CULTURE AS A POSITIVE RESOURCE IN THERAPY

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SCHOOL OF ENVIRONMENT EDUCATION AND
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ABSTRACT

While culture is a widely accepted issue in therapy, current approaches are criticised as unfit for purpose in a postmodern, postcolonial world characterised by large scale migration, cheap air travel and instantaneous electronic communication. This study attempts to move beyond crude ethno-cultural categories to view culture as a universal human phenomenon. It is a conception that admits characteristics of volatility, plasticity, contextuality and intersectionality; virtually unlimited hierarchical distinctions and dimensions that frequently come to stand in for each other. In addition, it attempts to view culture in positive terms, rather than as an unwanted obstacle to approaches to therapy that are historically rooted in dominant cultural groups.

Four participants were selected using purposive sampling, and data was collected using semi-structured interviews, which were recorded and transcribed. The transcripts were then analysed narratively and using thematic analysis, and reported against a common subset of superordinate metacultural themes.

While the study is a small scale exercise with admitted limitations, it provides support for a more universal view of culture; and the idea that it is a powerful personal resource that can be used both consciously and unconsciously. Personal factors caused participants to emphasise certain aspects of their cultural background and de-emphasise or avoid others. Participants attempted to seek out or access additional resources that helped to represent aspects of their personal story. The study provides support for three theoretical ideas: culture as a resource, cultural identity and personal culture; and it suggests ways in which culture can be used in therapy as a diagnostic and therapeutic tool. Further work includes additional case studies employing a more comprehensive methodology, the use of discourse analysis to provide a degree of triangulation and investigate the discursive processes at work, and extension of the approach to areas beyond therapy.
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But above all, I would like to thank my partner Val for putting up with me!
PROLOGUE

This is a foot-off-the-ground novel that came by the left hand. And the thoughts come and go and sometimes they do not quite come and I do not pursue them to embarrass them with formality to pursue them into a harsh captivity. And if you are a foot-off-the-ground person I make no bones to say that is how you will write and only how you will write. And if you are a foot-on-the-ground person, this book will be for you a desert of weariness and exasperation.

(Stevie Smith 1936: 89)

In September 2007 I stood on a hillside in Southern Turkey, in an area generally named after the nearby island of Kekova, between the small fishing and tourist villages of Üçağız and Kaleköy. I was about to submit my Masters Dissertation on ‘The Nature and Significance of Scottish Ethnic Identity’. In this strange and surreal place I could see and feel culture etched into the history and geography of the area; observe it at work in the daily lives of the people; and imagine the economic, political and religious forces behind it. It was a land that had been
conquered by Persians, Greeks, Romans and others too numerous to mention up to the
Italians, who finally relinquished their claim in 1932. The hillside was littered with Lycian
tombs dating from around 1000 BC. Some had been robbed or vandalised, but retained a
calm dignity in the face of their abuse. On the top of the hill was a ruined castle built by the
Knights of Rhodes on Lycian foundations. In the distance, over a short stretch of sea, lay the
sunken city of Simena; which had been destroyed by an earthquake during the second century
AD. It was subsequently rebuilt during the Byzantine Empire, and eventually abandoned due
to Arab incursions. The modern inhabitants of the nearby villages made a living from fishing
and tourism. Trip boats and gulets with large red Turkish flags plied their way up and down
the channel between Kekova and the mainland; anchoring for a while to visit the tourist sites,
then moving on. Walkers from the Lycian way stopped off for the night, and a small number of
independent tourists made the trip by road or sea. In the daytime, coaches brought tourists to
board boats; but their numbers had diminishing in the face of economic pressures and
logistical difficulties. Previously the tourists had been Western Europeans; but now they were
increasingly Russians, or citizens of the former Soviet Union. The local people tried to tempt
them with lace, scarves and table cloths; and provided drinks, food and accommodation.
While this was going on, five times a day, the call to prayer echoed along the coast from
mosque to mosque; and the subtle symbolism of Islam seemed to compete with the brash blue
branding of Efes pilsener beer. I reflected on the fact that it was impossible to understand the
area and its people without an appreciation of their culture. But in that moment I knew that
the intense sense of understanding and identification that I felt was imaginary, lacking any
authentic sense of being. This was the ultimate allure, illusion and delusion of culture; in the
process of which, individuality is lost and people become mere containers.

In Lacanian psychoanalysis, the Klein bottle is sometimes used to illustrate the link between
subjectivity and discourse (Ragland-Sullivan & Milovanovic, 2004). It is a one-sided surface in
three dimensional space; which if traveled upon can be followed back to the point of origin, thereby flipping the traveler upside down. Outside becomes inside and vice versa.

Figure 2 – Three dimensional representation of the Klein bottle (Wikipedia)

There is a trend among some psychoanalytically oriented and often politically motivated therapists, especially those that follow Jacques Lacan; to look for structural causes of personal pathology, alienation and unease. In effect, they seek that which seems to be inside, but is actually outside. I applaud this approach although, like social constructionism, it can lead to the conclusion that there is nothing genuine inside. This study does not seek to challenge the trend; but to complement it by seeking out the elusive and vulnerable humanity that runs for shelter whenever the light of external scrutiny shines upon it. It is a search for that which seems to be outside, but is really inside. Its signs are to be found in the outer world and the liminal region between inner and outer that can only be glimpsed fleetingly through the cultural mist.
INTRODUCTION

Our most beautiful and complex artwork that we can make is our identity

Grayson Perry (Channel 4 TV series dir: Crombie, 2014)

We are responsible for our dreams. Our dreams stage our desires and our desires are not objective facts. We created them, we sustained them, and we are responsible for them.

Slavoj Žižek (The perverts guide to ideology, 2012)

Some years ago, near the beginning of my career as a counsellor and psychotherapist, I was in a first session with a new client. She was a young, well-educated woman who was a second generation immigrant to the UK from an Asian country. The presenting problem was distress, resulting from marital and family issues. She lived with her husband and young child in the home of her parents-in-law, who were from the same country as her own parents. Social conventions dictated that they should live with her husband’s family until they could afford to buy a suitable home of their own. My client found her lowly status in the household insulting, and the pressures imposed by her professional and childcare responsibilities intolerable. She saw her husband as unsupportive and their relationship had deteriorated to breaking point.

Around the middle of the first session, wishing to express empathy, I commented, on the basis of real personal experience, that in her culture personal space was limited. I immediately knew this was a mistake. For what could I, a white middle aged man, possibly know about the experience of a cultural group, of which I was visibly not a member? More especially, at this early stage in the therapy, she needed me as an object onto which she could project her western perceptions and values. But rather than acting as a witness to the ‘unfairness’ of her treatment, I sought to understand it in its own terms. Such understanding could have been useful, and might have been introduced at a later stage. But, it was quite inappropriate at this
initial session; when she needed confidence that things were as they appeared. She made an appointment for a second session, but cancelled.

In this, and many other encounters, I have been left wondering about the ways in which culture and cultural difference enter into therapy; and how they can be more directly engaged in its process. Freud attempted to avoid such intrusions (Devereux, 1953), and the psychoanalyst Alan Roland (1988: xvii) laments this ‘overwhelming orientation of Freudian psychoanalysis to intrapsychic phenomena, generally ignoring how historical, social, and cultural patterns shape the inner world’. I believe that this attitude continues today and is compounded by a culture-blindness that is illustrated by an example from a case discussion group. An experienced counsellor brought a case involving a young woman, who was having problems with her family. She described these in considerable detail; but only after a long discussion in the group did she mention that the woman was of Pakistani origin. Suddenly, the whole understanding of the case changed. When challenged about the reason for ‘withholding’ this critical information, she said she did not want to be seen as racist.

The importance of culture in therapy is widely accepted, as evidenced by its inclusion in most training. However, I take issue with the assumptions that appear to underpin this training. Culture is treated as a homogeneous entity that can be readily identified, classified and defined. Cultural identity is seen as something that can be inferred from the cultural influences into which an individual was born, and culture is treated as an obstacle to the practice of approaches to therapy that are above or beyond it. My objective is to show that there is a complementary approach that can attempt to put these assumptions aside, and that can illuminate and enable the process of therapy rather than obstructing or sabotaging it.
About the study

Although set in the context of therapy, the study takes the form of a phenomenological inquiry into the nature and significance of culture. It aims to answer three research questions:

1. How do background and cultural roots influence cultural identity?
2. What is the significance of cultural identity in life?
3. What is the therapeutic potential of culture?

The main thrust is aimed at answering questions one and two, on a case by case basis; and then drawing together common threads and addressing question three.

Data was collected from four participants using semi-structured interviews. These were recorded, transcribed; then analysed qualitatively using thematic analysis, and reported narratively under three headings. The results of the thematic analysis were included under the third of these headings, against three common superordinate metacultural themes.

Subsequently, in the discussion chapter, individual answers were formulated to the research questions and commonality sought between the cases. I was committed to the principle that the particularity of individual cases should be privileged over my search for structure or pattern, and that the voices of the participants should be heard. I believed that this was the right way to approach the study, and to demonstrate the respect for difference that was at its heart.

I wish to support the widely held view that a fundamental change is taking place in the cultural fabric of our world, characterised by the emergence of the postmodern subject (Hall, 1992). A new paradigm is evolving that is the result of: greater diversity; the collapse of colonial empires and; advancing technologies of communication, information processing and travel (Gergen, 2000). This means that imagined communities (Anderson, 2006) or global diasporas (Werbner, 2002) can operate in ways that were not previously possible; and where electronic communication and social media provide both a platform for the circulation of propaganda
(Farwell, 2014), and a means of communication between similarly and differently minded individuals and communities (Rodríguez, 2011). In some areas there is a weakening of traditional systems of belief such as religion; and in others, new or modified systems are coming into existence. These are exemplified by cults, new religious movements (NRMs) and religious fundamentalism (Berger, 1967, 1999; Dawson, 2008). And, to paraphrase Marx (1970 [1843]), international sport has replaced religion as the opium of the masses (Walker, 2012).

Census information (www.ukcensusonline.com) shows that the UK is becoming more diverse. Between 2001 and 2011, net immigration was 2.1M, while the number of people declaring themselves to be White British fell from 87.5% to 80.5%. Over the same period, the number of people who declared their religion to be Christian fell by 13% to 59%. These are, of course, lagging measures that hide current trends, rates of change, and the acceleration or deceleration of these. They also conceal dramatic differences across the country, and the existence of extreme micro-cultures (Juivraj, 2011).

The study is ultimately more concerned with process and metastructure than individual dimensions of difference, political interpretations or the hegemony of any individual point of view. I attempt to take a postmodern, phenomenological position that unapologetically embraces plurality and syncretism (Lyotard, 1979, Tr 1984; Rescher, 1993), and to bring together theoretical and empirical threads that developed in parallel. I did not start with any single theory and I have not attempted to create or discover new theory. Instead, I have attempted to select and assemble existing components. As a method, this can be criticised, but it is an approach that is compatible with psychoanalytic writing, with the practice of psychoanalytically oriented therapy and with the integrative approach to practice, in which I was trained. While I do not expect seamless integration between theories that were
developed for different purposes in different places and times; I believe that the only viable alternative is to strive for this objective, in the service of a more complete understanding of an individual client or participant.

**Reflexity**

McLeod (2001: 195) states that qualitative research is a personal activity, ‘involving a personal struggle to challenge assumptions and achieve understanding and usually also involving entering meaningful relationships with people who are the research ‘informants’ or ‘participants’”. In this endeavour, it is clear that account must be taken of the subjectivity of the researcher and the fact that social reality is constructed by human agents (Altheide & Johnson, 2011). Reflexivity, or the ability to ‘bend back or turn back one’s awareness on oneself’ (McLeod, 2001: 195) provides a way of working with subjectivity, to break out of the ‘self-referential circle that characterizes most academic work’ (Parker, 2005b: 25). Denzin (1994: 503) states that ‘The Other who is presented in the text is always a version of the researcher’s self’ while Parker (2005b: 27) argues that ‘all claims to objective truth are simultaneously the reflection of the historically-embedded subjective position of the researcher’. These imply that it is not possible to exclude the researcher, only to acknowledge and attempt to take account of this otherwise unseen presence. It seems to me that this is especially true of an inquiry into culture, in which the position of an outsider is the best and only starting point and; one that is preferable to the implicit assumption that any human being has the innate capability to classify and comprehend another. This does not imply that I believe bracketing or epoqué (Langdridge, 2007; McLeod, 2001; Smith, 2008) is ultimately possible, but I cannot see an alternative. Reflexivity itself is an imperfect and contested process that can be approached in different ways (McLeod, 2001), but it is an essential
element in the search for authenticity and meaning. I have attempted to weave a thread of reflexivity into both the empirical activities and the literature review.

**Reflexive preface**

I approach the study as a white, middle aged, middle class, heterosexual, Scotsman. I was an only child who grew up in a small village in central Scotland near to Glasgow. Like many of my countrymen and women, I left my native country to find work, returned periodically, but now live in England and have no plans to return. I usually describe myself as Scottish first and European or British second, depending on the context. For 10 years, my main home was in Brussels, at the heart of the European Union; from which I travelled extensively. During this time, I frequently used my Scottish identity to shelter from projections of English stereotypes.

In 2007, shortly after my return to the UK, I completed an MSc dissertation on 'The nature and significance of Scottish ethnic identity' (MacDonald, 2007). However, I am not a nationalist and have no overarching political motives. My initial training as a counsellor was integrative, although my orientation is strongly psychoanalytic. My first degree, forty years ago, was in Engineering; and I have always had an affinity for quantitative methods, although this research is qualitative. I would describe myself as a critical realist (Bhaskar, 1997, 1998), rejecting both the certainty of positivism and the anti-scientific tendencies of postmodernism.

My interest in culture stems from my background and experience. When I first moved to England, it seemed like a foreign country, and this impression still returns from time to time. As a young manager at the sharp end of industrial relations in the 1970s and 1980s, culture was widely discussed by senior managers; who saw it as an obstacle to success in increasingly competitive markets. However, it did not seem to me that change arose from the proactive
initiatives by these managers, whose careers depended on the status quo. It resulted from
globalisation, economic reality and the political efforts of the Thatcher government. Later, as a
management consultant working with global companies, the culture of organisations was a
constant preoccupation. The challenge was to motivate or otherwise compel a collection of
nationally based subsidiaries to behave like a global entity; operating seamless global business
processes, and focussing on corporate objectives. My experience suggested that this was
extremely difficult, and not ultimately achievable. Despite (or sometimes because of)
 attempts to moderate and manage culture, national character constantly re-emerged. My
interest in culture intensified during my training and practice as a counsellor, although I was
never satisfied by the literature; and more recently I found myself in strong agreement with
Moodley's (2007) call for a more inclusive definition of culture, and for white people to be
considered as clients in multicultural therapy. At a deeper and more personal level, I believe
that a psychoanalytic approach to culture addresses the outsider in us all. Julia Kristeva
suggests that psychoanalysis makes possible the idea that we are 'strangers to ourselves'.

With Freud, she writes:

An uncanny [foreignness] creeps into the tranquillity of reason itself, and, without
being restricted to madness, beauty, or faith any more than to ethnicity or race,
irrigates our very speaking-being, estranged by other logics, including the
heterogeneity of biology ... Henceforth, we know that we are foreigners to ourselves,
and it is with the help of that sole support that we can attempt to live with others.
(1991: 170)

An incident from a meeting with a group of counsellors captures some of the issues involved in
working with culture. In a small group discussion, an openly lesbian member shared an
experience of being hurt by a homophobic comment. I tentatively asked why it was so hurtful,
aware that this was a difficult question. The response that I received from the group took me
aback. The discussion immediately switched from individual hurt to a social discourse of gay
and lesbian rights. Group members were interpellated (Althusser, 2001 [1970]), or called into
place, as subjects in the discourse; and I was cast as the white, male oppressor. In retrospect, I would probably have heeded the inner voice that cautioned against asking the question. However I still believe that, at a personal level, it was valid; and that undue reluctance to ask difficult personal questions on the grounds of political correctness can lead to thought paralysis (Dalal, 2012). My learning was that culture must be approached with care, and while it is necessary to understand, respect and work with its discourses, these can obscure deeper issues and it may be used defensively.

For most of the time I was undertaking this study I was also training in group analysis. Like all psychotherapy training this involved theory, personal therapy and practice. This experience influenced my emergent ideas on culture, which are rooted firstly in psychoanalytic processes then social constructionism and anthropology. Group analysis taught me that psychodynamic ideas can be used in many different ways. For example, in the application of psychoanalysis to management science, projections take place onto organisations, groups or even administrative procedures or policies. In a group it is possible to simultaneously project different aspects of the self onto different group members and for these specific projections to come to the surface at different times. By extension, this provides a prototype for a culture that is multidimensional, changeable and volatile. In the words of the sociologist Norbert Elias (1991), one of the main thinkers behind group analysis, we are a ‘society of individuals’. Group analysis also taught me that it was possible, and indeed essential, to combine a psychoanalytic view with social theories to provide an understanding of more complex human phenomena.

I do not wish to denigrate efforts to understand and define the general characteristics of cultural difference, for I think this is an essential element in the search for understanding and
the development of sensitivity to others. Setting aside these general, if stereotypical, differences would be an equal pitfall to their acceptance as absolute truth.

There were a number of key influences on my ideas. First and foremost has been my practice, and where ethics and memory allow I have incorporated elements of this. Some of the writing on culture in therapy has been extremely helpful and especially certain psychoanalytic and group analytic contributions from Winnicott, Kakar, Dalal and Le Roy. I later found support from sociologists and anthropologists, most notably Elias, Hall, Ewing and Stewart. And finally, there was the influence of social constructionism and most especially Gergen, and Berger and Luckman.

**What is culture?**

Culture is beset by definitional difficulties (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1963; Williams, 1983), from which I do not seek its rescue. At a simplistic level, everything that is not nature is culture (Schnädelbach, 2000); although this definition is unhelpful, because the two concepts are co-created (Vanden Berghe, 2003). I think a fixed definition is ultimately impossible, actively unhelpful, and incompatible with a postmodern and poststructural position. One way of viewing the evolution and complexity of culture is provided by Francis Mulhearn (2000: xiiv), who regards it as a *topic*. For him this is ‘an established object of discussion with established terms of treatment’. A topic is therefore always already a convention, with a defined relationship between those who participate in it. Mulhearn states that successful *topics*, such as culture, can achieve the status of *commonplaces*, which in the words of Bourdieu (1993: 168), are ‘those places in discourse in which an entire group meets and recognizes itself’. This resonates with the psychoanalytic account of nationality provided by Žižek (1993: 201).
argues that ‘the element that holds a community together cannot be reduced to the point of symbolic identification’ and that the bond between members involves a shared relationship towards a ‘thing’. This ‘thing’ cannot be defined except in contradictory terms and can only be understood by ‘us’. These ideas go a long way to justify my reluctance to force a definition and help to explain the definitional difficulties and disagreements that frequently accompany the use of the word. More practically, in the context of the study, I do not want to impose my definitions or categories onto the participants; which could be seen as imperialism or even racialization (Dalal, 2002).

If pressed, I use a modification of a definition provided by the psychoanalytically oriented sociologist Rustin (2007), that it is the basis on which individuals make and remake meaning in a society. It is always associated with a group of people, a sense of belongingness and a basis for relating. At a macro level it surrounds us, and is present before our birth (Le Roy, 2000), while at a micro level it is personal (Dalal, 2006; Moodley & Palmer, 2006), and influenced by the many groups to which we belong. In addition to the accident of birth, there are contributions from biology, environment, life events, and the progress of the human lifecycle. The main dimensions include: 'race'; gender; class; sexual orientation; (dis)ability; religion; age; socioeconomic group; and language (Ivey, Ivey, & Simek-Morgan, 1980; Moodley, 2007). Further contributions arise from environmental factors, such as: rural versus urban, totalitarian versus democratic or competitive versus uncompetitive; participation in discretionary activities such as sports or politics; membership of groups; or identification with ideas or forms of artistic expression. Under normal circumstances, it is unconscious and individuals become aware of their culture only when they find themselves in a strange context (Le Roy, 2000). It is impossible to capture the almost infinite and shifting hierarchical distinctions; factors such as intersectionality (Burman, 2004), contextuality (Ewing, 1990), or the way in which dimensions come to stand in for each other (McClintock, 1995). It has characteristics of a kaleidoscope, in
which the individual pieces move around; forming complex, ever changing patterns that defy classification. Although it is useful to examine and describe the individual pieces, the overall pattern is more than the sum of its parts. It demands interpretation by the observer and attempts to focus on one piece defocus or obscure the others (Lewis, 2000). Writers usually focus on one element, such as colour (Dalal, 2002); world view (Laungani, 2004, 2005, 2007); or class (Isaac, 2006) and while this can be valid and often necessary; a blinkered approach can also lead to misleading assumptions, or obscure other important dimensions of difference.

It is central to my concept of culture that, in psychoanalytic terms, it is over-determined (Freud, 1900; Laplanche & Pontalis, 1973; Rycroft, 1995). This contains within it the ideas that a formation can result from multiple causes, that a cause can give rise to multiple formations and that the process goes on at multiple levels of interpretation (Laplanche & Pontalis, 1973). In social constructionist terms (Burr, 2015) it corresponds to the idea that each individual has access to a multiplicity of competing discourses; between which they can choose, and within which they can accept or resist being interpellated or called into place as subjects (Althusser, 2001 [1970]).

Prior to the Enlightenment, which led progressively to the era of modernity that was instrumental in the development of counselling and psychotherapy (McLeod, 2003b), culture tended to be one dimensional; and there was little interest in the uneducated, rural masses or foreigners that lacked it. Echoes of this remain in certain approaches, such as the work of Bordieu (1983, 1984), although his objective is deconstructive and democratic. Modern culture is in a state of constant change and Pannikar (1991) lists 29 ways in which change can take place. However, this complex list does not even begin to approach the level of complexity that arises from a more personal conception of culture viewed from a postmodern,
poststructuralist and postcolonial point of view. This raises the important question of whether it makes sense to attempt to track such a complex, volatile and ephemeral concept. My answer is that it is not culture itself that I am trying to track; but personal forms in which it manifests itself, and ways in which it engages with the life of an individual. This is the field that the empirical work of this study seeks to explore.

My refusal to adopt a fixed definition of culture, or to favor any of the conventional dimensions, is not without difficulty. However, there is a choice to be made. The selection of one or more dimensions, would immediately and irreversibly introduce a lens that focuses on the chosen dimension(s), while defocusing, obscuring and distorting the others. My objective is to strive to enter the world of the participant – accepting that the picture produced is an inevitable co-construction between researcher and participant, and one that is influenced by the subjectivity of the researcher. It seems to me that this picture has equal, if not greater, value than an analysis expressed in terms of specific pre-determined dimensions; that can lead to unhelpful stereotyping, reluctance to challenge, and paralysing political correctness (Dalal, 2012).

**What is metaculture?**

One concept that is useful in this exploration of culture in action is the idea of *metaculture*. Like culture, it has many definitions, most of which stress aspects of universality, commonality and generality across cultures. The word does not appear in more traditional dictionaries. Wiktionary ([http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/metaculture](http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/metaculture)) defines it as ‘all the universal concepts that are present in all cultures’, while other definitions see it as more of a process of building a taxonomy. Tiryakian (1996: 102) understands it as ‘a set of beliefs, generated in the distant past and renewed by succeeding generations of actors’. For him, this process constitutes an
operating system of civilisation; which is supported by Urban (2001) who uses it to explain the process by which culture is propagated across the world.

The idea of metaculture supports the search for the universal and those things that are common to some or all of mankind. This approach is exemplified by Jung (1968: 4) whose collective unconscious 'has contents and modes of behaviour that are more or less the same everywhere and in all individuals'. However, I wish to root my use of the word in the writing of Mulhearn (2000) from the field of literary criticism. He uses the word interchangeably with metacultural discourse. Meta comes from the Greek, meaning after or with; and for Mulhearn it means discourse in which culture addresses its own generality and conditions of existence. I will be using it to refer to a deeper level of understanding of the origins and uses of culture. I do not wish to argue that there are universal constants, but metaculture seems to encapsulate a search for understanding and meaning that seeks to make sense of culture on a higher level.
LITERATURE RE-VIEW

Homelessness is coming to be the destiny of the world
(Martin Heidegger, 1977: 219)

On the seashore of endless worlds, children play
(Adapted from Rabindranath Tagore, 1959)

Introduction
A comprehensive overview of literature on culture is an impossible task. Even a restricted summary would be the work of many lifetimes, and it is unlikely that this would provide a useable basis for the study. This is compounded by the fact that I have found no academic discipline that adequately addresses the subject. It is therefore necessary to draw from, and cautiously make connections between, disciplines. I have chosen to steer a selective and reflexive path through a range of literature – focusing on psychoanalytic and social constructionist perspectives and concentrating on material that is relevant to therapy. This was guided by my instincts and preferences; by the references and cross-links that I chose to follow; and by the way I have ultimately documented it, which aims to provide a comprehensible background that illuminates the research questions.

It is clear that this cannot be a conventional literature review, which aims to be comprehensive and critical, and it is therefore necessary to be clear about inclusion and exclusion criteria and the basis of the critique that is being applied. The main inclusion criterion is the extent to which the work contributed to my understanding of culture as a universal human phenomenon and assisted me in building a theory to support the study. The main exclusion criteria relate to work that is irrelevant to the theory being developed; that neither support nor undermined the central arguments or that adopted a narrow view of culture as a unidimensional phenomenon. I have chosen to limit the academic disciplines covered to focus on
psychoanalysis, psychology, sociology and anthropology with brief excursions into semiotics, linguistics and the psychosocial. The basis of the critique relates to my assessment of the quality of the contribution and its strengths and weaknesses, but mainly the extent to which it contributes towards the overall theory being developed.

The chapter is organised under the broad headings of the perspective or discipline from which the material originated, since links between disciplines need to be made with care. A number of key sources have influenced my course, and I have attempted to identify these. I start by reviewing culture as an issue in therapy, then move on to look at the way it is handled in various perspectives and disciplines. Finally, I look at three specific ideas used in the study.

Five issues need to be exposed at the outset. The first arises from the fact that in the field of postmodern and poststructuralist ideas, it becomes impossible to separate a re-view, or re-reading, from new re-search. The second recognises that it would be unreasonably presumptuous to lay claim to objectivity in a field that focuses on differing world views. This necessitates engagement with subjectivity and the 'methodological horrors' of qualitative research (Woolgar, 1988) at the stage of theory. The third issue relates to the fact that most writing on culture focusses on specific dimensions, and views the world through this specific 'lens'. Generalisation is contentious and raises the question of whether the 'field of cultural production', as Bourdieu (1983) calls it, is homogeneous. The fourth issue concerns the profound question of how to adopt a critical stance within an environment in which the material has been selected for its relevance to the central view being developed. In this regard, my only defence is attention to rigour and reflexivity. The fifth issue relates to the apparently impossible width, breadth and depth of the topic. This could be seen to be a
weakness in my choice of subject, or in the way that I have delineated the boundaries of the study. However, I wish to argue that this apparent weakness is in fact its strength, and that it is necessary to abandon control of some aspects of the scope to make progress.

My approach is pluralistic, and Rescher (1993: 80) argues that the correct response to this is *perspectival rationalism* or *contextualism*. He contends that only one alternative should be accepted, based on rational cogency 'even if that basis differs perspectively from group to group, era to era, and school to school'. Rescher dismisses attempts to reconcile alternatives as *syncretism*, but although this intellectual absolutism has rhetorical appeal, it lacks pragmatism; and in the context of therapy, regard for the preferences of clients. It seems to me that multiple approaches must be pursued; and theoretical bridges sought. Single theoretical perspectives have failed to deliver solutions that are universally superior (Cooper, 2008), and it is widely argued that the most ethical and effective way forward is to embrace plurality (Cooper & McLeod, 2011).

I also want to position my documentation of the study within the field of psychoanalytic writing. According to Ogden (2005: 15):

> [Psycho]analytic writing constitutes a literary genre of its own. It involves the linking of an analytic idea (developed in a scholarly manner) with an analytic experience created in the medium of language. What makes this literary genre so demanding is that experience—including analytic experience—does not come to us in words. This fact generates a paradox that lies at the core of analytic writing: analytic experience (which cannot be said or written) must be transformed into ‘fiction’ (an imaginative rendering of experience in words) in order to convey to the reader something of what is true to the emotional experience that the analyst had with the patient.

I do not wish to argue that this tradition, in itself, constitutes research; although it is accepted as such in the field of psychoanalysis. However, because my intention is to generate
knowledge that is relevant to practice, which includes my own psychoanalytically informed practice; a relationship to its generally accepted medium of communication is natural, if not essential. On the other hand, this is not intended to be a psychoanalytic treatise; and I frequently sacrifice psychoanalytic rigour in the interests of brevity, readability and wider applicability.

**Culture as an issue in therapy**

Culture is a recognised issue in therapy with an extensive literature. This can be traced in a rough chronological manner through phases labelled, transcultural (d’Ardenne & Mahtani, 1999; Lago, 2011), cross-cultural (Marsella, Pedersen, & East-West Culture Learning Institute., 1981; Pedersen, 1975, 1981, 1985), intercultural (Kareem & Littlewood, 2000) and multicultural (Ivey et al., 1980; Klass & Goss, 1999; Laungani, 2005; Moodley, 1999; Palmer, 2002; Ramirez, 1999; Sue, Ivey, & Pedersen, 1996). Some writers (e.g. McKenzie-Mavigna, 2009) prefer one label or another, because it emphasises an aspect of the issue that appeals to them; and so the terms continue in parallel. Unfortunately, useful as it may be in other situations, this body of literature provides little that is of relevance to the study.

Most books are concerned with what Sue and Sue (1990) bluntly call ‘counselling the culturally different’. This excellent American book illustrates the typical pattern of such contributions. It starts with anecdotal evidence of problems, in the form of vignettes – then moves on to political issues; the reality of racial discrimination; and barriers to effective cross-cultural counselling etc.. It talks about communication styles; racial and cultural identity; and the competencies of the culturally skilled counsellor. Finally, there are a number of chapters relating to specific cultural groups such as Asian Americans, Hispanic Americans and Native Americans. I chose this book because it is a rather dated second edition, set in the USA. This
distance reveals more clearly both the strengths and weaknesses of the genre. The seldom
acknowledged reality is that although the authors are of Asian origin, and although the book is
clearly set in the context of white, middle class America; it focuses almost exclusively on the
culture of the client. This is obvious to the modern British reader, although it may have been
less obvious to Americans who read it in the 1990s. I think it also suffers from the problem
that it does not sufficiently distinguish ethnic difference from class and economic status, and
fails to acknowledge the issue of intersectionality; which challenges the validity of cultural
decomposition (Burman, 2004). An Asian woman is not simply a white man with Asian and
woman added. Finally, it fails to acknowledge the process of acculturation that takes place
when an inhabitant of one country moves to another. After the initial acculturative stress
(Sam, 2006), there is a long process that takes place over many generations (Abouguendia &
Noels, 2001). The second generation immigrant, brought up and educated in a new country is
fundamentally different from the first generation immigrant; and is more likely to be the one
to seek therapy (Rumbaut & Portes, 2001). I have, somewhat unfairly, used Sue and Sue’s
book to illustrate some of the deficiencies evident in the literature on culture in therapy,
however the same comments could be made about more recent British contributions (e.g.
Lago, 2011).

Another approach, more central to the theme of the study is illustrated by Using race and
culture in counselling and psychotherapy (Helms & Cook, 1999). This promises a great deal,
but while it makes a positive contribution to the topic, it seems to me that it fails to deliver on
the expectations raised by its title. It is again set in the context of the US, of which fact the
authors seemed relatively unaware; and focuses on what is called sociorace, or societally
defined racial categories, although it also makes reference to ethnicity and class. It does take
on board social constructionism, and the socio-political histories of the groups involved. It
attempts to pick apart some of the larger socioracial groups, although it remains
overwhelmingly concerned with the black/white dichotomy and only then with distinctions that can be made within these groups.

In recent writing, there has been a movement towards more inclusive definitions, although the focus remains on a small number of ethno-cultural client groups (Moodley, 2007). This reduces the richness and complexity of human diversity to simplistic and problematic categories, where the therapist is generally assumed to be a white member of the dominant culture; and where culture is viewed negatively, as an obstacle. A number of more recent writers believe that, like its predecessors, multiculturalism has failed. Jun (2010) argues that the approach ignores multicultural theory and lacks social justice and equity. Moodley (2007) calls for a more inclusive definition that recognises multiple dimensions of diversity, and where white people are considered as clients.

Freud believed that cultural influences should be excluded from his psychoanalysis, and famously referred a patient who was an Egyptologist because of his own interest in the subject (Devereux, 1953). Devereux (1953: 633-634) distinguished psychoanalysis, which he saw as operating ‘below’ the level of culture; cross-cultural psychotherapy, in which the therapist utilised knowledge of the patient’s culture; and transcultural therapy, in which the therapist utilised knowledge of ‘culture per se, and universal cultural categories’. For Devereux, like Freud, the danger was not the cultural indifference of the therapist, but that interest in cultural factors could lead to long discourses, or to its use as a defence. The argument about whether it is possible to get beneath culture continues today. The group analyst Hearst (1993: 403) believes that this is possible; referring to ‘basic irreducible and universal needs of the infant, irrespective of cultural heritage’. However, this is at odds with Foulkes (1966: 152), the founder of group analysis, who saw the individual as ‘preconditioned to the core by his
community even before he is born, and ... imprinted vitally by the group which brings him up’.

This view is shared by Dalal (1993a: 406), who argues in his response to Hearst’s paper that her view:

leads one to think of culture as a layer of onion skin that covers a true Winnicottian essential self. Taking it further, it might lead one to suppose that in therapy one ought to work through the cultural layer to reach the human core, to something that lies outside and prior to culture

Dalal rejects this approach and addresses the question of the infant – mother relationship by arguing that love and need are as much cultural as instinctual. I would support Dalal and Foulkes in the argument that there is nothing beneath culture. Even although I am unable to prove this, it seems a better, and more phenomenologically sound, starting point to assume difference until commonality is seen to emerge. Most group analysts also see cultural diversity in a therapy group as an asset (e.g. Le Roy, 1987), which shows that difference is not universally regarded as an obstacle.

A small amount has been written about humanistic approaches to culture (Christopher, 2001; Christopher & Smith, 2006). Like Hearst, these seductively offer a solution in the form of a universal shared humanity, but I have not found this to be persuasive. It’s ideal of universality and democracy seems ‘wishful thinking’ without any basis or content that can be distilled out or discussed and with nothing that can stand in for a theory. Karen Seeley (2000), on the other hand, was a key source for me. She suggests that, rather than learning about the stereotypical characteristics of particular cultures, therapists need to become familiar with the general characteristics and functions of culture. This raises the difficult question of what these characteristics and functions are, and how it can be done without re-creating a colonial epistemology (Tuhiwai-Smith, 1999). However, it opens up the possibility of the metacultural. Seeley’s view is echoed by Alarcón et al. (2012) who argue that the practice of psychotherapy requires cultural competence.
My own interest in culture strengthened during my counselling training and my Masters dissertation, which focused on my own Scottish ethnic identity (MacDonald, 2007). I had always regarded culture as an important issue, and saw my Masters as a preliminary piece of reflexivity for a wider study. I identified with a number of voices, such as Burman’s (2004: 293) call for therapists to ‘acknowledge and work with difference as creative and valuable resources’. The definitional difficulties around culture are covered in the introduction (page 22), and I think my personal lack of visible signs of cultural disadvantage encouraged me to seek a more comprehensive view, within which my own cultural uniqueness could be recognised. I also think that, after three hundred years, I still feel the need to see my home country of Scotland as a colonised nation (Hearn, 2002; Jackson & Maley, 2002).

**The universality of therapy**

Counselling and therapy were developed in the West and it is necessary to raise the question of their universality. To some extent this study sidesteps the issue by focusing on participants that live in the UK. However, it remains relevant to the many diasporas and other religious, ethnic and family communities that define themselves across the globe (Werbner, 2002). Most literature focuses on the dimensions of nationality, colour and aspects of history. It is argued by some that therapy is the product of a hegemonic Western culture that seeks to impose its values on conquered nations as a form of imperialism (Fernando, 2002; Littlewood & Lipsedge, 1989), which questions the ethics as well as the effectiveness of the practice. I think this view is diminishing in an increasingly mobile and educated postcolonial world, but it is still encountered. Western approaches to therapy are predominantly practiced in cities, in English or other European languages and in the more ‘educated’ parts of societies: while other approaches to healing, such as shamanic practices, medicine men or other rituals operate in
rural areas, in local languages, and often with less educated populations (Moodley & West, 2005). Western approaches to therapy can be seen as part of a wider process of enculturation that can be practised by those with the necessary competence, resources, and above all choice.

It is not argued anywhere in the literature that therapy is culturally neutral or that, in medical terms, it can be prescribed and administered in a standard manner irrespective of the cultural background of therapist and client or the cultural difference between. A small amount of quantitative research suggests that ‘culturally adapted’ therapies can be more effective. Two meta-studies (Benish, Quintana, & Wampold, 2011; Griner & Smith, 2006) show a benefit for culturally adapted therapies in ethnic and racial minorities (with effect sizes of d=.45 and d=.32). There is also considerable evidence that approaches to therapy are naturally modified when transported to new countries and continents (Pedersen, 1981; Roland, 1988). Finally, it is always possible that a particular approach may fit a new culture as well, or even better, than the culture in which it was developed. For example, one study has shown that Cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) is very much in tune with Eastern philosophies and values (Hodges & Oei, 2007).

Five overlapping responses seem to arise to the idea of universality. The first is that therapy is culturally contextualised and may be ineffective or inappropriate beyond the context in which it was developed (Fernando, 2002; Littlewood & Lipsedge, 1989). The second is that although it may not provide an ideal fit, it is the best we have and may still be effective with groups that diverge from dominant cultural norms (Moorhouse, 2000). The third is that the poor fit for some cultural groups, can be overcome by modifications to the theoretical framework (Kurtz, 1992; Mitchell, 1974, 2003; Roland, 1988). The fourth is that although the cultural
embodiment of a particular approach may be inappropriate, the underlying theory may still be valid, or even provide a way of understanding the underlying cultural difference (Dimen & Goldner, 2002; Kakar, 1981, 1989, 1996; Mitchell, 1974). The fifth is that therapy is itself a form of enculturation (Fancher, 1993; Kakar, 2007). These responses are not mutually exclusive and refer to a conventional conception of therapy (e.g. Prochaska & Norcross, 1994).

If this conception is abandoned, in favour of a concept such as healing, then the analysis is altered; which is a topic I pick up later under culture and healing (page 37).

**Culture as a defence**

One key idea that had a powerful influence on my thinking was the idea of culture as a defence. Two examples are provided by Dalal (2006); one from an individual therapy in which a client used a cultural defence to deal with a life situation, and the other from a group in which a group member used a cultural defence against the process of the therapy. In the first example, a female client used religious devotion to counteract denigration within her husband’s family. The couple were both second generation immigrants into the UK; born into secular Muslim families from the same sect, class and country of origin. However the husband’s family, with whom the couple lived, seemed to regard the wife’s background as inferior. Dalal does not suggest that her religious beliefs were insincere, but their emergence at the time of the marriage caused him to consider the possibility that they served a defensive purpose. In the second example, a black group member concealed from the group the fact that his wife was pregnant. When the group challenged him on this, he ‘played the culture card’ to close the door on further exploration. According to Dalal:

> The group fall silent because of the unspoken injunction to ‘respect cultural difference’, leaving them nowhere to go. We can see that in this instance the ruling to ‘respect’ cultural difference is being used defensively to make something sacrosanct and unquestionable.
This is a defence that is used more widely and, for example, it has been suggested that whatever the reality of Islamophobia and anti-Zionism, they are sometimes used defensively by members of the targeted groups (Husan, 2013). This is a difficult idea that I instinctively wish to consign to the same dark hole as Holocaust denial, but this is probably another example of the defence at work.

**Culture and healing**

Counselling and psychotherapy are practiced in a variety of situations and settings. However, the term healing is seldom used and McLeod (2003b: 10) makes a distinction between ‘mainstream counselling and psychotherapy’ and other ‘healing approaches’. The word healing seems to refer to an earlier paradigm; and to more shamanistic, traditional or spiritual approaches (West, 2011). While both are concerned with forms of healing; traditional healing practices are more visibly embedded in a cultural framework that often participates in the process.

This issue is addressed by Eleftheriadou (2010) who draws attention to the lack of books on the ‘role’ of culture in psychology and psychotherapy. She asserts that all healing is cultural, which is an idea developed by Frank & Frank (1991) in *Persuasion and healing*. They concluded that the distress and disability that bring people to healers ‘are classified in terms of theories that are products of culture’ (Kleinman & Good, 1985). Illnesses shaped by bodily factors can be readily diagnosed across cultures; whereas illnesses shaped by social or psychological factors express themselves in terms of the attitudes and values of the surrounding culture. It is therefore not possible to divorce psychiatric diagnosis or psychosomatic illness from cultural influences. Frank & Frank (1991) proposed that the common characteristic of people seeking psychotherapy was demoralisation. They defined four components of psychotherapies in
terms of the relationship, setting, rationale and ritual – all of which have a strong cultural component.

*Persuasion and healing* (Frank & Frank, 1991) had a significant influence on my thinking; and since its publication, the research on common factors promoted by Jerome Frank has developed in a number of directions. These include a focus on the life story of the client (Treisman & McHugh, 2012) and the restoration of meaning (Frank, 2012). It seems to me that these are the areas in which culture has a part to play in both understanding and working with clients. Alarcón *et al* (2012), argue that the sociocultural nature of psychotherapy in which ‘the healing influence is exercised primarily by words, acts and rituals in which the sufferer, healer, and sometimes a group participate’ (Frank & Frank, 1991: 2) means that the practice of psychotherapy requires a solid cultural competence. This takes the form of the individual clinician’s demonstration of respect for and interest in the cultural factors that shape a given patients context and behaviour (Lu, 2006; Tseng, 2004), together with awareness of their own perspectives and biases. The cultural norms of the society in which the therapeutic encounter take place dictate the roles of therapist and client; while the expectations of methods, skills and outcomes reflect beliefs nurtured by culture. In this way, they argue, culture itself becomes a therapeutic tool; and it may even be a part of the underlying pathology, as exemplified by the controversial and politically charged issue of culture-bound syndromes (CBSs), originally identified by Yap (1951). Alarcón *et al* (2012: 305-306) conclude that ‘In the tradition of *Persuasion and healing*, current conditions require us, first to broaden our view of psychotherapy to include a variety of healers, sufferers, and settings, and then to focus on their unique dynamics, values, processes, and outcomes’.
Another way of looking at psychological distress is in terms of resilience and coping (Lazarus, 1985, 1993, 1999). In her book *Stress coping and development*, Aldwin (2007: 245) states that ‘a fish is the worst creature to ask about water’. Similarly, the influence of culture on the stress and coping process is so pervasive that it is little noticed. However, she believes that there is growing awareness of the importance of culture, concluding that since the publication of the first edition of her book (1994) ‘there has been a growth in the recognition of, not only cultural, but also social aspects of coping, including gender, social support, and the influence of the family’ (2007: 239). She lists ways in which culture influences the experience and appraisal of stress, and the response to it. Quoting Mechanic (1974), Aldwin, Park & Spiro state that:

> Cultures may differ in both their preferred means of emotion-focused coping as well as problem-focused coping. Differences in emotion focused coping centre around issues of emotional control versus emotional expression. Cultures may also differ in generalized attitudes towards control and instrumental activity – preferences for external or internal control and direct versus indirect approaches to mastery.

(as cited in Aldwin, Park, & Spiro, 2007: 204-5)

In my Masters (MacDonald, 2007), I found some support for this view in the opinions of the participants regarding aspects of the stereotypical characteristics of Scottish ethnic identity. A number expressed the view that Scots were adept at emotion-based coping, because of personal experiences of childhood and a perceived history of oppression. They believed that Scots acculturate well, and do not feel the need to form expatriate communities in their adopted countries. They thought Scots had an identity, which some others lacked, and that this was a source of strength. It should be clear that I was not concerned with the reality of these stereotypes or whether the label of ‘Scot’ was meaningful or sufficiently precise. I was more concerned with the fact that it made sense to my participants and that they had used this identity as a positive resource in their own lives. I also speculated that emigration could become a source of apparent strength; because of the scope it provides to disengage from
unwanted attitudes or aspects of the self, such as religious sectarianism or Presbyterian repressiveness. These could be projected onto the country and the people left behind; which meant that although emigration involved acculturative stress (Sam, 2006), it could also be associated with projective relief. Many participants talked of the escapism inherent in leaving Scotland, and most seemed to find it a positive transition.

In my personal practice I have always had an interest in working with trauma. Wilson and Lindy (2013) state that trauma expresses itself in *Trauma-specific metaphors* (TSMs) that are either universally human or cultural. They are part of the human need to make sense of, and explain, experiences. It has been documented that in indigenous cultures, traditional health beliefs and practices persist; and may even flourish, after exposure to modern Western medicine (Smith, Lin, & Mendoza, 1993). In the words of Norman Cousins (1993: xi), ‘it is not enough for the individual to overcome feelings of helplessness and despair with respect to illness; it is also important to feel connected to the collective organism of society itself’. While this may seem impossibly vague and unhelpful it does point to the importance of ‘my culture’, whatever that may be.

I now move on to look for a theoretical basis for the understanding of culture.

**Culture in phenomenology**

The starting point in my search for a theory of culture is phenomenology. This is the description of conscious experience while suspending or bracketing all preconceptions, interpretations and explanations’ (Oxford dictionary of psychology). It seems to me that phenomenology can be questioned, interrogated, or judged insufficient, but it cannot be ignored. Even if emotions are socially constructed (Harré, 1986) or influenced by the
unconscious, they are the ‘reality’ of a client with which a therapist works. According to Vandenberge (2003), modern cultures, unlike their predecessors, are thoroughly reflexive and autonomous, each instance being manmade and but one of many. Vandenberge constructs a phenomenological theory of culture, that he calls posthumanistic, starting from the assertion by the German philosopher Schnädelbach (2000: 16, as cited in Vandenberge, 2003) that ‘the concepts of nature and culture are co-original’ and that they are thus constitutive of each other. However, as previously noted (page 22), I do not regard this concept as helpful, because of its breadth, vagueness and lack of detail. Christopher (2001: 116), on the other hand, provides something more specific. He argues that ‘from a hermeneutic point of view, culture is constituted by those shared meanings that make social life possible’. This provides a practical, utilitarian view of culture that can stand in for a theory. However, although this provides a way of looking at personal culture (page 74), it lacks any description of the processes that are at work or anything that is specific enough to build a theory; and the main contribution of phenomenology is probably as a mode of questioning, or research methodology, and not a basis for theory.

**Culture in social constructionism**

There is no single definition of social constructionism (Burr, 2015). Burr proposes that it is any approach that accepts one or more of a series of assumptions defined by Gergen (1985) relating to: the critical stance taken; historical and cultural specificity; the relationship of knowledge to social processes; and the relationship between knowledge and social action. One of its major concerns is with language and *discourse* – which is ‘an instance of situated language use’ (Burr, 2015: 73). It seems fairly obvious that a substantial portion of culture is socially constructed between people, through the use of language; and Burr (2015) argues that social constructionism IS the process of constructing culture. However, this is almost certainly
not the whole story, since there is evidence that children begin to appropriate a social heritage before they have acquired linguistic competence (Burkitt, 1991); and that cultural models are transmitted during the early months of life by holding, nursing, songs, rhythms, bodily contact and games (Le Roy, 2000).

Social constructionism provides a number of important concepts. *Subject positions* refer to the process by which identities are produced (Burr, 2015), linking to the idea developed by Althusser (2001 [1970]) that discourses *interpellate* or ‘hail’ individuals as subjects. This is where personal agency comes into play, in terms of the discourses selected and the willingness to either be called into place or resist. *Interpretive repertoires* is a concept put forward by Potter and Wetherell (1987) as a way of understanding the linguistic resources that people draw upon in in constructing their account of events. They state that:

> By interpretive repertoires we mean broadly discernible clusters of terms, descriptions and figures of speech often assembled around metaphors or vivid images ... They are available resources for making evaluations, constructing factual accounts and performing particular actions

(Potter & Wetherell, 1995: 89)

This may be regarded as a component part of the concept of personal culture that I develop later (page 74).

Berger and Luckman (1966) define social processes that are somewhat analogous to psychoanalytic processes. In particular, the ideas of *externalisation, objectification* and *internalisation* provide a mechanism by which needs are constructed in the outer world of discourse; embodied into entities or ideas; and then integrated into more personal discourses. Berger and Luckman (1966: 79) refer to these as ‘the three dialectical moments in social reality’. Berger (1967) has used the ideas to develop a sociological theory of religion; which he has applied to the desecularisation of the world (Berger, 1999), and to explicate wider social
and political phenomena such as the development of cults and NRMs (Berger, 1999; Dawson, 2008).

In this literature re-view, it has been necessary to make choices, and I have left out many ideas that would, in other circumstances, have been regarded as essential. These include feminism (Walters, 2005), queer theory (Penney, 2014; Watson, 2005) and deeper consideration of postcolonialism (Young, 2003), race and racism (Dalal, 1993b, 2002; Davids, 2011). Although this invites criticism from members of individual groups or the academics who study them, I think this is a necessary consequence of the epistemological stance that I have adopted, which is to avoid over attention to any single dimension of difference, political position or set of discourses. For me one of the main roles of social constructionism and, to a lesser extent psychoanalysis, is to help in deconstructing difference so that the focus can be directed onto the personal use that is made of it. This is a somewhat controversial turning back of current approaches that seek social causations for personal affect, but it is one that is consistent with the underlying ideas of critical theory (Bronner, 2011). Social constructionism provides a large contribution to an ontology of culture; but for the purpose of this study, this is not the whole story. It is also necessary to look at the personal motivations that bring it into existence in the first place; that distinguish one culture from another; and that explain the attraction of an individual for a specific aspect or dimension.

**Culture in anthropology**

Anthropology, is the comparative study of cultural and social life (Carrithers, 1992). It grew out of the intersection of European discovery, colonialism and natural science (Monaghan & Just, 2000). The main sub-divisions are social and cultural, sometimes combined into sociocultural. However, there are many other sub-divisions, including psychological
anthropology. Mainstream anthropology no longer sees itself as a physical sciences and has
adopted an interpretive, humanistic approach that has at its heart the practice of
ethnography; which is the systematic study of people and cultures (Monaghan & Just, 2000).
It has only recently begun to address postmodernity and does not yet have a convincing vision
of postmodern social structures (Monaghan & Just, 2000).

Anthropology has moved away from an exclusive concern with small, rural, non-Western,
societies to address groups such as social clubs, unions and migrants that would previously
have been the concern of sociology (Rapport, 2014). However, it remains focused on the
behaviour of a community rather than the experience of an individual. The approach has been
applied to the process of understanding culture in the context of therapy (Seeley, 2000); and it
can be seen as a theory neutral approach that builds a picture from the bottom up. However,
as Tuhiwai-Smith (1999) points out, Western colonial assumptions are so deeply embedded in
research methodologies that it is difficult to disentangle them. Anthropology fails to provide
an ontology and seeks this out in other places, such as Marxist theory (Eriksen, 2001). I have
concluded that mainstream anthropology has little relevance to this study, except in the
definition of cultures and the labels that are attached to them. The notable exception to this is
psychological anthropology, which was originally rooted in psychoanalysis, but is now more
widely based (Schwartz, White, & Lutz, 1992). I have selected two key contributions.

**Katherine Pratt Ewing**

The first of these is provided by the anthropologist Ewing (1987, 1990, 1992; 1997; 2006a).
She brings together anthropological and psychoanalytic views of the self, especially those
emerging from Kohutian self-psychology (1971, 1977, 1978). Most of her work has focused on
the cultural shaping of authority relationships, cultural inconsistency and linkages between
concepts of self and the politics of identity formation (Molino, 2004a). She argues that individuals in all cultures 'project' [her word] multiple, inconsistent self-representations that are context dependent and may shift rapidly. These representations seem timeless and have histories of their own, which challenges traditional ideas in anthropology that cultures are coherent systems; and that there is a cultural self that can be classified in relation to the autonomous, cohesive, bounded Western self. Ewing argues that individuals deal with this by creating an illusion of wholeness through metaphor and metonymy, and through psychoanalytic processes such as condensation, displacement, transference, identification and repression. She believes that individuals 'construct new selves from their available set of self-representations' (Ewing, 1990: 258).

Ewing’s work was done in what she calls ‘complex places’ like cities (Molino, 2004a), rather than more simple systems like ‘villages’ where it is possible to draw boundaries and identify the shared culture as ‘a system’. It seems to me that in the twenty first century, these complex places are virtually ubiquitous; and increasingly overlaid with levels of postmodern complexity. On the other hand, her work is done in exotic and foreign locations such as Pakistan (Ewing, 1997), or with immigrant populations from these locations in her home country of the US (Ewing, 2008). This focuses attention away from the more ordinary dimensions of difference.

Ewing (1997: 8) takes issue with Homi Bhabha (1994); whose influential, and at times elusive, work The location of culture develops a theory of postmodern cultural hybridity. She argues that his writing reflects a ‘specific, material positioning in the Western academic and literary worlds’. This overemphasises the role of the ‘Western gaze’, because it comes from a world that works primarily with texts. Dirlik (1994), she says, points out that not all postcolonials
repudiate modernisation and nationalism; and not all seek to recapture the local as an act of resistance to these discourses. I find this unwillingness to accept even the stereotyping that rejects stereotypes refreshing, since the symbolic coexistence of the individual with the social and discursive is central to my own view of the world.

I think that Ewing provides the most important anthropological contribution to my understanding of culture. Her account of the self as multiple, contextual, inconsistent and malleable is in complete agreement with my own observation and practice. It is a world in which new selves can be created for new circumstances and old selves can adapt to changes in the environment. This is close to the idea of a personal culture (page 74), that is a central concept in this study.

On the negative side, I find Ewing’s self insufficiently flexible to deal with the growing diversity of individuality. It does little to explain the dynamics of the formation of selves or the switches that take place between, and I do not think she takes sufficient account of the role of language and discourse in the creation of the encultured self. However, the underlying idea of multiple cultural selves is a powerful one that illuminates the empirical work of the study and its findings.

