

Social remembering and children's historical consciousness.

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Abstract

This study explores how young people's engagement with history outside of the classroom shapes the development of their historical consciousness. Drawing on public discourses around the First World War (WW1)¹, I address the implications of this engagement for history teachers and young peoples' learning. Recognising the active and dynamic construction of memory and meaning by young people, I develop the concept of social remembering.

Building on socio-cultural perspectives, I examine the 'lived experience' of young people's memory work. Using WW1 as a context, and adopting an innovative mixed methods approach, the research was conducted over two stages. The first stage of the research used a quiz and survey to explore the extent and nature of young people's social remembering. In the second stage of the study I examined young people's memory work outside the classroom. I worked with several small groups of students to construct their own ethnographic accounts of societal and familial remembering and their emerging historical consciousness, fashioning these into ethnographic portraits.

The research highlights the role that social remembering plays in young people's identities, including the ways in which they value and use history, attribute historical significance to events and orientate themselves in time. It shows how different forms of social remembering can both include or exclude young people and impact positively or negatively on young people's historical consciousness.

An understanding of social remembering outside the classroom can support history teachers in the development of pedagogies that build on students' meaning making associated with public events such as commemorations. I argue that teachers can use the intersections between social remembering and disciplinary history to engage and support students in their study of history.

¹ I use the abbreviation WW1 in most other cases, barring direct quotes and title, for the sake of brevity.

Although the study originated within the context of history education, it has wider value, offering a ground breaking methodological approach to exploring young people's understandings of the past and in contributing to the historiography of historical memory.

Dedication

To all my students, past and present, whose enthusiasm for history has fueled my curiosity.

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It's a Friday afternoon. Today's lesson was a new enquiry into the First World War. Aware of the war's popular resonance, I wanted to introduce a level of ambiguity and so began with this starter picture showing the Indian Lancers going into battle. I wanted the class to speculate about what this picture showed. I invited them to voice their responses. After I disclosed the First World War context, one child, one boy, disputed its connection to the First World War, but was not able to offer an explanation for his conviction. As the lesson moved on I took the opportunity to talk individually to him. He developed a rationale for this thinking and said:

'Sir, there weren't no Muslims in the First World War. I go past the War Memorial and it's a Christian War Memorial'

Figure 1: A Regiment of Indian Lancers Preparing to Charge²



² Source- <http://www.oldindianphotos.in/2010/12/indian-troops-in-first-world-war.html> Accessed 9th Sept 2016

Introduction

This vignette sets the scene for this thesis. The classroom encounter first helped stimulate my interest in social remembering and in finding out more about young people's interactions with history outside of the classroom. The boy's response was blunt and insightful. The Christian war memorial that he passed on the way to school was impacting on the boy's historical consciousness, his sense of what happened in the past and his place in the flow of time.

I can also remember the boy's family from parents' evening. They expressed negative views about immigrants, and can imagine that this also informed meaning making on the part of my student. The boy's account may have been drawn from a 'stock of stories' (MacIntyre, 1984) from home. Meaning was being actively constructed by the boy and not imposed on him by social memory or by me, the teacher. It is at this moment that I began to get interested in the social remembering as a fluid and dynamic process

The classroom exchange showed the boy employing a logic, the supporting evidence of the memorial, that would be acceptable to me the history teacher; but also a teacher with a mixed race background, albeit not Muslim, but potentially marked as 'other' in the same way as the Lancers (also not Muslim). The exchange showed both an understanding of context and a negotiation on his part, he was working with materials drawn from different contexts and making choices about these materials and the language he used. I had a sense of his individual understanding of history, of historical consciousness, and how this related to his identity. I wanted to know more about how about this interplay between identity and historical consciousness took place across different settings.

Van Maanen (1988) describes vignettes as, "personalised accounts of fleeting moments of fieldwork in dramatic form" (p.136). Using this vignette alerts the reader to my background and interests illustrating where the impetus for this work came from and how this led to the

formulation of my research questions. The use of the vignette also deliberately draws attention to my desire to use a style of writing that helps draw attention to context but also allow an exploration of young people's perceptions, beliefs and meanings in those specific contexts. This approach is developed further in my use of ethnographic portraits in chapters 4, 5 and 6.

In this introduction I situate my initial interests within the academic literature linking historical knowledge and social identity and suggesting the sorts of contributions my research can make to this work. Most of this literature comes from what might be called the history education community. This reflects my own professional background and my ambition, to contribute to the development of history teacher's pedagogy. In addition this thesis contributes to the burgeoning scholarly study of historical memory, especially in the context of the relationship between war and memory. I start with a context section that lays some of the theoretical ground, regarding history knowledge and identity, before going on to justify my research questions. The introduction ends with a brief synopsis of how I will research each question. I explain how I use ethnographic portraits throughout this thesis, as a way of exploring young people's historical perceptions, beliefs and meanings

History, knowledge and identity

There is a body of research, drawing on socio-cultural perspectives, that alerts teachers to the social and interactive factors that exert a powerful influence on and shape young people's thinking, including their historical thinking. Such factors include the diversity of children's backgrounds, especially with regard to racial and ethnic difference (Epstein, 2009; Traille, 2007); I am interested in understanding of how these backgrounds intersect with debates about 'vernacular' or community history versus official versions of the past as a primary source of beliefs and thinking (Levstik, 2008). It is evident that students' historical knowledge is derived from a range of contexts including those outside of classrooms (Barton & McCully, 2005; Epstein, 2009; Levstik, 2008) from their homes,

communities and the mass media. Students bring these narratives into the classroom which means that their understandings about history are drawn from a range of circumstances including wider public discourses. Yet the existing work has a predominant North American/Canadian outlook while the work in Northern Ireland (Barton & McCully, 2005) evolved out of a very specific context of sectarianism and, while highlighting the complex processes involved, concluded that community influences often led to problematic, partisan views of the past. A recent report by the centre for Holocaust Education (Foster et al., 2016) underscores the way in which knowledge is socially situated, such that individual student perspectives are impacted upon by larger sociocultural frames. They concluded however, “the particular benefit derived from standalone studies” (p.221) that took an ethnographic approach focussing on a small number of students to enable greater insight into the social situations in which students construct meaning.

As a former classroom teacher I was aware of the range of different perspectives young people brought into the classroom, as my opening vignette indicates. These could play out in both positive and negative ways. Having access to richly textured descriptions of young people’s lives and engagement with history would, I believe, be incredibly useful in helping shape practice in the classroom. Students’ perceptions about history, its nature and its uses, are an important starting point for any teacher’s planning (Chris Husbands et al, 2003).

One rich area of this research has focussed on students’ ideas about historical significance (Barton & McCully, 2005; Dickinson, Gordon, & Lee, 2001; Hunt, 2008; Lévesque, 2008; Levstik, 2008; Wineburg and Monte-Sano, 2008; Yeager, Foster, & Greer, 2002). Often this research takes the form of identifying what or who young people identify as historically significant. Just as important, are the reasons for their attributions, having a more informed sense of the processes of signification is critical; without this there is a danger that we read students’ ideas of

significance as fixed and uniform. Epstein (2008) alerts us to the need to analyse the varied and complex ways in which significance is constructed.

Following Epstein's call I wanted to develop this idea of engaging with pupil perceptions about history to include thinking more broadly about the nature of young people's lives and identities. In addition, given the increasingly diverse nature of classrooms, this should include the different ways in which diverse communities relate to the subject. Grever, et al (2007) highlight a range of differences between young people's ideas about history and those advanced by policy makers; they show that while most young people felt that history was meaningful and relevant to their lives, some discrepancies occurred when comparing school students from, what they term, indigenous and ethnic minority backgrounds. In a Department for Education research paper *'Ethnicity and Education'* (2006) looking at evidence regarding minority ethnic school students, history was cited as their least favourite subject, behind Maths, by students from Indian, Pakistani and Black African backgrounds. One dimension of my investigation would be to find out more about the lives of BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) students and how they construct their identities and the place of history in this.

Related to the contributions the work makes to understanding pupil perceptions is an interest in epistemological questions, specifically about the nature of disciplinary boundaries. As a cultural studies graduate I might be considered something of a Trojan horse; stealing my way into the disciplinary citadel of history before tearing it down by asking awkward questions about the boundaries of the subject; to ask what consensus exists over how the discipline of history might be conceptualised? In a classroom setting this is of particular interest: if the subject's boundaries are drawn too broadly history might lose its coherence as a discipline; drawn too narrowly, may make it an inaccessible esoteric discipline, as described by Beck (2013). Further questions follow: How far should the history education community engage with postmodernist critiques of

its subjective nature, and also with the linguistic turn? Is historical knowledge only constructed in the academy? What then are the cultural tools involved in building historical understanding? The range of questions here indicates how history exists as an “abstract idea with many meanings” (Jordanova, 2006, p.58). Jordanova argues that asking how and where disciplinary boundaries are drawn can reveal powerful investments and ideologies with new fields of investigation, like gender history, allowing for new forms of legitimation; these questions are also relevant in the classroom in the choices that teachers make regarding content and approaches. In exploring the nature and form of social remembering that young people do outside of the classroom this research is in a position to make a contribution to these epistemological debates especially in its consideration of vernacular or more popular representations of history.

Some history educators (Counsell, 2011) have a degree of ambivalence about more popular forms of historical knowledge, seeing the place of disciplinary knowledge as a corrective to “rawer forms of collective memory” (Counsell, 2011, p. 201). This contrasts with historians like Samuel (1994) who advocated a community approach to history making, an approach popularised by the British TV historian Michael Wood. This is further complicated if we consider that perhaps not all forms of collective memory have equal value (Wertsch, 1994). Just as not all accounts constructed, using disciplinary tools within the academy, have equal value. Exploiting this intersection between vernacular and disciplinary history in the classroom may serve to support school students and give value in their eyes to the study of history; by engaging with its popular manifestations and asking not only in what ways can disciplinary history contribute to reading collective memory but also in what ways can collective memory contribute to a more critical reading of disciplinary history.

Samuel would certainly advocate an embrace of more popular forms of history for the potential they have not only to engage young people but to give them access to meaningful and powerful cultural tools. “A history that was alert to its constituency would

need to address not only the record of the past but also the hidden forces shaping contemporary understandings of it, the imaginative complexes in and through which it is perceived” (Samuel, 1998,p. 222).

More broadly these epistemological questions are central to discussions about the relationship between history and memory. It is a hugely contested and sometimes bad-tempered discursive field, attributable to a range of factors, not least the problem of defining the key terms. Critics of what might be termed the ‘memory boom’ have variously called it to account for propping up the nation state by shrouding it in a fog of nostalgia (Lowenthal, 1985; Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1992) while others express a concern that a ‘surfeit of memory’(Maier, 1993) might serve to erode the very basis of the discipline(Klein, 2000).

Sometimes, in the process of defining history and memory, both can become reified and we see them in contestation, colliding with each other (Stearns, Seixas and Wineburg, 2000) or so abstract that they cease to hold any meaning. Instead, following Winter (2006) we might be better served to seek out the overlaps between the two areas to look not just at the way in which acts of remembrance are encoded but also decoded. My research, in this sense, offers a perspective on the messy processes that take place at the intersection of memory and history.

By developing rich accounts of young peoples’ lived experiences of history, especially outside of the classroom, this research contributes to debates about the nature and purposes of history and about what might be the object of study. This contribution is broadly based; in a consideration of disciplines as a principal ‘way of knowing’, such that it can be claimed, rather alarmingly, that: "Shorn of disciplinary knowledge human beings are quickly reduced to the level of ignorant children, indeed the ranks of barbarians" (Gardner & Boix-Mansilla, 1994, p.145). This research enables thinking about the nature

of the relationship between school history, academic history and vernacular history. Most of all, the research aims to make a contribution by articulating the voices of young people, a perspective that is easily overlooked, especially when considering curriculum and pedagogy. Work by Haydn and Harris (2010), building on earlier studies by Adey and Biddulph (2003), gives a useful insight into students' perceptions of being taught history in British schools. However, the work is largely quantitative in nature and gives very little qualitative data about students' experiences of history outside the classroom and the impact that history, in this broader sense, has on the way in which they construct their identities.

Finally, therefore, the research will help articulate the dynamic interplay between history and identity. Barton and McCully's work (2005) highlighted the complex and sophisticated ways in which children in Northern Ireland used history to make and remake their identities. Their work emphasised, in particular, the role that their communities played on their sense of identification with the past. Illustrating the two-way dynamic, between history and identity, Epstein's ethnographic work (2009) in the US underlined the impact that personal identity, specifically racial identity, has on mediating the past. Epstein highlighted how teachers who better understand the "interpretive frameworks" (p.xvi) that students use will be well-placed to develop pedagogical strategies to engage and develop student learning; highlighting how this is an "under-researched area of historical teaching" (p.xvii). This research will make a contribution to this important area.

Research Questions

My own interest in social memory began as a Cultural studies undergraduate. This grounding established interest in hierarchies of knowledge in addition to questions of power associated with these hierarchies and also secured an appreciation that the production of knowledge is a social activity involving a range of different ways of knowing. Samuel's (1994) work in particular illustrates how our sense of the past comes as much from memory, heritage, oral histories, novels, films etc. as it does from the historian.

I began therefore with an idea that historical consciousness could be defined as a vague 'sense of the past' that was fed by a range of sources that include something called social memory; and, as I have indicated, in a dynamic process best described as social remembering. In formulating my research questions I have reviewed the literature to arrive at a definition of historical consciousness that is broad and fluid enough to accommodate social remembering as an integral element. (A more detailed discussion of this literature can be found in Chapter 1.)

The Centre for the Study of historical consciousness (CSHC), established in Canada in 2002, defines historical consciousness accordingly as:

individual and collective understandings of the past, the cognitive and cultural factors which shape those understandings, as well as the relations of historical understandings to those of the present and the future.

(<http://cshc.ubc.ca/about/> accessed 6th May 2014)

This definition usefully allows collective understandings and the cultural factors associated with social remembering to be recognised as parts of the processes that shape historical consciousness. What I wanted to explore is how these forms of historical consciousness are remade and kept alive in a range of interrelated social situations; specifically how young people

construct their own historical consciousness through a process of social remembering outside of the classroom.

The CSHC definition of historical consciousness highlights the social dimensions of the construction of historical knowledge, specifically in its reference to ‘collective understandings of the past’ and the ‘cultural factors’ that help shape those understandings; attributes that can be ascribed to social memory. This social dimension is important in the ways it illuminates the process of developing historical understanding and because of what it can reveal about the power dynamics behind social relations. However, in focussing on the power dynamics of social memory, the concept can become reified and obscure the ways in which memory is negotiated and constructed. In Chapter 1 I explore, in more detail, how social remembering offers a way of focussing on the dynamic ways in which diverse cultural tools are drawn on to shape the collective understandings that are part of historical consciousness. Remembering, rather than memory, suggests something that is worked and re-worked (Thelen, 1989).

The outcome of this work was to render ‘thick descriptions’ (Geertz, 1993) of young people’s encounters and engagements, in real life contexts with the past through a series of ethnographic portraits. This emphasis was important both ethically in wanting to give voice to young people but also to counter privileging an exploration of the way which artefacts of social memory, such as texts, films etc. are encoded rather than decoded (Hall, 1980). Given the scope of the study, I needed to narrow my focus. So while it is evident that overlaps exist between meaning making done in the classroom and that done beyond, in order to maximise what can be learnt (Stake, 1995), the real-life contexts that I wanted to explore were those outside of the classroom and, in particular, the home. In addition, given that the data collection began in its centenary year, my case study was focused on WW1 and framed around four key research questions (RQ):-

RQ1) What is the extent and nature of young people's social remembering?

Some literature indicates that young people's engagement with the past outside of the classroom is limited, certainly in the way in which young people made use of the past (Foster Ashby, R., Lee, P. and Howson, J. 2008). I was therefore interested in exploring the extent of young people's social remembering. A quiz and a survey were used to identify the extent of young people's engagement with history and WW1, along with the 'cultural factors' that influence their remembering, including where it happens and with whom. The outcomes of this research are reported in chapter 3.

RQ2) What understandings do young people draw from the First World War?

Following Hall's call to draw on decoding(1980) I was keen to comprehend the types of understandings young people constructed. The quiz and survey helped reveal common associations that young people make with WW1. A more open question in the survey allowed me to explore these associations further in relation to their own identities, revealing the personal meanings they construct around WW1. In chapter 3 I use Lévesque's (2008) significance criteria to code these responses before returning in chapter 8 to an critical analysis of this critiera.

RQ3) Where are these understandings drawn from?

A lot of the literature suggests that understandings are drawn from a broad range of situations (Foster, 2013; Epstein, 2009) using a wide range of tools (Wertsch, 1991; Wertsch, 2002). I began working with a sample of 15 young people in five different schools. I combined the data from the quiz/survey with young people's own ethnographic accounts. The process culminated with a visit to the family home in six of the cases. This provided a richer picture of where understandings are drawn from and how they are developed within specific lived contexts, these portraits form the three central chapters, Chapters 4-6.

RQ4) How are these understandings constructed outside of the classroom?

Writers like Wertsch have talked about how students are engaged in mediating a range of irreducible tensions (Wertsch, 1991) however evidence regarding how understandings are constructed outside the classroom is the most under researched area. The young people in the sample (n=13) wrote or drew accounts of their own identity formation and interactions with historical culture in group, often family, settings. I met regularly with my young ethnographers to discuss their accounts; exploring, for example, how they understand commemoration and the ways in which their other identities are worked and re-worked within intimate encounters with history outside of school, this process is outlined in chapter 2.

My principle interest was in how history relates to identity formation specifically themes of nation, gender and ethnicity. The danger was that identity, thus conceived, would risk reproducing problematic reified identity categorisations. Therefore similar to identifying the dynamic processes at play with remembering I have sought, borrowing from theorising on intersectionality, to highlight the plural nature of identities and the way categories of nation, gender and ethnicity cut across each other. McCall (2005) defines intersectionality as, “the relationships among multiple dimensions and modalities of social relations and subject formations” (p.1771) fundamentally it creates a demand for complexity. This has implications for the design of the research but also as Lather (2001) points out for ethics, interpretation and representations in terms of authenticity and voice, themes I return to in Chapter 2.

In chapter 8 I draw all the research together in a synthetic analysis returning to each of the research questions. To facilitate this analysis, and to emphasise my usage of identity conceived as a process, I use Biesta’s (2010) concept of subjectification to explore the ways in which young people use history in its broadest sense to help actively forge identities and how conversely their identities have a bearing on their interactions with history.

Chapter 1: Literature Review

1.1 Introduction

This literature review begins with a discussion about the nature of historical knowledge. Both history and school history have long traditions of controversy and dispute about the nature of historical knowledge (Taylor & Guyver, 2012) and these controversies relate closely to contestations regarding the purpose and uses of history. Historical consciousness sits at the heart of these debates regarding historical knowledge, partly in the way it highlights the interplay between different sources of knowledge and because of the way it suggests that part of the purposes of history should be to enable orientations in the present (Foster Ashby, R., Lee, P. and Howson, J. 2008; Rüsen, 2006; Lee, 2004).

Following this discussion I turn directly to historical consciousness, establishing a working definition that accommodates social remembering and drawing guidelines for approaching this work. My original starting point for the research, as a teacher, was an interest in the interplay between history and identity; the varied ways in which students made use of the past. I will focus on the ways which history does or could shape students' identities, including their ideas about historical significance. Once again I then explore the nature of social memory and its evolution, including the influences and disciplinary trajectories that shape it, to situate it epistemologically for this study. I specifically seek to demonstrate how the concept of 'social remembering' offers useful ways of thinking about how young people work with social memory to inform their historical consciousness. Following this, I will broaden the discussion to review the literature on social memory to develop the concept of social remembering; I will make the case that it is fruitful in examining social memory to draw from a range of different disciplines. I attend to some aspects of the historiography of historical memory, a broad and contested field but one that has particular significances in the context of WW1 (Winter, 2006). Finally, I will review the

new historiography of WW1 and consider the interplay between what might be considered history, nation and memory. The design of my research emerges out of this exploration of the literature and follows in Chapter 2.

1.2 Historical knowledge and the purpose of history

My own interests in epistemological debates about history are broad; they include an interest in what constitutes historical knowledge but also closely related questions about who produces historical knowledge and how, and in whose interests that knowledge and its processes serve. I agree strongly with Samuel's assertion that, "History is not the prerogative of the historian, nor even, as postmodernism contends, a historian's invention. Instead history is, a social form of knowledge; the work, in any given instance, of a thousand different hands" (Samuel, 1994, p.15). Much has changed since Samuel's deliberately oppositional characterisation of academic history as "professionalized monopolies of knowledge" (Samuel, 1981, p.xxxii), with many historians in universities seeking and getting involved in a wide range of forms of public engagement.

Yet this public engagement takes place within a set of broader contexts that impose their own pressures. In the UK, King and Rivett (2015) have highlighted the problematic ways in which the 'impact agenda' influences how knowledge flows between public and university are often conceptualised and implemented in unidirectional and hierarchical ways. The consequence is to narrowly instrumentalise the knowledge, placing the emphasis on research outputs rather than processes. Cases exist that challenge this; opening the possibilities for more social forms of knowledge exchange and production. For example, 'Leeds stories of the great war' had academics working alongside community groups including two schools, Allerton Grange and Roundhay school; the project focussed on the plight of Belgian refugees who came to Yorkshire in 1914. Nevertheless the impact agenda highlights the need for vigilance against what King and Rivett term a form of "soft paternalism"(King & Rivett, 2015, p.223).

Retz (2016) has written about how academic history, school history and the philosophy of history have been braided together into a common conception regarding what it means to be historically educated. Many historians have taken up the challenge of writing about the nature of historical knowledge (Collingwood, 1946; Carr, 1964; Claus & Marriott, 2012; Tosh, 2015) often offering a stout defence of the status of that knowledge (Evans, 1997) or its value (Guldi & Armitage, 2014). The shifting contexts of the present play a key role in determining the object of historical study and frequently influences the approach adopted. Berger (2015) shows how the central concerns of enlightenment historiography, linked to a universal idea of progress and civilisation, led to conceptualisations of ‘major and minor’ civilised nations and the development of the nation as the primary unit of historical analysis in the nineteenth century. Jordanova (2006) illustrates how ‘fresh fields’ of historical research have emerged in the twentieth century that serve both the needs of historians and the wider needs of political identification.

These contestations regarding the nature and purpose of historical knowledge similarly find articulation in debates about school history. The work of a number of UK history educators (Counsell, 2011; Lee, 1978, 1983; Shemilt, 1980) has done much to ensure sure that the study of history in schools includes the development of students’ understanding of status of that knowledge; an understanding based on second order concepts that found expression particularly in the Schools Council History Project (SCHP, 1976). This disciplinary formulation that has been adopted elsewhere, notably in Canada (Seixas & Morton, 2012) whilst still being subject to debate. For example, the recent debates about the history curriculum in the UK centred around the place of knowledge, deeply influenced by the work of E.D Hirsch (Hirsch et al, 1987); the Government argument being that young people should be taught a foundation of common knowledge that gives them access not only to further learning but also to public debate. The School Minister Nick Gibb puts it thus, “I believe strongly that education is about the transfer of knowledge from one generation to the next. Knowledge is the basic building block for a

successful life”(Gibb 2010). He concluded a speech with a quote from Hirsch. The canonical dangers of such an approach reside in a consideration of what is considered ‘common knowledge’. The risks extend to teacher autonomy and pedagogy, Bruner was sceptical of reducing pedagogy to information giving colourfully likening a pedagogy based on knowledge as, “a monkey in the British museum, beating out the problem by a bone crushing algorithm or taking a flyer at a risky heuristic” (Bruner, 1990, p.5).

Burn (2015) has argued drawing on oral and archival research into history teaching in England since 1900 (Cannadine, D., Keating 2011) that of the many problems confronting history teaching in UK schools the nature of the National Curriculum was not one of them. While some of the debate surrounding the draft proposal for the UK history curriculum are partly pedagogical, regarding what might be considered the building blocks of knowledge young people need to make progress in history. More broadly they were also about the purposes of school history and whether the knowledge acquired enables the building of a shared national identity.

An indication of the strength of opposition can be seen in Historical Association(HA) response to the draft proposals, ‘You spoke we listened’(Anon, 2013). Ninety-six per cent of respondents criticised the proposals, condemning not only the amount of prescribed content, but its narrow, Anglo-centric bias. Respondents to the HA consultation felt that the notion of the subject as a discipline had been downplayed with the word removed from the aims in the draft document. The final version represented a breakthrough in giving teachers high degree of autonomy with regard to curriculum content choice but retaining an enhanced commitment to substantive historical knowledge and a focus on the discipline (Byrom, 2014). Such that students would be able to engage both with historical knowledge (know that) but equally think about how that knowledge is constructed (know how).

This recent controversy illustrates that debates about historical knowledge are in constant play. Teachers need to engage critically with these debates to enable them to consider the sorts of balance they want or feel their students need, both in order to facilitate their learning but also to enable them to see the value of history as a subject. The controversy shows the ways in which the present has a constant role in determining views about historical knowledge. It follows from this that, “For history to be relevant and accessible, it had to show a connection between past and present” (Retz, 2016, p. 510).

This desire to make that connection between the past and the present, particularly in the context of young people, is expressed strongly in the Schools history Project first principle.

A determination to connect history to young people’s lives was the foundation of the original Schools Council History Project. Many young people still find it difficult to articulate why they are studying history. As history educators we need to make our subject meaningful for all children and young people by relating history to their lives in the 21st century. The Project strives for a history curriculum which encourages children and young people to become curious, to develop their own opinions and values based on a respect for evidence, and to build a deeper understanding of the present by engaging with and questioning the past.

(SHP n.d.)

This principle strongly asserts that any consideration of what knowledge is taught in class needs to powerfully connect to young people such that the subject retains its meaning for them.

This discussion indicates the ways in which the past is contested and how much of its contingent nature rests on the interplay with the present. This interplay is underscored by political undercurrents regarding not just the object and process of the study of the past but also the question of who undertakes this study. Care should be taken not to characterise positions crudely; many historians have acknowledged the critical role of encounters with the past outside the academy. Sometimes this is as a source of inspiration. Yasmin Khan, for example, discusses how her grandfathers provided the wellspring for her monograph about Partition. “Their walk-on parts in the Partition story, though, and the stories that grew up around them, encouraged my interest in history, and provoked my curiosity about the origins of modern India and Pakistan” (Khan, 2007, p.xi). Sometimes those encounters take the form of a perception of absence. In the introduction to her book *The People* (Todd, 2015) the historian Selina Todd talks about how, “I looked in vain for my family’s story when I went to university to read history”(p.4). Further, when that historical work is located at the intersection of living memory and history, the boundaries of historical activity are blurred in ways that can enable a degree of fruitful crossover. Paul Preston when discussing his work on the Spanish Civil War (Preston, 2013) on Radio 4 (*Start the Week*, 2012), acknowledged his debt to the ‘great historian of south west Spain’ and an ‘expert’ on the killings in Valencia. He goes on to tell the listener, “Neither is employed in Spanish Universities. The former runs a petrol shop and the latter a little tobacconist shop”(Kean & Martin, 2013, p.xxvi).

Sometimes the debate about knowledge can be set up as an unhelpful binary between two irreconcilable propositions, with associated assumptions regarding the purpose and value of history. Michael Young (2011) in an examination of the UK Coalition government's approach to the 14-19 curriculum offers his analysis of this binary. The first proposition, supported by Hirsch, contends that historical knowledge is a given and the primary purpose of history teaching is the handing down of that knowledge. The second is that historical knowledge is simply a

construct and that boundaries drawn between everyday knowledge and academic knowledge are at best artificial and at worst responsible for supporting hierarchical boundaries that serve to perpetuate privilege. Given the openness of knowledge under this second proposition, the purpose of the curriculum should be, “based on the learner’s experiences and interests and that somehow these can be equated with the interests of society” (Young, 2011, p.268).

Young seeks to offer a ‘social realist’ alternative to these two propositions one that treats “knowledge as both social in origin and objective” (Harris, Burn and Woolley, 2013, p.28).

Young challenges the given nature of knowledge associated with the Hirsch position, by stressing the way in which knowledge derives its objectivity from community: “it is located in the specialist communities of researchers in different fields and those educational specialists who recontextualise disciplines as the basis for school subjects” (Young, 2011, p.269). Young contends that this knowledge, rather than being arbitrary, as argued in the second relativist proposition, takes “place within the epistemic rules of the different specialist communities”. This is a useful formulation in maintaining a defence of history as a distinctive form of knowledge (Harris & Burn, 2011), whilst maintaining some scope for a more collaborative approaches to knowledge production. However, just how democratic this community might be imagined to be is unclear. Consideration should be given to how the rules are drawn up or challenged and by whom?

1.2 Historical consciousness

1.2.1 Arriving at a definition

Wanting the parameters of this research to stay relevant to the history education field I originally thought that making a distinction between historical understanding and historical consciousness might be a useful way of conceptualising the study. Historical understanding might be more readily associated with disciplinary history, specifically the understanding of the second-order

concepts and processes that underpin history (Counsell, 2011), while historical consciousness entailed a broader conceptualisation, encompassing less formal encounters with history and a more ephemeral sense of the past. Reviewing the literature revealed a great deal of overlap between these two concepts and I concluded that a more expansive way of theorising historical consciousness, including disciplinary aspects, would serve this study better. Differentiating between historical understanding and consciousness creates an oppositional and hierarchical binary with historical understanding conceived of as a superior form of knowledge. More critically, in terms of the development of this research, the separation sets up a false dichotomy, whereby the relationships and symbiosis between the two are left underexplored.

Historical consciousness, broadly conceived, offers a range of more fruitful research routes. So, I sought to follow Peter Seixas' formulation that argues while, the term is relatively unfamiliar in English, 'it implicates historiography, collective memory and history education' (Seixas, 2006). It therefore has the scope to bring together this range of related terms and allow an exploration of the possible relationships.

Ahonen (2005) reviewing Seixas' edited collection, *Theorizing Historical Consciousness* (Seixas, 2006), suggests that a broad conceptualisation of historical consciousness offers the researcher a way of engaging with the affective and subjective uses young people make of history, taking the concept beyond what might be narrowly described as historical literacy in the US "a behaviouristic term suggesting mastery of the basic historical information" (Ahonen, 2005 p.697), and indeed beyond 'history education' in the UK which is taken to mean mastery over historical knowledge, including evidence handling, grasp of procedural concepts and the ability to critically evaluate. These are important aims of history education but neither the US nor the UK conceptualisation requires any degree of personal meaning attribution, a vital ingredient in getting young people to engage with history and especially understand its relevance to their lives. A broad conceptualisation of historical consciousness offers ways of realising its application in

history education as it becomes, “a vital human asset for an orientation to life and the world” (Ahonen, 2005, p.698). In some European history contexts this broader conceptualisation does include the temporal nature of human existence, the relationship between past, present and future. And has led to the development of a broader set of objectives for history education in order to make it more relevant to students (Van Straaten et al. 2016).

As indicated in my introduction, the definition I was therefore drawn to, given its breadth, was from the Centre for the Study of historical consciousness,

‘Historical consciousness can thus be defined as individual and collective understandings of the past, the cognitive and cultural factors which shape those understandings, as well as the relations of historical understandings to those of the present and the future.’ (<http://cshc.ubc.ca/about/> accessed 6th May 2014)

The range of overlaps inherent in this broader, more inclusive conception, allow for the useful research possibilities that Ahonen suggests. Firstly the overlap with social memory and identities offers a way into the potential investments and motivations children have in studying history. This overlap allows broader explorations of meta-identities such as national identities, gender and ethnicity that enable engagements with debates around citizenship and helps conceptualise a powerful relationship between social memory and historical consciousness as part of a historical and possibly political socialisation. Secondly the emphasis on cognitive factors allows a specific connection to history education. This emphasis reflects a growing interest of history educators in historical consciousness (Angvik & Borries, 1997; Foster, Ashby, Lee, and Howson, 2008; Seixas, 2006) . Finally the reference to ‘cultural’ and ‘collective understandings’ broadens this notion of history education beyond the classroom, to recognise the potential engagements and investments young people have with the past outside of the classroom.

1.2.2 Approaches

Seixas (2006) posits five principles for theorising historical consciousness. The first argues for the need to explore the relationship between academic and popular history. Seixas embraces the idea that academic historical questions can be explored in the broader arena. In another chapter of Seixas edited collection Letourneau and Moisan (2006), explore this relationship further.

However the relationship tends to be viewed in unequal terms, so while they acknowledge that ‘the classroom is only one among many places for acquiring historical knowledge’, implicit in their account is a largely negative view of the history encountered outside the classroom and the nature of young people’s engagement with these histories. They argue that, “young people become repositories, at a relatively young age, of a stock of historical knowledge and a generalised concept of history” (p. 122). The use of ‘repositories’ is instructive, adopting a passive, Cartesian, view of the learner.

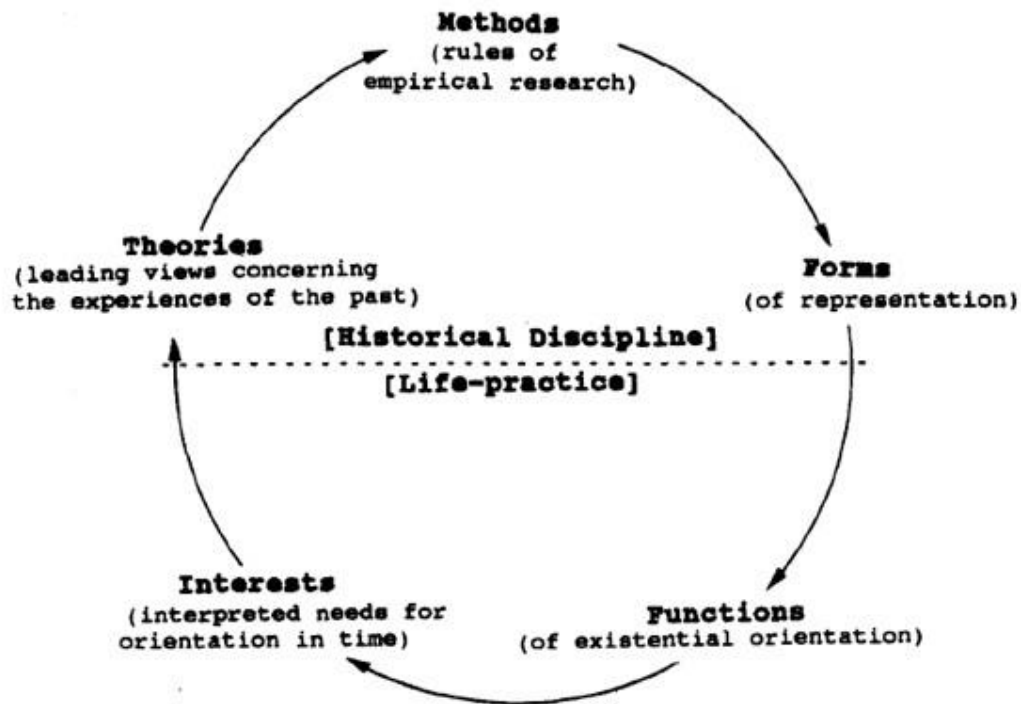
An account into the uses of history in Northern Ireland (Barton and McCully 2005) suggests that if young people draw upon the way in which their community understands the past, they are likely to develop a partisan view of the past. However the authors highlighted the range in student responses, for example in terms of gender, “identification with national history and culture, for example, was more common among boys, at secondary school, and in areas of conflict” (Barton and McCully 2005, p.109).

Sometimes the relationship between history found in the classroom and history beyond can be a more conflicted one but in unexpected ways. Epstein’s (2009) work, based on a long term ethnographic study of history teaching in an American district, highlights the impact personal identity has in mediating the past. Epstein revealed the ways that black students struggled between their own view of the past and the more official ones they encountered or were taught. These tensions are a reminder of not accepting presumed hierarchies of value between ‘official’ histories and more vernacular expressions. The principle of looking at the relationship of official

history with popular history is addressed in this research by asking what the extent and nature of children's remembering is, exploring the spaces where children construct their understandings of the past and examining what understandings they construct there.

Seixas' second principle is to ensure that any theorising does not take place within an empirical or practical vacuum. The discussion above hints at the practical value of my work while the empiric theme is one that Lee (2004) takes up in his exploration of Jorn Rüsen's work (Rüsen 1993; Rüsen 2012b; Rüsen 2012a; Rüsen 2015) arguing that while Rüsen, "offers us a typology upon which to found an empirical ontogeny of historical consciousness" (Lee 2004, p.37) the empirical work is still at a very early stage. Rüsen's typology of historical consciousness includes four types, traditional, exemplary, critical and genetic. Ahonen (2005) highlights the centrality of Rüsen in considerations about historical consciousness, "A kind of a cornerstone for the dialogue is Rüsen's explication of historical consciousness" (p.699). While Peter Lee (2004) explores Rüsen's potential for research in history education, Megill (1994) argues that Rüsen's notion of the disciplinary matrix is an important contribution to the understanding of historiography.

Figure 2: Rüsen's matrix in Allan Megill (1994)



Rüsen's work is not without its difficulties. Much of the work is not in translation, I am dependant here on Megill's interpretation of Rüsen's matrix, and the theoretical nature of the work makes it hard to pin down. In addition, according to Megill, Rüsen articulates a 'version of the idea that there ultimately exists a single history' (Megill, 1994). As Megill goes on to argue, such as position is impossible on a practical level given the diverse world we live in; it is also problematic in political and educational terms. Another issue is the hierarchical dichotomy evident in the matrix. Peter Lee argues that Rüsen's typology, with the exception of tradition, is clearly conceived of in orientations to time above the line in disciplinary history, which would appear to privilege certain forms of consciousness over others.

Nevertheless Rüsen's disciplinary matrix, evolving from Kuhn and first published in 1983 (Rüsen, 1983), usefully offers a way of thinking about the relationship between academic history and practical life '*lebenspraxis*' offering theoretical support for the idea that they inform each

other. Initially I want to hold the matrix in mind rather than to impose it on the data at this stage. Lee acknowledges that empirical work on Rüsen's theory is still at a very tentative stage, "we need many more smaller scale qualitative studies so that we can better understand what questions are worth pursuing" (Lee, 2004 p.18). However the theoretical model proposed in the matrix suggests one way in which this research might usefully contribute to the raising of such questions about the relationship between *lebenspraxis* that would include social remembering and academic or disciplinary history.

Seixas suggests a need to draw on a range of methodologies and gather empirical data to make sense of the complexity involved in historical consciousness. The range of methodological tools involved in my study is designed to reveal that complexity. The iterative way in which the second phase of case studies evolved allowed for flexibility and for the children themselves to contribute to this process, enabling diverse empirical possibilities.

Seixas' third principle is to take a comparative approach to the study of historical consciousness in order to examine assumptions and possible bias, guarding against universalising conclusions. The Northern Ireland example (Barton and McCully, 2005) outlined above points to the need to highlight the specificities of the research. Barton (2001, 2003) in other work highlights the importance of context when comparing North American students' ideas about the purposes of history to those of young people in Northern Ireland. Northern Irish students did not use history to construct individual or collective identities in the same way as North American students; they did not tend to use the word 'we' when talking about the purpose of history (Barton & McCully, 2005) and stressed the difference between past and present.

Practically, I was not able to undertake a cross-national comparative approach in gathering empirical data. However, I was alert to other investigations into historical consciousness that

have taken place in other jurisdictions and my own sampling for the case studies sought to draw comparisons in terms of gender, race and class in order to guard against universalising.

The fourth principle, as articulated by Seixas, is the need for value commitments. This includes recognition of the problem of more 'atavistic and fundamental' forms of historical consciousness, especially where research is intended to support public policy. This problematic form of historical consciousness was evident in the example of my Year 9 boy. While my work does not immediately support the development of public policy it requires me to be vigilant even as I desire spaces to explore how these more atavistic forms of consciousness are constructed. Peter Lee's (1992) approach to negotiating diversity in the context of citizenship issues in the classroom is instructive, suggesting that the history teacher should answer for the rationality of students' conclusions but not for the position they take and this approach is useful as a researcher. Lee's approach gives scope to explore, in researcher role, the views that the students hold, while challenging them to account for these views, and thus sustains a commitment to values but in a way that has potential to support further insight.

Historicising the study of historical consciousness itself, Seixas' fifth principle, is a way of avoiding the burden of normative judgments that might be made in the process of the study. Laville (2006) explores how an attempt to tie the political project of European integration to empiric forms of history risks imposing another form of legitimising narrative. The example of the place of the returning Irish soldiers after WW1, outlined below in section 1.6, is another example.

Seixas' final three principles usefully outline some of the problems in theorising and researching historical consciousness. As I had no desire to maintain an approach that is antithetical to an open and democratic society or reductive notion of history; I adopted a starting point of a more open and plural conceptualisation of historical consciousness with a focus that looked at the

active ways in which young people construct and reconstruct meaning. I therefore needed to make sure any conclusions drawn will be contextualised to allow the study itself to be historicised.

1.3 History and Identity

I have already proposed, particularly in following Seixas first principle, that consideration needs to be given to the relationship between history and different identities; a relationship that is controversial, complex and longstanding especially in the context of national identity. History like many other disciplines has been co-opted on the ‘construction sites of national identity’ (Berger, 2015).

National history has its origins in the late eighteenth century as part of the project of European modernity (Berger, 2015). For some, especially those on the left, (Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1992) national history served internal purposes, anchoring people into a sense of belonging, and thus served as part of the internal nationalisation of societies and as a legitimisation of statehood, especially in calling on its citizens to die in war (Anderson, 2006) and finally as way of overwriting cleavages in society. Berger (2015) explains how another perspective focuses on the external function of national history, primarily as a consequence of post-colonial studies; it attempts to place national histories within wider frameworks to make sense of global modernity and transnational processes. Together they help explain the emergence of national history as a genre of history writing adopted successfully across a wide range of national contexts.

Within a broader historiographical framework the debate about the relationship between history and identity can be traced to critiques of the subject that might be broadly characterised as part of the postmodern ‘linguistic turn’ that precipitated ‘an extended epistemological crisis’ (Harlan, 1989) for history. The debate has, at times, been unhelpfully polarised such that historians became unfairly characterised as crude empiricists and postmodernists as relativist vandals, intent

on tearing up the modernist project. For my purposes, the debate serves to highlight two interrelated issues. Firstly, the need to consider the relationship of history to the present, “All history thus has a present-day purpose and inspiration, which may be moral or political or ideological” (Evans 1997, p.195). And secondly, the need to think about the relationship between knowledge and power, particularly how this relates to issues of representation in history. The need to think about who is being (re) presented and the forms that these representations take is vital.

If the above debate can be characterised as a shift from a modernist form of history that was closely associated with the nation state – a Rankean version of the past – to a more pluralist post-modern version of history that emphasises the contingent and questions the imperative of the nation as the focus of study, then school history might be characterised as a place where the debate is most recently and keenly fought. Taylor and Guyver’s (2012) outline the polarisations that surround the teaching of history in ten different countries and serves as a reminder of the resonance of the debates regarding the nature of historical knowledge and the international scope of these debates.

One feature of many of these debates has been the concern for the way some countries have sought to impose a narrow nationalist history curriculum. Mario Carretero has written widely about the relationship between history education and national identities His empirical work, (Carretero, 2011) is based on a comparison of history education in Spain and Latin American countries, particularly Argentina, and reveals a range of patriotic rituals, replete with historical content, aimed at constructing patriotism within schools. These contexts reveal the troubling ways in which vernacular histories and school history curricula may serve to contribute the construction of problematic and exclusionary patriotisms. Carretero (2011) posits three ‘distinct’ meanings to the very concept of history, “in academia, confirming its institution as validated

disciplinary knowledge, while at school it is creating first identity links between individuals and the “imagined community” (p.176). This last concept follows Benedict Anderson’s formulation of nation (Anderson, 2006). And finally, “history is an everyday meaning, whence members of society normalize and even naturalize, in conscious and unconscious ways, the narratives they have received about the past, incorporating them to the common sense that orientates their experiences and understanding of reality” (Carretero, 2011, p. 176). This strong demarcation is underscored by Jose Alvarez Junco in the foreword where he argues that the book is based on the idea of the distinction, described in ‘conflicting’ terms, between school history and history as a discipline; where the latter is characterised as, “objective truths which are devoid of any moral hue” (p.xiii), whereas school history, in this conflict, is variously described using terms such as ‘romantic’, ‘emotional’ and ‘narcissistic’. As a way of knowing about the past it is clear that anything other than history as a discipline is regarded as problematic.

Carretero’s work is useful in highlighting the importance of looking at the historical knowledge derived from different sources and exposes the problems when curricula are co-opted overtly into nation-building projects. The United Kingdom curriculum is not immune to the desire of governments to use it to bolster national identities, Rob Phillips in his book, *History Teaching Nationhood and the State* (1998) examines the debates around the national curriculum and the place of nation in its different formulations. Yet the desire for the curriculum to bolster national identity persists as evidenced both by the Labour Government’s promotion of ‘Britishness’ (Brown, 2004; Brown, 2006) and the coalition’s governments’ draft proposals, published in February 2013, that prompted the Royal Historical Society (RHS) to comment: “First, we believe that the Programmes of Study are far too narrowly and exclusively focused on British history to serve the needs of children growing up in the world today” (RHS, 2013). This response typified many concerns and represented a broad-based coalition of a largely successful resistance to the draft proposals. Carretero’s sharp characterisation of very different forms of

history is a reflection of the nature of his work reviewing specific national contexts, such as that in Argentina, a point he concedes, “our attention has been particularly caught by the Latin American case, where the school – together with the army – was the institution that made the national construction project feasible” (Carretero 2011, p.186). Here the school was the ‘state’s right arm’ and this may help explain why Carretero is so concerned to delineate the forms of history so clearly.

Peter Lee’s introduction to a collection of essays about the relationship of history and construction of identities (Carretero et al, 2012) makes some similarly severe demarcations between school history and disciplinary history. Lee makes a number of useful observations concerning the relationship of history and identity. The first is to draw our attention to the role that memory plays in this relationship, something I will come back to later. Another is to remind us about the constructed and multiple nature of identities: “Like constructions of the past, identities in turn may be constructed to fit into different social relations to serve different functions” (p.xii). This is especially true in the context of adolescents whose identities are being made and remade in a range of relational settings (Browning, 2013). And finally, Lee usefully proposes that: “All this suggests that questions about history education and the construction of identities depend for their answers on conceptions of history” (p.xii).

The emphasis in Lee’s conceptualisation is that while history and memory co-exist, history represents a distinctive and, I suspect for him, a superior form of knowledge. He goes on to argue that while history can have a role in the construction of identities this is not its critical role for him: “History as it exists is a hard won achievement” (p.x).

With a sense of grievance he points out:

It is a commonplace to point out the connections between claims on the past and power relations or hegemonic intent, and that one community's stories must have equal rights with those of another. "Memory" is portrayed as wider and somehow more profound and richer than the narrow workings of "academic history". So indigenous peoples can assert their own versions not only of the past, but of their relationship with it, and hence what counts as knowledge.

(Lee in Carretero et al., 2012, p.xi)

The sense of grievance comes from a sense that this 'assertion' comes with none of the associative forms of legitimation that accompany history, the recourse to evidence and community of enquiry.

