

Towards Interculturality: building on existing cultural experience

Cultural travel

- Strange cultural practices which we can just work out
 - Privacy, closing doors, running water, shoes on or off, bathroom arrangements
 - Salt and pepper, showing numbers, talking to people
 - Answering questions
- What we carry with us and therefore make sense of when we get to other places
 - And back, or on to the next place
- Examples from narratives
 - John's memory of grandmother's home – how to deal with difficult formalities – and bringing back understandings of social space
 - ... and so how I have learned to behave in an Iranian 'shab-e sher' ⇒ **interculturality**
 - English poetry (that resonates), protocols of the event (just another event)
 - Jenna using the resource of hard work and preparation, and the example of kicking out teachers, to speak out in class – then being explained away with essentialist disbelief
 - Safa buying cherries after years of waiting – after working it out
 - Also noting that 'paying free' is catching on at home with a very indigenous flavour
 - ... only to be accused by her childhood friend of corrupting the culture (even though there is Bob Dylan on her iPod) and her friend here of being Westernised
- **And from fiction** (other people's)
- *We need new names* – NoViolet Bulawayo (2013)
 - Child character supremely cosmopolitan
 - Untainted by adult discourses
 - Know all about aids despite parents' traditional explanations
 - Not educated to be different
 - Juxtaposition of awarenesses
 - ... of indigenous (but somehow globalised) – funeral and worship (but critiqued)
 - ... and global (but localised in games) – finding bin Laden, singing Lady Gaga
 - Country games – country countries and not real countries

- Seeing through NGO people
- ... similar familiar-strange perceptions in the US
 - Overhearing adults speaking

■ Outliers of recognition

- Wormholes to other places – through **small culture formation**
 - Family next door, every new experience
 - Globalised connections with other worlds - nothing new - even in the
- Complex matrix of experience, familiar and unfamiliar
- **Reading Jane Austen** helps travel to China
- Building autonomy on observation on memories

Always a political backdrop

■ In every case not what we bring but what we meet

■ Everywhere

- Decentred accounts of cultural travel
 - Between communities and generations (e.g. Adichie 2007, 2013; Davidar 2002; Sanghera, S. 2013; Selvadurai 1998)
 - Conflicts about language, tradition, modernity, values
- Discourses and statements of culture – grammar
- Global positioning and politics – grammar
- Methodological nationalism – but nation only becomes an issue when raised
- The politics of values
 - Not going far enough with the family next door – ‘don’t value politeness or critical discussion’

■ Potential travels and then meets adult issues - Darling

■ Why the West non-West issue

- West bashing? (Stanley 2013: 45)
- Italian Sara going to Whitstable
 - No more strange than many places in Italy
 - As long as she has the language
 - Not a visible minority
 - But is travel really neutral?
 - Hierarchy of where to go. Work and opportunity vs. holidays
- Centre, Western construction of the rest e.g. Stuart Hall (1991, 1996)

- The 'West as steward' discourse
 - Tacit view – modernity and progress only in the West, and only learnt in the West
 - 'Our responsibility to help'
 - 'You are going so well' (Wodak 2008)
- Mirrored by similar discourse where long-standing aggression hides beneath a believed traditional cultural sense of doing what is good for the victims – narratives of Sikh families in Britain (Sanghera, J. 2007; Sanghera, S. 2013)

Different worlds¹

- The emergent world – 'the really real one'
 - 'critical cosmopolitan' discourse of culture
 - an unrecognised 'real' world
 - all possible cultural activity
 - whether recognised, misunderstood or thwarted
 - ... depends on the resilience and perseverance, and the size of the resistance of prejudice (grammar arrows)
- The established world – 'the "real" one'
 - the 'essentialist culture and language' discourse
 - plus softer versions – neo-essentialism – less essentialist but maintaining solid cultural boundaries
 - provides the most common language for talking about culture – including in my narratives
 - normalised as neutral and matter of fact – 'thinking-as-usual'
- The dominant imagined world – the 'real' problem
 - underpins the established world
 - world of ideology of which we are 'standardly unaware' (Fairclough 1995: 36)
 - explains why the 'West as steward' discourse is so hard to see except by those who are critical of it – between the lines of the established world
 - imagines the relationship between the Self and the Other
 - the established world does not recognise that what is being imagined as imagined or a discourse
- The marginal world – what the established world likes to think it takes notice of
 - speaks the 'West versus the rest' discourse

¹ (Holliday 2014), developed from Holliday (2011: 188).

- ironically supports the ‘essentialist culture and language’ – self-Othering
- resistance against the prejudice of the essentialist definitions ⇒ polarised essentialist views (e.g. Asante 2008; Ghahremani-Ghajar & Mirhosseini 2010; Miike 2008)
- hides more complex postmodern realities (Kim 2012; Kumaravadivelu 2008)

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