**Kathleen Stewart**

The second contribution is provided by Stewart (1991, 1996, 2007), who focuses on her own American culture. She shies away from many of the fundamentals of psychoanalysis, such as the distinction between conscious and unconscious, but acknowledges the influence of Lacan, Kristeva and Žižek. There are similarities to the work of the psychoanalyst Schafer (1992) and
strong resonances with Bolas (2009) on ideas like the generative unconscious and free association (Molino, 2004b). Stewart sees the fundamentals of anthropology – ethnography, history and culture as modes of questioning (Molino, 2004b) and regards academic discourse as a critique that is contaminated by unspoken norms and practices (Stewart, 1991). However, she argues for the legitimacy of this contaminated cultural critique, suggesting that before we ask the ‘seemingly straightforward’ question of the social construction of the subject we need to ask about the cultural-political charge given to specific notions of the ‘analyst’ as ‘subject’ in conventions of academic discourse’. Culture is no longer ‘given’, pre-constituted or ‘out there’, and has a vitality and creativity in which meanings is always in excess of what we can ‘know’.

For Stewart, the question of the nature of culture is left open; and when it appears to close itself down, her approach is to open it up again. Like Ewing, she admits multiple identities for a single subject. She has written about an eclectic collection of everyday topics that include nostalgia, conspiracy theories, apocalyptic thinking, daydreams, country music, gender, aesthetics, trauma, photography, whistle-blowers, dogs, TV repairmen and the pitfalls of the American dream.

Her approach is deeply poststructuralist, seeing culture as that which ‘inhibits the slippage of a gap between sign and meaning’ or ‘a space of excess and desire’ (Molino, 2004b: 140). She is therefore ambivalent towards ideas like the individual unconscious that ‘accuse the ... unconscious of being a modernist concept’ (Molino, 2004b). She wishes to remove the dichotomy between ‘deep structure’ and ‘surface phenomena’ in order to focus on that which is uncanny in the everyday. Her idea of objectifying otherness provides a more general way of looking at discrimination than analyses produced around ‘race’. It is an otherness that exists in
the here and now rather than ‘out there’. For her, processes like invention, creative
generativity, displacement, condensation and repression are aspects of ‘meaning’. Perhaps
most significantly she relates culture to Lacan’s register of the imaginary and to his concept of
desire - which is the ultimate recognition of a personal culture. For me she provides a bridge
between anthropology and psychoanalysis even if the nature of its construction is sometimes
unclear. This is a bridge between personal and social through discourse that I find lacking in
the work of Ewing. However, she does this at the cost of clarity and a blurring of the link to
psychoanalysis.

Despite the fact that there are clear differences between the two approaches, they
complement each other in a manner that I find extremely constructive. Ewing (1991; 1997,
2003) studies exotic foreign cultures; while Stewart (1996, 2007) focuses on her native culture,
making a virtue out of the ordinary. Ewing takes a strongly psychoanalytic view, whereas
Stewart’s approach is more constructionist and linguistic.

Culture in sociology

Sociology is ‘a hybrid discipline that concerns itself with the nature of society’ (Oxford
dictionary of sociology). Freud’s (1933: 179) view was that ‘sociology ... dealing as it does with
the nature of people in society, cannot be anything but applied psychology’. However there
are many other views. For me, one of the most effective analyses of the relationship between
the social and personal is provided by the sociologist Ian Burkitt (1991: 189) who argues that
personality is formed and reformed socially. He states that:

The basis of human difference and individual identity is to be found within society, in
the social relations that exist between individuals. It is only in relation to others and to
the material world in which we live, that humans come to realise their separateness
from all that surrounds them.
While I think that Burkitt is making exactly the point about individuality that underlies the study, there is a risk that it can also lead to a relativist, socially constructed world in which individuality escapes through the fingers. I suspect that while much of the difference between individuals can be explained by ontogenetic factors, it is reasonable to suggest that tiny differences due to genetics or epigenetics, significantly affect the trajectory of a human life through the integrative process of living and the life events that punctuate it. I have chosen to look briefly at the work of Norbert Elias and Erving Goffman, both of whom have added to my understanding of culture.

**Norbert Elias (1897-1990)**

Following his ‘rediscovery’ in the 1970s Elias has become one of the most prominent and influential voices in the field of sociology (Smith, 2001). He was a German sociologist, of Jewish descent, who later became a British citizen. He came to sociology late, having first trained in medicine and philosophy (Smith, 2001), and later becoming one of the less prominent members of the Frankfurt school (which evolved into critical theory after its exile to the US in 1937 (Bronner, 2011)). He had a strong commitment to Freud, who was a considerable influence on his major work *The Civilizing Process* (2000). Elias was primarily interested in explaining why different societies turn out differently, and why they change over time (Smith, 2001). Although he does not talk very specifically about culture he says much of relevance. He focused on the relationship between power, behaviour, emotion and knowledge, arguing that many categorisations and perceptions are determined by relations of power, rather than psychoanalytic processes such as projection. Dalal (2002) cites Elias extensively in his search for a theory of ‘race’, racism and racialization. Clearly, his ideas are
most useful at the level of a society or group, but he provides a partial account of the influence of individuals on society and vice versa (e.g. Elias, 1991).

Elias’ main relevance to the study is his understanding of the coexistence of social and personal (1991), and the influence he brought to bear on the development of group analysis through his friendship with Foulkes (Pines, 1983). He argues that the adversarial debate about the primacy of individual or society is unhelpful because it is carried out in an imaginary and impossible space where individuals can exist outside societies, and where societies are beyond individuals. His concept of figuration steers a path between the exclusive focus of Freud on the internal and Marx on the social (Dalal, 1993b). He states that:

> The concept of figuration ... expresses what we call ‘society’ more clearly and unambiguously than the existing conceptual tools of sociology, as neither an abstraction of attributes of individuals existing without society nor a ‘system’ or ‘totality’ beyond individuals, but the network of interdependence formed by individuals.

(Elias, 2000: 214)

The nature of relatedness and interdependence is such that it inevitably has power structured into it. Elias believed that every social relation was a power relation influenced by the power relationships between figurations, and in this context power is a relative category, which makes it a structural characteristic of all human relationships (Elias, 1978).

**Erving Goffman (1922-1982)**

Goffman (1971, 2005) developed the dramaturgical perspective. This evolved out of symbolic interactionism (Mead, 1934) and the work of Burke (Mitchell, 1978). It provides a micro sociological account of social interaction, and while not specifically a theory of culture, it has relevance to the volatility and changeability that I observe in the expression of individual
cultural identities. He argues that the elements of human interactions are dependent upon time, place and audience; and provides a credible mechanism for the transmission of culture and the transitions between the selves described by Ewing (page 44). Perhaps most importantly he suggests that, however culture is constructed or created, the manner in which it is displayed is dependent on context. In addition, concern with the analysis of ritual elements in social interaction (Goffman, 2005) is at the heart of an anthropological definition of culture concerned with the creation of symbols.

**Culture in psychology**

Psychology is ‘the study of the nature, functions and phenomena of behaviour and mental experience’ (Oxford dictionary of psychology). While there is a clear focus on the individual, the branch of social psychology deals with social behaviour. Psychoanalysis is arguably a sub-discipline of psychology, and is widely recognised as a theoretical perspective within it (Stevens, 1996); and this is how it was originally envisaged by Freud, as evidenced by the word ‘psychological’ in the full title of the ‘Standard Edition’ of his writings. Despite this, I have chosen to deal with psychoanalysis outside psychology for two main reasons. Firstly, this is because of its centrality to the study; and secondly, because of the controversial nature of the relationship. Some eminent practitioners with a background in psychology distinguish the two (e.g. Parker, 2003); while others attempt to drag psychoanalysis into the world of psychology (e.g. Billig, 1999), then criticise eminent psychoanalysts for abusing it (Billig, 2006). In general, I have concluded that psychology, outside the theoretical perspectives of psychoanalysis and social constructionism has little to contribute to the study, which is consistent with the view expressed by Christopher and Smith (2006). However, two areas are worthy of comment – the individual differences approach and social identity theory.
Individual differences approaches

Individual differences research is a nomothetic approach to personality and other psychological abilities (Thomas, 2007). It consists of two parts: the definition of traits, trait dimensions or personality dimensions; and the measurement of a population against these. In the area of therapy, Pittu Laungani (2004, 2005, 2007) has developed a four dimensional model of core values or factors; and in the field of management science Geert Hofstede (2003) has developed a five dimensional model that has been populated with data from more than 74 countries (http://www.geert-hofstede.com/). These give an interesting view of average differences between populations, but do little to explain a specific client or participant. The validity of an etic approach, based on a single model is questionable; and work in the related area of personality (Goldberg, 1981; Somer & Goldberg, 1999) has shown that although five factor models work quite well, the factors that emerge from correlation studies differ from country to country. More fundamentally, quantitative approaches have little to offer in the understanding of an individual (Willig, 2013).

Social identity theory and self-categorisation theory

A more useful starting point is Social identity theory (SIT) (Tajfel, 1978a, 1982) and its variation Self-categorization theory (Hogg & Abrams, 1988). These were motivated by a desire to understand the causes and effects of prejudice (Tajfel, 1978b). The underlying belief was that individuals strive to achieve a positive self-image, which has two components: personal identity; and social identity. In some ways these cater for the contextuality and complexity of the postmodern world, and fit quite well with certain observations (e.g. Nagel, 1994). However, they ignore wider historical and social aspects of culture; and are at least partially contradicted by research – including my own (2007). However, they are still widely influential and can be useful.
The approaches belong within behavioural psychology, and are based on experimental work in which a population of subjects is arbitrarily split into two groups. Tests, which often incorporate a degree of deception, are then carried out to investigate bias towards the in-group. The approach is criticised on the basis of ecological validity (Billig, 1976); lack of attention to deeper aspects of subjectivity; and the way it depicts racism as ‘natural’ (Howitt & Owusu-Bempah, 1994).

**Culture in psychoanalysis**

Psychoanalysis is an absolute foundation of my approach to practice, but in the current context I need to justify its status as a science. It is frequently attacked because the existence of the unconscious cannot be proved, because of the role played by the subjectivity of the analyst; and because of the importance attached to the authority of leading writers, practitioners and supervisors (Ikonen & Rechardt, 2010). Its reliance on clinical cases, held up by practitioners as the basis for its ‘validity’, may also be a weakness in applications outside ‘the clinic’ (Frosh, 2010). Rustin argues that its status as a science is attested by the way it has spread over the world, and become part of the common sense of our culture (Molino, 2004c; 1991). He sees this in the context of the description of science provided by Kuhn (1996); and uses the realist model of science, developed by Bhaskar (1978, 1979), Harré (1972, 1983) and others to conclude that under this definition, and subject to some qualifications, psychoanalysis meets the criteria to be regarded as a science.

An alternative approach is provided by Attwood and Stolorow (1984), who suggest that the confusion arises from Freud’s attempt to present his psychoanalysis as a natural science. They argue that it should now be regarded as a social science, and a form of existential
phenomenology; which is entirely compatible with the approach of the study. Here psychoanalysis has three roles: the first is as a way of understanding culture, the second as a theoretical perspective for the empirical work and the third as an approach to therapeutic practice. In this section, I am concerned with its use as a way of understanding culture.

**Sigmund Freud**

There is an extensive psychoanalytic literature of culture and diversity (e.g. Bainbridge, Radstone, Rustin, & Yates, 2007; Bell, 1999; Davids, 2011; Frosh, 2005; Minsky, 1998; Wheeler, 2006). This starts, inevitably, with Freud (especially 1913a, 1913b, 1928, 1930), and for the wider academic world is generally limited to Freud and Lacan. Freud built his ideas of culture on the drives, the Oedipus complex (1905), the incest taboo and the rule of exogamy (1913b). It is a universalist definition that takes little account of difference or ideology (Althusser, 1964); and, while it accepts history, does not attempt to theorise diversity – except in general terms such as difference (Dalal, 2002). I do not propose to focus on Freud’s general ideas on culture since I have not found them to be especially helpful in this specific area.

**Jacques Lacan**

Lacan added to Freud's theory in a number of ways. For example, his abstraction of the *phallus* as a symbol of male power (Lacan, 1977a) frees it for use in understanding wider Manichean relationships, where there is an imbalance of power. In addition there are many other ideas, such as the concepts of *alienation* and *separation* (Lacan, 1977b) introduced in Seminar IX and deeper philosophical influences that I will mention in the discussion section. In concrete terms, Lacan’s (2006) main contribution was his emphasis on language, which will be discussed later and in the registers of experience, which is a view of the world in which there is
a separation into the symbolic, the imaginary and the real. The symbolic world is the place in which culture is expressed, whether in the form of language or artefacts. However, it is the imaginary meaning to an individual that is of interest in therapy, and ultimately the elusive and inexpressible world of the real.

**Psychoanalytic processes**

Much of the strength of psychoanalysis, in the context of culture, lies not in its overarching theories; but in the tools that it provides. These tools are the basic psychoanalytic processes of introjection, identification, projection, projective identification and transference, together with the defences (Bateman & Holmes, 1995; Etchegoyen, 1999; Sandler, Dare, & Holder, 1992). Other useful ideas include containment (Bion, 1984 [1962]), incorporation (Le Roy, 2000) and the social unconscious (Hopper, 2003). These processes are comprehensively described in the wider psychoanalytic literature, with the exception of incorporation, which is used in a specific way by Le Roy (2000) in his development of a group analytic theory of culture (page 61). In addition Lacanian psychoanalysis provides a wide range of tools (Bracher, 1993; Parker, 2005a; Parker & Pavón Cuéllar, 2014; Pavón Cuéllar, 2010), which I do not describe, because I have not used them in the study.

Incorporation, in the sense used by Le Roy (2000), deserves some special attention. He regards it as a failed introjection that occurs when a loved object is lost before the cathected desires have been detached from the object and introjected into the self. In other words, the desires cannot be introjected when the object functions insufficiently well as a narcissistic selfobject for the developing self, and is repressed. This blocked introjection, and the associated narcissistic loss, results in repeated recreation of dependency to external objects onto which the earlier lost and incorporated narcissistic objects are projected. The significance
of this process for culture emerges, among other places, in relation to the idea of containment; and the search for secondary groups to which feelings of belonging can be felt.

Containment provides a particularly interesting way of looking at elements of culture such as nationality, which can be thought of both as a physical container and the sense of belonging that attaches to it. The idea was originally developed by Bion (1984 [1962]) and is similar to Winnicott’s (1965) idea of the holding environment. Freud (1917 [1915]: 243) frequently articulated the assumption that non-human objects such as ‘country, liberty or an ideal’ acquire their significance because they come to stand in for human objects through metaphoric and metonymic association. This makes it possible to consider non-human selfobjects, such as the childhood home or the surrounding countryside. These cultural selfobjects may provide containment, stability and relaxation, and may lead to enhanced coping resources. However, if they are incorporated rather than introjected, they may lead to feelings of loss and an endless, futile search for substitutes.

A psychoanalytic theory of culture provides a mechanism by which one dimension of culture may stand in for another through the process of displacement. This leads on to one of the ways in which culture can be regarded as a resource for the expression of deep feelings. An early example of this is provided by Joan Riviere (1929), in her essay ‘Femininity as a masquerade’, which illustrates both processes. At a more social level, Ann McLintock (1995), describes the way in which race, gender and class are historically intertwined within geopolitical strategies of subordination.

Another related idea is the stereotyping that is applied to dimensions of difference such as nationality or religion. These are often seen as restrictive, reductionist and unhelpful.
However stereotyping is a normal cognitive process with practical uses (Brislin, 1993; Jahoda, 1978) and it may be inherent in the operation of the brain (Adler, 2000). The psychoanalytic use of stereotypes is illustrated by the example of the Scottish stereotype of meanness (Macdonald, 2007). This can be used as a resource for identification and projection. The Scot may identify with the stereotype, thereby justifying meanness; or project it onto another individual, groups or the entire nation; leaving him or her free to practice generosity, and pursue philanthropic projects, while deriving disproportionate self-satisfaction.

**Donald Winnicott**

One of the most important inputs to my understanding of culture from the mainstream of psychoanalysis is provided by Winnicott (1963, 1965, 1971, 1975), who was an early member of the British Independent School (Kohon, 1986; Stewart, 2003). He was not a radical theorist like Fairbairn or Guntrip and specialised in the application of insights from his work as a paediatrician into psychoanalytic thought (Khan, 1975). He saw culture as a transitional phenomenon located in the *potential space* between the individual and the environment (Winnicott, 2005 [1971]: 135). In simple terms, it was an adult development of the transitional object (Winnicott, 1953), but one that the individual was actively involved in creating. He saw culture as a space in which ‘play’ could take place, and because this space was neither biologically determined nor common property, it was the root of individuality. He states that:

> The potential space between baby and mother, between child and family, between individual and society or the world depends on experience which leads to trust. It can be looked on as sacred to the individual in that it is here that the individual experiences creative living.

He was very clear that the ability to develop this cultural world was dependent on the safety and security experienced in childhood and that the primary culture was the early mother-
infant relationship. The progress from this early state, through physical transitional objects to a more abstract cultural world constructed in a transitional space can be seen as a natural process of growth and development, and it seems to me that it is one that continues throughout life.

Transitional phenomena are frequently sources of soothing, and Winnicott sees them as symbols for some part object such as the breast (Winnicott, 2005 [1971]). However, it is not a substitute for either good external or internal objects. In the case of the early transitional object the infant can only employ them ‘when the internal object is alive, and real, and good enough’ (2005 [1971]: 13). In addition, their role is not always benign, and the relationship to an early transitional object can be one of both love and hate. As Winnicott (2005 [1971]: 7) puts it:

At that point my subject widens out into that of play, and of artistic creativity and appreciation, and of religious feeling, and of dreaming ... and also of fetishism, lying and stealing, the origin and loss of affectionate feeling, drug addiction, the talisman of obsessional rituals, etc.

I think Winnicott provides a uniquely clear view of culture, supplying a definition of what I have called a personal culture (page 74), without prescribing it. It is a definition that recognises the reality and importance of personal background and environment on the one hand and cultural influences on the other; but sees cultural life as a unique evolving personal creation. Winnicott (1965 [1960]: 150) believed that there was a relationship between culture and health and stated that health ‘is closely bound up with the capacity of the individual to live in an area that is between the dream and the reality, that which is called the cultural life’.
Winnicott, Freud, Bowlby and growth

If culture is regarded as a creation in a transitional space, then it is necessary to consider the way the space is created and the manner in which it is used. Winnicott (2005 [1971]: 135) states that ‘For every individual the use of this space is determined by life experiences that take place in the early stages of the individual’s existence’. An infant can begin this process when it develops the ability to symbolise, which usually happens at 6 months to a year or later; indicated by the adoption of the first transitional or ‘not-me’ object (Winnicott, 1965 [1957]). For Winnicott, child development was a movement from dependence towards independence. He wrote that:

Independence is never absolute. The healthy individual does not become isolated, but becomes related to the environment in such a way that the individual and the environment can be said to be interdependent

(Winnicott, 1965 [1963]: 84)

This process is initially managed by the attunement and behaviour of the ‘good enough mother’ (Winnicott, 1965 [1960]). If the mother is absent for an extended period of time, the baby can be traumatised and permanent damage done; while shorter absences create anxiety that must be managed. This process is illuminated by Freud (2001 [1920]) in Beyond the pleasure principle. Here he develops the idea of the repetition compulsion, which is now viewed as a neurotic defence (Wolf, Gerlach, & Merkle, 2014). He illustrates the process with the example of a game played by a one and a half year old child, in which the child plays with a cotton reel on the end of a string. The child repeatedly throws the reel away uttering a word that is assumed to be ‘fort’ in German or ‘gone’ in English. Then he reels it back, hailing its reappearance with a joyful ‘da’ or ‘there’. According to Freud (2001 [1920]: 15):

The interpretation of the game then became obvious. It was related to the child’s cultural achievement – the instinctual renunciation (that is the renunciation of instinctual satisfaction) which he had made in allowing his mother to go away without protesting. He compensated himself for this, as it were, by himself staging the disappearance and return of the objects within his reach.
To some extent the objective of the game was the pleasure of the joyful reunion; but it was more than this, because the departure was also included. Freud speculated that the boy was attempting to move from a passive to an active state, in which he had mastery of the situation. He described the same boy a year later angrily throwing toys away; and exclaiming ‘Go to the front’ at a time when his absent father was away fighting, leaving the child in sole possession of his mother (2001 [1920]: 16). Winnicott never mentioned the ‘fort da’ game, although he described similar activities. For Lacan (2006), the game expressed the child’s accession to the symbolic order, and the purpose of making something appear and disappear was to replace it with elementary signifiers. The ‘fort da’ game is a repetitive ritual involving a transitional object and it seems likely that increasingly sophisticated versions of this ‘non-climactic game’ continue into adulthood in the transitional space of culture and its enactment in life.

Another dimension of the process of growth is described by Bowlby (1988, 1997). This concerns a toddler, who at the age of one or two years leaves its mother’s side for longer and more adventurous periods of exploration, but needs periodically to return; or to have the confidence that this is possible. As the child grows, it increasingly becomes able to internalise the mother so that longer periods of absence can be tolerated. However, the ‘fort da’ game illustrates that it is also necessary to manage the anxiety created and to strive for at least the illusion of control through the compulsion to re-enact, act out or find substitutes. To return to Winnicott (2005 [1971]: 133):

When one speaks of a man, one speaks of him along with the summation of his cultural experiences. The whole forms a unit.

I have used the term cultural experience as an extension of the idea of transitional phenomena and of play without being certain that I can define the word “culture”. The accent indeed is on experience. In using the word culture I am thinking of the inherited tradition. I am thinking of something that is the common pool of humanity, into which individuals and groups of people may contribute, and from which we may all draw if we have somewhere to put what we find.
Semiotics

I wish to mention semiotics under the heading of psychoanalysis, because some of the key contributions that have influenced my thinking have come from semiotics, film studies and linguistics. Psychoanalytically these tend to focus on Freud and Lacan, but what they lack in access to contemporary psychoanalytic theory, they make up in the clear way they spell out their theories and the manner in which they strive for integration. Silverman (1983, 1996) provides one of the most powerful overall contributions to my emergent concept of culture. She provides a clear and intelligible expositions of the role played by metaphor and metonymy in cultural identity and links together the fields of psychoanalysis, semiotics, film studies and linguistics. She is one of the few authors who attempt to explain the mechanism of suture that is central to Hall’s idea of cultural identity (page 72), and she provides a good overview of the relevance of poststructuralist linguistics (page 64).

Group Analysis

Another key contribution comes from Foulksian Group Analysis (Barnes, Ernst, & Hyde, 1999; Behr & Hearst, 2005; Foulkes, 1975; Foulkes & Anthony, 1965; Whitaker, 2001). In addition to mainstream psychoanalysis, its founder Foulkes was influenced by a wide variety of writers including Elias and other members of the Frankfurt school. He and a number of subsequent group analysts have made valuable contributions to the topic of culture. These include Le Roy (2000), Dalal (1993a, 1993b, 2002, 2006) and Nitsun (1989; 1996, 2006). Group analysis contains many concepts that are particularly relevant to culture: including the social unconscious (Dalal, 2001; Hopper, 2003), the foundation matrix (Foulkes, 1966) and the primordial level (Foulkes, 1964). However, I think the most important contribution is the recognition that every group has a culture, and that individuals are influenced by all groups to which they belong (Le Roy, 2000; Roberts, 1982).
Le Roy (2000) provides an insightful view of culture, rooted in the work of the French psychoanalysts René Kaës (1979, 1987a, 1987b) and Jean Claude Rouchy (1982, 1983, 1987, 1995). He argues that the psychic functions of culture are to contain the undifferentiated and syncretic aspects of the individual psyche and to promote structuralisation through their introduction into a series of symbolic orders. Culture is used proactively to avoid the psychotic anxieties resulting from failed introjections, and is frequently used as a defence. To put it another way, primary and secondary belonging groups such as family, partner, village, ethnic group or country can act as repositories for the psychotic parts of the self, and loss of this containment is perceived as traumatic. The individual will seek replacements for these in the form of membership of other groups. Dalal (2006) builds on this to provide a pragmatic view of culture that is personal and contextual, and in which an individual simultaneously inhabits a number of contesting and overlapping cultural frames. He balances this with ideas from Elias (1991; 2000; Elias and Scotson, 1994) that portray culture as the institutionalisation of systems of oppression.

**Cultural trauma**

Another key influence was psychoanalytic and group analytic writing on cultural trauma (Alexander, Eyerman, Giesen, Smelser, & Sztompka, 2004; Hopper, 1997; Rice & Benson, 2005; Volkan, 2001). This phenomenon provides examples of both the defensive use of culture and culture as a resource. Cultural trauma occurs 'when members of a collectivity feel that they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness' (Alexander, 2004: 1). Colonisation and slavery are probably the most profound examples, but the holocaust, the Berlin wall and the bombing of 9/11 are also readily recognisable as cultural traumas. The psychoanalytic version of what Alexander (2004) calls
*lay trauma theory* asserts that the traumatising event is distorted and repressed by defences that protect the collectivity from the intensity of the pain, although the trauma can only be resolved 'when memory comes' (Friedlander, 1979), which usually happens first in psychoanalytic treatment or literature. However, Alexander goes on to argue that lay trauma theory suffers from a 'naturalistic fallacy' and that events do not, in and of themselves, create collective trauma. Instead this arises from the socially mediated attribution that occurs before, during or after the event. He links these 'imagined traumas' back to Anderson's (2006) imagined communities and suggests that cultural trauma, as opposed to psychological trauma, is inherent in the damage suffered to the identity of the collectivity rather than any physical injury. Cultural traumas are used by members of collectivities to share suffering, and for the collectivity to create an identity, which is a clear example of culture as a resource (page 73).

**Culture in psychosocial studies**

Psychosocial studies also deserve mention. This is an area of thought that aims to bring together the personal and social. However it lacks coherence and is used inconsistently, usually with a critical theme (Frosh & Baraitser, 2008). There are many different approaches and the two main themes seem to be the use of psychoanalysis in peripheral fields such as literary criticism, semiotics and linguistics, and the legitimisation of this endeavour in the disciplines of psychology (Frosh, 2010), sociology (Chancer & Andrews, 2014) and anthropology (Heald & Deluz, 1994). This means that practitioners expend considerable energy legitimising their position in their main disciplines. The approach of most interest was developed by Frosh. According to Frosh (2010) the origins of psychosocial studies lie in psychoanalysis, sociology, applied social studies and social work, critical social psychology, poststructuralist theory, social constructionism, queer theory and feminist social research. Although deeply influenced by both Marx and Freud, its concerns have moved on considerably.
It focuses on a type of subject that is both social and psychological, but is granted agency and internality. Practitioners associated with the field include Frosh (2010; 2008), Parker (2010; 2015), Hollway and Jefferson (2000, 2005). Frosh (2008) is one of the few psychologists to use the word suture as a mechanism that links social and personal (page 72), although he never defines or discusses it in detail. I think the significance of the field of psychosocial studies lies in its existence rather than any specific contribution that it makes to the study. It gives evidence that others are struggling to achieve an imperfect integration between personal and social and that there are no easy answers.

**Culture in linguistics**

Linguistics in general and poststructural linguistics in particular are of considerable importance to an understanding of culture since they introduce individuality into the social world of discourse. This is seen clearly in the work of the structuralist and poststructuralist Roland Barthes (1977), who famously proclaimed 'the death of the author', indicating that the intentions and biography of an author should be of limited relevance to the interpretation of a text. Barthes best known work, Mythologies (2000), illustrates the way language used to sell domestic products can evoke the imagery of the Cold War. It also shows the way familiar devices and symbols are used in film to eliminate difference and Westernise the East. Barthes’ commentary allows us to begin to see, or perhaps see through, the values of a culture. His book S/Z (1974) develops an interpretive strategy for uncovering the symbolic field inhabited by a text and revealing the oppositions – sexual and other, that structure it (Silverman, 1983). In effect we are all readers of our own cultural book and we can become, to a limited extent, its author. This may seem to depart some way from therapy; but the hermeneutic process of understanding and interpreting, and the nomothetic process of giving meaning are fundamental to all work with clients, especially multicultural therapy. When client and
therapist come together in a room they are attempting to focus on one text, but are still two
readers, with different backgrounds who have been influenced by many other texts. I think
Barthes’ approach should give confidence to a therapist in working with cultural issues, and he
also provides some elements of a possible approach.

Postmodernism, poststructuralism and postcolonialism

It is virtually impossible to give an account of contemporary culture without reference to the
intertwined ideas of postmodernism, poststructuralism and postcolonialism. Poststructuralism
and postmodernism are frequently regarded as synonymous. However, poststructuralism
provides the ontological and epistemological foundations and, for that reason, I find it clearer
and more useful. Poststructuralism emerged in the later part of the twentieth century in the
humanities and social sciences; and reflects a move beyond structuralist ontologies of the
social world, including Marxism, structuralist anthropology and psychoanalysis (Fox, 2014). It
can also be seen as subversive and politically motivated. Belsey (2002: 65) suggests that:

With Kristeva’s proposition that we none of us know quite who we are, with Derrida’s
affirmation of our inevitable exile, Lacan’s view that our dissatisfaction is structural,
and Foucault’s emphasis on resistance, poststructuralism has tended to have a certain
radical edge.

Postmodernism has been described as the “political wing” of poststructuralism because it
seeks to undermine the grand narratives of modernist social organisation and domination
including capitalism, patriarchy, colonialism and heteronormativity (Fox, 2014). It adopts
poststructuralist epistemologies and ontologies in preference to structuralist explanations, to
expose the contradictions within these grand narratives of control or domination. In so doing,
it also suggests means to resist and refuse domination. The transition from modernity to
postmodernity was driven by a number of social and technological factors (Gergen, 1999,
2000, 2001) and postmodernism can be regarded as a framework for theories of culture (Belsey, 2002). According to Butler (2002: 28-29)

Postmodernists having abandoned their belief in traditional ('realistic') philosophy, history, and science under the influence of French thought, thus becoming more and more the theorizers of the (delusive) workings of culture

It is widely agreed that the role of culture has changed in the postmodern, poststructural world. This is not because human biology has changed, but because the environment, the technology and the social world have changed. As Zygmunt Bauman (2009 [2000]: 11) puts it:

The frantic search for identity is not a residue of preglobalization times which are not yet fully extirpated but bound to become extinct as the globalization progresses; it is, on the contrary the side-effect and by-product of the combination of globalization and individualizing pressures and the tensions they spawn.

I have found it useful to think around the ideas of postmodernism and to touch on the work of Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault.

The process of uncovering meaning is a major focus for Derrida, who is associated with deconstruction; and although he himself accepted this with reluctance (Hill, 2007), it is regarded as one of the most important areas of his work. Derrida argued that deconstruction is not a single, repeatable, applicable method or methodology. It works with texts and is concerned with ‘taking them apart and showing how they work to present us with a particular vision of the world, and thus enabling us to challenge it’ (Burr, 2015: 21). It has been extensively employed in critical psychology, where according to Burman (1996: 7), ‘it operates to highlight the cultural and conceptual organisation of modern Western thinking around gendered and racialized polarities’. Parker (2015: 79) sees deconstruction in Lacanian terms as ‘a way of destabilizing and uprooting those normal, given or common-sense notions that we typically rely upon to make sense of the world’. Deconstruction can be regarded as part of a
process of interpretation that helps the disempowered to understand the way in which power is exercised over them. Making a link to colonisation and postcolonialism, Derrida believed that culture is always colonial – we are all exiles (Hill, 2007). I think from the point of view of the study, the idea of deconstruction is of value rather than any specific process. It signals the need to look beyond the personal to the social, although I want to add that it is then necessary to return to the personal.

Foucault is important because of the different account he provides of subjectivity (Mills, 2003). Foucault, unlike Marxist theorists is less concerned with oppression and more with resistance to power (Mills, 2003). He believed that each society has its own ‘regime of truth’ (Foucault, 1991), which is the kind of statement that can be made by authorised people and accepted by the society as a whole. These differ from society to society, for example the ‘truth’ of Western feminists is challenged by women from marginalised non-Western groups (Minh-ha, 1989). They also change over time – as illustrated by the rapid changes in the treatment of criminals in French prisons (Foucault, 1991). Foucault could have done a great deal to promote an integration of thinking between key perspectives. However, he deplored psychoanalysis (Belsey, 2002), and dismissed it as another network of power relations that co-opts us in the name of the truth of our innermost being. However, his relationship with psychoanalysis was complex (Whitebook, 2005) and some writers believe that in the later parts of his unfinished ‘History of Sexuality’ (1987, 1988) he recognised the need for a concept of identity and for the unconscious. Unfortunately he did not take this forward, although his work remains hugely influential in postmodern approaches on therapy (Parker, 1999).

Having argued that postmodern ideas are of considerable importance in understanding contemporary culture, I now wish to suggest that they are a stepping stone rather than a
destination in themselves. For postmodernists, culture contains perpetually competing stories, whose effectiveness depends on their appeal to the communities in which they circulate (Butler, 2002); and this helps us to recognise, and to some extent, let go of racist, sexist, classist and colonial discourses and ideas. However, this is gained at a cost, for as indicated by its prefix -post, postmodernism is a critical reaction and its ideas are by definition negative. As Butler (2002: 116) points out, 'postmodernists are good critical deconstructors and terrible constructors' and I find the anti-scientific, anti-historical bias difficult to accept. Many writers have suggested that it is now necessary to look beyond postmodernism (e.g. Kirby, 2006), to a more pragmatic regime; in which the value of historical and scientific texts is recognised, without giving them overwhelming weight, and in the context of this study, where the practical needs of helping clients are accorded the highest priority. Bringing it back to therapy, the psychoanalyst Govin (2006: 507) believes that postmodernism has had an adverse effect on the development of psychoanalytic ideas and he looks forward to a ‘knowing’ post-postmodernism ‘in which new ideas and theories will be encouraged’.

Postcolonialism is also of considerable importance; as is the role of the United Kingdom as a coloniser, and the constituent nation of the Kingdom as both colonisers and colonised (Jackson & Maley, 2002). I found that, with some exceptions (Abell, Condor, Lowe, Gibson, & Stevenson, 2007; Abell, Condor, & Stevenson, 2002; Condor & Abell, 2006; Condor, Gibson, & Abell, 2006; Easthope, 1999), little had been written about the ethnic identities of the constituent nations of the UK. Robert Young (1995) argues that ‘Englishness’ has always been less fixed and stable than uncertain, fissured by difference and a longing for otherness. Homi Bhabha (1994) analyses the liminality of hybridity as a paradigm of colonial anxiety, making extensive use of Lacanian ideas. His key argument is that colonial hybridity produces ambivalence in the colonial masters and alters the authority of power. Hybridity is now used widely to think about the cultural effects of globalisation (Appadurai, 1996; Hall, 1992).
Globalisation and cosmopolitanism

There is considerable speculation in many disciplines about globalisation and the emergence of global culture. Mike Featherstone (1990a: 2) argues that this is fundamentally different from the culture of the nation-state, which emphasises cultural homogeneity and integration. He sees postmodernism both as a symptom and a powerful cultural image of the swing away from homogenising influences such as Americanisation and mass consumer culture; and towards the ‘diversity, variety and richness of popular and local discourses, codes and practices’.

Featherstone argues that it is possible to refer to the globalisation of culture, and the emergence of third cultures, in terms of processes of integration and disintegration that transcend the state society unit without implying any weakening of the sovereignty of nation-states. It seems to me that Featherstone’s concept of culture is too one dimensional, and too focused on nationality and the nation state. Unlike him, I perceive a general weakening of the nation state, although this is patchy and contradicted by the periodic and powerful re-emergence of specific examples. It is also complicated by the way in which dimensions come to stand in for each other – as illustrated by the role of some religions, exemplified by the recent terrifying emergence of ISIS.

Cosmopolitanism is closely related to globalisation, and is an idea that can be traced back to Kant and the enlightenment of the eighteenth century (Rapport, 2014). Anthropologists define it in many different ways. Hannerz (2007: 83-84) proposes that it ‘has to do with a sense of the world as one’; while Werbner (2008a: 2) suggests that it is ‘about reaching out across cultural differences through dialogue, aesthetic enjoyment, and respect’. Appiah (2006: xv) identifies the two clashing ideals of ‘universal concern’ and ‘respect for legitimate difference’; and Beck (2004) distinguishes between philosophy and actual practice. While the ideal is a powerful motivator, I am more concerned with the actual practice. Cosmopolitanism was
traditionally enabled by mobility, although Hannerz (1992) believes that cultural diversity in local settings and the power of the media make it possible to be a cosmopolitan without travelling. More recently Werbner (2008a) argues that postcolonial cosmopolitans are not necessarily travelers; although some cosmopolitans choose a peripatetic lifestyle, exemplified in the idea of existential migration (Madison, 2006). It is clear that some individuals identify with cosmopolitanism and use it as a cultural resource. I am interested in whether personal factors influence this identification: whether, for example, individuals with a weak, compromised, ambivalent, or divided sense of belonging will be attracted to it; or whether there are stronger more democratic and egalitarian factors at work.

This makes cultural diversity and migration sound like a weakness or a burden and while migration may be linked to a weakened sense of belonging and is inevitably associated with acculturative stress (Sam, 2006), it also has creative potential. There is clear evidence linking multiple childhood relocation to problems in later life (DeWit, 1998; DeWit, Offord, & Braun, 1998), but wider cultural exposure may also have possibilities. This idea is picked up by Useem and Useem (Cockburn, 2002; Useem & Useem, 1967) in their work on Third culture kids (TCK) and Adult third culture kids (ATCK). This is concerned with individuals who spend periods of their childhood in foreign countries. Useem and Useem (1967) showed that in areas such as academic achievement and creative output the TCKs and ATCKs excelled. This may be associated with causal factors unrelated to migration, and could result from defensive strategies used to deal with the anxiety produced by isolation and alienation. However, it seems clear that the experience has a positive side that can be related to the more general creative potential of liminality (Griffith & Elliott, 2002; Speedy, 2008).
Specific terms used in the study

A number of specific terms are used in the study and although these developed as the study progressed, they were in my mind from the outset; and had already emerged during the course of my Masters. These are cultural identity, culture as a resource and personal culture.

Cultural identity

The concepts of identity in general and cultural identity in particular are central to the study. The philosopher Taylor (1989: 3) regards identity as the, ‘notion of what it is to be a human agent, a person, or a self’. Argyle (1969: 370) gives a traditional view of the development of a unified identity in adolescence, when prompted by the ‘growth spurt and development of sexual maturity’ a young person makes important decisions about matters such as vocation, politics and religion and strives for what Lecky (1945) called self-consistency. Erikson (1963) believed that humans go through a genetically determined sequence of psychosocial stages and that each stage involves a struggle between two conflicting personality outcomes, one that is positive or adaptive and the other negative of maladaptive. Erikson proposed that there is an identity crisis in late adolescence and that the developmental task of that stage was to establish the ego-identity.

These views suggest that identity is determined at the completion of adolescence and that it is relatively fixed and stable. This is questioned by Goffman’s (1971) dramaturgical approach (page 50) and by social constructionism (page 41). The problems of theorising the link between social and personal and the irreconcilable differences between the perspectives of social constructionism, phenomenology and psychoanalysis are widely acknowledged (Burkitt, 1991; du Gay, Evans, & Redman, 2000; Stevens, 1996). However, I believe that it is necessary
to engage with these issues to address the significance of cultural identity, even if as du Gay et al. (2000: 3) point out; there are good reasons why a ‘rapprochement’ is problematic.

The approach I have chosen to adopt was suggested by the sociologist Hall (1996). He argues that the interpellation of individuals as subjects (Althusser, 2001 [1970]; Edley, 2001; Harré & van Langenhove, 1999) is a psychic mechanism. He relates identity to identification, a concept that ‘is drawing meaning from both the discursive and the psychoanalytic repertoire, without being limited to either’ (1996: 2). The definition of identity that he offers is:

the meeting point, the point of suture, between on the one hand the discourses and practices which attempt to ‘interpellate’, speak to us or hail us into place as the social subjects of particular discourses, and on the other hand, the processes which produce subjectivities, which construct us as subjects which can be ‘spoken’. Identities are thus points of temporary attachment to the subject positions which discursive practices construct for us.

(Hall, 1996: 6)

The concept of suture, was first suggested by Miller (1978), a follower of Lacan, and is ‘that moment in which the subject inserts itself into the symbolic register in the guise of a signifier, and in so doing gains meaning at the expense of being’ (Silverman, 1983: 199). Miller (1978) states that ‘suture names the relation of the subject to its chain of disclosure … it figures there as the element which is lacking, in the form of a stand-in’.

It is not an easy concept to grasp and one with which I have struggled. It seems impossibly vague or unclear, and reluctance to adopt the term probably reflects this. It has been used most extensively in the fields of semiotics and film studies (Silverman, 1996). However, I have found that it begins to make sense when used in a concrete way. It is really no more than a type of psychoanalytic interpretation that speculates on the link between a preference for a discourse or a subject position within a discourses and events from earlier life or internalised object relations. Interpretation is the substance of psychoanalytically oriented therapy, and
here subject positions in a discourse come to participate in psychoanalytic processes as objects, which is an extension of the psychoanalytic understanding of the world, but one already accepted in fields such as management science (Huffington, Armstrong, Halton, Hoyle, & Pooley, 2004; Obholzer & Roberts, 1994).

**Culture as a resource**

One of the most fundamental ideas in the study, which is specifically mentioned in the title, is culture as a resource. This arose and evolved spontaneously out of my Masters, and from incidental uses of the word that I found (e.g. Burman, 2004). There are many definitions of resource in common usage, and two are representative:

1. A stock or supply of money, materials, staff, and other assets that can be drawn on by a person or organisation in order to function effectively.
2. An action or strategy which may be adopted in adverse circumstances.  

(http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/resource)

My usage is closer to the second definition, although I am attempting to move it towards the first. My best attempt at a definition is ‘any external object, phenomenon, practice or discourse that is used to define identity, manage distress or achieve a conscious or unconscious objective’. Cultural resources are real or discursive constructions that originate in the outer world, but are usually made personal through the psychoanalytic processes of introjection and incorporation and the social constructionist process of internalisation (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Linguistically they are signifiers (Saussure, 1916) that can participate in a chain of signification (Lacan, 2006). Examples include cultural traumas (Alexander et al., 2004), cultural stereotypes (Jahoda, 1978), and a variety of figures from literature, myth and folklore. Phenomena such as a disease like AIDS (Sontag, 1991) or practices such as Female genital mutilation (Gibeau, 1998) can also be thought of as a cultural resource, depending on the usage and context.
In psychoanalysis the word is seldom used in this way. This is probably due to the focus on the internal world, and because it resides in the ‘no man’s land’ between drives or instincts and object seeking. There are some random examples and the mechanism can be seen at work in most psychoanalytic processes and defences. The idea appears more directly in social constructionism and discourse analysis, where the terms discursive resource (Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Taylor, 2006), interpretive resource (Wetherell, 2001) and more generally language as resource (Wetherell, Taylor, & Yates, 2001) are in wide use. This makes sense, because the performative processes involved operate largely through the medium of discourse. It is in the area of agency and intentionality that the psychoanalytic influence is felt.

**Personal culture**

Internet searches yield a bewildering array of usages of the term personal culture. At one extreme it is simply identity, and includes diverse aspects such as personal standards, self-discipline and politics. At the other extreme it is the sum total of influences on and choices made by an individual. My usage is somewhat different from these, and is somewhere between the two. Cultural identity provides a linkage between social and personal, and its volatility admits a culture that is multiple, fragmented, inconsistent and changeable. However, both theoretically and from the experience of analysing data, there is a requirement for a more stable concept that sums up the totality of the discourses, subject positions and cultural resources habitually employed by an individual in the formation and reformation of cultural identities. Certain psychoanalysts, and group analysts such as Dalal (2006) clearly acknowledge the idea, and it can be seen in the work of both Ewing (page 44) and Stewart (page 46). It is implied in the social constructionist
idea of interpretive repertoires (page 42); and is implicit in much psychoanalytic writing, hidden behind ideas like the self (Masterson, 1985).

It seems fairly apparent to me that there is a need for a process of overview that will operate over time to eliminate gross inconsistency; provide reality testing (Freud, 2001 [1920]); and introduce a moral dimension. In terms of Freud’s (1961 [1923]) structural model of the psyche, this would reside within the ego and operate through the secondary process of thinking described by Bion (1962). While the cultural identities that can be adopted are by their very nature multiple, fragmented, inconsistent and changeable; and psychic processes operate to achieve an illusion of wholeness (Ewing, 1990): common sense suggests that there must be mechanisms at work over time to weed out contradictions; move away from morally unacceptable or practically unhelpful positions; or at least manage the way in which cultural identities are enacted in public. When this process breaks down, operates ineffectively, or is insufficiently advanced; the result is extreme radical views, fundamentalism and the ultimate breakdown of a society. A deeper discussion of this topic would be a significant undertaking that would plumb psychoanalytic, discursive and philosophical depths. It would touch on Foucault’s (1991) regimes of truth and many other topics. For the time being, I simply wish to register the fact that something of the sort is needed, as Stewart puts it, ‘to inhibit a slippage between sign and meaning’ (page 47) and make social life possible.
METHODOLOGY AND METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

The broken glass is not merely a mirror of nostalgia. It is also, I believe, a useful tool with which to work in the present

(Rushdie, 1992: 12)

Introduction

Research in counselling and psychotherapy is inherently complex, and does not easily fit a defined academic discipline (McLeod, 2003a; Nelson-Jones, 2001). It tends to cross interdisciplinary boundaries and to mix techniques from different sources. This is further complicated by the fact that the evolution of a research design is an iterative process that is modified and fine-tuned as the study progresses (Terre Blanche, Durrheim, & Painter, 2006). In this case, the planning was rooted in my Masters (MacDonald, 2007) and the pilot study conducted in 2012. While, the objective was to illuminate the engagement of culture in therapy, the empirical work was a psychological inquiry into the nature and significance of aspects of culture in the lives of four participants. In this chapter I describe the design of the study; the decision to use bespoke methods rather than a packaged methodology; critical issues related to validity; practical and ethical considerations; and a description of the detailed methods employed.

Research questions

The research questions were:

1. How do personal background and cultural roots influence cultural identity?

2. What is the significance of cultural identity in life?
3. What is the therapeutic potential of culture?

The heart of the study is in questions one and two; while as in IPA (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009) question three is a more refined or theory-driven question that is 'secondary' because it can only be answered at a late stage in the study, and there is no guarantee that this will be possible. These questions were around from the earliest stage of the study and with the exception of small adjustments to wording, remained unchanged. The underlying notion was of the development of a human life, and the role that culture plays in it.

The study was concerned with the ‘construction and negotiation of meaning, and the quality and texture of experience’ (Willig, 2001: 15), where ‘the researcher is central to the sense that is made’ (Parker, 1994: 2). This indicates the use of a qualitative approach, and tends to place the focus on qualitative data. According to Willig (2001: 21), ‘a good qualitative research design is one in which the method of data analysis is appropriate to the research question, and where the method of data collection generates data that are appropriate to the method of analysis’. While my preference would have been to select a packaged methodology, I did not find one that provided a good enough fit. I therefore chose a bespoke design that was specifically customised to address the research questions. This was a case study approach that had at its heart thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; The Open University, 2007; Willig, 2013) as a method of data analysis and the semi-structured interview (Burman, 1994; Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Smith, 1995; Smith et al., 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2008), as a method of data collection.
**Background**

**Research paradigm**

In the social sciences, it is usual to locate research within an overall approach or *paradigm* (Crotty, 2003; Guba, 1990b; Terre Blanche et al., 2006). This term arises from the work of Kuhn (1996), who was primarily interested in the shifts that take place in the way natural science is carried out. Sharrock and Read (2002) warn that the social sciences frequently make the mistake of assuming that philosophy and methodology are key to scientific progress. They argue that form is not a substitute for substance, and that it has the potential to become an impediment. However, the framework of a paradigm provides a useful way of characterising an approach. Kuhn did not provide a clear definition of a paradigm, and Guba (1990a: 17) believes that this state of ‘problematic limbo’ is necessary and constructive. Guba (1990a) and Crotty (2003) provide similar, but slightly different, working definitions in terms of hierarchies of questions that must be answered, and I have combined these in Figure 3.

![Figure 3 – Research paradigm (Guba, 1990a, Crotty, 2003)](image)

Ontology is concerned with the nature of the ‘knowable’ or of ‘reality’ (Guba, 1990a).
Epistemology is concerned with nature of the relationship between the ‘knower’ and the
Theoretical perspectives are the philosophical stances that inform the methodology, and thus provide a context for the process and grounding for its logic and criteria (Crotty, 2003). Methodology is the manner in which the inquirer goes about finding out knowledge (Guba, 1990a). Finally methods are the techniques or procedures used to gather and analyse data related to research questions or hypotheses (Crotty, 2003).

These sharply defined distinctions are not always easy to apply. Some components are difficult to classify and there are disagreements in the literature. 'Packaged methods', such as grounded theory and IPA, come with a partly defined epistemology as well as a methodology and methods (Willig, 2013); and some theoretical perspectives, such as social constructionism, spread across categories.

The overall paradigm that emerged could best be described as constructivist (Guba, 1990a) or constructionist (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2006). The ontology is relativist, since cultural realities are: socially and experientially based; local and specific; and dependent on the individual. The epistemology is subjectivist; which means that, to some extent, the researcher and participant are fused into a single entity. The theoretical perspectives employed are psychoanalysis, phenomenology, hermeneutics and social constructionism. The methodology is hermeneutic and didactic, which means that individual constructions are elicited and refined hermeneutically and compared and contrasted didactically. It also seeks to balance the inductive and deductive.

**Theoretical perspectives**

Psychoanalysis and social constructionism are essential elements in bringing together the personal and social through the theory of suture; phenomenology is required to provide a
focus on the lived experience of the participants; and hermeneutics to struggle for an understanding of their inner worlds.

From a philosophical point of view, I regard hermeneutics as the fundamental perspective; and the overall integrator. Paul Ricoeur (1989, 2004) provides an inspirational example of an integrative approach to the world that brings together disparate systems of thought under the overall umbrella of hermeneutics. He believed that the study of human reality required the combination of phenomenological description and hermeneutic interpretation (Ihde, 1971). However, he also made extensive use of Marx, Nietzsche and Freud as the basis of hermeneutics of suspicion (Gadamer, 1984; Ricoeur, 1970; Scott-Baumann, 2009). This is an idea that can be traced back to Kant (1994 [1799]), who regarded it as doubt about the motives of others (Scott-Baumann, 2009). Ricoeur’s three ‘masters of suspicion’ gave him access to economics, power and the unconscious as bases for interrogating phenomenological accounts. I am, of course, particularly concerned with psychoanalytic interpretation, and although this must be used with care (Langdrudge, 2007; Parker, 2007), its centrality to my therapeutic orientation explains and justifies my interest. Ricoeur ultimately abandoned the idea of hermeneutics of suspicion because he concluded that Marx, Nietzsche and Freud could help with diagnosis but not cure (Scott-Baumann, 2009). At an ethical level he regarded suspicion as a personal offence and saw the question of motives as central (Scott-Baumann, 2009). I would argue that, in therapy, interpretation is well motivated, and I have personal experience that it can participate in a curative process.

Postmodern and poststructural plurality is both a challenge and an opportunity; and it seems to me that a research paradigm to study culture must take on board this plurality, together with other poststructural concepts such as the death of the author (Barthes, 1977) that move
the focus of meaning away from the background and experience of the author towards the reader or interpreter. This makes individual significance the issue, rather than any more collective or shared attribution; which is the everyday concern of psychoanalytically oriented therapy, as well as academics who study aesthetics and subjectivity (Silverman, 1983). It seems to me that the subjective nature of the ultimate purpose contributes to the significance and perhaps even the ‘validity’ of a subjective approach. In terms of psychoanalysis, the way is eased considerably by a move towards Atwood and Stolorow’s (1984) existential phenomenology and certain Lacanian ideas like the registers of experience; and away from more prescriptive approaches, based on historical case studies.

**Choice of methodology and methods**

My focus was the individual participant rather than any wider social group. It was therefore appropriate to develop an approach in which the phenomenological world of the participant was privileged over the wider social perspective. This was not to deny the overwhelming importance of the social, but it was the individual’s perception of this that was of primary interest. I now look briefly at three packaged methods that I considered and rejected: grounded theory, heuristics and interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA).

**Packaged methodologies**

*Grounded theory*

Grounded theory was originally developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) to 'discover theory from data'; and is a form of thematic analysis (Willig, 2013). The method has developed in a number of different directions (e.g. Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Glaser, 1994), and it is widely used in the social sciences and counselling research (Fassinger, 2005; McLeod, 2003a; Rennie,
Willig (2013) regards it as more suited to sociological research, than for accessing the psychological world of individual participants.

From the outset I found the method quite unappealing, because the positivist orientation of discovery is incompatible with a diverse socially constructed phenomenon like culture. While there are constructivist versions of grounded theory that attempt to look 'from the inside out' (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007, 2014; Charmaz, 2011; Clarke, 2005), these do not seem to address the issue. At a more detailed level, the concept of saturation (Glaser, 1992) is inappropriate to a situation in which the individuality of the participant is central, and where there are multiple interacting axes of diversity. In its original form personal and epistemological reflexivity were quite limited. It was a matter of 'how may I have got it wrong?' rather than 'why did I get it in this way?' (Willig, 2013). This relates back to the positivist orientation, and to concepts such as the selection of groups (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). For me, wide ranging reflexivity is an essential, if flawed, component of an inquiry into difference. A number of authors have considered the inclusion of more meaningful reflexivity into constructivist versions of grounded theory (e.g. Mruck & May, 2007); but this seems to be a solution to a problem that, for a study of this kind, should not be present in the first place.

**Heuristics**

Heuristics, was developed by Moustakas (1990, 1994). Like grounded theory, it focuses on discovery; and is 'an organised and systematic form for investigating human experience' (Moustakas, 1990: 9). It begins with a question or problem that has been 'a personal challenge and puzzlement' and proceeds by way of six phases. Intuitively the process appeals to me; but, for this study, I was unable to accept the omnipotent role given to the researcher. While
bracketing may be impossible, it acts as an ongoing reminder of the existence of difference; the unavoidable reality of bias; and the ultimate challenge of encompassing diversity.