So while he acknowledges that the "relationship between history and memory is important for history education", his tone retains a scepticism that is based on the idea that, "history is a very peculiar form of memory", one requiring particularly standards of validity and relationship to evidence. The argument regarding its peculiar status suggests that while he argues that "what goes on in schools cannot be based on the discipline", he remains, I believe, unconvinced especially when he asserts that the key aim of history education remains one related to it as a "cognitive enterprise" (Lee in Carretero et al., 2012) .

In contexts where a narrowly prescribed curriculum and textbooks serve a crude nation-building project, ambivalence about the relationship between history and identity is understandable.

Taking a position that delineates strongly between history as a discipline and other forms of knowing about the past makes a lot of sense. Contending that history should be studied for its own sake and not serve an identity-related enterprise, involving memory, has some legitimacy.

The problem, however, with the purist disciplinary position is the evidence in the UK that suggests that students, especially those from minority ethnic backgrounds, feel increasingly excluded from this 'cognitive enterprise'. This is reflected both in quantitative data, in terms of numbers pursuing the subject at GCSE (DfES, 2006) and in qualitative data which suggests that they feel a lack of personal connection to the past as they do not see themselves in the history they are taught (Harris & Reynolds, 2014). Work by Matthew Wilkinson, in a study of Muslim boys and the history curriculum, (Wilkinson, 2014a; Wilkinson, 2014b) argues that there is a need to address critical absences in the curriculum and that the need for 'buy in' from this group involves relating the curriculum to their affective needs; that is deliberately focusing in on identity-related issues to enable, "pupils reflect upon and understand their home cultures and their relationship with majority British culture" (Wilkinson, 2014a, p.408).

The problem with a purist disciplinary position is not only that it can be narrowly drawn and may commune with potentially problematic agendas, particularly when aligned with the state but it may also neglect the needs of the students. Barton (2009) articulates the potential danger of an overemphasis on the discipline as a 'denial of desire' where it runs the risk of ignoring students' perspectives on history, and as a result, the subject may become increasingly meaningless to them. Better, I think, to recognise the diverse range of ways that history can be characterised, to acknowledge that, "History is not a defined body of knowledge but an abstract idea with many meanings" (Jordanova, 2006).

This broader approach, which embraces the overlaps and exploits the potential between history and multiple identities, is particularly critical in the school setting. The evidence from America (Barton, 2001; Epstein, 2009) suggests that history needs to do more to address student subjectivities and this is echoed by Wilkinson's work with Muslim boys in the UK. (Wilkinson,

2014a) Yet this alone is not enough. Kay Traill's (2007) work, with children of African Caribbean origin in the UK, makes a strong case for the rigorous study of history:

there is the need to put more effort into getting children of African-Caribbean descent to see the importance of the discipline in answering their questions. We need to work towards improving the ability of students of African-Caribbean descent to engage in analytical thought processes about formal and informal history learning, to evaluate all versions of the past critically and comfortably.

(p.36)

Traill calls for an embrace of disciplinary history with recognition of history's emotional and affective power: a need for sensitivity to identities but also cognitive engagement. What Traill's work also highlights is the need for teachers to be alert to the preconceptions that students bring into the classroom:

First and foremost, evidence from this study indicates that educators may need greater awareness of the ideas and prior conceptions that students of African-Caribbean descent bring to the history classroom. These include cognitive and emotional conceptions about what these students think history is for. A better understanding of the informal versions of history that students may bring to the classroom will enable us to improve the tailoring of the formal curriculum that we have to offer.

(p.36)

This is echoed by Epstein who argues that if history teaching does little to take on board the interpretive frameworks that students bring into the classroom then history, disciplinary or otherwise will have very marginal transformative impact.

Robin Conway (2006), a UK based teacher, conducted a small-scale action research project into his students' idea of historical significance in the context of teaching the industrial revolution and used the outcomes to shape his planning. Investigating student ideas around historical significance can be a particularly useful way of accessing their interpretive frameworks, "The judgements about significance that the young people make effectively illuminate the narrative that they perceive as underpinning their nation's past, shaping a sense of collective identity in the present" (Harris et al, 2013, p.115). In addition this procedural concept allows thought about the nature of selection at the heart of historians' work sitting at an interesting intersection between the past and the present. A number of studies have investigated what events or people students' find historically significant (Barton & McCully, 2005; Levstik, 2008; Yeager et al., 2002) and their understandings of the concept of significance (Cercadillo, 2001) (Cercadillo in Dickinson et al., 2001). Lévesque (2008) argues, following Partington (1980), that historians deploy a set of defining criteria in order to make selections about who and what they study; to these five 'disciplinary' constructs of significance he adds three that he characterises as 'memory' signification.

Table 1: Lévesque's historical significance criteria

Disciplinary criteria	Memory criteria
Importance- is the degree to which the event or person was seen as important in the context of the time.	Symbolic- can be seen as being representative of a community of identity and is characterised by the use of collective pronouns such as 'we.'

Profundity- an evaluative criterion that asks questions about the depth of effect and is often related to the nature of change	Intimate- relate to belonging in a more personal way, through family rather than nation, a known relative who perhaps took part in the war.
Quantity- which ascribes significance to the numbers and range of people affected	Contemporary lessons- significance of the past is ascribed through the light it can shed on the present, like the sentiment 'never again'.
Durability- relates to the events or individuals endurance, the sense in which they live beyond their period, how they are remembered and celebrated	
Relevance- the extent that the event or person resonates in the present	

In order to differentiate from durability the relevance criterion relates to the way in which the event can be used as a tool to make sense of subsequent events or the present. For example, the way in which WW1 might be seen as relevant because it helps make sense of the Second World War. However the critical delineation is between historical and memory signification. He makes the following distinction, “they are more intuitive, subject to the dialectic of collective and intimate remembering and forgetting” and concludes that they are, “more likely to generate naive, distorted views of the past that are not open to revision” (Lévesque, 2008, p.59). Given the lack of evidence advanced by Lévesque in support of these characteristics, I would suggest that too little is known about the processes involved in student’s ideas about significance to

either make this strict delineation or claim and I will return to this formulation in my analysis chapters.

In exploring history and identity I have argued that the relationship between the two is worth exploring, particularly in the context of school history and that through such exploration we enter into key debates about the purposes of history and how we can know about what happened about the past. In this exploration it is important to recognise that both history and identity are dynamic concepts that have multiple meanings and in thinking about the plural and developmental nature of identities it might be better to think of processes of identification. Making too strong a delineation can be counterproductive, especially in a school history setting, as it might lessen the attention given to young peoples' affective needs; so while the discipline has a key part to play it should not be at the expense of students' affective needs. "Rather than asking students to deny their own interests and perspectives, educators should seek to deepen and enrich students' ability to use history in a variety of contexts and for multiple purposes" (Barton, 2009, p.265). For this to happen we need a clear idea of what students 'own interests and perspectives' are, particularly the ways they attribute significance in history and what they see as the uses and purposes of history; it is clear that social memory is a critical competent of the relationship between history and memory and that the role it plays merits further consideration.

1.4 Social Memory

Seixas' definition of historical consciousness highlights the social dimensions of the construction of historical knowledge, specifically in its reference to 'collective understandings of the past' and the 'cultural factors' that help shape those understandings; attributes that can both be ascribed to social memory. This social dimension is important in the ways it illuminates the process of developing historical understanding and because of what it can reveal about the power behind social relations. However, in focussing on the power dimensions of social memory, the concept can become reified and obscure the ways in which memory is negotiated and constructed. In

this section I explain how ‘social remembering’ offers a way of focussing on the dynamic ways in which diverse cultural tools are drawn on to shape the collective understandings that are part of historical consciousness, with use of the term ‘remembering’, rather than ‘memory’ suggesting something that is worked and re-worked (Thelen, 1989).

Given its potential importance and extensive theorising, defining social memory remains curiously elusive. The first difficulty with regard to definition is the competing range of cognate terms used in the literature, sometimes interchangeably, such as collective memory or cultural memory. For some theorists, social memory is located within the national and ideological contexts (Nora, 1996; Bodnar, 1992). While in the field of cognitive psychology, memory can be defined in quite specific terms, studies in social memory remain ephemeral. This is partly a result of the range of disciplinary interests in the ways in which memory is manifested, used and understood in broadly social terms.

A key starting point for the theorising of social memory in the twentieth century is Halbwachs's, (Halbwachs & Coser, 1992) *‘Les Cadres sociaux de la mémoire’* (*On collective memory*). Indeed, “the historian Bloch saw the analysis presented by Halbwachs in this book as a major contribution to the developing discipline of social science” (Radstone & Schwarz, 2010, p.77). Written following WW1, but containing virtually no reference to that event despite his having lived through it, Halbwachs's contribution was to assert the social and collective dimensions of individual memory. Influenced by the sociology of Durkheim, Halbwach explored the socially constructed nature of memory and focussed attention on the social processes taking place within social groups such as the family or the nation. His socially interactive and constructed view of memory emphasised the importance of a social framework in which memories can be given meaning and the need for rapport and a common language within that framework to facilitate meaning making. This language must be ‘consistent with societies’ accepted frame of reference: “A narrative that runs counter to dominant politics or ideology will prove hard to communicate”

(Radstone & Schwarz, 2010, p. 89). My Year 9 boy, in the vignette, sought to find a language to express his sense of the past within the accepted frame of reference I had established within the classroom. It is important to investigate the variety of settings in which these understandings are articulated and constructed, which is why I wanted to investigate the wide range of spaces where children encounter the past and construct their understandings. The diverse sample of case studies and freedom given to the young ethnographers allowed for this variety to be exemplified.

While Halbwachs usefully draws our attention to the socially constructed nature of memory, he still operates at the level of generality especially with regard to how these social dynamics work in practice. While not as socially deterministic as Durkheim, his societal focus can serve to place an undue emphasis on the ways in which societies, rather than individual or families, construct meaning, ignoring the dialectical tensions with individual or community remembering; tensions which I think are evident in my classroom example or in Epstein's study.

Wertsch's (1985; 1991; 1994; 1998; 2002) work, informed by a sociocultural theoretical framework, begins to offer ways of understanding social memory, accounting for both the way in which it is produced socially but also worked on individually. This approach is grounded in the use of textual resources, especially narratives. Critical to his conceptualisation is seeing people as 'active agents' in a process of gaining mastery over 'cultural tools'. Indeed, part of the process of learning is gaining mastery over these cultural tools, which are located within specific sociocultural moments and reflect particular social and cultural settings. However, these settings are not fixed, but are open to both temporal and spatial changes.

Wertsch (2002) forces a consideration of the multi-voiced nature of the understandings we reach. Wertsch makes the point that remembering takes place within specific socio-cultural contexts and two methodological assumptions underpin his approach. The first is the role of text as an organising unit; this might be broadened to include other tools such as memorials. The second is

‘voice’ which for Wertsch has three dimensions; the speaker and the listener but also the voice(s) in the sense that both the speaker and listener are drawing on other voices. Both text and voice have a bearing on remembering suggesting a complex process not something that is inert. Remembering is therefore action and this action is socially constructed.

Wertsch’s work has been critiqued in some quarters for its overlooking of semiotic word meaning as a unit of analysis and instead focussing on “tool mediated action” (Bakhurst in Daniels, 1996, p. 188). The central unit of analysis for Wertsch that of ‘mediated action’ is, nevertheless, a useful concept which brings together the agent and the cultural tools. For the purposes of this study it is worth considering this idea of cultural tools in both inscribed and incorporated ways. A distinctive characteristic of this mediation is an, “irreducible tension between agent and mediational means” (Wertsch, 1998, p. 25). In this extract, from my own ethnographic learning journey, a document I used with all the students involved in Phase 2, we can see this tension in action.

My first clearer memories are fragments originating from our second trip to Singapore while aged nine. We lived in Adams Drive, billeted in Army quarters. I remember terrorising the Amah by putting huge frogs in her room, but is this because my mother told me? I remember our dog Rusty hunting snakes, but is this because I have seen the photos. I remember swimming in the monsoon drains with my sister, but is this because my sister told me. Looking back I am troubled by memory, frustrated by its fragmentary and unreliable nature. Perhaps this why I am drawn to history and its interplay with social memory?

In the process of remembering I was accessing various cultural tools such as photos and drawing on conversations with relatives, giving an indication of the distributed and social nature of my

memory, while the fact that I am still troubled is an indication of the irreducible tension involved in remembering. What I haven't articulated here is the place of language, but the extract does suggest fluidity in the way in which narratives can operate.

Wertsch's account of mediated action (Wertsch, 1991), similar to Bartlett's (1967) study places a useful emphasis on remembering rather than memory, which helps draw a distinction between the nature of individual memory and social memory. Remembering allows for a more active and dynamic concept, giving a sense of things being reworked and recreated in a distributed range of social settings. This means, for research purposes, the recognition that collective remembering, unlike individual remembering, is not an isolated phenomenon. Wertsch argues, "Partly for this reason, collective remembering seldom lends itself to being studied with a methodology grounded in the control of variables" (Boyer & Wertsch 2009, p.122). Instead this conceptualisation of social remembering highlights the need to discover the cultural tools that young people use and the ways in which they use them in different social settings and finally to reveal the complexity of settings in which remembering takes place. My research questions were designed to give empirical weight to these ideas.

While Wertsch's work focuses on 'textual' cultural tools, Connerton (1989) argues that studies of inscribed forms of remembering tend to be privileged over incorporated ones. His contention is that incorporated practices are all the more powerful for being, in many ways, traceless. He argues such practices can be found in the performance of commemorative ceremonies, constituting something similar to Wertsch's cultural tools, while the processes of habituation and bodily practices are the means by which memory is learnt, an idea similar to that of mediated action, but one that Connerton calls 'acts of transfer'. So, for example, I explored how the wearing of a poppy constitutes a bodily gesture that conveys meaning and memory.

I think this line of enquiry has particular resonance in working with young people. Work by feminists (Hauge, 2009) has shown how adolescent girls constitute their subjectivities through

bodily practices. In addition while words continue to play an important part in young people's learning, changes in technology have created a generation of learners saturated with imagery that is an important carrier of historical consciousness (Moss, 2008).

1.5 Shadows between the boundaries

Wertsch's approach usefully integrates different disciplinary approaches to the study of social memory. I wanted to maintain the option of undertaking disciplinary border crossings, to avoid conclusions being either too individually determined or overly socially determined. I took the spirit of the advice that, "one should ignore disciplines altogether and forge ahead, as many of our contributors are doing with blithe eagerness and thorough opportunism, using whatever tools and techniques will best further their particular interests" (Boyer & Wertsch, 2009, p.1).

We have seen how the concept of social memory originates in the sociology of Durkheim and Halbwachs where it is linked with issues of identity politics. I believed for the purpose of this study it was worth maintaining this sociological intersection. Social memory is extensively theorised within sociology and the centrality of identities of belonging has good linkage to educational fields and history education. The sociological lens draws on a tradition exploring the connection of knowledge and power in the construction of social memory. The limitations of this disciplinary lens can be both its unidirectional emphasis, meaning that people are often conceived of as passive consumers of the constructed messages, and also its presentist focus.

While social memory is constructed in the present, it is useful to analyse its evolution in time and space. Time constraints prohibit a longitudinal study but comparisons can be drawn with previous anniversaries of WW1. Reynolds (2013) has shown how the Second World War altered perspectives on WW1 and my pilot survey indicated a confusion students have in distinguishing between them.

Given that this work will be set in the context of history education, maintaining a disciplinary link with historiography is critical. Those operating with a history lens tend to be more interested

in epistemological questions, but remain divided in their conclusions about social memory, as suggested in my discussion about the relationship between history and identities.

For Collingwood (1946), history and memory are distinct; memory, a spontaneous, unstructured form of knowledge, is regarded as inferior to historical knowledge. For historians like Hobsbawm, keen to reveal the political uses of heritage and history, the distinction is less clear, and he argues that historians should, “compile and constitute the collective memory of the past” (Hobsbawm, 1997, p.24). Samuel (1994) makes a case for a more social and eclectic engagement with the past and argues for historians to engage with manifestations of popular memory.

Hobsbawm’s and Samuel’s perspectives are shaped by political commitments, particularly ‘history from below’ and the importance of reclaiming this history. This concern led to the development of oral history methods, where the intersection of memory and history was drawn closer; a development which indicates that the issue of social memory, within history, is a methodological as well epistemological one.

These tensions are reflected in schools history. Educators like Counsell (2011) have a degree of ambivalence towards more vernacular forms of historical knowledge, seeing the place of disciplinary knowledge as a corrective to, “rawer forms of collective memory” (p.201). However Wineburg’s and Wilson’s (1991) work invites us to take a more catholic view of the possibilities offered by these more distributed forms of knowledge.

My final disciplinary foray is to anthropology where social memory is viewed as a way to demonstrate varieties of social organisation across time frames. The focus within this discipline on myth and ritual offers synergy with the historiography pursued by Samuel and Hobsbawm

Connerton’s (1989) work sits at the intersection of sociology, anthropology and history.

He argues that social memory operates in a variety of ways with some interplay with

historical reconstruction. However the ubiquity of social memory is not, according to Connerton (1989), borne out by extensive theorising:

There is a striking disparity between the pervasiveness of Social Memory in the conduct of everyday life and the relatively scant attention, at least in regards to explicit and systematic as distinct from implicit and scattered treatment that has been paid to specifically Social Memory in modern social and cultural theory.

(p.21)

This is partly due to the variety of associated terms, as mentioned earlier, but also, according to Connerton, because of the way in which the field has been ‘colonised’ by psychology and psychoanalysis with an emphasis on cognitive or individual aspects. He argues for a need to look at social membership and actual application of social memory and specifically the idea of ‘acts of transfer’.

For Connerton, one place where social memory can be found is in commemorative ceremonies which will be a focus for this study. He argues that the persistent psychological, sociological or historical focus on the meaning of the commemorations rites, and not on the form that they take, fails to recognise the ways in which commemoration, and ‘bodily practices’ help shape social memory. I attempt, below, to apply this form of analysis to the cenotaph commemorations.

Vast crowds gather in solemn respect, heads bowed, at the same time every year. Caught between the falling of the leaves and the onset of winter the ritual can be both bleak and beautiful but always fixed by the calendar and the clock. What follows is a performative re-enactment that uses no direct reference to the event it is re-enacting but whose memory

is felt by all. This annual ritual is more than an exercise in myth making. Myths are more pliable. This ceremony has, through its performative structures, an air of permanence about it.

The language is stylised and inclusive ‘we’ are brought together, an assumed collective that needs no exploration and invites none. From the crowd, men shout out what sounds like curses or oaths but are actually orders. But it is how language is rendered that highlights more clearly the performative aspect of this ritual. It follows a fixed pattern, measured sonorous intonations convey weight, pauses and silences allow reflective spaces. Punctuation is provided by the music, homophonic fanfares, percussive insistences, large bells, and booming shots. All resonate.

In its bodily expression the ritual conveys a measured solemnity. An 87 year old matriarch leads the ceremony, thousands wait as she takes staccato steps towards the ‘Glorious’ monument. She lays her floral tribute, her crown of eternal life. She takes tentative steps backwards and nods her head paying her respects before turning away while the rest of her family come forward and then some lesser individuals until, finally, it is the turn of the crowd.

While ideas such as encoding and personal narratives are useful, they ignore the place of habit, which Connerton emphasises. They also tend to privilege inscribed or written forms rather than incorporated and bodily forms of social memory. A scene from the ‘Thick of it’, albeit a fiction, highlights the bodily and habituated nature of social memory. As the new Leader of Her

Majesty's Opposition, former DOSAC³ Secretary Nicola Murray (Rebecca Front) is practising walking for laying the poppy wreath at the cenotaph, her assistant tells her, "Too slow"; "too fast"... "Too bouncy", "quick and elegant like a solemn heron". As Murray continues to struggle with the choreography, her assistant suggests, "just copy the queen if in doubt!" (Series 4 *The Thick of it*, BBC 1) This scene is played for laughs but it highlights the bodily aspect of commemoration; while Michael Foot in 1981 reminds us of the very real consequences of getting this wrong.

Connerton asserts that a theoretical scepticism regarding the place of commemoration in shaping social memory arises from a focus on the content of commemoration rather than the form. The heuristic nature of bodily practices, perhaps the reason why Murray finds them so difficult, also makes them hard to interpret and learn. They are paradoxically both persistent and traceless, a reminder that memory is passed on in non-textual, non-cognitive ways. For Connerton learning happens through incorporation, habituation. This requires a diachronic analysis that includes the performative, of how the practice of social memory is constructed through actual behaviour and practices.

I reached the conclusion that if I wanted to interrogate both what social memory is and also how it is constructed – social remembering – then I needed to draw on a range of disciplinary approaches and traditions. Some empirical work is urgently needed, on how young people work with social memory. This might enable a consideration of what questions are worth asking about social remembering and historical consciousness and what approaches might enable access to these questions. Connerton alerted me to the privileging of inscribed forms of social remembering. I was therefore keen to go beyond these, to investigate the way in which social

³ The fictional Department of Social Affairs and Citizenship

remembering is incorporated and to examine the ‘acts of transfer’, getting young people to write about their participation to enable access to these phenomena.

I have argued that social memory involves an active process of construction, social remembering, drawn across a range of social sites involving what Connerton calls ‘acts of transfer’. However, I did not wish to limit the study to ‘bodily inscriptions’ and believed that material artefacts, social settings and text were of equal interest and value. Instead it made sense to work alongside young people to explore these processes, identifying, with them, where they take place and what forms they take. This was best done across a range of settings particularly the family. I was keen to identify what ‘cultural tools’ they draw on, how they use them and how this evolves.

The most critical focus for this work is on social rather than cognitive theories of mind that stress the collaborative communal aspects of memory and draw on the culture associated with these shared dimensions.

1.6 Writing and Remembering the First World War

In the centenary year of its outbreak my case study is WW1. In design terms, I believe it offers a strong focus albeit with potential pitfalls. Although Winter makes a good case for framing it as the ‘Great War’, as it “set in motion the forces producing both the later world war and the forms in which contemporaries understood its meaning” (J. Winter 2006, p.2), I use the term First World War instead of the ‘Great War’ to reflect the relationship with the Second World War.

In wanting to analyse the nature of the commemorations and enable comparisons, I believe it is useful to make a distinction between history produced and practised within the university and history produced outside such as commemorations to better understand the interplay and analyse the nature of the relationships.

In doing so I am not suggesting an easy demarcation, Ashton and Hamilton's (Ashton, 2010) metaphor of history as a large house with many rooms is apt; people may inhabit more than one room and they will make visits to other parts of the house. In addition I do not wish to set up an over-determined hierarchy: academic history good, popular history bad. This more pluralistic interpretation of history sits better with the wider ranging encounters I have suggested young people have with the past both within and beyond school.

A recent review in the *Times Literary Supplement* illustrates some of the problems of too heavy a delineation. William Philpott, professor of the history of warfare at King's College London, in a review of a trio of WW1 books (Philpott, 2013), initially makes an unfavourable comparison between the broad brushed and judgemental conclusions of journalist Max Hastings and the 'nuanced, scholarly judgement' of Professor Margaret MacMillan. Yet, lest we take this as a putdown of history constructed outside of the academy, he concedes the value of the 'trained soldierly eye' of Allan Mallinson, author of popular military fiction. To further complicate matters, commissioning at the BBC for the season pitched Professor Niall Ferguson (Pennink, 2014) against Max Hastings (McGann, 2014) in debating the necessity of Britain's entry to the war.

Despite the difficulties and caveats in order to better contextualise the data generated, especially from my survey, it is useful to make some demarcation. I therefore begin this review with a brief overview of the historiography of WW1. This takes us to a point, prior to the current centennial commemorations, where it can be argued that both the historical scholarship and popular remembrance of the war was dominated by what might be termed the 'cultural' turn. I will give a synopsis of what is meant by this before briefly looking at some more recent trends in historical scholarship and the nature of the current commemorations. This comparative approach allows some exploration of the synergies and tensions that exist between social remembering and historical consciousness. For example what are the trends in new writing on WW1 and how far

are these reflected in forms of remembrance? I will conclude with a short discussion on the range of contemporary influences that might have a hand in shaping the focus of scholarship and forms of remembering.

Winter (2005) highlights three configurations in the developing historiography of WW1. The first, immediately following the war braided testimony and history together with a focus on diplomatic questions: what caused the war? The second, coinciding with the birth of television and expansion of higher education, had a more social emphasis and placed the soldiers' experience at the heart of the narrative. The final configuration, coinciding with the death of many first-hand witnesses, kept the social focus but took on a distinctive cultural character. If the shift between the first and second configurations was initiated by the sense of rupture, due to the impact of the Second World War, the move from the second to the third was more of an evolution. Issues of memory and history intersected with debates about representation and identity that coincided with a powerful memory boom aligned to the Holocaust that 'created a sense of duty to remember the collective past'.

Winter's third configuration of the historiography placed this duty motif, aligned for a need to remember the 'futile' sacrifice, at the heart of what might be described as the cultural turn and could be found readily in the scholarship of the time (Clark, 1961; Liddell Hart, 1970). This cultural turn was popularised in Joan Littlewoods 'Oh What a lovely War' and given a scholarly treatment by the American literary critique Paul Fussell (2009), first published in 1975. This duty motif also finds its resonance in commemoration services and its expression in revived poetry (Sassoon, 1961; Owen, 1963), Kipling's 'lest we forget' and Binyon's injunction 'We will remember them'. In this interpretation the war becomes a war of tragedy and disaster and our present-day responsibility is to remember the sacrifice. Famously, Samuel Hynes (1992) explored the cultural legacies of the war in exploring the myths and ways in which the war is imagined and remembered. For Hynes a myth was not a, "falsification of reality, but [... as] the

story of the war that has evolved, and has come to be accepted as true." In particular he highlights the 'myth of disenchantment' whereby:

A generation of innocent young men, their heads full of high abstractions like Honour, Glory, and England, went off to war to make the world safe for democracy. They were slaughtered in stupid battles planned by stupid generals. Those who survived were shocked, disillusioned and embittered by their war experiences [...].

(1992, p. x)

Samuel Hynes makes the case that the post hoc disillusionment of the war was derived from an obsessive focus on the infantry experience and the trench. David Reynolds (2013) has argued that this cultural turn has meant we have lost the big picture regarding WW1 that, especially in the United Kingdom, we need to climb out of the trenches and take a broader view of the impact of the War. Dan Todman has argued how tragedy and futility hold sway in current, popular, interpretations of WW1, "This interpretation continues to dominate how Britons think about the First World War in the first decade of the twenty first century"(Daniel Todman, 2005, p.xii).

This is an interesting debate to explore within my research, asking not only how far recent writing and commemoration has served to dislodge this interpretation, but also how far young people construct this particular meaning of WW1.

Alan Kramer(Kramer, 2014) reviewing more recent historiography of WW1 hints at the difficulty of a comprehensive survey given the sheer volume of publications. Nevertheless it is possible to detect in recent historiographical writing on WW1 a broadening of the scope. This includes new work on transnational perspectives. New British scholarship exists that broadens the global scope of the study of WW1 to include consideration of

contributions made by parts of the then British Empire (Das, 2011; Bourne, 2014; Olusoga, 2015) Read in conjunction with David Reynold's (2013) work, they begin to shift the emphasis beyond the trench experience to consider the global consequences of war and the ways in which the conflict has shaped the modern world. Janet Watson's (2004) work, collapsing the distinction of home front and front line, enables richer and more complex constructions of war experience and opens the possibility for exploring the difference in gender and class experiences of war. Christopher Clark (2012) and Margaret Macmillan (2013) have brought new perspectives and energy, in their recent work, to questions about the causes of the war.

Kramer asserts that certainly in France, the cultural theme has persisted as a hegemonic device over the last two decades. The picture in Britain is more mixed with traditional treatments (Hastings, 2013; Hollis, 2012) of the war sitting alongside some of the newer work I have outlined above. Winter argues (2005) that in the immediate years following the war, "The practice and discourse of remembrance unfolded without reference to historians or their activities" (p.173). One wonders, despite some shifts in the writing about the war, what bearing might this have on remembrance?

What then of the current commemorations? 2014 marked the beginning of the centenary commemorations for WW1. Anniversaries of this nature herald an immense expression of public memory that can serve to obscure as much as to enlighten. The thousands who visited Paul Cumming's ceramic poppy installation at the Tower of London can give an indication of the scale of popular interest, while the intervention of a Secretary of State (Gove, 2014), denouncing Blackadder and left-wing academics, and the ensuing responses indicate the political stakes. They also suggest how the cultural perspective continues to shape the discourse about WW1 and perhaps serve to prevent deeper historical analysis.

Government plans for commemorations ranged from local to international events. *14-18 NOW* is a major cultural programme taking place across the United Kingdom to mark the centenary of WW1 featuring theatre, dance, musical, literary and visual art work. The Imperial War Museum (IWM) has taken the lead in WW1 centenary partnerships, a network of 2,700 local, regional, national and international cultural and educational organisations.

The range of programming and some early indications of audience figures suggest that an appetite for WW1 persists and indicates possibilities for material and scope for my research. *Passing Bells* a drama scheduled at 7pm and targeted at a teen audience had an average of 3.7 million viewers and an 18% share (Plunkett, 2014). It is clear that the centenary commemorations have acted as a catalyst for the generation of new material. A BBC season, spread over the four years, will include 130 newly commissioned radio and television programmes which will last over 2500 hours, including more than 600 hours of new content (BBC News, 2013). This includes content targeted at children, mainly drama and the ubiquitous *Horrible Histories*.

An interesting dimension of the more popular commemorative aspects of the war has been the numerous websites inaugurated around 2014 to commemorate the centenary of WW1. The focal point of the Imperial War Museum's contribution to the WW1 centenary is the *Lives of the First World War* project which aims to create a, "permanent digital memorial to more than eight million men and women from across Britain and the Commonwealth" before the end of the centenary. "This innovative, interactive platform will bring material from museums, libraries, archives and family collections from across the world together in one place, inspiring people of all ages to explore, reveal and share the life stories of those who served in uniform and worked on the home front" (IWM, 2016). People and families are invited to contribute anything from photos to anecdotes to over 8 million life stories.

John Horne(2014) in a lecture discussing the different timeframes of the war stated that, “Anniversaries are living processes where societies re-evaluate their relationships to the past.” This opens up new possibilities for interpreting the war as well as thinking about new relationships and ways of ‘re-remembering’, to use Toni Morrison’s phrase(Morrison, 1987). The case of Irish soldiers of WW1 is instructive in revealing the complexity of meaning and interpretation in the context of popular remembrance. Initially written out of memory in favour of the combatants of the Easter Rising, they have come to be a symbol of reconciliation, as part of the peace process, undoing the previous repression. “The Irish dead of the conflict have today been conscripted (as the Irish living of the war years never were) to serve in a very political, if well-meaning, project of mutual communal understanding and reconciliation” (Jeffery in Horne, 2008, p.273).

Jeffery’s tone, the soldiers being ‘conscripted’ suggests a scepticism regarding this development due to the states involvement. However, this process of reclaiming these soldiers has also been stimulated by a resurgence of individual family interest in Irish soldiers of WW1. In January 2014 Northern Ireland’s First Minister, Peter Robinson, and his deputy, Martin McGuinness, joined the Republic’s Minister of Foreign Affairs to open a free database of Irish soldiers involved in WW1. While this is a state-building gesture, it opens up different possibilities for its use. It is a reminder that history encountered outside the classroom is not as bounded by aims of state, and can lead to different uses.

One online community, forming part of the IWM’s contribution to the WW1 centenary is the *Lives of the First World War* project, ‘Haddington Road, Dublin, at war’, was started by Adrienne Downs originally to commemorate her own family but expanded to include some 236 life stories. This is especially poignant and interesting in the context of Ireland’s troubled relationship of remembering and forgetting towards WW1. This Irish example is a reminder of the dynamic and fluid nature of anniversaries. In placing a focus on remembering in my work

rather than memory I hoped to allow for an exploration of this dynamism, examining the interplay between past and present and the potential agency involved and afforded in remembering.

In describing how the British rediscovered the Great War in the 1960s, as part of the 50th anniversary, Reynolds talks about how, “they reconstructed it, in forms that accorded with contemporary social attitudes and with perceptions of how 1914-18 and 1939-45 fitted into the trajectory of modern British history” (Reynolds, 2013, p.351).

In historicising remembrance Reynolds, like Winter in outlining the different configurations above, alerts us to the ways in which the present informs the questions asked about the past. Therefore another strand to the analysis will be the need to consider the nature of the current moment. It is too early to say what the current trajectory of modern British history is. It is, however, more accurate to think about multiple trajectories, which again hint at useful tensions and contestations. The impact of post structuralism and post modernism will continue to resonate, with thought given to identities and representations and a continuing interest in cultural history.

The impact of devolution and locality will also have an impact on the prism through which the war is viewed, even while globalisation directs us to look at how the war is experienced elsewhere. So, beyond the British focus, it will be useful to consider the global dimension of the war. A British Council report (Bostanci J. 2014) gives a clear indication of how the War is experienced and remembered differently, especially in the Middle East, and how this gives rise to contested meanings and identities. The impact of the Iraq War and the campaign ‘Help the Heroes’ suggest a changing relationship to the armed services and, in the wristbands by which they are honoured, the ways in which remembering is inscribed.

My research tests such claims regarding how young Britons think about WW1, what conclusions they reach and how they reach such conclusions. In doing so the research gives an insight into the relationship between scholarship and remembrance, allowing some exploration of how far new themes and trends penetrate the, 'myth of disenchantment', that Hynes outlines.

Chapter 2: Research Design

2.1 Introduction

My review of the literature highlighted the limitations of viewing social memory through one particular disciplinary lens (Boyer & Wertsch, 2009). Combining insights from history, anthropology and sociology helps to understand social memory as a dynamic process that is contingent on time, often involving myths and rituals that serve to play a powerful role in the construction of identities; a process I describe as ‘social remembering’. My research design reflects the range of shadows between these disciplinary boundaries; a design loose enough to give scope for the research to grow into it and to encompass the different disciplinary dimensions. I also wanted to provide scope for young people to work as co-researchers alongside me in developing the design of the work and especially in contributing rich accounts of their encounters with social remembering and their developing historical consciousness.

This cross-disciplinary approach is also useful in addressing the dangers of viewing identity as a fixed or static term. I am aware of the shortcoming of terms associated with categories such as Class, Gender, Race/Ethnicity and Nation; in particular the ways that they reify boundaries and potentially deny agency. Nonetheless I assert their on-going relevance as a way of thinking about social experience, “the relations of domination and subordination that are named and articulated through the processes of racism and racialisation still exist, and they still require analytic and political specification and engagement” (Alexander & Mohanty 1997, p. xvii). My desire therefore was to approach identities in a way that implicated cultures and communities while being alert to a range of contexts and complexity.

Bauman (1996) offers one way of highlighting the complexity by being alert to the interplay between dominant discourses, that confer identities in fixed inert ways, and demotic discourses

that exist at a local level. Bauman's study recognised the continued presence of dominant discourses within the contestations of the Southall community but highlighted the way it was mediated by demotic discourse that is language 'of the people' (p.10) reflecting local usages. In addition by treating Southall as a single social field Baumann opens the scope to look at how identity is formed across a range of social settings to reveal how identities are shaped by both time and space.

Another feature of my research design was to find ways of highlighting the intersectionality at play in processes of identity formation. McCall (2005) has outlined the categorical complexity at stake with intersectionality. Initially this study adopts an intracategorical approach adopting an auto-ethnographic approach that takes "as their subject an individual or an individual's experience and extrapolate illustratively to the broader social location embodied by the individual" (McCall 2005, p.1781). Bhattacharya highlights the work of bell hooks on intersectionality and the ways in which hooks is, "deriving her epistemological premise from her own lived experiences as a black woman as well as other such women around her" (Bhattacharya 2012, p65). My aim is to enable the young people involved in phase 2 to articulate their own lived experiences through auto-ethnographic accounts.

These auto-ethnographic accounts contribute to the portraits that form the central chapters 4-6. Complexity derives from the analysis of a social location and associated temporal factors. These personal narratives and single-group studies derive their strength from the partial crystallization of social relations in the identities of particular social groups like their families. Following this I adopt an approach of intercategorical complexity; the multi-group nature of the phase 1 data facilitated a comparative dimension in the design of the study to create a form of complexity that differs significantly from the anticategorical and intracategorical forms. In addition as well as writing their own ethnographies during phase 2 we met in mixed groups to discuss phase one

data and their own emerging understandings in all these discussions I emphasised that a range of understandings were always possible and that I was more interested in how these understandings had been arrived at. This intercategorical complexity is pursued in chapter 7 with complicating the field and the chapter 8 with a synthetic analysis working between the different narratives seeking points of dissonance and connection.

The socio-cultural perspective from which I started, assumes complexity in human interactions, which meant the design of the research needed to proceed in an iterative manner. The desire to find space for young people to contribute and collaborate made it necessary not to overdesign the project at the outset. The danger, however, was that too loose an approach could mean losing sight of what it was I wanted to find out. Arriving at a set of research questions, outlined in the introduction, which helped reflect my research priorities and returning to these regularly during the research was therefore key to maintaining my focus.

The research process involved a series of judgements made at various critical junctures. The purpose of this chapter is to outline those judgements and the principles and conditions that informed them. However I shall begin with an ordered description of the research process in order to orientate the reader

2.2 Overview

Table 2, below, summarises the overall design and chronology of the different phases of the work to provide the reader with a map of the overall direction, outcomes and timing of the work. I then provide a detailed description of this process before outlining the underlying rationale for the decisions made. The detailed description precedes the underlying rationale partly to enable the reader to have a clear idea of the process; this is especially important as the research evolved in an iterative manner responding to the participants, this detailed description enables the reader to get their bearings and gives an indication of the systematic nature of these micro-decisions before finishing with the underlying rationale.⁴

The research was broken down into different phases enabling priority to be given at different times to different research questions. Phase 1 focussed on research questions 1-3.

- RQ1: What is the extent and nature of children's remembering?
- RQ2: What (understandings) do children draw from WW1?
- RQ3: Where are these understandings drawn from?

Phase 2 maintained an interest in these questions but focussed on RQ4: How are these understandings constructed outside of the classroom?

In Phase 1, in order establish the extent of young peoples' engagement with culture of a historical nature that might be described as social memory; I administered an online survey investigating young people's engagement with history outside of the classroom that also asked them who they share this engagement with.

Part two of the survey included an open question asking students what WW1 means to them personally. This was to get a sense of the associations children make in relation to WW1 and allowed me to begin considering their potential origins. A classroom-administered quiz helped to

⁴ Supporting material can be found in Appendix

establish specific cultural references and the extent and nature of the students' knowledge about WW1.

For Phase 2 I used the survey to identify a group of students who would be willing, along with their families, to take part in further research, through a question inviting them to opt in to further participation. In this phase I wanted the young people to work ethnographically to create their own portraits, possibly working with their own families to record the discourse that occurs around historically-themed television programmes, visits, etc; as well as recalling memories that were formative in their own formation and engagement with history. I met with the students in small groups in school on four occasions, setting writing tasks between my visits. During these visits I also undertook an analysis, with the young people, of a commemorative event (s) to reveal what aspects of representations and what meanings are privileged by them and to discuss why. This included their analysis of my auto-ethnography and the data from Phase 1.

Finally I followed this up with interviews in each of the students' homes, sharing my emerging portraits with the individuals and then with their families. I used a composite visual description of the cultural tools I thought that they used and the understandings they drew from them. This stimulated further discussion of how their understandings are constructed outside of the classroom.

2.2.1 Extended fieldwork

The large number of students involved in the original sample (n=12) was deliberate. For ethical reasons the students and their families were given the right to opt out during any part of the research process without needing to give reasons. By August 2015 I had completed the research, including the home visits, with five of the original 12 students; a sample that included one boy and four girls. However by this stage it also became clear that the others had effectively opted out, although one formally notified me that she had moved house. While the data from the school visits was useful, and I draw on this in chapter 7, I considered the visit to the students' homes, to meet their families, a critical element in establishing a sense of place and in giving

validity to the findings. I was concerned that the completed data was skewed, with many more girls than boys; and in particular I had no children from BAME backgrounds who had completed the process to the home visit, as the whole cohort from school B had withdrawn (see table 3 for sampling information). I explain in section 2.5.1 how this was addressed by extending the field work from September 2015 to May 2016 to enable at least one case to progress to the home visit stage.

Table 2: Chronological overview of research steps

Ethical (CUREC ⁵) approval for phase 1: 14/05/14	Methods	Outcomes
Piloting May 2014 Phase 1	Testing the quiz and survey in class and in collaboration with class teacher.	A redesign of elements, such as the language used to enable access for all students. I established the time demands of the quiz and survey.
Piloting June 2014 Phase 2	Visit to school to explain my research, testing its viability and ask advice on guidelines for collaboration in Phase 2	The participants engaged well with RQs and provided useful advice.
Phase 1 June 2014-Sept 2014 RQ2: What (understandings) do children draw from WW1?	Classroom administered quiz: students responded to a PowerPoint quiz and pre-prepared quiz sheet. Mainly focussed on WW1.	Completed by 622 young people aged 11-19 across 21 different British state schools.
RQ1: What is the extent and nature of children's remembering? RQ3: Where are these	Online survey, using secure Survey Monkey link, completed at home. Mainly focussed on children's remembering.	The survey was completed by 342 young people, a self-selecting subset of the above quiz group from the same schools. The survey invited participants to opt in to Phase 2; 137 opted to join and the sample

⁵ Central University Research Ethics Committee

understandings drawn from?		of 12 young people was selected from them.
Phase 2 Sept 2014- March 2015 CUREC approval for Phase 2 15/09/14 RQ4: How are these understandings constructed outside of the classroom?	Young people involved in the case study undertook their own auto-ethnography, structured over 4 in-school sessions and focussed on their engagement with history outside of the classroom. These sessions included discussing their/and my writing/portraits; as well as data generated elsewhere. Prior to the visit I drew up a semi-structured interview schedule, picking up on things they had recorded in their portraits. Later sessions included shared viewing of WW1 remembrance associated events.	The sessions in school followed a broadly similar pattern, especially the introductory session. Adaptations were made as the project proceeded due either to timing or to the nature of group. These are described in detail below this table. The adaptations allowed more effective support for the groups that needed it and pursuit of specific themes highlighted in their writing.
Phase 2 March 2015- 17August 2015 Home visits Focus on all RQs.	The final element was a home visit. I created a graphic representation of the tools each individual had used and the meanings they constructed based on their writing and our school conversations. This graphic was used first with the young person and then with their family to develop more detail; to fill any gaps; and to discuss the validity of my description.	By August 2015 I had completed 5 home visits. One participant had dropped out of the study due to moving away; the remaining six had effectively withdrawn, although all had taken part in all the school visits.

2.3 Piloting

In late May 2014 I designed a quiz and survey to help generate data for RQs 1, 2 and 3. The survey was designed specifically to generate data for RQ1 and RQ3; the quiz focussed on RQ2. Both elements contained a mixture of open and closed questions. Some of the quiz content was derived from questions asked as part of a British Council YouGov survey (Bostanci, 2014) to allow scope for comparisons across national contexts. In particular I wanted to be able to use this data to select a sample for Phase 2 of the study.

I worked with an Oxfordshire state school to pilot the quiz and survey. Initially I worked with the class teacher, discussing the shape, content, form, timing and look of the quiz and the survey. Working with the teacher was especially important as I would be depending on teachers to administer both the quiz and the survey. I wanted to enable access for both teachers and students. I then went into school to administer the quiz and survey with the class teacher. The main purposes were to ensure that both elements functioned well as a whole; to highlight any areas of confusion; and, given that I would not be administering them, to determine the adequacy of the instructions. The piloting also allowed me to see if the questions enabled the generation of variables that would be suitable for analysis and of possible hypotheses to be pursued in Phase 2.

The class teacher and I agreed initially to try the quiz and survey with a class who had not previously studied WW1, as this would give a truer reflection of knowledge derived from outside the classroom and test the students' resilience if they were asked questions on a topic that they had not studied.

One outcome from this piloting was my decision to use embedded time limits, with electronic timers, in the PowerPoint presentation, to prompt a more spontaneous, and, I hoped, a more authentic response, from students. Restricting the time available was intended to prompt students to give the first answer that they thought of rather than giving a more deliberative

response that might be more reflective of what they thought I wanted. The students reported that they had found it useful that I had explained the research and that all answers were acceptable; that this wasn't a test of their knowledge. To better establish the context of the research and to provide similar reassurance for all students, I therefore also included a short audio clip introducing myself and the research, supported by pictures of me and my classroom context as a former teacher. This was important in establishing my credibility as a former teacher used to working with young people, dispelling possible negative notions of an Oxford researcher and gave a human face to the research. This audio-clip explained the nature of my research and how it could be useful, and confirmed that the quiz was not a test of their knowledge. Finally the quiz and the fill-in sheet were redesigned, with more use of visual cues, especially maps, to enable wider scope for access. We established that the time needed for administration of the quiz was 15 minutes, which felt viable in terms of asking teachers to give up some of their lesson time.

The survey took about 40 minutes and was for some, quite attritional; meaning that some of the later questions received shorter responses and that in some cases students did not finish. The first change I made was, therefore, to provide an outline in the quiz of the different areas of the survey and the time involved. I hoped that this clearer set up would help reassure the students. As a result of the piloting I altered some of the language and re-ordered some items so that priority areas for the research were foregrounded, such as Question 7 (Q7), an open question, about what WW1 meant to them personally. Only one other open question was used, Question 31, which asked about what they felt the impact of the war was on Modern Britain. I also realised how important it was that participants were always clear about the option of skipping sections.

Piloting for Phase 2 was less straightforward given its embryonic nature. It was nevertheless important to test whether my ideas could be understood in such a way that young people could contribute to the study. Furthermore I wanted to reflect theoretical and methodological shifts

repositioning young people as subjects, rather than objects of research (Christensen & James, 2000) The section below (2.7.2) on working with young researchers develops this point further . In order to link theory to practice, I thought it would be useful to consult young people about their views on the research and explore with them ideas about how to conduct it.

In June 2014 I visited two groups of students in a London state school; one Key Stage 3 (KS3) the other Key Stage 4 (KS4)⁶ to explain my research and ask for advice. After an initial presentation of my ideas, the four key RQs and the nature of research I asked the students for advice in the following areas.

1. What data might help me find answers?
2. What ideas do you have about recording?
3. What do you see as the costs and benefits (to the participants) of being involved in research like this?
4. What guidelines should I follow?
5. How should I seek consent?
6. What should happen to the data- who owns it?
7. Any practical advice?

I was confident, given the feedback from students and their teacher, that students in both age groups understood the principles and direction of my research; it was clear that the research was viable. The students advised working with small groups of students in schools, in the first place, so as to build confidence and momentum. Small groups would allow rich data to be collected but in a context where students felt safe. They suggested that students might record ‘Goggle-box’ style their families’ interaction with social remembering on TV. Concerns were raised about

⁶ Key Stage 3 (commonly abbreviated as KS3) is the term for the three years of schooling in maintained schools in England and Wales normally known as Year 7, Year 8 and Year 9, when pupils are aged between 11 and 14. KS4 pupils are aged between 14 and 16 this stage coincides with GCSE. KS5 are aged 16-19, sometimes referred to as 6th form.

performativity, where parents might behave differently in the home encounters and students might feel obliged to behave differently. A key guideline, therefore, was, ‘Make sure they understand that nothing they contribute back is wrong (just research)’. This echoed feedback from the initial piloting about answers to the quiz and survey.

