective, and emphasising a responsibility and duty to the collective well-being of the community (Swanson, 2015; Pieniazek, 2020; Jamieson, 2022; Van Norren, 2022). The ubuntu 'I' is therefore associated with community, and the interconnectedness and unity between us. It focuses more on the 'I' in relation to others, rather than the Western 'I' that relates to Self (Brown et al., 2023). A Western understanding of GCE tends to focus on the *individual* liberties, rights and responsibilities, whereas ubuntu focuses on the *community* aspects of such issues and encourages interconnectedness, balance, and harmony.[98] More generally, citizenship in the Global North tends to focus on neoliberal ideals such as 'democracy', 'modernity' and 'development' (Parashar and Schulz, 2021). In contrast, ubuntu accentuates restorative justice instead of punitive justice; it stresses intra-community relations, including ancestors, future generations and nature; it promotes community and an 'economy of affection' (Hyden, 2006 cited in Brown et al., 2023) over capital, emphasising sharing over profit (Van Norren, 2022).

There is a growing awareness of the phrase 'ubuntu' in the Global North; it has been used as a brand name and is attached to many Twitter handles. While it is

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Many of the West African Adinkra symbols referred to throughout this thesis reflect similar worldviews, for example 'Nkonsonkonson' in the final section.

complementary that ubuntu is being recognised in a positive light, Jefferess (2016) criticises the over-use of the phrase, warning that it is being applied in a tokenistic fashion that reinforces voluntarism and essentialism. Likewise, Swanson (2007) warns against the misappropriation of ubuntu for political and ideological purposes, which can result in becoming rhetorical and entangled in power. Nevertheless, if the ontological conception and semantic richness of ubuntu are considered more fully, then ubuntu encourages collective responsibility and obligation towards a collective well-being (Swanson, 2007). As Angyagre (2020) points out, the communitarian value system that ubuntu is rooted in can relate to the normative GCE values and attitudes (such as social justice), while resisting the neoliberal understandings of GCE. Having briefly considered ubuntu as a way of viewing, knowing and understanding GCE, one can appreciate how assuming, or promoting just one universal Euro-centric viewpoint is both unhelpful and unethical.