Sela-Smith (2002), provides a critique of Moustakas method. She comments on the contradiction that heuristics is a methodological structure for something Moustakas states must be free of methodological structures to be authentic. She sees it as a process of internal and not external enquiry; suggesting that Moustakas confuses experience as a verb with its use as a noun, and that he blurs the split focus between the experience of the researcher and that of the participants. It is also an important issue for me that Moustakas does not take account of the working of the unconscious, which is one of the pillars of my approach. For me there is a danger that the denial of psychoanalytic processes such a projection could result in further confusion between participant and researcher. But, above all, it seems presumptuous and unscientific to base an investigation of difference around the, largely unchallenged, self of the researcher.

**Interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA)**

IPA (Langdridge, 2007; Packer & Addison, 1989; Smith, 1996; Smith et al., 2009; Smith, Jarman, & Osborn, 1999; Van Manen, 1990; Willig, 2013) comes closest to meeting the requirements of the study. At a practical level, it is a form of thematic analysis (Willig, 2013) that tends to focus on people's experiences, understandings, perceptions and views of phenomena (Smith et al., 2009). This means that research questions are frequently open, and that quality is not always easy to assess. IPA is an ideographic approach (Smith et al., 2009) that does not seek saturation in the manner of grounded theory. Instead it aims to saturate each individual case. Participants are selected purposively rather than through probability (Smith et al., 2009). Finally it is reflexive, although it does not theorise reflexivity (Willig, 2013).
IPA operates ‘through a process of interpretive engagement with texts and transcripts’ (Smith, 1997: 189). It accepts the impossibility of direct access to participants’ life worlds (Willig, 2013). So although the aim is to explore the participant’s experience from their perspective; this is done hermeneutically, in a manner that implicates the researcher’s own view of the world as well as the nature of the interaction. It is best suited to methods of data collection that encourage participants to offer ‘rich, detailed, first-person accounts of their experiences’ (Smith et al., 2009: 56); and this is most often achieved through the semi-structured interview (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Smith, 1995).

Overall IPA met many of my criteria for the study. Its approach as a form of thematic analysis was right, and the combination of phenomenology and hermeneutics was exactly what was required to implement Ricoeur’s approach to the study of human reality (page 79). However I rejected it because of: its prescriptive nature; the lack of flexibility to focus on my specific research questions; and the overwhelming inductive nature of the method. It seemed to me that, in its progress towards academic maturity, the method has become laden with expectations; which overshadowed or tended to determine the research questions. This may have been appropriate for a study in which the research questions naturally fitted, or had been customised to the methodology; but I was not prepared to make this compromise in the interest of expediency.

My review of packaged methodologies convinced me that none of the options considered was suitable. It also convinced me that, for the reasons given above, it was unlikely that any packaged methodology would be right. I therefore decided to adopt a case study approach incorporating thematic analysis that had been influenced by IPA, but not defined by it.
**Bespoke method**

Having rejected a range of packaged methodologies, it was necessary to define an approach that would address the research questions in a focused and direct manner. A number of features in this approach are shared with IPA. These include: the underlying process of thematic analysis; the combination of phenomenology and hermeneutics; the approach to reflexivity, and a partially inductive approach. However, unlike IPA, the approach is also partially deductive, since there is a vaguely defined body of theory and a domain specific epistemology that I wish to ‘road test’. This theory and epistemology ultimately influenced the coding process, and I chose a relatively simple definition of thematic analysis (The Open University, 2007) to facilitate this. It is clear that a study concerned with the evolution of theory needs to combine induction with deduction.

One of the concerns about a bespoke method relates to its ability to deliver valid conclusions. If a method is well defined in the literature and has previously been used to deliver conclusions whose validity has been accepted, this appears to provide some assurance of its ability to do so again. In christening the approach a bespoke method, I was aware that I was raising the suggestion of something new, different or radical. This is not the case, since it is no more than two structured pieces of narrative description and an application of a simple version of thematic analysis. In tailoring terms three garments have been sewn together with some small adjustments. This was done solely in the interest of addressing the research questions, and in providing a framework for the development and refinement of theory. I would argue strongly that a method that addresses the research questions closely is more capable of generating valid conclusions than one that provides a poor fit. I address the deeper issues of the validity of case study research in this chapter (page 91) and the transactional validity of the research in
the validity section of the Discussion chapter, where I look at the topic of trustworthiness (page 190).

I start with the method of analysis and, at the risk of over-simplification, I will attempt to describe the approach in graphical format.

**Method of analysis**

Research questions one and two refer to four entities: personal background; cultural roots; cultural identity; and life. In crude terms this is represented in Figure 4.

![Diagram showing relationships between personal background, cultural roots, cultural identity, and life with research questions one and two mapped onto the entities](image)

**Figure 4 – Research questions one and two mapped onto the entities used**

The picture can be elaborated to include other entities related to human life as shown in Figure 5. This is illustrated using the conventions of entity relationship mapping from the world of database design (Bagui & Earp, 2004), a tool used to depict the structure of
information in an object oriented world. This shows the main entities or objects that we want to model and collect information about. It also shows the relationships between the entities. I have not complicated the picture by attempting to show attributes, which are the properties or characteristics of the entities; or to define the nature or cardinality of the relationships.

The basic definitions of the entities are given below:

Life events - Significant events in the life of the participant

Human lifecycle - The stages of the life of the participant
Personal background - The environment in which the participant grew up

Cultural roots - The cultural influences that surrounded the participant

Life story - The subjective story of the participant

Cultural identity - The participant’s definition of their own cultural identity

These entities can be grouped together into three domains that I have called objective, cultural and subjective (Figure 6), and it is against these three domains that the findings of the study are presented.

The names, although intended to be helpful, have the potential to mislead. All three are derived through phenomenology and hermeneutics; and are views of the subjectivity of the participants, seen through different hermeneutic lenses. Each is a unique narrative exploration of the data, with its own perspective and style of documentation. In the objective domain, the focus is on extracting from the text the realities of what Edwards et al. (1995) call ‘death and furniture’; which any but the most extreme relativist would accept as reality. Of course the participant may be mistaken, dishonest or withholding; or they may be selective in their memory and forgetting (Ricœur, 2004). By the same token, the researcher may misinterpret. However, the focus is on a search for facts and objectivity. In the cultural domain, the emphasis is on the cultural influences and resources that surround the participant. Attempts are made to blank out the individuality of the participants, and cultural influences are elaborated through the understanding of the researcher and published sources. The subjective world is where the individuality of the participant is most completely expressed. This makes use of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; The Open University, 2007; Willig, 2013) to dismantle and reassemble the text and to progressively move from themes rooted in the text towards superordinate themes rooted in theory (The Open University, 2007). There is
some inevitable repetition between the domains, since an event may relate to a cultural influence and be perceived in a certain way by the participant. However, the emphases are different and my belief is that taken together they make visible aspects of the underlying cultural and metacultural meaning of the story.

![Diagram](image)

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Figure 6 – Clustering of entities into domains
It seems to me that order is important, both in the conduct of the analysis and the presentation of results. This should start from the more solid ground of the objective, move to the cultural, and then the subjective. This is the natural order of phenomenology, as described by Husserl (1973 [1948]) in his later writings. It is an order that starts with pre-predictive experience, or experience before it has been formulated in judgements and expressed in outward linguistic form, and before it becomes packaged for explicit consciousness (Moran, 2000). It is also the order in which the data needs to be approached to address research questions one and two (Figure 4). One weakness is the focus on the ‘representational validity of language’ rather than its constitutive role (Willig, 2013). And this is especially relevant to a study into a phenomenon that is largely socially constructed. I had originally intended to address this concern through the selective use of discourse analysis. However, it became clear from the pilot that this was beyond the scope of the current study, and needed to be thought of as future work.

There were two further aspects of the approach that were influenced by IPA. The first was the way the voices of the participants speak through the analysis, which I regarded as an essential element in communicating the authenticity and validity of the analysis. The second was the separation between researcher and participant that was sought through bracketing and reflexivity.

**Method of data collection**

The obvious method of data collection is the semi-structured interview; which provides the ability to focus and clarify, together with wide flexibility to explore and investigate (Burman, 1994; Kvale, 1996). It would also have been possible to use focus groups, although this would introduce additional problems in applying experiential analyses to more complex social
activities (Smith, 2008). Both homogeneous (Kvale, 2001) and heterogeneous (Le Roy, 1987) groups have potential advantages in the investigation of culture, but I decided not to go down this route because of the complexity and uncertainty it would introduce. The interview schedule (Appendix 3) was intentionally defined at a high level, and like the research questions, it was structured around the idea of a human life story. The aim was for some similarity to a therapy session and so the use of counselling skills, open questioning and a focus on the relationship were especially appropriate.

**The validity of case study research**

This is case study research; although not of the type most widely recognised in the world of therapy, where the ‘clinical case study’ is the general currency. MacLeod (2001, 2010) has written extensively about this type of study, and concludes that while clinical case studies may be useful in training or interesting to practitioners, they do not constitute valid research within a hermeneutic tradition. This is because they are normally based on incomplete notes that are seldom published, and are the unchallenged perspective of one individual. This ‘top down’ approach means that ‘debate is stifled and the accuracy of an interpretation is established and maintained by the force of authority rather than through open, reasoned dialogue’ (McLeod, 2001: 32). McLeod illustrates the methodological inadequacy of the clinical case study by an analysis of Freud’s (1905 [1901]) case of Dora (McLeod, 2010). The hermeneutic tradition was originally concerned with the interpretation of scriptural texts that were always fully available for examination by other scholars, and this aspect is notably absent from the clinical case study. The psychoanalyst Donald Spence (1982, 1986) has argued that the methodology of the clinical case study leads to a process of ‘narrative smoothing’, in which aspects of therapy are selectively recalled in line with the therapist’s pre-existing theoretical framework, or personal interests; while contradictory evidence is overlooked.
Clearly the potential for valid case study research is central to the study. McLeod (2010) describes a number of more supportable approaches to case study research. These include ‘n=1 time series case studies’, the hermeneutic single case efficacy design (HSCED), and narrative case research. Finally, he describes the theory-building case study, which has direct relevance here.

McLeod approaches this category from the social constructionist position that it is futile to address the absolute truth of any theory using case study research. While a theory of therapy, such as psychoanalysis, can be refined and articulated through case studies; this will never establish whether it is more or less effective than any other approach. Polkinghorne (1992) argues that contemporary therapy is based on a postmodern epistemology of practice, in which practitioners regard theories as tools that can be used for different purposes with different clients. Therapists are open to the acquisition of new theoretical tools, particularly if their relevance has been established through real-life case examples. McLeod (2010) provides a quotation from Stiles (2007: 123) that seems to capture the essence of this study:

> In any scientific research, observations change theories. They may confirm or disconfirm or strengthen or weaken the theory. More constructively, the changes may involve extending, elaborating, refining, modifying or qualifying the theory ... observations.permeate the theory ... Thus, a theory is not a fixed formula, but a growing and changing way of understanding.

McLeod concludes that theory building case study research is merely an effective and transparent way for practitioners to organise their experience of the world. In this type of work, it is accepted that cases or participants will be selected to generate material that is relevant to the theory being tested. He describes an eight process model for a study of this kind; and although this was not in my mind during the initial planning of the study, it describes closely what I actually did.
Outside the field of therapy, the value of the in-depth case study is supported by a number of authors including Platt (1988); Campbell (1975) Bromley (1986) and Sloman (1976). More recently Flyvbjerg (2001, 2004, 2011) has argued that the in-depth case study is theoretically sound, valid and reliable. He believes it is the way progress is made in the social sciences, and argues that its inductive potential can be significant. Beyond this, it is clear that the in-depth case study is the only approach that models the process of individual therapy in a realistic manner, which is the topic that I pick up in the next section.

The isomorphism between research and therapy

As I will describe later, the participants in the study were not clients. They were ‘ordinary people’ that I used to stand in for clients. The capability of the study to generate conclusions that are meaningful to therapy is based on an assumed isomorphism or ‘equality of forms’ between the research process that I used and the process of therapy, and clearly these are not the same. The motivations of researcher and participant are different from those of therapist and client, and the power relationships are quite different. While my approach was constrained by practical and ethical considerations, it still needed to be capable of generating valid data.

In some ways the situation seemed quite natural. In my counselling training at the University of Manchester it was the normal practice to carry out realistic counselling sessions between students; and these felt authentic in both roles. Later in psychotherapy training I had similar experiences, most notably in my training in group analysis, when for four years I was a member of a training therapy group composed of trainee therapists and conducted by a
training therapist. This was a recognised aspect of the training that again felt entirely authentic.

Group analysis also offers the example of small and large groups of therapists being used to investigate and research the topic of culture. The European Association for Transcultural Group Analysis (Brown, 1992a, 1992b), promotes and arranges events of this kind based on the assumption that cultural difference will always emerge in the group matrix (Foulkes, 1990 [1971]; Roberts, 1982); where it can be observed, studied and worked with (Hearst, 1993; Le Roy, 2000). The strength and weakness of the approach is that all members of study groups are highly trained, or encultured, in Foulksian Group Analysis; and by extension this raises a question about the validity of the methods I have used that can only be addressed retrospectively and reflexively.

Ethics

Ethical issues need to be considered at all stages of qualitative research (Kvale, 1996). However it is at the design stage that most intense consideration is required. According to Silverman (2006: 323), the ethical goals of research are achieved by complying with ‘ethical guidelines’ and ‘ethically responsible research practice’. I complied with the BACP ethical guidelines for researching counselling and psychotherapy (Bond, 2004), and because these are not particularly detailed, I also referred to the BPS Code of human research ethics (BPS, 2014). I followed the ethical processes of the University of Manchester and gained clearance through the ethics committee of the School of Education (Ref: PGR-7210185-A1). This covers matters such as confidentiality and anonymity, briefing of participant, informed consent, debriefing and feeding back results, risks to the researcher and participant, deception, invasion of privacy and storage of data. However, there are a number of deeper issues.
Is the study worthwhile?

The ethical basis for any study must be that the effort expended and the risks taken are justified by its potential contribution to the common good (Silverman, 2006). This study has been in the forefront of my mind for at least ten years and it represents both a quest for self-knowledge and greater understanding of the world. This is a testament to my personal view of its worth, for I do not believe that I could have sustained my interest if this had not been the case. In therapy, and related caring professions, my objective is to increase the understanding of culture and to promote a more plural and egalitarian approach to difference. These seem to be laudable objectives that address acknowledged issues in a new way.

Was it conducted in an ethical manner?

Guba and Lincoln (1994: 105) have argued that ‘questions of method are secondary to questions of paradigm, which we define as the basic belief system or worldview that guides the investigator, not only in choices of method but in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways’. Christians (2011) goes beyond this, stating that qualitative research in the social sciences cannot be value free; that it must engage with the political; and that it must be multicultural, gender inclusive, pluralistic and international in scope. It seems to me that both the objective and the paradigm within which I have operated have these principles at their heart. There is nothing overtly political in the work reported here, but I would certainly argue that greater emancipation and inclusion are central principles. I am not researching what Silverman (2006) calls ‘strange’ cultures, but like Stewart (1996) the strangeness of my own culture. It is therefore about the otherness that is within all of us, and to me this seems to be an entirely sound and emancipatory objective.
Anonymity of participants

One issue that has concerned me was the anonymity of participants. In qualitative research it is not possible to guarantee confidentiality, but the identity of participants is generally hidden by omitting or changing details that would allow the individual to be identified. In this study, I have tried to achieve this, but I know that the identity of certain individuals could be guessed by those that know them. In these situations, the question I have asked myself is whether the individual would mind having this detail of their lives known. I discussed this question with the participants in the debriefing and found that they were relatively relaxed about it, and although anonymity was preferable, they were relatively relaxed about information that was already in the public domain. Ultimately the guide that I used was my own sensibility.

Psychoanalytic interpretation

An ongoing concern has been the use of psychoanalytically based interpretation as one basis of a hermeneutic of suspicion. Langdridge (2007) suggests that it is legitimate to employ a hermeneutic of suspicion based on cultural factors (gender, class, race, sexuality, age and (dis)ability), but discourages depth hermeneutics or 'those methods of interpretation founded on the notion of needing to dig beneath the surface for the deeper meaning, often ... concealed from the subject'. In this regard, he specifically mentions psychoanalysis and criticises the work to Hollway and Jefferson (2000, 2005).

While I agree with the sentiments expressed, and find certain ethical aspects of the work of Hollway and Jefferson unpalatable; as a psychoanalytically oriented practitioner, researching the process of therapy, I feel that I must allow myself some latitude in this respect. My
Objective was to establish the extent to which there was value in the introduction of cultural material into therapy, and not the absolute rightness or wrongness of any individual interpretation. This world of partial truth is the one that I inhabit as a therapist, and I therefore feel entitled to introduce it into research relating to therapy. I did however feel an obligation to approach psychoanalytic interpretation ethically – in the tentative, oracular and sometimes playful manner that it was carried out (Etchegoyen, 1999; Sandler et al., 1992), and where possible by checking it out with participants (Rizq, 2008). However, because the cultural field in which we were working was, at least partly, a co-construction between researcher and participant; it could have undermined the process to step outside the frame of the interview. I recognised that it was necessary to turn down the intensity of the interpretive focus; carefully consider the material that was reported; and leave out of the report interpretations that I did not wish to make public. In effect, I wanted to say enough, but not too much. I am much more relaxed about the use of interpretation in reflexivity where the hermeneutics of suspicion are turned back upon myself.

**Detailed methods**

Having covered the selection of the methods and associated issues, I now move on to consider the detailed manner in which these were implemented. A graphical overview of the methods, themes and reporting structure is given in Figure 7.

**Data collection**

The semi-structured interview is built around a large number of decisions (Kvale, 1996). This study was a piece of exploratory research and although I mapped the schedule (Appendix 3) against the research questions (Kvale 1996), my research theme was partly inductive, so I tried to minimise structure that might limit or constrain the interaction or limit free association and
storytelling. My overall objective was to be open, so the interview could move naturally into areas that would have been impossible to investigate with a more directive approach. For the same reason, individual questions were kept open. My plan was to move from the way early life experiences and cultural influences shaped the cultural identities of the participants to the significance this has had in their lives.

**Sample size**

While I am not using IPA, Smith et al (2009) provide a benchmark for sample size. They state that the number of interviews for a Professional doctorate using IPA is typically between four and ten, and I believe that the benchmark is applicable to this study. The pilot project convinced me that I should aim for the lower end of the range and the experience of the study has confirmed this.
Selection and recruitment of participants

One important aspect of the design of the study was the participant group targeted and the way individual participants were selected. I wanted to work with non-clients in a way that was relevant to therapy. I saw an advantage in selecting older people, for whom there had been an opportunity to work through cultural issues. In any case, I did not believe that it was possible to work with clients. This was for two reasons. The first related to the problems I would have faced at the time in gaining ethical clearance. The second and more important reason was that I envisaged significant problems in collecting relevant data from current or ex-clients.

Different ethical standards apply to research from those in therapy. In research the requirement is ‘the absence of psychological or physical harm’ (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011: 22), rather than the higher standard implicit in the principle of beneficence (BACP, 2013).

Without going into the argument around more dubious practices such as deception that are not relevant here, or challenging the excellent work that some practitioners have carried out with current or ex-clients (Bond, 2004); I felt that working with participants who had never been clients gave me more flexibility to prioritise my needs as a researcher.

It is also clear that working with clients would move the research towards the category of clinical case study criticised by McLeod (2001, 2010). The tendency would have been to make use of inadequately documented data from the therapy and to fall back on unsubstantiated judgements and assessments. Working with non-clients, with whom I have no close personal relationship is: cleaner; more ethically justifiable; and more consistent with a hermeneutic approach. As previously stated, I chose to base my research on an isomorphism between therapy and research. This meant that I collected data from non-clients on the basis that the results obtained would be relevant to clients. This seemed to be reasonable, for although the
two situations are different, there is no absolute distinction between the two groups and most of the participants had also been in therapy at points in their lives. My main selection criterion was that participants should have approached, crossed or positioned themselves on cultural boundaries through migration, travel, relationships etc. An interest in culture was not essential, although I reasoned that those who felt motivated to volunteer, and for whom the topic was of importance in their lives, were likely to have a pre-existing interest in the subject. I wished to avoid individuals whose cultural identity was dominated by one dimension and I regarded this as an exclusion criterion. I did not advertise for participants, but selected them individually using two approaches. In the first I identified potential participants among the group of people that I met in connection with my work. As a part of normal social interaction, I would initiate a conversation in which I aimed to discover a little more about them and tell them about my research. I would then broach the subject of participation, and if they agreed I would take it to the next stage. In the second approach people contacted me, through social media or in person, because they had heard about my research from personal contact or from information on social websites like LinkedIn. Thereafter it progressed in a similar manner to the first approach of discovering if their cultural background met the selection criterion and seeking verbal agreement to participate. As it turned out two of the participants came by the first route and two by the second. All participants were therapists themselves, and all were female. This was not my initial intention, but I accepted the situation as it evolved, and ultimately saw advantages in the greater personal robustness and personal insight that trained practitioners brought to the interview.

Although the participant group was never intended to be representative, it is relevant to note the characteristics of the group that was selected. This relates first to the selection criteria and second to the willingness to be recruited. The selection criteria focused on individuals for whom cultural factors were of importance and who had encountered cultural difference in
their lives through migration, travel or relationships. This was inevitably an untypical group, for whom the topic was likely to be of special interest, which was further intensified by the commitment required to set aside two hours of precious time to participate in the interview and further time to read and approve the transcript. Although I recognised that this would inevitably skew the results, my objective was to illuminate the process of therapy with clients for whom culture was an issue, and it seemed logical that this should be investigated in a population of participants for whom the same condition applied.

After gaining verbal agreement to participate, I followed this up with an email seeking confirmation. This email included the participant information sheet (Appendix 1) and consent form (Appendix 2). I then arranged a time and place for the interview. This took account of relevant ethical and safety issues and no payment was made. Interviews commenced with the signing of consent forms and at the debrief that followed I checked that participants were happy to continue and that no difficult issues remained. I also made an open ended offer to feed back results in whatever form the participants wanted.

**Recording and transcription**

According to Kvale (1996), the reliability of transcription, the style of transcription and the conventions used can have a marked effect on the output. The interviews were recorded on a Sony ICD-SX712 digital recorder and transcribed with the help of Sony Digital Voice Editor Software version 3.3.01.11240. The ICD-SX712 is a good quality recorder with adequate sensitivity to be located outside the immediate space of the interviewee. For practical and ethical reasons I carried out the transcription personally. I saw transcription as the first stage of analysis, and an essential part of immersion in the text. Ethically, I did not want to share the raw recordings with unknown third parties; and although these concerns could probably have
been addressed, I was happier to take personal responsibility. The transcripts were typed directly into Microsoft Word with line numbering turned on, using conventions (Appendix 4) that were adapted from published sources (Burman, 1994; Potter and Wetherell, 1987), and fine-tuned in my Masters and the pilot. I attempted to capture as much information as possible, including pauses, emphasis and additional information such as laughter. While my objective was not to subject the text to detailed techniques of discourse analysis; I wanted to avoid the inadvertent introduction of meaning that was not originally present. I used question marks, commas and full stops only in situations where I was sure they were appropriate; and in other places I used the character string (.) to link phrases and suggest the presence of unspecified punctuation. I did not attempt to ‘tidy up’ any aspect of the transcripts at this stage. Once typed, I submitted the transcripts to participants to confirm accuracy and seek their agreement to their use in the subsequent analysis.

Data analysis

In the analysis phase, I made extensive use of Microsoft Office tools (Word and Excel). I found this decision relatively straightforward, and I believe that it facilitated the process of sorting and re-sorting the data. This approach is not unusual (Hahn, 2008; La Pelle, 2004; Richards & Richards, 1994) and I had already used it in my Masters and the pilot. It provided an environment within which it was possible to accurately implement the methods, and produced a well-documented audit trail. In any case, Microsoft Office tools would normally be used for transcripts, tables of themes and reports; and a flexible integrated approach that can be viewed as multiple windows on a computer screen provides an effective and tidy environment for the researcher. The three most important technical features of the approach were the ability to cut and paste between files, the search facility that is available in both Word and Excel and the sorting facility that is available in Excel. Two aspects of the approach are of
particular significance. Firstly the complex and interrelated nature of the data lends itself to the use of a rudimentary database of the type provided by Excel, within which it is possible to cope with multiple coding and frequent resorting. Secondly, and more personally, it fitted my natural approach to the world; and I perceived other alternatives, such as paper, scissors and coloured pencils as somewhat alien. I had previously considered the use of NVivo; but found that, for me, it lacked visibility. I experienced the application as an artificial barrier to more intimate involvement with the data.

At a practical level these techniques mapped against the steps of the thematic analysis part of the method (The Open University, 2007). After completing the transcription (Stage 1), I moved on to familiarisation (Stage 2); in which I produced an annotated version of the transcript using the comment facility in Word (see example in Appendix 5). This maintained the relationship with line numbers in the text. I then produced a first draft of the objective background and cultural background sections before moving on to the subjective section. Here I coded sections of the text by cutting and pasting them into a Microsoft Excel table and entering emergent themes (Stage 3). This allowed sections of the text to be coded in a complex manner. I proceeded through first order coding (descriptive); second order coding (combining descriptive codes); and third order or pattern coding, which is thematic analysis (Langdridge, 2004). A worked example, showing the processes in action, is given in Appendix 6. This ultimately resulted in a table of themes that was the basis for reporting (see example in Appendix 7). The process was extremely time consuming, and exceeded any estimates I have seen – including those for IPA (Smith et al., 2009). I am unable to comment on whether the use that I made of Microsoft Office tools accelerated the process; but this is not really relevant, since time was not the main justification.
Reporting

Reporting of the findings represented a major challenge. I had found from the pilot that one participant generated abundant, rich data and that a detailed report required more than 45,000 words. Clearly I could have focused the whole study around one individual story. However my objective was to go beyond this, towards more general, although not necessarily universal, findings and a wider evaluation of the usefulness of the approach. I attempted to achieve this by focussing on a subset of the superordinate metacultural themes that emerged.

The reporting consisted of three sections:

1. Objective background
2. Cultural influences
3. Subjective background - three common superordinate metacultural themes

Sections one and two focussed on the hermeneutics of empathy, while section three introduces the hermeneutics of suspicion (Gadamer, 1984; Langdrige, 2007; Scott-Baumann, 2009). The discussion section formulated answers to the research questions and considered more general aspects of the study.
FINDINGS

Inasmuch as the word ‘knowledge’ has any meaning at all, the world is knowable: but it is variously interpretable; it has no meaning behind it, but countless meanings.

Nietzsche (2003 [1887]: 139)

The study comprises four case studies each of which produced extensive, rich data. The findings are presented on the basis of individual case studies, organised under the headings described in the previous chapter.

Superordinate metacultural themes

A variety of superordinate metacultural themes emerged, but three in particular were both significant across all four cases and compatible with the theoretical basis for the study. These were: influence of the personal; belongingness; and growth. Influence of the personal relates to ways in which other individuals, environment and life events have influenced cultural identities and personal culture. Belongingness relates to membership or lack of membership of specific cultural groups. Growth relates to the ways in which cultural individuality, security and development are pursued. Belongingness is probably the major superordinate theme.

Clara – the search for a home

Objective account

Clara was a sixty two year old female, who had worked as a teacher, social worker and counsellor. She was the only child of an English father and Austrian mother. Her parents met while her father was a non-commissioned officer in the British army, stationed in Austria. She was married to a black man and the couple had two children.
Clara was born in southern Austria; and up to the age of eleven, accompanied her parents on her father’s overseas postings. These included a spell in Libya, where she had a black nanny. Army life involved frequent disjunctions and relocations, but it provided structure and organisation.

At the age of eleven, she was sent to boarding school in England. It was a normal grammar school, with a boarding facility attached. The majority of pupils attended on a day basis; while the boarding facility catered for army families and brighter children from the care system. The boarders had little freedom, and were forced to wear school uniform outside the school. When her father left the army, her parents returned to the UK to live near the school; but she remained a boarder.

Clara did not do well at school; and on her father’s advice, went to teacher training college in Lincolnshire. There, she was drawn to people from a forces background, attended social activities in the nearby RAF base, and dated officers. After college, she moved on to teaching practice in Bedfordshire, which was a multicultural community that had RAF and USAF bases nearby. She dated an Italian, and became aware of prejudice and racial discrimination. She subsequently moved to Italy for an extended stay, working as an au pair in Milan.

When she returned, she trained as a social worker in Aston and found employment in the Midlands. She met a black man of mixed race from a forces background, but was reluctant to tell her parents. When she did, their disapproval damaged her relationship with them; and ultimately ended the eight year relationship with her boyfriend. Some years later, she met another black man; again of mixed race and from a forces background. They married
and settled down. The marriage has marked a period of stability that has lasted 28 years. The couple travel extensively and collect artefacts from countries they visit.

Cultural account

Clara's father was a white working class man from Birmingham (23-33), who 'worked his way up' to middle class (23-24). Her mother was Austrian (22-23) and claimed more elevated roots (154-159). The mother was brought up by Clara’s grandmother (38-39), who would have remembered the Habsburg Monarchy and the Austrian-Hungarian Empire, when Austria was a major power. Her mother was also an only child, without an extended family.

Clara was born in Southern Austria around 1950 (21-22) into a world dominated by the aftermath of World War Two (33-35). The restored Republic of Austria was 'in a state of utter disaster and moral degradation' (Beller, 2006). Her father was part of the four nation army of occupation that split the country into zones that remained in force until 1955. My fantasy is that Clara's father entered Austria as a ‘conquering hero’, both in his own view and that of his future wife.

The main cultural influence on Clara was the British army (39-40). On her father’s postings, she was exposed to distal influences of foreign cultures; notably in Austria and Libya, where she had a black nanny (118-119). It was a transient and impermanent environment in which the only constant factor was the routine and structure of army life. There was probably an atmosphere of institutional racism accompanied by considerable consumption of alcohol (795-801); and after a long fight for survival, it is unlikely that great attention was paid to political correctness (221-222).
Visits to the UK were infrequent (231-232) and Clara was regularly moved away from anything to which she might belong. Her school was a strict and inflexible institutional environment (277-292), typical of English boarding schools (Duffell, 2000). But her situation was especially alienating because of the structure of the school and her position as a boarder and incomer (283-284). The compulsory wearing of school uniform outside served to separate her from both the other pupils and the local community (626-627).

When she moved on to teacher training in Lincolnshire, she had her first opportunity to join a wider community, but lost the structure of army and school (662-664). She renewed her involvement with forces life, through friendship (674-676), relationships (693-694) and links to the nearby RAF base (677-679). In teaching practice in Bedfordshire, there were again RAF bases and the new variant of a USAF base, which introduced her to American music and sport, and the influence of black America (775-782). The local community was a multicultural environment with significant Italian, Jamaican and Ugandan Asian sub-communities (740-744). Later, there was the direct Italian influence of living in Milan (924-926), where I imagine she spoke Italian; and integrated with an Italian family, and the local community.

Aston, where she did her social work training, was a diverse inner city area (959-960). Here she first dated a black man, who was also from a forces background and the child of a mixed marriage between a Kenyan Asian father and a Ugandan mother (996-997). The reaction of her parents to her relationship with a black man demonstrated deep underlying racism (1012-1021). As a social worker she was based in various locations, including the Black Country in the Midlands. This was composed of small 'tight' communities (1252) in which many people had little experience of travel (1253-1257). The Black Country has a unique cultural heritage that
can be traced back to the Anglo Saxon and Welsh tribes in the ancient kingdom of Mercia (www.blackcountryhistory.com).

Ultimately as the wife and mother in a mixed race family, she was the only white person. She was deeply involved in dealing with the reality of racial discrimination and the complex dynamics of living on a profound cultural boundary. The cultural diversity of travel to other countries and continents was an important aspect of her life.

**Subjective account**

*Influence of the personal*

A number of individuals influenced Clara’s cultural development.

**Father**

She believed that her father was a major influence in her life:

> early influences were my father and his lifestyle (. ) which was his life and his career (74-75).

And this influenced her cultural development:

> things like (1) ... enjoyment of animals ... nature ... walking ... activity ... music ... reading (. ) so those were all ... very important things I learned from him (62-66).

And Clara made conscious or unconscious choices to align herself with his culture:

> I think this is where relationships influenced my cultural heritage ... ’cos I was closer to my father than my mother (44-45).

Her father also provided a prototype for racial discrimination, which became apparent later:

> my father was ... very derogatory in terms of his comments about black people (1017-1019)
It seems inevitable that, as a child, she would have internalised this racism; and perhaps also the institutional racism of the army. There is no evidence that she ever identified with it.

Mother

Clara’s mother provided good physical care:

my mother was very much the ... caretaker ... who always did the physical stuff ... cooking and cleaning and making sure I'd got white socks ... and that you looked good (67-69).

But she was often absent (117-118) and Clara perceived the relationship as distant (148-149) and rivalrous (468-486). Just as she chose to emphasise her father’s culture, she chose to de-emphasise her mother’s Austrian culture:

she always tried to talk German with me ... and I would always refuse to engage with it (91-92).

Nanny

One specific reason for the absence of Clara's mother was the employment of a black, Sudanese nanny during her father's posting to Libya (117-136). It seems likely that she developed a primary attachment to the nanny (Bowlby, 1997), which is an experience she shared with Bowlby himself (Bowlby & King, 2004). Clara had clear memories of the experience:

I remember (1) spending a lot of time with another person who was black (...) and going to the markets with her and sitting in the kitchen with her ... eating dates (132-134)

Perhaps this formed a bond between Clara and black people; defining them as warm and caring, in contrast to a white mother who was cold and remote. Clara had been reflecting on the importance of the experience while reading 'The Help' (Stockett, 2009):
it's about Mississippi ... and the States and ... black nannies bringing up white children (.) ... and that just sort of made me think about how important it was (135-138).

**Husband**

It seems likely that there was a cultural aspect to Clara's choice of boyfriends, and her ultimate choice of a husband. Her husband emerges as a significant figure:

he has been my rock for the last (. ) thirty years (1086).

There were similarities to her father:

[he] is very similar in a lot of ways to my father (.) not in terms of looks [laughs] ... but they have very ... similar connections (1108-1110).

And he was from a forces family (264-265), a mixed heritage (1166), and had a similar range of interests:

so there are a lot of similarities (. ) you know (. ) in that sense (.5) but they have a different skin colour (1127-1128)

But as a black man, he brought different cultural influences into the marriage:

I was just learning so much about (. ) ... different lifestyles (. ) ... from him (999-1000).

**Family**

Clara ‘lost’ her birth family because of the racism of her parents (1037-1038). However, she had built a new family that was similar, but more diverse and 'rich':

finding similarities and differences (. ) and working that out between us (.5) It's almost as if we've created a cultural environment as well (1214-1215).
Belongingness

For Clara this relates mainly to lack and the structures that permitted her to survive in situations where there was little to attach her need to belong. The bond to an abandoned object choice is central to the Freudian (1921) understanding of identification embedded in Hall's (1996) definition of cultural identity. It is therefore especially relevant to think about loss, lack and absence.

Roots

Beyond her family, the main influence on Clara's sense of belongingness was army life:

I guess culturally I allied myself with white, British, army life (46-47).

And this included frequent childhood relocations that limited other possibilities:

I did have a culture ... this sort of army life ... which was a ... transient life (.5) which has impacted on the way I have relationships (.) and how I've moved through life (1436-1439).

There was an inevitable lack of authenticity:

It's like ... sort of little England (.) [laughs] ... displaced from England (60-62).

Transience

Structure and routine stood in for substance, and she had no sense of home as a specific place:

you almost have to carry your roots with you (.) And I suppose, because army life is very similar wherever you go (.) there's that sense of (.) familiarity with routine (181-182).

There was little possibility for close friendship:

you make friendships for a short while (.) and because you've had this ... nomadic moving around (.) it's almost as though that's as far as you go (714-716).
And Clara took this forward into adult life:

> what I did hold onto was ... you don't trust people (.5) ... because they are either transient in your life (.) or they are passing through (544-546).

Her direct involvement with the army ended at the age of eleven, when she was sent to boarding school (272-273). However the transience continued:

> so again not really any roots or connections (319-320).

And even when her parents returned to the UK, she did not join them:

> and then they came back from Germany ... two years ... after I'd been in this boarding house (.) and they lived four miles away and left me there (.) so there's this sense of abandonment (302-304).

Later, in her teacher training, teaching practice, time in Italy, social work training and social work practice she moved in and out of communities, without integrating or settling. The analysis identified over fifty short quotations relating to the transience, which can be summed up by one heartfelt statement:

> I don't think I've ever belonged anywhere (1) in my life really (936-937).

The transience was characterised by absence, which needs to be understood in terms of the things that were missing, and which can only be guessed at, or fantasised about:

> some parts of me would have loved that (.) security (.) of ... (.5) a place where I was brought up and I knew people and there was a community (.) and stuff like that (.) but actually this has been ... a moveable feast (1343-1346).

Eventually, she found stability and belongingness with her adult family:

> our roots are ... around (.) our small family (1181).

Existential migration is increasingly seen as a valid way of life (Madison, 2006), but Clara's involuntary relocations in childhood and early adulthood do not feel comfortable. Now from
the security of her adult family, she is able to continue her search in the form of a quest for 'richness' – which is a word she used eight times in the interview.

**Outsider**

Related to transience was the implicit sense that Clara was an outsider, and that she identified with other outsiders. In her early army life she visited Austria and Libya as an outsider. Her mother was an outsider in the environment of the army. She was cared for by a black nanny who was an outsider. Then at boarding school, she was placed in the position of an outsider from both the mainstream of the school and the local community. Thereafter, in each of her adult sojourns, she continued to be the outsider and pursued actions that maintained this situation. She found that she was drawn to people who were also outsiders; because they understood, and were prepared to enter into transient relationships:

people who have been in the army ... have those connections ... they understand what it's like ... that sort of transient moving on ... and connecting (.) because they've also got that ... lifestyle of no roots (686-690).

With the exception of a positive experience with her nanny, she was mainly surrounded by white people; and I suspect that for Clara race and colour became representations of the thing she was outside, and an object of desire. She first encountered real diversity as a teacher in Bedfordshire:

it was ... my first experience ... of a multicultural environment (736-737).

She discovered that there was a racial hierarchy:

there was a definite racial hierarchy in [Bedford] (814).

She believed that this existed in the minds of white men and probably white people in general:
it was like (.) you started to go out with an Italian (.) you were on the slippery slope down ... and it was always (.) I suppose you are going to be going out with a black man next (818-820).

This downward journey was irreversible:

there was a definite (1) ... chung ... chung ... chung ... and once you ... started to go out with an Italian (.) you started mixing with the Italians (.) the ice cream guys and the hairdressers [laughs] (.) there was no way you were going to go back out with a white guy (823-827).

And dating a black man was the ultimate stigma:

go out with a black man it was hissssss [mimes spraying ] (.) definitely (.) you had hit bottom.

For Clara, there was a sort of inevitability about this journey (833-835). After returning to the UK, she dated a black man; lost this relationship, then eventually met and married another black man. These experiences left Clara with a sense of guilt at her passive role in the operation of racial discrimination (1283-1285).

When I first went out (.) with a black person ... it was like (.) the naïveté ... the colour blindness (.) disbelief that people were treated differently (.) the experience of being treated differently (.) myself ... and then the sort of (.) guilt and shame (.) and the recognition of being white (.) and unearned white privilege (.) and challenging that (1281-1285)

**Search to the familiar**

Clara identifies her culture as 'white, British, army' (40) and to those could be added outsider and mixed race. The strongest influence, and one she clung onto, was the forces culture embedded in her experience of army life. This provided a strategy for survival in new environments, and a pattern for the people she would seek out. This is consistent with Le Roy's (2000) description of the manner in which secondary groups are used to provide the
containment absent or lost from early relationships with caregivers and the primary group of the family.

Up to the age of eleven, the army provided her practical and social needs:

there’s the familiarity of army life ... wherever you are ... in the world (188-189).

At boarding school, she was again an outsider, but there were still people from an army background:

there were some army people (.)'cos that’s obviously ... how they heard about it (287-288).

During teacher training and teaching practice she found social activity at the RAF and USAF bases:

... there was always ... a lot of family activities (. you know (. the big bonfires (. ... going to the American bases ... for ... baseball and ... American football (765-767).

And her closest friend was from an army background:

interestingly enough, the person I ... became very friendly with during teacher training (. she was an army person [laughs] (676-677).

Her first black boyfriend had a forces background:

I then ended up going out with someone from the RAF (695).

And, like her, he had a mixed heritage:

he was a mix of African and Asian (.5) so his father was Kenyan Asian (. and his mother was Ugandan (996-997).

And the same applied to the black man she ultimately married.

my husband is from ... (.5) an air force family ... which is really interesting (264-266).
He's mixed as well (.) so he's got a white mother (.) and a black father (1166).

And like Clara, he was searching:

I think there's elements of searching for his blackness as well (.) in his identity ... (.) as well as me searching for mine [laughs] ... as a woman (.) and as a white woman (1167-1168).

This combination of similarity and difference seemed to provide an environment in which she could pursue her own growth.

**Growth**

There is something existential about Clara’s search:

I think I have been searching all my life (403).

Ultimately, she believed she was looking for her own identity:

I think I was looking for myself really (.) in terms of who I am (.) ... as well as belonging somewhere (935-936).

The personal search that she enacted in the cultural world was characterised by difficult disjunctions between the distinct sections of her life and the problematic separation from her parents. However, growth was now central to her view of life and had become an ongoing process. This evolved from the search for difference into the achievement of a secure base; and the ongoing quest for 'richness' that has taken her beyond the white, British forces culture:

just talking about it today ... I've recognised how much of that (.) I have taken with me to other parts of the country (.) and how important it was ... (.) even in my relationship (.) his history of being in the forces (.) not him himself ... but ... family environment in the forces and stuff (.) how that ... (.) has been my culture ... if you like (.) I don't think it is now (.) (1319-1323).
Search for Difference

Clara’s childhood and early adulthood seems to have been dominated by the ‘search for the familiar’ almost certainly as a defence against the anxiety of difficult, unsupportive and continually changing environments. Experience of travel and her black nanny may have opened the possibility of something beyond; but beneath the reassuring routine, army life must have seemed bland and boring, with limited possibilities for real intimacy. Then she was sent to boarding school, which had its own routine, but lacked the proximity of family and denied her the possibility of joining a wider community. Her reading showed the escapist fantasies that were almost certainly common to many teenagers at the time:

I went through a phase... when I was in my teenage years of Russian (.) Dostoyevsky and all of those books (.) and ehh (.) ... my favourite film of all time is Dr Zhivago [laughs] (.) you know (.) that's a total romantic fantasy (389-394).

Perhaps, she was looking for her own revolution that would bring freedom and emancipation from an oppressive totalitarian regime. Initially she saw teacher training as a way out:

I went off to teacher training college (.) and it was like whooooo (.) freedom (118-119).

But, she was disappointed:

even though it was freedom (.) it really wasn't freedom ... It was scary (.) ... because I was on my own (665-667).

In Lincolnshire she had the opportunity to cross the barrier of class by dating officers (487-488). Then in Bedfordshire she was exposed to multicultural environments in both the local community and the USAF base (741-750), where she encountered black African American culture:

at the US air force bases (.) they always had the great Motown people (1) you know I saw everybody ... Jimmy Ruffin (.) ... the Jacksons (777-783).

Here she took the first 'downward' step:
I went out with an Italian for several years (.) in Bedfordshire (833).

Setting aside personal factors, this combined fantasy and romance:

it was this sort of romanticism (.) fantasy (.) the romantic (.) you know (.) because they were always very ... respectful (.)

Even if this was not completely supported by reality:

having said that they weren’t that respectful (.) you know (.) they were (2) going off all over the place (867-870).

However, it was exciting:

For me it was more exciting than ... people who had just been stuck where they were for ever more (896-897).

She justified the trip to Italy in cultural terms:

I went to live in Italy for a while ... just to learn more about (.) Italy and the life ... and culture there (910-912).

On her return, she took the final 'downward' step of dating a black man:

It wasn’t until I came back to Birmingham that I actually (.) then went out with a black man (.) and it all came true ... didn’t it [laughs] (833-835).

Search for a secure base

The term secure base is from attachment theory (Bowlby, 1998; Holmes, 2001), and it was used by Clara in the interview. In cultural terms, it seems to me that Clara needed to find security before she could begin the search for her identity. This was linked to the relationship with her husband:

I suppose I have found (1) a secure base (1) with my partner (3) and maybe all of this heartache along the way has (.) landed me in that place (1133-1135).
And her adult family:

... our roots are ... around (. ) our small family (1180-1181).

The longevity (1174) and mutuality (1172-1173) of the relationship had provided the stability required to develop a cultural identity. But it remained a nomadic culture without deep roots, based on difference and diversity:

I think my cultural roots are (. ) actually with this sort of nomadic transient lifestyle (. ) of the army (. ) and the forces (. ) and I think my partner has also had that (. ) experience (. ) and it's almost as though we've both come together (1171-1173).

Clara's children were recipients of the security, which must be especially important for black children of mixed heritage:

I think for my children (. ) it was important to have stability (1) to have empathy (1) and understanding (. ) and (.5) to have a richness of (. ) cultural experiences (. ) ... so that they felt secure (. ) (1358-1360).

The concept of the secure base starts with the care-giver to whom the child turns when distressed (Holmes, 2001). At one point, for her this was her black nanny; so perhaps in her adult life, Clara has symbolically and culturally sought the nearest thing.

**Search for richness**

Having achieved her secure base, Clara was in a position to continue her search for ‘richness’.

She wanted to understand her own identity and defined this in terms of difference:

thinking about my own identity ... and my relationship with black people ... is like jigsaw pieces (. ) coming together and making sense of who I am as a person and how I relate in my own family (163-166).

This relates to the ethnic composition of her family, but I think it is probably wider than this. Her choice to marry a black man could be seen as identification with the outsider; as rebellion
against, and separation from, her father; and a part of her search for 'richness'. She describes her search in vague, unspecific terms:

I'm not sure what I'm searching for (.) I guess richness and wideness and variety (917-918).

The manner in which she had filled the containers of her life (her relationships and home) with cultural objects is a kind of cultural bricolage:

if you came into our house (.) you probably wouldn't know who lived in that house (.) ... because it is so multicultural (.) and so diverse (.) you wouldn't know whether it was (.) African (.) white (.) Asian (1151-1154).

And her task was to curate this collection:

what we take with us and what we leave behind (2) and what we find that's new and richer (1) or not (2214-2215).

Like belongingness, the short quotations relating to the sub-theme of 'search for richness', are often vague and repetitive. They refer to abstract qualities that are ultimately unattainable, and beg the question of what is rich enough, or wide enough, or varied enough. I was left with the impression that the search for cultural 'richness' was a metaphor for something deeper, or an 'avoidant narrative' (Holmes, 2001: 32). It can be seen as a cultural repetition compulsion (page 59), linking with the idea that the resource of blackness is being used to represent and act out her sense of being an outsider. However, it is clearly also a satisfying ritual that gives genuine meaning to her life.
Mhairi – the search for belonging

Objective account

Mhairi was a fifty-five-year-old female, who worked as a coach and counsellor. She had a younger sister, and a daughter and grandson who lived in London. She had been in a lesbian relationship with a black woman of mixed race for over ten years.

Her parents were born and brought up in the north of Scotland, and after marrying they moved to the South of England to find work; which is where Mhairi and her sister were born. Although she grew up in England, the family retained close links with Scotland and mostly socialised with other . It was an austere life with few books and little contact with the wider community.

A Scottish aunt was a significant figure in her life. Then, when she was thirteen, her parents divorced. Three years later her father died, during her final year at school; and a few years later her mother died. Throughout her life, she took on the role of carer for friends and neighbours; and at the age of eighteen she moved to Liverpool to train as a nurse. After training, she lived for ten years in a suburb of Liverpool; where her daughter was born. She began to train as a counsellor; then moved to Manchester, where she stayed for another ten years. Here, in her work and social life, for the first time she came into contact with a range of cultural and racial diversity. Finally she moved to Scotland with her partner, where she lived in a major city near to the aunt from her childhood.

Mhairi travelled widely, visiting increasingly remote parts of the world on holiday; and in connection with her work. She felt a particular connection with Asia, especially the Indian sub-
continent. Most recently she had travelled to Mongolia and over the years had learned to speak a number of languages.

**Cultural account**

Mhairi was technically a second generation immigrant, but this did not seem an appropriate label. Although she was born and brought up in the south of England, the dominant cultural influence on her early life was her Scottish roots. This operated through her parents (36); the Scottish community in her home town (102); frequent trips back to Scotland (103); visits to Scottish friends and relatives living in England; activities such as church attendance (47) and Scottish country dancing (99-100); and the presents she was given at Christmas (46-47). Ultimately she moved to Scotland, which provided a base to which she could return from her travels.

Mhairi’s roots were strongly white, working class; which was reinforced during her time in Liverpool. In Manchester, there was an eclectic cultural environment in her place of work. There were strong cultural influences from the Indian sub-continent, Africa and the Caribbean. In her childhood, she encountered many people who were disabled, ill or had educational difficulties and she grew to feel comfortable in this environment. She frequently visited hospitals and moved towards this through her training as a nurse. This continued, in her time in Manchester, where she worked in an environment of educational and mental health issues.

As her life progressed, she moved towards people who were educated, opinionated and politically aware; and to wider cultural influences. She had always wanted to travel (141-144), but did not begin to do this until later in life. She had visited India a number of times, and now
travelled to increasingly remote places. Her sexuality can also be viewed culturally. She felt driven to learn languages and had learned Urdu, Mongolian and Mandarin.

Subjective account

Influence of the personal

Mhairi experienced the influence of Scottish culture through her parents, the experiences they provided, and the way they structured her life. The main influence was her mother.

Mother

It was clear that Mhairi’s mother felt like an outsider in England:

Mum’s friend in particular was someone that (1) didn’t have a lot of friends ... and I think they did share something about being different (347-349)

But Mhairi did not realise this until she went to school:

I went to school and realised that my Mum talked differently to other people (333-334)

The mother had been abandoned at an early age:

When my mum was small her mother left the home at a time when there were seven children (58-59)

This left her father to bring up the children in a remote croft, lacking basic amenities like running water. It meant that Mhairi’s mother took on the role of a carer:

there were two younger than her at that age ... and she was a kind of Mum to the younger two (268-269)
It seems likely that this contributed to a strong desire to better herself, and it is my experience those who are forced to take on a heavy burden of care at an early age often harbour deep anger. It seemed likely that much of this communicated itself to Mhairi.

Her mother was the driving force in the move from Scotland:

there was always that (1) idea of having a better life (263-264)

And it was the mother who decided to end the marriage:

anyway my Mum divorced him (.) I think there weren’t many people doing that then ... she must have been really quite determined ... (278-281)

She was also a woman with a secret:

I had a brother that was a bit older than me that Mum put (.) into care and was long term fostered eventually (205-207)

It is only possible to speculate about the grief and sense of loss that her mother carried, and the influence this had on Mhairi.

Aunt

The other maternal figure in Mhairi’s life was her Aunt. In the early life on the croft she had played an important role:

this Auntie was Mum to my Mum (269-270)

And this role continued. The Aunt was a constant factor in Mhairi’s life, through her trips to Scotland and her Aunt’s visits to England. When Mhairi’s sister was born, the Aunt came to provide support; despite having eight children of her own.

when she was born, my auntie (.) came to look after me while my mum was having my sister (129-130)
Mhairi enjoyed the reciprocal visits:

she has eight children (.) ... six of them are boys ... so not only was she lots of fun when my sister was born ... but when we went to her house the rules were very different ... so from two girls to having this gang of boys (1) we were allowed to run wild ... and that I certainly enjoyed [laughs] (165-169)

The Aunt was a factor in Mhairi’s decision to move to Scotland, and they remained close.

she’s part of the reason I’m in Xxxxxxx ‘cos I can see her every week (133-134)

Father

Her father was a more absent figure:

my father disappeared a lot ... I mean ... at one point he went to be a long distance lorry driver ... so that took him away (143-144)

However, this triggered a thought that may have echoed throughout her life:

and I (.) thought that was quite a good life ... and (.) I’ve carried on loving travel ... but not as a long distance lorry driver (144-146)

When he was at home, he was not supportive:

I would say a more stereotypical Scottish Presbyterian ... he was more rigid in his views ... more (.) ruthless in terms of how he treated my Mum and me in particular (.) I don’t think he knew how to be with people (274-278)

Extended family

The sense I had of Mhairi’s extended family was of a core that included her own family and that of her Aunt with a vaguely defined group of Scottish people around. There was no doubt that Scotland was regarded as home, which was confirmed by the picture of a ruined crofter’s cottage that hung on the wall of her lounge. She talked about it in a special way and periodically returned to it:
my mum’s family were crofters ... my grandfather was a crofter ... (57-58)

She knew that the house and land were up for sale:

if I could have afforded to ... that’s on the market at the moment ... that land ... and (. ) that house (2) kind of (. ) an emotional connection for me (176-178)

School

Mhairi did not do well at school, partly as a result of her parents’ divorce and the death of her father.

when they divorced I had become a bit disengaged with school ... that’s something of an understatement really ... but by the lower sixth (1) my Dad died (439-441)

At school, she was an outsider and was attracted to other outsiders:

my best friend in my first school was Polish ... and ... later ... before my Mum died ... my best friend was Ukrainian ... so I wonder if there was always a sense of the outsider ... (338-342)

She talked differently from the other children and did not get on well with the staff. There was one male teacher who helped and may have planted the seed of being a counsellor:

I had said to him ... oh I just really need to talk about this ... and he did nothing but sit and listen (. )and I’d think wow I feel a lot better after that (510-517)

Belongingness

Mhairi had a very weak sense of belongingness to any place from her childhood. It was clear that she regarded Scotland as her symbolic home. But although she had moved there, the sense of belonging seemed to relate to her roots and the influence of her parents rather than any current reality, except her aunt:
I don’t have any friends here … so in Manchester and Liverpool I have a lot of odd friends (.) I don’t see that quirkiness and difference here that I need (1260-1262)

However it was physically and symbolically a place of safety to which she could return. When asked where she felt at home, she identified neither the place she grew up, nor her current home in Scotland; but the suburb of Liverpool in which she had lived:

as I go on the train to Liverpool and I hear the accents change … and I think oh my goodness I am coming home (366-368)

When she moved to Manchester, she immediately felt comfortable in the working environment:

it was a world I HAD NEVER EVEN IMAGINED … there were loads of African Caribbean people (.) people from Asia … lots of people with severe mental health issues … really wacky Irish people … and I thought … oh my goodness this is the place for me (574-579)

She identified strongly with this group, populated by relative outsiders and separated from the dominant culture on one or more grounds of ethnicity, language, colour, (dis)ability, illness and economics. This linked back to the otherness of her childhood friends and the sickness, disability, mental health issues and learning difficulties that she saw around.