2.4 Phase 1 June- Sept 2014 The Quiz (see appendix 1)

Following ethical approval (CUREC) in May 2014 for Phase 1, I approached 44 state schools asking them to be involved in the research. This approach was initially made through existing contacts, either schools in the Oxford PGCE⁷ partnership or schools in which ex-trainees were now working. While using this convenience sampling, I took care to make sure that both urban and rural settings were represented. Following my initial contact with history teachers, formal permission was sought from head teachers.

The quiz was administered, by teachers in classrooms, and was completed by 622 young people aged 11-19 across 20 different British state schools. Of the respondents, 54% were boys and 44% were girls; 45% were in KS3; 43% in KS4, 10% in Key Stage 5 (KS5). In terms of ethnicity the breakdown was white 67%; mixed 8%; Asian 13%; black 6%; other 5%. Only six returns were incomplete.

I wanted scope to allow comparisons with the British Council Survey (Bostanci, 2014) to enable some cross-national comparisons and tried to keep the wording as close as possible to facilitate this; on questions about the areas of the world involved in the war and the consequences of the war. Rather than the quiz serving as a memory test I wanted to give students’ options for example in naming events and individuals that they may have heard of. In choosing events and individuals I included events such as Sykes Picot and Balfour to once again allow cross-reference with the British Council Work. To extend the cross-national element I included the Battle of

⁷ Post Graduate Certificate of Education

Tanneberg and Gallipoli to see if there was a sense of an Eastern front. Jay Winter (Horne, 2010) reminds us that fewer than 1/9 of the casualties of war, “fell in the major military encounters on the western front ”(p.254). While the battle of Amiens would act as a counterpoint to the Somme with historians long asserting its decisive nature(Terraine, 1964) and evidence the so-called ‘learning curve’ (Bond, 1999). Among the individuals I wanted some diverse representation in terms of gender, hence Cavell; and ethnicity, hence Tull. The inclusion of Harry Patch I thought might trigger more recent remembrances, having been commemorated in poems by Carol Ann Duffy and Andrew Motion; in addition to many news outlets carrying news of his death in 2009.

Full outcomes of the quiz are recorded in chapter 3; however, analysis of the quiz enabled possible lines of enquiry for Phase 2. Some of the headline findings include a high degree of resonance for events like the Somme, with 70% of the respondents indicating that they had heard of it. In terms of individuals, Owen and Haig were the most likely to be recognised. Where knowledge was weaker was in relation to the global dimensions of the war and in its consequences. Only 25% of the young people thought that Africa was involved in any way, and only 31% in the case of the Middle East. This meant that the consequences of the war were mainly seen in a European context, typically in terms of the rise of Hitler. The most common cultural tool associated with WW1 was the children’s novel *Warhorse* (Morpurgo, 2007). Returns indicated that many young people have trouble differentiating between the First and Second World Wars, with the film *Saving Private Ryan* being associated by some with WW1, along with the television series *Dad’s Army*. Variables such as gender seemed to have a bearing on the associations young people made with WW1: girls were twice as likely as boys to recognise Edith Cavell and girls were more likely to make descriptive associations with the war like ‘sad’ or ‘brave’, while boy’s associations related to the stuff of war: ‘guns’ and ‘tanks’.

The outcomes of the quiz were of great interest suggesting several possible avenues for further analysis and investigation in Phase 2, especially of the role that gender plays in making meaning. It is important, however, not to over-interpret the quiz results. The degree to which teachers influenced the outcomes needs to be taken into account. The answers were submitted confidentially but some teachers expressed some private concern, albeit ‘mock’ concern, that the answers reflected shocking ignorance on the part of their students and may reflect badly on them. In addition, they do not necessarily illustrate a direct causal link to social remembering occurring outside of the classroom. I suspect that the continued resonance of Haig, Owen and the Somme comes from schools, particularly schools following schemes of work focused on an interpretations question exploring Haig’s reputation as the ‘Butcher of the Somme’. An AHRC⁸ research project investigating English and history teachers approaches to teaching WW1 (Einhaus & Pennell, 2014), revealed that Owen, Sassoon and Morpurgo were the authors most frequently used by English teachers in their teaching on WW1. However, high recognition for the events of the Christmas truce and Gallipoli may indicate a broader cultural resonance through film and TV programmes featuring the ‘football match’ at Christmas.

2.4.1 The survey (see Appendix 1)

Administered online through Survey Monkey (for which students were given a secure link to follow in their own time at home or elsewhere), the survey asked for responses to questions about young people’s leisure habits, particularly those associated with history. The survey included a more open question about what WW1 means to them personally that, following the piloting stage, was located immediately after the personal factual questions. The questionnaire could only be accessed electronically through Survey Monkey and the package included enhanced encryption to protect the survey link and survey pages during transmission, meaning that only I had access to the data. Students were invited to opt in to possible further research but

⁸ Arts and Humanities Research Council

this was not regarded as formal consent. This survey could be completed at home and, given the very limited computer access in most schools, this was largely the case.

The survey was completed by 316 young people, a self-selecting subset with respondents from 16 of the same schools that took the quiz. Of the 316 respondents 39% were boys and 61% girls. Sixty-eight described themselves as white, 3.7% as mixed, 20% Asian, 6% Black and 2.3 % other. Forty-four came from the Key Stage 3 bracket, 43% from KS4 and 12% from KS5.

The survey contained 35 questions, only two of them open questions, as a result of feedback from the pilot. Question 7 asked about what the war meant personally to them, and 25% of respondents skipped this question. Question 31 asked what impact the war had on Britain today, and 45% skipped this question. The rest were closed questions, beginning with personal factual questions. Only 6% skipped these questions, although 16% skipped the specific question asking about parent or carer occupation. The next section asked questions about the young people's leisure habits, for example what TV they watched and with whom, and between 6 and 10% skipped these questions. Later questions about history habits and visiting historical places were skipped by 42% of students; while questions concerning WW1, such as Q33: 'Have you watched or read anything about WW1? Film, TV, Play, Book', was also skipped by 42% of students. The final question about how the war should be remembered was only skipped by 16% of respondents, suggesting that the high incidence of skipped questions previously was related not to lack of time, but reflected a deliberate decision based on the nature of the question and/or the fact that they did not visit historical places or watch or read anything about WW1.

The survey allowed me to identify patterns of leisure usages and typical associations that students make regarding WW1. The respondents watched TV with their families regularly and rarely with their friends; however history-related content was rarely watched. Nevertheless, a majority had watched the November remembrance service and visits to museum or historical sites could be sites of interaction with their families about WW1.

The main purpose of the survey had been to establish some themes and ideas that I could pursue in Phase 2 of the research, in addition to identifying some students to take part in that second phase.

Question 7 was of particular value in this respect:

This year Britain and other countries will remember the 100th anniversary of the war with lots of events as part of a commemoration. People have different views on the First World War and the commemorations. I am interested in what it means to you, even if you don't think it's important it would be helpful if you could tell me why. I would like you to tell me in personal terms what the First World War means to you. You can skip this and come back to it later or add to it later too.

I wanted to get an idea of the sorts of significance young people might ascribe to WW1. In particular I wanted to find out if young people drew any personal meaning from this event and, if, so what forms this took. I was clear that different views could be held about the war and that I was equally interested in people for whom WW1 meant nothing or very little. The concept of historical significance forms part of the English National Curriculum and has been extensively theorised; especially where it is seen as having the potential to help students appreciate for themselves the importance of studying the past as noted by Hunt (2008). Significance is therefore a useful concept in getting students to work at the intersection of the work of professional historians and manifestations of social memory.

I coded responses to Q7 using criteria outlined by Lévesque (2008) see table 1 above. I will take issue in a later chapter with both Lévesque's reified categorisations and grim conclusions, especially as forms of signification often came together. For now I wanted a way of classifying what the war meant to young people personally so I could pursue this, in depth, during Phase 2.

Significance, using Lévesque's categorisation, lay mainly in symbolic factors associated with nation or in terms of an obligation/duty to remember the sacrifice. Typically,

'It makes me proud that my ancestors fought for our country and put their lives at risk to protect and serve the country we live in. However, it also makes me feel sad that so many were lost and that I could never have met these amazing people.'

Some had knowledge of relatives who fought in the war, *'my great granddad died fighting in the battle of the Somme so it matters allot (sic) to me'*.

These intimate and symbolic interests could work in negative ways too, *'The world war 1 doesn't really mean anything to me because I am not European'*.

The main outcomes from Phase 1 enabled:-

- 1) Potential hypothesising about how children engage with social memory. Of particular interest was the place that national identity and gender seemed to play a part in associations, uses and meanings.
- 2) The selection of cases for auto-ethnographic portraits, thus providing me with the sample for the rest of the research. Details of the sample for Phase 2 are given below in Table 3. I wanted a sample that was representative of gender but also of ethnic background. I decided to focus on the extreme indications of historical engagement: either a strongly embedded sense of history ('history geeks') or a potentially negative relationship ('history refuseniks'). In addition, given the ethnographic element, which depended specifically on writing, I wanted young people prepared to develop their answers. Question 7 was especially important in this regard as it invited an open written response. However my selection was not based on length or written quality, but rather on the sense of thought or provocation. Some of the choices were pragmatic; having made a choice based on an individual's responses in the survey I also needed to form groups of students of a

reasonable size in order to make the fieldwork feasible, for example by allowing dialogue, and facilitating safeguarding issues.

3) A determination of suitable places and settings. The family and possibly the local community appeared to be the best setting to explore, especially in accessing pre-secondary school engagements with the past.

Twelve students were initially involved in Phase 2 across four schools; this allowed a mix of ages, gender, ethnicity and school locations. This number allowed scope for a number of participants to drop out. I was able to meet with small groups, as suggested by the piloting, helping with school safeguarding protocols as well as protecting myself. The small group dynamic also allowed for discursive and comparative possibilities. The table below outlines the information about the sample for Phase 2. The student names are all pseudonyms, the descriptions reflect how they described themselves in the survey (Robert, in school A, told me he had mistakenly selected 'Black' to describe his ethnic background and would actually describe himself as white). In addition the four schools were chosen partly on the basis of comparison ranging from a large urban London school to a small rural school. They were also chosen to allow convenient access; the journey time to the north of England would make logistics prohibitive.

Table 3: Sampling information

School A	School B	School C	School D
A co-educational (co-ed) academy status school. It is one of the Oxford university's PGCE partnership schools and as such is familiar to me in my role as a curriculum tutor. It is situated in a medium sized market town near Oxford.	An inner city London co-ed school and recent academy convertor. It has a higher than average FSM ⁹ and BAME population.	A state-run co-ed 6 th form college. It is based in a large market town in south east England.	A co-ed comprehensive secondary school in a small rural village in south east England.

⁹ Free School Meals

The group consisted of Robert 17 male, who described himself initially as black; mother is a solicitor and father an engineer. Scarlett 17 female, white; mother professional cake decorator, father a buildings project manager. Amelia 17 female, white, mother is a forensic scientist and father a police officer.	The group consisted of Thierry 12 male, black and is fostered. Abdullah 12 male, Asian (Bangladesh origin); mother is a child minder, father a restaurant owner. Sophie 12 female, Black British Caribbean; mother is Nursery / Day Care Manager father is Music Producer. Yvonne 12 female, Black British Caribbean; mother works in beauty, father in sales.	The group consisted of Mark 16 male, white; father retired pilot. Ivy 17 female white; mother is a health visitor, father a facilities manager.	The group consisted of Tom 14 male, white; mother is an accountant father a cartographer. Bess 14 female, white; mother and father are both teachers Roisin 14 female, white; mother is a nurse and father an airport consultant. (Roisin withdrew from the project after 2nd visit as her family moved)
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2.5 Phase 2 Sept 2014-March 2015

The intended outcome of Phase 2 was to build up a ‘thick description’, in the form of a series of ethnographic portraits, of how young people work with social memory outside of the classroom ‘understanding behaviour and the meaning of that behaviour in its specific social context’ (Bryman 2008), and to consider its bearing on young people’s developing historical consciousness.

I wanted to encourage the young people involved in the case study to undertake their own auto-ethnography, structured over four in-school sessions and focussed on their engagement with history outside of the classroom. This was to be followed by a visit to their homes to explore their engagement with history further, both with them in context and with their families. I would use their writing, the transcripts of the discussions from the school sessions and from the home visit to write the portraits.

Following the first introductory session the time spent in school was spent discussing the young people’s ethnographic work. For most this took the form of writing, although for the younger group at School B it included drawing and use of video or audio diaries; I refer to these collectively as outcomes. Prior to each visit I would draw up a semi-structured interview schedule picking up on things that the students had recorded in their outcomes or that I had noted in the discussion transcripts. During sessions I would sometimes cross- reference their outcomes with either my own accounts or data from the Phase 1 survey, inviting the students to comment. This served the multiple purposes of modelling the outcomes, illustrating that multiple meanings existed and involving the young people in the research by thinking about coding and forms of analysis. A final element of these school visits was shared observation of commemorative events with the young researchers.

The sessions in the different schools followed a broadly similar pattern, especially Session 1 which was an introductory session. However some adaptations were made as the project

proceeded, due either to timing (one school visit had been cancelled so that group started later than the others which meant that the November remembrance ceremony had already taken place) or to the nature of group as when I sometimes split groups into single-sex groupings in order to provide scope for the girls to articulate their ideas. The main factor demanding flexibility related to the diverse nature of the students' outcomes and the different forms and extent of their social remembering. I therefore wanted to use the sessions to pick up on themes they had each identified or that needed further clarification.

The account below offers a broad outline of the nature of each session and its outcomes but also highlights important variations.

Session 1- see Appendix 1 for associated material

School A- 16th October 2014

School B- 23rd October 2014

School C- 6th November 2014

School D-17th November 2014

Aims: Begin to develop an understanding of the nature of research in general and the nature of this research.

To appreciate associated ethical issues and draw up guidelines.

To review examples of ethnographic approaches/portraits- partly to model, partly to see value/potential and highlight personal nature.

I began the session with an ice-breaker task related to saving objects that were precious to them.

A Prezi presentation that I had trailed in the pilot stage helped to explain the project and the

RQs. I shared an extract from Sally Galman's (2007) graphic novel '*Shane the lone ethnographer*' to introduce the idea of ethnography; especially the idea of settings

We then looked at examples of young people's ethnography. Some were online blogs, some were visual; the main written example was taken from an American auto-ethnography high school project, which I read to the younger ones (Camangian, 2010).

Finally we looked at the account of my own personal learning journey (which had been sent to them beforehand, via their teacher, giving them some insight into who I was). This was differentiated for the younger ones and I outlined how I had approached the task of writing the account and modelled how they might approach their own, especially for younger ones.

Listening back to the audio transcripts these initial sessions were sadly dominated by my voice. Partly this was driven by the necessity of setting up the project. Given the sequencing of the sessions, I was able to make minor modifications. For example after visiting school A, I noted in my field-notes how the session would need to be adapted for the young students in school B, which, led to the more elaborated modelling and the differentiated personal journey. All students were invited to ask questions but none really did. I invited them all, prior to my next visit to write or draw a portrait explaining who they were (their identity) and how this identity had been made.

Session 2 (Appendix 1 sample of materials)

School A 6th November 2014

School C 10th November 2014

School B 25th November 2014

School D 27th November 2014

Aims

1. Reviewing survey data from Phase 1
2. Re-visit questions about social remembering
3. Developing ethnographic accounts

I asked for views on the research focus, especially the four RQs. I wanted to clarify intent, possible outcomes, uses and value of the research; inviting revisions and suggestions. Since the

young people had now written their initial portraits, we discussed how these might provide data to answer the RQs and what it felt like writing them.

I shared the quiz and survey data from Phase 1, first getting the students to consider their own position in relation to the range of responses: Where does it place you? Are you typical or atypical? This discussion of the Phase 1 data allowed some consideration, by them, of the idea that the values and meanings they held were socially constructed and varied across different settings. And with some of them disagreeing with one another within the school groups, they could see that this could be true within settings. The disagreements also highlighted my interest in the range of interactions and served to reassure the participants that I was not looking for a 'right' answer; rather the emphasis was on making explicit the nature of these settings and how meanings were arrived at.

We then explored a number of questions arising from the Phase 1 data: What RQs do they contribute to? What is left unanswered? What implications do they have for our own research? Once again this was to help foreground my focus but also to involve the young people in the research processes. They began discussing aspects of their own experiences that could possibly address gaps in the Phase 1 data, which led to a consideration of how they might capture these experiences through writing.

In our discussions I invited them to volunteer the sorts cultural tools they used, films books etc., in relation to WW1 and to history more generally. We explored the types of conversations they had, and with whom. They shared any personal links and associations they had with WW1 and explained whether they would or wouldn't watch the remembrance service and why.

Time and the sensitive nature of their portraits meant that we didn't share them in the group setting. Except for the students in School B, they had all written in great detail and with great honesty. We talked about how it felt writing the portraits. I think they were surprised about their

own levels of honesty and this meant they were chary about sharing it so publically. This discussion helped set up the next writing project. In focussing on RQ4, it was agreed in School A & C that they would write about their experience of Remembrance Day. We talked about the need to capture settings; impressions and feelings in this ethnographic writing.

As the visits to School B and D both took place after Remembrance Day I restructured these sessions slightly. With the students in School D we also watched together a recording of the remembrance service at the cenotaph and I asked them what viewing it made them feel and think.

Tom joined us for first time but had written his initial portrait, as they all had, with amazing detail. Again reviewing the quiz/survey data helped them think outside of themselves and consider the constructed nature of their own understandings.

After watching the remembrance service footage, the themes that emerged were that 'it gives us space to think' associated with a duty to remember the sacrifice; with some idea of national focus, 'our' dead. Some thoughts were perhaps influenced by the earlier review of the quiz/survey.

In School D, for their next piece of writing, the students each took a different focus based on their interests. Tom took a visit; Bess was going to write about watching *Warhorse* with family at home and Roisin was going to write about visiting theatre to watch *Warhorse* with grandparents.

At School B I also included the shared viewing task. Only one of the students had completed their portrait, which meant I had to adapt the session somewhat.

Although I was struggling somewhat with this group to structure the project in ways that would allow them to contribute more, their ideas of feelings included and excluded by forms of remembrance were interesting and I decided to pursue a more personal, tailored approach to pick up more explicitly on their expressions of ethnic identity.

This was the only group that I was meeting in lesson time, which seemed to have the effect of making them think that the project was a way of getting out of lessons. I therefore spoke to the class teacher, asking him to remind the students about my visits in advance so that the group knew he was also interested in the project. This had to be balanced with keeping the nature of the contributions voluntary and confidential.

Session 3

By this visit the differences between the groups both in terms of their identities (age/ethnicity) but also in terms of when I was able to secure access meant that the sessions were differentiated to a greater degree and I shall therefore describe them individually. This tailoring allowed more effective support to the groups that needed it and the pursuit of specific themes in the different contexts.

School A 13th Nov 2014

I asked the students to self-review their portraits in relation to the RQs, highlighting where they had addressed a particular RQ and asking for further exemplification where there was a RQ that had not been addressed. The second activity was a direct tackling of the RQs, framed in personal terms, and re-visiting their responses to Q7 in the survey.

Robert did not turn up. However, this allowed me to pursue the place of gender with Amelia and Scarlett and in particular the place of history in their relationships with their fathers as well their views on the gendered nature of war. Both talked about historical artefacts/photos within their homes and how they and members of their families, especially their grandparents, interact with them.

School C 20th November 2014

Once again we reviewed the 4 research questions and I raised questions with them about seeming gaps or places in need to development in relation to particular RQs. We then undertook a review of Remembrance Day talking about the nature of their participation and the meanings they constructed. With both Mark and Ivy it was evident, from their portraits and our discussions, that they had an interest in current affairs. I therefore wanted to know in what way their engagement with the remembrance ceremony had influenced their thinking beyond history, to include current affairs and Britain's place in the world.

The sorts of themes that were emerging with this group included the place of grandparents and sibling influences. Political beliefs and current affairs were also important in terms of the bearing that history has on them. Both students were interested in current affairs and their views of WW1 were shaped by analysis of recent conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq, leading to discussions of the idea of just wars. This gave rise to consideration of the relative distance of WW1. Finally, as both were in the cadets, we talked about gender and the militaristic tone of remembrance, along with considerations of patriotism.

School D 12th December 2014

First, I asked the students to review their own portraits, with a highlighter pen relating them to the four RQs. (This was partly to remind them of what they had written and to re-clarify questions). We then undertook a shared viewing of the Sainsbury's Christmas advertisement. Sainsbury's had fashioned an advertisement around the Christmas truce and associated football match. The Christmas truce was something that had figured quite highly in young people's recognition in the quiz data and this was an opportunity to explore this recognition further. I wanted to know what they thought the message of the advert was, and what it made them think and feel.

Roison had by now left the school, so I was just working with two students. I had thought that this might impact negatively on Bess but given how gentle Tom was, Bess was still able to hold her place. Tom picked up on the places of computer games in shaping his understandings of war and Bess on the role of the Girls' Brigade. Themes drawn from our shared viewing included the idea of community and how the advert served to humanise war and Germans. Both young people drew on conversations at home to make meaning of the advert, and also of other cultural artefacts.

Following their contributions, I gave them both a personalised focus for their next piece of writing: Tom on WW1 computer games; Bess on the Girls' Brigade, along with some specific questions arising from her portrait.

School B 22nd January 2015

Staff training days and the proximity of Christmas meant there was a long hiatus before I saw this group again. This was useful as all, bar one, were able to email their portraits to me prior to the visit and I was able to annotate them, inviting the students to add more detail to what they had written during this session. The portraits were drawn, rather than written. With the girls I had a sense of the influences on their thinking, but much less sense of who they were – their identity. I gave back each portrait and encouraged the girls to annotate further to describe themselves. I asked the boys to give more detail regarding what shaped who they were, getting them to think about the influences on their lives.

I had decided that using a camera recorder might be a more effective way of getting detail about their lives. I set up a 'researching at home project', which involved some practical preparation in the session, priming them in how to use recorders as well as clarifying details of each of the home-based projects.

These were tailored to the interests of each person with a particular stimulus to discuss at home. This reflected a very strong sense that had emerged from the previous sessions that ‘their’ history was missing from the curriculum. For Sophie and Yvonne I wanted them to explore the Caribbean contributions to WW1 – including reading Morpurgo’s *Medal for Leroy* (2013) based on the life of Walter Tull, the first mixed-race combat officer in the British Army, who fought at the battle of the Somme. I also wanted Thierry to explore the Caribbean contribution, but instead of reading the Tull book, I asked him to look at computer games with a WW1 focus. I asked Abdullah to explore the Asian sub-continent contributions to WW1 with a focus on the life of Kazi Nazrul Islam. I hoped that by furnishing them with some specific ‘cultural tools’ I would get a clearer sense of how they used them.

The basic pattern of the task was for them to engage with the particular cultural tool that I had given them about WW1. These cultural tools related to their misgivings, raised in the previous session, about the partial nature of remembrance and curriculum and I wanted to record what bearing this might have on their ideas about WW1. I suggested that they might talk to their families about these tools and report back, using the recorder, on the nature of any discussion they had.

Place emerged as a theme from this session, both in terms of immediate neighbourhood; for example the history murals in Broadwater Farm and, more broadly, in terms of hybrid identities – either the Caribbean or Bangladesh in terms of connections to the history of those places and as sources of pride. Experiences of present-day racism were discussed in terms of the impact they had on pride in their identity, and the place of history in engendering or threatening their identity, especially in respect to issues of representation.

Session 4

School A 27th Nov 2014

I had two foci for this session: first to get the students involved in coding my Remembrance Day impressions (see Appendix 1.7) initially using their own criteria and then those advanced by Lévesque (2008). I wanted them to consider, based on what they knew about me, what tools I was using to construct meaning and what understandings was I arriving at. We then switched to the ways in which Remembrance Day impacted on their own thinking. The second focus was a shared viewing of the Sainsbury's advert; I wanted to see what types of responses and questions this generated and ask them how, or if, they would talk about this advert at home.

The students coded my Remembrance Day portrait with terms like aesthetic, factual, cynical/obligation pressure and emotional. They related these characteristics to my identity and to information from my portrait. In reviewing their own writing on remembrance, a range of understandings emerged, often in complicated ways stretching from resistance to the religious nature of remembrance to acceptance of the national nature in affirming a sense of belonging.

In terms of the Sainsbury's advert Robert and Scarlett thought it was shameless advertising and exploitation of war. The viewing stimulated knowledge but also questions. Is it true that they were the ones that came out of the trench? They all reflected that they were all more critical given the context of the research but that the advert would stimulate them to find out more-via Wikipedia!

School C 1st December 2014

The focus here was the same as in School A above.

The students coded my responses to Remembrance Day as critical, analytical, contextual and historical. This was based, according to them, on my educational perspective as a teacher and knowledge but also on my own social and political identity

Both Mark and Ivy expressed a frustration at the way in which history, particularly in the school curriculum, is divided up with no sense of flow or connection. This is a useful theme relating to

research on young people's orientation in time (Foster, Ashby, Lee and Howson, 2008) that can be seen as an important dimension of historical consciousness. Ivy talked about how the temporal distance of the WW1 can mean it is harder to feel its impact on the present day.

Ivy also talked about how her attitude to the advert had evolved, despite the fact that she had initially wanted to like it. Mark was less engaged with the advert.

School D 11th March 2015

The session was slightly truncated as we met during the lunch break.

Using Bess's writing on the Girls' Brigade and Tom's on computer games we focused on what impact these had on their understanding of WW1. This helped reveal the explicit and implicit ways in which they used these tools and how they impacted on their understandings.

We returned to their personal responses to WW1 in Q7 of the survey and broadening the discussion to consider what WW1 means historically. This allowed some insight into what they found historically significant and the ways in which remembrance assumes significance.

School B 12th March 2015

As this was the final session, I wanted to review the previous home-based task and set up possible enquires that they thought I ought to pursue when visiting their homes. I met with the girls separately from the boys as I thought this would enable more focus. Partly the boys were pursuing different things but also during the last session I had felt that the presence of the boys tended to distract the girls; it did, however, mean that I had half the time.

Both the girls had been on the Tull Facebook website and had read Morpurgo's books. They expressed surprise there had been Caribbean contributions to WW1; and this made them even more aware of the partial nature of remembrance. They were most interested in Morpurgo's reasons for writing the book.

We agreed that pursuing place as an anchor for memory, through photos and discussions of site visits that they had made, would be useful when I visited them at home. Also Sophie thought that music, in a more general sense, would be worth talking about, given the place that reggae played in giving her and her mother a strong sense of pride in Jamaican heritage.

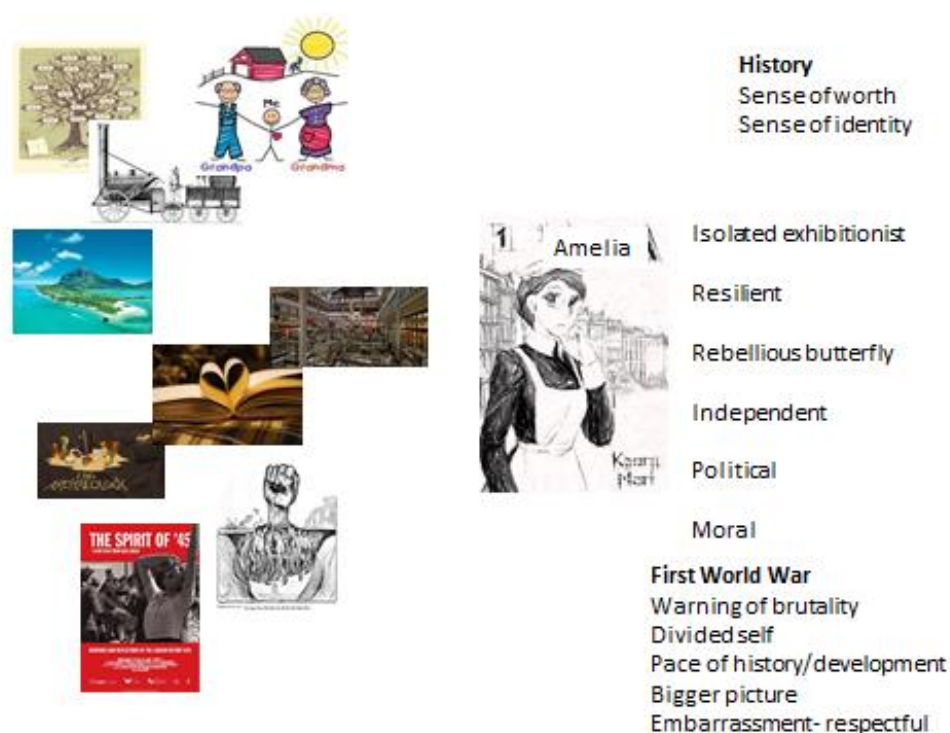
Abdullah had looked at the life of Nazrul Islam and had talked to his mother about him. She was clearly proud of Islam but Abdullah wasn't really sure what he felt about him as he had never heard of him. His negative response towards WW1 persisted because his view was that colonial soldiers were being exploited by the British. He nevertheless felt strongly that the war's global dimensions, especially the Asian element should be taught in school, satisfying his desire to know about his heritage and suggesting that this, in turn, would make him more positive about school.

Thierry had looked at WW1 games. He too considered the necessity of studying history in a global way arguing for a more complete picture. He had talked to his aunt about the Caribbean contribution to WW1, a conversation in which the theme of hybrid history was re-visited, especially where people like his Aunt, feel split between two places.

Phase 2 March 2015- August 2015 Home visits

Over this period I undertook five home visits. Before the visit I gathered data on the locality and setting before going to the house and meeting the young person and their family. Prior to each visit I had created a graphic image, drawing on all the relevant outcomes and sessions in school, indicating the tools I thought that they were using with a summary outline of the understandings and meanings they constructed with those tools listed, on the right hand side, as shown in figure 3 below.

Figure 3: Composite graphic portrait of Bess School D



In each case I sent the young person a semi-structured set of questions, drawn from our school sessions and refocusing on the RQs. They were invited to share both the graphic and the questions with their family; this was to enable the family to feel prepared and enable me secure richer outcomes from the visit. Both these tools acted as a stimulus for the discussions we had in their home. I began the discussion with the young person alone, inviting them to show me things or places that they think are relevant. This conversation lasts about an hour and is followed by a further hour, where the young person was joined by members of the family who were available.

The use of the graphic representation usefully stimulated discussion, especially with family members who volunteered things that they think the young person had forgotten or omitted. These ranged from stories passed down by grandparents to forgetting to mention how often they played 'Call of Duty'.

The visits provided valuable extra detail to flesh out the portraits especially regarding the nature of place. Abdullah, for example, talked about taking me to his local mosque. As a result of Phase 2 of the research I had the young people's own writing to draw on along with the transcripts from conversations during the school sessions and transcripts from the two sets of conversations held at home. In addition I had field notes (E. Chiseri-Strater, 1997) written immediately after the visit that highlighted my sensory impressions regarding places, the appearance and manner of the young people themselves and my own personal responses.

Using the data I fashioned portraits of these young people giving a rich a sense of who they are and the place history plays in their lives. As the research developed, analytical themes emerged, such as the place of nation, gender or ethnicity in the ways young people make sense of the past. One theme includes ways in which young people feel validated or excluded by history as they encounter it both in the classroom and beyond, in vernacular settings. These feelings of validation or exclusion, powerfully suggests ways in which history might be better connected to their needs and desires. When these feelings of exclusion are considered in relation to the Phase 1 data, regarding the limited global sense of WW1, it suggests how broadening the scope of their engagement to include global dimensions and the consequences of war might be fruitful.

As will be evident, the research evolved in an organic way, involving a series of judgements made at critical junctures, reflecting the nature of the participants and the different ways they reacted. However these judgements were based on a series of principles associated with both the nature of ethnographic portraits and ethical concerns that I outline below.

2.5.1 Extended field work

As indicated above, it was necessary to extend the field work as a result of students pulling out and to ensure some insight into the experience of young people with minority ethnic backgrounds, as reflected not just in school sessions but also in a home visit. On reflection I recognised that there were in fact a number of problems associated with the School B sample

from the beginning; mistakes made on my part and lessons learnt reflecting the different approach I adopted in the extended field work.

Group B represented a younger age group and a group identified, via the survey, as ‘history refusniks’; that is those who expressed a lack of purpose or claimed to find no meaning in history. Unlike the other groups it was agreed with their teacher that this group would meet me during their history lessons. This was partly a reflection of their age as they couldn’t stay after school and perhaps their interest and they weren’t prepared to give up their lunch time. In addition, the extended gaps between meetings meant that momentum was harder to maintain. On reflection, I realised that the written outcomes of the tasks proved quite hard for this group to respond to, given their age and the truncated nature of the visits. Meeting during lessons reinforced the perception that this was merely a good way of getting out of lessons and perhaps meant they didn’t take it as seriously or were not as committed as the other groups. This was especially evident with the boys, leading me to split the groups by gender, but meaning that I had less time with each of them in the sessions.

Given how important I think the home visit was in gaining a sense of context and involving the family, to enable a greater sense of authenticity, I was determined to make sure I was able to pursue this with at least one BAME student. I was keen to maintain momentum and pragmatically used the contacts I had in local schools to identify students that they thought might be interested in a project like this. I did not set up a ‘history geek’ history refusnik binary, merely asking the teachers if they could identify any students they thought might have interesting things to say about history.

School E is a large, oversubscribed, co-educational comprehensive school serving a wide-ranging community in a city in Southern England. Students are from above average socio-economic backgrounds although there is a significant number from less advantaged backgrounds and eligibility for free school meals is in line with the national average. The proportion of students

from minority ethnic backgrounds is higher than the national average and the percentage of students who have English as an additional language is also higher. Having sought permissions from the Head, the students and their guardians I began work with them on 22 October 2015.

The group consisted of:-

Harold 17 male, black and of Senegalese origin (he was working towards his British Citizenship).

He lives with his mother who works in health; his father is a banker in Senegal

Younis 18 male, Asian (Bangladesh origin); mother is a child minder, father a restaurateur.

Ngozi 17 female, Black British Nigerian origin.

Only Harold is studying history at A level.

Session 1: 22nd October 2015

Aims: complete the quiz

What is research? Why is it important?

Outline research- Identity and history & social remembering

This broadly followed the outline of the session above with the exception that I asked them to complete the quiz and explained opt out and consent.

Session 2: 5th November 2015

Aims: Reviewing survey data

Re-visit questions about social remembering

Introduction to ethnographic accounts

Sharing accounts

Neither Ngozi nor Harold had brought their personal accounts based on the task the task: 'Who am I and what has made me? Making discussion and the sharing of accounts here difficult. Both said they had completed the task but Ngozi's comment, "I don't think it's done" indicated they were concerned about the quality of the work. This still allowed an exploration of how it felt

writing these accounts. Younis had completed the task and was incredibly positive about the process and following his lead we began an extensive discussion about race and identity in relation to the history curriculum. We ended with a discussion of the survey data. We set up a writing task about Remembrance Day.

Session 3: 15th December 2015

Aims: Making meaning from accounts

Developing writing and exploring social contexts

Ngozi had told me she wanted to opt out from the project prior to this visit to concentrate on her studies. Harold had submitted his personal account via email before the visit. I therefore decided to see the boys separately to discuss their accounts, allowing me to get a deeper sense of them drawing on questions stimulated by the personal accounts and to set up home visits.

Harold proved quite elusive with setting up a home visit; he was building towards his A levels exams. In the end I was able to pursue this element with Younis. In addition, Younis invited me to meet his Iman at his mosque; we had talked a lot about the role religion played in his identity and he thought this would be useful. In the end I visited him at the mosque on 4th April followed by a visit to his home on 1st May. For both visits I sent an interview schedule in advance inviting Younis to share it with both the Iman and his family.

2.6 An ethnographic approach

Phase 2 of the research involved working with different groups of young people using an auto-ethnographic approach. Ethnography typically involves a written description of a culture often through a process of immersion or participation in that culture. Given that the culture I was interested in was that of young people, the degree to which I could participate was limited. Getting young people to write auto-ethnographies would give me access to the ways in which

they participated in the process of social remembering. In order to enable meaningful collaboration (Chang, 2012) I would participate in forms of commemoration and share my own ethnographic thoughts these with all the young people but I was dependent on them to describe their own interactions with social remembering.

Debates rage over the nature and value of auto-ethnography. Ellis and Boucher's (2006) autopsy gives an indication of what is at stake, exploring the tension between analysis and evocation while also playing with form by presenting the piece as a dialogue. Short et al (2013) argue that some consensus is beginning to emerge, stating that, "auto-ethnography is a contemporary qualitative research methodology, demanding unusually rigorous, multi-layered levels of researcher reflexivity" (p.1). Another key dimension, beyond the reflexive element, and one that is inherent in the name, relates to the issue of how the writing (graphy) should explore the relationship between the auto (self) and the ethno (culture/society). Writing my own auto-ethnographic account, to be shared with the young people in the sample served to highlight both my own subjectivities and model the link between self and society. However, in order to give scope to other forms of expression, I shared with them other forms of auto-ethnography written by young people.

Lather argues that the move to 'epistemological indeterminism' is to "endorse complexity, partial truths and multiple subjectivities" (Lather 2001, p.483). In terms of modes of presentation this move suggests a need to evoke rather than explain but such an evocation should also include the aporia of the fieldwork. Yet Lather retains scope for realist forms of representation especially in seeking, "an audience beyond the academy" particularly where holding back analysis might serve to make some interpretative sense. The decision to structure this thesis, with the central portraits prior to explicit analysis, reflects the desire to evoke and offer scope for interpretations. Nevertheless the portraits are enriched with the ruins and aporias of my own fieldwork.

2.6.1 The nature of portraits

Ethnographic portraits are an evolving and elusive form of writing. My own reasons for choosing this genre of writing combined two central objectives. The first was a principled desire to give voice to young people and to render this voice accessible to participants and possible readers beyond the academy. The second was a hopeful naivety, similar to that expressed by Van Maanen (2011), that ethnographic portraits would emancipate me from the mire of methodolatory (Janesick, 1994) and esoteric theory.

Although it soon became clear that ethnographic portraits were neither easy nor a way of avoiding methods, my interests were in methods that allowed the stories to emerge and gave space for the participants to find their voice, without losing sight of my interest in the ways in which these young people engaged with social remembering. This focus on social remembering emphasised the primacy of the research questions; the importance of keeping sight of what I wanted to find out (Punch, 2014). The other driver, the desire to give participants space to shape the study, led me to ethnographic portraits. A strong case for portraits is borne out of concerns raised about the silencing effect of ‘evidence based’ research (Smyth & McInerney, 2013); that an overly empirical or theoretical focus can work to exclude voices like those of the young. Smyth and McInerney argue that portraits offer specific methodological possibilities for articulating these voices; the creation of ‘authentic spaces’ that go beyond snippets from field notes to capture the rich and textured lives of young people.

Lightfoot (1997) makes a powerful case for portraits’ potential as a humanising tool. She refers to the forms of representation needed to ‘capture the fluidity and complexity of the living world’. Many words have flowed under the literary bridge regarding the ‘crisis of representation’ (Clifford & Marcus, 1986); some of the more polarising elements lie in the sediments and rather than muddy those waters, I looked to the emerging clear water suggested by a set of questions posed by Zenker et al. (2010).

The first of Zenker's questions relates to the issue of who should do the fieldwork and how? Collaboration was foremost in my mind, so that I would get the young people themselves involved in their own fieldwork, writing about their own encounters with culture, to construct their own ethnographies from which I would work. Zenker's question also forced consideration of the nature of the sample. I wanted to ensure that the range of young people involved would allow possibilities for problematising culture, especially in the ways in which young people of different genders, ethnicity and class might provide multi-voiced and multi-layered accounts. Williams (1983) highlights the complex and overlapping uses of the term culture and while I was interested in the ways the young people worked with culture in the form of films or books I was also interested in culture as a process of development and culture as a way of life. In order to retain this complexity and overlap at the heart of culture I have sought to choose cases reflecting multiple localities; urban and rural. And also get the young people to write about the processes of becoming, of 'subjectification.'

The second question was concerned with what topics should be studied. Primarily this would be led by my own research questions; however I wanted the young people involved to have the scope to explore their own agency in the formation of identity.

The final question asked how these experiences and behaviours should be (re)presented? The exact content wasn't a question I could answer until the work had begun. However common features of ethnographic portraits included their attention to detail, their open honest nature and use of literary devices. Sharing examples of ethnographic writing with participants would help make them familiar with this ethnographic form of representation. In supporting the collaborative and reflexive dimension I thought it appropriate to share my own ethnographic writing with the young people and for me to engage in the same tasks as I had set for them in the field. This would have the added advantage of highlighting my role in the research process.

The place of my own writing would serve one important pedagogical benefit but also lay a potential methodological trap. The trap was that giving the young people my own writing might serve to shape their own responses. However the twin benefits of supporting their writing and, through my own soul-baring, encouraging them to open up outweighed the potential risks. In addition I also deliberately chose to share the writing of other young people. These extracts were chosen partly to illustrate the potential agency that could be realised through writing as a process of critical self-reflection. The examples were taken from an African American context in Los Angeles (Camangian, 2010) that highlighted the importance of difference and particularity in descriptions. The final fail-safe would be in comparing the different accounts, which was something we did as the research evolved.

In writing the portraits – in, thinking about how they should be (re)presented – a range of tensions need to be managed. The portraits needed to be self-conscious without being apologetic. They should offer the reader space to interpret and make connections and comparisons but provide enough framework and cues for this imaginative work to happen. They needed to be humanising but not over personal. They should balance young people's lived experiences with social change (that operates on a familial and social scale). What should emerge is a rich and complex description that serves to suggest the theoretical issues at stake.

First and foremost ethnographic portrait work should seek to evoke the lived experiences of pedagogic encounters, within and – in my case – beyond the classroom. The portraits should communicate the rich textures of everyday learning encounters and student emotions. At the same time, they should locate these lived educational experiences within broader temporal, spatial and scholarly frames. Visiting the young people at home was key to this; being attentive in field notes to place and capturing dialogue in transcripts. Chiseri and Strater's (1997) book, especially the second chapter make an excellent case for the value of field notes as a methodological tool; they are more than just 'hanging out' at a research site and observing. The

authors defend their value as the essential ingredient in this process, one that must lead to writing. Having a process for collecting the ingredients for future writing, through the use of examples, alerts the portraitist to the need for sensory impression and personal responses to the facts, of recording; details that help capture the sense of place but also jottings that act to remind the researcher of their own presence and therefore to attend reflexively to this in their writing. The role of ethnographic portraits is in creating stories on a human scale as a vehicle for capturing contradictions, frictions and disjuncture. They should help draw attention to, and complicate, the present, and play an important counterpoint to more distanced theorisation and abstract analysis. Using the data inter-textually, for example in sharing the quantitative data from the Phase 1 surveys in our group discussions, was one useful way of doing this; it served to highlight the range of meaning making that could happen and deter normalising the Phase 2 students' own experiences

A final quality was that portraits should self-consciously draw attention to themselves, highlighting their artifice; and the relationship between the observer and the observed on which they depend. This attention seeking is deliberate, and involves the reader in creating a character through their own imagination. Methodologically, using my own writing was one way of doing this.

Working with ethnographic portraits suggests that writing is also a methodological issue. The demands expressed above suggest a range of methodological considerations needed to capture these elements but in such a way that the methods do not lose the subject. An overly deterministic design might serve to undermine collaboration, lose the subject and limit the scope of the humanistic and imaginative aspects of portraits.

Lightfoot (1997) raises some interesting questions about the place of imagination in pulling together the fragments to draw a picture of the cultures we are studying. She highlights how anthropologists such as Geertz (1993), unlike historians, embrace the imaginative as a critical

tool in the painting of thick descriptions. This is not to abandon systematic rigour but to accept that if ethnography is primarily concerned with the meaning making involved in everyday life, this inevitably draws in humanistic dimensions. It is a similar point made in a more recent work by Willis (2000) about the craft dimensions of the ethnographer's work. It is therefore interesting to read critiques of this work (Harrington 2001) that are frustrated by Willis' failure to provide a map, since what is most apparent to me about both Willis and Lightfoot are the ways in which they stress the centrality of process. That is to say, that given the centrality of the researcher's own subjectivities and the fragmented dynamic messiness of the lives they are studying, then 'how to' recipes are unlikely to be helpful. While it was something I was certainly looking for, the dream of a clearly laid out road map to a thesis, what writers like Lightfoot and Willis are urging, I think, is that it is through the process of reconciling the disparate elements of my data, my theoretical frameworks and myself, that I would find the tools to enable me to find the right voice.

Too loose a design risked losing rigour and detail and meandering into indulgence. It was therefore important to give the study some parameters to allow a shared focus.

2.6.2 Working with young researchers

Christensen and James (2000) talk about a paradigm shift in childhood research to children as subjects, rather than objects, of research. Some of this has its roots in teacher inquiry action research, especially in work around 'student voice', pioneered at Cambridge (Rudduck et al, 2003). Although most of the work emerges from a school rather than home or community context, it is a fruitful body of research that is alert both to the potential of inviting young people to participate in research and to the problems and pitfalls (Lewis, 2004). Given the complexity of young people's lives and the worlds they inhabit the literature does not, however, constitute a rule book for undertaking participatory research with children.

Two key areas emerge: the degree to which young people are genuinely engaged with the research and the extent to which they are enabled to undertake the research (Leitch et al, 2007). The selection of my sample from Phase 1, in consultation with school teachers, would I hoped enable me to locate a number of young people who were clearly engaged with history outside of school. As such they would be atypical, but predisposed to the study. The one group from School B that represented young people not as committed to history proved to be a difficulty. However, Younis from School E in the extended project was also someone not evidently committed to history in terms of his school options but who proved incredibly valuable in terms of the way he committed to the project, so perhaps age is a key factor to take into consideration. The piloting work with a larger group of students, in the summer term of 2014, to advise on the process of engagement, the research focus, possible methods, gaining informed consent and establishing ways of working also helped to secure engagement. Kellett's (2005) work offers a differentiated model for working with children, introducing them to the research process and developing skills to undertake their own research. I sought to implement some of these ideas during the second phase.

Using an iterative and predominantly inductive relationship to theory might seem like a dangerous step in the dark but it was intended to enable a greater degree of shared exploration with young people as co-researchers.

2.7 Structuring the research

The individual students were invited to construct their own ethnographies and these were used as a starting point to explore how each student's subjective experience is moulded through interaction with the beliefs and practices of others, especially members of their family.

Case studies involve a range of delicate decisions occurring across a range of unique situations. I therefore chose to structure the design of the study over two phases to answer my research questions. Phase 1 helped to ascertain the nature and extent of young people's engagement with the past outside of the classroom, to answer my first question 'What is the extent and nature of children's remembering?' It allowed for some speculations about the form of that engagement while providing data directly related to my second question, 'What understandings do children draw from the WW1?' Primarily Phase 1 was used to inform some of the decisions about the case studies. Phase 1 also helped to shape the historiographical focus in two ways. Firstly, informed by young people's emerging interests, it retained a focus on the soldier while also trying to find a wider range of soldiers' experiences. Secondly, given the omissions in the data regarding the global nature of war and its consequences, I determined that my subsequent reading would attend to these areas. The outcomes of phase 1 suggested ways of sampling the case studies, for example by suggesting that there were significant differences in terms of gender in relation to the associations that WW1 had for boys and girls. Finally it helped shape the context in which some of the research was conducted by suggesting some of the places where relevant interactions take place and with whom, highlighting the home and the family.

Phase 1 of the research gave Phase 2 the potential to evolve, change and develop. The data helped to answer the questions, 'Where are these understandings drawn from?' and especially, 'How are these understandings constructed outside of the classroom?' Ethically, it was essential that participants should feel able to withdraw at any point, especially given the personal and intimate nature of the work. Starting with 12 students allowed scope for this. It was also important that all participants had an opportunity to discuss the findings during my home visit, since this lent the data ecological validity (Neuman, 2003). The home visit provided member validation by the young person and their family in their review of the composite portrait I had created.

In the final analysis my intention was to triangulate all these data sources and use them to develop and inform each other, “to provide insight into different levels or units of analysis” (Creswell, 2003, p.16). However this was also a task which I invited the young people to conduct, with the intention of alerting them to the contingent nature of their own descriptions, and validating their variety. The task allowed them to contribute their own insights to the process of analysis.

2.7.1 Focussing the study

The first decision was to make the focus the social remembering that occurred outside of the classroom. This served a number of purposes; first it encouraged me, an ex-classroom teacher, into territory that was unfamiliar, creating an element of discomfort (Delemont & Atkinson, 1995) that would support my development as a researcher. Secondly it would help to limit the scope of the work and prevent an immediate pedagogical response based on simplistic claims about implications for practice, especially claims that took little account of the particulars of school contexts and the complexity of the interaction involved.

The second decision to focus the study was to alight on a specific historical moment. The 100th anniversary of WW1 enabled this. The scale of the planned commemorations meant that it represented a significant manifestation of social remembering. In addition, the regular marking of Remembrance Sunday allowed the possibility of tapping into an existing and established practice. Finally it was an event that had a place firmly in the curriculum allowing any conclusions drawn from this study to have an impact on classroom teaching.

2.7.2 Sampling decisions

The survey invited participants to opt in to Phase 2 of the research by giving their name in the survey; Forty per cent did this, giving me 137 possible students to choose from. Given the desire to produce ‘thick descriptions’ of young people’s lives the sample needed to be small and therefore could not claim to generate generalisable findings. However, since the survey data had indicated that it would be interesting to pursue issues of gender and ethnicity the sample had to have a degree of variety in the sample case studies So although I was not trying to generalise I believed it was still worthwhile getting a diverse sample that would give me a range of views. Working with young people with respect for safeguarding concerns in schools prohibited work with young people on a one to one basis. I also I had to allow scope for people to drop out if I was genuine in my assurance of their right to withdraw from the study at any time. In my

piloting work in June the students had advised me that they would work together best in same age groups

I therefore needed to review the 137 potential participants with a view to grouping them within age bands but in such a way that allowed a degree of variation particularly in terms of gender and ethnicity across the schools. Beyond this, my criteria for selection rested on responses to Q7 of the survey- what does WW1 mean to them personally? As involvement in the research would involve them writing about their interactions with social remembering of WW1, I thought it important that they had interesting things to say about WW1 and I began with these individuals before looking to create a viable group. This meant I tended to look at the extremes of engagement: history 'geeks' (their word) or history 'refusniks' (my word).

So, for example, when Abdullah from School B wrote 'The world war 1 doesn't really mean anything to me because I am not European', I began to look for other possible participants in that school, of the same age, who had indicated a willingness to take part in Phase 2.

One final criterion for selection was convenience, using schools where I knew a teacher on the inside could assist not only within access but also by providing meeting spaces. (These were teachers whom I knew in my role as a PGCE tutor). In order to manage my time I choose schools that would not involve huge amounts of travel but that were not all familiar to me; only one school was in the Oxford PGCE partnership.

2.7.3 Ethical considerations (Letters sent in Appendix- section 2)

Beyond seeking ethical approval from the University (CUREC) for both phases of the research; ethical considerations were paramount, especially given the sensitive nature of the work and the age of the participants. Consideration was given in both the design and the sampling to school's safeguarding procedures and issues of access. Diener (1978) highlight four key considerations underpinning principles of ethical research; I will consider each of these in turn.

The first consideration is in relation to, 'harm to participants'. The types of harm that could be relevant to my research focussed on stress and loss of self-esteem. To minimise stress I took care to make sure participants were aware that they could, at all stages, withdraw from the study. During Phase 1, and informed by the piloting, great effort was taken to ensure that students were aware that this was not a test of their knowledge. During all parts of Phase 2, I reiterated the opt-out, but also took care to adapt work to enable the students to participate. The iterative nature of the study meant I was able to adapt sessions sensitively to the needs of the students. For example, when it was evident that some students felt uncomfortable about sharing their portraits, I adapted the session. In terms of self-esteem, I believe the open nature of my own portrait that illustrated my vulnerabilities helped to reassure students. I had hoped that the study might actually contribute to enhancing student self-esteem, through the critical, but supportive, examination of themselves. I highlighted this possibility when I shared Camangian's (2010) student auto-ethnographies in session 1.

The second consideration is a lack of informed consent. During Phase 1, I took great care to ensure that participants were fully informed about the nature of the research, its applications and who I was. The audio-clip was an important part of informing young people about the research; in addition consent was also sought from the Headteachers and teachers in participating schools.

For Phase 2, students were able to indicate their interest in possible participation in additional research. This was not taken as informed consent. Having selected the sample, permission was sought initially from the Headteacher to approach the students' families. The letter to the Headteacher outlined the research in detail but also asked for advice on whether or not an approach to the identified student's family was advisable. If an approach was regarded as inadvisable then no explanation was required, given possible sensitivities. This allowed for a further reassurance regarding whether the study might involve undue stress or loss of self-esteem to the young person.

Once permission had been granted by the school Head, I wrote to the student and their parents. Once again this letter outlined the research process. As the participants were under age, informed consent was sought from the parent or carer; the protocol I was using indicated only verbal assent was required from the student, however the letter asked for written consent from the young person too.

The third area of ethical concern relates to invasion of privacy. Firstly I made sure that my methods were as open as possible and invited the young people to contribute ideas on methods too. In addition I made sure that they were aware that their anonymity and privacy would be respected, particularly in the use of pseudonyms in the reporting of the data.

The final concern relates to the practice of deception. It was not in the interests of my research to represent my work in false ways. Firstly this would seriously inhibit the collaboration of the young people involved; the more transparent I could be, the more I believe they could contribute to the study. In addition I was dependent on the young people to provide validation of my outcomes, I was therefore keen to get their input regarding the conclusions I had reached about them.

Throughout this work I have attended to ethical issues partly to serve the interests of the young people involved in this work. At each stage I was keen to involve them and consult with them about the process of the research. Ultimately this openness served my interests as a researcher in giving the outcomes integrity.

2.8 Nature of outcomes

I have used a range of methods in this research to collect data regarding young peoples' social remembering and to discover what impact this has on their historical consciousness. The mixed methods design was used, specifically a quantitative quiz and survey followed up by a qualitative study comprising of 12 young people working collaboratively with me to create ethnographic

portraits. The first phase enabled the collection of data regarding, RQ1: What is the extent and nature of children's remembering? RQ2: What (understandings) do children draw from WW1? (WW1) and RQ3: Where are these understandings drawn from? Phase 1 also enabled the identification of themes and interests that might be usefully pursued in Phase 2. The data from Phase 1 helped shaped the enquiry in Phase 2 and provided data on the selection of a sample that would enable the most fruitful pursuit of these themes.

Phase 2 maintained an interest in these questions but focussed on RQ4: How are these understandings constructed outside of the classroom? Using a range of qualitative methods including semi-structured interviews with young people and their families in addition to young people's auto-ethnographic writing; Phase 2 enabled the writing of ethnographic portraits that provide 'thick descriptions' of the range of ways young people construct understandings about the past, outside of the classroom.

It was not my intention to treat these sets of data as separate entities (Creswell, Tashakkori 2007). The relationship is largely implicit in the portraits but will be further integrated in Chapter 8 of the study the synthetic analysis.

Given the naturalistic settings under investigation and the ethnographic approach to the investigation a narrowly positivist interpretation of the concept of reliability would be inappropriate. Guba's (1981) construct of associated trustworthiness suggests more useful ways for thinking about the nature of the outcomes of this study. I have given a detailed description of the process and context of the fieldwork to enable consideration of the specificity of the settings and possible transfer. This detail, including the sampling information, should also enable future investigators to repeat aspects of the study. With respect to the criteria of 'confirmability', Guba makes two suggestions. The first is the triangulation of data. Within this study the mixed methods approach allows scope for this; in addition my sample ensured that a variety of perspectives this meant both mine and the other young peoples' predilections were consistently

tested. The second suggestion is 'practicing reflexivity'. An integral part of the research process outlined here was the encouragement, in our sessions, of exploring where understandings are drawn from and how this varied. This process of unpicking our own assumptions included me. Indeed, in a number of sessions my own ethnographic writings came under scrutiny from the young people involved in the study. In the writing of all the portraits, I have been transparent both about my presence in the research and my own positioning in relation to the research. My field notes recorded different introspections that were tested both in discussion with my supervisors but also in conversation with critical friends who read these notes and my portraits.

Given the complex nature of identity and social relations the outcomes of the research are provisional and incomplete. Lather (2001) makes a virtue in navigating the complexity surrounding issues of ethics, representations and interpretations of identities. She goes on to argue that it is only by embracing the epistemological limitations that we open up new ways of knowing and challenge conventional ways of knowing. It is through the flaws and cracks that new insights are developed or as the erstwhile Leonard Cohen (Cohen 1992) wrote, "There is a crack, a crack in everything. That's how the light gets in."

The research aims were never to find a specific causal connection but rather to 'understand behaviours and meaning in a specific context'. Therefore the critical aspect, regarding the integrity of the outcomes of this research, rests with the ecological validity ascribed by participants involved in the study, particularly the young people themselves. I shall therefore give the last words to one of my participants: Mark when he gave me feedback on his portrait said I had it; "Spot on!"

Chapter 3: Quantitative data findings of young people's remembering

3.1 Introduction

Predominantly using the quiz and survey analysis, this chapter will outline preliminary findings regarding the nature and extent of young people's remembering and specifically, the sorts of ideas they have about WW1 and where these ideas might come from. This chapter links back to the discussion in the literature review about the new historiography of WW1 and the form commemorations are taking, whilst also informing the portraits chapters that follow.

The adoption of a quantitative approach for this initial stage can be broadly classified as facilitation (Hammersly in Richardson, 1996) rather than implying the use of a fully embedded mixed methods approach. The quiz and survey were employed in order to aid the qualitative research firstly by suggesting themes for further investigation and then in giving data on which to base sampling decisions. Chapter 8 will draw together both sets of data to facilitate synthetic analysis. The construction of the survey and quiz and the resulting analysis were informed by my first three research questions. 1) What is the extent and nature of young people's remembering? 2) What understandings do young people draw from the First World War? 3) From where are these understandings drawn? The findings would also help give a focus to the next stage of research.

3.2 Design and collection

Following Bryman's warning (2008) that researchers should not leave thinking about the analysis of data until after its collection, I made the following plans prior to collecting the data. In designing the questions in the quiz and survey, I gave some thought to how the responses might be summarised and analysed.

Given the significance of identity to this study, it was important that I gathered data about respondents' gender, age and ethnicity. Concerning ethnicity, I offered a range of options but also gave scope for self-description. I did not want to lose social class as a key identifier but was aware of difficulties in defining it within questionnaires. Rather than dispense with it altogether, I asked about parents' occupation. This question, however, has the highest rate of non-completion in this first section.

The quiz, completed in the classroom, largely comprised knowledge-based questions. Both quiz and surveys were administered at the same time, in June 2014, to minimise the risk of external international events affecting responses. Visual elements were included in both the response papers and in the accompanying PowerPoint to enable student access. I entered the data, manually, from the quiz into an Excel spreadsheet.

For the knowledge-based questions in the quiz, I looked at the frequency with which students gave each answer and determined how many of them responded correctly to each question. I also looked at their incorrect answers to explore the nature of their misconceptions about WW1. I used pivot tables to facilitate cross-tabulation between variables, such as gender, and responses to, for example, key individuals who might be associated with WW1.

The survey was broader in scope and aimed to explore the nature of the young people's engagement with history outside the classroom, particularly the sorts of cultural tools they used and the context in which they engaged with them. The survey repeated the request for personal information, including their school, and offered an opportunity to engage further with the research so I could begin the sampling for Phase 2. I would not be able to compare the quiz with the survey outcomes, which was a potential limitation as it would have been useful to explore the relationship between their knowledge and the tools that they were using and the

contexts. However, I hoped to draw this out with the students involved in Phase 2. Using an online survey meant that data could be uploaded from the survey platform (Survey Monkey) into IBM SPSS¹⁰ for analysis. This reduced errors that can occur through manual data entry. However, following completion, I undertook a cleaning process based on a single-attribute, or univariate, case, providing an opportunity to review the data in a relatively intuitive setting. I was looking to eradicate obvious duplicate survey responses and standardise data to allow a frequency summary. This process allowed me to identify potentially crucial variables and to define what constitutes ‘incomplete’. I defined this as the output of a respondent who hadn’t responded to questions regarding the war. The number of incomplete responses totalled 23. Of the 342 returns I was therefore working with 316.

Most questions were quantifiable, using question scales to enable a calculation of the mean score or could be coded with a simple ‘yes’ / ‘no’ which allowed a frequency count. For the open question 7, I initially used the codes developed by Lévesque in relation to historical significance while the only other open question (31) was designed to gain some deeper sense of what students saw as the connection of WW1 to the present day. In terms of response rates, this was generally good: only 33% skipped question 7 while 45% skipped question 31. This justifies reordering the position of question 7, following the piloting phases, as mentioned in section 2.3. Only 16% of students skipped the final question, which suggests that most demonstrated a good degree of resilience.

¹⁰ Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

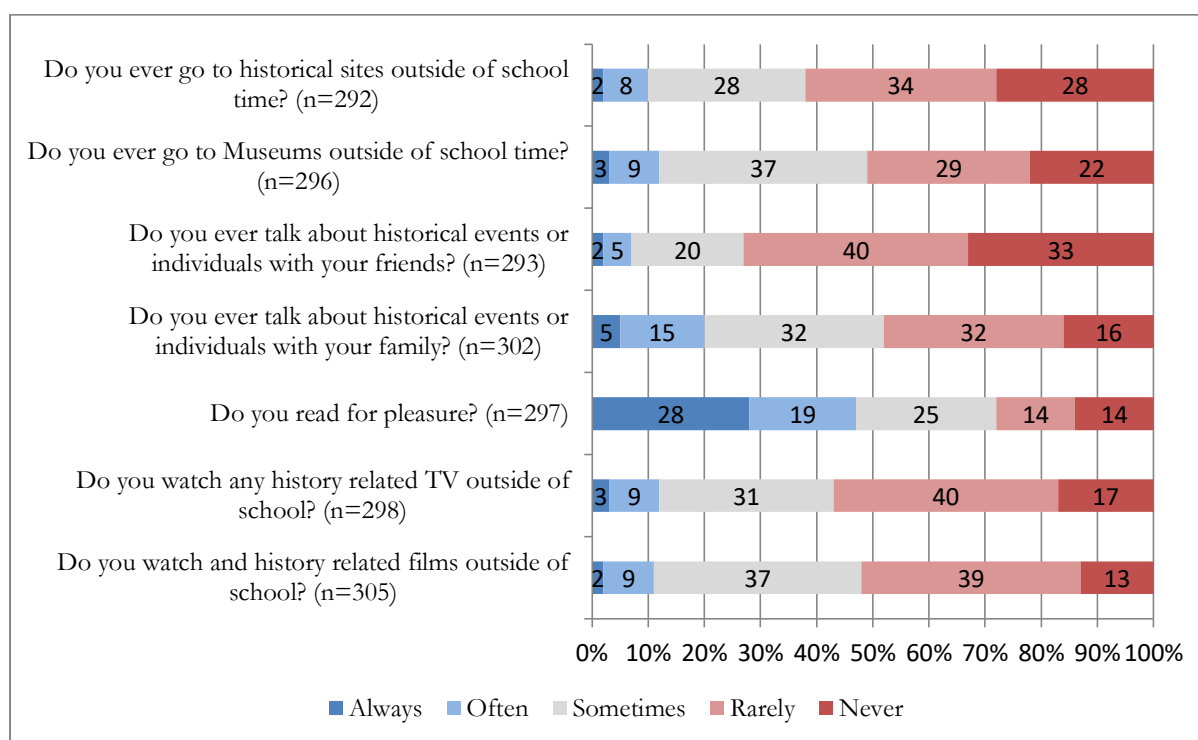
3.3 Data Analysis

3.3.1 Overview

I will begin with an overview of some of the quantitative findings from Phase 1 before describing the outcomes from the quiz and the survey. The quiz and survey were designed to establish an idea of what understandings young people formed about WW1. They also served the purpose of identifying some students for the second phase of qualitative research, exploring how these understandings were constructed. I also wanted to find out the extent of young people's engagement with social memory and the sorts of tools they drew on to make meaning of the past, outside the classroom. Given the size of the sample, the conclusions drawn are speculative and were intended to give possible leads for Phase 2 of the research.

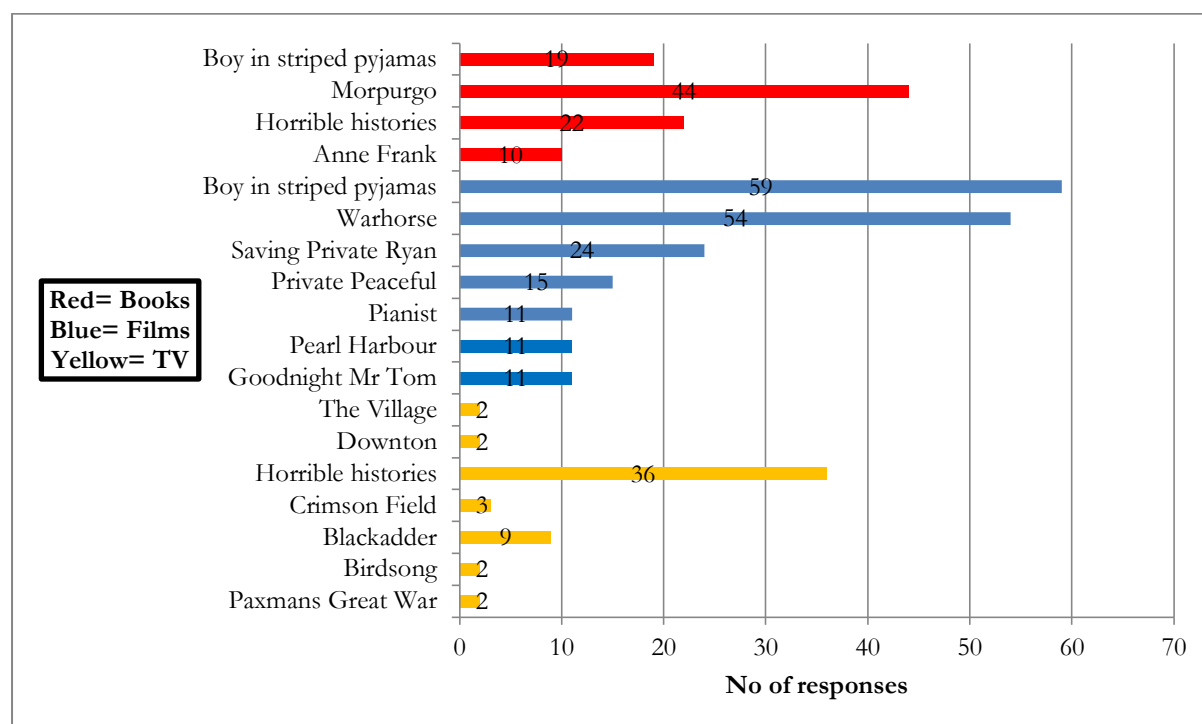
Based on the survey data of 316 young people, initial indications, figure 4, would suggest that young people have limited engagement with social memory. Merely 5% (n=309) belonged to historical societies, while only 26% (n=309) indicated that 'yes' they had seen an historical re-enactment. On a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 'Always' to 'Never'; watching history-related television programmes or films outside of the classroom featured in limited ways (For example, only 12% of students indicated that they 'Always' or 'Often' watched history related television programmes or visited museums out of school time and only 10% 'Always' or 'Often' visited historic sites). However, figure 4 indicates that some 20% of respondents did talk about historical events and individuals with their families, either always or often. Another encouraging finding echoes recent trends in young reading habits, indicating an interest and enjoyment of reading (Clark, 2016) with 47% indicating that they read for pleasure, either always or often.

Figure 4: Engagement with history outside the classroom



The survey also asked if they read any history related books, 59% (n=302) indicated that they had read history-related books. 72% of this yes group went on to give examples; some of these are included in figure 5. Figure 5, based on the survey, is a selection based either on the incidence (more than 10) of historically related books, films or television programmes and the comparative frequency of references which are potentially related to the First World War (more than 1), such as Downton. It should be noted they were asked for history related rather than First World War related items. In terms of WW1, Michael Morpurgo was the most commonly associated author.

Figure 5: Selection of responses to questions about the history-related books, films and TV with which the respondent engage.



One final resonant tool of social memory investigated in the survey was the remembrance service. Some 56% reported that they had watched the remembrance service on television and another 36% had attended a local commemoration.

3.3.2 Quiz results

The data from the survey helped to build a picture in response to my first three research questions. The quiz was especially useful in answering RQ2: What understandings do young people draw from the First World War? Based on the quiz data of 622 young people I found that for most young people, the trenches, mud and context of Northern France dominated their imaginative landscapes of the war, echoing the findings of the British Council Survey discussed in further detail below. This narrow set of associations, in turn, made it difficult for them to consider the broader consequences of war or take a critical position regarding Britain's role in the war.

Young people's knowledge of the events and people of WW1, based on the quiz, indicates a high degree of resonance for events like the Somme, with 70% indicating that they had heard of it, while individuals like Owen and Field Marshal Haig were most likely to be recognised as individuals associated with the war. I suspect the continued resonance for Haig comes from schools; particularly schools following schemes of work focused on interpretation questions exploring Haig's reputation as the 'Butcher of the Somme' (National Archives). Owen, too, is a staple part of the school curriculum diet. This is borne out in the final report investigating WW1 in the classroom (Einhaus & Pennell, 2014); "Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon remain the undisputed 'chart toppers', closely followed by Michael Morpurgo" (p.46). Questions in my quiz relating to which parts of the world were involved and the consequences of the conflict revealed a limited sense of the war's global nature and reach. This omission suggests a need to climb out of the trenches and engage with a broader context of the war; arguments articulated by historian David Reynolds (2013).

Following initial questions about their identity, Question 1 asked; 'When you think of the First World War, what are the first three things that come to mind?' This allowed me to build a picture of typical associations young people made with the WW1 and to discern any variation in students' responses in relation to gender, ethnicity and age. Not all 622 respondents gave three words; the total responses were n=1786 and the most common words are outlined below.

Figure 6: Most common words associated with the First World War (greater than 20 responses n=1786)



As an overview snapshot it is clear, from figure 6, that the dominant themes of death and trenches, associated with the cultural turn (Winter, 2005), endure and may give rise to a persistence of the ‘myth of disenchantment’ (Hynes, 1992). Hynes encapsulates this myth thus:

[A] generation of innocent young men, their heads full of high abstractions like Honour, Glory and England, went off to war to make the world safe for democracy. They were slaughtered in stupid battles planned by stupid generals. Those who survived were shocked, disillusioned and embittered by their war experiences [...]. (p.x)

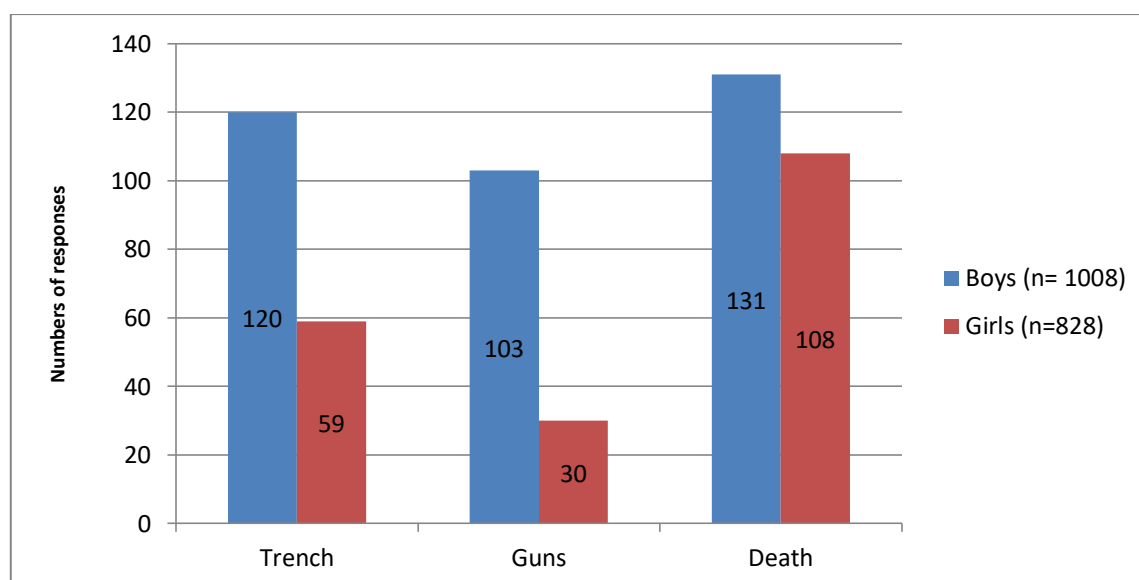
The myth is an idea closely associated with the Western Front, tying in with the sorts of events young people most readily associate with WWI. This is also powerfully illustrated by the dominance of the Battle of the Somme in terms of young people's event recognition as discussed in further detail later in this chapter (see figure 10, page 126).

Another notable feature, in these associations, is the fact that 21 students associated Hitler, with WW1. This might indicate either very good contextual knowledge regarding Hitler's role as a corporal in the war, but it is more likely that they have made the mistaken assumption that Hitler was the leader of Germany at the time of WW1. The more generic nature of responses, and outcomes relating to WW2, suggest that some students find it hard to imagine WW1, as a result

of it being eclipsed by the Second World War, in forms of social remembering. Associations of assured specific contextual knowledge like the reference to Franz Ferdinand (Archduke) are likely to reflect the emphasis, in schools, on looking at the causes of the war or life in the trenches with the association of the Somme and Haig. When this overview is broken down by gender, age and ethnicity, it presents a less uniform picture, suggesting that a student's sense of belonging may have a bearing on the associations they draw and possibly the meanings they attribute to WW1.

Taking the three most commonly associated words, from figure 6, I wanted to look for any key differences related to age and gender (Figure 7). I grouped responses from students broadly following Key Stage categorisation. Death, Trench and Guns represented 24% of the responses for the 11-13 age group, 30% for the 14-15 age group and 28% for the oldest age group and 30% overall suggesting a limited degree of variance on the basis of age.

Figure 7: Difference between boys' and girls' of most commonly associated words¹¹



¹¹ Not all students answered the gender question hence the slight discrepancy between numbers reported here and in figure 6.

However in figure 7, even allowing for a 28:23 ratio in favour of boys, it is evident that a far greater number of boys associate guns with the War, than girls. In addition, of the other commonly associated words from figure 6, girls were more likely to associate the following words with the war, in this order: bombs (70% of these responses were from girls), poppies (67%), fighting (64%), soldiers (63%) and Hitler (60%). Although, in total, only a small number of students used descriptive or evaluative words, this appeared more common among girls than boys. For example words such as sad (9 girls: 5 boys) brave (5:2), or tragedy (2: 0) while killing (16:3) and violence (15:5) were also more commonly associated by girls. Taken together this suggests that gender, and particularly dominant forms of gender socialisation, might have a bearing on the sorts of meanings young people confer on war offering a useful lens for further investigation.

Later sections of the quiz were intended to establish what young people knew about the war: 76% were able to correctly identify 1914 as when the war started. The follow-up question, 'Do you know where the War started?', could plausibly be answered correctly with a number of different replies so it was unsurprising that students gave a range of responses: 27% said they didn't know. The most common answer was 18%, stating Austria-Hungary; 11% quoted France; 7.5% opted for Germany and 5.4% said Serbia. The Germany responses echo a dominant theme across the quiz, established when students were associating words with WW1. Seventy-one students stated 'German' or 'Germany' as a word that came to mind when thinking about WW1, the 4th highest association, while the inclusion of France would seem to derive from the dominant imaginative geography of the war, located in Flanders, mentioned above.

The narrow sense of the war's global reach echoes the findings of the British Council report. Asked which continents in the world were involved or contributed during WW1, only 3.5% thought that all corners of the globe were involved, a breakdown is provided in figure 8.

Figure 8: The regions of the world selected by students when asked: 'Which continents, do you think, were involved/contributed in WW1?'

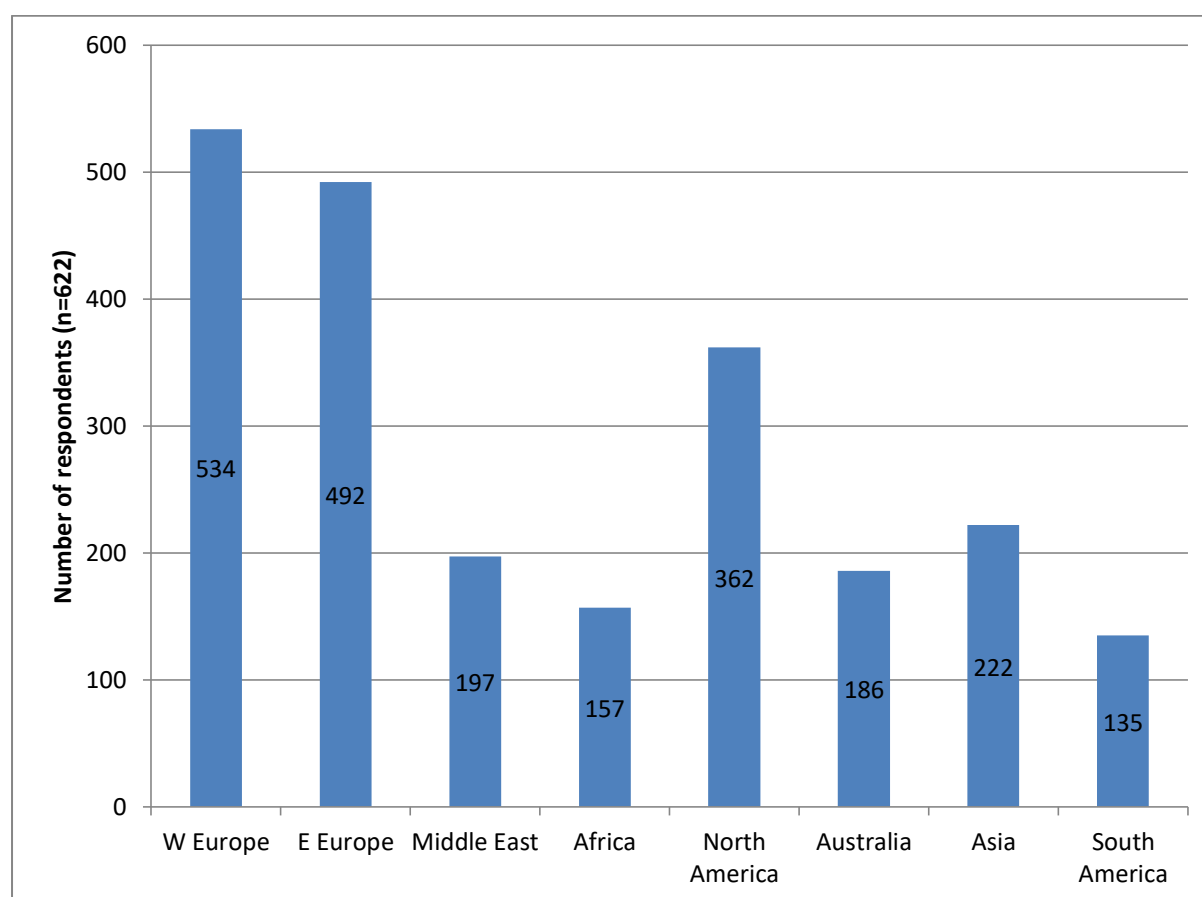
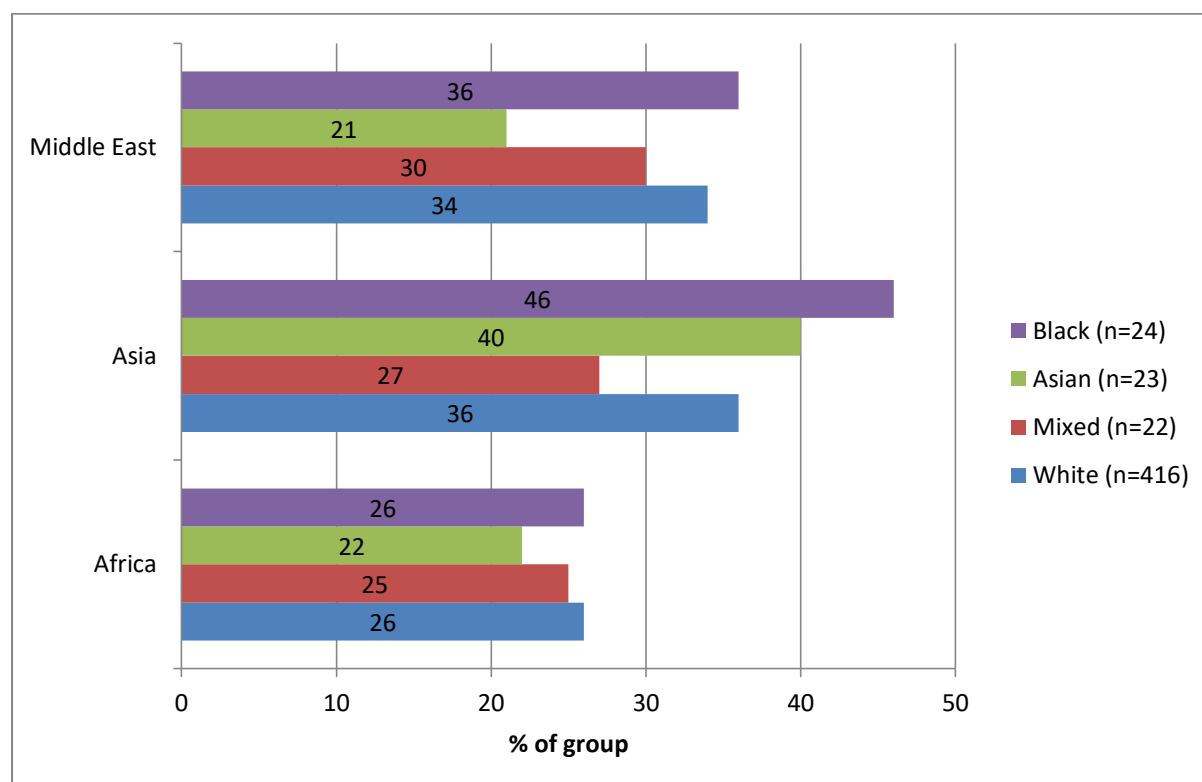


Figure 8 shows how narrowly the geography of WW1 is drawn. This reflects both the narrowness of forms of social memory but also classroom teaching. My own experience as a PGCE tutor and ex-teacher echoes the Exeter findings (Einhaus & Pennell, 2014) that indicated among a survey of 261 secondary teachers, that the top three topics taught in relation to WW1 were Trench Warfare (96%), Origins of the War (94%) and the Western Front (85%), with only 21% looking to other fronts, for example, and an even smaller 17% looking at colonialism or decolonisation.

Some differentiation occurs in my results when looking at different ethnic groups, as shown in figure 9. I have represented the 'yes' responses, (those who recognised the area's role in the war) as a percentage of the sample, to allow comparisons.

Figure 9: Proportion of students, by ethnic background, who recognised particular regions' role in the war

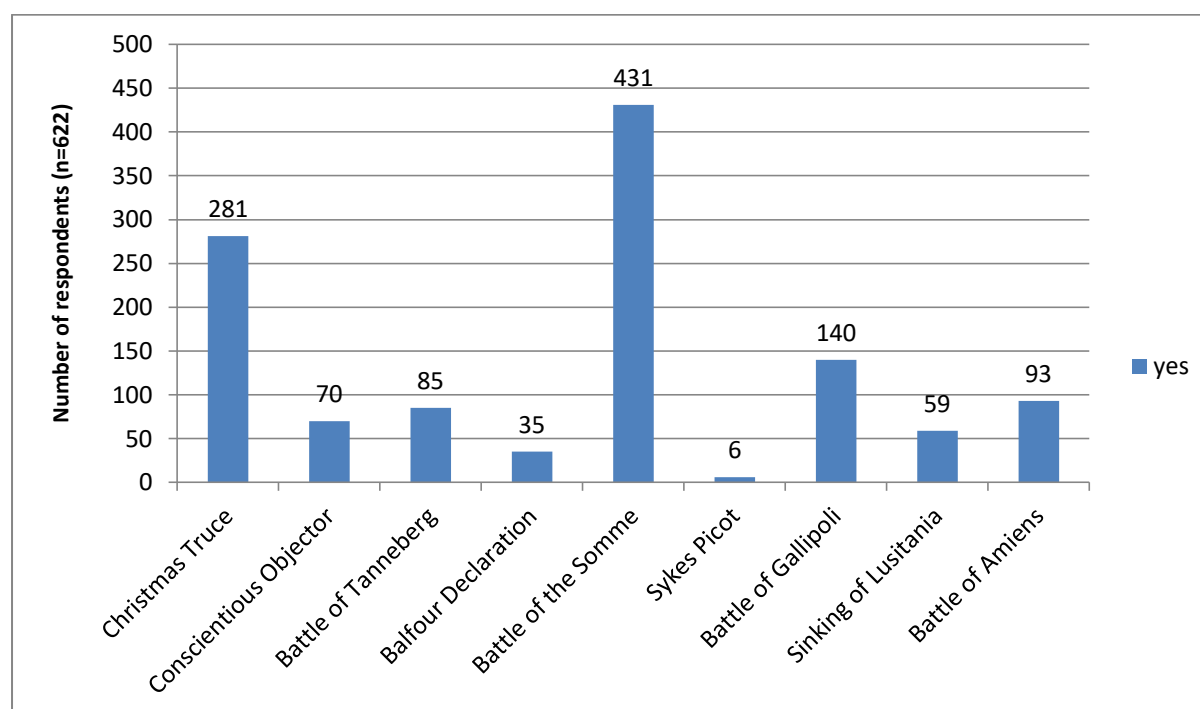


All groups seem to have a limited notion of Africa's contribution to the war, while students from black backgrounds seemed most likely to be aware of the involvement of the Middle East and Asia.

The qualitative responses, in the survey, to what the war means personally to the respondents, indicate the potential detrimental effect on BAME students' interests if they are not clear about the global scale of the war, in terms of the topic's relevance to them. When asked what the war meant to them, this response from a 12-year-old girl of Asian background was typical of a lot of BAME students: *I don't think this event is important due to the fact that my home country was not involved in this in any way. I have got absolutely nothing to do with this.*

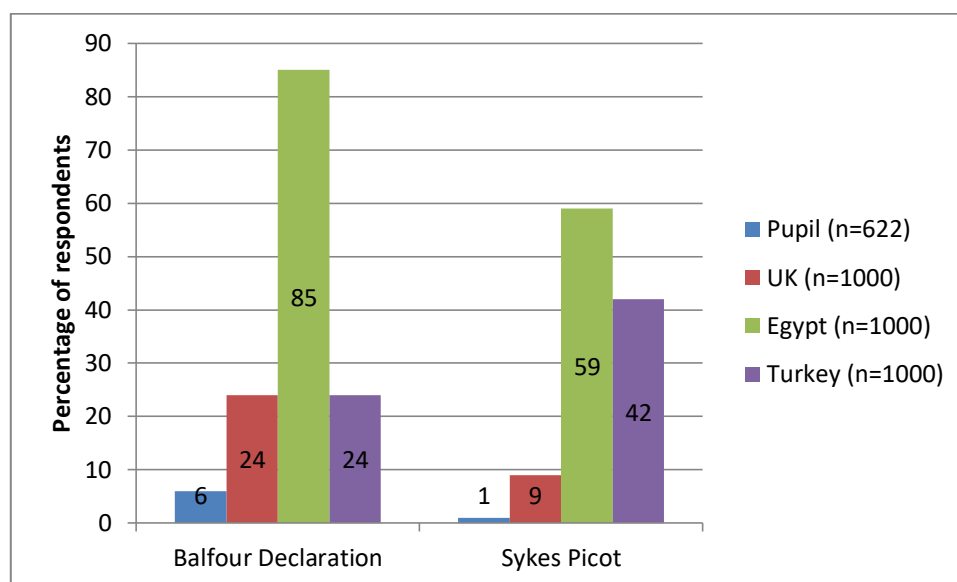
In the quiz, students were asked about people and events that they were sure they had heard of in relation to WW1. Figure 10 shows clearly how the Somme dominates recognition.

Figure 10: Event recognition



The relatively high recognition of the events of the Christmas Truce and Gallipoli may indicate a broader cultural resonance through film and television programmes, including the Sainsbury's advertisement focussed on the 'football match' at Christmas. It is certainly worth exploring whether and how schools draw on these events. In terms of social remembering, it is worth asking why schools continue to draw on events like the Somme, or individuals such as Owen, and how this forms part of a broader intergenerational memory exchange; not just in terms of the teachers' interactions with students, but also with regard to the degree of resonance these events have in the homes of young people. What memories are parents and teachers drawing on? Where are they drawn from and how are they acted upon? Is the effect to cement these events in the public imagination and more broadly create an impression of history as an inert body of knowledge: monumental rather than critical history, in the Nietzschean sense?

Figure 11: A comparison of event recognition between the respondents in the YouGov survey (Bostanci 2014) and the pupil respondents to my own survey

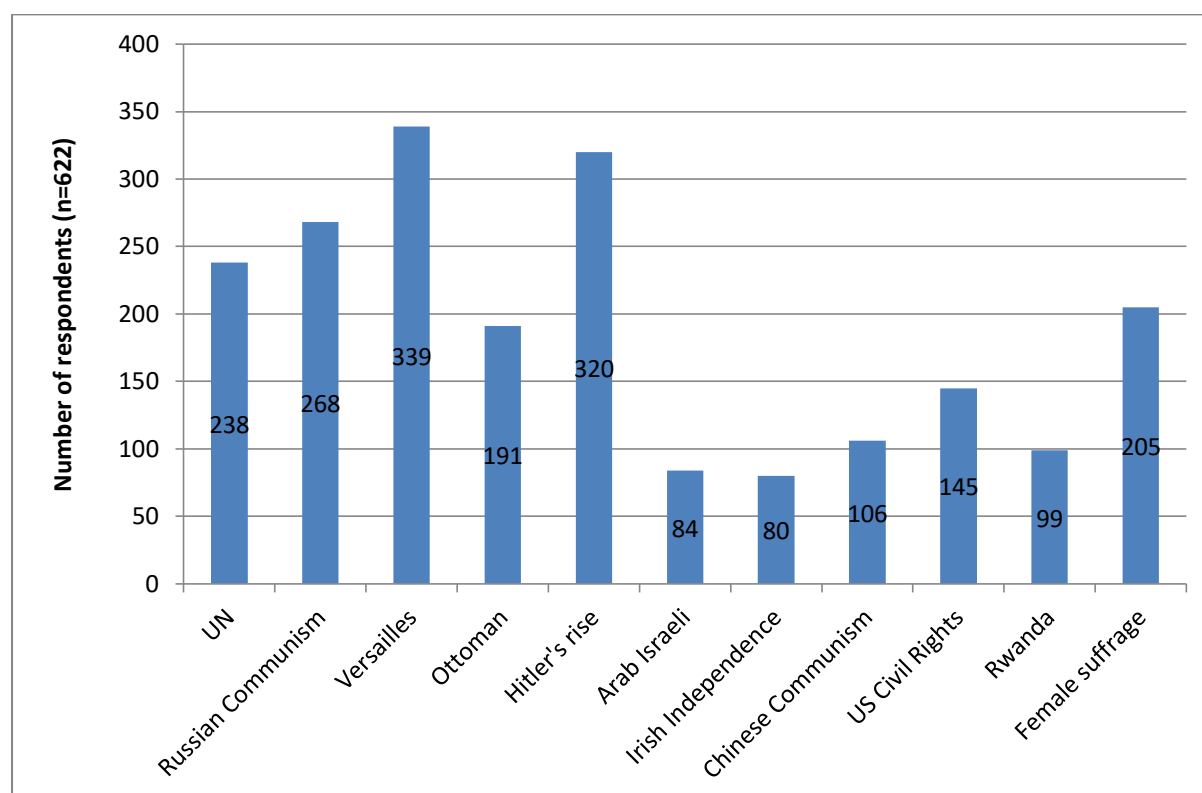


A critical concomitant of remembering is forgetting. Figure 10 indicated the high degree of resonance for events such as the Somme, recognised by 70% of students. The second highest was the Christmas Truce at 46%. However, only 6% of students recognised the Balfour Declaration and this proportion falls to just 1% recognition for Sykes Picot. This echoes the findings of the British Council YouGov survey (Bostanci, 2014). Figure 11 gives a cross-national comparison that includes my own percentages of pupil recognition. The British Council sample consisted of 1000 respondents. Events like the Balfour Declaration and Sykes Picot have a high degree of recognition, particularly in Egypt and to a lesser degree in Turkey. The impact on the way in which meaning is constructed, based on what is recalled and what is forgotten, is something I will return to in Chapter 8.

The (CSHC) definition of historical consciousness includes the ways in which it can: “shape those understandings, as well as the relations of historical understandings, to those of the present and the future.” This temporal dimension suggests that students’ orientations in time are of critical importance. An important issue related to this orientation, is the extent to which students appreciate that events in the past may have a bearing on the present or, put another way, their understanding of the enduring consequences of the WW1. In the quiz, students were asked if

any subsequent 20th Century events were linked, as consequences or legacies of WW1. The events chosen were based on the British Council YouGov polling (Bostanci J. 2014) exploring the international legacies of WW1, the responses are presented in figure 12 below.

Figure 12: Students' response, in numbers, to the question about consequences: 'Please tick the events that you think are linked to the First World War.'