**Growth**

As a result of Mhairi’s weak sense of belongingness, it seems reasonable to suspect that she would seek to find this elsewhere.

**Going to the limit and beyond**

A clear pattern emerged in her work and travel. This was of going to new and unknown places, usually ill prepared. This triggered a reaction of initially feeling alone and vulnerable, seeking
out a minimal shelter, and formulating an action plan. Then she was happy to go exploring and make the place her own. This happened when she went to train as a nurse in Liverpool:

I didn’t actually know where Liverpool was until I got in the car. I knew it was in the north, so I knew I had to go up the M1 … but I got onto the M1 and I thought … Oh … I should have looked at the map

This pattern applied at different times in her life, including the move to Manchester and her first visit to India:

I went on a development day and you had to put a wish on a piece of paper … and I put … oh I wish to go to India … and my closest friend then said … well when are you going to buy the ticket so I borrowed somebody’s backpack … I booked the ticket but when I got on the plane from Amsterdam to Delhi I realised I was probably the only white person that I could actually see and I thought … oh my God what have I done all I’ve got is Alison’s backpack and a Lonely Planet … and I don’t even know where I’m going

She initially found a hotel room that was a place of safety and formulated a plan that she could stay there for the whole trip. Then she was able to move out and quickly felt at home. She has since returned many times. Her identification with the Indian sub-continent and its people is a very deep one that goes beyond tourism. She recounted hearing an Asian woman in a coffee shop in Manchester:

and I thought they sound like me … and I forget that I’m actually not Asian ‘cos I’ve spent so long in India … with Indian women in Manchester

This pattern was repeated in a trip to the desert, in which she was unprepared, unprotected and at the mercy of a local guide.

Ultimately India was not far enough for her. She had worked in Mongolia and talked about the possibility of a trip to Timbuktu – which must be symbolically the furthest place imaginable on earth:
I've got a yearning to go to Timbuktu ... and I'm sure it's that kind of thing about how far out can you go ... OK ... how much further is Timbuktu ... and ... partly I think ... how much further is Outer Mongolia ... well I've been there now (1330-1333)

This theme can also be seen in her sexuality. I was initially concerned about raising the topic and unsure whether it would be possible to consider it in cultural terms. However it seemed to work and provided another illustration of a more general pattern of thought and behaviour.

Mhairi was first attracted to a particular culture:

then I come to counselling ... and I had to do a (.) placement (.) and ... I started being a counsellor at xxxxxxxxx ... and there was this group of (.) outspoken women that knew about politics (847-851)

This related back to the sub-theme of speaking out considered later. It was also a time of personal growth:

at the same time as (.) becoming more and more aware through the counselling training ... through being a counsellor (856-857)

Ultimately she fell in love with a colleague. It was clear that she could see the cultural dimension to her sexuality and used the metaphor of a homecoming to describe it:

this is a kind of coming home place for me (.) that seemed very ordinary ... and again ... of course that is about more than who my partner is ... that is a cultural identity (861-863)

The desert and the holy temple

Two kinds of remoteness seemed to appeal to her. She characterised these as:

the desert and the holy temple (1090)

The desert was exemplified by the Thar (1435) or Gobi (1045) desert and the holy temple by the Golden Temple at Amritsar (1048). These probably represented places inside her or things that she sought to internalise:

I do think that culture is the Golden Temple thing (.) the excitement ... and the (.) sparkle (.) [that] I see (.) outside ... I just don't see that sparkle inside me (1309-1312)
This pessimistic thought is one that she has considered quite deeply:

I’m left with that (.) thing around ... am I empty (2) but then (1) maybe I need to reframe that in a more positive place about holding the bareness (.) that I’m all of it ... and the culture as well (1423-1426)

Her ideal life would be to spend six months of the year travelling and six months at home (1018). While I would not wish to pathologise this pattern of life, it seems to capture something fundamental about her split and the repetition compulsion described earlier (page 59).

**Speaking out and being understood**

The theme of speaking out and being understood emerges strongly and can be seen as a metaphor for lack of belonging. As a child she was neither able, nor I suspect, encouraged to speak out; and was often not taken seriously. She described an experience that occurred when her father died:

my Dad died and when I went into school to tell them (2) there was a particularly ruthless deputy head at the time ... and she said (.) that I was lying ... and I had made it up (441-443)

There must have been such incongruence between her shut off manner and the awful message she was trying to convey that she was not believed.

This continued into her adult life:

I wouldn’t go into a shop if I had to speak ... I obviously spoke in my job (1) but not if I didn’t have to (876-877)

A friend taught her to speak to people:
my friend Xxxx taught me how to speak ... we would go out into town and (. ) she would talk to people (. ) and she'd say OK (. ) it's your turn this time ... and I had to learn how to speak (886-891)

Two of her favourite songs were in languages that she could not understand:

I have a couple of music tracks that I love (. ) and one is (. ) in Gaelic (. ) and one is African in another language (1182-1186)

The incomprehensible nature of the songs seemed to be part of their attraction. Now she wishes to talk to people that she encounters in her work and travel in their native language.

She had taken lessons in Urdu, Mongolian and Mandarin. However, she realised that her Urdu was not particularly good and that she could never become Indian or Pakistani:

when I spoke (2) people (2) said they didn’t really understand me (804-805)

But this need to belong and to speak out and be understood continued to drive her:

I keep noticing that I can’t be any of these other people ... you know I can’t be Mongolian ... I can’t be Asian (. ) and yet part of that is in me ... you know I am part of these cultures ... in (2) some way (1454-1456)

It seems that culturally her whole life has been a search for a better place to belong where she would be accepted, listened to and understood. In this quest, she has been driven to travel greater distances and to approach or cross more radical boundaries geographically, racially and in terms of her sexuality. In the most extreme places of difference, she needed only a small token of familiarity and safety to relieve her anxiety.
Rachel – the girl in the corner

Objective account

Rachel was a fifty two year old female who was training as a counsellor. She was divorced with two children, a girl and a boy. She had grown up in a conventional middle class family in Birmingham, with her parents and two older brothers. Her extended family included a large network of relatives.

Her father and brother had both fought in World War Two, and her father had been a prisoner of war. When the war ended, he had wanted to stay in the army; but was not able to do this. Instead he went to university, retaining links to the army through the Territorial Army (TA). The family participated in a range of joint activities and attended the local Methodist church.

Rachel did well at school and succeeded at virtually everything, although she was never top of the class. Music, dancing and sport were a large part of her life. Her middle brother was academically gifted but troubled, and he was the focus of her parents’ attention.

When she left school she did not want to go to University, so she and a friend took what would now be called a ‘gap year’. They went to Switzerland for the winter, where she worked as a waitress. The year after she went to University to do American Studies, a four year course that included a year in the US. After University she went to London, where she trained as a teacher and taught for a few years.

Then she got a job teaching in Hiroshima in Japan for two and a half years; before travelling extensively to the United States, Korea and the Pacific. She visited Micronesia and Palau and...
observed the devastation caused by US atomic tests, and also spent some time in Tanzania in Africa. Eventually she returned to London, which was experiencing a boom in the financial sector. She managed a restaurant, but did not feel comfortable; so she went to Barcelona, where a friend from her Japanese time was living. There she married an Englishman from a Jewish background, and they had two children. After sixteen years, the marriage ended traumatically, and she moved back to the UK. She did this with reluctance, in the interest of her children.

Cultural account

Rachel’s dominant cultural influence was her white, middle class family. She was the youngest child by ten years and the only girl. She believed that the family was male dominated (35). The suburb of Birmingham in which she lived was exclusively white and there were racist attitudes in the family and wider society (44-45). The family participated in collective activities such as church (71) and theatre going (265-266; 272-273), rugby and tennis (72). There was a large extended family, composed of the siblings of her parents and their families; some of whom had returned from South Africa (62). This group spent a considerable amount of time together (67-68). There was a strong military influence through her father and older brother who had served in the army (19-21), and her father’s involvement with the TA (137-138). Rachel later found out that there were things going on in the family that were hidden or beneath the surface (29-30).

Rachel attended a private girl’s school, which was strongly competitive. She fitted in easily (210-212) and participated fully in the social and cultural life of the school (296-297). However, she went beyond this to seek out a more diverse group of friends (348-353). In her
gap year in Switzerland she experienced a wide variety of cultural influences and there were again suggestions of things going on beneath the appearance of politeness and affluence (499-506). At University, she experienced student culture and the cultures of the other students. Her course required her to spend a year in the United States, just before the Reagan administration; which exposed her to American culture and to the other students on exchange programmes. There was racial discrimination, which she found less insidious than at home (701-709). After University and teacher training, she taught in London, which was a cosmopolitan environment.

In Hiroshima there was the radically different experience of Japanese culture (754-781), and she was accorded special respect because of her position as a teacher (752-755). Yet there were similarities to England, which was another island nation (755-757) where saving face was important (813-817). Hiroshima has the unique symbolic significance of being the site of the first atomic bomb, and a reminder of the devastation produced. Again there was the idea of difficult truths beneath a manufactured history of lies (788-796). She visited the Peace museum, encountered survivors of the nuclear explosion and heard their stories first hand (786-788). In her subsequent travels, she was drawn to places of trouble such as Pacific Islands devastated by American nuclear tests (904-907).

When she returned to the UK, London was experiencing an unprecedented boom due to deregulation of the stock market and a high level of activity in the economy. This was the time of ‘champagne Charlies’ (970-976). She wanted to make documentary films but ended up managing a restaurant (619-620), which did not satisfy her need to help people (621-622). She found it unbearable and ‘escaped’ to Barcelona which seemed more authentic. This was on the turbulent cultural boundary between Spain and Catalonia. There was a rising tide of
Basque separatism, which intensified over her time there. Unlike most of her English friends she integrated with the local community, but knew she would never belong.

When her marriage collapsed, she returned to the UK. This was a place of safety, and support; but she did it with reluctance and felt no more at home in a white middle class part of the UK than before. She decided to train as a counsellor rather than take an ‘ordinary’ job (1204-1213). She felt that she could connect better with people who had experience of travelling or had led a nomadic life (1305-1315).

**Subjective account**

*Influence of the personal*

It is clear that the main influences on Rachel were her family and school. The family emerges as a sort of amorphous entity in which individual members were indistinct.

**Family**

In many ways Rachel was the quintessential middle class girl from a ‘good’ family:

*it was a very traditional (1) (. ) family with (1) church going (. ) everything was about rugby (1) tennis (70-72)*

However the closeness was not genuine:

*I think it was all show (264)*

There were secrets and things going on beneath the surface:

*but what I didn’t know at the time was all the other stuff that was going on (29-30)*

And there were strong feelings of antagonism:
this was a family that actually hated each other (69)

She felt a strong obligation to succeed:

I remember very well (.) being the little girl who was meant to perform (25)

And there was pressure to conform:

it was very much tuck yourself in there (.) I’ll call you out when … you can come out (26-28)

She found the racist attitudes that she encountered repugnant:

Birmingham being industrial (1) emm (1) it was very much part of my growing up … with … racist attitudes … feelings of superiority (44-46)

Her feelings towards the family were ambivalent:

there have been so many issues that I’ve gone through over the years … trying to work out myself (.) and that’s varied from (.) real hate … real resentment … a real love … all the way through to … it’s OK … you know … it is what it is (254-257)

While she could easily fit in, this made her uncomfortable:

I wasn’t allowed to say anything … and that caused me a lot of frustration … I wanted to live life to the full … and I remember feeling very trapped at times … which is probably where the rebellion came from (308-312)

But her rebellion was quite subtle and understated:

my rebellion was very soft (.) because my parents had suffered hugely (1) with (.) my older brother … and to a certain extent my younger brother (.) I’d lived through their rebellion and it was hideous … my parents never knew what I was up to … but I wasn’t doing anything particularly wrong (343-349)

Aspects of this family situation recreated themselves in her later life, for example when she worked in Switzerland, In Japan and tragically in her marriage.
Father

The household was male dominated:

my childhood was very male dominated (35)

Her father was the strongest influence:

[he] was very (.) aggressive [although] (. ) not physically (94)

And he was quite undemonstrative:

[he] never actually hugged me ‘til I was twenty one ... which I hadn’t realised was an odd thing (119-120)

He had served in the army during World War Two, had been a prisoner of war; and continued to serve as an officer in the TA (138):

he was a real army [man] (1) very self-important (121)

And the cultural influence of the army was strong:

the army was an incredible force that was always there ... and the War was continuous (.) and spoken about all the time (130-131)

Mother

Her mother, on the other hand, was:

very much the (. ) dutiful wife ... I think very passive aggressive ... she was a very bright lady (. ) but was stopped by my father (95-97)

Inevitably Rachel would have internalised some of this passive aggression. Her father’s control extended to relatively trivial issues such as whether her mother should sing in the church choir:

my dad went [to church] only if my mother promised not to sing in the choir which was her love (1) so you can imagine there were lots of things going on there (82-84)
And her mother never worked:

she could have worked ... but she was a stay at home mum ... I mean we’re talking about (.) the fifties and sixties (101-103)

**Brothers**

Rachel says very little about the brothers individually, and they did not emerge as distinct people. They were much older, and one was academically gifted; but problematic for her parents, and aggressive to her.

one of my brothers was incredibly bright ... he was (.) gifted (.) and everything revolved around him ... and this caused a lot of problems for everyone else (.) because I was the girl and younger ... I guess I perhaps missed out on that ... however (.5) he was very aggressive ... and (.) that I didn’t miss out on (30-35)

**Extended family**

There was also a close extended family, which seems to blur the distinction between her immediate family and society at large:

we spent a lot of time together ... and every Christmas (.) anything that was celebrated was very much centred in the family (67-69)

**School**

Rachel believed that school and the social life around it and outside were a significant influence:

school was a massive influence ... sport ... but also outside and socially ... that was a massive influence ... I had (.) a very wide social life ... I was out at the age of thirteen ... fourteen ... not doing anything ... but we always went to the pub ... we always went to the tennis club (.) it was a really middle class (2) you know ... middle to (2) perhaps further up (332-338)

The racism that she observed in her family was echoed at her school:
and of course the racism (2) so as I got older (2) I really didn’t deal with that very well ... and that was in my social set up (2) that was not OK (390-392)

Again she fitted in well and performed, but did not feel completely comfortable among her school friends.

**Belongingness**

This theme is at the heart of a subtle but profound split. On the one hand she belonged absolutely to her country, class and family:

> I am very English (945)

However she felt a deep sense of unease and alienation that made her uncomfortable in her home and later her home culture, motivating repeated attempts to escape:

> there was something that wasn’t right for me (338-339)

She visited remote and radically different places, but had the maturity to realise that this was not an answer:

> I realised I don’t need to be another bloody middle class white woman [In Tanzania] ... they’ve got enough (1289-1291)

Throughout her life, she sought difference; but was also aware of similarity. For example she says of Japan:

> of course this is another island mentality ... so there were lots of things in common with (. ) Britain (755-757)

When she returned to the UK after her travels, she did not feel at home in the ‘champagne Charlie’ lifestyle:

> I couldn’t fit into it ... it was very uncomfortable ... I knew I was meant to ... but I couldn’t ... it meant nothing ... I’ve come from all of this ... and here I am in London and you’re saying ... come on Rachel let’s go to the Champagne bar ... and I’m going ... what the ... so I was a fish out of water (973-977)
This motivated another ‘escape’:

so I went to Barcelona (1) ... and I just went for two or three months while the other
job was being sorted out ... and I stayed (2) ... I wasn’t incredibly happy to be in
Barcelona but there was a vibrancy there (985-987)

She eventually married an Englishman, with the token difference of being Jewish. It seemed to
make sense that she settled in Barcelona, which was sufficiently different from her English
roots, but not as radically different as Japan or Africa. However it was directly on top of a
major cultural fault line between Spain and Catalonia, and I would speculate that this played a
role in representing the split she felt inside.

Ultimately, when her marriage ended, she returned to the UK; where she received support
from her family. However this was with reluctance, and in the interest of her children:

it was purely for the children ... education wise they couldn’t get what they needed
... and they’re both (2) very very clever (1126-1128)

And again she was not comfortable:

I still live ... in a very [middle class area]... you know ... I mean Cheshire ... it’s just
smothering ... and it couldn’t be whiter (1141-1142)

My impression is that her home culture was so deeply internalised, that she had no need to
return physically. In Le Roy’s (2000) terms, it had been successfully introjected. But cultural
discomfort remained in the sense that she found white British culture and her place within it
unbearable, claustrophobic and hypocritical, just as she had found her home. In Winnicott’s
(2005 [1971]) terms both were objects of hatred as well as love.
**Growth**

Rachel’s cultural response to her disaffection with the family was to successively move out and away, and to be attracted to people that were either culturally different or more cosmopolitan. This process started at school, where she fitted in, but did not feel she belonged:

**but there was something that wasn’t right for me (338-339)**

As a result, she found a wider social group of friends:

**my friends were older … everyone came from different parts … and a mixture of different types of schools … some went to a private school (350-352)**

She chose her University course on the basis that it involved a year abroad:

**I got a letter through saying we’ve made it into a four year course and you’ll be going to America for a year … and that changed everything … it was always … always about getting out (572-574)**

In her time in the US she did not identify with the domestic culture and associated mainly with other European students:

**I felt more comfortable with the people (.) on the Erasmus programme (.) than actually with Americans (645-649)**

But she found racism in the US less repugnant than the version she had seen in the UK:

**so the racism that we think about in the States … and obviously I had learned about … was in a different … very different way (708-709)**

I find it significant that she chose, for her first overseas job, to work in Hiroshima; the place, above all, that is a symbol of devastation. Of course this could simply have been coincidence, but I suspect it was more than this. She chose to accept the offer, and stayed for three and a half years.
Thereafter she went travelling to other places that had known various types of devastation, such as the Pacific.

Going through Micronesia and to [Vanuatu] ... that was another (1) amazing experience of learning about the islands and the devastation that the Americans had caused to these populations (904-906)

She sought out people with similar experiences to her own:

I can be with ... people who have travelled ... or they've even been ex-pats abroad and they get it completely ... and it's comfortable ... because we know what we're talking about (1312-1315)

My sense is that she felt quite comfortable in her expatriate life in Barcelona, although she had:

never been particularly expatty (1067)

And unlike most other expatriates she had a wide range of friends and work colleagues:

it was very real ... you know ... it was something that touched the ground ... and (.) it was very important to me ... those sort of relationships (1093-1095)

Even though she knew that she would never really belong:

I knew (1) that I was never going to really (2) fit in ... I was never going to really belong ... and my family were not going to really (2) belong (1095-1097)

She was understandably uncomfortable about Basque separatism and its influence on the education of her children.

It seems to me that Rachel had greater cultural maturity than the other participants. She was not searching for a sense of belonging, since she already had this. However, she could not bear to be in her place of belonging, where she experienced claustrophobia and unease that
triggered an irresistible urge to escape. She was clearly happier as an expat, especially when she was in a place of conflict or unrest.
Erika – the cosmopolitan

Objective account

Erika was a thirty two year old, unmarried female postgraduate student who was training to be a therapist. She was an only child, born in Poland to a traditional Catholic family. When she was two, the family left Poland to escape the Communist regime, and seek a better life. They were given permission to visit friends in Italy, where they applied for political asylum. After a short time in a refugee camp, they moved out to live in a hotel, where her parents worked. After a year, they emigrated to Nova Scotia on the east coast of Canada.

On the flight, they met other Poles in a similar situation; which led to a number of strong friendships. A year later they moved to central Ontario, where there was a large Polish community and more plentiful employment. This was where Erika spent the formative years of her childhood, although they continued to move house on a regular basis. Eventually her parents decided to separate; and after they divorced, her mother remarried. Eventually her mother wanted to move again; and when Erika was fifteen, the new family moved to Vancouver in western Canada. Her father stayed in central Canada, where he remarried and was joined by relatives of his ex-wife from Poland. Her mother’s peripatetic lifestyle continued until she eventually found a place where she was happy, in a remote part of western Canada.

After school, Erika went to university in Canada, graduating at the age of twenty two. Then, after a crisis in her life, she studied for a Masters degree in the UK. Then she moved back to Canada, where she spent a year with her father; before volunteering for overseas work, and being sent to Africa. After this she travelled for a while, and eventually returned to the UK for further study. She regularly visited both parents in Canada; and her relatives in Poland, where she owned property.
Cultural account

Erika was born into a traditional Polish background, with the overlay of the totalitarian, communist regime from which her parents escaped. Poland had a long, rich and turbulent history. In his forward to ‘The essential guide to being Polish’ (Spysz & Turek, 2013) Lech Wałęsa suggests that the factor connecting and defining Poles is ‘the freedom gene’. The country was defined by its history of conquest and domination; and the struggle for freedom from these influences. It was partitioned multiple times and various parts were occupied, with the invasion by Germany in 1939 being the final trigger for World War Two. It is regarded as a beautiful country with a predominantly rural character at the heart of central Europe. In 966 Mieszko I introduced Christianity as a way of unifying the country, and Catholicism remains an essential element of being Polish that has resisted the onslaught of both Russian Orthodox and German Protestant rule (Spysz & Turek, 2013). The ethnic homogeneity of the country has much to do with World War Two and its aftermath.

Erika grew up in Canada, which is a new country with little history and few indigenous cultural influences (290-292). Much of the population were first or second generation immigrants (Canada, 2015) and it is clear that Erika’s parents were drawn to a network of ex-patriot Poles (75-78; 80-84). When she left Canada to study in the UK, she lived in quite diverse student, city communities. Then, to ‘experience a different way of life’ (542-543), she undertook voluntary work in Africa. This was the first time she had lived in a non-white culture, where she had been visibly different from those around (556-561).

Her first degree had been in a faculty of science (379). She chose to undertake her Masters in a faculty of arts (381-385) and is now merging these (385-387). During her adult life, a spiritual
dimension emerged (392-400; 447-456) that is not fully defined, but was distinct from her Catholic religious roots (463-470). This had become her most important way of connecting with people (397-420). She regarded it as something that was outside (395) or beyond (404) culture.

Subjective account

Influence of the personal

Mother / strong women

The strongest influence on Erika was her mother. However, there was little sense of her as a person and it was mainly her strength that emerged. It was she who decided to leave Poland:

my mom made the decision (. ) to leave Poland (29-30)

And it was she who made the arrangements, through a friend:

she (1) had another Polish friend that married an Italian (1) man and she moved to Italy (. ) if you had an invitation from someone outside of the country you could go and visit them (42-45)

After the risky journey to Italy the family emigrated to Canada, where they lived in Nova Scotia; then moved to Southern Ontario. However, even there, they did not have a settled life:

we tended to move (1) from like house to house to house … ‘cos my mom was always searching for (. ) her place that she wanted to settle down (132-133)

Eventually her parents divorced and her mother remarried. Then shortly after, they moved again:

she visited a friend of hers in Vancouver … British Columbia (. ) and thought OK I want to move there … so (. ) when I was fifteen … my mom my step dad and I moved to Vancouver (96-101)
A few years later, Erika left home to go to University; but her mother continued searching and eventually moved to a place where she was able to settle:

> it wasn’t until (. ) seven eight years ago that she finally found her place (. ) it’s kind of a small community (1) up north … and she’s … settled there (. ) she’s getting older now so she doesn’t want to move (132-138)

Erika acknowledged the influence of her mother:

> my mom took a lot of risks (. ) and [is] a very very strong woman (1) who’s gone through a lot in her life … so (. ) there’s a lot of influence (. ) from her (351-354)

And this pattern is generally true of the women in her family. Her grandmother and great grandmother were from the same mould, as evidenced by stories from World War Two (317-324):

> I kind of see that there’s a lot of resilience … especially the women in my family … at somehow ploughing through tough times and (. ) wanting things to be better and better for the next generation … and I think I’ve adopted a part of that in me (336-341)

**Father / dependent men**

Her Father was quite different:

> he’s been more passive in a lot of these things (. ) I think my dad is not as resilient (1) so he’s (1) kind of been influenced (1) a lot more by negative events (359-361)

And he was cared for by a series of women:

> my dad (2) has always (. ) been taken care of by other women in my family (. ) that includes his mother … that then included me after my parents divorced (364-367)

Again a pattern that was more generally true across the family:

> the men in my family seem to rely on the women to get through (362-363)
Peripatetic life

Over and above the major relocations between countries, Erika’s life had been spent moving from home to home and place to place:

my whole life (1) I’ve moved around so much (.) it’s been good in a lot of ways because I’m easily able to adapt to new environments (1) the downside has been that (1) I’m not rooted anywhere (138-141)

Her parent’s divorce and the relocation of her mother meant that her sense of belonging was divided:

approximately twelve years that I was (.) growing up in southern Ontario ... and then from the age of fifteen (2) I was in Vancouver British Columbia (1) and (2) that became kind of my other home (104-106)

This meant that the psychological split between her parents, was symbolised by a geographical split; echoing her already divided sense of belonging. At a practical level, there were three places and three groups of people that had a call on her. She accepted my suggestion that home contained the idea of movement (166).

Belongingness

Erika was not really a typical first generation immigrant. In terms of the work of Useem and Useem (Cockburn, 2002; Useem & Useem, 1967), she was more a third culture kid (TCK) who grew up outside her parents’ culture. She experienced Polish culture in the short but significant period up to the age of three; and then after a year in Italy emigrated to Canada, where she spent her childhood and adolescence in a succession of homes in three different parts of the country. When the political situation in Poland changed, she made trips back, and at a practical level had dual citizenship (784). She did not feel Canadian:
I kept thinking of myself as (1) a Polish woman who’s living in Canada ... and somehow I felt like I’m not really a hundred per cent Canadian because I grew up with Polish traditions in my home (176-178)

But neither was she Polish:

then when I would go to Poland (1) I would find that I’m actually very different from people that have lived ... their whole life [there] and I felt a lot more Canadian (179-181)

She acknowledges this dissonance:

I’m not a hundred per cent Canadian and I’m not a hundred per sent Polish (2) I’m kind of somewhere in between the two ... and then what does that mean (.) if I don’t belong to any particular country (181-184)

And even if she wanted to opt for one nationality or the other, the choice was not open to her:

when I say I’m Polish (1) people say yeah (.) there’s nothing Polish about you ... you don’t sound Polish in the way you talk (.) [and] if you met (.5) my Canadian friends (.5) you’d see that I’m actually not (.) really like them ... so ... I’m not one or the other (726-733)

This meant that her sense of belongingness could not be uniquely associated with a nationality or place:

it’s about (2) more of a feeling (.) that’s within me (1) and (.) it’s more about the people (2) people represent home to me rather than a particular location (1) (148-150)

However, she wished to retain contact with both cultures and already owned property in Poland:

I’ve got property in Poland (1) so (1) I want to hold onto that ... ‘cos that to me is really important (242-243)

She would also like to have a foothold or container in Canada:

I want to ... eventually ... buy a home in Canada (244)
And perhaps the UK:

and for me I kind of see ... three homes (1) in that way at least I can be a bit closer to my family as well (244-246)

She could then move between:

my ideal lifestyle would be to have more than one home and create a life where I can (2) spend a bit of time in Poland ... in Canada (1) and potentially I have the UK because I’ve (2) been here for (2) two years now and see myself staying (158-161)

For many people, this postmodern vision would not be an attractive prospect; and it depends on relative affluence and the technology of ubiquitous, affordable air travel.

Erika does not participate in political activity, because she sees this as something that divides people:

I’m not involved in politics (.). It goes back again (.). to my (1) desire to create unity ... so I tend to not get involved in things that separate and divide people (765-767)

**Personal relationships**

While the exploration of difference in her personal relationships is an aspect of her search for growth, she also seeks the belongingness of relating to people that are similarly conflicted:

I tend to also be quite attracted to people who (2) are also (2) from a different background (.5) who have emigrated (1) to a different country (1) because in that way they’re also in between two cultures (1) so (1) we’re sharing that ... in that we both (1) have the influence of two cultures (2) on our own identity (850-854)

Her musical tastes are international and for reasons of language she prefers English or American books and movies to Polish.


**Growth**

Erika was culturally conflicted, both unwilling and unable to choose between the options that were available to her. She felt neither truly Polish nor truly Canadian, yet wished to keep in contact with both. This echoed an impossible choice between parents. However life demanded a practical and cultural solution. One trigger for this was a ‘crisis’ that she does not elaborate:

> it emerged from a crisis (1) where (2) everything broke down in my life when I was twenty one (447-448)

Her solution was to move to UK to study for her Masters. Moving could be regarded as a repetition of the preferred defence learned in her childhood. However, in this context, the UK was also a neutral place that was physically and culturally between her two homes. Practical factors, such as language, undoubtedly played a part; but it can also be seen as a constructive attempt to find a solution to a cultural problem. In this neutral place she probably felt freer to be partly Polish and partly Canadian; rather than un-Polish in Poland and un-Canadian in Canada.

After completing her Masters she returned to Canada to stay with her father for a while, and then made a significant personal and cultural choice to seek voluntary work overseas. She was looking for something new and different:

> I wanted to experience a different way of life (542-543)

She thought of going to South America or Africa, and was offered Africa; which was a good experience.

> it was definitely (1) better than what I expected (.1) and I take that with me ... and it’s made me even more open (.5) to diversity and difference than I was before (553-555)
Now, more clearly than ever before, the difference she felt on the inside was visibly reflected on the outside:

in Xxxxxx [my difference] was physically visible for the first time (1) and that was something I hadn’t experienced before ... because I’d literally have ... little African kids running after me pointing ... shouting mzungu mzungu ... which is like white person (570-573)

Eventually she returned to the neutral environment of the UK for further study, where her research relates to cultural difference. She already works with cultural difference in her practice and plans to build this into a business:

I work with international students ... and some of them (1) have a difficult time adapting to the culture here ... they can’t seem to (.5) understand (.5) why people are the way they are (655-657)

Although the acculturative stress of growing up in a third culture is significant, the Useem and Useem (Cockburn, 2002; Useem & Useem, 1967) also focus on its creative potential, and it seemed to me that Erika was attempting to make the most of her cultural experience and to employ it constructively in her private life:

it’s helped me to create more understanding (3) in my own family (.) about (.) diversity and difference (784-786)

And also in her work

I just think that your own personal experiences are your biggest strength ... and I think it’s great when you can use that (1) in the work that you do rather than ... separating your personal experiences (.) I’m quite happy that I can ... draw on that and ... use [it] as something that is helping other people (805-812)

**Spirituality**

One way in which she does this is through her spiritual beliefs. While this is about more than culture, it seems to me that there is a cultural dimension. She does not elaborate on these beliefs, and culturally it was not necessary to know.
there’s been a … kind of … a separate stream of my own development … [a] kind of (.) spiritual growth that I’ve experienced … that has taken me outside of culture (1) to my own identity … that isn’t necessarily influenced by culture … so if I connect with someone who’s from a very different culture from me … but they also share the same spiritual beliefs as I do … I connect with them very very deeply … very easily … more so than someone from my own culture (392-400)

In terms of the definitions that I have adopted, this is not outside culture, but merely another dimension. I take Dalal’s (1993a) view that nothing is outside culture and that, whatever its nature, this is another overlapping layer that meets my basic criteria for a dimension of culture. It is associated with a group of people, a sense of belongingness and a basis for relating.

**Cosmopolitanism**

Another area in which she seeks out belongingness is in the idea of cosmopolitanism:

> I’m from planet Earth (.) that’s somehow how I see myself … as being (1) a more global citizen rather than being (.5) from a country (709-712)

This constitutes a form of belongingness that is an increasingly recognised phenomenon (Amit & Rapport, 2012; Featherstone, 1990b; Werbner, 2008b). It also meets the criteria for a dimension of culture and one that is more than a catch all, default or outsider category.

**Relationships**

Erika acknowledges her personal attraction to the culturally different.

> I’ve definitely (1) emm … experienced (1) that closeness … that intimate connection with a different culture through (1) having a very personal relationship with someone from (1) from that culture (842-845)

In conclusion it seems to me that Erica has chosen to live in a culturally intermediate and liminal region and to build her cultural life on the dimensions of cosmopolitanism and
spirituality. Although there may be a degree of avoidance in her approach, she is attempting to live constructively and creatively in the inevitable emptiness of liminality, her desire to help demonstrates a degree of altruism that is beyond a defence (Freud, 1966 [1923]) or a displacement activity.
DISCUSSION

For even if it should appear that the universe of idea cannot be deduced from experience by logical means, but is, in a sense, a creation of the human mind, without which no science is possible, nevertheless this universe of ideas is just as little independent of the nature of our experiences as clothes are of the form of the human body.

(Einstein, 1923: 2-3)

In this chapter I am going to look at research questions one and two. I will then draw out common threads, look at research question three, and consider the underlying theoretical aspects of the study. Finally I will consider validity and reflexivity. To soften the forensic focus on individual participants, I have organised the discussion under the headings of the research question.

The approach is phenomenological and hermeneutic; and the hermeneutic aspect is defined by the subjectivity of the researcher, and the epistemological stance taken. It will be clear that the answers given are personal answers, influenced by my own therapeutic orientation and the way in which I have applied it to the research data. I do not wish to fall into the trap identified by McLeod (2001, 2010) of arguing that this is truth. I can only hope, as the researcher, that the answers I have found as a proto-metacultural therapist are convincing and that others who adopt a similar epistemology would find answers that are similar, or if different then equally compelling. The validity of this assumption is based on my belief that, in the context of appropriate reflexivity and imperfect bracketing and in the full Winnicottian (1965 [1960]) sense of the words, readers will find the approach ‘good enough’.

How do background and cultural roots influence cultural identity?

Clara’s cultural identity was influenced by the cultural and personal split within her own family; personal influences from her father and mother; seductive foreign cultures that she could not
join; frequent relocations that periodically robbed her of the sense of belonging; and the bland chauvinistic, racist, but safe army life that she could not escape. There was the almost penal regime of her boarding school and the cruel separation from both her family and the wider community. One positive, but temporary, factor was a black nanny who combined care and safety with the exotic and seductive foreignness that was otherwise denied to her. It seems to me that she introjected or incorporated (Le Roy, 2000) each of these elements and used them to build a personal culture that defined her cultural identity and sought to redeem the split and homeless nature of her childhood.

Mhairi’s main cultural influences were her Scottish roots and the sense of being an outsider who talked differently from the people around. This served to isolate her from other cultural influences. Her childhood friendships were with other outsiders, either in terms of their national or ethnic roots or because of illness, disability or learning difficulties. She took these cultural influences into adulthood: especially identification with outsiders who were foreign, ill, or had educational or mental health issues; and the need to move out, speak out and be understood. These became defining characteristics of her personal culture.

Rachel’s cultural roots were her stable, middle class, suburban childhood in the Midlands of England. There was also a strong influence from the army and World War Two, through her father and older brother. However, beneath the respectability and the meticulous attention that her family paid to appearances, were difficult issues. She always felt that things were going on beneath the surface, and there was something claustrophobic or unbearable in the family injunction to perform and conform. Her family situation was supported by the influence of her private school, where she fitted in but was not completely comfortable. And in Le Roy’s (2000) terms these personal dynamics were introjected rather that incorporated.
earliest times, she was motivated to seek out diversity. This was not as an alternative to, or a replacement for her strong sense of identity. It was simply a place in which she could feel less impinged upon; in which she could be herself; and in which she could meet other similarly minded people. In this way her personal culture was as an insider who chose to live outside.

Erika was quite different from Rachel in that she had no certainly about her sense of personal or national belonging. She was born in Poland, moved to Canada via Italy, then periodically relocated and moved house within Canada. She felt neither Polish nor Canadian, which was reinforced by the reaction she received from friends and family. This cultural split was echoed by the split between her parents that was ultimately represented by their geographical separation. Her time in Africa exposed her to real cultural difference and her two spells in the UK seemed like a neutral place that was between cultures. Whether as a direct result of this, or for other reasons; she chose not to root herself in either of her cultures of belonging and to adopt a personal culture that was between, rooted in cosmopolitanism and spirituality.

I can identify with each of these stories. As an only child, I understand the isolation experienced by Clara; while aspects of my background resonate with the alienation and exclusion felt by Mhairi. I can also relate to the sense of belonging felt by Rachel, and the sense of not belonging felt by Erika; as well as the need felt by both to leave. Each chose to emphasise some aspect of their background in the cultural manner they have lived out their lives, but each seemed natural, coherent and authentic.

**What is the significance of cultural identity in life?**

Clara’s cultural identity led her to seek out difference but to retain the bland services environment as a place of safety to which she could retreat when anxious, unhappy or lonely.
As life progressed she created her own physical and psychological place of safety in a home environment that encapsulated the forces environment, disrupted cultural identities, and the appeal of foreignness symbolised by the colour black. She made considerable progress in integrating these influences in a positive manner, but the underlying conflict remained. Her travel can be regarded both as a constructive search for ‘richness’ and an acting out of the split – an adult version of Freud’s ‘fort da’ game (page 59).

Mhairi went on to engage her identification with outsiders in her work as a nurse and counsellor. Although not strictly entitled to claim Scottish nationality; there were no barriers, such as colour or language to her appropriation of this identity. There was a strong link to the ruined croft that was the family home of her mother, and it was clear that she entertained a fantasy of ‘returning’. This had encouraged her to move to Scotland, where she led a comfortable life in close proximity to her maternal aunt. Yet she had no friends in Scotland and saw it as a base for her travels to England and further afield. She was in a long term lesbian relationship with a black woman of mixed heritage, who also had links with Scotland. This relationship combined many elements of her definition of ‘otherness’ and it can also be seen culturally as an attempt to gain access to difference and to positive cultural resources. The metaphors of speaking out and being understood were extremely powerful and recurred throughout her life in different forms, motivating her to approach or seek to join social and ethnic groups, and to learn languages. The idea of a minimal place of safety and a rudimentary contingency plan were also deeply ingrained. She continued to seek out difference, in many forms; and to approach and attempt to assimilate that difference. The motivation to travel to increasingly remote places in search of the ‘riches of the temple’ and the ‘emptiness of the desert’ can be seen as elements of an existential need to belong that can never be fully satisfied and symbols of herself as she was or would like to be.
Rachel moved quickly towards the margins where she felt more at ease. In her early life, there are many examples of measured rebellion. In her family, she rebelled silently. At school, she got good grades; but was never top, which she could probably have done if she had wanted. She had a wide circle of friends, but not from her school. They were generally older and more socially and culturally mixed. There was a constant sense of moving away to find something that was more honest and natural. There is evidence of attraction to boundaries; to places of deep conflict, or where profound traumatic events had taken place. Yet, culturally she knew exactly who she was with such confidence that she did not feel the need to return to her roots. These were deeply internalised and she could take them with her. When she did physically return, it was with reluctance and for the benefit of some greater good. I see her peripatetic lifestyle, which eventually led to Barcelona, as an escape rather than a search. These places of marginality were ones in which she could meet likeminded people and I think that proximity to destruction or violent underlying conflict represented something important for her. Her desire to expose, understand and help seemed completely honest, genuine and sincere. This was seen in her choice of a first career as a teacher, in her desire to make documentaries when she returned from her travels; by the dissatisfaction that she found in running a restaurant, and in her decision to train as a counsellor. However, there could also be an element of acting out of her need to expose the hypocrisy of her family, to understand it and ultimately make it better; particularly when this was so cruelly recreated in her adult life. I do not wish to suggest anything pathological, although the unconscious nature of the underlying motivation removes an element of choice. It also opens up the large and complex debate about the nature of altruism (Dovidio & Penner, 2001) and the extent to which it can ever be genuine rather than beneficial (Wilson, 2004); evolutionarily adaptive (McAndrew, 2002; Nowak & Sigmund, 2005); an unconscious defence (Freud, 1966 [1923]); or a displacement activity (Kriegman, 1990). I incline to the view that real altruism is possible, which has received some support in recent years (Batson, 2012). In any event it could provide potential material for therapy.
Erika’s attempts to belong are certainly not fraudulent, but she was denied both the nationality of her birth and that of the country in which she was brought up. Legally she had dual nationality, but neither of these felt authentic. It seems to me that she attempted to create her own sense of belonging in a number of ways. I have identified at least seven from the transcript. Firstly she subjected herself to environments in which she was visibly foreign. Here at least there was some clarity. Secondly she moved to a neutral, English speaking country that was both physically and culturally intermediate between her two natural ‘homes’. Thirdly she owned property in Poland and would like to have a place in Canada to maintain links to both branches of her belonging. Fourthly she was drawn to work with foreigners, with whom she felt an affinity. Fifthly she built a sense of belonging through spiritual beliefs that formed a basis for relating to others. Sixthly, she regarded herself as a cosmopolitan or citizen of the world. Seventhly, she could see herself forming a relationship with another ‘foreigner’, perhaps also someone that had a similarly conflicted cultural history. All of these were, I believe, at least partly consequences of her conflicted personal culture; and in terms of a human life and the decisions made, they are all extremely significant. Useem and Useem (Cockburn, 2002; Useem & Useem, 1967), would classify Erika is an Adult third culture kid (ATCK). Their focus on the creative potential of diversity fits well with Erika’s life and it seemed to me that she was attempting to realise this potential, although she did not find it easy.

Again I feel a sense of identification with the ways in which the four participants have shaped their lives. In various ways they have defined a place of belongingness; a home to which cultural artefacts are taken; a minimal but empty place of safety for periodic return; a place that needs to exist, but to which return was not required or wanted; or a place between that allows a partial sense of belonging to two places that can be visited, but in which a more
international and spiritual sense of belonging could be developed and nurtured. The participants all showed altruism, which was not surprising in people that have chosen counselling or psychotherapy as a career, and whatever the explanation for this (see above), it also seems genuine and authentic.

General discussion

I think all participants provided clear, personal answers to research questions one and two. I am now going to look across the participants, within the superordinate metacultural themes of belongingness and growth. These themes emerged most strongly from the analysis, and can be rooted in Winnicott’s location of culture (page 57), theories of child development due to Winnicott, Freud and Bowlby (page 59) and the theory of suture developed by Hall (page 72). This is consistent with the description of culture provided by the psychological anthropologists Ewing (page 44) and Stewart (page 46). It is also a metacultural approach, which means that it addresses the generality of culture (page 25) and although it is not possible, on the basis of four case studies featuring females from the West, to draw universal conclusions, there are suggestions of something more general.

Belongingness

It seems to me that culture provides a symbolic sense of safety that can also be real. It is reasonable to suspect that this is an evolutionarily adaptive trait that had a significant influence on the chances of survival in primitive environments. This is clear in the superordinate metacultural theme of belongingness. It is ‘place’ to go in times of danger, anxiety or loneliness. Clara had some sense of her Britishness, but this was contained within the dull but safe cultural wrapper of the British army, and there was the somewhat similar institution of the boarding school that provided bleak but safe containment. The army
environment provided a place of sanctuary, potential friends and a strategy for dealing with her moves to Lincolnshire then Bedfordshire. Mhairi was brought up to believe that Scotland was her cultural home. Despite her place of birth, she was made to feel an outsider in the South of England and spoke differently from those around her. She associated with or sought out people who were also different by nationality, mental health issues or learning difficulties. It is not surprising that she now lives in Scotland near to the maternal figure of her aunt, however, personally and culturally Scotland was a safe but empty container in which she had no friends. Rachel was always clear about who she was and where she belonged, although she was never comfortable or happy in this environment. As a result she had no need for physical presence in her place of cultural belonging, and viewed return as undesirable. Erika had no experience of a secure sense of cultural belonging, and her personal background lacked ongoing insecurity. It is understandable that she chose to base herself in a country that was convenient, neutral and intermediate; and to seek belongingness in the ideas of cosmopolitanism (page 69) and her spiritual beliefs. She had chosen to work with other foreigners and related better to people who had foreign, conflicted or split origins.

I think it would be wrong to suggest that a stable, mature sense of belonging can be equated to happiness or contentment. However, there is evidence from the study that it can be a source of strength and resilience (Aldwin, 2007; Aldwin & Gilmer, 2013; Aldwin et al., 2007; Lazarus, 1985, 1999). All participants had somewhere to belong – even if it was split, insubstantial or something of a fantasy. These are examples of what Belsey (2002: 64) calls ‘the longing to belong’. I also think there is considerable merit in the idea of the creative potential of diversity. In my Masters dissertation (2007), I speculated on the existence of culture borne illness and culturally specific coping mechanisms, without reaching a conclusion. Perhaps culture is a repository for the dis-ease inherent in the human condition, the anthropathology described by Feltham (2009); and it may also be the means used to express it – which is an
idea to which I will return. Anderson (2006), provides a starting point for a postmodern understanding of nations as ‘imagined communities’, which may also be imaginary communities (Rushdie, 1992), shaped by history, politics and historical processes such as colonisation, slavery and global migration in the postcolonial era (Bhabha, 1994). In certain areas, religion and religious difference intervene – most especially, but not exclusively Judaism and Islam, to drive quests for religious homelands, supported by transnational diasporas (Werbner, 2002). The interrelationship of the issues of nationality and religion is illustrated by the example of Muslim identity in the post 9/11 world (Ewing, 2008). For example, research has shown that Asian Muslims in Britain, who would previously have declared their nationality in terms of a single or hyphenated country, such as Pakistani-Scottish (Modood, Beishon, & Virdee, 1994), now increasingly include Muslim (Hopkins, 2007; Saeed, Blain, & Forbes, 1999; Werbner, 2002). This resonates with the attitude of Freud to his own Jewish identity. In 1926, he told an interviewer:

My language is German. My culture, my attainments are German. I considered myself German intellectually, until I noticed the growth of anti-Semitic prejudice in Germany and German Austria. Since that time, I prefer to call myself a Jew.

(Gay, 1988: 448)

**Growth**

The idea of belongingness seems warm and comfortable; but as Winnicott (2005 [1971]: 14) states ‘incomplete adaption to need makes objects real, that is to say hated as well as loved’. It seems reasonable that the symbolic place of cultural belonging will be associated with negative as well as positive feelings that will trigger a wish to escape, which may be enacted or acted out in life. Even if there is optimal attunement (Winnicott, 1960), and the feeling towards the place of cultural belonging is broadly positive; the process of growth and separation will still operate, and there will be a normal healthy desire to move outside or
beyond. I previously referred to Freud’s (1917 [1915]) idea that non-human objects stand in for human objects (page 56); which suggests that different attachment styles may apply to cultural attachments and that these may become incorporated into working models (Holmes, 2001) and become part of a personal culture.

For Clara, the forces culture must have been an empty and unsatisfying environment; and understandably one she moved beyond. The black nanny was an object of maternal desire that promised to meet her needs, yet even when this was symbolically achieved through her marriage, she was left with a racial conundrum that provided ongoing reminders of something unresolved. She continued to travel in the search for ‘richness’, and brought artefacts back to fill her home. There seems to be a mixture of security and insecurity in her cultural attachment style and a combination of acting out and healthy growth; which are never, in my experience, completely separable. For Mhairi, growth was symbolised by the need to speak out and be understood and by the search for the ‘emptiness of the desert’ and the ‘richness of the temple’. On her first trip to India it was important to have the minimal safety of a hotel room and the plan of staying there for the whole holiday. From there she could move out to explore; and once established, she relaxed and did not return. However, nowhere on earth was far enough and she had to live with the disappointment that she could never find her ultimate place of belonging. Even if she attempted to learn the language, she could not speak like a native or even be understood. However, travel and the attraction of the exotic gave her life meaning, even if it this did not lead to lasting satisfaction. It seems to me that her cultural attachment style was ambivalent. Rachel illustrated the combination of hatred and love for her cultural home. This drove her to leave and made her reluctant to return. In her travels she was drawn to places of conflict that had deep cultural injuries or splits. She wanted to bear witness to these, perhaps out of some displaced wish to heal the conflict in her own family. She exhibited a greater level of cultural maturity than the other participants, although her
cultural attachment style was avoidant. There seemed to be nothing specific that she was seeking and her motivation was to feel comfortable outside her deeply internalised and fully introjected place of belonging. Erika’s cultural attachment style towards each of her places of partial belonging was ambivalent. She wanted to maintain links to and have homes in both, but could not bear to choose either. As a result, it makes sense that she moved to a neutral place; where her position as an outsider was clear and where she could build her own cosmopolitan, spiritual culture among people who were also foreigners or had a similarly conflicted sense of belonging. Her journey was both physical and spiritual and it seemed to me that it was creative and positive rather than simple avoidance.

Overall the word growth has a positive connotation, and I am not sure that the underlying essence of the cultural growth that I found was quite so benign. I do not wish to pathologise the participants, and I will not hold up to scrutiny individual examples, however I think there were frequently elements of acting out or examples of repetition compulsion. However, this almost certainly demonstrates a search for a solution; it may be an attempt to resolve trauma from the past or to right some wrong. The metaphorical revisiting of these situations has therapeutic potential (Grove & Panzer, 1991), and acting out introduces the possibility of interpretation and insight that can transform the acting out into working through (Sandler et al., 1992). Most of the wrongs took place in the past and there was no possibility of undoing them. In any event, I would speculate that people can derive pleasure, satisfaction and meaning from cultural activity, such as the observance of religious, national or family rituals; travel; or befriending the culturally different etc.. These provide aesthetic or practical choices that are as valid as any others; and the significance for the study, as well as the potential in therapy is to simply note and tentatively interpret the choices made, rather than any form of judgement.
What is the therapeutic potential of culture?

The motivation for the study was the significance of culture to therapy. This is addressed by the third research question, which in IPA (Smith et al., 2009) would be considered a secondary, or theory driven question. As a therapist I deal with people for whom the individual and social are virtually inseparable. I am going to look at the way in which the idea of culture as a resource enlightens or extends the idea of therapy and then more specific implications for psychodynamic, humanistic and cognitive-behavioural approaches.

General implications for therapy

I have always found the concept of cultural matching overly simplistic, arbitrary and presumptuous. While it may be sensible to offer the client options and it is clear that in certain cases specific cultural differences may create an overwhelming obstacle to the process of therapy. However, the field of cultural difference is so infinitely complex, multi-dimensional and situational that matching is ultimately impossible and specific differences that initially appear problematic may ultimately be helpful in addressing the presenting problem. This is not to suggest that cultural differences should be ignored or that inappropriate, arbitrary or autocratic pairings should be made between client and therapist. The study illuminates this issue and raises the question of the meaning that should be attached to the personal culture of the client and to the cultural similarities and differences between therapist and client. As previously noted, the approach taken by Foulksian group analysis provides a positive model. Here cultural diversity is treated as a strength (Le Roy, 1987), while minimising instances of cultural singletons, in order to avoid isolation and scapegoating (Behr & Hearst, 2005). These principles are less directly applicable to individual therapy; which underlines the fact that the group is a particularly effective medium in which to address cultural difference, and the issues that arise from it.
There is good reason to believe that culture is therapeutically significant in healing (Alarcón, Frank, & Frank, 2012; Eleftheriadou, 2010; Frank & Frank, 1991). It is one way in which clients tell their story - in psychoanalytically oriented therapy it provides material for interpretation, and in person-centred therapy it provides new levels of meaning to each of the core conditions. It can allow clients to communicate deep issues, while concealing traumatic, painful or shameful details that they do not wish, at the time, to disclose; and it allows them to act out or work through scenes from the past metaphorically, in search of more positive outcomes. While it may also be used defensively, I believe that the recognition or careful interpretation of this behaviour can be diagnostically and therapeutically significant.

It is widely accepted that many types of trauma become symbolised in metaphors that are either universally human or culturally specific (Wilson & Lindy, 2013). Here we are concerned with the cultural aspects, and the way in which the cultural may be engaged in working with clients. Metaphor therapy is already an acknowledged approach to the resolution of traumatic memories (Grove & Panzer, 1991) and many practitioners believe that metaphors can be mutative (Cox & Theilgaard, 1987).

The participants showed me that the lens of culture can be diagnostic. However I think this can only work effectively if a wide view is taken, rather than a reductionist approach based on specific arbitrary dimensions. It is already my practice to observe carefully the cultural roots, life history, occupation, relationships and family circumstances of my clients and I think that the experience of the study has encouraged me to have more confidence in this, and to think
more critically about whether and when it might be helpful to interpret or introduce it as a topic. I am now going to look briefly at the main schools of counselling and psychotherapy.

**Psychodynamic therapies**

Given the psychoanalytic orientation of the study, it is most easy to understand the therapeutic potential in psychoanalytically oriented therapy. In this connection, the study is concerned with opening up a field of creative transference and interpretation or in Winnicott’s (2005 [1971]) terms a field for ‘play’.

I take the psychoanalytic position that few things are completely random, although unquestionably some are. As Lacan points out, interpretation is an ongoing and unending process in the mind of the analyst (Gabbard, Litowitz, & Williams, 2012). This can only be communicated through actions or symbols, or the withholding of these; and nothing is ever all one thing or another. This is a world of tentative, partial and conflicting truths; which will be all too familiar to therapists of this orientation. I do not believe that there is anything new about interpreting culture and most psychoanalytically oriented practitioners will already do it to some extent. However, I am not sure whether or how they would identify or interpret a link between the personal and the social and I hope that one contribution of the study is to emphasise the metaphorical and metonymic links between personal and social through the mechanism of suture.

For example, I do not believe that Rachel’s decisions to leave home; to travel to devastated places, and to live on the fault lines of deep cultural divisions was purely random. I think that they were an acting out, or attempt to work through and redeem her own sense of internal devastation. However, I am not sure of the extent or manner in which I would systematically
interpret this opinion, especially in the early stages of therapy. This is a difficult hypothetical question, because Rachel was not in therapy and there was no therapeutic contract or agreed objective. However, the cultural material she presented provided an aid to deeper and quicker understanding of her as a client; and in describing and thinking about her life there was a sense of working with deeper material that could, in itself, be therapeutic (Grove & Panzer, 1991).