In assessing the consequences of WW1 some students are confident about the direct and European consequences specifically the treaty that immediately followed the war and the perhaps the role that WW1 and Versailles played in Hitler's rise to power. Yet, even with Versailles the 339 who identified it as related to the war only represents 54% of respondents. Of the remaining consequences, the most opaque is probably the link to the Rwandan genocide. It is not possible to argue for direct causality but it can be opined that colonialism influenced the way in which the state operated and changed the meaning of the ethnic divisions (Newbury, 1998). What these findings reinforce is the narrow geographic scope of young people's knowledge of the war and lack of an imperial context; a narrowness shared by adults in the YouGov survey, that

underscores Reynold's concern (Reynolds 2013) regarding the limited understanding of the legacies of the WW1 . The high linkage for Versailles and Hitler's rise reinforces the sense in which WW1 is obscured by the events of the Second World War. It suggests that, in teaching, a clearer delineation between the First and Second World War might be helpful.

3.3.3 Survey Results

The survey was designed to provide support initial answers to RQ1) What is the extent and nature of young people's social remembering? And to provide some insights in response to RQ3) From where are these understandings drawn?

The survey also had questions that followed up on students' thinking about WW1, particularly asking what the war meant to them personally (Question 7) and whether they thought that Britain's involvement should be a cause for pride and subsequently, how the war should be remembered (Question 35). I coded the personal attributions using Lévesque's (2008) disciplinary or memory significance criteria to enable thinking about the relationship between these two forms of significance.

Question 7 asked: 'This year, Britain and other countries will remember the 100th anniversary of the war with lots of events as part of a commemoration. People have different views on the First World War and the commemorations. I am interested in what it means to you: even if you don't think it's important, it would be helpful if you could tell me why. I would like you to tell me in personal terms what the First World War means to you.' 84 out of 316 respondents skipped this question. Figure 13, below, indicates the count based on the 255 who did respond. However, some responses could be coded using more than one of the significance criteria and therefore could be counted more than once (n=334). Figure 13 indicates that students were far more likely to attribute

significance using memory signification criteria, while for a small group, WW1 held no significance.

Figure 13: Response to Q7 coded using significance criteria, based on the number of references to different significance criteria

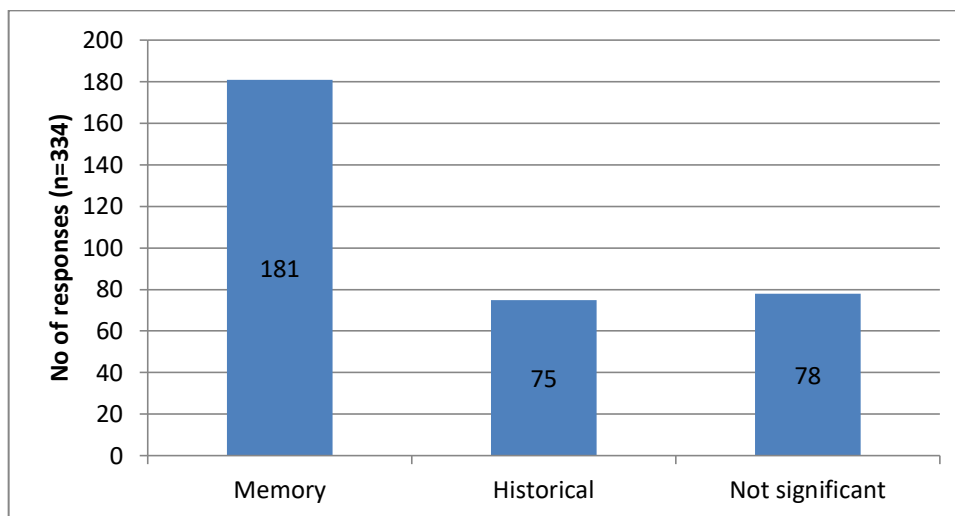
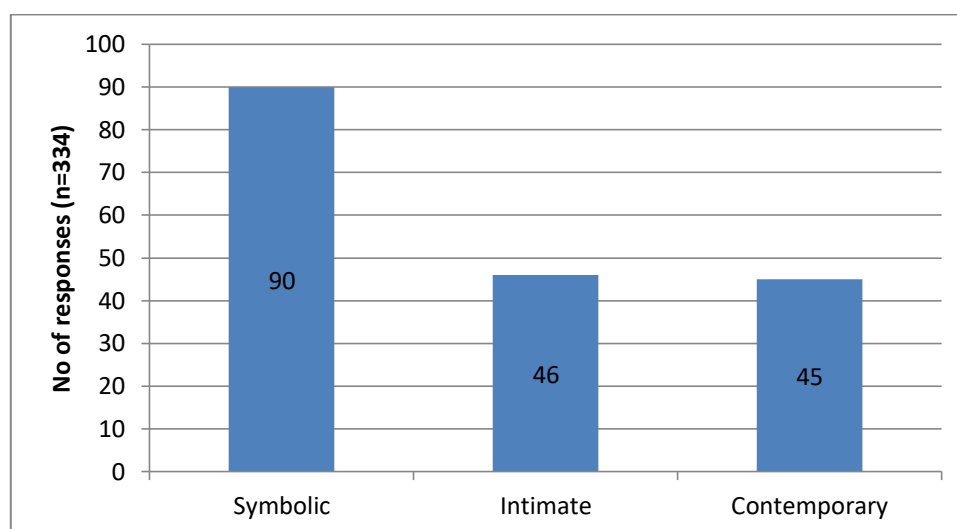


Figure 14 breaks down the forms of memory signification showing the prevalence of the symbolic feature.

Figure 14: Breakdown of the number of references to different kinds of memory significance criteria in students' responses to Q7



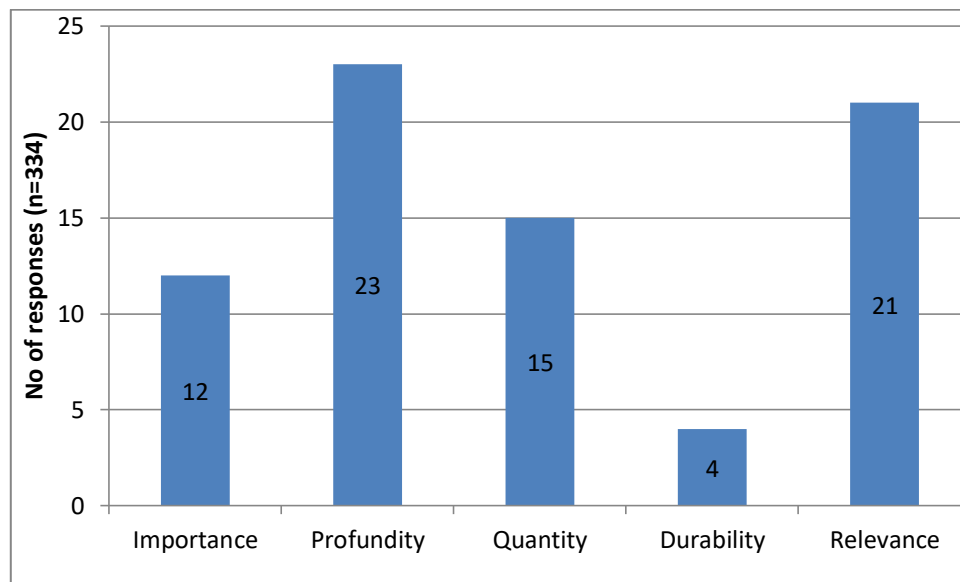
Typically, this symbolic form took the nature of collective national identity and belonging, linking the signification with a sense of national pride wherein the use of collective pronouns,

such as 'our' soldiers or 'we', was prevalent. The following response was typical of this categorisation: "It makes me proud that my ancestors fought for our country and put their lives at risk to protect and serve the country we live in." A noteworthy group of students (17% of 255) either found it hard to ascribe any personal meaning to WWI or ascribed meaning in simple generic ways, such as 'Death'. In describing the cultural artefacts that they associate with the war, many of this group cited products associated with the Second World War, such as the feature film, *Saving Private Ryan*.

Most students 67% (n=316) were not aware of anyone in their family who was involved or affected by the war, which, in part, explains the lower incidence of intimate forms of signification. Of the 104 students who were aware of family involvement 64% were able to describe the nature of their ancestors' involvement. Some respondents cited a direct personal link with an ancestor who played a part in the war, while others referred to more vague notions associated with an obligation or duty to remember. Contemporary lessons that students drew out tended either to refer to the idea that if it were not for the soldiers fighting, we would not be here today or to point out how far things had progressed. Some respondents talked about how studying the war was important, in order to learn from our mistakes.

In terms of historical forms of signification, the idea of profundity, as figure 15 indicates, was the most common. The responses here involved some form of evaluative element related to the idea of change, exemplified by respondent 185: "Another way that WWI is important is it was the introduction of the kind of war taking place today - the kind that people now and for a long time after will have to face, where before, wars were fought in battles on fields, not affecting civilians much."

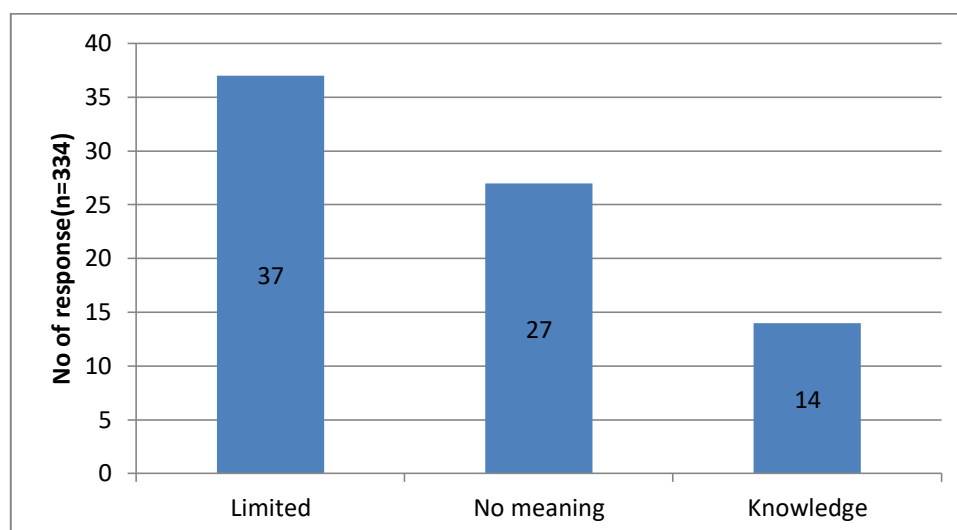
Figure 15: Breakdown of the number of references to particular historical significance criteria in students' responses to Q7



Those whose thinking reflected some understanding of the idea of relevance stressed the connections or continuity in the form of legacies from WW1. The most common line of thinking was the way in which WW1 laid the ground for the Second World War: “...I feel it is very important to remember this event, as it arguably shaped the events of the Second World War.”

While most students attributed some sort of meaning to WW1, many were unable to understand it on any terms. It has already been seen in figure 13 that 78 responses fell into the category for whom WW1 held little or no significance and these responses could be broken down into three groups, as shown in figure 16.

Figure 16: Breakdown of number of statements not attributable to historical significance criteria in Q7



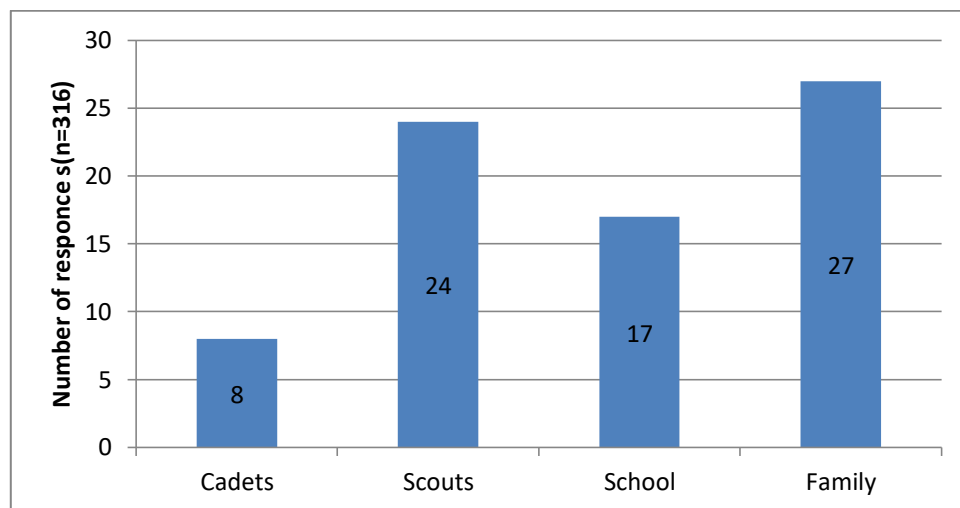
The largest group here was those who left only a limited one-word response, such as ‘death’. The knowledge group comprised students who felt the war held no meaning for them but conceded that this was largely because of their own lack of knowledge. While overlap exists between these two groups, the knowledge group differed in the sense that they recognised their lack of knowledge as the reason why the war held no meaning. One common theme in this group was that the Second World War tended to eclipse the First. “I don't really know anything about ww1: in fact maybe nothing. I know more about ww2.”

Twenty-seven responses strongly indicated that the First World War held no meaning for them, ranging from: “Means nothing to me I don't care sorry” to the more blunt, “I only care about WWII I don't give a crap about WWI” indicating some overlap with the point made about the Second World War eclipsing the First.

Allowing for the distortions in the sample, it is noticeable that children from BAME backgrounds are overrepresented in this group for whom WW1 has no meaning. Asians represent 18.6% of the total survey respondents but 29.6% of this group, while Black responses represent 5.9% of the survey, but comprise 22.2% of this group.

52% (n=316) watching and attending commemorative ceremonies suggested a high-level engagement with forms of remembrance, much higher than students' engagement with history-related media or books highlighted in figure 5. Even the students in school B, who had indicated they did not watch remembrance ceremonies, were well aware of them. Asked if they had attended a remembrance ceremony just over a third of respondents had attended a remembrance ceremony: they did not specify whether attendance was local or at the London Cenotaph. Figure 17 illustrates that attendance was mostly with family members.

Figure 17: Breakdown of numbers of students indicating with whom they attended remembrance ceremony.



The final area of the survey further pursued the theme of remembrance, asking what forms students thought it should take and more generally asking if Britain's involvement in the War might be a source of pride.

Figure 18 illustrates that when asked if Britain's involvement in the Great War should make people feel proud, most felt Britain's involvement was a reason to feel positive. This follows a similar question asked by the British Council YouGov survey (Bostanci, 2014). It should be noted that the phrasing of the question in my quiz varied from that used in the YouGov survey. The question they asked was: 'Does the UK's role in the First World War and the peace negotiations that followed it have a positive or negative effect on your views of the UK today?'

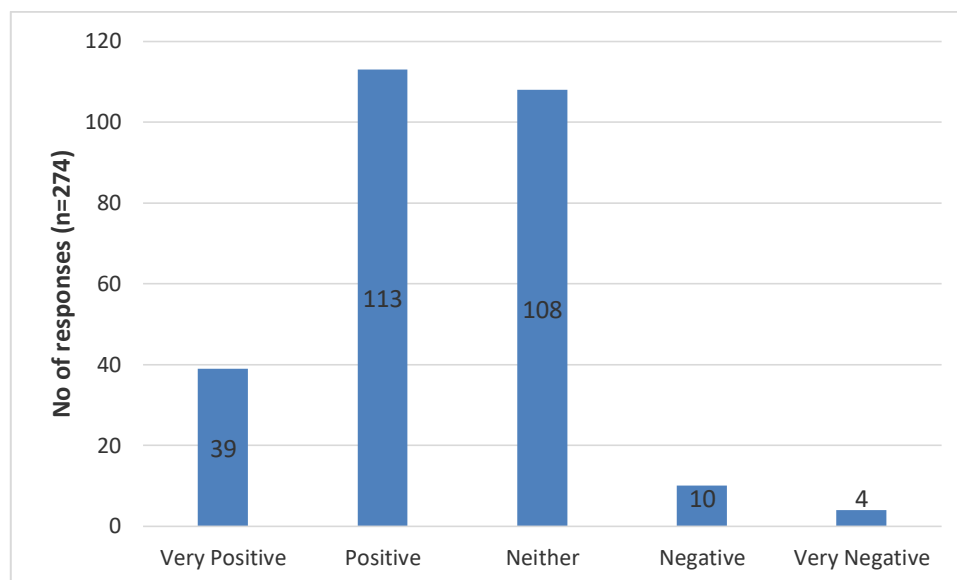
This question was used in the original trialling of my own survey but was then changed, as many students struggled with the language and knowledge of ‘peace negotiations.’

Student responses were often described in national terms, especially feeling pride in being British; typically, [it is] “GREAT TO BE BRITISH”.

However, some students qualified this with regard to the loss of life or the nature of war engendering feelings of sadness associated with the sacrifice of soldiers; for example, “War isn’t really good”, or this student’s conflicted sense of pride: “It makes me feel proud to be British, but I do think that war is wrong so maybe we shouldn't feel so proud?”

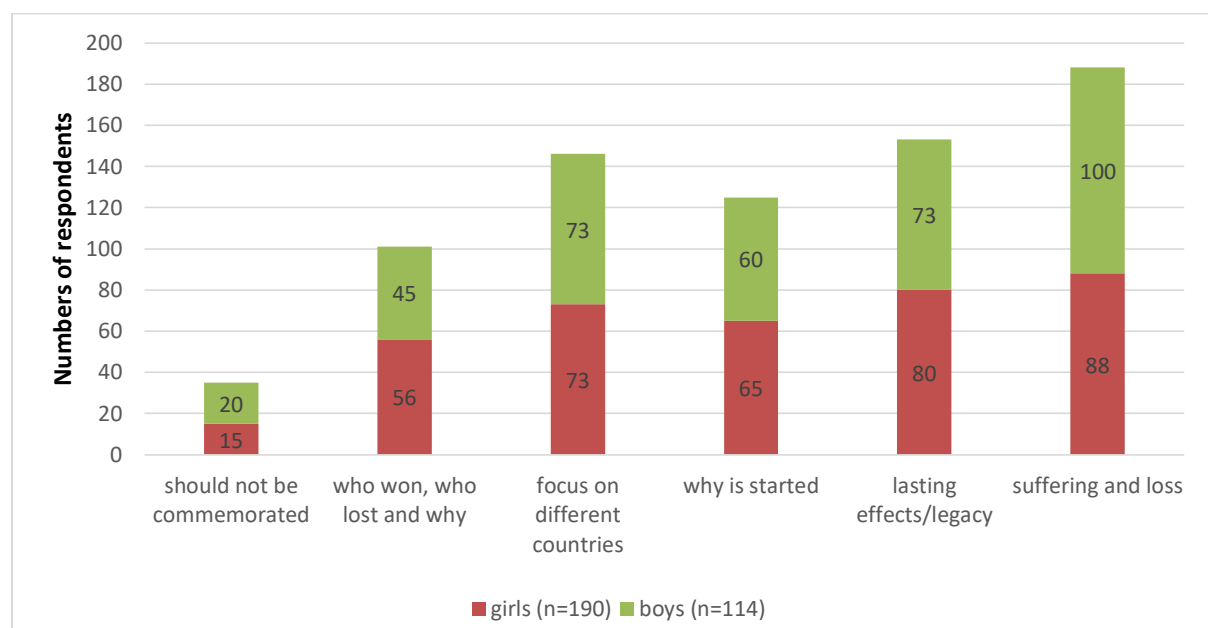
Another strong association was the implied sense of a ‘good cause’ or values for which Britain was fighting. This sometimes related to more altruistic motives, such as “...really happy because we worked very hard to protect other countries as well as ourselves”, or was framed in more specific national terms, such as “positive because we fought for our country’s rights”. This could also be expressed in self-regarding ways whereby the war was seen as consolidating British power. A final group of positive responses coalesced around legacy issues associated with war. The sense in which Britain’s involvement made the world safe linked to a belief in a shared set of values; of gaining a peace that one student related to the founding of the EU.

Figure 18: The number of different responses given to the survey question: Should Britain’s involvement in the First World War make people feel positive or negative about being British?



For most, the war was a source of national pride, while for 69% the focus of remembrance should be on the loss and sacrifice, a sentiment that accords with the underlying substance of Hynes' myth of disillusionment (Hynes 1992). When asked how they thought WW1 should be remembered, figure 19 reveals that there was no real difference evident between boys and girls and although those from BAME background constituted a very small number in the sample, it was clear that Asian children were more likely, proportionally, than their white counterparts to argue that the war should not be commemorated.

Figure 19: Students' responses, by gender, to the question of how the First World War should be remembered.



While most feel that a remembrance service needs to retain a focus on suffering and loss, there is a high degree of interest in broadening the scope of remembrance to include different countries and to consider the wars' legacies.

Remembrance does, for some, act in powerful ways to reinforce a sense of national identity, while for others the overtly national focus might serve to exclude them. A sense of nation is clearly important to both remembrance and to some young people's sense of participation and involvement.

3.4 Conclusions

The overall results indicate some limitations with the survey and quiz as a tool to uncover such an ephemeral notion as social remembering. For example, the survey relies on young people having a clear idea of what is meant by a history-related films or books. In question 8, they were asked to choose their favourite genre of film: 75.6% of respondents indicated that their favourite was comedy, with only 11.9% listing historical. This crude categorisation might miss the extent to which genres borrow from each other. 2015's highest grossing comedy, *Minions*, begins in 1968 New York, has action located at the Tower of London and includes a scene where a character named Bob successfully extracts the sword from the stone of Arthurian legend and becomes King Bob, displacing Queen Elizabeth II.

My survey and quiz data suggest a persistence of social and cultural attitudes reflecting an interest in the individual. However, this quantitative data provides no detail of the more dynamic interplay between the scholarship and remembrance that exists. Many of the most popular forms of remembrance have focused on the soldier but this does not determine what forms of remembering are taking place and the intertextual nature of this remembering. The ethnographic work outlined in the next chapters suggests an appetite amongst some young people for bigger historiographical questions and reveals that the places where they seek answers to these questions are diverse and surprising.

Phase 2 of the research enabled me to further pursue the complexities and, in particular, give a greater sense of the circumstances in which young people make meaning out of events and the different ways in which they use cultural tools.

Chapter 4: A portrait of Mark

I used to regularly drive through Cowfold, where Mark lives, en-route to visit my father-in-law, who lived nearby. As I arrived for a fieldwork visit, in late February, my initial impression was that nothing much had changed since my last visit, 15 years ago. A closer inspection revealed an old coaching pub earmarked for housing development, perhaps as a result of the bisection of the village by two major A-roads. It typifies both the appeal and tension of living in the south east of England; ‘well connected picturesque village close to “good” schools’, an estate agent might say and people will pay good money to live here. So the allure of the chocolate-box past, in the form of a traditional coaching pub, gives way to the clamour for homes. During my February conversation with Mark and his family, it becomes clear that Cowfold does have a community, a possible heart; one pub still exists and Mark and his father, Steve, talked about going there and talking to locals. Cowfold retains a church, scout hut, village hall and post office. Mark’s mother, June, is involved in the church and younger children are served with a primary school and a well-sized municipal playground.

Mark is 17. When I met him for the first time, in November, he came across as a gregarious and mature young man, taking his A’ levels. Of medium build, with a slight squint and dark hair, he wore clothes that were clean, neat but unremarkable; someone for whom fashion was not important. Mark’s family has lived in Cowfold all his life. His father used to work as an airline pilot for British airways; Cowfold’s location convenient for his work before Parkinson’s curtailed his career. Mark’s Scottish mother works mainly in the house and Mark’s younger sister attends his former school, doing her GCSEs. Mark and I first met at his sixth form college on 6th November 2014 and went on to meet there a further three times. In between these visits, Mark produced a range of writings for me. For his auto-ethnography (I had asked him to write a short portrait), he wrote 3 sides of typed A4, detailing his own personal journey to date, to answer two

questions: Who am 'I'? How have 'I' been made? I have italicised the text when I have drawn on any writing (using single inverted commas to differentiate from dialogue, for which I use double); any errors are directly reproduced from the original. He also wrote about his Remembrance Day experiences, as well as providing direct answers to my four research questions. I used these written responses and the oral transcripts of our college conversations to put together a pictogram of the tools I felt Mark used to make meaning of the past and the meanings he drew from the past. During the final visit in late February, to his home, I interviewed Mark, alone, using this pictogram (Figure 20) to get feedback from him about the impression I had created and then discussed it again with his family.

Figure 20: Composite graphic portrait of Mark, School C



For a teenager like Mark, the nearby town of Horsham is, I would think, more of a draw. Mark's ethnographic description of Cowfold suggested ambivalence, *I have lived in Cowfold all my life. A pretty mundane setting you might say.* For Mark, and his family, having experienced a life associated with an airline pilot, Cowfold represents a rootedness that must be bittersweet. Gatwick, a mere

20-minute drive away, means that planes stack overhead, offering a grounded view on flight:

Mark's future aspirations and his father's past. In Mark's ethnography, he wrote, *'Throughout school and till this day my interest was always in two places; humanities and aviation.'*

Mark's house is one of the oldest in the village; an old coaching house and a grade II listed building, the past rendered solidly in red brick, comfortably middle-class. Inside the lounge, Mark's father, Steve, proudly points to the ancient beams, taken from a Tudor ship, drawing on technical knowledge acquired from Mark's maternal grandfather. Roses sit in the porch 'ready for early spring planting', as his mother notes. There is a sense of pride about living here.

Mark answered the door. I had left things in the car so, having confirmed I was at the right address, went to get them. Mark seemed nervous, compared to our chats at college, barking the announcement of my arrival to his parents', "Jason's here!" with a degree of uncharacteristic impatience. When I had first met Mark, at college, I had been explaining ethnography using *Shane the Lone Ethnographer* and the issue of natural settings (Galman, 2007). Mark revealed, "My family would change their behaviour if they were being observed". Mark's mother came down first to introduce herself. June's voice has a light Scottish brogue and she has a confident and business-like manner. We chatted easily as she made tea for me and, for Mark, a cold remedy - an alternative explanation for his skittishness?

When I had first arrived I had been quickly directed, by Mark, into the lounge. Later, and with the recorder off, June showed me some pictures on the walls of the hallway. The presence of the Union flag was particularly noticeable; a repeated pattern on the draft excluder, then on a hanging and again as a corner piece, framed on the wall. Earlier, in the kitchen, I had noticed a union flag tea tray. For me, this is an uncomfortable symbol, representing an identity from which I was frequently set apart. Tentatively, I asked June what the corner piece represented, thinking as it was framed it might have a personal story. I was surprised, therefore, when she simply said

she had got the idea on a visit to Oxford where a shop, or pub, had framed a whole range of flags. This was simply a piece of wrapping paper she had leftover and framed.

When I spoke to Mark about the presence of the Union flag at home, it was something he said he hadn't really thought about as an influence. Yet in his memories of Remembrance Day, which he attended as an air cadet, he wrote about being, '*united under one banner of pride*'. Times change. My own relationship with the flag was formed in the East End of London, in response to the BNP¹². For Mark and his mother in particular, it represented an inclusiveness rather than exclusion, especially in the context of the recent Scottish referendum vote. June pointed out a photo of her Irish ancestors hanging next to the framed flag corner piece; Mark had mainly talked about his Scottish heritage, previously. A yellowed photo hung on the wall, showing two late Victorians peering out at me as they sat in front of what, I presume, was their home. She told me that they were people she had never met, or knew, but she talked about a sense of determination and hard work in relation to them. I could see those same qualities of self-reliance mirrored in her and, in turn, in Mark. Later, I reflected that my assumptions about Ireland always default to the idea of the Republic: however, Mark's family links are with the north, Ulster, where flags carry additional significance.

In his ethnographic portrait for me, Mark wrote of a pronounced detachment: '*So what you have is a kid who is rather cold in his thinking*'. This statement surprised me, contradicting the confident, gregarious manner with which he conducted himself in sessions. He is an active member of the Air Cadets and his involvement in my doctoral project is itself, a reflection of his curiosity and engagement. I wanted to believe that his cold thinking is qualified by a driving curiosity about the world and for the past, aligned to his love of learning and desire to be socially involved. Detachment, therefore, is not the manner in which he conducts himself, but might characterise the way he wants to think – with a degree of objectivity.

¹² British National Party

Meeting his family, in February, clarified for me this idea of an objective thinker, both in how it manifested itself but also from where it originated. Mark's mother, June, is a pretty forthright and confident person. We had been discussing the heated nature of debates amongst her siblings when Steve, Mark's father, volunteered an example (which I didn't pick up), but to which June's response was unequivocal: "Don't be brave in a crowd, Steve!" Steve's response was a nervous giggle. The family's approach to life was serious-minded; a broad interest in the world, regular watching of the news, encouragement to debate and have opinions. June's expression of wisdom was often characterised with a 'common-sense' framing. The family shared the idea that knowing the world was both necessary and possible. While they recognised the world could be seen in different ways, they had a shared confidence that the conclusions at which they had arrived were good ones, because they had approached it in an 'objective' way. This confidence is a characteristic of the family's middle-class status and is underscored by the ways in which the difficulties encountered in their lives have only served to make them stronger.

We all sat in a large lounge; Mark's sister had returned from school, the central heating was still not on and the wood burner was inactive, but with charged tea mugs we got on with the group interview. Mark sat with his father, perhaps a little self-consciously, with his mobile phone out, apparently offering some welcome distraction. Most of the talking, during this one-hour interview, was undertaken by June. Mark's father, Steve, has Parkinson's disease and sits in such a way as to control his shaking. It is hard to gauge his age, due to his illness, but he appears to be in his 50s, with a gap of six or seven years separating him from Mark's mother. In his ethnography, Mark had written about how the condition had curtailed his father's career as a pilot and impacted on his own aspirations and interests, which also gives another context to the curt interaction between June and Steve, mentioned above.

My father was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, meaning that he was forced to retire early from his beloved career. My family's world was shattered. I was not told that he was diagnosed until about a year later, on the basis

of my age. The dialogue between my parents grinded to a halt completely, and has never really ever picked up since. After my father was diagnosed with Parkinson's, I felt this responsibility to continue in father's footsteps, almost complete what he didn't. Of course, this is easier said than done.'

This responsibility, I think, is newly-realised; part of the reflexive process of writing his auto-ethnography. It doesn't reconcile with his admission in the same piece, *'that I was set on becoming a pilot from about age 5'*, something that would have preceded his father's illness.

Back in the lounge, the general tone of the talk about Mark and his interactions with history and the past was mostly one of awe and respect, laced with wry bemusement. During one of our college-based interviews, after I had read his piece, Mark alerted me to a particular Dorling Kindersley book on the Second World War. I had found an image of the exact same book and included it on the pictogram. Earlier, during the one-to-one meeting, before the family joined us, Mark had confirmed this in an excited manner; "Yes, that's the book!" as if recognising an old friend. We began talking about this book and Mark's reading habits in general. The extract below reveals how Mark wrote about his reading habit, in his ethnography, and how these habits contributed to his burgeoning identity as the family history specialist.

'My love of aviation stemmed from both my passion to travel and my love of flight, as well as my dad being one (a pilot). It was fuelled also by my passion for history. See, my main area of interest was WW2. I would read a plethora of books and facts on the Pacific theatre and aerial combat. Mother always said in discussion with my teachers that I would prefer to read an atlas or history textbook than a story book, which is 100% true. I have always felt that I gained nothing out of fiction, because if it's not real, what's the point? By year 5 I was an expert in WW2, at least by my parent's standards.'

In our discussion, Mark had talked a lot about travel. We shared a connection with Singapore: my sister was born there and he had visited about 12 times. His father and I talked about favourite eating haunts while June developed the reading theme, and specifically the DK book.

“I couldn’t get him to read a book but he would take an atlas and history book. He was reading this book on holiday whilst crossing the beach in Dubai, as a young child, and shouting out facts about the Holocaust that he had learnt.” She remarked on the precision of his pronunciation of the Holocaust and the Shoah, perfectly normal for this 6 year-old who was strangely oblivious to the sunny beach context. But perhaps, also to the nature of what he was reading.

Continuing the theme of his obsessive interest in details from non-fiction books, June referred to a particular incident about which her sister (Mark’s auntie) and eldest nephew still talk: when Mark went up to visit them, he would take his atlas with him, testing them on the capitals of the world. “My younger sister still laughs about how they were talking about countries and they would say...they must have been playing a game, and there was something about Monaco, and he said, ‘It is not a country: it’s a principality!’ He was correcting them.”

I asked about other tools they thought Mark used in constructing his ideas about the past. “Well, he’s told you about questioning me, when he was ill, about Pearl Harbour...”

Mark had highlighted this memory in his ethnography, as a critical moment in cementing his interest in the Second World War and his status as the family expert.

‘This is probably due the time where I had chickenpox. I was helped by my mother through the night due to the immense pain, but I instead of falling asleep I stayed up all night discussing the implications if Japan had bombed the American aircraft carriers at Pearl Harbour.’

June recollected this event with a degree of humour:

“He would say to me, ‘What do you think would have happened if they had hit the aircraft carriers?’ Well, I didn’t even know that was a major point!” As June related this detail, it prompted laughter from the others, including me, but not Mark. “It’s one in the morning and he has terrible chicken pox and can’t sleep and she (his sister) had just got over the chicken pox and it was just...” and she sighs in exasperation and mock exhaustion remembering it. “I knew she

would be up at six o'clock and here he is, at one o'clock, wanting to discuss Pearl Harbour and I just didn't know... so I said, 'Can we talk about it in the morning?' It's one o'clock but he didn't think there was anything wrong that we should be discussing this at one o'clock in the morning."

Mark's reputation as an obsessive history expert had also acquired a currency beyond the family. In his ethnography, Mark wrote about:

My natural talents of history was recognised in primary school, as I was selected to take part in a day at Fishbourne Roman Palace that was geared towards people gifted and talented in history.'

I asked about this moment, whilst sitting in the lounge with the family.

June asked, "Show-and-tell, Mark. Did you tell Jason about your show-and-tell?" I had noticed that Mark now had his head down, looking at his phone. Mark's uncertain reply was, perhaps, a sign of his increasing embarrassment at all this talk about him: "Err, which one?"

June shifted her attention towards me and explained, "When everyone was taking in their hamster or a picture of their cat" (her disdain was evident), "Mark took and talked about Pearl Harbour for his five minutes." Mark chipped in, "I took in a model aircraft carrier and probably that World War Two textbook." Dorling Kindersley strikes again! "You took in the Japanese plane," June reminded him. "Yeah, that as well," Mark replied, before returning to his phone.

"You had also written it out," June reminded him before redirecting towards me. She continued, "And I wouldn't normally go in but I sat at the back of the class and people in the class were asking, 'What else do you know about the war? Who else can you mention?' Later, as I was waiting at the gates, another teacher who wasn't his teacher stopped him, so it must have been talked about in the staff room. She said, 'I heard you gave an absolutely fantastic show and tell.' "

This obsessive reputation was also developed at scouts. For his cub collector's badge, I was told that Mark took along his collection of aircraft models. I asked, "Were these the ones your

grandparents gave you, because you talked about your gran spoiling you?” June muttered, “Oh god yeah,” while sister also laughed in recognition. Even Mark sheepishly acknowledged this spoiling.

June picked up the story. “While Mark was standing at the front with these models, she (the cub leader) said, ‘Next week, we want you to just talk about a hero: who you see as a hero.’ The scout leader asked Mark, ‘Out of curiosity, Mark, who would your be your hero?’ Mark answered quickly and directly, ‘General Douglas MacArthur.’” June then relayed how the scout leader had said she expected David Beckham, or someone else. “ ‘Never in a million years would I have thought General Douglas Macarthur would have come out of a boy’s mouth.’ ”

Mark had never mentioned MacArthur before so, back in the lounge, I asked about him - why MacArthur? Mark’s answer contained a typical precision. “Oh, I just thought he led an effective Pacific campaign against the Japanese.” For Mark, this needed no further explanation or, indeed, acknowledgment of MacArthur’s later difficulties with President Truman.

Warming to this theme of Mark’s history expertise, Mark’s sister chipped in, “What about that time that he came in and taught my class? He had his models and PowerPoint presentation.”

Both June and Mark revealed how they had both forgotten this. Mark speculated that this was because, at the time, “I was pretty ill.” June further exemplified the memory slip in the context of Mark’s bullying and slack treatment by the school. This was something Mark had talked about, movingly and at length, in his ethnography.

‘Unfortunately, it was at this point that tensions built among my classmates, and the long road of bullying was open for business. As you can imagine, having your world completely destroyed a by a cruel disease and to have your classmates turn on you, it was a very tough time. Of course, my parents both backed me in my fight against it, and it actually got so bad that it became a legal issue.

...Through an infinite number of “verbal wars” (for lack of the better name) and some rather strongly worded advice from a Scottish mother, I had them in tears at one point with their parents lodging a complaint against me to the school.’

The difficulty of this memory offers an explanation concerning why both June and Mark had initially forgotten this story of Mark going back to the primary to talk to his sister’s class, with the bullying a more powerful foregrounded experience of that school. Echoing Mark’s comments about the ‘*strongly worded advice*’, June told me that she had given him “my full permission that if she (the primary Head) comes up to say whatever, to tell her exactly where to go.”

The impact of the bullying was particularly formative, as it coincided with the diagnosis of Mark’s father’s illness and reminded me of the detachment Mark had highlighted at the beginning of the piece.

It was my finest and darkest hour. I realised that this world was the cruellest thing known to man and that if you didn’t stand up for yourself, it would beat you to your knees and keep you there if you let it. It may seem rather sinister that someone so young was thinking in a cold manner, but at the point of 11 years old I had been through more than what most adults had been through. I had family die, family diagnosed with horrible disease, stabbed in the back by my classmates with the presence of the teachers (please don’t be fooled, the teachers were as bad as the bullies) and had my view of the world completely changed. Taking that into account, it seemed inevitable.’

When I first read this, in November, I was unsettled by some of the things Mark said. I felt that he was harbouring a strong sense of injustice and feelings of resentment. The language was also odd: ‘...*my finest and darkest hour*’ was almost Churchillian. I was reminded of this reaction when I heard his family talk about his return to the same primary school, to talk to his sister’s class. It forced me to re-think my initial unease and instead, I considered Mark’s enormous resilience. His own writing suggests how the primary school bullying began to shape his sceptical view of the

world and his pronounced 'detachment'. This, considered in conjunction with his return to the school, also shows how Mark's interest and knowledge of history returned agency to him.

By now, everyone had contributed stories of Mark's prowess in history, with a great deal of bemused awe and respect. Steve, who had, like Mark, been quiet, now took up this leitmotif with a story of going to the local pub with Mark as a young boy. In establishing when this took place, it was clear that this story was again a piece of shared family folklore and evident source of pride, occurring while Mark was studying Tudor history at primary school. The trips to the pub suggested a close and easy relationship with his father, adding weight to the sense that Mark has a responsibility to follow his father into aviation.

Steve picks up the story, "So Mark and I go down to the pub, I don't know - middle of the summer sometime?" Mark assents, still on the phone. "And a friend of mine, Tony Goldsworthy, who is an ex-flight engineer, and him and I are very close friends. We were in the pub and Tony takes a great interest in history and they (Mark and Tony) were talking about Queen Mary. And Tony got mixed up that Bloody Mary and Mary Queen of Scots and thought they were the same person and Mark said no! And they had this very adult conversation and he (Mark) wouldn't budge, insisting he was correct. There was a history book behind the bar but Tony said, 'I will go from here and I will find the answer'. And Tony had the good grace to phone Mark and say he was wrong and Mark was right. He debating with him and I was stunned. He wasn't rude and Tony was impressed because he was very adult, very mature and he talked about his resilience. He knew he was right and I was stunned, rocked back on my heels."

Mark had mentioned his grandparents, in his ethnography, and I asked what sort of an influence they had been on Mark. June chimed in, "Huge, I would have said!" It was clear we were talking about her parents Steve added, "June's father was an extraordinary man. His knowledge of history, he was stunning," (A possible template for Mark I wonder?). "He stood in this house, looked at these beams, saw this hole here, these holes." Steve, having sat still for most of the

conversation, now stood in the middle of the room. “And he said, ‘That’s a decking beam because that is where the pegs went in for the floor boards on the Tudor ships.’ Now I didn’t know that I thought that... He actually knew! Fantastic knowledge.” June’s parents lived in Scotland and in Mark’s early years, they took regular journeys to see them. Mark’s first dentist was in Scotland.

Mark’s maternal grandparents were important bearers of both the importance of history and family history. This included talking to Mark about direct experience of the Second World War and family involvement in WW1. With evident pride, June described the involvement of Great-Uncle Davy in the Somme. “He was there from the first and the going-over, the officer, his officer in front of him was hit, was shot, and he fell face down into the dirt and the mud whatever and my great uncle put his rifle across. It was the mud, my father said, so he must have been well into it, and held his rifle there so he wouldn’t go into the mud and bent down to take his officer’s face out of it and he was shot and it went through so I think he was sent back.” She thought a further two brothers were there, with some suffering from shell shock.

I asked about the circumstances in which this story was passed on to Mark and the cover of a particular book seemed instrumental. June told me, “I pointed out the book.” I understood this to mean she was pointing it out to Mark. “The book, it was bizarre – I had brought the book for my father at Christmas and when he opened up the book and it’s a picture of men standing in line in a trench and he said ‘That’s my uncle Davy. It can’t be. I could swear that’s my uncle.’ He’s not right at the front and I said ‘How do you know?’ He said he was with the Royal Irish Rifles at the Somme. And when I opened it up to look at the details it was the Royal Irish Rifles at the Somme. Well, that is just bizarre that I would buy a book that we are pretty sure that my relative on the front.”

This intergenerational exchange was solely through June’s paternal side. She had little knowledge of her mother’s side and Steve seemed embarrassed to have no recollection of his family’s

involvement: “You see I have been very remiss in this.” He did share a story about his father’s involvement with the ‘Forgotten Fourteenth [Army]’ in Burma. June explained, “I think it was just that my father spoke about it or read about it and Remembrance Day, my father would always quote facts and figures and get quite emotional. So if you see your dad get quite emotional, you think there must be something going on and it makes you more curious about what went on. But I don’t ever remember being taught it at school.”

Mark’s capacity to stun the family with his interest in history extends to his mastery over the details of that history. Mark’s passion for the subject of the Second World War and the Pacific theatre was such that, despite his traumatic experience of primary school, he was prepared to go in and talk to his sister’s class about it. All family members, extending to aunts and nephews, expressed bemused respect for Mark, alternating between laughter and incredulity to genuine admiration. For Mark, his engagement with history provides a source of agency and identity, often forged in adversity.

I had noticed Mark consulting his phone during our extended family conversation, something I had taken as a sign of self-conscious embarrassment. However, focused on history to the end, Mark had instead located the book (via the Internet) that featured his mother’s great-great-grandfather, who had fought for the 1st Irish at the Somme, to show me. I was clearly surprised and exclaimed, “Oh, this is the classic picture!” The image is so resonant because of its usage, I told them. “That series - ‘*The Great War*’ with Laurence Olivier - this is the image that is used in the opening credits but they have doctored the image.”

It was a timely reminder of the First World War context of my research. My original interest in Mark, as a possible case study, had been stimulated by his response in the June online survey to the question, ‘What does World War I mean to you personally?’ Mark’s response was unusual.

'The First World War to me, personally, was the beginning of a new era in war. For the first time, whole rows of infantry could be cut down in seconds. For the first time, war was global. For the first time, technology played an unprecedented role in the fight. The First World War was not a case of good vs. evil, as both sides were often deeply mistaken. I think it is critical to remember the war, as a pinnacle of what man is willing to do each other, but I think it is very important to remember the millions of young men who went off to war with unimaginable bravery, and fought fiercely to defend Britain. I also think it is an important part of British history, as it involved: The Empire, a huge loss of life and deeply impacted Britain during and after it.'

Despite the request for a personal response, and with no mention of the relatives highlighted in our family discussions, Mark's answer had the quality of a historical judgement that was rare, compared to other responses on the survey: notably in its identification of the war as a turning point, in terms of technology, the suggestion of the social consequences for Britain and also in referencing the global and empire dimensions. However, the national tone and the theme of sacrifice associated with 'unimaginable bravery' was a much more familiar trope. We revisited these ideas on a number of occasions, prior to my meeting with Mark and his family in February.

I had first met Mark on 6th November 2014. He attends 6th Form College in Horsham. Ivy, who was the same age as Mark, was also part of these meetings. They had both been in the air cadets but Ivy had recently left. It was lunchtime when I first arrived at the college; lots of very tall teens were hanging around in groups and there was a great sense of calm. Ivy read my ethnography while we waited for Mark. When he arrived, he apologised for being late. He had been to "debating club"; did I mishear that as "dating club"? It was partly intended as a joke, picking up on the hormones in the lunch area, but Mark barely smiled; a seriousness that was a feature of his interactions with me. On this first meeting, I asked Mark to give me an idea of what contributes to the understandings outlined in the survey answer above. His first response was "own knowledge", that was acquired from books but also "Internet, news and social media."

Mark's autodidactic method also grabbed my attention at our next meeting. We had been reviewing the survey data and especially looking at the sorts of understandings young people seemed to have about the consequences of WW1. Based on the British Council YouGov poll, exploring the international legacy of WW1, I had asked respondents, in my quiz, whether they thought a range of different twentieth century events might be linked to WW1; figure 12 illustrates the incidence.

In reviewing these results Mark commented with typical alacrity and confidence, "I can see the links with every single one." This wasn't false bravado. Unsolicited (although I would have asked), he went on to explain: "UN that was formed after World War Two, and World War Two had some sort of link through the League of Nations. And also like these are quite weak links, like US civil rights movement - the main ones were in the 50s and 60s but the black community had served in World War One and Civil rights in UK also improved afterwards, as they improved over time. So links with World War Two, but also World War One, because it got better over time."

As ever, I was impressed with the extent of Mark's knowledge; Ivy had also sat back in awe. I wondered why, unlike many children in the survey and many adults in the YouGov survey, Mark was able to both identify and explain these international legacies. Mark's explanation: "The reason I think I, personally, can see all the links in them is my own personal interest in history; my curiosity. It's my own natural talent, for lack of a better name." The social scientist in me wasn't going to stand for this: a natural talent for curiosity - where does this come from? "I don't know where it comes from; just something I was born with. It goes back to World War One: I just wanted to see every single impact of everyone involved and obviously, Ireland was heavily involved in it." I didn't know the particularities of Mark's Irish ancestry at that moment and was more preoccupied with how Mark went about finding out, after his 'natural' curiosity had kicked in. "Let's say I wanted to learn about the Arab-Israeli conflict - straight to the library

or Internet. Just to find out some basic info about it. Because quite often these factors link back to World War One or World War Two, but they also link back to each other, so Russian and Chinese communism are very close. Ottoman and Arab-Israeli conflict very close, Versailles and UN... They all interlink, so when I learn about one factor and another and another, I can get a clearer picture of how World War One unfolded and its impact.”

Reflecting now on this interaction, I am sensitive to a range of paradoxes, but at the time was struck by Mark’s ability to make temporal links when so much of history that is encountered, especially in the curriculum, is often compartmentalised. The links were also spatial, reflecting Mark’s global interests, stimulated by his love of travel. In his original survey piece, he has talked of the global nature of the war and specifically, its empire dimensions. The Balfour Declaration and Sykes-Picot Agreement are two events that had minimal resonance in the survey, yet Mark picked up on this. “Was it to do with Britain’s Campaign in the Middle East and something to do with the Egypt theatre in that region...? Something to do with the British mandate of Palestine?”

We talked about the bearing this might have on the contemporary Middle East: “...the divisions create sectarian tensions or territorial division Arabs would feel negative.” Again, this was information acquired by Mark independently, revealing a frustration at an overly-narrow focus in the school curriculum. “I think we don’t get taught anything about the world. Yet it’s the first global war but we focus just on Europe. What I’ve learnt about the campaign in Africa or Gallipoli, that is from my own contextual reading. We have done literally nothing on Africa or the Middle East.”

Mark’s own writing about his involvement with Remembrance Sunday alights on its galvanising and homogenising effects, rather than disrupting elements. Mark’s active participation was as an air cadet. He describes the very cold and crisp morning before marching, with 70 of his fellow cadets, to the memorial where they were joined by other service groups. How does it make him feel? “It was surreal.” It was unusual for Mark to use such an emotive term. He suggests the

100th anniversary and the ending of NATO operations in Afghanistan as having a particular bearing on how he feels. But it was the sense of togetherness that impacted most. This is how he wrote about the experience of remembrance.

'Stopping at the 11th hour was, for lack of the better word, the weirdest part. I contemplated that about 60 million people at that minute stopped whatever they were doing, and for a whole two minutes, a nation of people remembered what their relatives went through. That's when I was overcome by a sense of unity. Without meaning to sound like a nationalist, I felt that the UK, and of course the commonwealth, were united under one banner of pride.'

The 'banner of pride' put me in mind of the flags, at home, in the front hall. Mark's very particular engagement with remembrance elicited pride through a sense of unity and active participation. Yet, in discussion, Mark retains a critical perspective on WW1, arguing that it was both "futile" but also a conflict where the moral imperative for war was "blurred".

We met the day after Remembrance Sunday and after Mark had written his recollections. I confessed to feeling some remembrance fatigue, myself. I mentioned that remembrance had even appeared on *Strictly Come Dancing*, another witticism that had little purchase. I asked them both (we were joined by Ivy) if they thought the form remembrance takes can serve to hinder historical understanding? Mark thought the emotion of it could very well "cloud your judgement". In his view, the humanitarian purchase of seeing injured soldiers marching past meant that analysis gave way to pride and honour. Yet, when I asked how they might re-conceptualise or re-imagine remembrance, Mark proved resistant to any changes.

"I do think the honouring is a massive part and it shouldn't be scrapped, by any means but... what we should also remember is maybe the consequences." I asked about a more global orientation, especially as we had talked about how the Poppies at the Tower had only commemorated the British war dead. "Obviously, there is Commonwealth remembrance as well,

which is great, but I don't know." Mark made an ambivalent pause before confidently asserting, "I suppose if other countries aren't remembering the sacrifices," (by which he meant the British sacrifice) "then why should we do it back? Because I'm pretty sure the Russians don't remember any of our sacrifices." As ever, Mark adds a coda that, while once again illustrating his knowledge, also serves to show how his ideas are still developing. "Having said that, the Arctic convoy was recently remembered by the Russian embassy."

The Russian embassy had honoured 30 World War Two veterans in Southampton for their part in transporting crucial supplies to Russia, presenting them with Ushakov medals - something the Foreign Office had initially sought to prevent, as it broke the rules on foreign medals. It made me consider that much of Mark's 'natural curiosity' was actually stimulated by news and current affairs. When I met with the family, I asked if they were a news-watching household. In unison, though with some hesitation from Mark's sister, they heralded that the news would always be on in the house and they would watch it together. Steve, echoing Mark's views on "natural curiosity" commented, "I think that is a genetic thing: the first thing I do when I check into a hotel anywhere in the world, I put the news headlines on from wherever."

One news event seemed especially formative. In his ethnography, Mark describes watching the 9/11 attacks: *I felt it was history unfolding in front of me, as it really was a pinnacle of the 21st century.* I asked his family about the circumstance of how the four-year-old Mark came to be watching. "Well, on the day it happened, we were in here. On the television was Oprah Winfrey." June explained that this was her guilty pleasure, something not shared by her young son, "...who was whinging and moaning... 'Oh, I hate this programme; I hate this programme.'" June had popped out, briefly, to get some lunch and when she came back, Mark was watching the footage of the twin towers and her first reaction was "Have you put on that stupid Die Hard movie?" But it was the footage of the unfolding events, cutting into all programmes.

Following 9/11, Mark pursued this curiosity into the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts, even while still young. He writes, in his ethnography, *'What also influenced in my time growing up were the simultaneous Iraq and Afghanistan wars. I can only vaguely remember the green night vision footage of the invasion, but the way it influenced me was in the field of politics. I remember seeing Tony Blair address the House of Commons time and time again about both wars, and I remember the 7/7 and 9/11 terrorist attacks very clearly. I was interested in the motives behind the people who commit the attacks and the reason why the Iraq and Afghanistan wars occurred.'*

Politics and current affairs were perhaps the well-spring of Mark's natural curiosity. I was interested in how this influenced Mark's desire to draw links with events in the past and particularly, how his understanding of WW1 influenced his thinking about the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts. There was no continuity in terms of causation, he told me. "One is about a war on terror and the other is about stopping militaristic Germany." I waited and he reconsidered. "Personally, I am opposed to both Afghan and Iraq and how they run in parallel, as it was people at the top sending people at the bottom to war. That's how I view it." He talked briefly about his desire not to conform to the political mainstream, before returning to my question, concluding, "The First World War is, again, like Iraq and Afghanistan. I feel empathy towards the fallen because they sacrificed in vain, because it just led to the rise of Hitler and WW2. It was a disaster, basically, but I don't feel necessarily proud of WW1 or any war unless the causes are just. So I guess they run in parallel more than I thought they did."

It is a sentiment that he echoed in his Remembrance Day memories: *'Everything seemed to be coming full circle.'* We talked about this drawing of WW1 together with the Afghanistan and Iraq conflicts: "The vicar who led the sermon was talking about the 13 years of conflict and the sacrifice of the soldiers. So that had a bigger part to his speech."

For Mark, one of the underlying lessons of WW1 is that *'War never changes'*. Lions will always be led by donkeys and humans will always be inhuman. Yet this lead him to draw conclusions,

combined with a contemporary analysis of the world seen through night-vision cameras and with his own cadet uniform, in that, “We will always need an armed force.” Remembrance is important to him, such that he has attended locally, with the cadets, as well as attended the Whitehall ceremony with his family; and this importance resides in his desire to pay respect to soldiers who have fallen in what, for Mark, are futile struggles, the exception being the Second World War. Mark’s participation in Remembrance Day helps to cement his bond with ‘nation’, not in an uncritical way, but influenced by a view of war’s ability to unite. I asked him in, November, whether remembrance impacted positively on his sense of nation.

“Yeah, I do. I do think it does. Because so many people have sacrificed themselves from around the world to protect this tiny island, this tiny, freezing, cold and miserable island off the coast of Europe. I think it is quite interesting that so many people came to fight for us and our cause.”

Chapter 5: The ‘lived experiences’ of young people’s interactions with the past

It was Mark who greeted me at the door when I visited him in February of 2015. When I visited Scarlett and Amelia, later in the spring, it was their fathers, who had featured so much in our previous school-based conversations, who came to the door: Amelia’s father, Tristrum, in a frenzy of activity; Scarlett’s with a degree of proprietorial assessment. When I visited Ivy in late summer, just after the A level results, it was she who answered the door. She had recently received her A level results: an A* in film and an A in history. I wrote in my field notes ‘Ivy is exuberant – fresh from her results she radiates confidence.’

Ivy, Scarlett and Amelia appear together here, but only Scarlett and Amelia have met. They were all in their final year at School in 2015. In this chapter I begin with Scarlett and Amelia before developing the portrait of Ivy. This is partly because Scarlett and Amelia attended the same school but also because they both foregrounded about their father’s influence in their engagements with history.

The homes of all the girls suggested a comfortable home life. All three lived in large, detached or semi-detached houses, all with gardens. Although the gardens related to their houses in different ways, at Scarlett’s I got a sense of an outside space with little or no planting but offering a perspective on the open fields beyond. With both Ivy and Amelia, the garden seems a much more integrated part of the house. As I sat in the lounge, looking out at Amelia’s back garden, I could see pergolas and a small, planted raised bed. At Ivy’s the kitchen opened out through a set of French windows onto a well-stocked and well-kept garden where she and I chatted sat at a table under a pergola. In all the homes the domestic space is shared with pets. While Amelia and Ivy kept dogs, who eagerly greeted me, at Scarlett’s we were joined by the cats that initially came to warily inspect the house visitor and then retreated in a disinterested manner.

I first met Scarlett and Amelia on 16th October 2014, when they were joined by one of the boys, Robert. I was introduced, on this occasion, by their teacher; thereafter arrangements were made directly with them, usually with Scarlett who organised the other two. They all attend the 6th form at a rural school where I have acted, in a professional capacity, as general tutor supporting trainees in the school. This was my first field work visit and, because of the familiarity, it gave me a comfortable entrée to life as a researcher. We were given the conference room in which to meet: a large space and, on this day in October, drenched in warm autumnal light. On this first occasion Scarlett made less eye contact and spoke less than the other two, but did mention visiting the poppies at the Tower of London, something that in my eagerness to talk, and naivety as a researcher, I did not really follow through. Over the next three visits and as spaces for dialogue opened up, Scarlett's intelligence and insight were increasingly evident, so perhaps her initial reticence was a sign of her getting the measure of me? Scarlett's contributions were always given with a sense of urgent drama.

My sense of Amelia came alive when I visited her at home, in March of 2015, where the ways in which her family critically inform her identity and engagement with history became clearer. On this first occasion, at school, she would contribute when asked in measured tones but mostly offered a round-faced smile. It was Robert who tended to dominate these school-based sessions.

Scarlett's relationship with history is longstanding, coming from an early self-identification as someone who was and is academic, or- in her words- a '*massive nerd*'. Scarlett would often offer such self-deprecating analyses of herself, accompanied by a repentant laugh. She wrote about how history fed both her thirst for knowledge and a drive to achieve. This, in her words, '*constant desire for success and achievement*' has sometimes been destructive and history acts as a double edged dynamic in this: competitively wanting to do well, she told me at school with the others present,

of how she wants to exceed her mother's achievements at school, but history also as a source of calm, *'one of the things I love to do most when I'm stressed is watch documentaries.'*

Scarlett's candour in writing about herself was startling to me. After meeting the group only once, I asked them all to write a piece of auto-ethnography that described who they were and what had contributed to this identity. I had not anticipated such openness, even though I had asked for it.

'The next part of my life is difficult for me to write about'. And yet she did, and for someone she had only met on one occasion. Right from the first sentence of her ethnography, Scarlett sets a marker to write honestly: *'I felt it would be more appropriate to handwrite my ethnography due to the personal nature of it.'* Yet that did not prepare me for the reflective nature of what came later.

'I was asked to make this as honest as possible; therefore I should not cover over a part of my life I cannot deny I am ashamed of. With academic success comes pressure. With pressure comes a breaking point. I met that breaking point in September 2012. I won't go into detail, not because I don't want to, but because it doesn't feel appropriate. What I will say is that my diagnosis of anorexia and OCD does not mean that I am any less of a nerd; I am not any less of Scarlett I used to be.'

Being ill gave her time to think, read and watch the TV; some of the nourishment she drew on was history-related, based on a *'fascination for other people and their lives'*. This allowed her to connect even while she was at home alone, *'Watching documentaries from every angle possible has widened my view of the world, and taken me out of the isolated bubble I would otherwise let myself fall into.'* The most significant of these (re)connections was with her father: *'I spent more (time) talking with my dad about all the things I had learnt; slowly rebuilding the relationship I had lost with him through our shared interest with the past.'*

Illness was also an important factor in Amelia's accounts in relation to coming to terms with her brother's autism and, latterly, her mother's cancer. Initially, in our group discussions at school, Amelia didn't readily contribute. It was Robert who dominated at first until gradually Scarlett asserted herself. Amelia would nod consensually with their contributions but rarely offer something. Yet there was a stated sense of non-conformist rebellion at the heart of Amelia: a self-declared exhibitionist, but in my experience of her (except when I visited her home), a curiously quiet exhibitionist, one who keeps friends at a distance, but family close: *'Making friends was never really important to me, but I did like to be the centre of attention.'* If anyone was the centre of attention during the school sessions it was Scarlett. And while Robert and Scarlett clearly had a friendship, Scarlett would text him if he were late, laughing that he was probably still in bed; Amelia seemed detached from this fraternity.

The statement about friends and being the centre of attention made more sense when visiting Amelia at home. Amelia had written how her childhood has been marked by transitions; her constant reference point not based on place but on her immediate family. Some of this transitory existence was borne out of moving because of parental work; her father works for the Metropolitan police; her mother is a forensic scientist, which led to a move to Mauritius. They later moved to Oxford because of her brother's specialist school. Amelia writes about coming to terms with her brother's autism: *'At first I was angry with my brother, but now I understand it wasn't really his fault.'*

Amelia had written in her portrait about how her family tree really interested her; that she used her own family history to show off and be the centre of attention. It was her grandfather who was the conduit for this narrative and this was formative in stimulating Amelia's interest in history. *'I think what first got me into history was learning about by 6th great-grandfather, George Stephenson, in school. Strangely, this period of time became one of my favourites.'*

Later, during a school discussion about whether artefacts played any part in their social memory I asked Amelia about the reference she had made to Stephenson in her portrait. Scarlett expressed evident admiration, “Wow, that is amazing!”

“Yes, that’s on my mum’s side but I don’t know.” She sounded doubtful, “I don’t believe them because I’ve gone on Wikipedia. Stephenson had one son and that son had no children. But we do have artefacts from George Stephenson, his plans for the train and it’s been proven, so some relation there but I don’t know what.”

It seemed that in the school setting, being with Scarlett and Robert present, far from encouraging her to show off, had made her diffident and coy about this past.

At home it was clear that familial pride is still taken in this connection. Visiting Amelia in March, we were joined for a short while by her brother, Callum. He interrupted his father to say, “Excuse me, sir (meaning me)...Did you know that Mum’s ancestor was George Stephenson inventor of the steam train.” He then went on to outline his own obsession with trains. There was no hint of the earlier diffidence from Amelia and her parents offered no equivocation.

Amelia had to navigate difficulties initially at school: *‘school was hard for me when I was younger’*, but history lessons and art remained subjects in which Amelia’s talent was acknowledged. The way that learning was structured during the early years of her secondary schooling, around independent project work, suited her desire for independence, it speaks volumes for her spirit and love of history that her lazy study partner at school was not seen as a burden, but rather as an asset, giving her more scope to pursue what she was interested in.

Amelia referred a lot in our discussions and her writing about her sense of rebellion. In her early years, she wrote, this non-conformity had taken a '*shy passive*' form. Amelia had struggled academically at primary school in Watford, needing support in class. Her teenage years coincided with a spell at an international school in Mauritius; it was here that Amelia's stand against short skirts and inappropriate shirts led to some homophobic name-calling, but this simply paved the way for a more assertive person. Amelia writes, '*I became loud and pushy*'. In our school sessions Amelia talks about how history supported this transformation in giving her confidence. This was especially marked in Mauritius. The island's colonial history meant that the curriculum was populated with British events and people; this enabled Amelia, one of the few to have studied such events, to shine. But Amelia also saw an opportunity to extend her interests. Her own knowledge of the global nature of WW1 was enhanced by talking to and being with students from a wide variety of backgrounds at the international school, her life in an ex-British colony rendering tangible the materiality of empire and its role in WW1.

During our school conversations a strong source of Amelia's engagement with history, as for Scarlett, appeared to stem from her father. I visited Amelia's home on 27th March 2015 an early evening call on a Friday, a day usually reserved for letting hair down at the end of the working week, not for welcoming nosy researchers. However on arrival I was immediately and enthusiastically welcomed by Amelia's father, Tristram. In these first moments Amelia was barely able to get a word in and looked on with a knowing smile on her face; Tristram's passion, for history eliciting both amusement and pride. I was still in the hallway when he presented me with a copy of *Mein Kampf* in which he had forged the author's signature, a joke at the expense of his own German ancestry. Amelia had already related this story to us at school. As we segued into the lounge he brought my attention to a shell casing that he had retrieved from the Somme area and had integrated with another find secured while diving in the English Chanel. He explained how Amelia had used this shell in a year 8 presentation at school, talking about poetry

and hardships of war. Amelia also took a homemade papier-mâché trench into school, into which he had an input, “I always talk about my projects to father.” Tristram’s exuberant historical tour de force was only curtailed with the return of Amelia’s mother, Jane, with the dogs whose feeding he needed to attend to, along with the tea he had promised me.

In all our conversations at school, both Scarlett and Amelia frequently appeared to foreground their father’s influence in their engagements with history. For Scarlett the connection with history was consolidated through her shared interest of the past with her father who was to feature a lot in our conversations and is clearly a formative influence in Scarlett’s passion for, use of and interpretation of history. This was especially true when we talked about Remembrance Day, our discussions about the Remembrance Day service spread over two visits. The first meeting was on 6th November, prior to the remembrance services, with a follow up on 13th November. In between those visits Scarlett wrote about her personal experiences of Remembrance Day.

It was during our follow-up discussions that Scarlett recalled an early experience of Remembrance Day, “I know when I’ve been out say like, I don’t know, shopping or whatever and it’s the two minute silence. I can see myself, like aged 8, watching people carrying on and getting really angry!! Because like they weren’t stopping and they were still talking.” Scarlett’s articulated fury contrasted with Amelia, whose response could best be characterised as muted ambivalence. Robert shared Scarlett’s fury but for very different reasons related to the religious ‘hi-jacking’ of the event, something that Amelia, the niece of a vicar, later revealed that she wished she had challenged.

For Scarlett remembering the sacrifice of those who died is clearly important and this lead is taken from both her parents, especially her father. At times she articulated this in matter of fact

ways, as she did on 6th November, “Normally my dad will like say you will stand and watch it (remembrance) during that two minute silence. He will like (say) ‘Do not sit down!’ So that’s what I’m used to.” I hadn’t yet met Scarlett’s father but I had a palpable sense that he was proud of the contribution and the sacrifice that British soldiers had made during WW1, and critically he had instilled this in Scarlett too. When I observed that Scarlett was wearing a poppy at school, while the other two weren’t, and mentioned this, she boasted with evident pride “My dad has six of these!”

There was also some personal connection in the desire to mark, with respect, the contribution made by soldiers in WW1. We all listened as she told us, “Both my parents take a similar line with it. Obviously the emotional we’ve lost, everybody’s lost family and my view that everybody has lost family definitely came from them. Because we had a lost soldier in our family which is quite strange to think about that. But um...Like they both look at it, they look at war as a concept generally and think ‘Yep not my favourite thing ever, but if there is a threat you have got to combat it somehow’. And I know that my dad definitely thinks that with World War One. And I know my mum does.”

Amelia’s experience of Remembrance Sunday was far more ambivalent. She wanted to mark the event but retained a more critical perspective of it. The night before Remembrance Sunday Amelia had agreed to help at her school that was marking the day with a display covering the contributions made by young people from the school that had lost their lives 100 years ago. This suggests that Amelia regards remembrance as important but she was unimpressed with what she saw.

“Usually I like reading about the First World War, and I want to be respectful for all those involved, but the information about the school’s involvement in the war didn’t interest me. I

think it was because it focused more on the pride for the sacrifices of the school which didn't include the bigger picture in my view."

On Remembrance Sunday itself, Amelia described how she had fully intended to mark the day in some way but ended up not really marking it at all. Reviewing her day with us all on the 12th November Amelia declared, with a shrug, "My dad was also busy during the day taking care of my mum so I wasn't woken up in time for eleven o'clock and we couldn't do anything during the day." Amelia's mother's cancer, combined with her brother's disability, places responsibility on both Amelia and her dad. However Amelia was still unsure why they didn't mark remembrance at all, an omission that clearly nagged at her; *'Towards the end of the day I asked my dad why that was, he said it was because of laziness.'*

Some of this embarrassment might be attributed to taking part in this project, she confides in me during my home visit; "I didn't even know (anonymised name) had a (remembrance) service until Robert mentioned it in our meeting, and always a little embarrassed how uninvolved I am in it. I think it's because I'm afraid people will think I don't respect the sacrifices that were made in the First World War or that I just don't care." Amelia's embarrassment reflects a more general ambivalence about the rituals of remembrance, as the extract she wrote for me below indicates, and this contrasts with the certainty of Scarlett above.

'Remembrance Day I lost my poppy running for the bus. I had a pond [pound] to buy a new pen but instead I check the school, the (anonymised name) leisure centre and (anonymised name) to see if anywhere were still selling poppies. When I worked out they were all sold out I gave up and considered making a poppy (as I had the craft stuff to do it on me). I decided that was worse than not having a poppy and just got on with my day without it. Even though I had an event after school and felt very disrespectful in not wearing a poppy I felt a little better that most people didn't have poppies anyway.'

Visiting Amelia at home gave a context to her uses and engagements with history and a much clearer sense of the person she described in her ethnography. As I sat down with Amelia and her family in the lounge, I felt a great sense of congenial disputation, driven not by point scoring but a desire to make sense of the world in order to change it. I was sat on one of the two generous and comfortable sofas facing each other across a large coffee table, configured in such a way that suggested a lively household, the television was in the corner and the room contained objects and pictures from the family's travels. Her brother, Callum, taking a break from Lego in the kitchen, joined us briefly. He was initially excited as my name, Jason Todd, is also the alias for Batman's sidekick Robin. He later left denouncing the conversation as 'boring' but not before volunteering his own pride in Stephenson's rocket.

Both fathers are integral to Amelia and Scarlett's sense making in the context of remembrance. Amelia and her father also share a broader political engagement and commitment. As I was leaving he pressed a flyer for the local Labour party candidate into my hand conceding that canvassing, which he often did with Amelia, was a pretty thankless task in this conservative rural stronghold. Some of the cultural artefacts that Amelia cited in making sense of the past were infused with a left-leaning sensibility. Amelia and her dad had attended the local Labour party showing of the *'Spirit of 45'*, the Ken Loach film about the origins of the NHS. Family holidays involved trips to unusual destinations like Romania. In explaining a family outing to the Somme Tristram recalls "The thing that we do" referring to himself and his brother, "is take the Somme on three levels." This begins, he explained with interpreting the landscape on a strategic level, then the graveyards that he characterised as 'the personal level', which he felt appealed to Amelia more. "And then there is one layer beneath – with your eye and my wife has got fantastic eyes – you can see fragments of bone, you can see First World War debris." This trip was with Amelia's uncle. Her mother told me this trip would leave her cold because, beyond the forensic, she would be thinking about the human emotional dimension. In a form of mild admonishment she

tells us “these bones are people’s graves, people’s children.” A disputation ensued about whether this visit represented depersonalised patina of debris or human stories. Her fundamental objection is the excavation of war, that is the digging up of artefacts, ‘which is a bad thing’ and her associated concern that this fascination might serve to glorify it.

Before her parents joined us, I had asked about Amelia’s book habits. Amelia and her dad are currently sharing reading of Thomas Picketty’s *Capital*, albeit Amelia concedes that she is “only 10 pages in”. Amelia’s stated rationale for reading a book like this is her desire to “sound like the smartest kid in the room” and secondly it was in the charity shop and it was cheap. I ask her how she goes about selecting books. She recalls how in the charity shop she would ask dad if he would read the book, he approves and it ends up on her bedside. It also builds on a recent interest in economics based on books like *Freakanomics* by Levitt and Dubner. Unlike Scarlett and Ivy, Amelia’s reading does not include fiction, since she thinks it is a waste of time, even while she is writing her own fictional account of WW1.

I had initially assumed, based on her relative absence in our school-based discussions, that Amelia’s mother was a diffident partner in Amelia’s history pursuit. Yet it was her mother who stimulated her thinking for a story-writing project, about a man who pretends to be a woman so he doesn’t have to fight or ‘get a white feather of shame’. Tristram had been clear to delineate how Amelia, as a girl, might be more interested in the personal dimensions of their trip to the Somme and gender played a role in film outings, so while *Spirit of 45* was a night out with dad. *Pride*, about the miners’ strike, was an all-girls outing. Her mother, a forensic scientist, recalls how Amelia, like herself, wanted to investigate and explore from a very young age, recounting how as a young girl Amelia would, with a friend, excavate ‘finds’ from the mud in the garden. However she concedes Tristram’s formative influence on Amelia’s engagement with history, but also attributes some of Amelia’s interest in the past and the forms it takes to her having a hybrid

identity especially, in the context of WW1 and the twentieth century, one derived from a German paternal grandparent and her experience having travelled the world.

Amelia's interest in the global scope of the war is also attributed by her mother to Tristram who, for example, discussed with her the Chinese labourers' contribution to the war. Amelia feels strongly that history should say something about the present and this relates to her shared commitment, with both parents, to social justice. Asked if history should have a moral dimension Amelia assents, "I think it would be brilliant if it did." She and her father debate and discuss moral questions in history. At school she had told me how the pair of them had been talking about slavery, based on an article about reparations, in terms of whether the present bears responsibility for the crimes of the past.

Family circumstances have contributed to Amelia's engagement in history. Her father takes a lead, his passionate enthusiasm is infectious. He is both guide and adversary; from the three-layered approach on trips to arguing about the meaning and place of graves. Tristram tells me that it is Amelia's mother side of the family that gives her interest a moral undertow, highlighting the human dimension of the past. However both parents engage with issues of social justice in the present and share that interest with Amelia.

For Scarlett too, family acts as a rich context for her explorations of the past. I visited the family on 1st April. As I parked up at the end of the cul-de-sac, I was surprised to hear the sound of sheep bleating. This rural soundtrack was a handy reminder that, despite being surrounded by modern semi-detached mock Tudor homes, this was not suburbia but a housing development on the edge of a village.

On arrival I was greeted by Scarlett's Dad, John, who semi-joked that his wife, Tracy, was busy swotting up on WW1. After I had chatted to Scarlett in the dining room all the family, including the cats and Scarlett's younger sister, Lottie, who is in Year 10 at the same school and also studying history, joined us in the lounge. Tracy seemed self-conscious, braced for an interrogation of her knowledge of WW1, but was forthcoming as revealed when she felt able to tell me about her grandfather's racist language. John was, in the main, watchful but volunteered a lot of detail including his own early childhood in Northern Ireland. Both the girls and the cats seemed at ease. Listening back to the recording I had a sense of a noisy household with lots of views aired, punctuated by lots of laughter. Lottie and Scarlett share an energy and enthusiasm. Scarlett proudly tells me how she drives them both to school and how they argue and chatter about history in the car.

Both parents are self-employed. John works in construction while Tracy is a professional cake maker; both took evident pride from their daughters' educational successes. In terms of history Scarlett had, prior to the visit, foregrounded her father's role in her interests. But when we talked about remembrance both parents are clear about the importance of those in the present paying their respects to the sacrifices made by those in the past. While the village has its own service and memorial (14 men died from this village in the Great War) the family would instead watch the national service on TV, with John making them all stand in their lounge at 11 o'clock as a mark of respect. This respect, especially for John, is located in pride for the soldier and the nation, something he attributes to his protestant upbringing in Northern Ireland where the British soldier was heroised and the presence of the military and history is ever present. They return occasionally to visit Belfast to see his family and have been on historic organised tours of the city that were richly articulated by dad's personal experiences. Tracy told me she is a "committed royal watcher" and how this also forms part of the remembrance respect.

Scarlett shares the duty to remember with her parents but like Amelia has a critical sense of the past. Scarlett, like Amelia, will pursue a university education, but unlike Amelia, Scarlett is a family pioneer in this regard. Scarlett is questioned by her father about history but more as a sense of provocation; he remains respectful of Scarlett's knowledge. A clearer sense of debate exists within Amelia's household, informed and sustained by a broader engagement with history and informed by both parents' professional lives, mum as a scientist and dad a police inspector where authority comes from the use of evidence.

Nevertheless what became clear as I talked to John and Tracy is how they both take history seriously. Earlier during the school sessions, Scarlett had characterised her mother as not interested in history and had explained that, together with her father, they teased her mother as belonging to the 'dark side' because of her perceived disengagement with history. When I visited her home Tracy mounted a spirited denunciation of this characterisation. She described how while the girls might sit at home with their father and watch documentaries about history, it was Tracy who would take them on trips outside of the home. Many of these trips were to enhance the study in school but Mum's passion for royalty meant visits to palaces, especially Hampton court. Both girls groaned in unison before laughing about the number of royal visits or holidays interrupted by news of royal babies. Mum was quite clear that the problem, which led to her unfair characterisation as somehow anti-historical, as belonging to the 'dark side', is that her passions were rarely reflected in the formal curriculum at school where war and the twentieth century tended to dominate. Nevertheless it was Tracy who took the family to the tomb of the Unknown Soldier a visit that helped create a personal connection to the war for Scarlett. Tracy told me, "When they were little I used to take them up individually to London and force them to go round these buildings." Tracy's family history is more immediate and local. Her own grandfather, who served in the home guard and was interviewed by Scarlett for a school project, lived locally and died only recently when Scarlett was 13. Tracy's family gives Scarlett a sense of

connection and immediacy with the past. Tracy's aunt has recorded and kept this history and it is shared collectively with family members including Scarlett and her sister who have both tapped into this archive for school projects.

For all the family, history was important such that they were almost judging each other's commitment to it. No one disputed Tracy's trenchant defence of her own role and engagement with history and Tracy clearly thought it was important to put the record straight.

What then are the sorts of historical understandings Scarlett draws out of her 'lived experiences' with the past? Outlined below is Scarlett's response to the survey question 'What does the First World War mean to you personally?'

'The First World War marks a significant period in the History of modern society.

Due to the nature of events that took place, from major decisions regarding international relations to personal decisions made by families, it is clear today that this war has had an impact in some way or another on every person living today.

There is not one person alive today who has no connection to the Great War, whether that be a lost soldier or a suffragette.

It is vital that we commemorate the First World War as its impact is still prominent in our world today, as now, in Britain, women have the right to vote, and there is no longer a British Empire.'

The theme of personal connection expressed here was echoed when Scarlett wrote about her experience of Remembrance Sunday while with her mum at Cake International in the NEC *'each person in that room had been affected'*. When I asked her at school if she had any personal connection Scarlett talked about how her great-great-grandfather was a lost soldier, something she became aware of on a trip with her mother to the tomb of the unknown soldier at Westminster. For her it was an "exemplar moment" in that it was "made apparent to me... as I became aware that the war had a direct impact on my family history."

Her determination that WW1 should be commemorated also stems partly from a more objective understanding of historical continuity so that the event is linked in clear ways to the ways in which we live our lives today, both in terms of women's suffrage and post-colonial independence. Scarlett's analysis here goes beyond a duty to remember and draws on a deep well of knowledge. The sources of this substantive knowledge, in Scarlett's case are varied, but would include home. "Watching my grandparents made me more concerned with feminism and its history: 'Don't carry that David, it's a woman's job'. I immediately went home and started researching feminism because this felt wrong to me; this research led me to the suffrage movements of World War 1." Scarlett's idea of continuity therefore is not divorced from an interest and understanding of change, in this case she wanted to explore the change in attitudes of society in relation to gender.

I have tried to indicate the ways in which Scarlett's and Amelia's understandings of history and WW1 have been shaped by a range of cultural factors. I have chosen to focus on two particular factors that I think had a formative influence on their understandings, their family and their gender. I will analyse these in more detail in the next chapter. What is clear however is that their understandings are multifaceted; that historical and personal meaning are created from the events of remembrance and history more generally. These meanings are shaped by a range of influences and it is clear that home plays an important part in this. This is not to suggest an easy or direct correlation, as both girls arrive at different understandings. Ivy, who I shall end with here, shares Amelia's and Scarlett's interest in the human stories of history perhaps also sharing a desire for history to serve a moral, presentist purpose. However for Ivy her family does not share such a passionate engagement with the past and when responding to what the war means to her she conceded a lack of personal connection to WW1. In addition while Ivy shares many of the human interest elements of a pursuit of the past, her father plays less of a role in her interest.

I met Ivy at home in the August of 2015. It had been a while since I had seen her at her college, but as she welcomed me into her hall she was relaxed and happy. Her home was a substantial, modern and non-descript detached property near the busy town centre- I noted a 'For sale' sign as I stood on the porch. In the hall we were joined by Nigel and Sharon, Ivy's parents; plus Monty the Springer spaniel; the hall felt welcoming and warm rather than busy.

Nigel offers me a cup of tea that Sharon makes. I could hear the radio as I walked through the light and airy kitchen to the south facing garden. Ivy and I sat outside, armed with the tea, leaving Sharon making the family dinner whilst chatting to Nigel, radio still on. Clematis scrambled over the arbour and we looked out onto a well-kept lawn with tidy flower beds overlooked by a generous conservatory. Later, being shown round the house, I noticed all the downstairs rooms offered generous communal space, the study now a second TV room, where Ivy would watch films. Little of a personal nature appeared on the walls or the decor but the dining tables in the garden, the kitchen and the conservatory, together with the food aromas of impending dinner, reinforced the idea of conviviality that Ivy had written and talked about before.

In her original piece of ethnographic writing Ivy signalled an embrace of the idea of a fluid identity, writing, '*I think that identity is always ambiguous and subjective.*' And she was aware of how settings and people have a bearing on this, 'My identity has been shaped definitely by the people around me.' At College, when we were joined by Mark Ivy took a much quieter role, as Mark held forth confidently, and I asked the questions. The Ivy I had met at school was much more of an observer, taking a back seat while Mark held forth. The idea of a watcher sat well with her cineaste passion, she described film as 'her thing.'

In her writing Ivy indicated an awareness of context in shaping interactions, *It is also interesting to consider that my friends and family would describe me completely differently to those who know me only slightly and would suggest that I am quiet and unconfident. In general, we adapt our personalities according to who we are with and I would say I am guilty of this perhaps more than others. At parents evening my mum is always surprised to hear that teachers say I am quiet, because she knows me to be forever talking, singing, dancing, laughing and shouting around this house.'*

Meeting Ivy at home, I get a clearer sense of this other dimension. And context matters, the shared areas of the house are full of conversation and noise, especially in Ivy's formative years as the youngest of three sisters. She, like them, will now be moving to university and this is perhaps why a 'For Sale' sign is aloft in the driveway. Ivy had talked and written about talking during meal times. When she wrote about the Remembrance Day she began with, *'at the dinner table with just my mum and I.'*

As we sat in the garden we discussed the composite portrait I had put together based on her writing and college based discussions. During the discussion I ask her what she thinks of the way I have described her. "I genuinely think that is quite accurate." I highlight that I claim she has a moral and ethical interest in history is that right? "Yeah, yeah yeah, that is completely it." I ask her to develop.

As she develops her response she broadens this moral and ethical dimension to include a passion for story and imagination, with people at the heart of her uses of history linking to her passion for film. "I like... I can see it when we learn about it like at A level I like the cultural things. I remember the bit when we did about the Weimar Culture this year I loved that. And also like...not necessarily the facts I didn't really like the military facts and stuff like that but why

things happened so yeah the moral and ethical questions. Which is why I think I like the connection with film because that is what comes across most in film.”

I ask if the passion for film is about the human dimensions? “Yeah definitely,” she warms to her theme, “Yeah and that is what I like about history in general. That is why I like Em’s teaching (her A level teacher) because she will like often just go off about these stories in general... Goes off like, the textbook stuff. Because what in general, what I am interested in, is that I love fiction and I love stories in general. And that is why I like history because it’s very similar because history is stories.”

I ask her to recommend something that would make me think about the morality of people. “What a film?” I accept. “Definitely the *Thin Red Line*. Have you seen it? (No) Have you seen *Saving Private Ryan*? (Yes) So I studied these two and I compared them because the *Thin Red Line* is really poetic and it’s a Terence Malick film (we briefly bond over a shared love of Malick specifically *Tree of Life*). So it’s like really beautiful and poetic, so it doesn’t seem realistic but it explores, like, a lot of deep questions and it just seems just true to life. *Saving Private Ryan* has been made to look aesthetically real... so Spielberg uses all these techniques to make you feel like you are in the battlefield, he did so much to make it as realistic as possible but then critics argue that the storyline is completely ridiculous and patriotic and cringey- and stuff like that.”

Beyond the critics I wonder what she thinks about *Saving Private Ryan*. “The first time I watched it I didn’t really think that but when reading all this about that I thought yeah it’s a bit stupid.”

Film is clearly a powerful tool that Ivy uses, articulated by her A level study, but I wonder about her interactions prior to her study of it.

“I can remember loving *The Fox and the Hound*, because it always made me cry at the end... I loved animal films. I loved *Andre* about a little girl who makes friends with a seal.” She giggles momentarily embarrassed.

I ask about *Goodnight Mr Tom*, a film she has mentioned at college. “I think we did something about it at school... in probably Year 5 I don’t know what we did about it I don’t know whether we would have read the book like that early on. But I think I got the DVD for Christmas. But I remember I just loved it I think because” She is really animated now. “It’s about the child, it’s much easier for the child to relate to it. And it’s kind of like that romantic idea of the children going off with their gas masks and obviously it’s not like ...” She briefly stumbles before adding, “it kind of seems exciting for a child because it’s like its.. it’s different.”

Later when we are in the kitchen with Sharon and Nigel the film comes up again. It is Ivy who asks, “Did you buy it for me?” They both answer in unison “yeah” before Sharon continues, “we brought it for you because I think you did cover it at junior school and it’s a really lovely film and we watched it as a family because we brought it as a Christmas present, or something like that, as something to share. But I would have said that before you studied film your interests would have been the current popular market the current blockbuster that was out. And now it’s very diverse isn’t it?” she adds querulously, before continuing. “Films I haven’t heard of and a lot that are yes ...quite brutal.” Sharon ends by laughing at herself regarding her shock at the brutality of the films Ivy is keen to share with them now.

One of the key themes of *Goodnight Mr Tom* is evacuation and as we sat round the kitchen table it was clear that the family had a more personal memory of evacuation, yet this was not raised in the context of *Goodnight Mr Tom* by any of them. Nigel had mentioned his Dad’s evacuation to

the Isle of Wight during the Second World War. Ivy protests “I have never talked to grandad about that.”

“Well you have to mum’s dad.” Nigel ripostes.

“Yeah because he has all these stories, we love grandad, he has all these stories about how he was left in the house peeling potatoes while the other children went out.”

“He didn’t have a good experience of evacuation” Sharon interjects. Ivy defends her absent grandparent, “but he has lots of good stories to tell!” Sharon concurs, “He certainly has.”

Ivy relays a story of granddad lying in bed as a boy, hearing the adults arguing, with the husband saying to the wife ‘You love him more than me’. Ivy also tells us how on holiday this year in Devon her boyfriend, Joe, got to hear these stories.

This exchange, about grandad’s evacuation stories, was stimulated not by the film *Good night Mr Tom* but my questioning about the role played by grandparents in Ivy’s interests.

Chapter 6: A portrait of Younis

Younis greets me with a broad smile, perhaps slightly sheepish. I have arrived early at his home, and he is hanging out the handwashing in the yard behind his father's shop. It is the first of May, a bright spring Sunday morning and a good day for drying. 'Back home' in Sylhet it is 4 o' clock in the afternoon. It will be warm, but also the start of the rainy season. Younis is wearing glasses today, he doesn't always, and another changeable feature is his nascent beard.

Place and faith matter to Younis. He lives in Oxford, where he was born, with his parents and two younger brothers in a flat above a fast-food franchise restaurant run by his father, Ashraf. The restaurant opens out onto one of the most affluent areas of the city. Crowded with restaurants and pubs, the area is a popular destination for the city's middle classes. Although the shop is not quite the upmarket food venue the street is used to, it garners ecstatic online reviews from local students.

I had assumed when I first met Younis, at his school in October, that he would live in Cowley Road in East Oxford. Cowley Road is home to Oxford's most diverse range of communities. James Attlee, in his book about the road, lists this diversity and asks, if one really has to make a pilgrimage, "Why make a journey to the other side of the world when the world has come to you?" (Attlee 2009, p.16) And it is to Cowley Road that Younis makes a daily pilgrimage, because it is here that all of Oxford's three mosques can be found, including the Bangladesh Islamic mosque where we had met the month before.

The other place of pilgrimage for Younis is Bangladesh. In his personal journey, Younis referred to Bangladesh in his writing as 'back home'.

My community (Bengali) is always complaining of the differences in life here [England] and back home. I never grasped the differences to the extent they mentioned, until I visited my country. Indeed, for once the community hadn't exaggerated their accounts, and the differences were huge.'

Yet his visits are infrequent: his first was as an 11-year-old, with his brother and his mother, followed more recently, in December just past, with the whole family. Younis writes about the differences between life in Bangladesh and in the UK in his account.

Not bringing to account the physical differences (lack of electrical energy, non-existent infrastructure, village politics), the very structure of a day changed. Lunch extends to several hours during the hot season; also another supposed safe point that changed was the home structure. Three generations, as well as distant (in some cases, obscure) relations live under one roof, as can be imagined there was no private space, it was almost like they had no notion of privacy.'

When we met at school in November, with two other students also from BAME backgrounds, I wanted him to develop the ways in which Bangladesh impacts on his sense of identity. Would he consider living there? “Yep, no problem whatsoever”. His answer was direct and he immediately added: “Even if my parents lived here.” I was curious, given his limited visits there, about why he has such a strong association, how this was maintained and whether this has always been the case. In conversation at school, he conceded that Bangladesh exists largely in his imagination, but an imagination fed and maintained by his mother, who he described as, “a proper village lady from Bangladesh”. He elaborated on the role his mother plays in maintaining his connection to Bangladesh.

Through my mother on this side because she was important in terms of development in Bengali culture and norms. For example, at home I only speak Bengali with my mother because she won't accept English. She understands English, but if I talk to her she just won't reply, so

when I talk to her it is always Bengali. And my mum, she is always constantly talking about Bangladesh. About when I was young and how she constantly wants to go back so... as a child it was pure imagination. I had assumed that it would be some wonderful tropical rainforestry sort of place, which obviously was very different when I got there. Also, simply constant exposure to these sort of plans led me to make the sort of connection to Bangladesh that I haven't before I had ever been there.

The centrality of Bangladesh in his identity today, as well as in his imagination, wasn't always apparent. During our December conversation I asked him about what he remembered about that earlier visit: "As a 12-year-old I was very disappointed." He lets out a laugh as he remembered the visit. "The state of the toilets are horrendous, no technology, nothing whatsoever. It put me off Bangladesh as a child." He described to me his transformed positive association brought about following his last visit: "I went more open-minded and that time I fell in love with the country. It's really strange, so for instance if you compare it with life here, life here is a lot better, definitely, no argument! But from a cultural and sense of belonging, I feel more at home in Bangladesh. Simply because I speak the language I am more comfortable with and the people... also they are my family."

His mother's role in this is critical. Yet he made no mention of her in writing his personal journey, where he mentions his father some nine times. Only by asking about the absence, both at school and when I visited the home, did I get a sense of her role.

Visiting the family home, which is in the north of the city, in May, I say hello to his mother but, maybe for language reasons, I had no further contact. The first floor above the shop has two rooms, the lounge and the kitchen, off a small landing. She sat in the kitchen; with someone who

I later found out was another female relative. I was ushered quickly into the lounge to meet with Younis' father, Ashraf, and Younis' two brothers. Occasionally, the youngest was sent out to the kitchen by Ashraf to check or fetch refreshments.

Much of the early part of the visit was dominated by Ashraf, who asked me so many questions that I began to doubt who exactly the researcher was. The brothers had hardly said a word, so after 35 minutes had elapsed, I began asking about shared family stories. Ashraf is bemused. I offered an example of my own mother telling me stories about Malaysia. Ashraf, who had taken to calling me 'Mr Jason', seemed initially perplexed by this line of enquiry and then offered this: "But Mr Jason, this is for benefit of my sons as well. He and him and him!" He pointed to the three of them. "We live in a society where he is confused, he doesn't know whether he is Bengali or he is English. And the dilemma becomes if Bangladesh were playing England at cricket. Who they going to support then? And I have seen my boys when England lose in World Cup, you know the football, they actually get sad!" He is incredulous. "I've seen that. Yet I tell them, you know you are Bengali. I say that to them. What can you say for yourself? Are you English or a Malaysian?"

This *volte face* typifies our exchanges, as in response to Ashraf's interruption I try to explain my own identity conflict and ambivalence. Ashraf pronounces: "Well, you see, it is more deep-rooted in you. You have English blood and Malaysian blood." It is therefore with relief and desire for survival that I return to my enquiry about the place of family stories. Ashraf thinks of this and then: "Hang on a bit. Let me bring Yemin in on this one. I can't remember sharing a story with you. You understand what Mr Jason is asking?"

Thankfully, Yemin does: "Sometimes mum would say stories about her brothers and things. To give us some idea of Bangladesh, so we would kinda have an idea of what Bangladesh is like."

The youngest brother is dispatched to the kitchen by Ashraf on an errand. Yemin continues.

“My last visit was seven or eight years ago, so I don’t remember much, but we are planning on visiting again, to boost our cultural understanding and pride for the national country.” Yemin goes on, developing something that Younis has talked about before, during our school visits, relating this cultural understanding to the way they live at home: “We always link back to Bangladesh, culturally at home we live quite a Bengali lifestyle. We stick to our lifestyle, the food we eat, the way we act. So I think the Bengali culture is quite deep rooted in us more than the English culture.”

I then ask Younis about his more recent visit. “Yes, I think it was Christmas time, December? Just last year. So yeah, similar to my brother, stories from my mother, mainly. But when I went to Bangladesh over Christmas with both my parents, when I could actually see what was going on, we talked about sort of village and village politics and how everyone views each other and a little bit about the whole country, but mainly focusing on our local area. And yeah, like my brother said, the actual culture, the way it is permeated in our household here, in England, so yeah, the food we eat, and also the language, so I speak to my mum in Bengali and sometimes my dad, but mainly English, and also with general family members it always speaking to them in Bengali as well.”

Ashraf disputes this, chuckling, “No it’s not! You speak English mostly.”

“On my mum’s side,” Younis offers.

“Oh, that’s because they can’t speak English.” Ashraf says dismissively. “And with your mum you speak Bengali. Do you speak English with your mum? Do you?” He turns to me “That’s a funny thing you know they can talk to me in English right now.” He shakes his head. “But when they turn to their mother they turn to their dialect, they turn to their mother’s language. It’s funny you know.”

This exchange revealed some of the ways Bangladesh figured as a place in Younis' imagination and I shall return to this home visit to explore other themes. However as well as Bangladesh, another important place for Younis is the mosque. Younis suggested when I visited him in school that I came to his mosque and also met his Iman. The role faith plays in Younis' life is of critical importance. All our conversations illustrated his deep knowledge and commitment to the Islamic faith and he wrote in his personal journey:

'I often have markedly different reactions to events than other people due to my beliefs.'