I recently watched Emilio Estevez’ (2011) film The way, which depicts a grieving father who undertakes a pilgrimage on the Camino de Santiago in memory of his son. I was struck by the contrast with Chaucer’s Canterbury tales. In Chaucer, characters identified by individual or job titles and brief biographies, tell stories that would have been of great interest to psychoanalytic therapists of the time; as they have been to generations of psychoanalytically oriented practitioners of literary criticism (e.g. Patterson, 2007; Pearsall, 1985). It occurred to me that in the more saturated and less structured postmodern environment, storytelling of the type found in the Canterbury tales has become less common and people have themselves become the stories. If this has some truth, it makes sense that the interpretation of cultural identities is of interest and significance.

Winnicott’s approach links into idea of therapy as a third space (Moodley, 2007, 2009) in which the multicultural matrices of both the client and therapist are explored. In this context it becomes an intersubjective version of Winnicott’s transitional space, within which the creative potential of both client and therapist are engaged, or as Winnicott (2005 [1971]) described it, two people playing together. In addition the possibility that cultural identity comes to stand in for deeper personal issues suggests that culture provides a more accessible and less emotional
way of talking about deeper issues, which is supported by the manner in which I quickly found out a considerable amount about the participants by investigating their cultural identities.

**Humanistic therapies**

Taking a humanistic view: empathy and congruence are two of the necessary and sufficient conditions for therapeutic personality change (Rogers, 1992). I would suggest that this requires the therapist to strive to understand the culture of both the client and him- or her-self in the encounter, not as fixed stereotypical categories but as living beings engaged in a joint process (e.g. Christopher, 2001; Christopher & Smith, 2006).

Although less direct, I believe that the study has considerable potential for humanistic approaches to therapy, including person-centred and existential. One of the processes of coming together in the field of therapy is around the ideas of phenomenology and to some extent existentialism. Differences remain, but even the most classic person-centred practitioner would take little exception to the intersubjective psychoanalytic approach of Attwood and Stolorow (1984; 1987). I think the approach taken in the study has the potential to enhance the process of an authentic encounter between two people. It is unreasonable to expect therapist or client to set aside the visible markers of culture such as colour or accent; but the message of the study is to acknowledge difference and the stereotypes that attach to it, without making assumptions or giving them undue meaning. These assumptions can only get in the way of the ability to be truly present and to provide the therapeutic conditions.

I also wonder if there is unexploited mileage in the idea of encounter groups. It is one of the topics that Rodgers (1980) identified in looking back at his career. As previously noted groups may be a particularly effective medium within which to work with cultural issues, and I would
speculate that this applies to groups that work at an experiential level, without access to more psychoanalytically oriented interpretation.

**Cognitive-behavioural (or cognitive and behavioural) therapies**

The relevance of the study to cognitive-behavioural therapies is less obvious but nevertheless important. However, there are definitional difficulties around what constitutes the cognitive-behavioural. There is a considerable gap between the therapies defined in some of the ‘standard’ handbooks (e.g. Dobson, 2001) and other third wave approaches like mindfulness (Segal, Williams, & Teasdale, 2013), ACT (Flaxman, Blackledge, & Bond, 2011; Hayes, Strosahl, & Wilson, 1999), and compassion focused therapy (Gilbert, 2009, 2010); or older approaches like personal construct therapy (Fransella & Dalton, 2000) and its modern incarnation in constructivist psychotherapy (Neimeyer, 2009). These are frequently included as a consequence of their concern with cognition, or because they were developed by practitioners from the more conventional world of CBT. In one sense, the cognitive-behavioural can be seen as a narrow focus on thought, and to a lesser extent behaviour, that minimises the influence of the past and, for this reason, would appear to minimise the significance of culture. However, it can be very much more than this, and even if the past is left outside the therapy room, it is where the attitudes and cognitions that are brought in were formed.

The nomothetic nature of both cognitive psychology and CBT are at odds with the idiographic nature of this study. While there is nothing inherently un-cultural about an empirical approach, the concept of therapy as a standardised treatment that is frequently delivered in the context of a medical model means that the cultural focus is on how to adapt the therapy to a defined cultural group, rather than how to work with a specific encultured client. And the
concept of engaging cultural resources in the process of therapy is not something that fits an approach based on teaching.

On the other hand CBT has an idiographic side, focusing on specific maladaptive cognitions or self-destructive behaviours and it is in the particularity of the encounter between therapist and client and the individuality of the material brought that the study can shed light.

It remains valid to think about the way in which a therapist can understand and work with the cultural individuality of a client and the cultural differences between client and therapist. The study invites an examination of the client’s cultural cognitions about their own cultural background and about that of others. To the extent that these are related to the issues that bring the client into therapy, they can be challenged using Socratic questioning and more adaptive alternatives sought. The study also makes it easier and more legitimate to think about cultural stereotypes; to adapt the therapy to these; to challenge their legitimacy, where they are unhelpful or maladaptive; or to look at the limitations they impose. Where the approach admits some concept of transference the study enlarges the opportunity of looking at the cultural differences between therapist and client, or between the client and others. If the therapist is for example older, ethnically different, from a different country of origin or a different gender then the cognitions that attach to this can be thought about, and areas of significance in which these are especially relevant or significant can be identified. If a client feels that he or she is experiencing discrimination then it is legitimate to look at the reality of this and to question those areas in which the evidence is patchy or contradictory. The study also obliges therapists to look critically at their own cultural background and the distortions and pre-conceptions that they bring into the room. Otherwise they have no right to challenge the client’s cognitions as maladaptive. It obliges them to look at the cultural conventions that are inherent in the cultural establishment of the UK; in the profession to which they belong; and, if applicable, in the service where they work. It poses the question of the ways in which
this may be helpful or unhelpful in the case of a specific client and challenges the practice of regarding the client as the sole titleholder of difference, in the manner illustrated by a number of the references (Helms & Cook, 1999; Sue & Sue, 1990).

Other approaches

It is not possible to look at all approaches to therapy. However it seems to me that it is relevant to any approach that is concerned with working in an individual manner with clients, especially where attention is paid to fantasy or creativity. As previously noted, it can provide approaches to working with and working through traumas – in the same way as any metaphorical construction (Grove & Panzer, 1991; Wilson & Lindy, 2013).

Theoretical discussion

My starting point for the study was that, under the influence of personal background, life events and cultural factors; individuals form, evolve and re-form a personal culture out of the resources to which they have access or can acquire. This lifelong work of creation is a set of preferred cultural identities that have a profound influence on the progress of life. In the manner outlined by McLeod (2010), this encapsulates the theory that I sought to investigate and that the study has helped me to develop, shape and embroider. In the following subsections, I will discuss my reflections on the various concepts used and relate these to underlying ideas from psychoanalysis, social constructionism and anthropology.

The ideas that came to dominate my thinking were the theory of suture, Winnicott’s location of culture; Le Roy’s group analytic theory of culture; ideas of child development and the repetition compulsion. As well as providing theoretical background, these influenced the
selection of the superordinate metacultural themes that I chose. It may be that the cultural enactment of separation and growth is only one of a number of processes at work; but this seems to be the most important, and one that provided more than sufficient material for the study.

**Culture as a resource**

My understanding of culture as a resource matured as the study progressed. It is clear that the underlying processes are linguistic and discursive and in excluding discourse analysis from the study I set aside detailed consideration of these processes. However, it is appropriate to make some brief comments, based on the experience that I gained. Cultural resources are discursive entities, or symbols that stand in for them. They always relate to membership of a group; and they always have potential to help achieve a conscious or unconscious objective, that need not necessarily be positive or beneficial. Subjects, whether speaking or listening, may be members or non-members of a reference group; they may identify with either the in-group or out-group; and they may project onto one or other or both of these.

The participants showed many examples of the use of culture as a resource. Some were conscious, practical and relatively obvious, such as Clara’s identification with the forces culture and her attraction to locations inhabited or habituated by forces families. Others were unconscious, speculative and debateable; such as her identification with blackness and her attraction for black men. At the heart of these examples is a ‘thing’ to which the individual feels an attachment (Žižek, 1993). It seems to me that cultural resources of this kind are used to represent; contain; act out; work through; or attempt to resolve deeper personal issues. Some were used in a defensive manner to find safety, while others were used more creatively to seek growth, separation or a better outcome.
It seems obvious that individuals will preferentially employ resources to which they have access and entitlement, and only then seek out additional resources to which they have limited access or partial entitlement. Technically Mhairi was not entitled to claim Scottish nationality although she had been widely exposed to it, and there were no obstacles of language or appearance. Her identification with South Indians was less clear and here there were obstacles of language and appearance. Outright fraud or claiming membership of a group to which there is no legitimate right is problematic and, I think, relatively uncommon. However, as I put the finishing touches to this thesis, the intriguing case of Rachel Dolezal emerged in the news (Sanders, 2015) (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lG9Q2_Hv83k). She was a white American civil rights activist who, ‘identified as black’, had modified her appearance to appear black and had allowed the impression to be given that she was black. Her motivation was unclear, although it is interesting that she was brought up in a family comprising herself, her white birth parents and three younger, adopted black siblings. In any event, negative reaction in the media illustrated the strong human emotions stirred up by this sort of cultural fraud. Black people in particular were incensed, because Dolezal was making a choice that was denied to them.

Some cultural resources such as drug use are associated with profoundly damaging practices; and I would not suggest that these, or dimensions of difference such as sexuality, spirituality or class are simply categories in a cultural taxonomy. However they have a discursive, cultural dimension (Gergen, 2003): and to this extent they have the potential to be used consciously or unconsciously; defensively or creatively. Some resources are inherited while others can be sought out; still others, like old age, are acquired through the progress of the human lifecycle; and some are the result of life events like (dis)ability or a disease. I do not wish to argue that there is unlimited choice; for some resources are life-defining and virtually inescapable. This
applies both to membership of a group; or to the identity that is assumed by, or imposed upon that group. However, the world of discourse opens up considerable possibilities of choice, and the creative potential to spin a web of social meaning around almost anything; thereby transforming it into a resource.

In one of her earlier papers, Ewing (1990: 251) wrote about the way in which ‘multiple, inconsistent self-representations that are context-dependent and may shift rapidly’ are incorporated into an illusion of wholeness. She states that (1990: 263):

> An experience of wholeness and coherence is encapsulated in a self-representation, in a semiotic process that highlights and organises certain fragments of experiences. I argue that, although such wholes are actually fleeting, they are experienced as timeless.

It seems to me that each person is seeking a ‘cohesive’ self that is also authentic. There is a penalty associated with the use of inauthentic resources in terms of the intrusion of reality or the response of others. Erika was unable to maintain a ‘cohesive’ cultural self that was either Polish or Canadian, and I have speculated that this is a factor in her focus on other cultural resources, such as cosmopolitanism and spirituality.

In his film The perverts guide to ideology, Slavoj Žižek uses the example of the way the Choral movement of Beethoven’s ninth symphony, in which ‘Alle Menschen werden Brüder’ has been universally adopted by the most despotic, elitist and criminal regimes; including Nazi Germany, The Soviet Union, Communist China and The Republic of Rhodesia. This is a highly developed example of a cultural resource being used to create a timeless illusion of wholeness that can temporarily conceal terrible personal and cultural inconsistencies.
I have commented on the use of SIT as a way of understanding difference (page 52) and I remain convinced that it has some legitimacy. People will frequently take advantage of privilege and use their membership of cultural groups to enhance self-image. However, this does little to explain Clara’s choice of a black husband or Mhairi’s identification with South Indians or Rachel’s discomfort at life in white, middle class England. I think this is because SIT tends to apply to situations of advantage and to dimensions of difference that are relatively unimportant to the individual, which are not the dimensions that contribute most strongly to a personal culture. Another way of saying this is that individuals are more likely to make conscious, inauthentic use of resources or dimensions of difference about which they lack strong feelings.

Cultural identity and the theory of suture

The theory of suture, as articulated by Hall, was the theory that provided the initial inspiration for the study and encouraged me to consider the possibility of a theoretical rapprochement between the social and personal. In Lacanian terms this operates in the register of the imaginary. It can be neither proved nor disproved and can only be thought about symbolically. However, this is the normal habitat of psychoanalytically oriented therapy; and my experience of working with it has convinced me that it has potential.

The processes at work are mainly discursive and the role of the psychic is as a moderator of controller. Hall is reasonably clear about the process of interpellation and the role of subject positions in discourse. He is less clear about the nature of the 'processes which produce subjectivities' although he includes the 'psychoanalytic usage' of identification (1996: 3), and relates this back to Freud's (1917 [1915], 1921, 1930) writings on the subject. My contention is
that, in the realm of the personal, both the social processes of internalisation (Berger & Luckmann, 1966) and the psychoanalytic processes of displacement, identification and projection are involved and that it is also possible to make direct connections to objects or object relations through the metaphoric and metonymic processes of the human brain.

**Personal culture**

One of the big ideas in the study is that of personal culture. This was present in the beginning and matured as the study progressed. It is not an idea that I invented, but one that I have appropriated and customised. Cultural identity does not seem adequate in itself. It provides a linkage between social and personal, and its volatility admits a culture that is multiple, fragmented, inconsistent and changeable. However, both theoretically and from my attempts to analyse data, there is a requirement for a more stable concept that sums up the totality of the cultural resources habitually employed by an individual in forming and reforming cultural identities. This is a concept that is widely encountered in psychoanalytic writing, usually as something that is obvious and without need of further justification. However, it is also found in sociology, psychological anthropology and by implication in social constructionism as the idea of agency. It is also an idea that the research participants illustrate with great clarity.

For me there is considerable mileage in Winnicott’s view of culture. He recognised the realities of personal background and environment, and acknowledged the contribution of both. However, he saw culture as a separate and different creation in a transitional space between inner and outer. Analogies with child development provide a way of looking at the three main superordinate themes that emerged, those of personal background, belongingness and growth.
In my experience the concept of a personal culture is controversial. Although it is accepted explicitly or implicitly by a range of eminent psychoanalysts, group analysts, anthropologists and sociologists, including Winnicott, Dalal, Le Roy, Ewing, Stewart and Hall, the idea seems to create argument, and while this argument is constructive and may indicate the importance of the topic, I do not wish it to distract attention from the deeper and more important issues. For me, culture is an emergent, localised and diverse phenomenon that will always struggle for definitional clarity; and these difficulties at the heart of the conflict are also central to its importance. It is both ‘out there’ and ‘in here’ and although this study has focused on the inner world of the participants I do not seek to deny the importance of the social, political and economic. I support the group analytic position that every group has a culture and that all members of a group have access to that culture. However, within the matrix of these groups various aspects of disturbance are located in specific individuals or sub-groups with a particular valence for them (Foulkes, 1964). This phenomenon will be most marked when the individual is an active participant in the group or is strongly called into place as a member of the group by the discourses to which he or she is subjected. The most important issues for this study are the individual’s response to the cultural influences that they encounter in their lives.

It is clear that culture is deeply embedded in what Foulkes (1964) called the dynamic matrix of a group; although it may, over time, reach deeper levels, replacing, or providing alternatives to less adaptive cultural roots (Roberts, 1982). This suggests that cultural activity has, in itself, the potential to be therapeutic although I have argued that it can also be a form of acting out or a defence. However, this suggests that if therapy is itself enculturation (Kakar, 2007), then the process by which a new and more healthy culture replaces the old or provides alternatives is clearly a therapeutic process.
**Origins of personal culture**

I am suggesting that personal culture is the summation of more common or habitual cultural identities defined by points of suture between subject positions in the social world and individual experiences or internalised object relations. This operates through the metaphoric and metonymic processes of the human brain for which my theoretical basis is the conception of the human brain captured in an inconsistent, evolving manner by psychoanalysis. Clara, for example, was closest to her father and identified strongly with his cultural roots; while she was less close to her mother and identified less strongly with hers. It is also tempting to suggest, without proof, that her attraction to black people and black culture were related to early experiences of her black nanny. While these ideas may seem somewhat simplistic; it is not an issue of proof but of whether the material generated is useful in therapy.

The ingredients for the creation of a personal culture come from the social world. These resources are socially constructed, often on the basis of a long history. However, as pointed out by Berger and Luckman (Berger, 1967, 1999; Berger & Luckmann, 1966), many of the historical resources such as religion are being abandoned while new resources, or new forms of old resources, are being created through the processes of externalisation, objectification and internalisation, which can take place relatively quickly. In addition, discursive cultural resources are generated by all groups both small and large including support of football clubs, NRM s or even a group of school or university friends.
Wider implications

While the scope of the study is the field of the personal and the implications of this for therapy, it is also appropriate to consider wider implication of the ideas developed in the previous section. Cultural identity, culture as a resource and personal culture allow us to think about social phenomena in a different way. This is not unique or new and most of the ideas can already be found in psychoanalytic of social constructionist writings. However, it breathes life into the ideas, and makes them more widely accessible. I wish to illustrate this with a number of examples.

The first example is that of cultural or national stereotypes. In a world of political correctness, cultural stereotypes are frequently portrayed as unhelpful, offensive and unacceptable; and this can obviously be true. However, as I have already noted (page 56), they can contain a degree of truth and may relate to a fundamental mode of operation of the human brain (Adler, 2000). The idea of culture as a resource allows us to accept stereotypes as a valid entity without expressing any judgement about the accuracy of a particular example. It seems to me that a valid stereotype is something about which members of the in-group should be in broad agreement with members of the out-group. If this agreement is not possible, then it is probably not a valid stereotype, but a caricaturing of one group by another. Given agreement, we can be fairly sure that a stereotype exists, but it is then necessary to pose the question of what this means. I would argue that a stereotype is just a stereotype or, in my terms, a cultural resource. It does not represent truth, either current or past; although it may contain elements of truth or some deeper meaning. For example, the accepted stereotype that Scots are mean may result from the fact that Scotland was a poor country at stages in its development, as brilliantly illustrated in Burns (1966) poem, ’The Cotter’s Saturday Night’. Once the stereotype is accepted as a cultural resource we can move on to look at the discursive use that is being made of it by those that speak or hear it. Is it being used
defensively or offensively (in any meaning of the word)? Is it being used to create or strengthen the identity of a group (Volkan, 2001)? Or is it an attempt to redefine an argument in different terms? This may seem like a somewhat frivolous example but it is, I believe, a primary mechanism by which belongingness is created and the politics of conflict and hatred are prosecuted. I normally choose to use my own cultural background as the basis for examples, because this minimises the risk of causing offence to others; and if this sense of offence is avoided, there is more chance of going beyond to deeper aspects of personal significance.

A second example is the way the ideas help in the understanding of difficult phenomena like radicalisation, religious fundamentalism or terrorism, where the idea of culture as a resource allows destructive forces to be objectified. In 2011 I delivered a paper on terrorism as a cultural resource (MacDonald, 2011). This was written shortly after the American military action, which resulted in the shooting of Osama bin Laden; and clearly this was in my mind at the time. However, I chose to base the paper on some data from my Masters, in which I uncovered the existence of the Rampant Nationalist Scotsman (RNS). This mythical figure was an amalgam of real and mythical characters like Robert the Bruce, William Wallace and Highlander. He was, I argued, the Scottish terrorist and although he may now seem like a figure of fun; the dispossession, brutality and persecution that he symbolically opposed was very real. This figure of the RNS is, in my terms, a resource that can be brought into action, together with its discourses of freedom and resistance and is available for identification or projection. I argued that if we can own the terrorist in ourselves, then we can begin to understand the phenomenon in others. The extension of this to more recent examples has the problem that while phenomena such as martyrdom and paradise may also be seen as resources, their use by ‘non believers’ may cause deep offence or anger and the use of the resource as a defence. However this is not an attack on underlying religious beliefs, simply a
way of explaining a process that may be at work; and it is still relevant to ask why one individual is interpellated as terrorist or martyr, while another resists.

It also seems to me that the metaphor of the scapegoat, which is deeply embedded in group analysis (Nitsun, 1996), is of relevance. In the original meaning of the word this is:

A live goat over whose head Aaron confessed all the sins of the children of Israel on the Day of Atonement. The goat, symbolically bearing their sins, was then sent into the wilderness.

http://www.answers.com/topic/scapegoat#ixzz1Qq0edre4

The terrorist carries not the guilt, but the anger and outrage of a people; yet like the original scapegoat it is blooded and sent into the wilderness to die, for if it were to return this would confront the wider population with the problem of owning its own violent feelings. The similarity to a suicide bomber is quite clear and shows, in a way, that the terrorist is also a victim. In this view the terrorist is an individual with a particular valence, rooted in their personal background, who has projected into them deep emotions that drive horrible destructive and self-destructive acts. In this context radicalisation is identification with a single cultural resource to the exclusion of all other aspects of personal culture.

In selecting an example of this, it is preferable to avoid recent cases. For this reason I have chosen the assassination of Indira Ghandi in 1984. Most Indians with whom I have discussed the topic, whether Hindu, Sikh or Muslim, as well as commentators (e.g. Tully, 2014) historians (e.g. Keay, 2010) and biographers (e.g. Frank, 2002) regard the assassination as the inevitable consequence of operation Blue Star; in which Mrs Ghandi ordered the storming of the complex housing the Golden Temple at Amritsar in June 1984. The complex had been occupied and fortified by a fundamentalist Sikh preacher, Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, who was demanding the establishment of Khalistan, a Sikh homeland. As a result of the military action,
there was considerable loss of life; and the Golden Temple, the centre of the Sikh religion, was badly damaged. This was seen by Sikhs as the defilement of their most sacred place (Tully, 2014). Several months later Mrs Ghandi was publicly shot in her garden in New Delhi by her two Sikh bodyguards Satwant Singh and Beant Singh. Thirty three bullets were fired into her chest and abdomen while the bodyguards shouted Sikh slogans. When arrested, they said ‘we have done what we needed to, now you can do what you have to’. During their arrest, Beant Singh was shot and Satwand Singh wounded; and in the subsequent riots, over 2,000 Sikhs were killed in Delhi alone (Keay, 2010; Tully, 2014). While the assassination may have been inevitable, it was carried out by two individuals who, in some way, had projected into them the fury and outrage of the Sikh community; and while this may be seen as no more than a psychoanalytic theory, the local non-Sikh population seemed to understand this completely. Their retaliation was taken against the whole Sikh community, presumably employing other cultural resources to justify and drive the retaliation against individuals who were largely innocent of actual wrongdoing, or any physical complicity in the assassination. I chose this example because of its simplicity, but others abound; most notably in the Middle East and the Balkans, where the see-saw process of cultural trauma seems endless. The strength of the approach is that once we can identify the resources at work we can externalise them and look at individual’s relationship to the resource and the manner in which they are used. This provides a way of understanding radicalisation and fundamentalism and suggests an approach to de-radicalisation.

It seems to me that cultural identity and culture as a resource are the mechanisms that power these processes, while personal culture is the place where hope, humanity and morality reside. This is where, eventually, an accommodation must be sought between competing forces and the worst excesses of radicalisation moderated. The evidence is that, at the level of a society, the neutralisation of a dangerous resource is a slow process that takes many generations to
make itself felt. However, at the level of the individual it is clear that radicalisation, or identification with a terrorist resource and the resulting commitment to acts of destruction can happen quite quickly; and this gives reason to hope that de-radicalisation can be equally rapid (El-Said, 2012).

This mechanism is probably as old as mankind but it must now be set in an environment of geopolitical change, driven by: the collapse of colonial empires; technological advances in electronic communication, information processing and travel; and the current hegemony of capitalism. Culture is by its very nature dynamic and changeable, and individuals are increasingly able to express their individuality through the personal culture that they create and by the manner in which they display it. As a part of this, many individuals and groups feel disadvantaged and alienated in ways that are more complex than anything envisaged by Marx (1968 [1875]) and the constant, focused bombardment by social media and 24 hour news mean that the exposure to radicalising influences can be amplified exponentially.

Validity

Lincoln et al. (2011: 120) regard validity as an ‘irritating construct’ that is ‘neither easily dismissed, nor readily configured by new-paradigm practitioners’. The criteria used to assess validity in qualitative research differ from those in quantitative research (Lincoln et al., 2011). While attempts have been made to redefine it in terms such as authenticity (Lincoln et al., 2011), I prefer to confront the idea directly as a reminder of the scientific aspirations of the study. Willig (2013) defines validity as the extent to which research describes, measures or explains what it aims to describe, measure or explain. Measurement is unlikely to be relevant in qualitative research, which leaves description and explanation. These are somewhat problematic in the context of a constructivist ontology; where the phenomenon being
investigated is context and situation dependent, and where the instance created in the data collection process is, to some extent, a co-creation of participant and researcher. This is further compounded by the dependence on the interpretive processes of the researcher, and by the fact that, in this study, the objective is not simply deeper insight into culture, but its relevance to therapy.

Smith et al. (2009) base their approach to validity in IPA on criteria developed by Yardley (2000, 2008). These are:

1. Sensitivity to context
2. Commitment and rigour
3. Transparency and coherence
4. Impact and importance

These criteria provide a reasonable basis for a discussion of validity. However, I found the approach somewhat inadequate in the context of the current study, where my selection of a bespoke method means that it is not possible to refer to an existing body of work conducted in a similar manner. It seems to me that while Yardley’s approach recognises the distinction between the way a study is carried out, and the reception it receives, it fails to provide the detail required to assess either. It also fails to distinguish between method and interpretation Lincoln et al. (2011).

There is no suggestion in the literature that validity is inherent in a method. It is clear that a particular presentation of data and order of analysis may be conducive to the generation of particular kinds of conclusion; and that rigorous documentation of, and adherence to, defined methods, whether off the shelf or bespoke, are factors in establishing repeatability. However, the fit between the methods used on one hand, and the research questions and
epistemological foundations of the study on the other, is also a factor. In this case, I originally intended to use IPA, which was superficially attractive; but I decided to abandon this because it failed to address the research questions in a sufficiently focused manner, and did not accommodate the partially deductive focus that I was seeking. As I have already stated, Smith et al. (2009) refer to general writing on the validity of qualitative research rather than anything specific to IPA (page 187). It seems to me that methods which directly address the research questions and have an epistemology that fits the underlying epistemology of the study are more likely to generate answers to the research questions that are valid within the context of that study. The issue of validity was one of the factors that persuaded me to root the study in McLeod’s writing on the theoretical case study, because of its focus on the practitioner community that are the consumers of the research.

I have chosen to supplement this is three ways. These are to note in passing the approach defined by Polkinghorne (2007); to adopt an overview suggested by Cho & Trent (2006) which distinguishes between transactional and transformational validity; then to discuss transactional validity in terms of the definition of trustworthiness provided by Lincoln and Guba (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Polkinghorne (2007) argues that modern qualitative researchers, especially those with a narrative approach position themselves within a reformist rather than conventional community, and that validity remains one of the unresolved issues between the two communities. He suggests that ‘different kind of knowledge claims require different kinds of evidence and argument to convince readers that the claim is valid’ (Polkinghorne, 2007: 474). A statement or knowledge claim is not intrinsically valid; rather its validity is a function of intersubjective judgement, which rests on a consensus within a community of speakers.
However, validity judgements do not yield simple acceptance or non-acceptance responses and Polkinghorne argues that the reader should be given access to claims about which the researcher is less than absolutely certain, leaving them free to make their own judgements. Both the validity of evidence and of the interpretations made need to be considered. Regarding the evidence, Polkinghorne suggests that there are four sources of disjunction between a person’s actual experienced meaning and his or her storied description:

- The limits of language
- The limits of reflection to reveal layers of meaning outside awareness
- The reluctance of participants to reveal the full meaning of which they are aware
- The complexities caused by co-construction between interviewer and participant

While I believe that I have paid attention to each of these aspects, it occurred to me as I read Polkinghorne’s paper that he could be describing the process of therapy, which is central to the study. Each of these aspects is considered by the therapist and the only measure of success is the impact they have on the client. I think that I must accept that the most important measure of validity is ultimately in the hands of the reader. This is a theme that I pick up again under the summary of transactional validity (page 197).

While Polkinghorne’s approach comes closest to my own conception of validity, it does not go far enough and could be seen as sidestepping a number of central questions. I found that the topic was put into context by Cho and Trent (2006) who highlight the fact that qualitative researchers are being put under increasing pressure by recent attempts to discredit qualitative research as unscientific. They distinguish two quite different approaches to validity within the literature on qualitative research. These they call transactional validity and transformational validity. Transactional validity is grounded in the active interaction between the inquiry and the research participants using an array of techniques. Transformational validity is based on
the premise that research is valid only if it furthers an eventual ideal. Taken together, these approaches provide a conception of validity that seeks middle ground between the extremes of scientific and poststructuralist/emancipatory approaches.

Probably the most detailed and comprehensive approach to transactional validity is provided by the idea of trustworthiness (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Shenton, 2004). This is the extent to which the reader may trust the conclusions reached, and that the researcher may trust himself to reach them (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). It is a term that was widely used in the 1980s and 1990s as qualitative research struggled to establish itself in relation to quantitative research. Today it is rarely used; except in the more general, everyday sense of the word. As an indication of this, trustworthiness is widely referenced in the first edition of the Sage handbook of qualitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994), but is scarcely used in later editions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, 2005, 2011). However, it captures the essence of a more traditional view of validity as a list of criteria. This ‘criteriology’ is rejected by many writers (Scheurich, 1997; Schwandt, 1996; Smith, 1993), although list of criteria always seem to re-emerge (Lincoln et al., 2011).

**Transactional validity / trustworthiness**

Lincoln and Guba (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) start from the position that inquirers who wish to persuade their audiences that the findings of an inquiry are worthy of attention pose four questions of themselves relating to: truth value, applicability, consistency and neutrality. In relation to truth value the question is about the establishment of confidence in the “truth” of the findings of a particular inquiry. Applicability is the determination of the extent to which the findings have value in other contexts or with other participants. Consistency is concerned with whether the findings can be replicated with the same (or
similar) participants and the same (or similar) context. Finally, neutrality is about establishing whether the findings are determined by the participants and conditions of the inquiry rather than the biases, motivations, interests or perspectives of the inquirer. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that these questions can be operationalised in qualitative research under the headings of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. I shall look briefly at each of these.

**Credibility**

Credibility is equivalent to internal validity and comprises five major activities. These are ‘activities increasing the probability that credible findings will be produced’ (Lincoln & Guba, 1985: 301), peer debriefing, negative case analysis, checks on referential adequacy and member checks.

**Activities increasing the probability that credible findings will be produced**

These consist of prolonged engagement, persistent observation and triangulation. Prolonged engagement is the investment of sufficient time to achieve certain purposes. Processes like environmental immersion are difficult to understand in the context of the current study, and I would offer my training and experience as a counsellor and psychotherapist as evidence that I have a prolonged engagement with the wider subject. Prolonged engagement in the specific cultural background of a particular client would, in my view, have undermined the underlying objective of the study, which is to confront the immediacy of the interaction that takes place between researcher and participant. The research that I subsequently carried out, and reported in the findings and discussion chapters into specific cultural influences is, I believe, a more appropriate understanding of ‘prolonged engagement’ in the context of the study. Persistent observation is sufficient involvement with a context to detect and take account of
distortions that might otherwise creep in. This is equally hard to understand in the current context and again my training and experience are relevant factors; as is the subsequent research into specific cultural influences. Triangulation involves the use of more than one approach to mobilise multiple sources of evidence (Willig, 2013). Denzin (1978) has suggested that there are four modes of triangulation: sources, methods, investigators and theories. Triangulation of sources and investigators is clearly outside the scope of the current study. Triangulation of theories does not make sense in a study that is concerned with the testing and development of a specific theory. Triangulation of methods is something that I would have wished to carry out through the use of discourse analysis, but this turned out to be beyond the scope of the study, and must be acknowledged as a limitation. It should be added that the primary justification I saw for discourse analysis was not to provide triangulation, but to gain deeper understanding of the discursive processes at work in the mobilisation of cultural resources. Finally it should be noted that the use of triangulation is also somewhat controversial, and as Guba and Lincoln (1989) have acknowledged, it is inherently a positivist concept.

Peer debriefing

Peer debriefing, or the involvement of a disinterested peer, would have been an excellent enhancement of the study. I did not do it for practical reasons, but would readily admit that it could have a place in a subsequent, more extensive study. This could go some way to overcome the clear limitations of the sole reliance on myself as both therapist and researcher.

Negative case analysis

Negative case analysis is the continuous refinement of hypotheses until it accounts for all known cases without exception. It is again a concept that has been borrowed from positivism
and does not really relate to the current study, which is more concerned with the refinement of theory than generation of hypotheses. I would not regard any of my four cases as ‘negative’, and to this extent I have attempted to take account of the full richness and complexity of each case. I cannot comment on the extent to which I have been selective or biased in either the focus taken or the interpretations made.

Referential adequacy
Referential adequacy was originally proposed by Eisner (1975, as cited in Lincoln & Guba, 1985), to establish the adequacy of critiques by storing raw data in the form of Videotape recordings, so they could be used for review or as a benchmark for later analyses and interpretations. In the current study, both audio recordings and transcripts exist, but I would not be prepared to share raw recordings or transcripts and will eventually destroy them for ethical reasons. The argument that the stored recordings must be surrendered to an archive and not used to further the purposes of the inquiry is also not something that would have been possible without a significant extension to the scope of the study. Substantial portions of one transcript are included in the thesis, and this provides some element of referential adequacy.

Member checks
Member checks is the process by which data, analytic categories, interpretations and conclusions are tested with members of those stakeholding groups from whom the data was originally collected. Lincoln and Guba (1985) regard this as the most crucial technique for establishing credibility. As part of the study, I confirmed the transcripts with participants, as part of the process of gaining informed consent. I also offered to provide informal feedback to the participants, which was taken up by two of them. However, I regarded this as an ethical
requirement; and a part of my responsibility to the participants rather than a check on validity. I was clear that checking out of results with participants was not something that I wished to do. This was for three reasons. Firstly, I wanted to focus on the interaction that took place in the interview and to exclude any influence from outside, even from the participant. Secondly, at the planning stage of the study I had no idea how to structure feedback to participants. Thirdly, I was concerned that the increased commitment required from the participant would discourage participation; and it proved hard enough to gain commitment to a single two hour interview. I believe that this was the right decision, although I accept that it can be seen as a limitation. Lincoln and Guba (1985) go as far as to suggest that audits may be set up with members of stakeholding groups, but this goes considerably beyond the scope of a small study carried out with four participants.

I think there is a reasonable argument in favour of the approach that I have taken. Although research questions one and two relate to the cultural identity and personal culture of the participants, my concern was with the implications for therapy. Here, the mutative potential (Cox & Theilgaard, 1987) of the cultural material uncovered is of at least as much significance as the ‘truth’ of any specific interpretation or the extent to which a participant agrees or disagrees. The views of the participants on the cultural categories of belongingness and growth would have been valuable and now, with the experience of the study, I believe that I could design a feedback process that would support the achievement of a degree of member checking, as well as contributing to the process of the research.

It would also be wrong to say that member checking was entirely absent. In a very real sense, it was built in to the design of the interviews and the manner in which they were carried out. This is a part of my normal therapeutic approach as a therapist, which I attempted to mirror in
the approach I took in the interviews. In the course of the interviews I made many tentative interpretations; and received feedback on these, through the ongoing interaction. In a number of ways, this was more valuable than a member check carried out some considerable time after the interview; especially in view of cultural identities that are theorised as multiple, contextual, inconsistent and malleable (Ewing, 1990, 2006b). However visibility of this ‘member checking’ is lost together with the support it could provide to the validity of the process. This is another area in which a form of discourse analysis could be of value in making these interactions visible.

**Transferability**

Transferability relates to external validity in quantitative research and many more postmodern accounts replace it with authenticity (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). It is the extent to which the results of a study can be generalised to a wider population. The very limited experience of four unique participants suggested something common in the metacultural categories and processes that were at work. This prompts the idea that these categories and process may be more widely applicable. Caution is required in this, since the number of participants was small, unrepresentative and purposefully chosen to generate interesting data. My sense is that the conclusions are more generally applicable, but this will only be supported if others can be persuaded, and ultimately confirmed by additional research in a variety of different situations.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) state that it is not the task of the researcher to provide an index of repeatability, but to provide the information to enable transferability judgements by potential appliers. This they say is achieved through thick description, which is a term that was originally elaborated by Geertz (1973) in the field of anthropology. Guba and Lincoln acknowledge that, in quantitative research, the term may never be completely defined; and since the burden of
proof is on the subsequent enquirer, he or she has the last word on the subject. It seems to me that in reaching towards the metacultural, I am both simplifying the task of establishing transferability and making it impossible to achieve. One area in which I can claim some support for the transferability of the results is in the manner it has helped me to look and explain phenomena such as radicalisation, terrorism and racial hatred. This is an issue that I have covered under the *Wider implications* section of the discussion chapter (page 182).

**Dependability**

Dependability is concerned with showing that findings are consistent and repeatable. Lincoln and Guba (1985) provide a number of arguments that can be used to ‘shore up’ dependability claims. These include the idea that credibility guarantees dependability; the use of ‘overlap methods’; ‘stepwise replication’; and the inquiry audit. Of these, the first argument is, they admit, dubious and the others are either unfeasible in the current situation; considerably beyond the scope of the current study – or both. The main basis that I use to establish dependability is in the transparency that I provide.

**Confirmability**

Confirmability is the demonstration that the findings are shaped by the respondents and not by the bias, motivation or interest of the researcher. Lincoln and Guba (1985) state that the major technique for establishing confirmability is the confirmability audit and that this can be incorporated into a wider inquiry audit. Triangulation and the keeping of a reflexive journal can be dovetailed into this process. While this kind of audit process is beyond the scope of the current study, the main input into this process, that of the audit trail is relevant. The manner in which I conducted the study has a solid audit trail running through it. This is sampled in the annotated transcripts and table of themes includes in appendices 5 and 7 and by the worked
example of the method included in Appendix 6. My reflexive journal could have provided evidence for an audit, but is relatively unedifying in itself.

Summary

Pulling together the threads of this brief overview of the trustworthiness of the study within the somewhat quasi-positivist framework defined by Lincoln and Guba (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), it is necessary to move towards a conclusion. It seems to me that I have gone as far as I was able to ensure the trustworthiness of the results, given the starting point and the resources available to me. However, it is clear that this is a limited study with a number of shortcomings. However, the alternative, for me, would probably have been to not do the study. For me, the underlying importance of the ideas was sufficiently great to live with the inadequacies and imperfections, trusting that the transformational validity (Cho & Trent, 2006) of the work would ultimately emerge and that it would demonstrate catalytic validity (Bailey, 2010; Lather, 1986) in the effect that it had on other practitioners. I have already seen early signs of this in the response I have received to presentations and articles.

I have not yet presented the study in its entirety, but I have made many presentations on aspects of it at conferences and workshops. I have always found wide interest, but have sometimes encountered resistance. I have come to regard this as a highly interesting phenomenon that goes beyond legitimate negative feedback. My reason for this is that the negative arguments I encounter are usually ones that I originally employed in developing the theoretical approach. I have come to see that this is probably because individual reactions are rooted in personal experiences of culture. In this context, the arguments seems to be further examples of Žižek’s (1993) ‘nation thing’; of an entity that is beyond discourse, that can only be described in contradictory terms, and that can only be understood by ‘us’. In effect people are
saying ‘do not presume to try to understand my culture, although I will use my experience of it to attempt to understand that of others’. In this regard, I will be happy if I can begin to break down this approach of the exclusivity of ‘my’ culture; bring all culture into the domain of study; and remove the focus from the cultural difference of the client.

**Reflexivity**

The data that I collected was in the form of a description of four cultural life stories that I interpreted metaculturally. While I was surprised by their coherence and the clarity of the images produced, it is possible to suggest that, like a photograph, this was partly a result of the development process – the methodology and methods used, and my personal involvement in the process. However, I am convinced that the pictures that emerged, between palimpsest and pentimento, as Orbach (1999) puts it, was an exposed image waiting to be developed. Perhaps the tint or clarity of the image was influenced by the development process but not the underlying image. It is also clear that the picture was partially revealed by its influence on life, in symbolic material that was clear and uncontroversial. In each case there was a strong resonance between the cultural and metacultural stories and the personal background. My strongest feeling about these was my sense of their authenticity. There may well have been other undeveloped images in the camera, but this does not invalidate the ones that emerged.

I tried to remain aware of the differences that existed between me and the participants as I attempted to bracket off my own situation. The most obvious difference was that of gender. Like all of the participants, I was white. In terms of age, I varied from a little younger to quite a lot older. I had stable cultural roots, having spent my life in Scotland up to the age of 21 and my parents had lived in the same village for the whole of that time. Like the participants, I had travelled widely, and like all I had lived and worked in countries other than my country of birth. One of my strongest identifications with the participants was an interest in culture itself.
While this was not a selection criterion it was an understandable consequence which inevitably skewed the findings. I tried to exclude the dramatic difference of colour by selecting only white participants. However this pervasive issue insinuated itself beneath the surface, and in at least two of the cases, was very near to the surface. I tried to treat my participants with respect and to limit the interpretations that I made about their lives and the manner in which I expressed them. In a few cases these may have been questionable but I hope that this was not intrusive. From the point of view of the study, the issue was not their absolute accuracy, but their potential relevance to the process of therapy.

I have attempted to incorporate threads of personal and methodological reflexivity throughout. However, it is also necessary to reflect back on the process, which provides a reminder that the most important requirement in working with the culture of others is to understand your own. The topic of culture has been a major component of my own search for meaning and understanding. I grew up in a village in Central Scotland, and although I had a clear view of my roots, I did not feel that I could stay there. Like Rachel, I felt both an insider and an outsider; and I lacked the maturity to either accept the impossibility of escape, or to enjoy the process of trying. The structure of the UK allowed me to leave Scotland without emigrating; and my employment with a large, paternalistic, but intellectually challenging company met my needs for a while. I achieved some success in my career, and marriage but was, I think, held back by the sense of being an outsider. Eventually I left both and began to travel more widely. I ended up living in Belgium, which is one of the most culturally split countries in Europe, and I think I benefitted greatly from this experience. I also travelled widely and went almost as far as I was able; before it was enough, and I returned ‘home’ to England. I often thought about returning to Scotland, but could still not bear this and remained in my version of Erika’s neutral place. I then spent a decade training and practising as a counsellor, studying and researching culture. The relevance of this is the resonance...
between my own experiences and the metacultural themes that emerged in the stories of the participants. It is necessary to consider the extent to which projection or projective identification may have been at work and although I think this must have played a part, I hope my quest for rigour and my training allowed me to avoid the worst pitfalls.

**Methodological reflections**

Subjectively, I can divide the process of each case into three clear stages, separated by handover points represented by a document. These were the interview up to production of the transcript; the analysis up to production of the table of themes; and reporting up to production of the narratives.

I found the first stage comfortable and collaborative. This may have been because I had chosen willing and sensitive participants, but a part of me watched with interest, and at times surprise, as the stories unfolded. This was not something that can be expressed in intellectual terms, it was a deep emotional sense of 'rightness', comparable with 'tacit knowing' in Heuristics (Moustakas, 1990). I felt privileged to be allowed to share the stories and extremely empathetic towards each of the participants. The interviews felt like therapy, which was probably inevitable, given my training and the objectives of the study. However, in contrast to therapy, I was able to focus more attention on my own agenda. Like therapy, it was a complex process in which both participant and researcher had a major role to play and the culture created in the third space of the interview was a significant factor (Moodley, 2009). I was surprised at the volume and richness of the data generated, which confirmed the decision made at the pilot stage to reduce the number of interviews to four. It also served to confirm my decision to drop the use of discourse analysis as a supplementary methodology; and although this would be a valuable piece of further work, I do not believe that it was a
necessary part of this study. The interview process did not feel intrusive or unethical and I checked out periodically that the participants were comfortable. From time to time it seemed that we were getting close to more personal areas, and this was relieved by my reminder that I was only interested in culture.

The second stage of analysis was quite different. It was uncomfortable, intricate and surprisingly stressful. At the start, I had no clear idea of the themes that would emerge. The feeling of discomfort rose through the phases of familiarisation (sampled in Appendix 5) and the three stages of coding (The Open University, 2007). However, eventually out of confusion, order did emerge and it was an order that felt 'right'. The pieces of the jigsaw that materialised out of the process began to fit; and the assembly of these pieces began to reveal a pattern that was wider and deeper. The decision to use Microsoft Office tools, and specifically the sorting capabilities of Excel was fairly straightforward and I was happy with the platform it provided.

The third stage of reporting was again comfortable and relaxed. It was as if; having completed the analysis, I was presenting it back to the participants who were listening to the narrative and participating through the words used in the interview. In any event, I was pleased with the outcome and comfortable about sharing the analysis with the participants. There may have been a few places in which it could be seen as judgemental, but I think this applies mainly to the context of interpretation; which is always partial, inadequate and tentative.

Overall, I found the bespoke method that I developed was effective, and had enough flexibility to adapt to my preferences and the requirements of the study. The method felt natural and beyond a certain point it became almost automatic. The decision to focus on a sub-set of
superordinate metacultural themes was a necessary consequence of the need to manage the scope of the study, and it gave a theoretical direction to the results.
CONCLUSIONS

The relatively coherent and unified sense of self inherent in a traditional culture gives way to manifold and competing potentials ... The possibility for committed romanticism or strong single-minded modernism recedes, and the way is open for the postmodern being

Kenneth Gergen (2000: 80)

Man know thyself, then thou shalt know the universe and God

Pythogoras (As cited in Cajander, 2006: 109)

Epistemology and theoretical ideas

The study showed that it is feasible to approach culture from an open metacultural position in which specific definitions or dimensions are initially resisted; in which attempts are made to avoid pre-conceptions; and in which clients and participants are encouraged to tell their own cultural stories. This does not replace other approaches, based on the detailed study of one or more defined dimensions, nor does it attempt to challenge the knowledge that is created in these vertical silos. Instead, it strives to set this knowledge in the context of a more holistic and individual framework in which there is agency in terms of the identities that are adopted, and the way in which they are expressed. It also seeks to understand the manner in which culture is used as a resource that can be preferentially employed or minimised; and, if absent, can be sought out in more or less legitimate ways.

This was my initial engagement with the subject which took the form of theory building case study research (McLeod, 2010). It was restricted in the number of participants, the unrepresentative nature of the sampling process. There were limitations in some aspects of transactional validity although early indications of transformational validity (Cho & Trent, 2006). Perhaps most significantly, it places considerable reliance on the subjectivity of the
researcher-as-therapist. However, I believe that the ideas which emerged have a coherent and compelling quality; and that they have the potential to enhance and enrich the practice of therapy in a variety of situations.

The central theoretical ideas were culture as a resource, cultural identities and personal culture. None of these is new. Culture as a resource can be most directly traced to existing ideas from the world of discourse analysis (Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Taylor, 2006) and can be seen at work in psychoanalytic processes like defences (Laplanche & Pontalis, 1973). Cultural identity is an established concept to which I have added little except a bias towards a particular understanding. Versions of personal culture can be found in the fields of sociology (Hall & du Gay, 1996), semiotics (Silverman, 1983), anthropology (Ewing, 1997; Stewart, 1996), psychoanalysis (Winnicott, 2005 [1971]) and psychology. However the study provides strong support for the idea and results in a particular understanding of it as a preferred set of cultural identities. A number of theoretical contributions proved useful including Winnicott’s (1971) location of culture; Ideas on child development from Winnicott (1965 [1960], 1965 [1963]), Freud (2001 [1920]) and Bowlby (1988, 1997); Miller’s (1978) theory of suture and Hall’s (1996) definition of cultural identity that makes use of it.

The study showed how personal culture and the cultural identities that populate it are influenced by personal background, experiences, cultural roots and membership of groups. The dynamic process of cultural development is one of unfolding that is influenced by life events and the progress of the human lifecycle. It also provides strong support for the idea of culture as a resource. Individuals may use these resources in a defensive or creative manner; to avoid anxiety, or represent, act out or seek to resolve personal issues in their lives. They will be attracted to and selectively employ cultural resources that are useful, and seek to acquire
or gain access to resources that they lack or would prefer. The process can be regarded as a repetition compulsion, but if a defensive function is not required; it may become an enjoyable and satisfying activity that gives meaning to life. Personal culture has a defining influence on life; not just in the normal sense of delineating pathways and setting limits, but in specifying navigational markers that one individual may ignore; another head towards; and yet another veer away from in an individualistic way. Some navigational responses are life defining and others become increasingly significant over time. In therapy I believe that observation of the course taken can be diagnostic, and may form the basis of helpful interventions.

The study also convinced me that it was possible to combine social constructionism and psychoanalysis, within an overall framework that was phenomenological and hermeneutic. This approach allowed interpretations to be made regarding links or points of suture between the social and the personal. Under the theory of suture (Hall, 1996), these define the preferred cultural identities that are brought together within the concept of a personal culture.

**The nature and significance of culture**

The case studies provide four clear individual answers to the questions of how background and cultural factors influence cultural identity and the significance these have in life. This provides support for the idea that culture is not simply a series of categories within which people have a state, such as race, colour or religion: it is also a domain within which a story is told. There may be more than one story, lying both on and beneath the surface; but for the four participants, I tended to find one dominant story. Like a form of feeling (Hobson, 1985) or a mutative metaphor (Cox & Theilgaard, 1987), this goes to the heart of the participants as people, and the cultural strongly echoes the personal. Cultural resources are used consciously
to achieve a known objective: or unconsciously in the form of defences or psychoanalytic processes to represent the personal story; manage anxiety; eliminate unwanted feelings; increase satisfaction or self-esteem; or achieve unconscious objectives. Where people lack native resources, they may seek to acquire access to these through migration; travel; re-location, friendships, relationships or marriage; employment; spiritual beliefs or hobbies. However the process cannot be observed directly, it must be inferred from statements made; from interpretation of the representation or acting out of cultural identities in life; and from the cultural resources that are sought out or side-lined. While the subject of agency is always problematic, it seems to me that all individuals have an element of choice and initial small departures from the norm can lead to large differences in life. Examples of this are provided by a decision to migrate or relocate, to form a relationship, or simply take up a new hobby or activity. These may be no more than a biasing of a finely balanced decision taken in a moment of emotion.

The process of cultural enactment has many of the characteristics of child development. It is characterised by repeating patterns or repetition compulsions that may die out as life progresses; develop into normal enjoyable patterns of living; or become unsatisfying and destructive compulsions accompanied by disillusion and physical or mental damage. Personal culture seems to be symbolically associated with a place of safety from which exploration and growth can take place; and to which an individual can retreat in times of difficulty, anxiety or isolation. Individuals can show great ingenuity in bringing together diverse elements from their past in a physical and psychic place of belonging, or in constructing a place that is between or outside. However it can also be an ambivalent relationship of both love and hate, in which different levels of maturity and attachment styles can be observed towards the place of belonging.
It seems to me that belongingness or as Belsey (2002) calls it ‘the longing to belong’ is a natural, and evolutionarily adaptive, human need comparable to object relating or attachment. Many would argue that it is the most fundamental need and one that is earlier and before the emergence of the individual (Burkitt, 1991). This is an idea that is central to Foulksian group analysis (Foulkes & Anthony, 1965). The primary group of the family is almost certainly the dominant factor in defining a personal culture, together with the personal interactions with individual members – especially mother and father; or whatever adjustment is required by the pattern of child rearing and the actual model of family life that is experienced. Cultural exploration and growth may be a genuine search for ‘richness’; or a thinly veiled attempt to right a wrong, or fix something from the past.

I have found some resistance to the approach to culture developed in the study. Many people struggle to see culture as anything other than a relatively fixed entity that is ‘out there’. For me it as an infinitely complex field of emergent cultural influences that combine or discordantly mix in subtle and variable ways mediated by personal factors such as early life experiences, life events, the cultural resources that are available or accessible, and the stage of the human lifecycle. However, I think an even more fundamental issue is the difficulty of separating culture in general, from ‘my culture’, which by definition no one else can understand. Some people become focussed on a specific dimension of culture that they believe to have overwhelming importance, and find difficulty in setting aside this lens to think about a different or broader approach. There is no doubt that the process of interpellation can be irresistibly powerful, and someone with a valence for a specific subject position will require only mild discursive encouragement to be called into place.
Implications for practice

My objective was to improve the practice of counselling and psychotherapy, which is a field riven by inconsistencies, incompatibilities and disagreements. Ultimately the value of the study needs to be judged by the influence it has on practitioners; the manner in which it sensitises them to culture and cultural difference; and the way it illuminates or alters their practice.

My belief is that the approach taken in this study points to a more person-centred, psychoanalytically based approach that has therapeutic potential in the areas of understanding, relationship building and the resolution of traumatic memories. It is an approach that avoids questions such as: ‘what was it like to grow up as a black man in Britain’ that inevitably interpellate the individual into a subject position and assumes the existence of significance where there may be none. Rather it makes use of more open questions like ‘tell me about your life’ and when a specific dimension emerges ‘what was that like for you’.

Cultural difference will inevitably emerge in an encounter between two people or in a group, but this should not be forced or assumptions made about it. The focus of the approach should be on the particularity of a client rather than the generality of the area of culture. Ultimately the relationships between figurations (Elias, 2000) are relevant, but these should not be taken as a given. This is not to suggest ‘colour blindness’, merely that there should be careful control of references to culture in the early stages of an encounter and that the personal should be the point of departure, before moving on to the personal significance of a specific dimension.

It seems to me that culture is therapeutically significant, and that talking about culture at the right time and in the right manner is important. This is because it is one way that people in general and clients in particular tell their stories of the world, and it is a field in which
transference can emerge. It can allow clients to be authentic, while concealing painful or shameful details they are unwilling to share at the time. It allows them to act out scenes from the past and seek more positive outcomes, without the need to talk about painful memories or even bring them into conscious thought. And while this may be defensive and, may not in itself lead to an effective resolution of profound traumatic memories; the potential exists for interpretation and for encouragement towards a symbolic resolution that may free the client to seek a resolution of the underlying issue. This does not mean that culture is a blank canvas. It is only possible to create this work of art from the materials that are available: which are the resources to which individuals have access; and those they can more or less legitimately acquire. It seems to me that legitimacy and authenticity are of considerable importance. It is doubtful if the immigrant can ever feel like a native; or if one partner in a relationship can acquire the culture of the other. This may be a conscious or unconscious fantasy and it may be partly, but never wholly achievable. Mhairi said she felt like an Indian; but when surrounded by Indians, she was reminded that she was not. She learned to speak Urdu, which was a useful ice breaker; but could not really make herself understood in conversation with native speakers. This is not to say that it is wrong to assimilate cultural diversity or that we should not take pleasure in the cultural richness of others, but cultural self-delusion does not seem to be a satisfying or successful strategy. In summary, there is evidence from the study that people mould their lives around the task of enacting or acting out cultural themes that mirror personal themes. It seems to me that there is value in noticing and working with these cultural themes as an indirect way of working with the personal themes; which may be associated with layers of relational, developmental or shock trauma.