I was keen to get sense of the specific role the mosque played in Younis' faith and the development of his ideas and was pleased that he had suggested it.

Younis had told me, at school, he liked to visit all three mosques in the city, but we arranged to meet at the Bangladeshi mosque off Cowley Road. The café we had agreed to meet in was closed and this meant there was a mix-up in our arrangements, so I joined him in the mosque after prayers had finished. As I waited for Younis outside, I counted some 20 men enter the mosque. Most were of Asian origin, a couple were dressed in *jubbas* or *thobes*. The building is a fairly non-descript, two-storey terraced house. 'For Sale' and 'To Let' signs were assigned to one of the neighbouring premises. According to Younis, the building was given by the local council to the Bangladeshi community as a place of worship in the late 1950s, which has meant most worshippers are Bangladeshi in origin.

Inside, I initially started a conversation with Younis as some people continued their prayers. I was struck both by Younis' openness in inviting me and how unperturbed the men were by my presence, despite their praying. I had a lapel microphone, but decided against using it, instead noting down what was said. It is quite a small space and we sat on two of only three chairs at one end of the room.

I asked what role the mosque played in his life. For Younis predominantly a house of God and a place of prayer, he added that in Arab countries it served a more community purpose, but this was less evident here. Later, he also delineated the difference between the Pakistani mosques up the road that seemed more of a community focal point.

The Iman, who turned out to be the assistant, joined us and suggested we went upstairs for more privacy. The room is used for teaching and was again quite bare, but with books on the shelves. I began asking about the place of history in the Islamic faith.

The Iman told me a 'story' of the elephant and the *Ka'ba*¹³. He prefaced it by telling me it was a story that predated the Prophet. Ostensibly it is the story of a miracle. Younis listened initially, but after the story had finished both asserted how remarkable that a small bird with stones might be able to defeat an elephant. It also asserts the centrality of the *Ka'ba* to the Muslim faith. In terms of the history it was Younis who explained that Muslims, then, used events like this one as temporal markers - the year of the elephants and how this, in turn, makes it hard to date events.

What interested me was that the telling of this story, notwithstanding my asking about the relationship with history, felt very much to be in the tradition of Christian parables. I asked about alternative interpretations. And both suggested that, in terms of Koranic stories, no doubt exists.

The *Sunnah*, or the sayings of the prophet, are much more open to interpretation, they told me, and this includes the *hadith*, or what the prophet did. The Iman's phone rang at this point and he briefly excused himself, but this didn't stop Younis elaborating on the process of interpretation.

¹³ Ka'ba is a building at the centre of Islam's most holy mosque in Mecca. It is considered the house of Allah and Muslims face the Ka'ba when performing prayer.

The Koran is the primary source of authority, he said, following this is the *hadith*, the various reports describing the words, actions or habits of the prophet, more open to interpretation, given its oral nature. If there is a contradiction between the Koran and the *hadith*, the Koran will usually take priority. However, it can be reconciled via *Qiyas*, a form of scholarly reasoning, where scholars draw on historic and documented writing to make arbitration, based on the idea of precedence. Finally, there is *Ijtihad*, which is a form of independent reasoning. Younis was clear and concerned that these processes, especially the operation of *Qiyas* was “not happening nowadays”, and that people tend not to do “*ijtihad*”. This confident articulation of aspects of his faith was typical of Younis in all the conversations we have had, where he is both serious and fluent.

One consistent theme that Younis had raised was the idea of the *Ummah*, a group of individuals sharing a single Muslim identity (Wheeler, 2005). In our interview on 15 December, at school, he had described the difficulty of negotiating his own Muslim identity, given external perceptions of Muslims and internal divisions. “It’s really, really difficult.” He let out a sigh. “However, the Muslim *Ummah*, it is a body. If there is a pain in one part of the body, the brain registers it, you feel the pain. So if there is pain in the foot, you will feel it; it is still a part of you. And that is what we are trying to imply. That suggests that the Muslim *Ummah* is united. It should...” he placed a heavy emphasis here, “stick together.”

At the Mosque, the topic of the *Ummah* came up again, this time in the context of the *Shia* and *Sunni* split. The Iman had re-joined us and I was struck by how confident Younis was in articulating his perspective and the respect the Iman afforded Younis. The Iman, in his explanation, asked Younis for reassurance about whether *al-Amin* meant ‘truthful’. The Iman’s explanation for the split was that, as the Muslim faith spread, people took the ‘wrong meaning’ and perhaps also drew on norms of European society that saw the family as the key to succession. What is interesting is that this was followed by Younis’ own explanation. He began

talking about how the ‘basis of the Shia claim’ is rooted in the story of King David and how the throne was passed to Solomon, a member of the direct family. The exchange between the two of them indicated a complex, non-hierarchical relationship.

In our final conversation as a group, on the role of the mosque, this respect was again evident. Younis took the Iman’s idea, that the mosque was a place where people learned about Islam, and developed it. He gave the example of two different and contrasting *hadiths*. One that tells that the prophet stood while he prayed the other that he sat while he prayed. Some Muslims have taken this to mean that you can sit and pray (there were, after all, no chairs in the mosque). Younis told me how scholars are better able to contextualise these *hadiths*, explaining that the sitting describes the prophet praying while injured from battle, highlighting in his mind the need not to take the *hadith* at face value and the need to think about contextual details.

They both said that, increasingly, Muslims are not accepting the work of the scholar, something that concerned them both. The Iman ascribed this to a general malaise and lack or waning of faith. Younis ascribed it to the nation state creating a split in the *Ummah*; such that scholars in Saudi, for example, serve the interests, or are induced by the context, of their nation, to interpret in a partial way. Younis had mentioned before the problems he thought the nation state, a western imposition, had caused Muslim people. He later added how the scholars don’t have a broader knowledge of the geo-political situation. Finally, he agreed that social media might also play its part.

After the Iman had left, Younis and I continued our conversations in the top room, the Iman saying we were welcome to stay for as long as we liked and to let ourselves out. Younis’ earliest memories of coming to the mosque were as an eight-year-old, coming two or three times a week with his father. He mentioned how his family had thought about sending him to a *madrassa*, but had decided to keep him in the English education system. While talking about these earlier

experiences, he reflected that, back then, faith had less of a bearing than race. He talked about a recognition of lots of brown faces, but also how ‘markedly different’ the *madrasa* teaching was to school classes; namely in the greater respect afforded to elders in the mosque setting.

He told me that on Fridays the mosque operates more like a community centre and how the Pakistani mosque has a programme that people can sign up to for exploring faith-related issues. He gave an example to illustrate how much more community-orientated and proactive he believed the Pakistani mosque to be, “Recently, following some issues with the youth, the Iman talked to parents about trying to be understanding and to the youth about their need to respect.”

The issues concerned an EDL¹⁴ march in Oxford and a desire by younger Muslims to challenge this. Developing this theme, Younis talked about a ‘feeling of being victimised’ with a huge negative stigma attached to being a Muslim and that this was ‘getting worse and worse.’

This more expansive approach was not evident in the Bangladesh mosque, which stressed the “idea that religion was greater than culture”, that the bond of Islam takes precedence over everything else.

Younis had often, in discussion and in writing, put forward the idea that each individual is best suited to their culture. His use of the word ‘culture’ here is, I think, a reference to race and ethnicity, and his view is that these are not as significant a bond as faith. Across his writing and conversations some inconsistencies are evident, a reflection of how he is trying to work things out, not just in what he means by culture, but in how critical ideas of race and ethnicity are to his own identity and making sense of the world. A larger degree of consistency existed over the limited possibility for people of different faiths and possibly cultures to live in an integrated way.

¹⁴ English Defence League

I believe each individual is best suited to a culture, often being one that a person is directly connected to, though not necessarily always.' And this, sometime, related more broadly to his ideas about history and WW1.

Younis submitted two versions of his personal account, initially a shorter two-page piece, followed by a longer six-page account. When I ask the group on 5 November whether writing their accounts was hard, Younis was the most enthusiastic: "When I first started; but then I was thinking about it and then I realised there are lots of things I have done that I wasn't aware of. So when I finally got going, I really got into it; not finished yet!" I asked about how easy it was to be honest: "Well I'm quite open anyway. A lot of people don't like me anyway." This last comment was disquieting. Ngozi, responding to the same question said: "Like Younis, I am quite an open person but I don't have as strong opinions."

These strong opinions were evident in his writing and in our conversations, but were never conveyed in an aggressive tone and often contained some degree of qualification. One potentially estranging idea that Younis put forward was that people from different cultures can't really live together. On 5 November, a discussion on race reflected on the partial nature of the curriculum and all agreed there were significant absences. Younis went further, explaining: "I'm actually a segregationist. I believe that these differences are inherently found within the races, there is nothing you can do about it so..." The others shifted uncomfortably, but did not respond or challenge this idea.

In his writing, Younis developed this idea in relation to his own context.

'The term 'fresbie' is used prominently by the people of the Indian subcontinent to refer (in the example of Britain) to immigrants who fail to successfully adapt to British cultural values and society. Prime examples include only being able to converse in Pidgin English, and complaining constantly of how much better life is 'back home'. Clearly, these individuals are experiencing cultural clashes, failing to merge the new with the old. However, as different cultures are

markedly unique to each other, one questions whether it is possible to successfully fully implement aspects from each culture a person is affiliated with together into a person's character and identity.'

He develops this in relation to his own experiences.

'In my case, for example, contrasting expectations need to be dealt with. At home, I disregard cutlery and simply use my hands to eat. However, in the public sphere (influenced by British culture) cutlery use is the norm and I will use a knife and fork with no qualms. This suggests that differing aspects of varying cultures can be balanced; this is not the case as it is far easier for me to disregard cutlery, but I do not due to norms placed by society. Hence, I believe that different cultures cannot be balanced successfully by any individual. The problem with this conclusion is the fact that with time (as do all things), both culture and social norms change.'

In his writing, we can see Younis debating with himself, in contrast to the school-based discussion where he simply asserts a statement of fact, almost as a provocation. Nevertheless, a consistent case is being made that each individual is best suited to their culture, however that may be defined.

In his personal journey, Younis elaborates a range of sources for his ideas. In talking about European enlightenment, he cites Andrew Heywood. Later, talking about discussing faith in the Middle East, he quotes the Koran. In trying to get to grips with the idea of race, he draws on a number of different sources.

'I delved for answers and opinions amongst books, most notably The Autobiography of Malcolm X & Roots (Alex Haley). From reading, my perspective once again shifted. Coupled with research into history not taught in schools (history of the non-white peoples), my history, I became more cynical due to the oft recounted horrors of slavery, imperialism and colonialism,

believing that the Western, white people are determined to retain control over the world in all aspects. History corroborates this opinion repeatedly, the dignity and right to freedom taken for granted today was substantially abused by Europeans during the slave trade. Elijah Muhammad and Malcolm X were adamant that slavery had robbed the Africans in America of their identity, with many not able to recall their heritage and original culture.'

He prefaces this however with, *'Unfortunately, I never really debated the issues of race and culture with my peers or other people.'* When I met him again at school on 15 December, this time by himself, I was curious to understand what stimulated this particular engagement and how he chose these sources.

"Garvey came first, so I was learning about slavery at school but at the time I didn't think a great deal of it. Later, I can't remember when, I was talking to one of my dad's friends, who was an African lady, and she was very opinionated and we got on to talking about that and I thought I will look into it. She was talking about race, not politics, just the historical facts. I think I searched something about slavery on *Wikipedia* and on the page it sort of presented the other view, the reaction to slavery. So then I clicked on that and Marcus Garvey 'Back to Africa' and repatriation movement. That led me to Malcolm X, his autobiography. I read it, I really enjoyed it, and that led me to further research into general racism."

Talking as a group in November, about the curriculum, I got an insight into what stimulates Younis' interest. "One thing that annoyed me was that throughout education here you have never been taught African history, Oriental history." All three of the students expressed frustration at the perceived omissions in the curriculum, but Younis acts on this. "So I do my own research. So I say, well, I don't want to stay ignorant! I want to find out about other people's cultures. And then I realise that history is clearly not as simple as you imagine it to be; there is a lot of other factors, politics, economics, which led to me to research into those areas."

What else prompts his interest in race I ask him? “Originally from my dad, talking about racism, that made me aware that people – well, that there is differences. Technically, we don’t want these differences to exist, but they do exist, so how do we deal with it”

Younis had opted not to take history as an A level, but maintains a clear interest in it, particularly in the way it helps him make sense of the world in which he lives. All the young people I spoke to on 5 November were interested in current affairs and saw a clear role for history in helping to understand the contemporary world, though for Younis this was quite clearly delineated. “Yeah, I do, but is a fixed interest. For me, personally, it’s just the Middle East or Islamic people as such. So in terms of the migrant crisis, it’s more it’s bearing on Syria; that is what interests me. And also the oil crisis, of course, and how the oil is managed.” This led him to say a lot about the way in which the WW1 is remembered.

Following the Remembrance Day service on Sunday 8 November, I asked all the students to write something about what the day meant to them, if anything. Younis began his written account, *Neither myself or members of my family have ever commemorated the Remembrance Ceremony.*

He goes on to explain.

First, it is of utmost importance that we fully understand the meaning of the ceremony, the British Legion state that Remembrance Sunday ‘is a day for the nation to remember and honour those who have sacrificed themselves to secure and protect our freedom.’ Contrastingly, the BBC says that ‘the anniversary is used to remember all the people who have died in wars, not just World War One.’ However, the list they then present only catalogues wars involving Great Britain. Therefore, my understanding is that Remembrance Sunday is primarily for the British people.’

The involvement in the research has clearly stimulated Younis. His feelings about the ceremony are defined by his identity as an outsider. He writes: *For people who do not identify as British (myself*

included), we find ourselves in murky waters.’ In addition, Younis has a different perspective on WW1, not just its remembrance. *‘WW1 is seen in my eyes as not a British triumph, but as the last nail in the old man of Europe’s coffin. A disaster further exacerbated by the collapse of the Islamic Caliphate, and the implementation of nation states defined by borders (one commonly interpreted as being a rogue state doesn’t help matters) over a people that were united by their faith. Thus, the Remembrance Ceremony is a painful anniversary for me and Muslims, a reminder that the Middle Eastern and Muslim peoples are disunited, and engulfed in war with each other, ironically.’* Younis’ perspective on WW1 is profoundly influenced by his interest in what is happening in the Middle East today.

When talking with his peers on 5 November, prior to the Remembrance service, I asked them all how WW1 might offer a perspective on their interests in the contemporary world. Ngozi’s interests alighted on the domestic economy (houses prices and employment), Harry talked about the migrant crisis; neither were able to make any links. Younis, whose interests were in the contemporary Middle East, enthusiastically and confidently related the connections as he saw them.

“I think it is very obvious, the two connections. First World War, obviously Germany against the allies and the Ottoman Empire against the allies. And as soon as the First World War was ended, Ottoman Empire split up. The Middle East map is drawn in Europe. So in the Middle East every single nation directly resulted from WW1- literally!” He goes on; “And the migrant crisis, as such, obviously in Syria most of the people are running to protect their lives. But also people are running here for opportunity. The reason for that is industrial revolution that led to First World War; better social conditions and that is why the migrants are coming over here.”

So while Younis might ‘passively ignore’ remembrance, as a ceremony only for the British, he is interested in the events of WW1 and particularly the bearing they have on the contemporary Middle East. This relates to his interest in history of non-white people - ‘my’ history; a history he

feels is often excluded from the curriculum and remembrance. He pursues these interests through online research, sometimes stimulated by conversations or school, and reads extensively to make connections that he feels explain the state of the world he is living in. However, in our discussions and in his writing I had a sense that he was engaged in this process in a different way to his usual *modus operandi*.

Younis writes about one incident in his personal journey that demonstrates how he would usually go about his thinking. *'Recently, a white (proper blonde, blue-eyed, an ideal 'devil' for black separationist movements) friend declared she was scared any time she was in Cowley, but not in any other part of Oxford. I racked over her statement many times, and came to the conclusion (of course, I could be totally wrong) that this was due to the colour of the people living there, being far less white people density present than in other parts of Oxford.'* The 'racking' he did was done alone, while his tentative conclusions have not been tested in conversation with the girl or others like her.

However, when I asked him in November what it was like writing his personal account, he told me; "When I was writing it - it just opened my mind. I started to think of things in different ways. I've been pondering things differently; especially history because my dad insists that history is 'a set of lies agreed upon.'" This suggested a different approach being taken. In December, I suggested to him that the way he usually goes about thinking about things is like a sponge, absorbing lots of details in books or online but not really talking to anyone about what the conclusions he has come to. With a broad smile of recognition he agrees; "That would be a really good analogy." That the writing and talking, as we have done, is not his usual process, there were a number of times in our conversations where following a question from me, Younis would initially give an answer, then pause and conclude "But you are making me think now."

One key influence in Younis meaning making was clearly his father, Ashraf. This is how he begins his personal account: *'Regarding the early years of my life, no specific event comes to mind that could*

be interpreted as shaping my character. However, constant exposure to ideals/ teachings of my father as a young child has led to changes in my beliefs as I developed and matured as a person.'

His father's influence is the first thing I asked him about when we meet, alone, in December.

"It's really weird because, you know, the way he does it, everyone has got a view on everything right, and so he is just trying to, sort of, implement his view on me. They range from everything, so like, from religion to politics that I have talked about. Or simply from the way we should dress, manners, eating and etiquette. Etiquette, everyone knows, eat with your mouth closed..." he paused for a moment, considering, "But in terms of classes, he is sort of set on the upper class, middle class, lower class - those three grouping. He always sings a song in Bengali" he corrects himself, "well, not always; he **occasionally** sings a song that says a mango tree will always give mangos. Right?" He looked to me to check my understanding? "So he is saying that if you are working class, it is very difficult for you to come... to increase your status."

Younis and his father aren't always in accordance and tensions exist particularly around race.

This is how he writes about a disagreement regarding race.

*'My father discriminates against races of people, however in the fashion of a true critic he is never appeased and insults himself as well as people of other races. Interestingly, he never condemns people independently, rather he condemns people collectively. I am aware that the above written sentence is paradoxical, **in most scenarios**. My father would argue most probably that he is not a racist, but a racialist (I cannot state with certainty due to the fact I am constantly astounded by his declarations on people's behaviour being mainly due to skin colour, truly tongue-tied, and have thus never accused him of being {blatantly} racist). Regarding this, I oppose my father's view, which I hope the majority of people do, but this was not always the case. When I was younger, I avoided black children due to the associated prejudices of thievery, dope-dealing and gang violence. However, as I got older and started to ponder independently over life; I came to*

the conclusion that at the end of the day, people irrespective of their descent, need food, shelter, commerce and social interaction.'

Younis, later in the piece, is quick to contextualise his father's attitude; *'Perhaps I should not be too hasty about condemning my father, as a child when he first lived in England (1970s); racism from the whites was commonplace, abusive and, most dangerously, a **normal** part of life. My father seems to have taken this to heart ... and never truly gotten over it.'*

In December, when we met, Younis talked about the apparent divisions and conflict between different Muslims in the Middle East. He began initially making the case that: "At the end of the day, it is a Muslim problem and we have got to solve it ourselves." But develops this in an interesting way:

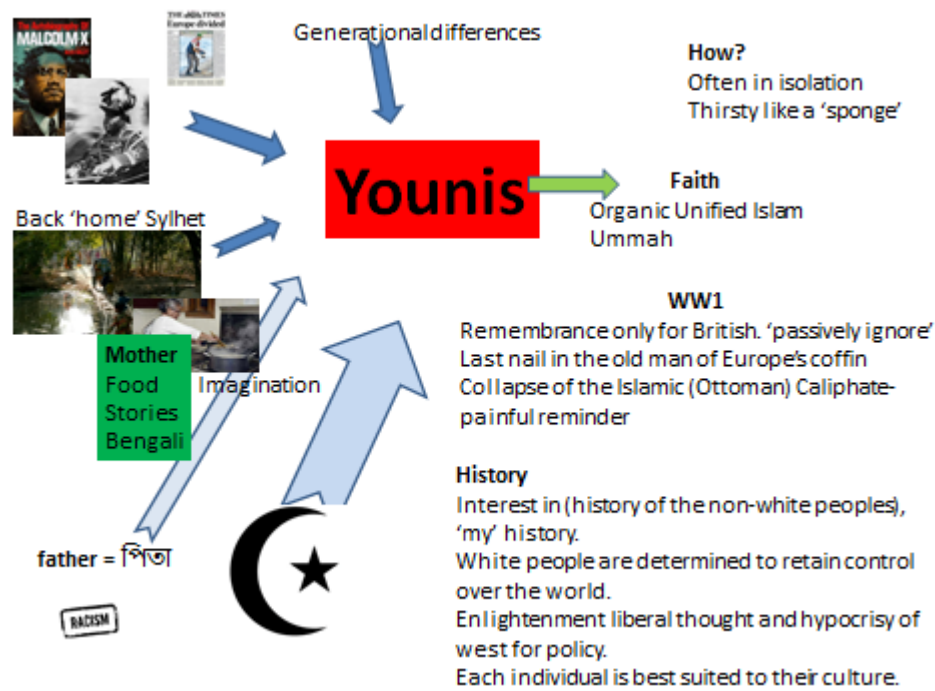
If that involves taking help from outside groups, secular organisations but has clearly got to be done about the situation. The model is that a lot of especially younger Muslims, say, in this city, say, is that if you look at the western world, so England...there is a lot of Muslims there, living really fine, and they are cohabiting with different Muslim ideologies without a problem. So if we were to take this model and implement it in the Middle East, surely we should have the same results. A lot of younger Muslim think that, so involvement from the west, so like a humanist viewpoint, we can make the Middle East situations better and more stable. However, a lot of less moderate Muslims, old school Muslims, which I like to tell them as, they reject this, you can't have non-believers, but the problems with that is that they don't propose a solution.

He appears to be both arguing with himself and suggesting a generational difference. I asked him if generational differences lay at the heart of this.

“Yeah, I think there is; there has got to be! Because if you look at the” he paused, weighing things up again, “ideology and thoughts, especially of the younger year, people of my year, they are a lot more media related, they are a lot more modern! However people like my father and people in the same age group as him, they are a lot less liberalistic, lots less democratic. They are saying that in Islamic countries there should be Islamic law, there shouldn’t be secularism.” He was clearly warming to his theme, “in this generation, I feel that a lot of the Muslims are more open to secularism and they are **open to change, reform** within Islam making it more modern so to say.” He placed a clear emphasis on the words open, change and reform.

And so I return to my visit to the home, upstairs in the lounge with Younis, his two brothers and his father Ashraf. We are sitting in the lounge. I have been invited by Ashraf to sit on the sofa. The wall opposite has writing, in Arabic, I presume from the Koran and a picture of the *Kaaba*. The two oldest brothers sit opposite me, taking an armchair each. Ashraf is at the end of the sofa and the youngest brother perches next to his father. I am trying to outline what Younis and I have been doing and why I am here, referring to the pictogram in figure 21, that I have brought and asking them about their impressions of their oldest brother.

Figure 21 : Composite graphic portrait of Younis



Ashraf interrupts “So who are you?” He asks querulously. It is not a good start on my part.

“You are doing a PhD at the moment on racial behaviour?” he asks. I hadn’t mentioned race at all in my explanation.

“So how can ‘we’ help you Mr Jason”

How would you describe Younis? I ask. He leans across to me and frowning asks,

“You want me to tell you how I would describe my own son?” He is incredulous “Do you have children yourself?” I have no idea where this is going, before I can answer another question. “Mr Jason, where are you from?”

Although I feel like the visit is running away from me, I submit to the questions and begin describing my mother’s Malay Indian ancestry. “And your father?” He seems impatient. I explain that he is an Englishman from Blackpool.

“It wasn’t a love match was it? He went looking for a wife in Malaysia.” He declares.

“And you talk about First World War; there is more to history then First World War.” It feels like he is trying to provoke me and I tell him the choice of WWI is entirely coincidental. “It’s just that over the next four years, the government...” He interrupts “Are you working for the government? Cameron?”

By this stage, the youngest has left the room to ask his mother about the tea, while the two older brothers are looking intently at their feet. He picks up on the theme of WW1, making the case that compared to then, we live in a very small world.

He asks: “Why the colleges, the university, the government has chosen to teach the youngsters about the First World War?” He answers his own question. “And then get their perception or show them and put them in the frame of mind of growing up – it’s probably imperialism, materialism probably. Now I started this conversation just now and I nearly forgot because I don’t even have any knowledge of any of the world wars. Right! And I am 46.” He announces defiantly before asking “And I think you should tell us what started the First World War?”

This feels like a trap, but luckily no explanation is required or probably wanted.

He looks to Younis, perhaps to answer this question, but instead declares, “Well, he probably has the knowledge, but he is knowing only what he has been taught. You know very well, Mr Jason, History is...” He pauses briefly; “almost becoming surreal or almost lies to a certain extent. So which game are you playing?”

I am given a moment to give a view that history has many possible interpretations. He listens for a moment before looking to his oldest sons; the youngest has now joined us again. He laughs, “My son is not liking this, I am arguing too much.” He looks pleased with himself.

In an effort to pull things back, I ask if there are any historical events that he considers important that should be studied.

“Any historical event of any importance?” He doesn’t appear to understand the question.

“Important to what?” he asks. “Important to you.” I reply trying to encourage a personal comment.

He looks again to Younis who is, by now, sitting with his arms crossed and eyes looking down at the floor. “Younis are you alright? Do you need a jumper or anything?” And then turns back to me.

“You see, it is interesting. I didn’t expect all my sons to be here. Did you ask them to be here? (Younis nods) Oh, OK interesting. Now for me. I always see religiously. I look through religious eyes. I am not extremist or fanatic or I feel that everyone is ...first of all...are you religious?”

The tea had by now arrived and I had thought my examination to be over. I tell him, reluctantly, that I am not.

“So we have an issue here? Your mentality and mine is going to be different. Do you believe in the evolution?”

I give some response about it being arrogant to believe that there is nothing bigger than humanity, but that I don’t have a belief in formalised religion. His analysis of me continues.

“So, in your mind, you are confused right now. You don’t believe in formalised religion and you can’t say if there is an evolution or not.” I try to respond “Therefore, all major religions are telling you Adam and Eve, this is how mankind started.”

He makes a case that religion is the key determinant of a person's identity, transcending nation and other factors. "Now for me sir. There is no significance for me. All I see, the significance is Adam. For me Adam coming on earth." He lowers his voice; "Can you understand?"

I think I do, he is answering my question about events of significance, and I pursue this and ask where would he look for that history? I'm trying to get at the sources of his understanding, not proof.

He laughs incredulously "You are proof!"

He gives an extended account of the proof of Adam and Eve in all the major religions before concluding; "So to answer your question sir, the most significant part of history for me would be, (he pauses to laugh) the call of Mohammed."

This is where I try to get the boys to talk about stories from Bangladesh that I mention at the start of the chapter. This succeeds in bringing the two older boys in until the conversation shifts on to how the boys chose their subjects at GCSE and A level. Both boys had chosen to study philosophy and ethics and I ask if philosophical and ethical conversations are typical at home.

"Yes, in our home a typical day, in the car, they don't like it. But this is the way it is."

Finally, I want to explore how they think they are perceived and understood as Muslims in contemporary Britain, whether they face issues of prejudice and whether they think this is associated with race or faith.

Ashraf begins, "I say to my sons recently I make a few comments" He looks across to Younis, who nods, embarrassed, and then looks back down to his shoes. Ashraf picks up his story, "And both of them look at each other and they say, 'Oh dad is racist. Then I sit down and I say look I'm not racist. Yemin what explanation did I give?'"

“You said that for example pointing out that someone is black or he is Chinese isn’t racist – it’s what they are, but if you have a superiority complex, saying ‘Because he is black you are better or because he is black he is lower than you’, then that becomes racist.”

Ashraf turns to me and asks “Does that answer your question?” It doesn’t really, as I was looking for their experiences, so I try again asking whether the boys have experienced any racism. Both demur, but acknowledge that their experience of racism is limited. Yemin concludes, “I think everything is a lot more diverse now. Always a wide range of culture and background within your classroom; always around people of different races.”

Ashraf responds, drawing me in collaboratively, “What they don’t realise, Mr Jason. Is that all of England is not like that, even now. You are lucky to be at XX School and in this city. It has changed, but there are other cities in the UK that is still left behind in racial intolerance. But this is natural!” he declares.

Ashraf asks if I have any more questions. I have been with them for almost an hour so I think better of pursuing anything else. As I am packing away Ashraf asks me to read the first chapter of the Koran. He leans in with earnestness and says

“Mr Jason look into religion. It is my duty now to say one thing, final thing. Life; everyone is living their life, whatever legacy you leave behind, material is nothing, but if you leave behind a legacy of faith and good character that is the best thing. But are you taking with you? ... We don’t come back as a butterfly. Very simply, Mr Jason, believe in one god and believe in his judgement. Of course, you have to be patriotic, otherwise the world doesn’t run. You have to love your own people first.”

‘My question’, I say to him, is ‘Who are your people?’

“For you yes!” As if this question confirms everything; “First of all, you are mixed race, secondly you don’t have a religious faith.”

In my exploration of identity, my own identity has been painstakingly disassembled.

Chapter 7: Complicating the field

7.1 Introduction

Chapters 4 to 6 broadly follow the themes of nation, gender and ethnicity. However, it is not my intention that these portraits are seen, in any way, as emblematic of these themes. Not least, my contention is that each portrait serves to show the complexity involved in the ways these young people do their social remembering and the rich way in which this contributes to their historical consciousness. The decision to focus on the individuals within these central chapters was based primarily on the fact that I was able to pursue the research with them to their home settings and the value of the material gathered from these settings. However, nine other young people took part in Phase 2 of the research, contributing their own portraits and discussing my research questions in the visits and tasks outlined in Chapter 2. Even though I wasn't able to visit them at home, they have contributed greatly to my understanding of the forms of social remembering with which young people engage outside school, just as I think Mark helped to complicate the way in which we might read the outcomes of the survey so too did the students in School B. The survey created an impression of a group of students disengaged with history, this phase 2 qualitative investigation revealed a more complex picture.

The students from school B were all from minority backgrounds, this chapter therefore serves an additional aim of helping to complicate and contextualise the portrait of Younis in Chapter 6 and further enrich the field. In particular, I hope to counter any impression that I hold Younis, in all his singularity, to represent the experience of BAME students.

7.2 The refuseniks?

The children in School B were originally sampled largely because their survey responses indicated a lack of, or limited engagement with, history either inside or outside the classroom. Responding to question 7, about ‘what the First World War means to you?’, Thierry wrote, *I don’t know anything about the WW2.* Sophie responded with, *The first world war doesn't really mean anything to me that is important other than it is an important part of making our country.* Yvonne replied, *It makes me think of all the people who fought for this country,* while Abdullah stated that it *‘doesn't really mean anything to me because I am not European.’* All children in the group were from minority ethnic backgrounds; Abdullah described himself as Asian / Asian British, the others described themselves as Black or Black British.

More generally, when asked in the survey about their engagement with history outside the classroom, only Yvonne hinted at a deeper engagement. In answering question 21, ‘Do you ever talk about historical events or individuals with your family?’, Yvonne responded that she did this often and the topic that they discussed in this regard was ‘slavery’. For the others, there appeared to be limited use of historical artefacts in book, film or television form. Moreover, if they visited historical locations, as Yvonne seemed to, it was to places like the Tower of London. Sophie stated that if she were to visit historical places, it would be a school outing.

Regarding this group, the overall survey indicated that the extent of their social remembering was limited. Therefore I initially characterised this group as ‘history refuseniks’. However, during the school-based sessions, it became apparent that, at least for some of the children, quite a lot of remembering was taking place, encompassing the family and related particularly to memories of their hybrid identities.

When I first met the group, at school on 23rd October, I gave them an icebreaker task: this was before I had explained the nature of the research to them. I asked them what they would rescue if their house was burning and they had to rescue just three things, possession or objects. They

knew the people were safe and they had 30 seconds to think about this. I wanted, at this stage, to encourage them to talk and to get an idea of what was important to them.

The first article they all mentioned was a photo. For Abdullah, the object was a photo album that his mother had put together. For Yvonne, it was a picture of her grandmother: she told me her Nan was Italian and had passed away when she was a baby. Sophie explained; “There is like this box that I’ve got in my room, yeah. I used to have this perfume that came in this really pretty box and I put lots of photos in there of my family and that, so like obviously I’d take that from the house.” Thierry would take a photo of his mother. I asked him why he chose it. “Um - it’s a picture of me and her when I was six, and I would take that because I don’t live with her anymore. I live with my auntie.”

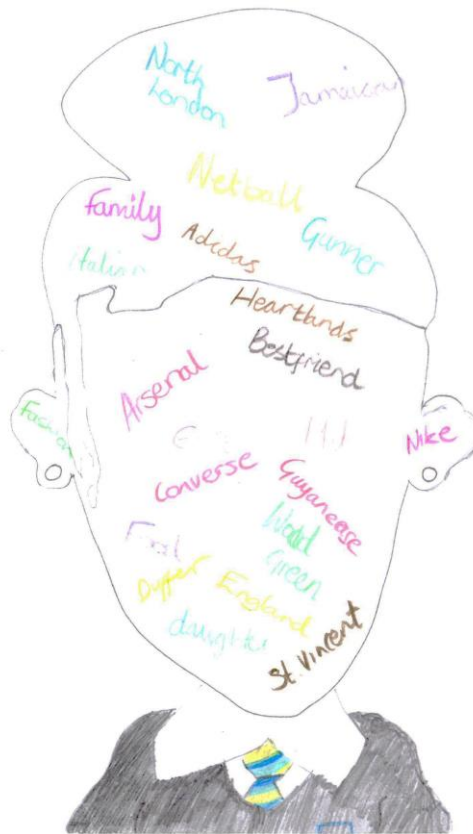
I asked them about the use of these photos in their homes. Abdullah, whose family had many photo albums of Bangladesh, said that he and his mother might talk about them as they looked at them. For the others, these objects held great meaning about their pasts but they were not used to generate discussion.

One thing that the children did talk about at home, suggesting a broader engagement with social remembering, was place. By the third time I met the group, on the 22nd January, each of the girls had created a portrait. I had given them the option of drawing instead of writing a response to the task: ‘Who am I and what has made me?’ The boys were not forthcoming with their responses, so I initially set them a task while I further explored the girls’ portraits.

Yvonne’s portrait (Figure 22) gave an indication of elements important to her identity but it also became a powerful stimulus, articulating some of the themes integral to her piece. Beyond the references to conspicuous consumption (Converse and Nike), I was interested in the Caribbean islands. I asked about these, wondering if anyone in Yvonne’s home talked about the history of these places. She replied, “Maybe if it came up in a way that they might have a little bit of

knowledge but not much.”

Figure 22: Self-portrait by Yvonne School B



I asked Sophie about the places she had referred to, in figure 23 as I was especially interested in the reference to Tottenham and Broadwater Farm.

“I lived on that estate and there were loads of different flats on that estate, but I lived on that estate.” She seemed proud. “I know they have paintings on the side of the flats; they have different ones, they have like John Lennon, Bob Marley. They have different ones on the sides of each flat. And there were riots there! As well, my mum was there when it happened. I think a policeman got shot - PC Blakelock!” The tone of Yvonne’s account was enthusiastic: she knew things about this place, important things that she wanted to share with me.

Figure 23: Self-portrait by Sophie School B



We talked more generally about whether it was important for them to keep a sense of connection with the Caribbean and if so, how they did this. Both girls thought the connection important and beyond visiting the area, this took a range of different forms. Both sets of grandparents are located in the Caribbean, though not Yvonne’s Italian grandmother. Yvonne talked about understanding the patois her grandparents speak although she did not speak it, herself. Sophie was dismissive of its use among her peers. “I think people just use it as a way to cuss one another. And they think if they use a patois-type voice that it’s more effective because it’s like more of a rough kind of loud voice - *Yardie*.” I asked about other forms of connection. In unison, they announced, “Food”, smiling at each other in recognition.

I was curious whether they talked with their peers or with other family adults about the history of the Caribbean. I asked about historical places that had meaning for them and Sophie responded, “There is like waterfalls in Jamaica that you have to walk through that are really beautiful and there is this lighthouse that my mum takes me to and its ages away and you have to walk and it’s hot.” She used a tone of playful complaint before announcing, “But the lighthouse is nice.”

The boys re-joined us and I asked them all how the Caribbean is talked about or learnt about, beyond their trips to the Caribbean. At first, they mentioned its absence in their curriculum before Thierry offered, “In church sometimes - not necessarily Caribbean, but Caribbean and African, mostly - if you go to a certain kind of church because they will speak in an African kinda accent and they will speak powerfully.”

I asked if this heritage made them feel at all proud. Thierry mentioned fighting slavery and Martin Luther King: “So like Martin Luther King, he made all... (inaudible) so that is like a black achievement.” Sophie offered an example: “You know when people talk about Bob Marley...” Sophie had talked about how important Marley was, to both her and her mother, including the Marley murals at Broadwater. She continued, “...and people like Usain Bolt. It kinda just makes you happy to know that you are from the same place as them but it doesn’t mean I can run!” Everyone erupted into laughter.

Abdullah, in his contribution to the discussion about pride in their heritage, articulated the tensions in negotiating a positive sense of his own heritage. He tried to explain why it is hard to feel proud of his background: “Sometimes... because most of the time people make like these racial comments, like English calling Asians ‘Pakis’ and things like that. I don’t know where the pride comes from.” Following this contribution, all of them began relating experiences of racism in the playground (which they agreed was rare), discussing the looks they generated when catching buses or being in other public spaces. I asked about where they thought other people’s ideas about race come from. The girls talked about direct experiences mediated through the

media. Thierry offered the possibility of an historic explanation: “Maybe because their grandad’s grandad’s grandad was from when slavery was on. Because their grandad was a slave [I suspect he meant slaver] but their family all the way down, maybe their slavery family was there and they kept on carrying on with the racism until this time and then that person just carries it on...their family business was capturing slaves.” I asked him to explain further. “Maybe they are doing it in their heads. The enslaving.”

Abdullah’s own portrait (Figure 24) gave some insight into the hybrid nature of his identity, ranging from references to, again, conspicuous consumption, in the form of Nike Hypervenom trainers, to the prophet Shuaib. Places again featured, from London to Bangladesh, and included reference to his primary and secondary schools.

[illegible]

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7.3 Conclusion

The young people in School B were initially included as part of the sample as a contrast to those other students who indicated a high degree of engagement with history. It is a shame that I was not able to pursue this research to include the home visit: nevertheless, the work done with them and by them, at school, has been valuable in complicating the impression of them as ‘history refuseniks’. All articulated important ways of relating to the past, located in their own families, and places of origin. All expressed frustration with historical, curriculum and public history, absences conveying a desire that history could do more to serve their needs.

Chapter 8 Synthetic analysis

8.1 Introduction

This chapter returns to the four research questions synthesising all the data, including that from all the students involved in the qualitative research and not solely from those represented in chapters 4, 5 and 6. It was not possible, within the scope of this piece, to render them all into detailed ethnographic portraits. In the previous chapters, describing young people's lived experiences, I deliberately endeavoured to stand back from direct analysis, to give voice to the young people. However, it will be evident that certain analytical themes were emerging.

I shall only give a brief resumé in relation to RQ1 and RQ3, drawing primarily on the quiz and survey data, as much of this has been covered in Chapter 3. My initial focus in this chapter is on the second research question, highlighting the sorts of understandings young people have of history in general and of WW1 in particular. This draws together data from the quiz and the survey with an analysis of the qualitative data in Phase 2 to add depth to the analysis. Having established the sorts of understandings expressed by young people, I will finish with the final research question: 4) How are these understandings constructed outside the classroom?

8.2 RQ1) What is the extent and nature of young people's social remembering?

The survey data, reported in Chapter 3, suggested that young people have limited engagement with social memory outside the classroom, with very few indicating an engagement with history-related culture through television, film or books, while conversations about history with friends or family were rare. One event that did have a high degree of resonance was the annual, televised service of remembrance, with 56% reporting that they had watched the broadcast while 36% had attended a remembrance service. I have explored this in detail, below, in section 8.4.1.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 indicate that this older group of students have a broad-ranging engagement with social remembering. Individuals, like Mark and Younis, are single-mindedly curious about

what happened in the past, while the girls, as shown in Chapter 5, were more generally curious and interested in the human stories of the past, often linked more directly to their families' own pasts. While all the students had different and particular interests, stimulated by their individual contexts, they were evidently using the past as a way of making sense of their different present(s).

The broader picture, from the Phase 1 quantitative data, suggests that the extent of young people's social remembering is limited and this is particularly true of the younger age group.

However, the qualitative data from school B, outlined in Chapter 7, is a reminder of the need to look beyond the quantitative data to draw a more complex picture of the extent and nature of young people's remembering, especially in the ways that this data articulates the nature of their remembering, often focused in their identity creation, with place and family featuring highly in this process. This was also true of many of the older students involved in Phase 2 of the research. With the exception of Ivy, it was clear that the respondents' families all played a part in enabling their social remembering, with visits and discussions. Indeed, their families were often a well-spring of passionate enthusiasm for history, both at a familial and national level. For Younis and Mark, this enthusiasm was taken to another level, often stimulated by what they saw as absences in the curriculum, in that they engaged with a range of sources, including the Internet, to build their own understandings of WW1 and of what happened in the past.

The nature of young people's social remembering is broad ranging but often linked to their intimate interests, either stemming from their families or in wanting to explore who they are and in many cases, both. The extent of this varies and may depend on age, with the older students, especially more interested in making links between the past and the present. Overall, young people are engaged with the activity of social remembering: this often begins with intimate interests related to their communities and their families but potentially builds as they get older. It involves a wide range of artefacts, from photos and keepsakes in the family setting to books and

films, sometimes, but more often the Internet, concomitant with age. Within the context of WW1, the annual ceremony of remembrance does have a high degree of resonance with young people, suggesting that it plays an important part in the types of understandings young people form regarding WW1.

8.3 RQ2) What understandings do young people draw from the First World War?

As illustrated in Chapter 3, using the quantitative data, the trenches dominated most young peoples' imaginative landscapes of the war. Todman argues that this prevalence of the trench, with its associated motifs of mud acting as visual shorthand, helps cement a particular and partial view of WW1 that emphasises disaster, tragedy and futility: "This interpretation continues to dominate how Britons think about the First World War in the first decade of the 21st century" (Todman, 2005, p.xii).

In addition, the trench effectively locates this understanding in the context of Northern France, limiting comprehension of the global nature of the war. Only 3.5% of young people in the quiz correctly identified the global reach of the war. While the role of South America is more obscure, the lack of awareness of Australia was more surprising.

Regarding the Middle East and Africa, it is troubling as this, in turn, makes it hard to consider the broader consequences of the war, or to take a critical position regarding Britain's role in the war and in negotiating the peace.

Young people from a Black or an Asian background were more likely to recognise the role of Asia in the conflict than their white peers, as indicated in figure 9. In fact, black respondents were also the most likely to recognise the role of the Middle East and Africa. For Younis, while not black, the Middle East was the locus of his curiosity about WW1, particularly in the way it informed his interest in the Ummah and what the collapse of the Ottoman Empire meant in that context. However, students from BAME backgrounds were also the most likely to draw conclusions that the war was irrelevant to them, because

they perceived it to be a narrowly British affair that had little or no bearing on the rest of the world, particularly the parts of the world with which they associated. This was certainly the case for Abdullah.

In addition to this broader impression about WW1, I wanted to understand what the war meant to the children on a personal level: Question 7 provided data to help support analysis, in this respect. As mentioned in section 1.3, I initially coded the responses using Lévesque's significance criteria (see Table 1). I thought it would be useful to take one of the disciplinary concepts, historical significance, that Lévesque argues is crucial to fostering historical thinking. As I mentioned in Section 1.3 this procedural concept allows thought about the nature of selection at the heart of the historian's work sitting at an interesting intersection between the past and the present. I was therefore seeking to extend the analysis by applying it to the understandings young people to beginning to think about what understandings young people draw more generally about history.

Lévesque argues that historians deploy a set of defining criteria in order to make selections about who and what they study. Lévesque makes the following distinction regarding forms of memory signification: "They are more intuitive, subject to the dialectic of collective and intimate remembering and forgetting" concluding that they are, "more likely to generate naive, distorted views of the past that are not open to revision" (2008, p. 59).

Indications from my quantitative data would suggest that young people were far more likely to employ what, for Lévesque, were problematic forms of memory signification. Responses to Question 7, in the survey, indicated that memory signification was far and away the most likely form of signification coding (181 compared to 75) that might be described as a historical form of signification. The most common form of memory signification was symbolic, with some 90 references, while intimate and contemporary resonances were on a par with each other, 46 for intimate and 45 for contemporary. Typically symbolic forms took nationalistic forms, such as

pride in Britain's participation, extending to "Good 'cause we won". These national terms were also evident in the ways many students characterised the conflict as a struggle between Britain and Germany, with 'Germany' featuring highly as a word that many young people associated with WW1. Clearly, for many young people the war represents a source of national pride. Asked if Britain's involvement in WW1 makes people feel positive or negative about being British, 55% thought it should make people feel positive or very positive.

However, this patriotic sentiment was more typically mixed with regret associated with the scale of loss and for many, the source of national pride related directly to a duty to remember the 'sacrifice' that resonates so powerfully in the popular estimation of the war. Of the Phase 2 sample, the most obviously patriotic were Mark and Scarlett. Both showed a deeply reflective and historical response, mentioning the broader global contributions and legacies of the war. Mark was keen to recognise that emotion can cloud judgements about what was at stake in remembrance. Yet when I interviewed him after remembrance, on the 20th November, asking him about patriotism, he was clear: "It depends what the country is doing, like in Iraq and Afghanistan. I'm not a fan of it. So I'm not necessarily a patriot but having said that, I still feel empathy towards the soldiers who have been killed out there. And then with WW2, I'm patriotic to the 'nth' degree because it was a just cause." So his feeling of pride and the war's symbolic importance rest on an analysis of the causes. "First World War is again like the Iraq and Afghanistan: I feel empathy towards the fallen because they sacrificed in vain, because it just led to the rise of Hitler and World War 2. It was a disaster, basically, but I don't feel necessarily proud of WW1, or any war, unless the causes are just. So I guess they run in parallel more than I thought they did."

As suggested at the end of Chapter 3, the quantitative data is limited in the way that it serves to crudely characterise the sense in which these attributed categories work, with many students,

drawing on different types of attribution within the same answer. In addition, the ephemeral and dynamic nature of social remembering, outlined in Chapters 4, 5 and 6, suggests something more complex at work.

The qualitative data gives a picture of this complexity that counters the idea of a 'naïve' or 'distorted' view of the past and, in particular, indicates powerful ways in which young people's ideas are open to revision; often with the young people the agents of that revision, themselves.

In terms of intimate forms of signification, those within the sample group who completed the survey (Scarlett, Amelia, Mark, Tom and Yvonne) all mentioned relatives who had an association with WWI. . Younis and Harold (like Robert, Ivy, Bess and Roisin) had no awareness of involvement by a family member. Cross-referencing those who were aware of ancestors s involved in the war might suggest an increased likelihood of reference to intimate forms of signification but this was not borne out by their responses to Question 7.