Therapists need to believe that their clients have the potential to improve or to get better. They may fantasise about redemption or transformation, while knowing that this is the work of a lifetime that is, at best, partially achieved (Freud, 1937). However my contention is that
cultural acting out is a part of the process of seeking to ‘get better’, which takes place in areas that are personally painful. To this extent it is both diagnostic and potentially therapeutic. The therapeutic element consists of both finding a symbolic resolution to the cultural dilemma; together with increasingly conscious recognition that the cultural dilemma is not the real battle, but its indirect representation. This world of the cultural is not one that all therapists or clients will wish to enter. However, I do not believe that there is anything new in it, and I think that therapists who reject the challenge of embarking on the journey are missing out on a deep and rich source of material that can be greatly beneficial in understanding clients; can help in quickly getting to the source of problems; and can provide a metaphorical environment in which to work with deep and difficult issues. The underlying approach also provides a more appropriate way of understanding and thinking about culture in an increasingly complex postmodern world.

There is one piece of advice that I would enthusiastically endorse. This asserts that the key to working with culture in therapy is for the therapist to understand his or her own culture (Kakar, 2007). If we can understand the individuality of our own personal culture then we have a chance of understanding that of a client and of working with the differences between. I would also acknowledge Kareem’s (2000) warning that it is not enough to work with the inner world of the client, when there is the reality of discrimination in the outer world.

I would like to suggest twelve deceptively simple guidelines for working with culture in therapy:

1. Pay attention to culture and cultural difference
2. Try not to make assumptions about the culture of a client on the basis of appearances or pre-conceptions
3. Take a wide view of culture and its many dimensions and influences rather than immediately focusing on the obvious

4. Notice which dimensions are emphasised and which are minimised

5. Think about the cultural resources that a client uses or does not use

6. Think about the cultural resources that a client has sought out through relationships, employment, travel, religion, migration, participation in hobbies or sports, appreciation of art or popular culture

7. Think about culture as a communication about the life of the client

8. Be prepared to engage with the cultural issues at a surface level

9. Be attentive to the defensive use of culture

10. Be prepared to challenge these defences in a careful manner

11. Consider the timing and manner of cultural interpretations carefully

12. Pay particular attention to the way in which culture manifests itself in the transference

**Personal issues**

The ideas in this study have been a part of my life for more than a decade. They have been influenced by and have, in turn, influenced my practice as a counsellor and psychotherapist. However, the process of personal deconstruction that accompanied the study has also been of considerable importance. I noticed the paradox that the more I understood or deconstructed my own cultural identity, the less important it became. Like a loved transitional object that was emptied of meaning (Winnicott, 1951), this left a feeling of emptiness, vulnerability and disappointment that diminished with time; but reminded me of the feeling that remained after a relatively long experience of psychoanalytic psychotherapy in the middle part of my life. It relates to Kakar’s (2007) description of feelings about his training as a psychoanalyst. This
raises the question of whether holding up to scrutiny the individuality of cultural identity is therapeutic, when the thing that is examined crumbles to dust in the hands of the observer. I eventually concluded that this was the inevitable consequence of freeing oneself from aspects of the past, in that the creative space left is initially frightening. In longer term bereavement counselling I have watched people who have suffered great losses, struggle almost interminably to stay away from emptiness and pain. But the key aspect of a transitional object or phenomenon is that, while it may stand in for a loved person, it is generally not lost; rather its owner decides to let go, leaving earlier and more painful losses exposed and unprotected. Cultural roots remain available, and it is usually possible to return physically or in other ways. This links with the idea that an end product of psychoanalytic psychotherapy is a place inside, into which it is possible to go for recreation; and I suspect that this may be equally true for the process of cultural deconstruction. Repetition compulsion may be a neurotic defence, but this does not mean that all repetition is defensive or lacking in meaning; and ritual has an important part to play in the inevitable cycles and repetitions of life.

**Further work**

Although the ideas developed in the study are rooted in various bodies of literature, they are very much my own. The first requirement is to socialise these immature ideas and seek feedback from researchers, therapists and others through attendance at conferences and by writing papers and book chapters. This will help me to refine the ideas and hopefully kindle the interest of others to accept, reject or, in some other way, to engage with them.

The study is an isolated piece of work. There is an inevitable need for more cases, and I would like to see what other researchers make of the experience of trying to work in this way. I would like to see the approach applied to individuals from different countries with different
combinations of cultural influences. Hopefully, this would support or suggest modifications to the approach and the tentative conclusions that I have reached. There remains scope to supplement the methodology with discourse analysis, as I had originally intended; which would provide a degree of triangulation, and shed light on the more detailed discursive processes that are at work in the construction, modification and evolution of cultural identities.

Future work should attempt to overcome the admitted limitations of the study in the area of validity and in the selection of participants. Consideration should be given to the definition and design of an approach to member checking that does not undermine the integrity of the encounter but provides some assurance that the interpretations are useful in the context of a developing understanding of culture, and potentially helpful in therapy. It seems to me that the validity that is important is transformational validity (Cho & Trent, 2006) and the catalytic validity (Bailey, 2010; Lather, 1986) that it demonstrates in interesting and influencing other therapists.

I have always been aware that my approach is quite Lacanian, although the language that I use is somewhat different. It is about denial and the disruption of discourses to allow underlying significance to emerge (Frosh & Baraitser, 2008). I have tried to approach the task in a gentle manner, but the implicit ideas of denying the absolute significance of individual dimensions of difference and of critically interrogating discourses of difference are radical. This eventually leads into the world of the political and the extent to which the way we feel inside is actually a symptom of life under capitalism (Parker, 2005b). While my objectives are not overtly political, the process of suture works in both directions and the focus can be turned back
around onto society. I think this is a natural extension of the study and although it is not one that I have plans to pursue, it remains an area of interest for the future.

Much of the progress that has been made in the field of culture has been through the deconstruction of cultural hegemony. For example Tuhiwai-Smith’s (1999) excellent book shows how difficult it is to conduct research into colonised minorities within a dominant academic environment defined by the white coloniser. This inevitably leads to resistance and the formation of minority groups that develop their own discourses of unity and superiority that obscure and distort the picture produced. The feminist position is an example of this, as demonstrated by the divisions in Britain and the US described by Bolt (2004) in her book *Sisterhood questioned*. The reality of the historical and current discrimination experienced by a minority may exert a significant influence in the present; and the discrimination experienced may be real. However, it is only by disrupting the accompanying discourses that it is possible to begin to understand the individual. Althusser (2001 [1970]), who coined the word interpellation, used it to refer to the ideological discourses of the state, but I think we have moved on somewhat to consider a wider overlapping field of competing discourses, each of which needs to be addressed as and when they arise.

There is also much theoretical work to be done in developing, modifying or replacing the ideas of culture as a resource, cultural identity and personal culture. I would personally like to write a more comprehensive description of the terms and processes that are at work, which would more rigorously and explicitly bring together the psychoanalytic and social constructionist views of culture. There is also scope to think about the active processes at work in the domain of the cultural as forms of feeling (Hobson, 1985) or mutative metaphors (Cox & Theilgaard, 1987).
The approach that I have developed and put into action in this study is one that I have found helpful in developing my own understanding of wider social and geopolitical phenomena such as radicalisation, terrorism and ethnic unrest (page 182). I think this is because the idea of cultural resources helps us to understand stereotypical positions that are generally regarded as unacceptable without pathologising an individual or removing personal agency and responsibility. If we can accept the terrorist in ourselves, we can begin to understand terrorism in a more enlightened manner, without condoning the awful acts carried out. In therapy this would be useful in working with real terrorists as clients; as well as those that have internalised the phenomenon without acting it out in the outer world. This links to the narrative that has recently been developed by the UK Prime Minister David Cameron in his recent speech on counter-extremism; of Muslims who reject violence, but quietly sympathise with the terrorist (Grierson, 2015). One of the strongest arguments for a personal culture is that extreme views and positions are forced to confront their logical conclusion and ethical contradictions; which is, I suspect, one of the key processes in de-radicalisation. This is supported by research from the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence (ICSR); which argues that the root causes of radicalisation are issues of identity (Maher, 2015), and that cultural awareness is a factor that contributes to the effectiveness of programmes of de-radicalisation (El-Said, 2012).

**Final remark**

The logical way to end this journey is to revisit my handling of the case of the young Asian woman with marital and family problems. How would the experience of conducting the study have influenced my approach? I think the answer to this is quite a lot. I have learned little about her specific culture in the intervening decade, but I know that I would have been less
forthcoming with my opinions, and more open to understanding what it was like for her. Had
the therapy progressed, I would have asked her to tell me about her early life and I would have
tried to understand the relative influences of her Asian family and her life in Britain. I would
have considered the possibility that the cultural issue might represent something more
personal. And above all, I would have been especially attentive to the dynamic that was being
enacted in the transference.
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APPENDIX 1 - Participant information sheet
Culture as a Positive Resource in Therapy

Participant Information Sheet

You are being invited to take part in a study, which is part of my work for a Professional Doctorate in Counselling. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the study is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

Who will conduct the study?
George MacDonald

Title of the study
Culture as a positive resource in therapy

What is the aim of the study?
The aim of the study is to understand the development of cultural identity, its significance in everyday life, and the potential it could have in therapy

Why have I been chosen?
You have been chosen because you have indicated an interest in the work and because there are features of your personal and cultural background that are relevant to the study

What would I be asked to do if I took part?
You would be invited to participate in an interview lasting between one and a half and two hours. This would cover aspects of your personal and cultural background and the influence this has had on your life. There is no intention to cause upset or distress and if you are reluctant to talk about these aspects of your life then you should not participate.

What happens to the data collected?
The interview will be digitally recorded and transcribed. The transcription will then be analysed using qualitative methods to derive underlying themes and reported using short quotations from the transcript.

How is confidentiality maintained?
All computer files will be stored in encrypted form on a computer that is password protected. Paper document, such as consent forms will be stored in a locked filing cabinet. Your anonymity will be protected by changing all information that could be used to identify you. Computer files will be kept until the thesis is submitted and will then be destroyed within twelve months of this date (at the latest by the end of June
2016). This will be done in a way that prevents their recovery. At this time paper documents will also be shredded.

**What happens if I do not want to take part or if I change my mind?**

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason. After the interview, I will send you the transcript for approval and at that stage you can make corrections or delete any part of the transcript.

**Will I be paid for participating in the study?**

There will be no payment for participation in the study. Subject to agreement I will pay out-of-pocket expenses.

**What is the duration of the study?**

Your participation will be limited to one interview of one and a half to two hours and I may subsequently ask questions of clarification in an agreed manner. I will send the transcript to you for approval and at the time of the interview I will agree whether you wish to have feedback and how this should be provided.

**Where will the study be conducted?**

Interviews will be conducted on University premises or in a public place, at a mutually convenient time.

**Will the outcomes of the study be published?**

In the first instance, the outcome of the study will be published in my doctoral thesis. I may subsequently publish parts of the work in academic papers or other publications.

**Contact for further information**

George MacDonald  
email: george@innerselves.net  
mobile: 0793 3778719

If you have any concerns about the study you can contact my supervisor:

Dr William West,  
School of Education,  
University of Manchester,  
Oxford Road,  
Manchester M13 9PL

**What if something goes wrong?**

If you subsequently require help or advice, please contact me. If required, I will arrange for appropriate help, assistance or support from a specialist agency.
If there are any issues regarding this research that you would prefer not to discuss with the researcher, please contact the Research Practice and Governance Co-ordinator by either writing to 'The Research Practice and Governance Co-ordinator, Research Office, Christie Building, The University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PL', by emailing: Research-Governance@manchester.ac.uk, or by telephoning 0161 275 7583 or 275 8093.
APPENDIX 2 - Consent form
Culture as a Positive Resource in Therapy

CONSENT FORM

If you are happy to participate please complete and sign the consent form below

1. I confirm that I have read the attached information sheet on the above study and have had the opportunity to consider the information and ask questions and had these answered satisfactorily.

2. I understand that my participation in the study is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

3. I understand that the interviews will be audio/video-recorded.

4. I agree to the use of anonymous quotes.

5. I agree that any data collected may be passed to other researchers.

6. I agree that any data collected may be published in anonymous form in academic books or journals.

I agree to take part in the above project

Name of participant: ___________________________ Date: ____________ Signature: ___________________________

Name of person taking consent: ___________________________ Date: ____________ Signature: ___________________________

Please Initial Box: [ ] [ ]
APPENDIX 3 - Interview schedule
Interview Schedule

I am interested in the subject of culture; the way in which it develops and the influence it has on life. My understanding of culture is very wide. It includes a range of personal and social factors such as 'race', (dis)ability, gender, class, sexual orientation, religion, age and also factors such as democratic versus totalitarian; rural versus urban; wealth versus poverty etc.. It is influenced by life events and by the human lifecycle. However, it is your understanding of the word that is important.

We are obviously shaped by our culture and we influence it by our actions and decisions. It helps us to understand the world and to deal with the challenges that face us.

Some of the deeper aspects of culture are captured in stories, anecdotes or even jokes, and I encourage you to share these, if they come to mind.

Tell me a little about your childhood and early life

Where were you born?

What was your immediate and extended family situation?

Where did you live in your early life?

What are your earliest or strongest recollections?

Is there an image of "home" in terms of a place, a landscape, or a building?

What about your parents? What kind of people were they?

What memories do you have of music/literature/art?

Where do you feel most at home?
What were the main cultural influences on your development?

What was the significance of these?

What events, decisions or actions have defined your life?

For example school, work, relocations, marriage or relationships?

What important cultural boundaries have you approached or crossed?

Tell me about your life now.

How have you changed over time?

Where do you live?

What is your family situation?

What does "home" mean to you now?

What cultural / political / sporting activities do you participate in?

What does culture mean to you now?

What aspects contribute to your identity?

What role does culture play in your life?

How realistic is the image of a homeland?

Do you ever use your culture to achieve personal objectives?
APPENDIX 4 – Conventions used in transcription
CONVENTIONS USED IN TRANSCRIPTION

(.) pause
(2) two second pause
xxx untranscribable
(xxx) indistinct / doubtful transcription
(NOTE) note, emotion or gesture
Word underline emphasis
... to separate phrases when recognisable sentence structure is not apparent
APPENDIX 5 - Sample extract from annotated transcript
Transcription of interview 'Clara'

G: Thank you very much for agreeing to take part in this interview.

C: No problem.

G: I sent you some background information. I am interested in culture, the way it develops, and the influence that it has on life. I gave a definition but in the end it is your understanding that is important. We are shaped by our culture; it influences our actions and decisions; and helps us to understand the world and deal with the challenges that face us. Up until now, I have found that a lot of the deeper aspects of culture come out in stories or jokes or anecdotes. So if these occur to you, please share them with me.

C: OK.

G: And if none occur, then that is alright as well. What I want to do first is to ask you to reflect on your childhood and early life, and the cultural influences that you experienced.

C: Err ... right ... I mean I think I can see my life in very distinct (1) sections (.) my childhood and early life goes up to the age of ten ... eleven. And then there was a definite change ... a shift at that age (.) I was born in Austria (.) in Southern Austria (.) I was born by a lake (.) a very beautiful part of the country ... and (.) my mother's Austrian and my father is (.) how would I describe him (.) white working class ... worked his way up to middle class ... sort of quite a strong character. He was in the army and I guess that shaped my early life a lot.

G: Was that the British Army?

C: Mmm hmm (.) he was British.
Transcription of interview 'Clara'

G: So he was stationed in ...

C: From Birmingham ... it was ... sort of ... post War ... I think they sort of split
Europe off into (...) British zones (...) American zones ... and I don't know who else was
part of it ... Russian ... I think (...) wasn't it? (...) so he was stationed in Austria, and
obviously met my mother then (...) and they had a sort of whirlwind romance (...) she
was very young, without parents ... both of her parents had died (...) not in the War (...) pre-war (...) and she was brought up by her grandmother (...) a very strict woman (...) and
I can remember her (...) I'm trying to sort of think what actually influenced me when I
was younger (...) and it was much more white British army life.

G: But you were very much born on a cultural boundary (...)

C: Yeah ... and I think this is where relationships influenced my cultural heritage ...
really ... 'cos I was closer to my father than my mother (...) which is another story (...) but
I was closer to him (...) so I guess culturally I allied myself with white, British, army
life (...) because he was quite significant in my life ... he was very much my attachment
figure ... he was the person who ... if you like ... took me to ... 'cos army life is a lot of
moving around and different (...) (2)

G: What language did you speak at home?

C: British (...) English (...) English (...) yeah. Which is why I am saying I don't really
connect with the Austrian (...) aspect (...) and that might be about the relationship with
my mother (...) which influenced ... obviously influenced whether I would take on
board her heritage (...) but actually I took on board his heritage.

G: And the British army has a very strong internal culture ...
Transcription of interview 'Clara'

C: Yeah ... I mean ... It's like ... sort of little England (.) [laughs] ... displaced from England really ... if that makes sense ... so you have these pockets ... and it was everything was very close knit (.) very much about army life ... (.5) and he was very important to me in terms of things that have always interested me ... and stayed with me ... things like (1) emm (.) enjoyment of animals ... emm ... nature ... walking ... activity ... music ... reading (.) so those were all ... sort of ... very important things I learned from him ... emm (.) sounds a bit hop-sided doesn't it ... that I ... my mother was very much the ... sort of ... care-taker ... who always did the physical stuff ... you know ... cooking and cleaning and making sure I'd got white socks ... and that you looked good (.)

G: She sounds as if she was in the background.

C: Very much so ... and I'm an only child ... as well (.) so I guess that probably has some bearing on the whole thing (1) So early influences were my father and his lifestyle (.) which was his life and his career ... and ... family activities tended to be (1) again it tended to be me and him ... you know (.) my mother was never interested in the walking and the dogs and (.5) and stuff ... it was really bizarre really ... when I've been thinking about it ... she doesn't figure strongly ... not a strong feature (.) which is sad (.) in a lot of ways ... because ... I feel I've lost a whole part of (1) my heritage (.) really (.) and that's the Austrian part of it ... and I don't know whether that's something about her assimilating into army life ... as well ... and not wanting to be different (.) although there were a lot of army families which were mixed families (.) and so obviously army soldiers [laugh] meeting women in the countries that they were actually living in ... emmm (.) so yeah (2) so I guess that ... that ... those are my sort of strongest memories ... around life with my dad rather than my mum (.) emm ...

G: And Austria was almost irrelevant.

Comment [G19]: The England is obvious but what does little mean in this context.
Comment [G20]: Displaced is an interesting choice of words.
Comment [G21]: Again the idea of small or little. And of coherence and cohesion.
Comment [G22]: Immediately jumping from culture back to his father and his importance in his life.
Comment [G23]: The influence of her father was not only profound but persistent.
Comment [G24]: A list of things each of which has a cultural dimension
Comment [G25]: Very important and learned!
Comment [G26]: Again the imbalance of influence.
Comment [G27]: So the mother did have an influence but at a more practical level.

Comment [G28]: The mother was in the background but this does not necessarily mean that her influence was unimportant.
Comment [G29]: Not a cultural factor in itself but an influence on her life. There is a further sense of isolation, especially when taken together with the transience of her early life.
Comment [G30]: Father, lifestyle and father's career.
Comment [G31]: Again the importance and exclusivity of the relationship.
Comment [G32]: Mother dissatisfied.
Comment [G33]: Why bizarre?
Comment [G34]: Again absence of mother and maternal influence.
Comment [G35]: Sad – a feeling!
Comment [G36]: Sense of loss.
Comment [G37]: Was his mother conquered and colonised.
Comment [G38]: Heterogeneity beneath the surface.
Comment [G39]: Sounds as if it was just chance rather than anything else. If her father had been in another country he would have met and married a woman from that country.
Comment [G40]: Yet again, the mother is in the background – unremembered or absent.
Transcription of interview 'Clara'

C: Yeah (.) yeah (.) emm (.) I've come back to it in later years ... recently ... and tried to make sense of it ... and meeting Austrians ... emm (2) and I felt sad for her actually ... because she always wanted to go back to Austria ... and she always tried to talk German with me ... and I would always refuse to engage with it (.) really bizarre really in some ways ... 'cos ... I've gone back to find it ... and now I've met Austrians ... 'cos we go to Austria quite a bit ... (.) I can see her (.) in a different light ... in terms of how Austrians are ...

G: Yes ...

C: ... and they're very ... very particular ... and very home focussed ... and everything's got to look good ...

G: Very traditional (.) very conservative ...

C: Yeah ... and I think she tried to hang on to some of that but ... actually ... lost a lot of that on the way ... emm ... so I didn't get the benefit of that ... and I don't know whether that was because (1) of our emotional connection ... or whether she was trying to lose some of it and be part of army ... army life (.) really (.) so we started off in Austria ... then we went to North Africa to ... ehh (.) Libya (2)

G: With the army again?

C: With the army ... yeah (1) and my other recollection is that my mother always worked (1) you know she was a secretary (.)

G: In the army? (.)
Transcription of interview 'Clara'

117 C: Yeah (.) and she was never around ... really (.) emm (.) and I think she had her
own issues around attachment and stuff ... and I think that came into (1) it. I had a
nanny ... I had a black nanny (1)

120 G: I see (.)

122 C: [laughs]

124 G: So that's yet another cultural ...

126 C: Difference ...

128 G: Interface ...

130 C: Absolutely ... yeah (.) Sudanese (.) nanny (.) emm (.) and I don't actually
remember her (.) but I remember (1) spending a lot of time with another person who
was black (.) and going to the markets with her and sitting in the kitchen with her ...

134 eating dates (.) you know picking dates off the trees and things and ... so it was like (2)

135 interesting that I've just been reading The Help (1) I don't know if you know the book
136 (.) it's about Mississippi (.) and the States and ... emm (.) black nannies bringing up
white children (.) and that just sort of made me think about how important
it was (.) and maybe that also contributed to my mother's distance...

139 G: Yes ...

141 C: From me (1)

143 G: Because you were more closely attached ...

George MacDonald
Transcription of interview 'Clara'

C: ... Day to day life was with the nanny (.) and ... sort of ... reading that book has actually ... sort of ... made me think a little bit about my relationship with my mother (.) and her distance (.) she wouldn't say she was distant ... but I felt distance (.) it's never been a close relationship ...

G: What you're describing is a story that could have come from the Raj? (.)

C: Oh yes (.) my mother had this very pretentious sort of ... view of life ... that she was brought up in this (.) sort of (.) she said wealthy environment and you know ... the family had a string of hotels ... and she was spoiled ... and stuff like that ... and you can see that in her now (.) in terms of she likes to go and spend her holidays in hotels (.) to be waited on (1) so it's like ... there's an element of her ... she was looking for that (.) princess type (.)

G: It is the little princess ... isn't it (.)

C: Mmm (.) mmm (.) mmm (.) so yes ... and I think that was probably ... and just sort of reading the book and thinking about my own experience ... and thinking about my own identity ... and my relationship with black people [removed] is like jigsaw pieces (.) coming together and making sense of who I am a person and how I relate in my own family (.) and then from there (.) we spent a couple of years (.)

G: So that was maybe twelve or thirteen ...

C: No I was three (.) four (.) five (.) that age (.)

G: Oh I see! (.)

C: So I went from Austria ... where I was born (1) and in between we did ... sort of ... little bits to Britain (.) you know with the army ... being based somewhere in Britain
Transcription of interview 'Clara'

(. and before you get your next posting (. out to (.5) So very nomadic ... and very (.)
no roots ...)

G: Yes (.)

C: So you almost have to carry your roots with you (. And I suppose, because army
life is very similar wherever you go (. there's that sense of (. familiarity with routine
and (.)

G: It's a combination of having (. in one sense ... quite deep roots (. but in another
sense ... having quite shallow roots (.)

C: Absolutely (. absolutely (. so there's the familiarity of army life ... wherever you
are ... in the world (. but you don't get this sense of ... there is ... gosh (. I suppose it's
different levels of community (. because you don't have the same people with you (.)
so although the lifestyle is similar wherever you are ... you don't have the people (.)

G: And you don't have an answer to the question (. who am I (. where do I come
from (.)

C: I think that's an evolving thing that (. lots of things have happened over the years
that have (. and I remember some aspects of Africa (. like the camel sticking it's head
through my window [laughs] and my mother being really horrified about the fact that
this camel (. and there was me putting my hand in this (. sort of (. camel's mouth
(.5) because it went against her ... sort of ... cleanliness view (. mixing with

G: Mixing with ...
Transcription of interview ‘Clara’

C: Dirty animals (.) although we had dogs (.) you see and she did like the dogs (.) so (.) and then we had ... lizards (.) I used to think they were skinks (.) in the bedrooms and things ... and it sort of freaked her out a little bit [laughs] for me they were just friends (.) really (.) you know (.) and I think that's another thing (.) although there were lots people around (.) it was quite a lonely existence (.)

G: You were an only child and you were in an environment where there was no natural community around you (.)

C: Mmm (.) yeah (.) and I also ... I do remember things like (.) and I guess this relates to [removed] who am I and my identity (.) I do remember the sort of negative comments about people there ... like the dirty Arabs living across the road (.)

G: Mmm ...

C: Where did that come from ... because ... actually ... as a people they're not dirty (.) you know (.) but there's these negative comments that have filtered through to me ... which I took on board (.) so yes (.) that was (.) so I didn't actually (.) and I was just thinking about this image of home in terms of a place (.) don't have that (.) don't have that at all (.) very nomadic ... almost ... there's no one building ... no one place that (.) is home (.) except we did ... when we came back to Britain (.) on and off (.) we always went to my grandfather (.) now that was very important to me (.) he was really (.)

G: Your grandfather was important to you? (.)

C: Yeah (.) yeah (.) and I can remember his home (.) vividly (.) he had a lot of clocks (.) ticking and (.) it was a very comforting sound ... a lot of people find clocks annoying ... but actually ... I find it really (.) comforting and relaxing ... because ... actually ... it takes me back to then ... and he had this beautiful garden (.) rose

Comment [G80]: Dirty again
Comment [G81]: Not all animals tarned with the same brush
Comment [G82]: Did Clara like animals because they were 'dirty' and despised and ousted
Comment [G83]: Maybe she also liked them because of the reaction they had other mothers
Comment [G84]: Indication of loneliness, or in this case too much into it
Comment [G85]: Acknowledges loneliness
Comment [G86]: Loneliness and isolation
Comment [G87]: Dirty animals, dirty Arabs!
Comment [G88]: Dirty does not apply in a literal sense - so what does it mean?
Comment [G89]: Clear evidence of external influence from remote and others.
Comment [G90]: Took on board, but not necessarily in a direct way.
Comment [G91]: No image of home.
Comment [G92]: Nomadic again – which does have Arab roots
Comment [G93]: So no place or building.
Comment [G94]: But there were small items to cling on to.
Comment [G95]: First there is no place, then a place emerges and then it is a vivid memory
Comment [G96]: A specific memory
Comment [G97]: Comfort sounds like belonging, contained, held – and the sound of a clock is worth like. Perhaps symbolically visits to her grandfather was returning to the womb?
Comment [G98]: Other people find it annoying – but I am different!
Comment [G99]: Sounds like home
Transcription of interview 'Clara'

235 garden (.) emm (.) so those are the really strong memories (.) and he had a nice
236 sense of humour (.) and my dad had a nice sense of humour (.) and he was a bit of a
237 teaser (.) and ... ehh ... the usual sort of ... look at that and then hit you on the nose (.)
238 and smell my hand (.) smell cheese (.) and then he would ... sort of ... hold your hand
239 out and [smacks hand] [laughs] ...
240
241 G: [laughs] ...
242
243 C: And lots of things like that (.) which my children enjoyed (.) from him ... because
244 he was a bit of a teaser (.) emm (.) so much more of a fun person (.) and my granddad
245 was like that (.) so he was quite an important person (.) in my life (.) and you know
246 (.) oh gosh! ... you know ... just thinking ... we never had (.) although we met with
247 members of the extended family (.) it never felt close (.) you know (.) very fragmented
248 ...
249
250 G: My observation of army life ... from situations I've seen is that there is a real
251 atmosphere of transience and impermanence (.)
252
253 C: Mmm (.) mmm (.) there's no (.)
254
255 G: No roots at all (.)
256
257 C: Mmm (.) mmm (.) I was always saying ... about ... you have this familiar (.) the
258 familiarity of ... you know ... the barracks and routines ... but actually ... because the
259 people are not the same (.) you don't (.) you're not anywhere long enough to build
260 relationships (.)
261
262 G: Yes ...
263

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Transcription of interview ‘Clara’

C: That are permanent (1) and the interesting thing is that my husband is from an army family [laughs] (.5) an air force family ... but a forces family (.0) which is really interesting (.0) as well (.0) in the sense of (.0) similarities and in terms of our relationship (.0) (...)

G: Do you think that was a factor in (...)

C: No ... no (.0) just a coincidence (.0) but it might well be (.0) you know (.0) I don't know [laughs] (.0) but (.0) so yes (.0) that's early life really (.0) emm (.0) changed significantly when I was eleven ... 'cos I went to boarding school (...)

G: Right (.0) right (.0) and that's another culture (.0)

C: Thats ... an absolutely (.0) it was a horrendous experience (.0) horrendous (.0) and ehh (.0) it was a boarding school attached to a grammar school (1) emm (.0) and I can understand why ... you know ... and that its created a lot of angst in the family (.0) amongst other things (.0) that have come later (.0) emm ... reaching secondary school (.0) they're still in Germany (.0) looking for stability (.0) they were going to come back to the Midlands ... which is where my father's family was from (.0) emm ... put the child into a boarding environment (.0) but it was a small boarding school attached to a grammar school ... so the majority of children went home to families (.5) so again ... in a situation where you weren't with family (.0) emm (1) if you like (3) emm (.0) random (.5) random people from (.0) random environments (.0) because also (.0) emm (.0) there were some army people (.0) 'cos that's obviously ... that's how they heard about it (.0) there were a couple of families with children from the army were there (.0) but there were also children who had been in care (...) and (.0) you know were actually placed in that environment ... because they were obviously bright and able ... but their educational needs weren't being met by being in their families (...) so again it was a bit ... sort of disjointed (...) and (...) again (...) not ...
Transcription of interview 'Clara'

G: And in a sense ... you were the outsider ... because you were part of this boarding
community within a bigger ...

C: Gosh yes (,) yeah () yearning () yearning is the word () but also this woman that
ran the place () she was like () you know the head mistress in Matilda [laughs] () she
was just () she was a miss () and she obviously had a lot of issues of her own ... and
not an empathic person () emm () and I'm quite a shy person () much to everybody's
amusement () but I hated it () hated it () it was not a good experience () you know
() and then they came back from Germany ... literally ... just about a year () two years
after I'd been in this boarding house () and they lived four miles away and left me
there () so there's this sense of abandonment () and I had been angry with my mother
[laughs] which wasn't a good relationship anyway () but ...

G: I don't know if you noticed () you called it a boarding house there ...

C: It was a boarding house () yeah () 'cos it was ... it was literally a house () emm
() down the road from the school () so it wasn't even part of the school as such () it
was literally a boarding house ()

G: It was a house where some people from the school ...

C: Lived ()

G: Yeah ...

C: Yeah () yeah () so yeah it was a boarding house () so again not really any roots
or connections () all I can remember is that it was not a nice experience () not a nice
experience () there were some aspects of it that were OK () emm () when I think
about it () there were ... you know ... being with other people () emm ... there were
some nice people there () emm () but I can't honestly () I can remember some of
Transcription of interview 'Clara'

them (.5) but they weren't lasting (.5) friendships (.2) as such (.2) emm (.2) and we had
these sort of guinea pigs (.4) [laughs] I remember the guinea pigs (.2) again animals ...

G: Mmm ...

C: And that connection with animals ... and ehh (.)

G: Because maybe it's easier to have a ...

C: Relationship with animals ...

G: Yes ...

C: Unconditional love ...

G: And there's no ...

C: No demands ...

G: Yeah ...

C: And they give a lot (.2) animals do (.2) animals have always been important in my
life ... and still are ... you know (.2) got horses and dogs ... and all sorts (.2) so yeah ...
they're really important (.2) and always have been (.2) so we've always had dogs when I
was little as well (.2) so dogs have always been (.2) if you like ... my friends (.2) you
know ... the ones you can talk to (.2) the ones you can share your problems with (.2) the
ones that listen to you (.2) the ones that take notice of you ... emm (.2) because I think
army life is very busy ... my father was in the special investigation branch (.2) so he
wasn't always around ... so he was always out doing things (.2) emm ... I think my
mother was very much ... floating around somewhere (.2) yeah ...

Comment [G141]: Nice people. Starts to say she cannot remember any of them, but then
admits that she has memories.

Comment [G142]: And transient.

Comment [G143]: But there were animals.

Comment [G144]: Which seem to stand in for human relationships.

Comment [G145]: Again partly my words, but she readily accepts the idea that it is easier to
relate to animals.

Comment [G146]: And the relationship is interpreted as unconditional love.

Comment [G147]: Why are demands a problem.

Comment [G148]: Animals are still important.

Comment [G149]: Dogs were her friends.

Comment [G150]: Of course there are largely proportions, attempts to meet Clare's need to
be understood, listened to, noticed.

Comment [G151]: Back to the structure and routine.

Comment [G152]: Her father was physically absent a lot.

Comment [G153]: And her mother's presence seemed to go unnoticed or be ignored.
Transcription of interview 'Clara'

354  G: Mmm ...
356  C: Emm ...
358  G: The impression I get is that she's floating around up there somewhere (.)
360  C: She is floating [laughs] (.) but she hasn't quite got up there yet [laughs] (.) but (.)
362  emm (.) and the same is true of school as well (.) it wasn't (.) you know (.) it's just
363  really sad (.) actually (.) when I'm thinking back on it ... actually (.) it's sort of rootless
364  (.) so where do I get my sense of who I am from? (.)
365  G: Yes ...
367  C: Emm ... and (.) I suppose I got a lot ... in the early days ... from my father (.) his
369  views ... his attitudes ... his sense of fun (.) teasing ... those sort of things were quite
370  important (.) music's quite important (.) physical activity (.) so those are aspects of
371  myself that I enjoy (.) I enjoy the outdoor life (.) I enjoy physical activity (.) I enjoy
372  animals (.) and he was always a very animal person (.) and he did work with animals
373  before he went in the army (.) and part of his army career was working with horses ...
374  and stuff (.) so ehh (.) so I guess there's that sense of (.) connection (.)
375  G: Yes ...
377  C: Emm (.) reading (.) you know ... emm (.) he was a member of the Folio society
379  (.) so loads of books around (.) and ehh (.) emm (.) sort of much more into (.) sort of ...
380  I guess the arts (.)
381  G: What kind of books? (.) what kind of books did you like? (.)

Comment [G154]: Another feeling coming through.
Comment [G155]: Rootless again.
Comment [G156]: Good question!
Comment [G157]: Back to the father and his influence.
Comment [G158]: Lots of books around, but my sense was that the selection was quite
limited by her father's taste and the restrictions of army life.
Comment [G159]: Wanted to probe this a bit.
Transcription of interview ‘Clara’

C: What kind of books did I like? (.) ehm (.) gosh (.) I mean ... it was limited by him in a lot of ways (.) ehh (.) so they tended to be things like ...

G: They were his books? ...

C: The classics [laughs (.) like Charles Dickens ... and (.) I went through a phase ... when I was older ... when I was in my teenage years of Russian (.) Dostoyevsky and all of those books (.) and ehh (.) and there was a sort of ... ahh (.) my favourite film of all time is Dr Zhivago [laughs (.) ehm (.) you know (.) that's a total romantic fantasy ... but there's also this sort of fantasy about Russia (.) old Russia ... before the revolution (.)

G: Yes (.)

C: Maybe I wanted to be a little princess ... as well ... like my mother (.)

G: A princess (?) or maybe (?) one thing that Russia had was deep historical and cultural roots (?) there was a sense of belonging ...

C: It's a searching ... a bit (?) yeah (?) I think I have been searching all my life (?) I think there are aspects of me that are very much from my early life (?) ehm (?) which are the sort of ... the reading ... the music ... the animals ... and the sort of (?) which you can take wherever you go ... 

G: Yes ...

C: Ehm (.) so (?) so yeah (?) but no sense of community (?)

G: No (?) and from what you say (?) not much sense of friendship (?) or anything deeper ...
Transcription of interview 'Clara'

C: Quite an isolating (.) lonely (.) life as an only child (.) and eh (.) moving around (.) so (.) so you know (.) it's like (.) and as a shy child as well (.) it's like you have to start again (.) with building relationships (.) knowing that two years down the line you're going to be moving off again (.) or their going to be moving on (.)

G: So why invest in them (.) why put yourself at risk of hurt (.)

C: Mmm (.) or putting the energy into it (.) which is probably why (.) then (.) animals became more important (.) because you were (.) we always took the dogs with us (.)

G: The dog was for life (.) whereas the people were (.)

C: But even then the dogs aren't for life (.) because (.) we had to leave one in Austria (.) we had to leave one in Africa (.) then to leave one in (.) the one I remember the most is (.) we had a boxer called Buster (.) and enn (.) they didn't even think about bringing him back (.) to Britain (.) enn (.) they left him in Germany (.) to be a mascot of the army (.) you know (.) so I think that's what was lacking in my household was empathy (.) it was done for the best reasons (.) and for (.) in their eyes (.) but actually (.) the thing about my childhood I remember is actually (.) I mean (.) it's not that they didn't care (.)

G: But they didn't understand how important it was for you (.)

C: Yeah (.) yeah (.) oh god! (.) we had (.) I had budgies (.) I had two budgies (.) and I remember him turning up at the school one day (.) and it was quite (.) quite weird what he did (.) was actually (.) he sort of talked to this woman (.) said I've got some bad news ... and stuff ... you know (.) a member of the family had died (.) it was my budgie (.) and I didn't (.) when I think back to it (.) this woman got really .. sort of (.)
Transcription of interview 'Clara'

Oh gosh ... you know ... how awful ... this is really awful ... thinking it was a member of the family ... you know ... in terms of ... a human member of the family ... emm ... and it was my budgie! ...

G: But your father obviously understood how important that was to you ...

450

C: Mmm ... but he didn't bring my dog over ... yeah (1) so that was quite a big loss for me. ... the dog ...

452

G: So in summary, then it's a kind of patchwork quilt of bits and pieces ... that in some ways didn't even quite fit together ...

458

C: That's how I would describe my life ... and how I have developed is a bit like a patchwork quilt ... and I think it's a bit about ... because I haven't been in one place ... emm ... grabbing what you can ... from this ... grabbing what you can from that ... and I think that ... there's a richness in that as well ... I don't think it's a negative necessarily ... because I think it's contributed to who I am as a person now ...

462

emmm but I think it became richer ... later on into my life ... because it was very ... trying to think what word ... I was very narrow in a lot of ways ...

466

G: And I think as an observer ... the comment I'd make is that something you've already alluded to which is the almost passive nature of your mother ...

470

C: Yeah ... I mean ... on an emotional level ... which is separate from the ...

472

sort of ... cultural level ... really ... we didn't have a bad relationship ... but we didn't have a close relationship ... emmm ... and I've always felt ... emm ... because of her own needs ... emmm ... it's almost been a rivalry for my father's affection ... and ... I mean ... even ... recently she came to Austria with us (.) and (.) my father came up for some reason ... and emm (1) there was some sort of comment about (.) oh well ... he never took me shopping like he took you shopping (.) and it was very much at a

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Transcription of interview 'Clara'

child level (.) quite a sort of childish rivalry (.) sibling rivalry ... rather than mother
474  
child relation (.) and that ... I think is still (.) still there (.) I'll tell you one of the
475  
really sad things (.) this is really sad (.) 'cos my father's dead now (.) I mean he died
476  
about three or four years ago (.) not on good terms because of my relationship with a
477  
black man ... basically (.) really (.) so I lost that relationship in a lot of ways (.) and he
478  
went down in my estimation (.) but ... in my mother's home, there are no pictures of
479  
me (.) and a few years ago, she threw all my photographs away (.) so (.) emm (.) and
480  
then she wonders why I get (.) why I'm not that interested in ... in her welfare ... really
481  
(.) emm (.) so there's a lot of (.) lots of currents going on there as well (.) and so
482  
... when I go into her house ... she's put up all these ... sort of ... pictures of my father
483  
(.) it's like a ... sort of ... memorial to him (.) she's got pictures of my children (.) she's
484  
got pictures of all the animals (.) but there's no pictures of me (.) it's like I don't
485  
exist (.)
486  
487  
G: Mmm ...
488  
489  
C: In there (.) and it's like (.) I've got him now (.) I've got all his photographs
490  
[laughs] (.) and she's ... sort of ... reliving when she met him (.) and I wasn't around (.)
491  
really (.) so (.) emm (.) so yeah ... it's kind of sad (.)
492  
493  
G: It must be very hurtful (.)
494  
495  
C: Em (.) I think I've learned to live with it ... really (.) yes it is hurtful ... in some
496  
ways (.)
497  
498  
G: So moving on ...
499  
500  
C: It's a slight digression really (.) I'm just ... sort of thinking about how much ()
501  
how much I've lost really ... as a result of (.)
502  
503  

Comment [G194]: Who is the mother here and who is the child?
Comment [G195]: That does sound sad and Clara follows this up with an example of the
sadness.
Comment [G196]: Sad!
Comment [G197]: A really bold bland statement of the issue with her father.
Comment [G198]: Presumably the real sadness.
Comment [G199]: Although he responded negatively to Clara's relationship and although
she judged him for this, the issue is that he still occupies the top position in her.
Comment [G200]: Echoes of Sleeping Beauty.
Comment [G201]: Sounds like a very violent act (exhales).
Comment [G202]: Real bitterness beneath the surface.
Comment [G203]: Like she has been expropriated from the history of the family.
Comment [G204]: Underlining the importance of her father.
Comment [G205]: The children and even the animals are allowed to exist but not her.

Comment [G206]: Sounds really competitive and really sad.
Comment [G207]: How can you learn to live with something like that? But how can you
continue if you don't want.
Comment [G208]: Sounds abrupt, like I am trying to dismiss the material as irrelevant,
which is not the case. I felt that I was getting close to a boundary that should not be crossed.

Comment [G209]: This idea of loss really registered with me.
Transcription of interview ‘Clara’

G: Lost or never had ...

C: Yeah (.) in terms of my Austrian ... you know (.) sense of self ... really (.) so it has been very much white British (1)

G: With Austrian ... with black African ...

C: Bits and pieces of elsewhere ...

G: All round the outside (.)

C: Yeah (.) yeah (.) yeah ... and I do remember (.) I mean she cooked ... she was a good cook ... and she used to do lots of Austrian food (.) and ehh ... you know (.) we would go out (.) she lost her Austrianness as well ... and her father was quite a rigid guy (1) emm ... and she always wanted to go back to Austria (.) I can remember this (.) every year she would get the ... you know (.) the holiday brochures out ... and be talking about going back there (.) and she never went back ... and he never (.) he always said I'm not going anywhere (.) I've done my travelling (1) that's it (.) sort of thing ... so it was kind of sad (.) I understand where she's come from ... and why she feels how she does (.) I just would like a little bit of it back (.)

G: Yes (.) you can understand her profound sense of loss ...

C: Mmm ...

G: But she can't seem to even think about yours ...

C: No (.) oh (.) and can't understand why I felt so ... why I was so (.) why I was so affected by going to boarding school (.) when all she could say was we did it for you
Transcription of interview 'Clara'

... your best ... the girl you (...) and adalada (...) and I'm saying (...) I'm just telling you it was an awful environment (...)  

G: Yes (...)  

C: Yeah (...) it's like (...) just give me a little bit of understanding and empathy please here (...)  

G: So [name removed] must have entered adult life (...) or adolescent life without a great deal to hold on to (...)  

C: Yeah (...) what I did hold onto was the ... sort of ... cmm (...) I suppose you don't trust people (...) in some ways (...) because they are either transient in your life (...) or they are passing through (...)  

G: Or they have not done as good a job as they might have (...)  

C: Yeah (...) yeah (...) so (...) which is why I suppose animals are really significant in my life (...) because they're there (...) until they go (...) So yes (...) so the ... sort of ... a bit rootless and a bit grabbing at aspects to make me ... really (...) because (...) and that did come from my dad (...) you know (...) the sort of ... as I say ... the music ... the books ... the love of books (...) and (...) needing and moving on ... you know (...) don't stand still ... sort of thing (...)  

G: But on the other hand (...) although your father was your strongest attachment figure (...) that's not the relationship you sought in your adult life (...)  

C: No (...) no (...) very different (...) yeah (...) cmm (...) next phase (...) [laughs] I was very fearful of my dad (...) I didn't have the confidence to stand up to him (...)  

George MacDonald
Transcription of interview ‘Clara’

G: Mmm (.)

C: Emm (.) so in some ways he was (.) he was important (.) emm (.) and I know he cared ... and wanted the best for me (.) but I also felt like ... you know ... if I did an image ... it would be (.) I would be down (.) I would be about this high [makes a gesture with thumb and first finger of right hand] and he would be this high [looks up (.) emm (.) and almost as if you didn’t have a voice (.) you know (.)

G: You were never able to rebel (.)

C: No (.) no (.) was always a good girl [laughs] always the good girl (2) you know ...

I mean ... even when I was at school (.) d’you know I would ... and do naughty things [laughs] but the teachers and the care staff ... whoever or whatever their titles were (.) they always knew (.) just pull Pat into the room and she’d go bright red and tell the truth (.) I couldn’t just (.)

G: Mmmm (.)

C: You know (.) I was always the good girl (.) y’know (.) emm that’s changed as I grew up (.) but ... ehh (.) and nobody wanted the good girl to be their friend if they wanted to do naughty things (.) so ... ehh (.) mmm (.) really quite interesting that (.)

G: I feel a certain amount of empathy ... because I’m an only child (.) and I was always the good guy (.) the person that couldn’t stand up to his father (.) I think not having the opportunity to cross boundaries and rebel as a child does lead you to want to rebel ... in a quite profound way ... later (.)

C: Yeah (.) I do think there was a sort of ... era type ... age thing as well (.) because ... obviously .... I was brought up in the 50s (.) you know (.) when children are seen but not heard (.) type ... emmm (1) I can always remember ... you know ... how they

Comment [G239]: Sounds like an understatement.
Comment [G240]: That much is already clear, although it is working towards a but.
Comment [G241]: There is a hierarchy.
Comment [G242]: Quite a telling remark. No voice!
Comment [G243]: Rebellion was the flounder in my mind rather than separation or adolescent growth.
Comment [G244]: Pushes her back into a childish place.
Comment [G245]: Something significant about the attitude to authority.
Comment [G246]: Always the good girl who did what she was told.
Comment [G247]: I wonder!
Comment [G248]: Not only the good girl but isolated because of it and separated from her contemporaries.
Comment [G249]: I don’t think I would have gone for self disclosure in a counselling situation – and not sure if it should have done here.
Transcription of interview 'Clara'

used to tell everybody ( ) she's such a good girl ( ) you know ( ) she can sit at the table and we wouldn't even know she was there ( ) and you think ( ) whaaas ( ) was this good child care practice [laughs] so no voice ( ) no voice ( )
597 G: No voice ( )
598 C: Yeah ( ) yeah ( )
599 G: Or a silent voice ( )
600 C: Mmm ( ) definitely ( ) yeah ( )
601 G: Silent screams ( )
602 C: Yes ( ) and seen but not heard ( ) That's a phrase that's always stuck in my head ( ) because I think that was ... that era ... as well ( ) I swore I would never be like that as a parent ( ) with my children ( ) thank god ( ) emmm ( ) so yes ( ) so I came out of secondary school ( ) I think an angry person [laughs] emmm ( ) but ( ) you know ( ) he did give me some good advice ... and I went on to do teacher training ( ) yeah ( ) 'cos I was wanting to go and be ( ) I don't know ( ) a receptionist or something ( ) I didn't want to be ( ) I hated school ( ) I didn't achieve very well ( ) I was always just unhappy ... in school ( ) so ... ehh ( ) and it was another ( ) if you like ... cultural environment ... that was alien to a lot of ways ... because everybody else was ( ) had come up through primary school together ( ) and it was like ( ) again ( ) trying to get into the group ( ) but actually ... you couldn't get into the group ... because they were all going out ... and you went back to this ( ) bleak ( )
620 G: Bleak house ( )

Comment [G250]: Clara attempts to rationalise it in terms of the values of the time.
Comment [G251]: But indicates her disapproval.
Comment [G252]: Back to the absent voice.
Comment [G253]: There is an echo!
Comment [G254]: That was probably a useful distinction - although a silent voice is not a voice at all. However it holds on to the fact that the unheard words are formulated and articulated.
Comment [G255]: Maybe going too far, but it is what I sensed and what I meant to say.
Comment [G256]: Maybe too much for Clara, because it sends her back to the platitude of 'children should be seen and not heard'.
Comment [G257]: Back to the values of the time.
Comment [G258]: And Clara's disapproval of them.
Comment [G259]: First time the emotion of anger has emerged.
Comment [G260]: Lack of ambition or silent rebellion.
Comment [G261]: More silent rebellion.
Comment [G262]: And she again makes the link to culture.
Comment [G263]: The culture of the outsider who can never join the group.
Comment [G264]: That was my association.
Transcription of interview 'Clara'

C: Boarding house (.) ehh (.) because you weren't allowed out (.) you know (.) again (.) a bit of the era as well (.) no way were we allowed out (.) stuck in (.) it was like a prison (.) in some ways ... because (.) you weren't ... if you went out on Saturdays you had to go out with one of the senior people ... and you trundled down the (.) I remember ... trundling down the road (.) you know ... in our school uniform (.) which was bright red (.) ehh (.) so you (.) you know (.) you just (.) you were seen (1) so yeah (.) so again that was quite a alien environment ... really (.) I don't really (.) It was just an awful environment . . situation (.) I remember going off to teacher training college ... almost relieved (.) emm (.) at that point my mother had wanted to go to Australia (1) and they had got everything packed ... and you know (.) I said I'm not going (.) I'm going to teacher training college (.) you wanna go (.) I'll join you in the holidays (.) you know (.) I'll find some way of (.) my aunt ... uncle (.) I'll stay at my uncle's (.) during the holidays and I'll come out for the main holidays (.) emm (.)

G: So when you were eighteen ... or so ... your parents had this plan to ...

C: Go to Australia ...

G: Go as far away in the (.) world as it was possible to go ... almost (.) leaving you ...

C: No they were going to take me (.)

G: They were going to take you (.)

C: Yeah (.) but I did actually put my foot down and say no (.) I'm going to go on and do teacher training (.) emm (.) and (.) I suppose it was my little attempt at being a rebel (.) finding some independence (.) but even then didn't allow me to be independent (.) you know (.) 'cos they decided to (.) sort of (.) change their minds (.) and stay here (.) and of course ... that has caused resentment from my mother (.)

Comment [G265]: The outsider, the prisoner that even has to wear prison clothing.
Comment [G266]: Was the environment alien or was she the alien? Both I am sure.
Comment [G267]: More expressions of emotion.
Comment [G268]: Escape?
Comment [G269]: Her mother wants something. Emigration to Australia often has the association for me of escape. Moving to (almost) the furthest away place in the world. Also the association that if you take away the 'al' you are left with Austria. Not sure if her mother had ever been to Australia.
Comment [G270]: Rebellion at last!
Comment [G271]: This makes some sense for Clara - but it also sounded volunteers ... justifiably so.

Comment [G272]: I say what I was thinking.
Comment [G273]: I felt sympathy with Clara ... she was not consulted about the idea ... did not share the vision but was expected to go along with it.
Comment [G274]: Again the feeling of taking a stand ... resisting ... maybe also retaliating. "Put my foot down" almost suggests the stamping of feet.
Comment [G275]: Clara acknowledges the rebellion.
Comment [G276]: Sounds more grown up - and of course she is technically an adult at this stage.
Comment [G277]: But she was not allowed her independence. It is not clear how this decision was taken.
Comment [G278]: But it is clear that her mother bore a grudge.
Transcription of interview 'Clara'

G: Because they stayed for you ...

C: She sees that as (.) I spoiled her chances (.) again (.) you know (.) she's not like a mother ... she's a child (.) a sibling (.) It's all your fault that we didn't go (.) And I say ... I didn't stop you from going (.) I said you could go (.)

G: It's very narcissistic (.)

C: Absolutely (.) absolutely (.) yeah (.) she's a woman with her own attachment difficulties and issues ... because her mother and father died when she was very young (.) and ehh (.) so she was brought up by her grandmother (.) who was quite a severe woman (.) but ehh (.) emmm (.) tiny but severe (.) she was a tiny little woman (.) I can remember her (.) so yes (.) I went off to teacher training college (.) and it was like whooooo (.) freedom (.) but actually ... even though it was freedom (.) it really wasn't freedom (.) yeah (.) it was like ... emmm (.) It was scary (.) scary (.) again (.) because I was on my own (.) didn't know anybody (.) emmm (.) hadn't got (.)

G: You didn't have a network (.)

C: No (.)

G: You didn't have the (.) I suppose the equipment to build it (.)

C: That's right (.) stepping into the unknown (.) emmm (.) yeah (.) it was quite scary (.) interestingly enough, the person I (.) actually became very friendly with during teacher training (.) she was an army person [laughs] (.) she came from an army family (.) and ... emmm (.) and because I went to teacher training college in Lincolnshire (.) the links were with the RAF (.) emmm (.) Cranwell and (.) emmm (.) you know (.) the air force bases that were around there (.) so again (.) which is interesting ... in a sense ... is actually ... connecting with that life (.) because it was the only life I knew (.)
Transcription of interview 'Clara'

G: In a very real sense that was your cultural background (.).

C: Yes ... yes (.) it's the only life I knew (.) that sort of (. ) emm (.) and I guess that's where (. ) people who have been in the army ... actually ... have those connections ... because you do feel that other people are the same (.) they understand what it's like (.) they're doing the same thing as you are (.) that sort of transient moving on (.) and connecting (.) because they've also got that ... that lifestyle of no roots ... moving around (.) emm (.) experience (.)

G: They're like you (.)

C: Mmmm (.) mmm (.) so it's really interesting because (.) emm (.) as I say she was from an army family (.) I then ended up going out with someone from the RAF (.) which is really bizarre in a lot of ways (.) emm (.) so ... yeah (.)

G: Did it seem bizarre to you at the time? (.)

C: Not at the time it didn't ... it felt right at the time (.)

G: But talking about it now (.) it sounds quite natural (.)

C: Mmm (.) mmm (.) but emm (.) and then we both went down to Bedfordshire (.) to work (.) we both got jobs teaching down there (.) but then (.) and I suppose this is probably (.) I'm just wondering if it's (.) sort of ... symbolic of army life ... it's like (.) ran out of a connection with each other (.)

G: Mmm (.)

C: It's like (.) it was time to move on (.)

Comment [G288]: Voicing my thought.

Comment [G289]: Very clear acknowledgement of the structure in rootlessness and transience.

Comment [G290]: So she found friendship with someone from a similar army background and romance with someone from the nearby RAF base.

Comment [G291]: That word again.

Comment [G292]: This time I picked it up.

Comment [G293]: And I suppose got the response I expected. It seemed right at the time. It seemed comfortable, familiar.

Comment [G294]: I feel a sort of sadness. The relationship had no real depth. It was just a defence against isolation and loneliness that was abandoned without emotion when it no longer served a purpose. I suppose this may be the case with many friendships – it is the casual way Clara dismisses it that is most powerful.

Comment [G295]: And when it is time to move on you do this without a backward glance!
Transcription of interview 'Clara'

G: There was no depth to it.

C: Yeah, and I think that's interesting in itself ... really it's almost as though you make friendships for a short while and because you've had this sort of nomadic moving around it's almost as though that's as far as you go.

G: You've either got to go deeper or else...

C: Move on...

G: Move on and end the relationship.

C: And I think that's quite just actually it's just sort of really occurred to me that that's what's happened in my life ... really is actually I only go so far and then move on it's almost as though I can't go beyond three ... four years in a friendship because actually that's about all I had in my life you know these sort of chunks ... of time and connecting with people and then...

G: So I don't know maybe that's part of my psyche.

C: Or the forces yeah yeah as I say, we went to Bedfordshire which was interesting as well because it was like my first experience of multicultural environment because certainly if you know Bedford...

G: I don't.
Transcription of interview 'Clara'

C: I mean we went there in the seventies and it was like they had the brick works there and they brought over Italians and oh em mm Jamaica... mm and so you had these really distinct communities in Bedford and mm a large Italian community mm and then cos it was the seventies there was then the East African throwing out of the Indian Asian community mm throwing out of the Indian Asian community mm Uganda...

G: Uganda with Idi Amin...

C: Idi Amin and so there was a big influx of Asians into Bedford as well mm so you had these really distinct communities and because I've been thinking about my own journey in terms of my identity and oh mm and my relationship with others mm it was my first experience really of it but interestingly enough [laughs] mm around Bedford and Bedfordshire there are a lot of army air force bases mm American bases mm so...

G: So there was something familiar...

C: Again it's that familiarity yeah RAF bases and US air force bases so the social life of Bedford tended to mm be around going to the bases so like seeking out that sort of connection mm with that lifestyle you know and I have to say I do have some happy memories of army life because actually you know because you were a sort of a base everything took place on the base or you had connections with other bases so social life you know there was always sort of a lot of family activities you know the big bonfires the emm going to the American bases for the sort of baseball and football American football because that was actually a real big family stuff you know activity...
Transcription of interview 'Clara'

G: And people had to (.) be a self contained community (.) they had to be self
sufficient (.) they had to meet each other's needs (.)

C: So there was (2) quite (1) a connection with that lifestyle (.) so I guess there was
an element of seeking it out (.) in other (.) you know (1) I mean ... I was quite happy to
be (.) connected with the forces ... really (.) just talking about it (.) really (.) just
thinking about it (.) as I say ... our social life was around going to the RAF bases and
the US air force bases (.) emm (.) mainly at the US air force bases (.) they always had
the great Motown people (1) you know I saw everybody (.) you know [laughs] (.)

G: I was going to ask you about popular culture (.) the music and the ...

C: Yeah (.) you know (.) emm (.) Jimmy Ruffin and (.) all the Motown people (.) you
know (1) The ... the Jacksons (.)

G: But you saw it all with a forces stamp on it (.)

C: Oh yeah (.) it was all part of being in the forces (.) yeah (.) But the social life was
good (.) I went out with people in the RAF (.) who were officers (.) So it was quite
(5) I have to say quite pretentious and superficial (.) in a lot of ways (.) you know ...
sort of going for cocktails (.) with the station commander and ...

G: Quite short term ...

C: Brandy and champagne (.) cocktails (.) alcohol was a big thing (1) alcohol was a
big thing in that life (.) I can remember my father (.) you know (.) propping up the
bar (.) and ... you know (.) that was army life (.) that was forces life (.) you know (.)
you worked hard (.) they played hard (.) that was the sort of message (.) but the
playing hard was also (.) alcohol related (.) and a lot of alcohol related issues in the
forces ... and stuff (.) but if you look at the lifestyle ... it is about (.) at the different

Comment [G307]: Clara acknowledges that she sought it out.
Comment [G308]: Hope to be connected.
Comment [G309]: The cultural difference of Black America.
Comment [G310]: Want to try to hold onto this thread.
Comment [G311]: These artists and performers were already becoming a part of the British
popular music scene but they must have seemed new and perhaps exciting to Clara.
Comment [G312]: Again the ready made social life.
Comment [G313]: And now there is a move up the chain hierarchy to officers.
Comment [G314]: Pretentious but it sounds as if Clara enjoyed it.
Comment [G315]: The social structures lubricated by alcohol.
Comment [G316]: Which is immediately fed back to her father.
Comment [G317]: The difficult work and life perhaps needed some lubrication.
Comment [G318]: Which had a negative side.
Transcription of interview ‘Clara’

levels (.) obviously my father was in the ... sort of (.) other ranks (.5) you know (.)
worked his way up (.) but you know (.) so it was beer in the (.)

G: The non-commissioned officers’ mess (.)

C: [laughs] the mess (.) yeah (.) emm (1) and then I moved up in the world (.) I went
out with an officer [laughs] and we went into the officer’s mess (.5) and ... you know
... all the dressing up (.) and ... you know (1) God it was a bit fantasy ...

G: I guess the alcohol (.) sort of smudged out the social boundaries and (.)

C: And also as a shy person ... it actually gave you confidence (.) to actually socialise
and be something (.) different (.) in that sense (.) so yeah (.) so I went to Bedfordshire
(.) and still hankering after army (.) forces life really (1) then I went out with an Italian
(.5) and there was a definite racial hierarchy in eh (2)

G: Bedford (.)

C: Absolutely (.) the white guys (.) you know it was like (.) you started to go out
with an Italian (.) you were on the slippery slope down (.) you know (.) and it was
always (.) I suppose you are going to be going out with a black man next (2) emm (1)
and the conversations ... you know ... you heard were about (.) oh yeah (.) my ex has
been out with an Italian (.) she’s now going out with a black man from one of the army
bases (.) the air force bases or something (.) so there was a definite (1) sort of you
know ... chung ... chung ... chung ... chung (.) and once you (.) you started to
go out with and Italian (.) you started mixing with the Italians (.) the ice cream guys
and the hairdressers [laughs] (.) you know (.) there was no way you were going to go
back out with a white guy (.) and then obviously (.)

G: So it wasn’t reversible (.) you couldn’t go back (.)

Comment [G319]: Referring back to the father that was white working class and worked his
way up to middle class - but never managed to become an officer.

Comment [G320]: Again the hierarchy of ‘moving up’ ... with a slight tinge of excitement.

Comment [G321]: Why was it not real?

Comment [G322]: The shyness returns.

Comment [G323]: Hankering ... staying connected with.

Comment [G324]: Shock, surprise, inevitability.

Comment [G325]: Hierarchy again.

Comment [G326]: An inevitable decline and the sense was that there was no return.

Comment [G327]: Again the inevitability of the decline.

Comment [G328]: I seek to confirm this.
Transcription of interview 'Clara'

C: No (.) no (.) 'cos once you go out with a black man it was hisssss [mimes spraying] (.) definitely (.) you had hit bottom (.) and no white man would touch you (.) emm (.) I went out with an Italian for several years (.) in Bedfordshire (.) It wasn't until I came back to Birmingham that I actually (.) then went out with a black man (.) and it all came true ... didn't it [laughs] (.)

G: But you had this hierarchy in your mind (.)
C: Well ...
G: Not that it was your view of the world ... but it was ...
C: It was around (.) yeah (.) it was definitely around (1) yeah (1) and it's like (.) you were tainted then (1) and I suppose it's like (.) you know (.) OK (1) it's still part of the searching really (.) have I gone off track? (.)
G: No (.) no (.) you haven't (.)
C: I suppose I'm just going through my life history (.) I don't know if that's (.)
G: That's OK (.)
C: But actually (.) it's really quite interesting (.) to see how fragmented it is (.) and what I've taken from each (.) each bit (.)
G: And how (.) the connections between them (.) at first seem tenuous (.) but actually are probably much deeper than that (.)

Comment [G329]: Clara confirms this.
Comment [G330]: She takes the first step.
Comment [G331]: But this is linked to the inevitability of taking the next.
Comment [G332]: Other ways of looking at the decline.
Comment [G333]: So exploring the decline is a part of her search for herself??
Comment [G334]: She seems to think that she has crossed a boundary or begins to feel uncomfortable. As far as I am concerned it is absolutely on track since it relates to culture, Clara's attitude to it, and her use of it.
Comment [G335]: I try to reassure her ... to keep the train of thought going.
Comment [G336]: But something has made her feel uncomfortable. I suspect it was some sort of insight into herself that was uncomfortable.
Comment [G337]: Feels like we are back to a more intellectual place. Where things are interesting and we are taking an objective helicopter view of the world.
Comment [G338]: Not sure what I was trying to say here. Maybe it was something to do with trying to stay in a deeper place.
C: I think there's an element of searching ( ) that's gone on in my life ( ) and
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taking what I can from bits ( ) obviously I took ( ) I love Italy ( ) and I love Italian
food ( ) and I love Italian men ( ) aren't they gorgeous? ( ) you know [laughs] on the
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whole [laughs] you know ( )
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G: What's the attraction?
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C: Uhhhh ( . ) god ( 3 ) you're going to ask the same question when I come to black
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men aren't you? ( . ) ehh [laughs] ( . ) emm ( . ) I think at the time ( . ) it was this sort of
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romanticism ( . ) fantasy ( . ) the romantic ( . ) you know ( . ) because they were always
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very ( . ) you know ( . ) respectful ( . ) having said that they weren't that respectful ( . ) you
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know ( . ) they were ( 2 ) going off all over the place ( . ) you know ( . )
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G: There is certainly an image of that ( . )
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C: Absolutely ( . ) when you're actually with them ( . ) and they treat you so nicely ( . )
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oh gosh this is lovely ( . ) you know ( . ) then along comes your beer drinking white man
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( . ) you know ( . ) well that's a bit of a stereotype ( . )
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G: And also in the background was this idea that you were going down in the world
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( . ) that there was something unrespectable ( . ) or not respectable about it ( . )
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C: Yeah ( 5 ) but actually ... you know ( . ) again ... it was ( . ) you know ( 1 ) that was
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their problem ( . ) because ( . ) actually ( . ) they didn't really know what these people were
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like ( . ) you know ( . ) they were making assumptions and stereotypes about ( . ) them ( . )
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but it's interesting ( . ) they all drove better cars ( . ) and had better lifestyle ( . ) and ( . ) you
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know ( . ) and they treated women with ( 2 ) roses and everything else ( . ) and how nice
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was that ( . ) it was quite flattering really ( 1 ) emm ( 1 ) and you just turned a blind eye to
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the other thing [laughs] ( . ) I don't know what the attraction was ( . ) and I think ... maybe ...
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perhaps having had a bit of a cosmopolitan ( 1 ) background ( 1 )
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Transcription of interview 'Clara'

G: In comparison to the beer swilling (1)
890 C: Moving around ()
891 G: English men () it was a step up ()
892 C: For me it was more exciting than () emm (1) than you know ... people who had just been stuck where they were for ever more ()
894 G: And quite often cultural differences become eroticised ()
896 C: Mmm () you know () the Italian is () the Italian male is (1) very much () was very much seen as that (1) but white men were threatened () they obviously both were () but ... eh () but the sort of local men () threatened by (.5) these people coming in (1) threatened by the Italians () threatened by the () the black Jamaicans () the [] threatened by the Asians coming in as well () and then the American () emm () people coming in () so very much threatened by it () fearful and (.5) so their only way of coping was () actually () to sort of denigrate anybody who had a relationship with them ... but I suppose for me it was just a bit more exciting (1) emm () and having as I say ... lived abroad () it's actually () was more interesting () and again the richness of culture and different lifestyle () and emm () as a result of that I went to live in Italy for a while () emm () you know () just to learn more about ()
898 G: So you were searching for something? ()
900 C: Mmm () I think I've been searching () probably still am searching [laughs] (1) and I don't know ... I'm not sure what I'm searching for () I guess richness and wideness and variety ... really () not just () eh ()

Comment [G359]: I stick with the stereotype.
Comment [G360]: At last! the word exciting. And she seems that the inherent nature of these people is an attraction. Perhaps, at some level, she is looking for others norms.
Comment [G361]: I'm going a bit far here? And I don't think she picks it up.
Comment [G362]: She does pick it up a bit -- in the specific sense of acknowledging that Italian men have a certain reputation for chasing women.
Comment [G363]: This is getting down to a deeper level of the discrimination that accompanies difference.
Comment [G364]: Reducing the problem to the level of evolutionary psychology. The local men are threatened by the competition for indigenous women.
Comment [G365]: The main weapon is denigration - and by implication discrimination
Comment [G366]: But she does acknowledge the excitement.
Comment [G367]: And it was more interesting. Because she shared her nomadic experience because she identified with them; or what??
Comment [G368]: Richness, lifestyle ...,
Comment [G369]: I am not clear if she went to Italy to be with an Italian man or just went there. I suspect it is the former. In any case richness, excitement and lifestyle certainly seem to have played a role.
Comment [G370]: I pick up searching.
Comment [G371]: She acknowledges this and agrees, but still hasn't found what she is looking for.
Comment [G372]: She attempts to put it into words. Richness, wideness variety. Not sure if you can really achieve these things. More likely to lead to a never ending search.
Transcription of interview ‘Clara’

G: Going to Italy (.) suggests that you were looking for something around (.) what it is to be Italian (.) rather than just meeting a nice (.) very complementary (.) good looking Italian man (.)

C: Yeah (.) yeah (.) and ... you know ... and they speak English with a lovely accent to it (.) isn’t it? [laughs] (.) emm (.) but ehhh (.) yeah (.) I went to Milan (1) and worked as an au pair (.) and ... of course (.) my father (.) he just ... like (.) it was like (.) gone from a teacher to an au pair (1) you know (1) I suppose there could be an element of rebelling (.) or trying to find myself (1) find myself ... that’s different to my parents (1) you know (2) sort of my identity (.) not their identity (.)

G: You were looking for a sense of belonging (5) the one that you came with wasn’t easy to get hold of (.) didn’t make sense (.) and wasn’t very attractive to you (.) so you went looking for another one (.)

C: I think I was looking for myself really (.) in terms of who I am (5) really (.) and ... ehh (.) as well as belonging somewhere (.) but I don’t think I’ve ever belonged anywhere (1) in my life really (3) so (1) mmm (1) so quite a fragmented journey really (2) but ... sort of ... as you say some tenuous links to (.) this sort of lifestyle of (.) and ... and maybe there is a bit of excitement about that type of lifestyle (.) it’s actually (.) it’s new (5) it’s changing (.) it’s (.) mmm (1) there’s always something to do (.) you don’t have to actually find activities in that sort of lifestyle (.) there were always things (.) that were ongoing (.) if you like (.) social activities (.) for the family (.) and for individuals (.) emm (.) not only when I was a child (.) but as I grew older there was much more a social network (.) an existing social network (.) so although you had to make the effort to get into a social network (.) it was already there (.)

G: There was a network to join (.)
Transcription of interview ‘Clara’

C: Yeah (.) yeah (.)

G: You didn’t have to create it from scratch (.)

C: Mmm (.) mmm (.)

G: So when did Italian’s lose their attraction for you (.)

C: [laughs] (.) he went off and married somebody else [laughs] (.) no I came up
Birmingham to do my social work training (.) so cehh (1) that was difficult (.) ‘cos (1)
ehh (2) No (.) I went to live in Aston (.) which is like inner city (.) Birmingham (.) so
that was quite interesting (.) I did my social work training (1) emm (.) (5) and I got a job
in a community centre (.) and I lived in Aston (.)

G: Why social work (.)

C: Emm (.) by that time (.) my father worked for social services (.) not as a social
worker (.) he did the sort of investigative work (.) for (.) you know (.) like if
somebody had died in (.) you know an elderly person (.) had died in (.) in the care of
social services (.) sort of looking into (.) sort of (.) monies and finances and (.)

G: So when he left the army (.) he joined social services?

C: He worked for the special investigation branch in the army (.) then he did a spell
in security (.) he worked for Securicor (.) then went into social services to do their
investigative work (.) yeah (.) and my mother worked as a social worker (1) emm (.)

G: Interesting that you should choose (.) you should want to go into (.) the area that
your father was in (.) it wasn’t the same role (.) but (.) ehh (.)

Comment [G388]: Throwing some ideas back and forward.

Comment [G389]: A slightly direct question – but I was trying to move things on.

Comment [G390]: Provokes a direct and probably accurate answer – with the humour
hitting something deeper and more painful.

Comment [G391]: A rational explanation.

Comment [G392]: Was it difficult or was it interesting? Both. Moving from Milan to
Aston must have been quite a contrast. Yet this was a new environment as well – but obviously
not such a rich one. It turns out from later material that her father and mother had both moved
into social work.

Comment [G393]: I ask the direct question.

Comment [G394]: Was this the reason for the move into social work? Search for approval
maybe.

Comment [G395]: Attempting to clarify the point.

Comment [G396]: More detail.

Comment [G397]: And her mother too.

Comment [G398]: What will her answer be to this.
Transcription of interview ‘Clara’

C: And emm (.) I don’t know how my mother made it (.) but (.) she worked in a social work team (.) this was ... sort of (.) pre qualification days (.) when you could get a job (1) and (.) ehh (.) she also worked for fostering and adoption (.) and (.) ehh (.) oh gosh ... later on (.) I have a lot of things to say about my mother [laughs] (.) emm (.) we went to a (.) this is where my husband comes in (.) we had already got our two (.) and emm (.) decided to foster a child (1) emm (.) and they were specifically looking for somebody where (.) a family where (.) education was important (.) and they would encourage this particular young person to (.) I was very pregnant at the time (.) so ... emm (.) and my mother worked for the fostering and adoption and (.) she wouldn’t (.) she refused to give us a reference (.) so there’s all these little things (1) that go on in my relationship with my mother (.) emm (.) I couldn’t believe that she would do that (.) I thought (.) I really thought (1) given that her job (.) that she would actually support that (.) but that was later on (.) I was working in this community centre and I met a guy (.) I haven’t had that many relationships really (.) thinking about it (.) emm (1) and he was just (.) very good looking (.) looked a bit like (.) like Michael Jackson before all the ... ehh ... plastic surgery (.) in fact his nickname was Michael (.) emm (.) because he looked like Michael Jackson (.) but he was a mix of African and Asian (.) so his father was Kenyan Asian (.) and his mother was Ugandan (.) and ehh (.) yeah (.) now that was when trouble started in the family (.) and ehh (.) absolutely ... really nice guy (.) interesting family dynamic (.) you know (.) sort of (.) I was just learning so much about (.) sort of (.) different lifestyles (.) emm (2) from him (1) that caused huge ructions in the family (.) and we did go out for about eight years (.) but it was quite a testing time (.)

G: It sounds like (.) in the view of your family, you had crossed a cultural boundary

C: Oh definitely (.) I didn’t tell them about it for ages (.) ages (.) now this is the fear that (.) and ... ehh (.)
Transcription of interview 'Clara'

G: And it proves to be well founded (.)
C: Fear and (.) you know (.) taking a risk (.) emm (.) because (.) I would lose what little bit of family I had (.) as a result of going out with a black man (.) and ... chhh (.) they were horrendous to me (.) they were awful to me (.) and I wasn't strong enough at the time to be able to resist their (.) because I waited quite a few years before I actually told them I was going out with this guy (.) and they refused to meet him (.) they called me all sorts of names (.) emm (.) and my father was [whispers next two words] very derogatory in terms of his comments about black people (.) and stuff (.) so I was just beginning to be aware of what racism was about (.) and what it meant (.) well I must have been aware before then because ... obviously ... I was fearful of actually saying it (.)
G: You had been around (.) racism and race for (.)
C: A while (.)
G: A while (.) yes (.)
C: But (.) sort of (.) this little tenuous link with my family (.) emm (.) and I did have a very close relationship with my dad (.) and actually it was destroyed as a result of that (.) because (.) I saw him in a very different light (.) to (.) well one to speak (.) to me in the way they did (.) and treat me in the way they did (.) but also the way they treated and talked about other people that they didn't know (.)
G: Mmmm (.)
C: Ammm (.) so (.) and we didn't ever really recover that relationship (.) so (.) so I suppose I did lose my family as a result of that.

Comment [G413]: Suspected and feared that it could threaten the very existence of her family.
Comment [G414]: Her fears turned out to be well founded.
Comment [G415]: She wasn't strong enough - presumably to resist her father, although she uses the word 'that'.
Comment [G416]: A few years! She really must have suspected the effect it would have.
Comment [G417]: Which was quite extreme.
Comment [G418]: And derogatory!
Comment [G419]: It becomes framed in terms of racism.
Comment [G420]: She gave examples earlier from army times.
Comment [G421]: I try to confirm this.
Comment [G422]: She completes the sentence.
Comment [G423]: Clara paid a high price for the relationship.
Comment [G424]: And it caused a change in her perception of her father.
Comment [G425]: So she lost her family and the relationship as a result.
Transcription of interview 'Clara'

G: Yes (.)
C: Ammm (.) but I also lost the relationship as a result of that (.) because I wasn't ...
if you like ... strong enough (.) to actually take that step (.) but then I met my husband
( .) emm (.) and I was much stronger then (.) because I actually thought (1) you know
( .) what's going on here Pat? (.) you know (.) you've got to make a decision here (.)
emmm family or partner (.)
G: I suppose that's the question I had in my mind ( .) what was going on? (.) you
chose to go out with a black man knowing the effect it would have on your family (.)
C: I don't know what ( .) I didn't really think it would at first ( .) at a conscious level
( .) I think maybe on an unconscious level ( .) I knew it ( .) emm ( .) but I think on a
conscious level ( .) I think I generally thought that these people worked in social
services ( .) that they would care about other people (.)
G: Yeah ( .)
C: But ... emm ( .) so on that level ( .) I thought they might have accepted it ( .) but I
think ( .) actually ( .) I think deep down I knew they wouldn't accept it ( .) yeah ( .)
maybe it's just having that hope ( .) having hope ( .) that actually ... maybe family ties
might be strong enough (1) to ... if you like ... deal with this ( .)
G: Mmm ( .)
C: But they weren't ( .) they weren't (2)
G: So ( .) as you say ( .) you lost both of the ( .) elements ( .)
Transcription of interview 'Clara'

C: Mmm (.)
G: But then (.) in a sense (.) you tried again (.)
C: I did try again (.) and I was determined I was (.) you know (.) these external pressures weren't going to (.) actually (.) affect me (.) mmm (.) and (.) awwww (.) I mean (.) my mother called me some awful names (.) which she denies now (.) but (.)
G: ehh (.) mmm (.) you know (.) I was called (.) pfft (.) erm (.) I was called a prostitute (1) this was from my mother (.) you know (.) but she says she didn't do that (.) but I chhh (.) you don't forget something like that (.) at all (.) emmm (.) and I just said (.) In the end I just said (.) look (.) I'm going out with this guy (.) and you can meet him (1) or you can just forget (1)

G: I suppose I'm thinking that (.) you were looking for something (.) you were looking for something that you couldn't find (.) within your immediate experience (.) so you thought (.) these people (.) or this person has got what I want (.)

C: Yeah (.) yeah (.) I mean he has been my rock for the last (.) thirty years (1) so (.)
G: almost thirty years (.) [name]s twenty five (.) so (.) about twenty eight years (.)

C: I don't think it was a lot actually (.) I really don't (.) emm (.) I mean it was a big loss (.) realising (.) losing my father (.) in all of that (.) but then I think (.) he made some choices there (.)
G: Mmm (.)

Comment [G434]: Sounds like she went through a really unpleasant time.
Comment [G435]: But this time there was the strength to confront them.
Comment [G436]: That really was a bit too direct – but I was still trying to think about the attraction.
Comment [G437]: One of the things she got from her husband was strength. Which has similarities with the relationship with her father.
Comment [G438]: Thinking about the costs.
Comment [G439]: She states first that it was not such a big loss – then admits that it was a big loss then looks at the responsibility – 'he made some choices there'. So it was not such a big loss because her father was prepared to throw it away so easily.
Transcription of interview 'Clara'

C: And ( ) emm ( ) so that was quite a significant loss ( ) I never, ever recovered (1) that relationship ( ) at all ( ) I was always angry with him ( ) or resentful ( ) of his ( ) his attitude ( ) emm ( ) so I think it ... you know ( ) I mean ... he went to ( ) he died ( ) and we still hadn't really rebuilt ( ) any sort of relationship ( ) we had built a relationship ( ) mainly for the grandchildren's sake ( )

G: Yeah ( )

C: But for me ( ) I was just so angry ( ) that people could treat others ( ) in the way that ( ) they did ( ) amm ( ) without ( ) without ( ) meeting them ( ) and the interesting thing is ... actually my partner is very similar in a lot of ways to my father ( ) not in terms of looks [laughs] ( ) he's very interested in money ( ) he's interested in financial things ( ) ahh ( ) you know ( ) they had very ... really similar connections ( )

G: Some military ( ) things ( )

C: Background ( ) yeah ( ) yeah ( ) yeah ( ) so it was really interesting ( ) that actually there are ( ) traits that are very similar ( )

G: So in a sense ( ) ehh ( ) you did ( ) look for your father in a husband ( ) in a sense ( )

C: [laughs] isn't it awful [laughs] ( ) yes here comes the psychodynamic bit [laughs]

G: I wasn't ...

C: There were aspects ( ) I mean ... there were aspects ( ) you know ( ) I think ( ) fairly solid ( ) fairly secure ( ) emm ( ) quite ... strong ( ) emm ( ) quite ... stable in a lot of ways ( ) similar interests ( ) you know ( ) emm ( ) because my partner is also very interested in animals ( ) and ( ) you know ( ) so there are a lot of similarities ( )
Transcription of interview 'Clara'

you know (. .) in that sense (. .) but they have a different skin colour (. .) you know (. .)
and that's kind of sad (. .) that actually that (. .)

G: Mmmm (. .)

C: Mmmm (. .) yeah (. .) and I suppose I have found (1) a secure base (1) with my
partner (5) and maybe all of this heartache along the way has (4) landed me in that
place (3)

G: Listening to it (. .) it is almost as if (. .) you were searching for something (. .)

C: Mmmm (. .)

G: But it didn't seem to be there (. .) so you tried to go in a different direction (. .) but
still came back to where you wanted to be (. .)

C: Mmmm mmmm (. .)

G: And in all of that culture seems to be quite a big factor (. .)

C: Yeah (. .) and it's about how you describe culture (. .) isn't it (. .) cos it's such a wide
there's macro and micro (. .) isn't there (. .) there's a bit about being an individual (. .)
and what I've taken from (. .) various places (. .) on my journey (. .) and I think I'm still
doing that (. .) you know (. .) I mean (. .) if you came into our house (. .) you probably
wouldn't know who lived in that house (. .) you know (. .) sort of (. .) through the keyhole
type thing (. .) emm (. .) because it is so multicultural (. .) and so diverse (. .) you wouldn't
know whether it was (. .) African (. .) white (. .) Asian (. .) because we do (. .) we've both
taken from (1) places on our journeys (. .) along the way (. .) and we still are (. .) cos I
think he is also (. .) searching for aspects of himself (. .) in terms of his culture (. .) cos he
comes from a mixed environment (. .) as well (. .)
Transcription of interview ‘Clara’

G: And inevitably any black person has got the legacy of slavery and all the postcolonial stuff.

C: Mmm (.)

G: That's there (.)

C: He's mixed as well (.) so he's got a white mother (.) and a black father (.) and...

ehh (.) so I think there's elements of searching for his blackness as well (.) you know (.) in his identity as well (.) as well as me searching for mine [laughs] along the way (.) as a woman (.) and as a white woman (.) and stuff (.) so (.) so yeah (.) I mean (.) so there's a bit about what I've taken on my journey (.) which I've wanted to take on the way (.) I think my cultural roots are (.) actually with this sort of nomadic transient lifestyle (.) of the army (.) and the forces (.) and I think my partner has also had that (.) experience (.) and it's almost as though we've both come together (.) and actually (.) Mmm (.) this is the longest we've both been in one place (.) together (.)

G: You've both been searching (.) and you found a like minded soul mate who was also searching (.)

C: Soul mates is the sort of thing really (.) you know (.) and I think that's how we would describe our (.) our relationship (.) as soul mates (.) yeah (.) and actually that's what now as security our roots are (.) if you like (.) around (.) our small family (.)

G: Yes (.)

C: It's not big (.) yes there are aspects of (.) who I am as a white woman (.) and who he is as a black man (.) and the ... sort of ... wider cultural backgrounds that we've come from (.) and what we bring into this relationship (.) with our children (.)

Comment [G469]: I throw in the postcolonial dimension.

Comment [G470]: Mixed and searching – again like Clara.

Comment [G471]: It seems strange to hear her talking about herself as a white woman – although that is clearly what she is.

Comment [G472]: All the diversity has come together.

Comment [G473]: I couldn't resist throwing in the words soul mate.

Comment [G474]: Accurate empathy and the secure base.

Comment [G475]: It is a patchwork quilt. Each piece has its own individual identity. Although interestingly Clara is the only truly white piece.
Transcription of interview 'Clara' 

G: It's almost as if you've had to bring in a bit (.) of each of your cultural roots (.)
C: Oh gosh yeah (.)
G: You couldn't say (.) this is who I am (.) this is where I belong (.) so you've had to bring a bit of everything (.)
C: It's a real (.) sort of (.) what did you say at the beginning (.) patchwork quilt (.) and you've got two people (.) two patchwork quilts (.)
G: Yes (.)
C: We've joined our patchwork quilt up (.) in a lot of ways (.)
G: I suppose the things I'm interested in are (.) does culture give you some strength in life (.) or does it in some circumstances undermine that strength (.) the coping mechanisms (.) and the coping strategies (.) it sounds as if you've found in the patchwork quilt (.) some kind of strength (.)
C: Yeah (.) I would say the last twenty odd years (.) that's been the solid bit in my life (.) but influences from other aspects of my experiences have come into that (.)
G: Mmm (.)
C: And connecting with somebody else who's also got a patchwork quilt (.) and finding similarities and differences (.) and working that out between us (.5) It's almost as if we've created a cultural environment as well (.)

Comment [G476]: What was I trying to say here. Probably just to keep things going.
Comment [G477]: Which was received but sounds a bit too jelly hockey sticks.
Comment [G478]: I think that is a better point - that Clara and her husband are seeking to form an identity out of bits and pieces which has become the defining feature.
Comment [G479]: She recalls my metaphor and builds on it.
Comment [G480]: Not only brought into proximity to each other, but joined up.
Comment [G481]: The sense is that Clara has found strength in the diversity. My sense is that she has found strength in a relationship.
Comment [G482]: In a way that is saying the same thing. The strength is in the joining and the similarity as well as the difference.
Comment [G483]: I suppose this is what I mean by personal culture - although this personal culture has a family group in it - which resonates with group analytic ideas. Is a dimension of culture always associated with a group. Probably it is.
Transcription of interview ‘Clara’

1217 G: Yes (.) it like you felt the need to choose someone who was the opposite (.) but in choosing someone who was the opposite you actually chose ...
1218
1219 C: Similarities ...
1220
1222 G: Someone who (.) echoed (.) or who repeated your roots in a different order (.) in a different way (.) but (.)
1223
1224 C: And the interesting thing is (.) we are both mixed (2) both culturally mixed (1) although my previous partner was culturally mixed (.5) emm (.) so there's almost as though (.)
1225
1226 G: Well (.) German and British (.) Austrian even (.)
1227 C: The Austrian's would be really upset if you put them [laughs]
1228 G: They are quite similar (.)
1229
1231 C: I think the Austrians try to separate themselves from Germany (.) even although it was an Austro-Hungarian empire (.) wasn’t it? (.) emm (.)
1232
1233 G: That’s almost brought the story up to date (.)
1234 C: Yeah (.)
1235
1239 G: What influence do you think that has on your life (.)
1240 C: Now? (.)
1241
1242 Comment [G484]: I pick up the theme of similarity and difference again. I suppose that difference is always a part of attraction. Which goes back to Freud (Toton and taboo etc.).
1243
1244 Comment [G485]: Keeping similarity and difference going.
1245
1246 Comment [G486]: Yes – I am sure this has already occurred to Clara, but maybe she is experiencing the idea in a new way.
1247
1248 Comment [G487]: I know that I was saying German – but then though that Clara might react to this.
1249
1249 Comment [G488]: As she did. It is always dangerous to use national stereotypes.
1250
1251 Comment [G489]: I should have given up at that point – but I kept on. Maybe I was trying to understand something about Clara's perception of the Austrian part of herself. I suggested Clara as the pseudonym and this was the name of Freud's younger daughter. I was probably thinking about the well known quotation in which Freud said that prior to the rise of anti-Semitism in Germany / Austria he considered himself to be German.
1252
1253 Comment [G490]: This seems like Clara trying to define an Austrian identity for herself and kindly telling me off for being so stupid.
1254
1255 Comment [G491]: I try to move.
1256
1257 Comment [G492]: Introduce the subject of the influence of culture.
1258
1259 Comment [G493]: I suppose that is a reasonable clarification – but seems a little like a rabbit caught in headlights. As if she was surprised by the question.
Transcription of interview 'Clara'

G: That rich patchwork (.) the search for difference (.) and the search for similarity (2)

C: It's provided a richness (.) of different aspects of a world view (.) emm (.) I mean (.) I suppose (.) I mean ... I've worked in areas such as (.) emm (.) the Black Country which is very (.) I don't know if you the Black Country (.) in the Midlands ? (.) It's very (.) very (.) emm (.) it's a very tight community (.) it's still a tight community (.) emm (.) and it's like (.5) stepping back in time when you go into Tipton and ... eh (.) and ... emm (.) places like that (.) I've driven a woman down (.) a motorway (.) and she's just (.) like (.) faked out because she's never been on a motorway (.) and there aren't any road turning and there's no traffic lights (.) and it's like ... you know ... another world to them (.) they haven't moved out of that (.) insular (.) so in some ways (.) although it's been fragmented (.5) emm (.) and not perhaps as secure (.) as perhaps being in a tighter community (.) I think what we both offer (.) is that sort of richness or diversity (.) and an understanding of others (.) how you can have it to be different (2)

G: Yes (.)

C: Because I couldn't survive without (.) that sort of tenuous link with my family (.) even though it was a (.) a negative experience at times (.)

G: And you've been left wrestling with the big difference (.) of (1) black versus white (.)

C: Emm (.) don't know if I'm left wrestling with it [laughs] (.5) emm (2)
Transcription of interview 'Clara'

G: I don't know if it's you or the world (.) in a sense (.) but (.) it's obviously a big issue for you (.).

C: I think it's been an evolving journey as well (.) and again that's related to [deleted] (.) When I first went out (.) with a black person (.) you know (.) it was like (.) the naiveté (.) the colour blindness (.) disbelief (.) that people were treated differently (.) the experience of being treated differently (.) myself (.) enn (.) and that evolving (.) enn (.) and then the sort of (.) guilt and shame (.) and the recognition of being white (.) and unearned white privilege (.) and challenging that (.) enn (.) so I guess it's been an evolving process really (.) and I don't know where (.) whether that fits in with culture (.) or whether it's just about my identity and (.)

G: Yes (.)

C: And I guess our own identities are about (1) culture and what we take onboard (.) and so I've gone from that (.) sort of (.) naiveté position to (.) ohhh (.) I suppose when you have children (.) wanting everything to be black focussed (.) to now perhaps being a bit more balanced and challenging (.) enn (.) and being a bit more of an antiracist (.) having a bit more of an antiracist stance (.) and challenging whiteness (.) and stuff (.) and again that's an evolving process (.).

G: I think the interesting thing for me (.) is that (.) most of the people I've interviewed (.) and most of the thinking I've done in the past has been around (.5) a quite coherent (.) cultural (.) set (.) whereas what you are describing is a fragmented (.) ehh (.)

C: Tenuous? (.)

G: Tenuous (. ) structure in which the military was really constant ...
Transcription of interview 'Clara'

C: That was the culture (.) that was the culture (.) yeah (.) that was a culture of its own (.) mmm (.) in some senses (.) it was a sort of moving culture ... really ... wasn't it? (.)

G: Yes (.) but it was a culture (.) it was a way of living (.) a way of being (.) a way of seeing the world (.)

C: Mmmm (.) mmmm (.)

G: Literally seeing the world (.) as well as cognitively (.)

C: Literally (.) yes (.) but also you take that with you (.) and really just ... sort of ... just talking about it today has (.) actually (.) I've recognised how much of that (.) I have taken with me to other parts of the country (.) and how important it was (.) and even in (.) say (.) even in my relationship (.) his history of being in the forces (.) not him himself ... but family (.) family environment in the forces and stuff (.) how that is my (.) has been my culture ... if you like (.) I don't think it is now (.)

G: Yes ...

C: It is a part of me (.)

G: My background has (.) in a different way (.) been about searching out diversity (.) but I've always had the fact (.) I'm Scottish (.) I know exactly where I was brought up (.) I know exactly the experience that I had (.) It wasn't uniformly good ... but at least I knew what it was (.)

C: Mmmm (.) mmmm (.) and I haven't had that (.) experience (.) which is why I thought it would be really interesting for you to interview me (.)
Transcription of interview ‘Clara’

G: And it has been fascinating.
C: because it is a very different experience.
G: Yes.
C: And as I say I think there is something some parts of me would have loved that security of somewhere I was brought up and I knew people and there was a community and stuff like that but actually this has been a
G: If you like a moveable.
G: And you've found quite a place of stability now.
C: Oh yeah.
G: And you've taken into that place of stability a little from everywhere that you've been.
C: Yeah and still more because you know we do a lot of travelling so it's kind of important as well I mean we always bring something back from wherever we've been emm to sort of add to the richness and I think that (2) I think for my children it was important to have stability (1) to have empathy (1) and understanding (1) and (5) to have a richness of cultural experiences yeah (1) so that emm (1) so that they felt secure.
G: They've had stability they've had I mean there's been different elements in it but it's been quite constant.

George MacDonald
Transcription of interview 'Clara'

1365  C: Mmm (.) mmm (.) and understanding of other (.) and diversity (.) and difference
1366  (.) and all of that's been really important (.) as well (.) and acceptance (.5) you know
1367  (.) emmm (.) and I suppose having the awareness of what I didn't like in my own
1368  upbringing (.) and actually I wasn't going to do that (.) you know ... I know we all say
1369  that (.) I'm not going to say that (.) I'm not going to be like my parents (.) emmm (.) but
1370  it has been quite a conscious decision (2)
1371
1372  G: I suppose, if I wanted to be challenging (.) the feeling I'm left with is that there's
1373  been quite a lot of (.) I hesitate to say running away (.) but (.) avoiding being (.) eh huh
1374  (.) tied down (.) of putting yourself in a box (.)
1375
1376  C: Mmm (2)
1377
1378  G: You almost couldn't bear to (1) to be labelled (.)
1379
1380  C: No ...
1381
1382  G: Because you don't like any of the labels enough (.)
1383
1384  C: No I don't (.) you're right (1)
1385
1386  G: So (.) it's not just a hyphenated identity (.) it's a sort of (.) oblique stroke (1)
1387  identity (.)
1388
1389  C: I do still see it as an evolving one (.) and (1) recognising what I've taken (.) from
1390  my past (.) but also what I've also left behind (.) and (.) finding a richness (1) in a
1391  different environment (.5) if that makes sense (.5) emmm (1)
1392
1393  G: I suppose that's one of the questions for me (.) does culture evolve (.) yes it
1394  changes as we get older (.) because there's the human lifecycle and things like that (.)

Comment [G532]: All good things
Comment [G533]: Learning from personal experience and using this as a parent to do a
better job.
Comment [G534]: Yes, of course – but I think that Clara really is doing it to the best of her
ability.
Comment [G535]: Might as well see what she says to this strong challenge.
Comment [G536]: Keep digging!
Comment [G537]: But she sort of agrees.
Comment [G538]: So I have little alternative but to go on.
Comment [G539]: Again she agrees.
Comment [G540]: Bringing in some ideas about hyphenated identities.
Comment [G541]: Around we go again. Evolving, leaving behind, richness.
Transcription of interview ‘Clara’

but does it actually evolve () or are we () is there a certain point at which it becomes relatively fixed () except for life events and accidental changes () I don't know the answer to that ()
1398
1399 C: And it's how you define culture () isn't it ()
1400 G: The more I've read about it () the more I've thought about it () the less well () I understand it ()
1402 C: Yeah () I mean you could say () oh well it's about () a culture of a group identity () or it could be a culture of an individual identity () or it might be a joined up bit of both () or it might be [laughs] () something to do with () you know () related to religion () and () and () community () or something ... you know () hell it's such a huge ()
1408 G: I think the best way of looking it I've found is that it's to do with the groups that we are born into or near to () with all the personal stuff that happened to us superimposed on top ()
1412 C: Mmm () And what we take with us and what we leave behind () and what we find that's new and richer () or not ()
1416 G: Mmm (2) yes () I guess we do need to round up now ()
1418 C: Or we could talk for ever ()
1420 G: It's been fascinating for me () mmm () how did you find it () did you find it intrusive ()
1422 George MacDonald
Transcription of interview ‘Clara’

C: Not at all () not at all () I actually found it quite () I mean ... I think ... again () I used it as an evolving process () really () rather than () eh () 'cos I actually () an 
not really sure what my definition of culture is () yeah () because () and what it has 
helped me recognise is actually () the aspects of my life () ermm () such as this sort 
() this transient moving around () it's like a moving culture () rather than a static one 
() err () and that () that () just talking about it () that's () that's really helped me 
sort of realise () actually () I've always longed for this sort of () there's been a bit of 
me longing for this ... sort of () being able to establish some roots () and grow from 
that () and maybe that's what I've got now ()

G: It sounds as if it is ()

C: And actually that's what I didn't have () but also I did have a culture () which 
was this sort of army life () this sort of forces life () which was a sort of () transient 
() which has impacted on the way I have relationships () and how I've moved 
through like ()

G: The view I've had () on and off () has been that culture is () among other things 
() a series of resources ()

C: Mmm ()

G: And those resources () we can use ()

C: Mmm ()

G: In a much more personal way () and in your case () there is this richness and 
diversity () and I suppose the ability to pick and choose which bits you like ()
Transcription of interview 'Clara'

C: I suppose what we've done is try to amalgamate it all into this ... sort of ... pot (.)
really (.) but also recognising that each one has value (.) in its own sense (.) but to
provide a sort of (.) and I think what I wanted to provide was actually that richness for
my children (.) and the stability to go with it (.) and the safe place (.) the place (.) to
move from (.)

G: I suppose you couldn't want to give your children anything other than the good
bits of what you've had (.) and to avoid the bad bits of what you've had (.)

C: Yeah (.) yeah (.)

G: So you want to give them some of all the good bits (.) but avoid the (.) the bad
bits (.) which were the transience and the ehh (.)

C: And I know as a child (.) I mean (.) I mean (.) I always searched out large families
(.) to be part of (.) and ... you know (.) some of my friendships have been (.) to sort of
(.) sit in a large family home (.) with lots of activity going on (.) and just absorb it (.)
in some ways (.)

G: And that's one of the things I find quite attractive about (.) an Asian way of life (.)
that family is so much more important (.)

C: Important (.)

G: And family isn't just (.) mother father and three children (.)

C: It's everybody (.) yes (.)

G: It's the whole community (.) the whole village (.) the whole household (.) the
whole extended family (.)

Comment [GS58]: Again interesting that Clara cannot talk about her cultural identity
without talking about her husband – presumably because in her view they have build it together.
This supports the idea that culture relates to groups.

Comment [GS59]: Overall not sure this adds much to what has already been said, but again
a good summary.

Comment [GS60]: That was a bit challenging – suggesting that her summary was
motherhood and apple pie.

Comment [GS61]: And I do go on.

Comment [GS62]: And this is an interesting piece of data that did not come out before. Part
of the teasing.

Comment [GS63]: Although I do want to bring it to an end at this point the idea is
interesting and I try to build on it.

Comment [GS64]: More building and the suggestion that the nuclear family is not enough.

Comment [GS65]: Just to make certain she heard me.
Transcription of interview 'Clara'

C: Yes (.) and African communities are very similar to that as well (.) and I suppose that (.) that's a bit that I've been searching for (.) I know I have (.) because actually (.) this sort of (.5) nuclear (.) isolated family (.) with no sense of (.) family as such (.) wider family (.) it was too intense (.) but it's been really (.) sort of (.5) thought provoking (.)

G: I should ask if you have felt disturbed by anything we have talked about (.)

C: [laughs] ... absolutely traumatised (.) no not at all (.) no no (.) and ... you know ... the really good thing is actually (.) it's helping me think about (.) who I am as a person (.) as well (.) and the bits of me that (.) actually I have not (.) I have wanted to distance myself from (.) and change (.) and stuff (.) so (.) and how it [deleted to maintain anonymity]

G: A lot of the parts that you've thought that you were trying to distance yourself from actually (.) the events of your life tell a different story (.)

C: Mmmm (.) that's really interesting (.) isn't it (.) in itself [laughs] (.) yeah (.)

G: Anyway [name] thank you very much ...

C: Thank you (.) OK no problem
Transcription of interview 'Clara'

Conventions used in transcription

(.) pause
(2) two second pause
xxx untranscribable
(xxx) indistinct / doubtful transcription
(NOTE) note, emotion or gesture
Word underline emphasis
... to separate phrases when recognisable sentence structure has broken down
APPENDIX 6 – Worked Example of Thematic Analysis
WORKED EXAMPLE OF THEMATIC ANALYSIS

In this appendix a worked example is provided of the thematic analysis component of the analysis. While there are many worked examples of thematic analysis in the literature, it is useful to illustrate this in the specific context of the data collected and the epistemological assumptions made. I have chosen a simple section of text from near to the beginning of the interview with Clara, which was the first interview that I conducted. The operation of the method is dependent on the bringing together of material from the entire transcript, and it is therefore not possible to give a meaningful illustration of the method using a small subset of the data. However, it gives a flavour of the mechanics of the processes carried out without the ability to communicate the richness and complexity of the process.

The section that I have selected is from the early part of the interview where Clara is talking about her early life and the influence of her father:

1  C:  ... I'm trying to sort of think what actually influenced me when I was younger (.) and it was much more white British army life.
2  
3  G:  But you were very much born on a cultural boundary (.)
4  
5  C:  Yeah ... and I think this is where relationships influenced my cultural heritage ... really ...
6  'cos I was closer to my father than my mother (.) which is another story (.) but I was closer to him (.) so I guess culturally I allied myself with white, British, army life (.) because he was quite significant in my life ... he was very much my attachment figure ... he was the person who ... if you like ... took me to places ... 'cos army life is a lot of moving around and different ... (2)

Figure 8 – Section of transcript

In this extract, I identified four ‘chunks of meaning’ (The Open University, 2007) and carried out first level coding as by cutting and pasting sections of text into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet:
The quotation from lines 8-11 seemed to have two possible codings, one related to ‘Army Life’ and the other to ‘Father’ and so it was entered twice. In practice the auto completion feature of Microsoft Excel was of considerable help in achieving a degree of standardisation of the codes, especially since the full spreadsheet had over three hundred rows. I then sorted these by first order theme to bring similar material into proximity:

It can be seen that this resulted in two similar first order codes ‘Army Life’ and ‘White British Army Life’. This was quite alright, since it is possible to combine these later into a common second order code. I found this the most complex and difficult stage of the process. A way of looking at the data had not yet emerged and I was struggling to find cultural meaning. However, eventually a second-order coding emerged:
Figure 11 – Second order coding

Here ‘Army Life’ and ‘White British Army Life’ have been combined into one second order code of ‘Roots’ and ‘Father’ and ‘Parents’ into ‘Family’. This may not seem to be much of a step forward, but in the background some idea of a structure was beginning to emerge. I then sorted the spreadsheet on the basis of second-order coding and then first-order coding:

Figure 12 – Sorted second-order coding

Taking the spreadsheet as a whole I was beginning to see a number of metacultural themes and sub-themes. These were influenced by the process of the analysis and by the theoretical ideas that were emerging in parallel. In this way, I moved from a second order coding rooted in the data towards a third-order coding rooted, at least partly, in theory:
Here a number of things have happened. ‘Family’ has morphed into ‘Influence of the personal’ since it became clear that people other than family members had an influence on Clara and that life experiences were also relevant. The specific nature of the personal influence was captured in the sub-theme, where ‘Father’ and ‘Mother’ were identified as the specific influences. This required lines 6-7 to be duplicated since it related to both. ‘Army Life’ and ‘White British Army Life’ morphed into ‘Belongingness’ since it became clear that Clara had deeply internalised the structure and experience of the forces life, and that she returned to it and sought it out in different ways throughout her life. This was moving beyond the specific nature of Clara’s cultural experiences to think about the function that culture come to perform in her life. Lines 8-11 were further duplicated in order to illustrate both the positive aspects of the belongingness, and the absence, lack and transience that they also seemed to represent. These aspects were again captured in the sub-theme.

This table was then sorted again, this time by third-order code, then sub-theme, second-order code and first order code to produce the table of themes used in the data analysis (Appendix 7):

---

**Figure 13 – Third-order coding**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-theme</th>
<th>Third-order</th>
<th>Second-order</th>
<th>First-order</th>
<th>Short quotation</th>
<th>From</th>
<th>To</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Influence of Personal</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>he was quite significant in my life ... he was very much my attachment figure ... he was the person who ... if you like ... took me to places ... 'cos army life is a lot of moving around and different ...</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Influence of personal</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>I think this is where relationships influenced my cultural heritage ... really ... 'cos I was closer to my father than my mother</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Influence of personal</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>I think this is where relationships influenced my cultural heritage ... really ... 'cos I was closer to my father than my mother</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roots</td>
<td>Belongingness</td>
<td>Roots</td>
<td>Army Life</td>
<td>he was quite significant in my life ... he was very much my attachment figure ... he was the person who ... if you like ... took me to places ... 'cos army life is a lot of moving around and different ...</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transience</td>
<td>Belongingness</td>
<td>Roots</td>
<td>Army Life</td>
<td>he was quite significant in my life ... he was very much my attachment figure ... he was the person who ... if you like ... took me to places ... 'cos army life is a lot of moving around and different ...</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roots</td>
<td>Belongingness</td>
<td>Roots</td>
<td>White British Army Life</td>
<td>I'm trying to sort of think what actually influenced me when I was younger (.) and it was much more white British army life</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roots</td>
<td>Belongingness</td>
<td>Roots</td>
<td>White British Army Life</td>
<td>I guess culturally I allied myself with white, British, army life</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-theme</td>
<td>Third-order</td>
<td>Second-order</td>
<td>First-order</td>
<td>Short quotation</td>
<td>From</td>
<td>To</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
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<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roots</td>
<td>Belongingness</td>
<td>Roots</td>
<td>Army Life</td>
<td>he was quite significant in my life ... he was very much my attachment figure ... he was the person who ... if you like ... took me to places ... ’cos army life is a lot of moving around and different ...</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roots</td>
<td>Belongingness</td>
<td>Roots</td>
<td>White British Army Life</td>
<td>I’m trying to sort of think what actually influenced me when I was younger (.) and it was much more white British army life</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roots</td>
<td>Belongingness</td>
<td>Roots</td>
<td>White British Army Life</td>
<td>I guess culturally I allied myself with white, British, army life</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transience</td>
<td>Belongingness</td>
<td>Roots</td>
<td>Army Life</td>
<td>he was quite significant in my life ... he was very much my attachment figure ... he was the person who ... if you like ... took me to places ... ’cos army life is a lot of moving around and different ...</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Influence of Personal</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>he was quite significant in my life ... he was very much my attachment figure ... he was the person who ... if you like ... took me to places ... ’cos army life is a lot of moving around and different ...</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Influence of personal</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>I think this is where relationships influenced my cultural heritage ... really ... ’cos I was closer to my father than my mother</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Influence of personal</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>I think this is where relationships influenced my cultural heritage ... really ... ’cos I was closer to my father than my mother</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 14 – Sorted third-order coding
APPENDIX 7 - Sample table of themes
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cluster</th>
<th>Sub-theme</th>
<th>Cultural themes</th>
<th>Short quotation</th>
<th>From</th>
<th>To</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black country</td>
<td>Outsider</td>
<td>Belongingness</td>
<td>I've worked in areas such as (. ) emm (. ) the Black Country which is very (. ) I don't know if you the Black Country (. ) in the Midlands ? (. ) It's very ... very (. ) emm (. ) it's a very tight community (. ) it's still a tight community (. ) emm (. ) and it's like (. ) stepping back in time when you go into Tipton and ... ehh (. ) and ... emm (. ) places like that (. ) I've driven a woman down (. ) a motorway (. ) and she's just (. ) like (. ) freaked out because she's never been on a motorway (. ) and there aren't any road turning and there's no traffic lights (. ) and it's like ... you know ... another world to them (. ) they haven't moved out of that (. ) insular (. ) so in some ways (. ) although it's been fragmented (.5) emm (. ) and not perhaps as secure (. ) as perhaps being in a tighter community</td>
<td>1250</td>
<td>1259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boarding school</td>
<td>Outsider</td>
<td>Belongingness</td>
<td>everybody else was (. ) had come up through primary school together (. ) and it was like (. ) again (. ) trying to get into the group (. ) but actually ... you couldn't get into the group ... because they were all going out ... and you went back to this (. ) bleak (. )</td>
<td>615</td>
<td>618</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boarding school</td>
<td>Outsider</td>
<td>Belongingness</td>
<td>because you weren't allowed out (.5) you know (. ) again (. ) a bit of the era as well (. ) no way were we allowed out (. ) stuck in (. ) it was like a prison (. ) in some ways ... because (. ) you weren't ... if you went out on Saturdays you had to go out with one of the senior people ... and you trundled down the (. ) I remember ... trundling down the road (. ) you know ... in our school uniform (. ) which was bright red (. ) ehh (. ) so you (. ) you know (. ) you just (. ) you were seen</td>
<td>622</td>
<td>627</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Outsider</td>
<td>Belongingness</td>
<td>I'm an only child ... as well (. ) so I guess that probably has some bearing on the whole thing</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family life</td>
<td>Outsider</td>
<td>Belongingness</td>
<td>although we met with members of the extended family (. ) it never felt close (. ) you know (. ) very fragmented</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family life</td>
<td>Outsider</td>
<td>Belongingness</td>
<td>almost as if you didn't have a voice (. ) you know</td>
<td>569</td>
<td>569</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life events</td>
<td>Outsider</td>
<td>Belongingness</td>
<td>I came up to Birmingham to do my social work training (. ) so ehh (.1) that was difficult (. ) 'cos (.1) ehh (.2) No (. ) I went to live in Aston (. ) which is like inner city (. ) Birmingham (. ) so that was quite interesting (. ) I did my social work training (.1) emm (.5) and I got a job in a community centre (. ) and I lived in Aston (. )</td>
<td>957</td>
<td>961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>Outsider</td>
<td>Belongingness</td>
<td>it was another (. ) if you like ... cultural environment ... that was alien in a lot of ways</td>
<td>614</td>
<td>615</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>Outsider</td>
<td>Belongingness</td>
<td>so again that was quite a alien environment ... really (. ) I don't really (. ) It was just an awful environment ... situation</td>
<td>628</td>
<td>629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outsider</td>
<td>Outsider</td>
<td>Belongingness</td>
<td>when I go into her house ... she's put up all these ... sort of ... pictures of my father (. ) it's like a ... sort of ... memorial to him (. ) she's got pictures of my children (. ) she's got pictures of all the animals (. ) but there's no pictures of me (. ) it's like I don't exist</td>
<td>483</td>
<td>486</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background</td>
<td>Roots</td>
<td>Belongingness</td>
<td>I'm trying to sort of think what actually influenced me when I was younger (. ) and it was much more white British army life</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background</td>
<td>Roots</td>
<td>Belongingness</td>
<td>I guess culturally I allied myself with white, British, army life</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background</td>
<td>Roots</td>
<td>Belongingness</td>
<td>when we came back to Britain (. ) on and off (. ) we always went to my grandfather (. ) now that was very important to me (. ) he was really (. )</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fragmentation</td>
<td>Roots</td>
<td>Belongingness</td>
<td>so quite a fragmented journey really (.2) but ... sort of ... as you say some tenuous links to (. ) this sort of lifestyle</td>
<td>937</td>
<td>938</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homelessness</td>
<td>Roots</td>
<td>Belongingness</td>
<td>I was just thinking about this image of home in terms of a place (. ) don't have that (. ) don't have that at all (. ) very nomadic ... almost ... there's no one building ... no one place that (. ) is home (.5) except we did ... when we came back to Britain (. ) on and off (. ) we always went to my grandfather</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside influences</td>
<td>Roots</td>
<td>Belongingness</td>
<td>Text</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
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<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudanese nanny emm and I don’t actually remember her but I remember spending a lot of time with another person who was black going to the markets with her and sitting in the kitchen with her eating dates you know picking dates off the trees and things and so it was like interesting</td>
<td>Sudanese nanny emm and I don’t actually remember her but I remember spending a lot of time with another person who was black going to the markets with her and sitting in the kitchen with her eating dates you know picking dates off the trees and things and so it was like interesting</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>313</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day to day life was with the nanny and sort of reading that book has actually sort of made me think a little bit about my relationship with my mother and her distance she wouldn’t say she was distant but I felt distance it’s never been a close relationship</td>
<td>Day to day life was with the nanny and sort of reading that book has actually sort of made me think a little bit about my relationship with my mother and her distance she wouldn’t say she was distant but I felt distance it’s never been a close relationship</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>149</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>So early influences were my father and his lifestyle which was his life and his career</td>
<td>So early influences were my father and his lifestyle which was his life and his career</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>75</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It has been very much white British</td>
<td>It has been very much white British</td>
<td>505</td>
<td>507</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There’s been a bit of me longing for this being able to establish some roots and grow from that and maybe that’s what I’ve got now</td>
<td>There’s been a bit of me longing for this being able to establish some roots and grow from that and maybe that’s what I’ve got now</td>
<td>1430</td>
<td>1432</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>But also I did have a culture which was this sort of army life this sort of forces life which was a sort of transient which has impacted on the way I have relationships and how I’ve moved through life</td>
<td>But also I did have a culture which was this sort of army life this sort of forces life which was a sort of transient which has impacted on the way I have relationships and how I’ve moved through life</td>
<td>1436</td>
<td>1439</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s a searching a bit I think I have been searching all my life I think there are aspect of me that are very much from my early life emm which are the sort of the reading the music the animals and the sort of which you can take wherever you go</td>
<td>It’s a searching a bit I think I have been searching all my life I think there are aspect of me that are very much from my early life emm which are the sort of the reading the music the animals and the sort of which you can take wherever you go</td>
<td>403</td>
<td>406</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I mean he has been my rock for the last thirty years so almost thirty years [name]’s twenty five so about twenty eight years</td>
<td>I mean he has been my rock for the last thirty years so almost thirty years [name]’s twenty five so about twenty eight years</td>
<td>1086</td>
<td>1087</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soul mates is the sort of thing really you know and I think that’s how we would describe our our relationship as soul mates yeah and actually that’s what now as security our roots are if you like around our small family</td>
<td>Soul mates is the sort of thing really you know and I think that’s how we would describe our our relationship as soul mates yeah and actually that’s what now as security our roots are if you like around our small family</td>
<td>1179</td>
<td>1182</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soul mates is the sort of thing really you know and I think that’s how we would describe our our relationship as soul mates yeah and actually that’s what now as security our roots are if you like around our small family</td>
<td>Soul mates is the sort of thing really you know and I think that’s how we would describe our our relationship as soul mates yeah and actually that’s what now as security our roots are if you like around our small family</td>
<td>1179</td>
<td>1182</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would say the last twenty odd years that’s been the solid bit in my life but influences from other aspects of my experiences have come into that</td>
<td>I would say the last twenty odd years that’s been the solid bit in my life but influences from other aspects of my experiences have come into that</td>
<td>1208</td>
<td>1209</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My partner is very similar in a lot of ways to my father not in terms of looks laughs he’s very interested in money he’s interested in financial thinks ahh you know they had very really similar connections</td>
<td>My partner is very similar in a lot of ways to my father not in terms of looks laughs he’s very interested in money he’s interested in financial thinks ahh you know they had very really similar connections</td>
<td>1108</td>
<td>1110</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There were aspects I mean there were aspects you know I think fairly solid fairly secure emm quite strong emm quite stable in a lot of ways similar interests you know emm because my partner is also very interested in animals and you know so there are a lot of similarities you know in that sense</td>
<td>There were aspects I mean there were aspects you know I think fairly solid fairly secure emm quite strong emm quite stable in a lot of ways similar interests you know emm because my partner is also very interested in animals and you know so there are a lot of similarities you know in that sense</td>
<td>1124</td>
<td>1128</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>There are aspects of himself in terms of his culture cos he comes from a mixed environment as well</td>
<td>There are aspects of himself in terms of his culture cos he comes from a mixed environment as well</td>
<td>1156</td>
<td>1157</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I think there’s elements of searching for his blackness as well you know in his identity as well</td>
<td>I think there’s elements of searching for his blackness as well you know in his identity as well</td>
<td>1167</td>
<td>1168</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similarity in difference</td>
<td>Belongingness</td>
<td>as well as me searching for mine [laughs] along the way () as a woman () and as a white woman</td>
<td>1168</td>
<td>1169</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Similarity in difference</td>
<td>Belongingness</td>
<td>and I think my partner has also had that () experience () and it’s almost as though we’ve both come together</td>
<td>1172</td>
<td>1173</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similarity in difference</td>
<td>Belongingness</td>
<td>and I think my partner has also had that () experience () and it’s almost as though we’ve both come together</td>
<td>1172</td>
<td>1173</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similarity in difference</td>
<td>Belongingness</td>
<td>It’s not big () yes there are aspects of () who I am as a white woman () and who he is as a black man () and the ... sort of ... wider cultural backgrounds that we’ve come from () and what we bring into this relationship () with our children</td>
<td>1185</td>
<td>1187</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similarity in difference</td>
<td>Belongingness</td>
<td>It’s not big () yes there are aspects of () who I am as a white woman () and who he is as a black man () and the ... sort of ... wider cultural backgrounds that we’ve come from () and what we bring into this relationship () with our children</td>
<td>1185</td>
<td>1187</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similarity in difference</td>
<td>Belongingness</td>
<td>We’ve joined our patchwork quilt up () in a lot of ways</td>
<td>1201</td>
<td>1201</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similarity in difference</td>
<td>Belongingness</td>
<td>And connecting with somebody else who’s also got a patchwork quilt () and finding similarities and differences () and working that out between us () it’s almost as if we’ve created a cultural environment as well</td>
<td>1213</td>
<td>1215</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similarity in difference</td>
<td>Belongingness</td>
<td>the interesting thing is () we are both mixed () both culturally mixed () actually my previous partner was culturally mixed (.) emm () so there’s almost as though</td>
<td>1225</td>
<td>1227</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similarity in difference</td>
<td>Belongingness</td>
<td>even in my relationship () his history of being in the forces () not him himself ... but family () family environment in the forces and stuff () how that is my () has been my culture ... if you like</td>
<td>1321</td>
<td>1323</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social life</td>
<td>Belongingness</td>
<td>our social life was around going to the RAF bases and the US air force bases () emm () mainly at the US air force bases</td>
<td>776</td>
<td>777</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social life</td>
<td>Belongingness</td>
<td>But the social life was good () I went out with people in the RAF () who were officers () so it was quite (.) i have to say quite pretentious and superficial (.) in a lot of ways () you know ... sort of going for cocktails ... with the station commander</td>
<td>787</td>
<td>790</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol</td>
<td>Transience</td>
<td>alcohol was a big thing () alcohol was a big thing in that life</td>
<td>794</td>
<td>795</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol</td>
<td>Transience</td>
<td>I can remember my father () you know () propping up the bar () and ... you know ... that was army life () that was forces life</td>
<td>795</td>
<td>796</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol</td>
<td>Transience</td>
<td>they worked hard ... they played hard () that was the sort of message () but the playing hard was also (.) alcohol related () and a lot of alcohol related issues in the forces ... and stuff</td>
<td>797</td>
<td>799</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol</td>
<td>Transience</td>
<td>as a shy person ... it actually gave you confidence () to actually socialise and be something () different</td>
<td>811</td>
<td>811</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army</td>
<td>Transience</td>
<td>So you almost have to carry your roots with you () and I suppose, because army life is very similar wherever you go () there’s that sense of () familiarity with routine</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>182</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army</td>
<td>Transience</td>
<td>there’s the familiarity of army life ... wherever you are ... in the world () but you don’t get this sense of () there is ... gosh () I suppose it’s different levels of community () because you don’t have the same people with you () so although the lifestyle is similar wherever you are ... you don’t have the people</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>191</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army</td>
<td>Transience</td>
<td>there’s the familiarity of army life ... wherever you are ... in the world () but you don’t get this sense of () there is ... gosh () I suppose it’s different levels of community () because you don’t have the same people with you () so although the lifestyle is similar wherever you are ... you don’t have the people</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>191</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
you have this familiar (. ) the familiarity of (. ) you know ... the barracks and routines ... but actually ... because the people are not the same (. ) you don’t (. ) you’re not anywhere long enough to build relationships

so again ... in a situation where you weren’t with family (. ) emm (. ) if you like (. ) emm (. ) random (. ) random people from (. ) random environments (. ) because also (. ) emm (. ) there were some army people (. ) ‘cos that’s obviously ... that’s how they heard about it (. ) there were a couple of families with children from the army were there

it’s the only life I knew (. ) that sort of (. ) emm (. ) and I guess that’s where (. ) people who have been in the army ... actually ... have those connections ... because you do feel that other people are the same (. ) they understand what it’s like (. ) they’re doing the same thing as you are (. ) that sort of transient moving on ... and connecting (. ) because they’ve also got that ... that lifestyle of no roots ... moving around (. ) emm ... experience

I do have some happy memories of army life (. ) because ... actually (. ) you know (. ) because you were a ... sort of (. ) a base (. )

everything took place on the base (. ) or you had connections with other bases (. ) so social life

there’s always something to do (. ) you don’t have to actually find activities in that sort of lifestyle (. ) there were always things (. ) that were ongoing (. ) if you like (. ) social activities (. ) for the family (. ) and for individuals (. ) emm (. ) not only when I was a child (. ) but as I grew older there was much more a social network (. ) an existing social network (. ) so although you had to make the effort to get into a social network (. ) it was already there (. )

That was the culture (. ) that was the culture (. ) yeah (. ) that was a culture of its own (. ) mmm (. ) in some senses (. ) it was a sort of moving culture

but also I did have a culture (. ) which was this sort of army life (. ) this sort of forces life (. ) which was a sort of (. ) transient (. ) which has impacted on the way I have relationships (. ) and how I’ve moved through life

but also I did have a culture (. ) which was this sort of army life (. ) this sort of forces life (. ) which was a sort of (. ) transient (. ) which has impacted on the way I have relationships (. ) and how I’ve moved through life

but also I did have a culture (. ) which was this sort of army life (. ) this sort of forces life (. ) which was a sort of (. ) transient (. ) which has impacted on the way I have relationships (. ) and how I’ve moved through like

I went from Austria ... where I was born (. ) and in between we did ... sort of ... little flits to Britain (. ) you know with the army ... being based somewhere in Britain (. ) and before you get your next posting (. ) out to (. ) So very nomadic ... and very (. ) no roots

So you almost have to carry your roots with you (. ) And I suppose, because army life is very similar wherever you go (. ) there’s that sense of (. ) familiarity with routine

it was done for the best reasons ... and for (. ) in their eyes (. ) but actually (. ) the thing about my childhood I remember is actually ... I mean ... it’s not that they didn’t care

and as a shy child as well (. ) it’s like you have to start again (. ) with building relationships (. ) knowing that two years down the line you’re going to be moving off again ... or their going to be moving on
| Grabbing | Transience | Belongingness | I think it's a bit about (.) because I haven't been in one place (.) emm (.5) grabbing what you can (.) from this (.) grabbing what you can from that | 457 | 458 |
| Lifecycle of friendship | Transience | Belongingness | but then (.) and I suppose this is probably ... I'm just wondering if it's ... sort of ... symbolic of army life ... it's like (.) ran out of a connection with each other (.) | 704 | 706 |
| Lifecycle of friendship | Transience | Belongingness | It's like ... it was time to move on | 710 | 710 |
| Lifecycle of friendship | Transience | Belongingness | it's almost as though you make friendships for a short while (.) and because you've had this ... sort of ... nomadic moving around (.) it's almost as though that's as far as you go | 714 | 716 |
| Lifecycle of friendship | Transience | Belongingness | And I think that's quite (.) just (.) actually it's just sort of really occurred to me that that's what's happened in my life ... really ... is actually I only go so far (.) emm (1) and then move on (.) it's almost as though I can't go beyond (.) three ... four years (.) in a friendship ... because ... actually (.) that's about all I had (.5) in my life (.) you know (.) these (.) sort of chunks ... of time ... and connecting with people (.) emm (.) so I don't know ... maybe that's part of my psyche | 724 | 729 |
| Loneliness | Transience | Belongingness | although there were lots people around (.) it was quite a lonely existence | 208 | 209 |
| Loneliness | Transience | Belongingness | Quite an isolating (.1) lonely (.1) life as an only child (.1) and ehh (.1) moving around | 415 | 416 |
| Mother | Transience | Belongingness | both of her parents had died (.) not in the War (.) pre-war (.) and she was brought up by her grandmother (.) a very strict woman | 37 | 38 |
| Perpetuum mobile | Transience | Belongingness | I think my cultural roots are (.) actually with this sort of nomadic transient lifestyle (.) of the army (.) and the forces | 1171 | 1172 |
| Perpetuum mobile | Transience | Belongingness | this transient moving around (.) it's like a moving culture (.) rather than a static one | 1428 | 1228 |
| Perpetuum mobile | Transience | Belongingness | but also I did have a culture (.) which was this sort of army life (.) this sort of forces life (.) which was a sort of (.) transient (.5) which has impacted on the way I have relationships (.) and how I've moved through like | 1436 | 1439 |
| Personal characteristics | Transience | Belongingness | a bit rootless and a bit grabbing at aspects to make me ... really | 551 | 552 |
| Personal characteristics | Transience | Belongingness | And people had to (.) be a self contained community (.) they had to be self sufficient (.) they had to meet each other's needs | 770 | 771 |
| Personal life | Transience | Belongingness | and as a shy child as well (.) it's like you have to start again (.) with building relationships (.) knowing that two years down the line you're going to be moving off again ... or their going to be moving on | 416 | 418 |
| School | Transience | Belongingness | and the same is true of school as well (.) it wasn't (.) you know (.) it's just really sad ... actually (.) when I'm thinking back on it ... actually ... it's sort of rootless (.) so where do I get my sense of who I am from? | 362 | 364 |
| Trust | Transience | Belongingness | what I did hold onto was the ... sort of ... emm (.) I suppose you don't trust people (.5) in some ways (.) because they are either transient in your life (.) or they are passing through | 544 | 546 |
| Yearning | Transience | Belongingness | there are times when I think it would have been nice to have been in a much tighter knit community (.) and having more support (.) which might come from being in a tighter knit community | 1261 | 1262 |
| Transience | Belongingness | he was quite significant in my life ... he was very much my attachment figure ... he was the person who ... if you like ... took me to ... 'cos army life is a lot of moving around and different ... |
| Transience | Belongingness | I was just thinking about this image of home in terms of a place (.) don't have that (.) don't have that at all (.) very nomadic ... almost ... there's no one building ... no one place that (.) is home (.) except we did ... when we came back to Britain (.) on and off (.) we always went to my grandfather |
| Transience | Belongingness | you have this familiar (.) the familiarity of ... you know ... the barracks and routines ... but actually ... because the people are not the same (.) you don't (.) you're not anywhere long enough to build relationships |
| Transience | Belongingness | so again ... in a situation where you weren't with family (.) emm (1) if you like (3) emm (.) random (.) random people from (.) random environments (.) because also (.) emm (.) there were some army people (.) 'cos that's obviously ... that's how they heard about it (.) there were a couple of families with children from the army were there |
| Transience | Belongingness | but they weren't lasting (.) friendships (.) as such |
| Transience | Belongingness | and the same is true of school as well (.) it wasn't (.) you know (.) it's just really sad ... actually (.) when I'm thinking back on it ... actually ... it's sort of rootless (.) so where do I get my sense of who I am from? |
| Transience | Belongingness | what I did hold onto was the ... sort of (.) I suppose you don't trust people (.) in some ways (.) because they are either transient in your life (.) or they are passing through |
| Transience | Belongingness | a bit rootless and a bit grabbing at aspects to make me ... really |
| Transience | Belongingness | I don't think I've ever belonged anywhere (1) in my life really |
| Transience | Belongingness | but also you take that with you (.) and really just ... sort of ... just talking about it today has (.) actually (.) I've recognised how much of that (.) I have taken with me to other parts of the country (.) and how important it was |
| Transience | Belongingness | some parts of me would have loved that (.) security (.) of ... you know (.) a place where I was brought up and I knew people and there was a community (.) and stuff like that (.) but actually this has been a (.) if you like a moveable |
| Transience | Belongingness | there's been a bit of me longing for this ... sort of (.) being able to establish some roots (.) and grow from that (.) and maybe that's what I've got now (.) |
| Transience | Belongingness | but also I did have a culture (.) which was this sort of army life (.) this sort of forces life (.) which was a sort of (.) transient (.) which has impacted on the way I have relationships (.) and how I've moved through like |
| Black nanny | Cultural dissonance | Cultural dissonance and loss | I had a nanny ... I had a black nanny (1) |
| Black nanny | Cultural dissonance | Cultural dissonance and loss | I've just been reading The Help (1) I don't know if you know the book (.) it's about Mississippi ... and the States and ... emm ... black nannies bringing up white children (.) basically (.) and that just sort of made me think about how important it was (.) and maybe that also contributed to my mother's distance |
| Choice | Cultural dissonance | Cultural dissonance and loss | not on good terms because of my relationship with a black man ... Basically (.) really (.) so I lost that relationship in a lot of ways |
I wasn’t strong enough at the time to be able to resist their (. . .) because I waited quite a few years before I actually told them I was going out with this guy.

but then I met my husband (. . .) and I was much stronger then (. . .) because I actually thought (. . .) what’s going on here Pat? (. . .) you know (. . .) you’ve got to make a decision here (. . .) (. . .) family or partner

I don’t think it was a lot actually (. . .) I really don’t (. . .) (. . .) I mean it was a big loss (. . .) realising (. . .) losing my father (. . .) in all of that (. . .) but then I think (. . .) (. . .) he made some choices there

so that was quite a significant loss (. . .) I never, ever recovered (. . .) that relationship (. . .) at all (. . .) I was always angry with him (. . .) or resentful (. . .) of his (. . .) his attitude (. . .) (. . .) so I think it (. . .) you know (. . .) I mean (. . .) he went to (. . .) he died (. . .) and we still hadn’t really rebuilt (. . .) any sort of relationship (. . .) (. . .) mainly for the grandchildren’s sake

I wasn’t strong enough at the time to be able to resist their (. . .) because I waited quite a few years before I actually told them I was going out with this guy.

so it was the seventies (. . .) there was then the (. . .) East African (. . .) throwing out of the Indian (. . .) Asian community

I didn’t tell them about it for ages (. . .) ages (. . .) now this is the fear that (. . .) (. . .) and (. . .) (. . .) (. . .) (. . .) (. . .)

which is why I am saying I don’t really connect with the Austrian (. . .) aspect (. . .) and that might be about the relationship with my mother (. . .) which influenced (. . .) obviously influenced whether I would take on board her heritage (. . .) but actually I took on board his heritage.

which is sad (. . .) in a lot of ways (. . .) because (. . .) I feel I’ve lost a whole part of (. . .) my heritage (. . .) really (. . .) and that’s the Austrian part of it

I don’t know whether that’s something about her assimilating into army life (. . .) as well (. . .) and not wanting to be different
| Mother | Cultural loss | Cultural dissonance and loss | I felt sad for her actually ... because she always wanted to go back to Austria ... and she always tried to talk German with me ... and I would always refuse to engage with it | 90 | 92 |
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<p>| Race | Hierarchy | Discrimination | so there was a definite (1) sort of you know ... chung ... chung .... chung ... chung() and once you () you started to go out with and Italian () you started mixing with the Italians () the ice cream guys and the hairdressers [laughs] () you know () there was no way you were going to go back out with a white guy | 823 | 827 |
| Race | Hierarchy | Discrimination | go out with a black man it was hissssss [mimes spraying ] () definitely () you had hit bottom | 831 | 832 |
| Race | Hierarchy | Discrimination | and no white man would touch you | 832 | 832 |
| Race | Hierarchy | Discrimination | It was around () yeah () it was definitely around | 843 | 843 |
| Race | Hierarchy | Discrimination | and it’s like () you were tainted then | 843 | 844 |
| Ignorance | Discrimination | you know [1] that was their problem () because ... actually () they didn’t really know what these people were like () you know () they were making assumptions and stereotypes about (1) them (1) but it’s interesting | 881 | 884 |
| Ignorance | Discrimination | but also the way they treated and talked about other people that they didn’t know | 1032 | 1033 |
| Cultural roots | Prejudice | Discrimination | I do remember the sort of ... negative comments about people there ... like the dirty Arabs living across the road () Where did that come from ... because ... actually ... as a people they’re not dirty() you know () but there’s these negative comments that have filtered through to me ... which I took on board | 215 | 222 |
| Prejudice | Discrimination | I was just so angry () that people could treat others () in the way that () they did () amm () without () without () meeting them | 1106 | 1107 |
| Denigration | Racial | Discrimination | so their only way of coping was () actually () to sort of denigrate anybody who had a relationship with them | 906 | 908 |
| Cultural roots | Racism | Discrimination | I remember some aspects of Africa () like the camel sticking it’s head through my window [laughs] and my mother being really horrified about the fact that this camel () and there was me putting my hand in this () sort of () camel’s mouth () because it went against her ... sort of ... cleanliness view () mixing with ... dirty animals | 197 | 205 |
| Racism | Discrimination | I was just beginning to be aware of what racism was about () and what it meant ... well I must have been aware before then because ... obviously ... I was fearful of actually saying it | 1019 | 1021 |
| Racism | Discrimination | but they have a different skin colour () you know () and that’s kind of sad | 1128 | 1129 |
| Racism | Discrimination | When I first went out () with a black person () you know () it was like () the naivété ... the colour blindness () disbelief that people were treated differently | 1281 | 1282 |
| Racism | Discrimination | the experience of being treated differently | 1282 | 1283 |
| Racism | Discrimination | I’ve gone from that ... sort of ... naive position to () oohhh () I suppose when you have children () wanting everything to be black focussed () to now perhaps being a bit more balanced and challenging () emm () and being a bit more of an antiracist () having a bit more of an antiracist stance () and challenging whiteness () and stuff () and again that’s an evolving process | 1291 | 1296 |
| Cultural roots | Army | Fantasy | It’s like ... sort of little England () [laughs] ... displaced from England really ... if that makes sense ... so you have these pockets ... and it was everything was very close knit () very much about army life | 60 | 62 |
| Cultural roots | Austria | Fantasy | I was born in Austria () in Southern Austria () I was born by a lake () a very beautiful part of the country ... and () my mother’s Austrian | 21 | 23 |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Austria</th>
<th>Fantasy</th>
<th>I was born in Austria (.) in Southern Austria (.5) I was born by a lake (.) a very beautiful part of the country ... and (.5) my mother's Austrian</th>
<th>21</th>
<th>23</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fantasy</td>
<td>Fantasy</td>
<td>all the dressing up (.) and ... you know (1) god it was a bit fantasy</td>
<td>807</td>
<td>807</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fantasy</td>
<td>Fantasy</td>
<td>on the whole [laughs] you know</td>
<td>861</td>
<td>862</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fantasy</td>
<td>Fantasy</td>
<td>I think at the time ... it was this sort of romanticism (.5) fantasy (.5) the romantic (.5) you know (.5) because they were always very (.5) you know (.5) respectful</td>
<td>867</td>
<td>869</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fantasy</td>
<td>Fantasy</td>
<td>having said that they weren’t that respectful (.5) you know (.5) they were (2) going off all over the place (.5) you know (.5)</td>
<td>869</td>
<td>870</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family life</td>
<td>Literature</td>
<td>The classics [laughs] (.5) like Charles Dickens ... and (.5) I went through a phase ... when I was older ... when I was in my teenage years of Russian (.5) Dostoyevsky and all of those books (.5) and ehh (.5) and there was a sort of ... ahh</td>
<td>389</td>
<td>391</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family life</td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Oh yes (.5) my mother had this very pretentious sort of ... view of life ... that she was brought up in this (.5) sort of (.5) she said wealthy environment and you know ... the family had a string of hotels ... and she was spoiled ... and stuff like that ... and you can see that in her now (.5) in terms of she likes to go and spend her holidays in hotels (.5) to be waited on (1) so it’s like ... there’s an element of her ... she was looking for that (.5) princess type</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family life</td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Maybe I wanted to be a little princess ... as well ... like my mother</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>398</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal characteristics</td>
<td>Changes</td>
<td>I don't think it is now</td>
<td>1323</td>
<td>1323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes</td>
<td>Growth</td>
<td>you just turned a blind eye to the other thing</td>
<td>876</td>
<td>876</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life events</td>
<td>Loss of mother</td>
<td>I think I've learned to live with it ... really (.5) yes it is hurtful ... in some ways</td>
<td>496</td>
<td>497</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black nanny</td>
<td>Search for difference</td>
<td>I had a nanny ... I had a black nanny [1]</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blackness</td>
<td>Search for difference</td>
<td>thinking about my own identity ... and my relationship with black people [removed] is like jigsaw pieces (.5) coming together and making sense of who I am a person and how I relate in my own family</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excitement</td>
<td>Search for difference</td>
<td>For me it was more exciting than (.5) emm [1] than you know ... people who had just been stuck where they were for ever more (.5)</td>
<td>896</td>
<td>897</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family life</td>
<td>Search for difference</td>
<td>I know as a child (.5) I mean (.5) I always searched out large families (.5) to be part of (.5) and ... you know ... some of my friendships have been (.5) to sort of (.5) sit in a large family home (.5) with lots of activity going on (.5) and just absorb it (.5) in some ways</td>
<td>1467</td>
<td>1470</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family life</td>
<td>Search for difference</td>
<td>I suppose that (.5) that’s a bit that I’ve been searching for (.5) I know I have (.5) because actually (.5) this sort of (.5) nuclear (.5) isolated family (.5) with no sense of (.5) family as such (.5) wider family (.5) it was too intense (.5) but it’s been really (.5) sort of (.5) thought provoking</td>
<td>1484</td>
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<tr>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Search for difference</td>
<td>Growth</td>
<td>Page</td>
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<tr>
<td>Film</td>
<td>Search for difference</td>
<td>my favourite film of all time is Dr Zhivago [laughs] (.5) emm () you know () that’s a total romantic fantasy ... but there’s was also this sort of fantasy about Russia () old Russia ... before the revolution</td>
<td>391</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Search for difference</td>
<td>as a result of that I went to live in Italy for a while () emm () you know () just to learn more about () Italy and the life there and culture there and () you know () so ()</td>
<td>910</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life events</td>
<td>Search for difference</td>
<td>I went off to teacher training college () and it was like whooooo () freedom</td>
<td>664</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Literature</td>
<td>Search for difference</td>
<td>I went through a phase ... when I was older ... when I was in my teenage years of Russian () Dostoyevsky and all of those books () and ehh () and there was a sort of ... ahh () my favourite film of all time is Dr Zhivago [laughs] (.5) emm () you know () that’s a total romantic fantasy ... but there’s was also this sort of fantasy about Russia () old Russia ... before the revolution</td>
<td>389</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Literature</td>
<td>Search for difference</td>
<td>my favourite film of all time is Dr Zhivago [laughs] (.5) emm () you know () that’s a total romantic fantasy ... but there’s was also this sort of fantasy about Russia () old Russia ... before the revolution</td>
<td>391</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiculturalism</td>
<td>Search for difference</td>
<td>we went to Bedfordshire (2) emm () which was interesting as well () because it was like my first experience ... really ... of multicultural environment</td>
<td>735</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal characteristics</td>
<td>Search for difference</td>
<td>as a shy person ... it actually gave you confidence () to actually socialise and be something () different</td>
<td>811</td>
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<tr>
<td>Separation</td>
<td>Search for difference</td>
<td>not on good terms because of my relationship with a black man ... Basically () really () so I lost that relationship in a lot of ways</td>
<td>477</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Separation</td>
<td>Search for difference</td>
<td>and we didn’t ever really recover that relationship () so () so I suppose I did lose my family as a result of that</td>
<td>1037</td>
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<td>Separation</td>
<td>Search for difference</td>
<td>you’ve got to make a decision here () emm () family or partner</td>
<td>1045</td>
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<tr>
<td>Separation</td>
<td>Search for difference</td>
<td>so on that level () I thought they might have accepted it () but I think () actually () I think deep down I knew they wouldn’t accept it () yeah () maybe it’s just having that hope () having hope () that actually ... maybe family ties might be strong enough (1) to ... if you like ... deal with this</td>
<td>1058</td>
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<td>Yearning</td>
<td>Search for difference</td>
<td>yearning () yearning is the word</td>
<td>297</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Search for difference</td>
<td>they always had the great Motown people (1) you know I saw everybody () you know ... emm () Jimmy Ruffin and () all the Motown people () you know (1) The ... the Jacksons</td>
<td>777</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Search for difference</td>
<td>I went out with an Italian</td>
<td>813</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Search for difference</td>
<td>I went out with an Italian</td>
<td>813</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Search for difference</td>
<td>It wasn’t until I came back to Birmingham that I actually () then went out with a black man</td>
<td>833</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I went out with an Italian for several years (.) in Bedfordshire

it all came true ... didn’t it [laughs]

I love Italy (.) and I love Italian food (.) and I love Italian men (.) aren’t they gorgeous? (.) you know

when you’re actually with them (.) and they treat you so nicely (.) oh gosh this is lovely (.) you know (.) then along comes your beer drinking white man (.) you know

ey all drove better cars (.) and had better lifestyle (.) and (.) you know (.) and they treated women with (2) roses and everything else (.) and how nice was that (.) it was quite flattering really

For me it was more exciting than (.) emm (1) than you know ... people who had just been stuck where they were for ever more (.)

the Italian male is (1) very much (.) was very much seen as that

but I suppose for me it was just a bit more exciting

I think I’ve been searching (.) probably still am searching [laughs] (1) and I don’t know ... I’m not sure what I’m searching for (.)

I think I was looking for myself really (.) in terms of who I am (.5) really

and maybe there is a bit of excitement about that type of lifestyle (.) it’s actually (.) it’s new ... it’s changing

I was working in this community centre and I met a guy (.) I haven’t had that many relationships really (.) thinking about it (.)

I was just (.) very good looking (.) looked a bit like (.) like Michael Jackson before all the ... ehh ... plastic surgery (.) in fact his nickname was Michael (.) emm (.) because he looked like Michael Jackson

he was just (.) very good looking (.) looked a bit like (.) like Michael Jackson before all the ... ehh ... plastic surgery (.) in fact his nickname was Michael (.) emm (.) because he looked like Michael Jackson

so on that level (.) I thought they might have accepted it (.) but I think (.) actually (.) I think deep down I knew they wouldn’t accept it (.) yeah (.) maybe it’s just having that hope (.5) having hope (.) that actually ... maybe family ties might be strong enough (1) to ... if you like ... deal with this
Cultural bricollage  Search for richness  Growth  thinking about my own identity ... and my relationship with black people (removed) is like jigsaw pieces (. ) coming together and making sense of who I am a person and how I relate in my own family  163 166
Cultural bricollage  Search for richness  Growth  [with] ... Bits and pieces of elsewhere  511 511
Cultural bricollage  Search for richness  Growth  it’s really quite interesting (. ) to see how fragmented it is (. ) and what I’ve taken from each (. ) each bit  853 854
Cultural bricollage  Search for richness  Growth  and it’s about how you describe culture (. ) isn’t it? (. ) ‘cos it’s such a wide (. ) there’s macro and micro (. ) isn’t there (. ) there’s a bit about being an individual (. ) and what I’ve taken from ... various places (. ) on my journey (. ) and I think I’m still doing that (. ) you know (. )  1148 1151
Cultural bricollage  Search for richness  Growth  If you came into our house (. ) you probably wouldn’t know who lived in that house (. ) you know .sort of ... through the keyhole type thing (. ) emm (. ) because it is so multicultural (. ) and so diverse (. ) you wouldn’t know whether it was (. ) African (. ) white (. ) Asian (. )  1151 1154
Cultural bricollage  Search for richness  Growth  we do a lot of travelling (. ) so it’s kind of important as well (. ) I mean we always bring something back from wherever we’ve been (. ) emm (. ) to (. ) sort of (. ) add to the richness  1355 1357
Cultural bricollage  Search for richness  Growth  I suppose what we’ve done is try to amalgamate it all into this ... sort of ... naive position to (. ) oohhh (. ) I suppose when you have children (. ) wanting everything to be black focussed (. ) to now perhaps being a bit more balanced and challenging (. ) emm (. ) and being a bit more of an antiracist (. ) having a bit more of an antiracist stance (. ) and challenging whiteness (. ) and stuff (. ) and again that’s an evolving process  1291 1296
Cultural bricollage  Search for richness  Growth  And I guess our own identities are about (1) culture and what we take onboard  1291 1290
Cultural bricollage  Search for richness  Growth  I’ve gone from that ... sort of ... naive position to (. ) oohhh (. ) I suppose when you have children (. ) wanting everything to be black focussed (. ) to now perhaps being a bit more balanced and challenging (. ) emm (. ) and being a bit more of an antiracist (. ) having a bit more of an antiracist stance (. ) and challenging whiteness (. ) and stuff (. ) and again that’s an evolving process  1291 1296
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Cultural bricollage  Search for richness  Growth  a bit rootless and a bit grabbing at aspects to make me ... really  551 552
Decision  Search for richness  Growth  And what we take with us and what we leave behind (2) and what we find that’s new and richer (1) or not  1414 1415
Diversity  Search for richness  Growth  I think I’ve been searching (. ) probably still am searching [laughs] (1) and I don’t know ... I’m not sure what I’m searching for (. ) I guess richness and wideness and variety  916 918
Expanding horizons  Search for richness  Growth  I think it became richer ... later on (. ) in my life (. ) emm (. ) because it was very (1) trying to think what word (. ) it was very narrow in a lot of ways  461 462
Identity  Search for richness  Growth  so I guess it’s been an evolving process really (. ) and I don’t know where (. ) whether that fits in with culture (. ) or whether it’s just about my identity  1285 1287
Patchwork quilt  Search for richness  Growth  That’s how I would describe my life (. ) and how I have developed is a bit like a patchwork quilt  456 457
Patchwork quilt  Search for richness  Growth  I think there’s an element of searching (. ) that’s gone on in my life (. ) emm (. ) and taking what I can from bits  859 860
Patchwork quilt  Search for richness  Growth  It’s a real (. ) sort of (. ) what did you say at the beginning (. ) patchwork quilt (. ) and you’ve got two people (. ) two patchwork quilts  1196 1197
but then I met my husband (.) emm (.) and I was much stronger then (.) because I actually thought (1) you know (.) what's going on here Pat? (.) you know (.) you've got to make a decision here (.) emm (.) family or partner

I think that ... there's a richness in that as well ... I don't think it's a negative necessarily (.) emm (.) because I think it's contributed to who I am as a person now

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it's still part of the searching really

and again the richness of culture and different lifestyle

we've both taken from (1) places on our journeys (.) along the way (.) and we still are

It's provided a richness (.) of different aspects of a world view

(.) I think what we both offer (.) is that sort of richness or diversity (.) and an understanding of others

finding a richness (1) in a different environment (.5) if that makes sense

I think for my children (.) it was important to have stability (1) to have empathy (1) and understanding (.) and (.5) to have a richness of (.) cultural experiences (.) yeah (.) so that (.) emm (1) so that they felt secure (.)

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finding a richness (1) in a different environment (.5) if that makes sense

I think it's been an evolving journey as well (.) and again that's related to [deleted]

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I suppose I have found (1) a secure base (1) with my partner (3) and maybe all of this heartache along the way has (.) landed me in that place

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but actually ... even though it was freedom (.) it really wasn't freedom

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It was scary (.5) scary (.) again (.) because I was on my own (.) didn't know anybody

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stepping into the unknown (.) emm (.) yeah (.) it was quite scary

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I remember going off to teacher training college ... almost relieved

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Soul mates is the sort of thing really (.) you know (.) and I think that's how we would describe our (.) our relationship (.) as soul mates (.) yeah (.) and actually that's what now as security our roots are (.) if you like (.) around (.) our small family (.)

Soul mates is the sort of thing really (.) you know (.) and I think that's how we would describe our (.) our relationship (.) as soul mates (.) yeah (.) and actually that's what now as security our roots are (.) if you like (.) around (.) our small family (.)

I think you have to become quite resilient and (.) emm (.) have lots of survival strategies (.) emm (.) which for me weren't that strong until I (.) actually (.) found my soul mate

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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Influence of personal</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Separation</td>
<td>Growth</td>
<td>you've got to make a decision here (.) emm (.) family or partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separation</td>
<td>Growth</td>
<td>I did try again (.) and I was determined I was (.) you know (.) these external pressures weren't going to ... actually (.) effect me</td>
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<tr>
<td>Separation</td>
<td>Growth</td>
<td>In the end I just said (.) look (1) I'm going out with this guy (.5) and you can meet him (1) or you can just forget</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cosmopolitan</td>
<td>Search for richness</td>
<td>I don't know what the attraction was (.) and I think ... maybe ... perhaps having had a bit of a cosmopolitan (1) background (1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recovery of lost</td>
<td>Search for richness</td>
<td>I've come back to it in later years ... recently ... and tried to make sense of it ... and meeting Austrians</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recovery of lost</td>
<td>Search for richness</td>
<td>I've gone back to find it ... and now I've met Austrians ... 'cos we go to Austria quite a bit ... emm (.) I can see her (.5) in a different light ... in terms of how Austrians are ...</td>
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<tr>
<td>Life events</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Influence of personal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life events</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>and of course ... that has caused resentment from my mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life events</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>She sees that as (.) I spoiled her chances (.) again (1) you know (.) she's not like a mother ... she's a child (.) a sibling (.) It's all your fault that we didn't go (.) And I say ... I didn't stop you from going (.) I said you could go</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrimination</td>
<td>Influence of personal</td>
<td>I remember some aspects of Africa (.) like the camel sticking it's head through my window [laughs] and my mother being really horrified about the fact that this camel (.) and there was me putting my hand in this (.) sort of (.) camel's mouth (.5) because it went against her ... sort of ... cleanliness view (1) mixing with (1) ... dirty animals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrimination</td>
<td>Influence of personal</td>
<td>... I do remember things like (.) and I guess this relates to [removed] who am I and my identity (.5) I do remember the sort of ... negative comments about people there ... like the dirty Arabs living across the road (.) ... Where did that come from ... because ... actually ... as a people they're not dirty</td>
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<tr>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>Influence of personal</td>
<td>I think that's what was lacking in my household was empathy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bigotry</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Influence of personal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bigotry</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>that caused huge ructions in the family (.) and we did go out for about eight years (.) but it was quite a testing time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bigotry</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Influence of personal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bigotry</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>I didn't tell them about it for ages (.) ages (.) now this is the fear that (.) and ... ehh (.)</td>
</tr>
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<td>Bigotry</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Influence of personal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bigotry</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Fear and (.) you know (.) taking a risk (.) emm (.) because (.5) I would lose what little bit of family I had (.) as a result of going out with a black man</td>
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<td>Bigotry</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Influence of personal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bigotry</td>
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<td>they were horrendous to me (.) they were awful to me</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bigotry</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>they refused to meet him (.) they called me all sorts of names (.) emm (.) and my father was [whispers next two words] very derogatory in terms of his comments about black people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>so on that level (.) I thought they might have accepted it (.) but I think (.) actually (.) I think deep down I knew they wouldn't accept it (.) yeah (.) maybe it's just having that hope (.5) having hope (.) that actually ... maybe family ties might be strong enough (1) to ... if you like ... deal with this</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultural dissonance</td>
<td>Family Influence of personal</td>
<td>now that was when trouble started in the family</td>
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<td>Family</td>
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<td>Soul mates is the sort of thing really (.) you know (.) and I think that's how we would describe our (.) our relationship (.) as soul mates (.) yeah (.) and actually that's what now as security our roots are (.) if you like (.) around (.) our small family (.)</td>
</tr>
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<td>Family</td>
<td>Influence of personal</td>
<td>It's not big (.) yes there are aspects of (.) who I am as a white woman (.) and who he is as a black man (.) and the ... sort of ... wider cultural backgrounds that we've come from (.) and what we bring into this relationship (.) with our children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Influence of personal</td>
<td>Because I couldn't survive without (.) this sort of tenuous link with my family (.) even though it was a (.) a negative experience at times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Influence of personal</td>
<td>I know as a child (.) I mean (.) I mean (.) I always searched out large families (.) to be part of (.) and ... you know ... some of my friendships have been (.) to sort of (.) sit in a large family home (.) with lots of activity going on (.) and just absorb it (.) in some ways</td>
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<td>I suppose that (.) that's a bit that I've been searching for (.) I know I have (.) because actually (.) this sort of (.5) nuclear (.5) isolated family (.) with no sense of (.5) family as such (.5) with wider family (.5) it was too intense (.5) but it's been really (.5) sort of (.5) thought provoking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army</td>
<td>Father Influence of personal</td>
<td>He was in the army and I guess that shaped my early life a lot.</td>
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<td>Attachment figure</td>
<td>Father Influence of personal</td>
<td>he was quite significant in my life (.) he was very much my attachment figure (.) he was the person who ... if you like ... took me to (.) 'cos army life is a lot of moving around and different ...</td>
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<td>Attachment figure</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bigotry</td>
<td>Father Influence of personal</td>
<td>I did have a very close relationship with my dad (.) and actually it was destroyed as a result of that (1) because (1) I saw him in a very different light (1) to (.5) well one to speak (.) to me in the way they did (.) and treat me in the way they did</td>
</tr>
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<td>Bigotry</td>
<td>Father Influence of personal</td>
<td>and we didn't ever really recover that relationship (.) so (.) so I suppose I did lose my family as a result of that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominance</td>
<td>Father Influence of personal</td>
<td>I was very fearful of my dad (.) I didn't have the confidence to stand up to him</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominance</td>
<td>Father Influence of personal</td>
<td>I wasn't strong enough at the time to be able to resist their (.) because I waited quite a few years before I actually told them I was going out with this guy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominance</td>
<td>Father Influence of personal</td>
<td>D 'you know what (.) I didn't really think it would at first (.) at a conscious level (.) I think maybe on an unconscious level (.) I knew it (.) emm (.) but I think on a conscious level (.) I think generally thought that these people worked in social services (.) that they would care about other people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family life</td>
<td>Father Influence of personal</td>
<td>I think this is where relationships influenced my cultural heritage ... really ... 'cos I was closer to my father than my mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interests</td>
<td>Father Influence of personal</td>
<td>he was very important to me in terms of things that have always interested me ... and stayed with me ... things like (1) emm (.) enjoyment of animals ... emm ... nature ... walking ... activity ... music ... reading (.) so those were all ... sort of ... very important things I learned from him</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Influence of personal</td>
<td>He was in the army and I guess that shaped my early life a lot.</td>
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<td>Father</td>
<td>Influence of personal</td>
<td>I think this is where relationships influenced my cultural heritage ... really ... 'cos I was closer to my father than my mother</td>
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<td>Father</td>
<td>Influence of personal</td>
<td>So early influences were my father and his lifestyle (.4) which was his life and his career</td>
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<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Influence of personal</td>
<td>family activities tended to be (.5) again it tended to be me and him ... you know (.5) my mother was never interested in the walking and the dogs and (.5) and stuff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Influence of personal</td>
<td>those are my sort of strongest memories ... around life with my dad rather than my mum</td>
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<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Influence of personal</td>
<td>my dad had a nice sense of humour (.5) and he was a bit of a teaser (.5) and ... ehh ... the usual sort of ... look at that and then hit you on the nose (.5) and smell my hand (.5) smell cheese (.5) and then he would ... sort of ... hold your hand out and [smacks hand] [laughs] ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Influence of personal</td>
<td>I got a lot ... in the early days ... from my father (.5) his views ... his attitudes ... his sense of fun (.5) teasing ... those sort of things were quite important (.5) music's quite important (.4) physical activity (.5) so those are aspects of myself that I enjoy (.5) I enjoy the outdoor life (.4) I enjoy physical activity (.4) I enjoy animals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Influence of personal</td>
<td>but I also felt like ... you know ... if I did an image ... it would be (.4) I would be down (.4) I would be about this high [makes a gesture with thumb and first finger of right hand] and he would be this high [looks up]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Influence of personal</td>
<td>he did give me some good advice ... and I went on to do teacher training</td>
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<tr>
<td>Influence of personal</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>my father worked for social services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family life</td>
<td>Grandfather</td>
<td>my granddad was like that (.) so he was quite an important person (.) in my life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandfather</td>
<td>Influence of personal</td>
<td>I was just thinking about this image of home in terms of a place (.) don’t have that (.) don’t have that at all (.) very nomadic ... almost ... there’s no one building ... no one place that (.) is home (.5) except we did ... when we came back to Britain (.) on and off (.) we always went to my grandfather</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandfather</td>
<td>Influence of personal</td>
<td>when we came back to Britain (.) on and off (.) we always went to my grandfather (.) now that was very important to me (.) he was really(.)</td>
</tr>
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<td>Grandfather</td>
<td>Influence of personal</td>
<td>I can remember his home (.5) vividly (.) he had a lot of clocks (.) ticking and (.) it was a very comforting sound ... a lot of people find clocks annoying ... but actually ... I find it really (.) comforting and relaxing ... because ... actually ... it takes me back to then</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandfather</td>
<td>Influence of personal</td>
<td>and he had this beautiful garden (.) rose garden (.) emm (.) so (.) so those are the really strong memories (.) and he had a nice sense of humour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband</td>
<td>Influence of personal</td>
<td>really nice guy (.) interesting family dynamic (.) you know (.) sort of (.) I was just learning so much about (.) sort of (.) different lifestyles (.) emm (2) from him</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband</td>
<td>Influence of personal</td>
<td>I mean he has been my rock for the last (.) thirty years (1) so ... almost thirty years (.) [name]'s twenty five (.) so (.) about twenty eight years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband</td>
<td>Influence of personal</td>
<td>I suppose I have found (1) a secure base (1) with my partner (3) and maybe all of this heartache along the way has (.) landed me in that place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband</td>
<td>Influence of personal</td>
<td>he is also (.) searching for aspects of himself (.) in terms of his culture (.) 'cos he comes from a mixed environment (.) as well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband</td>
<td>Influence of personal</td>
<td>and actually (.) Mmmmm (.) this is the longest we've both been in one place (.) together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband</td>
<td>Influence of personal</td>
<td>Soul mates is the sort of thing really (.) you know (.) and I think that's how we would describe our (.) our relationship (.) as soul mates (.) yeah (.) and actually that's what now (.) as security our roots are (.) if you like (.) around (.) our small family (.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband</td>
<td>Influence of personal</td>
<td>And connecting with somebody else who's also got a patchwork quilt (.) and finding similarities and differences (.) and working that out between us (.) it's almost as if we've created a cultural environment as well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband</td>
<td>Influence of personal</td>
<td>I think you have to become quite resilient and (.) emm (.) have lots of survival strategies (.) emm (.) which for me weren't that strong until I (.) actually (.) found my soul mate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bigotry</td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Influence of personal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family life</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Influence of personal</td>
<td>but there’s these negative comments that have filtered through to me ... which I took on board</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nanny</td>
<td>Influence of personal</td>
<td>I remember (1) spending a lot of time with another person who was black () and going to the markets with her and sitting in the kitchen with her ... eating dates () you know picking dates off the trees and things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nanny</td>
<td>Influence of personal</td>
<td>I've just been reading The Help (1) I don't know if you know the book (.) it's about Mississippi (.) and the States and ... emm ... black nannies bringing up white children (.) basically (.) and that just sort of made me think about how important it was (.) and maybe that also contributed to my mother's distance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nanny</td>
<td>Influence of personal</td>
<td>Day to day life was with the nanny (.) and ... sort of ... reading that book has actually ... sort of ... made me think a little bit about my relationship with my mother (.) and her distance (.) she wouldn't say she was distant ... but I felt distance (.) it's never been a close relationship</td>
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<tr>
<td>Life events</td>
<td>Reference</td>
<td>Influence of personal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boarding school</td>
<td>Unsympathetic women</td>
<td>Influence of personal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>Forces</td>
<td>Return to familiar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband</td>
<td>Forces</td>
<td>Return to familiar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social life</td>
<td>Forces</td>
<td>Return to familiar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forces</td>
<td>Return to familiar</td>
<td>the interesting thing is that my husband is from an army family [laughs] (.5) an air force family ... but a forces family (.) which is really interesting (.) as well (.) in the sense of (.) similarities and in terms of our relationship</td>
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<td>the interesting thing is that my husband is from an army family [laughs] (.5) an air force family ... but a forces family (.) which is really interesting (.) as well (.) in the sense of (.) similarities and in terms of our relationship</td>
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<td>Forces</td>
<td>Return to familiar</td>
<td>just a coincidence (.) but it might well be (.) you know (.) I don't know [laughs]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forces</td>
<td>Return to familiar</td>
<td>Interestingly enough, the person I (.) actually became very friendly with during teacher training (.) she was an army person [laughs] (.) she came from an army family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forces</td>
<td>Return to familiar</td>
<td>and because I went to teacher training college in Lincolnshire (.) the links were with the RAF (.) emmm (.) Cranwell and (.) emmm (.) you know (.) the air force bases that were around there (.) so again (.) which is interesting ... in a sense ... is actually ... connecting with that life (.) because it was the only life I knew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forces</td>
<td>Return to familiar</td>
<td>so it's really interesting because (.emmm) as I say she was from an army family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forces</td>
<td>Return to familiar</td>
<td>I then ended up going out with someone from the RAF (.) which is really bizarre in a lot of ways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forces</td>
<td>Return to familiar</td>
<td>but interestingly enough [laughs] (.5) around Bedford and Bedfordshire there are a lot of army ... air force bases (.emmm) American bases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forces</td>
<td>Return to familiar</td>
<td>Again it's that familiarity (.yeah) (.5) RAF bases and US air force bases (.5) so the social life of Bedford (.tended to) (.1) emm (.5) be around going to the bases (.5) so it's like seeking out (.1) that sort of connection ... almost (.5) with that lifestyle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forces</td>
<td>Return to familiar</td>
<td>So there was (2) quite (1) a connection with that lifestyle (.5) so I guess there was an element of seeking it out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forces</td>
<td>Return to familiar</td>
<td>I went out with people in the RAF (.) who were officers (.5) So it was quite (.5) I have to say quite pretentious and superficial (.5) in a lot of ways (.) you know ... sort of going for cocktails ... with the station commander</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forces</td>
<td>Return to familiar</td>
<td>still hankering after army (.) forces life really</td>
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<tr>
<td>Partners</td>
<td>Mixed heritage</td>
<td>Return to familiar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family life</td>
<td>Building bridges</td>
<td>Search for difference</td>
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</tbody>
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