Scarlett had become aware of her family connection on a trip, with her mother, to visit to the grave of the Unknown Warrior at Westminster Abbey. This was an important moment for Scarlett in making a connection to WW1. She described it as an "exemplar moment" in that it was "made apparent to me... as I became aware that the war had a direct impact on my family history." Her written response to Question 7, however, develops significance beyond the intimate.

'The First World War marks a significant period in the history of modern society. Due to the nature of events that took place, from major decisions regarding international relations to personal decisions made by families, it is clear today that this war has had an impact in some way or another on every person living today. There is not one person alive today who has no connection to the Great War, whether that be a lost soldier or a suffragette. It is vital that we commemorate the First World War as its impact is still prominent in our world today, as now, in Britain, women have the right to vote, and there is no longer a British Empire.'

Much of this response concerns ‘relevance’; that is, the extent to which the event or person resonates in the present, for Scarlett, relating to the suffrage question and thinking about the war in post-colonial terms. The phrase, *‘from major decisions regarding international relations to personal decisions made by families,’* suggests that, rather than a dialectical tension between ‘historical’ and ‘intimate’ remembering, Scarlett is more integrative in her approach. Her response incorporates intimate interests but also a ‘profound’ element in making an evaluation about the depth of change the war represented. She implicitly suggests ‘importance’ by reference to family decisions made at the time. Scarlett was certainly proud of her intimate connection but this did not prevent her from expressing a range of sophisticated understandings regarding the meaning of WW1.

This integration of both intimate memory and historical signification was also true of Mark. His great-great uncle had been a soldier in the Irish Rifles; once again, a connection enabled by his mother and her discovery of the uncle’s image used to illustrate a book. Both Mark and his mother took evident pride in this association and it also served to feed his interests, yet it didn’t limit the meanings he drew from WW1 as his response to Question 7 shows, once again quoted here.

‘WW1 to me, personally, was the beginning of a new era in war. For the first time, whole rows of infantry could be cut down in seconds. For the first time, war was global. For the first time, technology played an unprecedented role in the fight. WW1 was not a case of good vs. evil, as both sides were often deeply mistaken. I think it is critical to remember the war as a pinnacle of what man is willing to do each other, but I think it is very important to remember the millions of young men who went off to war with unimaginable bravery, and fought fiercely to defend Britain. I also think it is an important part of British history, as it involved the Empire, a huge loss of life and deeply impacted Britain during and after it.’

Elements of memory signification are certainly evident; in particular, the desire to elicit contemporary lessons and the explicit link to national identity indicates the way in which Mark

sees the war serving symbolic purposes. However, he also has a sense of the 'profound' in an evaluation of the depth of change and the ways in which the war acted as a turning point.

Another feature of thinking about forms of significance attribution, using Lévesque's categories, is to highlight the problems when limited forms of memory signification – or none – are at play. I want to argue that memory forms of signification play a vital part in helping connect young people to the study of history by highlighting the connection they have to the past: that without that connection, they might conceive of the study of history as irrelevant to them as it contributes little by way of helping them construct a sense of who they are.

In the Phase 1 data, some students explained their reasons for a lack of interest in WW1, such as this 13 year-old black girl: "It isn't that important to me and doesn't mean anything to me because I'm not British and have no care about this country." In addition, this 11 year-old Asian boy declared, "I do not find it that important to me as nobody in my family relates to that war but to others it will mean a great deal." He identifies the lack of intimate interests but acknowledges that, for others, it may hold greater meaning. I am not, however, making the case that a child from a minority background cannot take meaning from WW1. Respondent 185, on page 120, who was able to describe the changing nature of warfare and its impact on civilians, was a 13 year-old Asian girl. However, the BAME students were far more likely to argue that the war meant nothing to them.

It was more probable for students from a BAME background to find little personal connection to WW1. This, from Abdullah's response reveals this lack of personal connection very clearly, *'The world war 1 doesn't really mean anything to me because I am not European.'* is a good example and It highlights the importance of knowledge but also the need for symbolic signification. Abdullah took part in the subsequent qualitative case study where it became clear that one dimension of his identity, as a British Bangladeshi, was critical to his motivations and interests in history and

that an exclusively disciplinary approach would serve to be a denial of this desire (Barton, 2009), particularly his wish to know more about the Asian sub-continent's contribution to the War.

The Phase 2 work, with Younis and Abdullah, afforded a deeper insight into why this might be the case. In Abdullah's case, his lack of personal interest is largely based on a lack of knowledge about the war's global nature, while for Younis, the lack of interest is related to a narrow focus, in the curriculum and commemorations, excluding his interest in the Middle East. For both boys, it highlights the importance of the identities young people bring into the classroom. Mark's identity as a young white male, for instance, meant that he felt a lot of agency in studying this topic and his interactions outside the classroom, as an air cadet, served to underscore this.

The understandings that young people draw about WW1 are complex and broad-ranging. Having substantive historical knowledge about the war is critical in enabling the formation of meaning. But more intimate and collective forms of knowledge can also be important, acting in a facilitative way to encourage interest and promote the asking of historical questions. This is linked in important ways to young peoples' sense of who they are, as well as what the historical event is. In working with young people from minority backgrounds, it is important to think about ways in which they can find personal connections to events they are studying, in order to better facilitate engagement. Therefore, rather than being fearful of the ways in which memory significance features in young people's social remembering, we should understand that many young people appear to work with it in complex ways, that are certainly not fixed.

8.4 RQ3) Where are these understandings drawn from?

The understandings young people have about both WW1 and history, more generally, are drawn from a broad range of settings, and have been constructed using a wide range of tools. While an initial reading of the Phase 1 data would suggest that very few young people use cultural tools that might be described as having historical content, bringing this together with an analysis of the

Phase 2 data might suggest a greater degree of engagement with history and complexity regarding the nature of that engagement.

Chapters 4-6 provide a rich picture of the ways in which young people create their understandings across a range of settings, drawing on a variety of tools. These tools included the reading of books, especially in Younis's case, and the Internet, in Mark's case. Younis was unique in the sense that his understandings were largely constructed in isolation, though faith played a key role in directing his interests. Mark's use of the Internet was not uncritical and combined with other sources of understanding, including his family, especially through his mother's side. It also included possible elements that he was not prepared to disclose as part of the research, such as the playing of computer games with a war theme. What was clear in both cases was the level of interaction between history encountered at school and that encountered beyond school. The history experienced beyond school took place via the home, the locality and beyond, encompassing broader notions of belonging: the '*Ummah*' in Younis's case and the nation in Mark's.

Both the girls and the boys saw and valued a relationship between the past and present. However, the girls' understandings were developed much more in dialogue with others, particularly members of their family. The idea of 'nation' mattered to Scarlett but the others, for whom human stories inspired their understanding of the past and, in particular, drew them into history, did not share this stance. It was notable, in many of the cases, that an enthusiastic parent was instrumental in fermenting a passion for history.

In the case of children from BAME backgrounds, 'place' featured highly as the source of their understanding. This worked on a number of levels: firstly, the sense of belonging to more than one place and secondly, in the cases of Younis and Abdullah, the sense of belonging to a broader faith-based identity that has its roots in other parts of the world and in some ways transcending physical bound ideas of place. Finally, the ways in which the places that mattered to them

appeared absent from public forms of social remembering (and also history) contributed to either a rejection of history or a frustration with it.

It was evident that in social remembering young people drew in dynamic and varied ways from a wide range of sources. . Indeed the involvement in the research process itself became the catalyst for new understandings to be drawn.

8.4.1 Remembrance

One area where understandings of the war were cultivated was in relation to the remembrance ceremony. Phase 1 indicated that many young people knew about and were involved directly in remembrance. For some, it contributed directly to their feelings of pride and reinforced the idea of sacrifice and duty. Asked how the war should be remembered, the strongest response was that remembrance should focus on suffering and loss. Fewer than 5% of respondents thought it shouldn't be remembered. This gives weight to the argument that ideas about the war coalesce around the idea of sacrifice and the soldier. However, a sizable number of responses indicated that the young people wanted more from remembrance: 20% thought that there could be a greater focus on the legacies of war and 19.5% suggested a greater focus on the contributions of different countries. Both were sentiments that would be echoed by historians like Reynolds (2013).

While most people simply watched the Remembrance Ceremony on television, 36% of the survey respondents actually attended one; most commonly with their family but some took part in the ritual of remembrance that might suggest embodied forms of memory (Connerton 1989). However, the shared form of this participation takes does mean the understandings gleaned are the same.

Mark and Ivy had both attended as cadets, in the same location, but they took very different meanings from the event. Mark did question the extent to which remembrance enabled a consideration of the consequences of the war but was still immensely proud of the inherent unity, including the contributions of the Commonwealth. Because of his participation, he also drew conclusions about current conflicts. Ivy (who, by the time I was working with her, was no longer in the cadets) had a response that can best be described as a curious irony, regarding remembrance. In the conversations she had about remembrance, at home and school, it appears to have lost its meaning for her. This loss of meaning is echoed by Bess, who describes her involvement through the Guides' organisation as being quite passive. She writes: *'When I was younger, I admittedly didn't understand why we were marching through town and having this 2- minutes silence among all the army men and other people in odd uniforms. However, it's soon became a tradition every year for these 9 years and I just sort of accepted it as something we did.'*

Robert, a 17 year-old from School A, shared Scarlett's anger but his ire was directed at what he saw as the way in which religion had hijacked the remembrance service. His mother and father shared this indignation and the family arrived late to the service to avoid the religious aspects. However, in his writing about remembrance, he concludes: *'Overall, I feel the Remembrance Day is very important but it is not carried out in a way that I agree with. The religious element and the tendency for people to use it as an excuse to promote views that are not focusing on the history and remembrance of those died.'*

Amelia, also part of the School A group, was ambivalent about remembrance. She wrote about how her family missed the Sunday service and also failed to watch it on television; something her father ascribes to laziness. She frets about not wearing a poppy: she had lost hers on the way to catching the bus, but was reassured that most people were not wearing one, anyway.

In their surveys, the students from School B said they did not watch or go to a remembrance event. Visiting them on the 25th November, I asked them to watch a Sky news clip of the Queen

laying the wreath at the cenotaph. I asked them to tell me a word that best described the emotion they felt as they watched the clip. Sophie said “sympathy” and Yvonne said “proud”. The sympathy was directed at the families. I then asked Yvonne what she meant by ‘pride’. She responded with, “I just think these people fought for the war and after all these years they are being remembered. Proud of England.”

Thierry’s word was “confused”. He felt a need for words beyond the silence. “I just don’t what is going on.” He was giggling. “I knew what she was doing but I didn’t know at the very start what was going on. Sometimes I just don’t know why everyone is just standing there. They should be like saying stuff, saying sorry and stuff.” Abdullah’s word was perhaps the most potent:

“Pointless,” he said, emphatically. His explanation echoed his sentiments answering Q7 of the survey about what WW1 meant to him. “Because me and my family weren’t actually born in this country so none of this stuff that happens here really involves us.” This explanation encouraged the others to take their analysis further. Yvonne suggested, “I think he is trying to say that they are kinda, in England, they are only celebrating.” Sophie and Thierry join in: “...the English people.” The group become quite animated as they talked about ways in which they felt the service could be more inclusive, with Abdullah keen that the German loss should also be remembered. They all thought it would help to make a connection with what is going on in the world today. Abdullah, normally quiet but now quite vocal, offered, “Yeah, what about ISIS?”

This discussion opened up the ways in which they thought that the current forms of remembrance were partial; a view based on their ethnic identities. The narrow framing served to exclude. This was a view echoed by Younis in his account of Remembrance Day: “Therefore my understanding is that Remembrance Sunday is primarily for the British people.” He offers this as an explanation for his usual disregard of remembrance wherein people like him, who do now regard themselves as British, find themselves “in murky waters.” Younis is also keen to stress the

need to connect remembrance to the present. “Current events are also important in interpreting the Remembrance Ceremony.” Moreover, this helps him draw conclusions about what WW1 means. Firstly, “WWI is seen in my eyes as not a British triumph, but as the last nail in the old man of Europe’s coffin.” In addition, more personally for him: “The Remembrance Ceremony is a painful anniversary for me and Muslims, a reminder that the Middle Eastern and Muslim peoples are disunited and engulfed in war with each other, ironically.”

The meaning and place of remembrance is one of intense public debate (Aldridge, 2014). For some (Carr, 2014), the plans for commemoration amount to an attempt to re-militarise the nation through the fantasy of a virtuous war. This view is not borne out by the range of different and complex ways students in this work have negotiated its meanings. Even those most predisposed towards patriotism and even, to a degree, ‘militarised’, like Mark, have a complex way of interacting with this event.

Asked to think about different ways WW1 might be remembered all groups were clear that more could be done in commemorating the global nature of the war, echoing the findings in the survey.

The meanings and associations young people attach to remembrance are complex and broad ranging. There is a danger in discussing the nature and purpose of remembrance that one over-determines its impact and downplays or under-estimates the capacity of young people to form their own opinions. Such a discussion might also obscure the ways in which they draw on a wider field of resources and experiences in a range of different contexts. This diverse set of tools and contexts, in part, explains the broad meanings young people attach to remembrance, evident from the data presented above.

8.4.2 What understandings do young people draw about history?

The preceding analysis was drawn largely from the context of the discussion about WW1. The Phase 1 data was directed to answering RQ1 and RQ3; however, indications in relation to questions about pride in remembrance suggested the ways in which the respondents thought history, more generally, might enable them to develop or think about their identities or even to have a sense of pride. This echoes Traill's (2007) work, wherein students and mothers of African-Caribbean descent thought that history should, among other things, provide a means of feeling proud about oneself that history should focus on issues of navigation, identity, social legitimacy, social knowledge and critically, ownership.

It was in Phase 2 that a clearer idea of the understandings young people have about history was drawn. Given the highly personal nature of these accounts, it is hard to draw overarching conclusions without crudely generalising. Most of the analysis focuses on the understandings young people have about the purpose of history; however, it is possible to say something about the way in which some of them considered this and, to an extent, what they thought about how the discipline worked.

Section 1.8 of the Appendix presents all the composite portraits of the six individuals I saw through to the home visit. These give an indication of what these young people saw as the purposes of history. For many of them it was about a guide to action in the present. This came out particularly in our discussions. Bess, who was probably the least overtly political, wanted to know about the subsequent impact of the war, especially on a global scale. All felt that the global context was important. For Ivy, the political dimensions were rooted in moral and ethical questions and like Mark, she was interested in questions of causation in order to make judgement about whether Britain's involvement should be a source of pride: both felt it wasn't a 'just war'. The three students at School A shared this discussion and conclusion. There was a gender difference in terms of foregrounding the human dimension in the study of history: for the girls,

this was a critically articulated feature and related to the sense in which a purpose of history was to help them think about who they are and the cultures to which they belong. This desire to use history as a way of exploring belonging was shared by Younis, but articulated more in particular religious terms than wider human interest.

Mark was unique in suggesting that one purpose of history was to provide the truth. This led to him foregrounding substantive knowledge and the deployment of facts as a critical element of how history works. Mark's command of the facts afforded him great status at home and, to an extent, amongst his peers, so in some sense also served the purpose of enhancing his identity. In their discussions regarding the causes of the war, the students at Schools A and C were able to give sophisticated multi-causal analysis. This was Mark's verbal account: "Some say it was German aggression, others say it was a confusing mess; but what is true is that millions of men died for different causes pedalled by the same family. The Tsar, King George and the Kaiser were all cousins - a well-known fact. This has led to the idea that it was just a family spat, but of course history is never that simple. Complex, long term and dangerous factors all triggered it and it did little to change the face of Europe in a good way. It should be remembered because it's a reminder of when diplomacy fails, something that is more than relevant today."

In School A, Scarlett introduced the idea of a 'necessary war' fought in the name of national security. Robert picked this up, suggesting that the scale of death meant that, "We've GOT to be proud of that because if we don't think we were fighting an expansionist evil force, they have died for nothing and I don't think that is something most people in Britain could take."

All students were able to talk about change as a concept and held this to be an important area of analysis; one that often went under-explored in terms of the longer consequences of war. Again, students at Schools A, C and D talked about how the war changed lives for women, while students like Mark added how the war challenged the social order, in terms of class. For Younis, the change wrought by the war was a source of pain because of its association with a turning

point that had continued to exercise an influence on the present. As he explained, “During the Ottoman caliphate everything was fine it was only with the rise of nationalism that the ottoman caliphate sort of split apart.” I challenged this interpretation and Younis did become hesitant. However while Younis was hesitant about his knowledge he was confident about the relationship between the past and its bearing on his life in the present. All the students were interested in this temporal element of change and continuity, looking for ways of connecting the history to their lives in the present.

8.5 RQ4) How are these understandings constructed outside of the classroom?

Underpinning all the initial questions has been a consideration of how these understandings are constructed outside the classroom. This analysis is set within a framework of thinking about identities and relating this to the ways in which constructs such as nation, gender and ethnicity interact in the ways young people create understanding outside the classroom. Right from the initial formulation of the research questions, I was interested in the ways that young people’s identities influence their views on history (Traill, 2007). I was clear that the way in which our identities are constructed and shaped has a bearing on the uses we make of history and that the value we attribute to history is shaped by factors such as gender, ethnicity and nationality, as they all have a bearing on the interpretive frameworks that young people bring to their interactions with the past (Wertsch, 2002).

8.5.1 Identity

In undertaking an analysis of the final research question and following themes that emerged from the fieldwork, I have chosen to explore the question using the concept of identity, with nation, gender and ethnicity and place all recognised as critical components that inform identity. “Identity is a concept that figuratively combines the intimate or personal world with the collective space of cultural forms and social relations.” As such, it is the “key means through

which people care about and care for what is going on around them” (Holland, 2001, p5).

However while I have indicated that I retain an acceptance of the value of terms such as nation, gender and ethnicity eschewing an anticategorical complexity (McCall 2005) I recognise the “ambivalent status” (Bhattacharya 2012, p.66) such categories retain. Initially pursuing intracategorical complexity I have sought to draw out the spatial and temporal nature of subjectivities through the portraits. Shifting to intercategorical complexity, I have sought to highlight how those subjectivities are made and remade across a range of different social settings. Taken together these approaches highlight the fluid and dynamic nature of the processes involved in identification or what Biesta terms subjectification that I develop below.

I have indicated, throughout, the important ways in which identity features in my own motivations and interests for this work. This focus on identity stemmed from my own experience of being marked as ‘other’, through being non-white. This has always necessitated an examination of my identity: who am I? In many ways, my own exploration is similar to the task completed by all the young people who featured as case studies within the research. As a teacher and a researcher, this interest has become more wide-ranging. Said’s work alerted me to the ways in which the Orient and Occident were made and remade, that neither was, “an inert fact of nature” (Said, 1978, p.4) and that identity was socially constructed. It is important that this form of analysis is applied more broadly, a concern that drove me to ensure that my sample included a range of students to enable an analysis of intercategorical complexity. Said’s work also forces a broader notion of ethnicity to include not simply those marked as ‘other’. “Whiteness, as a set of normative cultural practices, is visible most clearly to those it definitely excludes and to those to whom it does violence. Those who are securely housed within its borders usually do not examine it” (Frankenberg, 1993, p.228). This absence of an analysis of whiteness is doubly problematic for history, in terms of building a deeper understating of accounts of the past, and also in education.

A greater focus on the study of whiteness is evident in emerging educational research, such as Reay's (2008), highlighting the ways in which class intersects with whiteness in anxieties around school choice. Yet, "whiteness as a concept sits at an intersection between historical privilege and identity, something that has a contemporary dynamic but which is not universally shared in (or can be very distant to) how many white people experience their identities" (Meer & Nayak, 2015, p13). Hence, research into the ways in which whiteness is experienced by ethnic majorities is necessary, to enable a clearer picture of its complexity. In this way, Mark's portrait is as much a study of ethnic as it is a study of gender and nation. It is important, in educational terms, that more is known about the ways in which white children experience education and the world beyond education. Pedagogically enabling them to see the constructed and varied nature of whiteness might, in turn, serve the interests of diversity more broadly within the curriculum. Identity is not a given then but is formed through social activity and interaction, with social remembering forming an integral element of that activity. My research suggests ways in which this activity can be enhanced and also enabled by history, encouraging students to think about it in diverse settings.

Further, the concept of identity is important in any consideration of the purpose and function of school history. The educational philosopher, Biesta, argues that education should contribute to a young person's process of becoming a subject; a process he calls 'subjectification' (2010, p12). Biesta is careful to distinguish this process from socialisation (another function he argues education should fulfil), making the case that subjectification is not "about the insertion of 'newcomers' into existing orders". It is a process that affords young people a higher degree of agency.

It is with 'subjectification' in mind that I have, therefore, chosen to analyse the question of how these understandings are constructed outside the classroom, by thinking about the ways in which nation, gender and ethnicity have a bearing on the constructions, but not in a way that presumes

that they determine identity. While socialisation suggests ways in which these constructs might affect young people, subjectification gives scope for a consideration of how young people might act, in turn, on these constructs.

The WW1 focus, particularly, asks questions about the place of nation in young peoples' construction of meaning. While the fieldwork highlighted how critically gender and ethnicity mediate the ways in which meanings from the past are constructed by young people, I think it is possible to analyse how, for some, the processes of remembrance, when embedded in strong familial and social settings, can act in a strongly hegemonic way to underscore and reinforce national identities. Conversely, for others, it can serve to reinforce feelings of estrangement and displacement (Carretero et al., 2012). This can be the result of omissions and forgetting but might also be evidence of more active forms of resistance.

I am aware there is a danger in relating aspects of identity to structural features of society, such as gender or ethnicity, or reifying it and dismissing the particularities of identities and elements of agency within those identities. Biesta's notion of subjectification is useful in hinting at the role of an individual's agency in constructing their identity and the possibilities of holding a range of identities simultaneously. I also recognise the need to, "focus on the development of identities and agency specific to practices and activities situated in historically contingent, socially enacted, culturally constructed worlds" (Holland, 2001, p7). I will therefore draw attention to this in analysing the role of setting in shaping how the understandings are constructed.

Early indications suggest that, for some young people, history is a source of great agency giving them a sense of worth and status, especially within their family settings. In other cases, the opposite might be true.

8.5.1.1 Nation

Nation is intimately linked to both history and social memory. National history, as a genre of history writing, has been adopted successfully across a wide range of national contexts (Berger, 2015). Berger and Conrad have argued that history is but one of the key players in national identity formation: “Theirs [History] was only one of the disciplines and genres contributing to the development of national master narratives. Apart from history, language and literature have played major roles” (Berger & Conrad, 2015, p.20). This includes a range of other cultural artefacts and practices including anniversaries and remembrance, especially those associated with war. For many, this relationship to national identity formation is deeply problematic, though this critique is levelled more at manifestations of collective memory (Lowenthal, 1985; Lowenthal, 1997; Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1992) rather than historical scholarship. Whatever the source of national identity formation, it is worth thinking about the nature of this formation: “It should not be assumed that everyone subscribes to national memories of this kind. Class locality and religion can generate memories that are sharply at variance with a dominant public memory” (Tosh, 2015, p.258).

In his monograph, *Mind as Action* (1998), Wertsch illustrates how identity formation, even national identity formation, is not a simple, unidirectional process of consumption. He illustrates this by explaining how attempts by Soviet authorities to impose a particular version of national history on Estonians were actively appropriated and resisted. In *Voices of collective remembering* (Wertsch, 2002), he analyses this process further in what he calls an encounter with collective memory. He ‘remembers’ a conversation he has with a young Russian student, Sasha, about Russia’s involvement in the Second World War. In his analysis, he concludes that Sasha is using tools, being an active agent, and is mediating a range of narratives whilst constructing his own. Wertsch is also attentive to his own use of narratives and exemplification of a range of particular voices in his remembering of this encounter. The encounter reveals deeply-held commitments to particular narratives on both their parts. This means that while Wertsch remembers that Sasha

told the story of Russian involvement with great certainty and pride, Wertsch's own remembering also takes place within a specific socio-cultural context that stimulated scepticism on his part regarding Sasha's version of this event of national importance.

I have written how history educators, such as Carretero (2011; Carretero et al., 2012), are concerned about the baleful influence of partial and exclusionary national history that can be perpetuated by the state; how, in certain contexts, the influence of particular forms of vernacular memory might serve to undermine community cohesion (Barton & McCully, 2005). My research suggests a need to stress the specificities of each socio-cultural context; this includes a consideration of both time and place. In both Mark's and Scarlett's case, it was evident that their engagement in forms of remembrance engendered a particular type of national pride. Yet both maintained a critical distance, even while they were participating in acts of remembrance. They were able to engage in acts of embodied remembrance (Connerton, 1989; Kleinman & Kleinman, 1994) with Mark marching, or Scarlett observing the silence, yet critically mediate, to use Wertsch's phrase, their understanding of what they were engaging with. Participation in remembrance wasn't the only 'tool' they were drawing on in creating meaning. In addition, their positive predisposition towards these acts of remembrance was influenced by narratives drawn from home, both of which were embedded in intimate interests, with a clear sense of relatives involved in the war. Yet while Mark certainly felt proud, this pride was cast in a cross-national way, with a recognition based on his own knowledge of the contribution made by soldiers of the empire; something that didn't feature highly in his participation during the remembrance service. Scarlett also drew on a range of narratives in making sense of remembrance; for her pride was tinged with emotion. Scarlett was interweaving knowledge acquired in formal settings – her politics lessons – with her own sense of identity firmly nailed, in this moment, to a patriotic pole. However, as we discussed her reactions, she offered further exemplification regarding the need for empathy in making connections. In this respect, her thinking transcended national frames of

reference to suggest that people's personal stories, aligned to recent bereavement, for example, might intersect to produce an affective response. The way in which she expressed this suggested that this was a valuable thing to be able to do.

Where nation exerted, perhaps, a more powerful influence was in the ways it served to alienate those students from minority backgrounds, in the sample. Perhaps Scarlett's and Mark's nuanced position indicated a reflection of the 'given' nature of their identity. For many students in the survey and as revealed in Phase 2 with the ethnographic studies, remembrance served to emphasise their absence. Here, the politics of representation mattered but was also influenced by other narratives. For the young people at School B, some of this was based on a lack of knowledge of the global nature of the war but it also fed into a broader experience of race and marginality. For Younis, this sense of exclusion from the official narrative went further because of his knowledge of the impact the war had on the Ottoman Empire and the caliphate: he was alert to a range of meanings. I had given Abdullah some information about Kazi Nazrul Islam, a Bengali poet who had been involved with the British Army in WW1, to discuss at home. In his response to this task, he writes, *'It makes me feel proud that possibly my ancestors fought in the war. However a bit disappointed that I have only found out about this now.'*

Wertsch (2002) advocates a range of different versions of collective memory. These can be homogenous, whereby people hold a shared representation of the past; or complementary, wherein a different interpretation exists but within a coordinated system of complementary pieces – like a set of fish scales. The final version is a contested interpretation wherein different perspectives exist but are not complementary. This distributed version of collective memory, in the context of nation, more accurately represents not just the positions across the range of case study students in my research but within individual cases for some young people that I think held more than one version simultaneously. Nation does play a powerful role in helping young people to create understandings about WW1 and history, sometimes in a way that enables them

and sometimes in other instances, operating as a hindrance. It is important to note, however, that the nature of its role can vary across a range of different contexts.

8.5.1.2 Gender

It is clear that with public state orientated manifestations of WW1, like the Remembrance Sunday or Paul Cumming's Tower of London display, the focus is on the soldier, the trench and this is a predominantly male experience. This trend is also reflected in the historiography of the war where, through both social and cultural configurations of the history of war (Winter and Prost, 2008), the soldier remains at the centre of the historians' interests. Data from the survey echoed this, with *Warhorse* (a narrative by Michael Morpurgo, constructed around the wartime experiences of a boy and his horse) the most cited cultural tool young people associated with the war. The individuals they most associated with the war were Haig and Owen. Edith Cavell was the least likely person respondents associated with the war (11%) but twice as many girls as boys made this association. The most interesting difference, from this first stage, was in the words that boys and girls associated with the war. Boys' associations centred on death, guns and trenches: while girls shared the linking of death with the war, they had a much broader range of associations and were far less likely to associate guns. However it is not possible to say whether this difference was due to their gender or emerged from their remembering.

To an extent, these differentiated patterns of language were borne out in the case study group; Sophie and Yvonne's "sympathy" and "proud" responses to watching remembrance; Ivy's desire for the intimate or human aspects of history; Scarlett's 'emotional' exploration of remembrance. Mark was more interested in 'the facts' of history, to such an extent that his family remarked on this with admiration. This centrality of facts, in his view, was complemented by his disavowal of fiction in history: "I have always felt that I gained nothing out of fiction." Care should be taken not to delineate this too crudely as a masculine feature, Amelia too suggested a preference for

non-fiction. Slippage from stereotypical masculinity was evident in Mark's account with a clear set of 'intimate' interests informed by his mother. While his stated 'cold thinking' might be attributed as much to the particular role he plays within his family as the history expert, as much to his gender.

Another feature of the research was the way in which gender affected the manner in which the dialogue was structured. My field-notes reflected an ongoing anxiety on my part, particularly in Schools A and C, concerning the ways in which the boys dominated the dialogue, despite being in the minority in both these groupings. This echoes classroom-based research that shows "boys are more likely than girls to respond to teachers' initiations" (Howe, Christine, & Abedin, 2013, p.13). Yet within their homes, it seemed more apparent that the girls used dialogue within their families to construct and make meaning while the boys, particularly Younis and Mark, were more likely to pursue their construction of meaning alone. Once again, this echoes the research by Howe, Christine & Abedin (2013) suggesting that it is girls who are more likely to engage with both help-seeking and help-providing.

The boys seemed to be drawing on different cultural tools to construct meanings of the war and history. Thierry and Tom both professed a love of computer games, including those related to war. In Tom's auto-ethnography, he revealed how his interest in history was stimulated, at least in part, through video games, "From a very young age I became interested in humanities such as history and geography when me and my friend started playing this computer game called Rome Total War two. The game involved maps, history and computers which strangely enough have been the sort of areas that I want to follow." This, in turn, led to him talking about how he and his friend would then "go out into the woods and pretend to fight of evil armies". Interestingly, Mark was not as forthcoming about his use of computer games. During my home visit, Mark seemed embarrassed when his dad revealed, with a degree of surprise, that Mark had not mentioned his love of the game *Call of Duty*. For both Tom and Mark computer games featured

in the ways they interacted with the past and while these games are marketed at boys Tom and Mark presented very different versions of masculinity. It indicates how account needs to be taken of the particular contexts the games are being used in and how these impact on the processes of identification.

It is clear that all these responses were shaped by the range of different contexts in which the respondents found themselves and that they were aware of the ways in which society helps shape their identities. This is not to suggest that they all arrived at the same set of meanings, as boys or as girls, but gender certainly played a part in shaping their experiences and their understandings of WW1 history. For example, both Amelia and Scarlett cited their fathers' roles in their history interest, in the school contexts. Yet when I visited their houses, it was clear that their mothers played an equally critical role, such that in Scarlett's case her mother bitterly commented on her mischaracterisation.

The ways in which gender is constructed and presented, societally, have a bearing on the ways in which young people make different understandings about history. WW1, as a remembrance event, is presented in a highly gendered way with the male soldier foregrounded. Yet the boys and girls in this study negotiated this in a range of ways reflecting intersectional factors at play. Boys and girls did appear to use different tools to construct their meanings and in phase 2 they used dialogue in different ways to make and remake meaning. It is, however, important to stress the diversity that exists within gender grouping, such that while most boys in groups tended to dominate discussion in schools, this wasn't true of all, with Tom often demurring to Bess and Roisin at School D. In addition, it was noticeable that the girls, particularly, engaged in dialogue in very different ways at home to the ways they did in school suggesting setting has an impact on how the young people enact their gender.

8.5.1.3 Ethnicity

I have specifically chosen to use the concept of ethnicity rather than that of race, as it stresses shared cultural practices rather than assumed biological or physical characteristics: both are historically freighted constructs. Ethnicity entails a breadth of references in those constructions, including a common history, environment, territory, language, customs, habits, beliefs; in short, by a common way of life.

This is not to downplay the experience of race and racism in society and clearly overlaps exist in the ways that ethnicity and race are conceptualised and experienced, but I believe that ethnicity better captures the historical and cultural aspects of identity constructions.

If the black subject and black experience are not stabilised by Nature or by some other essential guarantee, then it must be the case that they are constructed historically, culturally, and politically - and the term that refers to this is 'ethnicity'. The term ethnicity acknowledges the place of history, language and culture in the construction of subjectivity and identity...

(Hall, 1988, p.29).

Developing on Hall's theme of the constructed nature of ethnicity, it is important that this analysis of ethnicity extends to white ethnicities, particularly in the context of understanding the ways in which different ethnicities interact. "The problem with intellectually disowning English ethnicity was that the left never got around to working out what it was, and what our own emotional connections to it were" (Rutherford, 1997, p.5). In an education setting, this lack of attention to English ethnicity can have serious ramifications in developing broader work in challenging discrimination; within a history education context, promoting a diverse curriculum

without accounting for the identities of the broad range of white ethnicities might foster serious resentment.

One way in which many of the students from minority ethnic backgrounds who took part in my research went about constructing historical understandings outside the classroom was oppositional. The survey and quiz data suggested some antipathy towards acts of remembrances associated with WW1. For others, this manifested itself as muted ambivalence: the idea that the war had nothing to do with them. In Abdullah's case, this idea was based on limited knowledge of the involvement of the Asian subcontinent in WW1. Neither his school nor his home articulated this role and his limited engagement with remembrance ceremonies reinforced his idea of a 'white' war that led to conclusions of its irrelevance in his life. This led to a more general understanding that history served no purpose for him beyond the photos at home of his 'home', Bangladesh. It was only when I made an intervention in introducing him to Kazi Nazrul Islam that he began to re-think his views on history's utility, although his articulation indicated a degree of resentment regarding this omission from his school curriculum and a sense of his own heritage being denied.

Abdullah's peers had a more positive orientation towards history, seeing it as an important way of making a connection with the Caribbean and informing their sense of identity. One aspect they all recognised was an experience of racism (particularly through forms of marginalisation) that, to a degree, informed the understandings they drew from history or the value they ascribed it. This, in part, explains Abdullah's more hostile relationship to history; it was he who first articulated experiences of racism that had the effect of making it hard for him to feel pride in his origins and therefore, his history. For the others, sources of pride were more readily available. They took the form of murals of Black Heroes in Broadwater Farm or statues of slave rebellions in Jamaica or contemporary heroes, such as Bob Marley or Usain Bolt. Abdullah's self-portrait

highlighted his Asian and (to a lesser degree) his Muslim identity but he wasn't able to articulate the ways this manifested itself as clearly as the other respondents.

Younis, however, was very clearly able to articulate pride in his Muslim identity. In many ways, it was central to the manner in which he created understandings about history, either in the particulars of his interests, like the impact of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire on the Muslim Ummah, or even in the way he approached the study of the past. The way in which both Younis and his Iman described the Koran's unitary and unquestionable authority shared Mark's desire for truth. The history of 'back home' is also important; something that all the minority students in this study shared and, for Younis, the keeper of that history was his mother. This was also true for Abdullah. However, if we see this history as the history of the family, we can observe across all the cases, with the exception of Ivy, that it was the mother who held the role of archivist.

This research indicates more work that needs to be done on the ways in which faith mediates the understandings young people have of history. Wilkinson (2014a, 2014b) has written a great deal about Muslim boys' interaction with history. He argues that, "the Muslim faith has consistently been shown to be of high emotional and intellectual significance in the lives of young British Muslim male" (Wilkinson, 2014a, p. 398). This is not reflected in the curriculum where a significant absence exists, across subjects, regarding the Muslim faith and this gap between the home culture and the school culture has ramifications for the achievement and engagement of young Muslim boys. In addition while faith is important to many Muslim boys, its practice takes place within a wider discourse, as was evident for Abdullah and Younis, with the creation of 'folk devils' and associated ideas of hegemonic masculinities (Wilkinson 2014a). Out of this discourse

potentially emerges the idea that powerful religious identity trumps a commitment to secular education. The impact of 9/11, 7/7 and The Prevent strategy¹⁵ may serve to reinforce this.

Care should be taken not to characterise one experience as speaking for the whole. The two Muslim boys in this study shared a common faith and Bangladeshi background but had very different views on the uses of history that cannot be attributed simply to the difference in their age. Nevertheless, as I indicated in Chapter 1, following Retz (2016) academic history, school history and the philosophy of history have been braided together into a common conception regarding what it means to be historically educated and it is valuable for teachers to have some sense the way in which these different elements become intertwined but without losing sight of the ways in which the diverse range of young people might also consider this question. Invariably the idea of what it means to be historically educated has been drawn largely on a European model of historiography. Islamic historiography is a broad field with a range of different traditions, being influenced both by period, dynasty and region, so it is hard to characterise. Chase Robinson's overview (2003) of Islamic historiography is limited to the formative and medieval periods (to c. 1500), focusing on the Arabic social contexts in which history writing was produced. More recently, Choueiri has suggested that Arab historiography has, "become part of a worldwide professional movement" (Choueiri, 2011, p.512). However, as I have demonstrated in describing the interaction of social remembering and historical consciousness, tensions and debates exist regarding the routes to historical knowledge. For an individual like Younis, the idea that Arab (or more broadly, an Islamic) historiography has become part of a worldwide professional movement might be a source of tension.

¹⁵ The Prevent Strategy formed part of the UK government's Counter-Terrorism and Security Act

2015 placing a duty on schools under section 26 to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism"

Younis indicated a range of ways that he was aware of negotiating a variety of tensions; one was in relation to secular influences in the lives of Muslims. He suggested that his generation were much more open to secular influence than his father's generation. However, in his personal journey, he writes:

I have been exposed to more religious ideology and teachings than many other young people, including apparent religious ones. This is due to family, namely both my parents' beliefs. Due to this, and they were successful as I believe in many things others dismiss (devils, curses, evil influences, angels, Satan, God, Divine Judgement), I cannot analyse anything from a purely secular viewpoint, and indeed I often have markedly different reactions to events than other people due to my beliefs.'

My sense is that, while in conversation with me, Younis was prepared to embrace secular influences and this could extend to what might be described as a European historiography. However, he didn't hold this position consistently, or at least it was hard for him to hold this position at home, especially in the context of a father who dismissed history, in his words, as "...almost becoming surreal or almost lies to a certain extent. So which game are you playing?"

This scepticism is informed by the sense in which certain events are considered significant while others are omitted, or the ways in which different communities' experiences in the present affect their perceptions of how to interpret events in the past. In the YouGov survey (Bostanci, 2014), we have seen how respondents from Turkey and Egypt had memories of a different set of events associated with WW1 and as a consequence, drew very different meanings. A study of Turkish college students (Özer & Ergün, 2013) found that they, "did not see Western European events as having a primary importance in history". While this is not surprising, it suggests that British teachers might need to take into account the broader ranging sets of ideas about 'home' encountered within their classroom. One clear outcome of this Turkish study was the

recognition of a set of, “unique cultural and historical variables that contribute to the identity and social psychological attributions of Turkish students” (Özer & Ergün, 2013, p.574).

One manifestation of the way in which Younis’ faith influenced his approach and meaning-making in relation to history was in his interest in the *Ummah*. In some of his formulations the idea of the *Ummah* is contrasted with that of the nation state. During our talk at the Mosque, in the context of a discussion about where authority is derived from, I wondered how Younis negotiated different claims to authority. His response drew on history, “How do we conserve Muslim teachings that were present during the Ottoman caliphate and how do we keep that going? During the Ottoman caliphate everything was fine – it was only with the rise of nationalism that the Ottoman caliphate sort of split apart.” Whilst acknowledging the nature of change, this snippet seeks to re-establish a level of continuity with “Muslim teachings that were present during the Ottoman Empire.” This echoes Lassner’s idea that, “there is a certain timelessness to the way Muslims have experienced and indeed continue to experience history” (Lassner, 2000, p.14). The negotiating of the competing ideas of nation state and Ummah are evident in this extract from Younis’s writing about Remembrance Day, explaining why remembrance was, for him, a painful memory: ‘*A disaster further exacerbated by the collapse of the Islamic Caliphate, and the implementation of nation states defined by borders (one commonly interpreted as being a rogue state doesn’t help matters) over a people that were united by their faith*’, as well as a clear sense of the connection between the past and the present.

Lassner argues for a nuanced view of how Muslims used and continue to use their past and that this ought to begin with Muslim perceptions rather than Western sensibilities. The European traditions of historical consciousness that has its own history emerging from the relationship to the nation shape ought not to be taken as a template for Muslim historical consciousness; although we should take care not to characterise this in simplistic ways, we might need to

recognise that some Muslims might be drawing on different traditions that contribute to an altogether different idea of historical consciousness. For some (Akram, 2007), “The concept of the *Ummah*, from its inception at the time of the origin of Muslim history to its ultimate unity and its anticipated role in the future, has a combined effect on the Muslim consciousness” (p.410). For others, like Abdullah, the *Ummah* did not feature in his accounts. Instead, he had a powerful identification with the nation state of Bangladesh.

As Bauman had found in his study of Southall, “Young Southallians seemed at once to reify their cultures and communities, and deny their own reifications.” (Baumann 1996, p.4) I too found this dual process at play. It is a reminder of the part played by contingency and context in articulations of identity.

Lassner’s call for a more nuanced view on how Muslims observe the past can be extended to the ways in which white students from within the majority culture also work with history.

Frankenburg’s work (1993) asserts the need to investigate the constructed nature of white identities. She also reminds us of the important ways in which whiteness is cross-cut with other identities (Frankenberg, 2001) so that critically, while belonging to the majority culture, it is still possible for them to experience marginalisation, particularly through the ways they experience class and or gender; so that just as neither of the Muslim boys in question is used to being emblematic of the experience of Muslims, the same is true of the white students in the study.

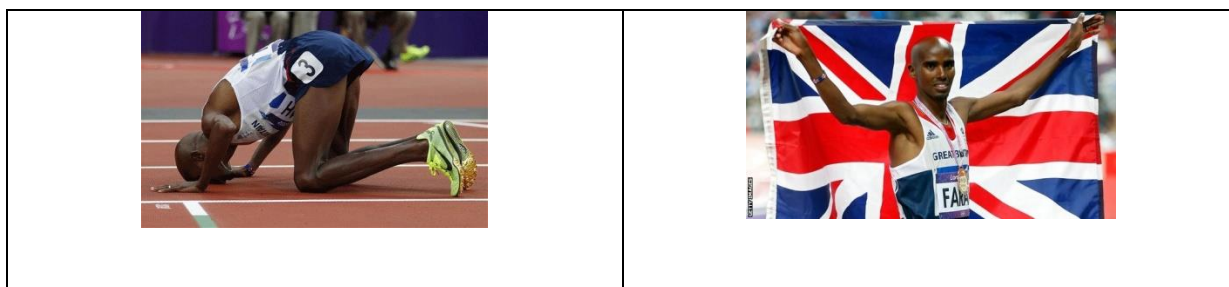
Using historically informed ethnographic data, Nayak (1999) explores how young people experience white, English ethnicities in the contemporary post-imperial moment in the North East of England. Using the post-structuralist and psychoanalytical approach, he articulates appreciation of ambivalence – ambivalence at the heart of negotiations in identity with all the young people in my study; racism and nationalism just one of many competing discourses that

they drew on in constructing their identities and meanings from history. Ambivalence was raised across all the meetings by each participant at different moments.

Mark was often the most emphatic in tone, when we talked, yet his positions clearly shifted from the idea that 'War never changes' to the war as a turning point in the nature of warfare. His rationale for remembrance has shifted too, less now in terms of the soldier or indeed Britain, more in terms of the lessons that can be learnt. However, the echo of the '*pinnacle of what man is willing to do each other*' is still here. His interests in contemporary politics and conflict might be at play here, relating back to wars fought in Afghanistan. Nayak uncovers ways in which young people feel that anti-racist policies effectively serve to regulate white identities. Mark also hinted at this in articulating, with a degree of resentment, the possibilities of broader, more inclusive forms of remembrance. Yet it was Mark who had the clearest idea of the global scale of the war, once again showing ambivalence and the heart of his negotiations through what he knows about the past and his sense of who he is.

Mark's obvious global interest in history can be at odds with the way he conceptualises diversity within his own setting. I sensed a romantic engagement with difference that is found elsewhere but has more limited recognition in Britain. When we had first met, I had given Mark and Ivy two different images of Mo Farah (Figure 25) to try and get into play the idea that people can derive multiple meanings from cultural artefacts; Mark had the image on the left but both arrived at the same conclusion, as expressed by Ivy, that the key message of the image was: 'This is a moment of triumph and celebration for the British Olympic team and the British people'.

Figure 25: Mo Farah



Later during this first meeting, we had been discussing my own personal ethnography, which they had read prior to my visit, in which I talk about my arrival at Oxford to begin the DPhil. I had written, *‘However, my start at Oxford was not a happy one. Suddenly I felt catapulted into a world whose assumptions seemed a million miles away from my own learning journey.* Earlier in the same piece, I had written about the importance of ethnicity in my identity formation. In this context, I asked them both about their impressions of Oxford. Mark commented, “Quite an old city; fairly young because of the university but quite old.” It occurred to me, based on these two interactions and subsequently, that Mark appeared to have no notion of race or ethnicity, that he doesn’t appear to see it and this reflected the place in which he had grown up.

Jeater (1992) claimed that many young whites do not feel they have an "ethnicity", or if they do, that it is not one they feel too good about. This, too, was something that I had experienced as a teacher, visiting an English classroom during an enrichment day themed around identity; students were asked to construct pictures that represented who they are. When I spoke to some of the white students who were sitting with blank pages, they made comments like “I don’t know who I am” or “I’m just fish and chips”. This was not true of the white students involved in this study. Mark was aware and proud of his Irish and Scottish ancestry. Scarlett and Amelia were keen to tap into this broader British identity, perhaps explaining the more confident, settled and positive sense of identity. Another cross current relates to class: each of the students who took

part in the final home visit came from more comfortable professional homes. For each of them, university was the expected outcome, with only Scarlett being a pioneer in this regard.

Sometimes the way in which Mark and Younis talked about history and the world around them, especially in the group sessions, shared a degree of certainty. In contrast, the way in which they pursued their understanding was often in isolation rather than in dialogue with family or friends. Both these are partly attributable to their gender. However, Younis was more conscious of negotiating his understandings in relation to broader societal factors. One of the reasons he did things in isolation was that he wasn't sure of how his ideas would be received. One remembers Younis racking his thoughts over a comment made by a white girl at his school, about feeling unsafe on the Cowley Road. This reveals the way in which Younis has to think a great deal more about ethnicity than the others in the case study group. Both the school Younis attended and the city he lived in were ethnically diverse, though he was still in a minority. The others went to schools in relatively mono-cultural settings. This was especially true of Mark. The consequence of this was that Younis was constantly thinking about and negotiating his ethnic identity, whereas Mark (and to an extent, the others) took their whiteness as a given. Younis's hybrid identity and location had afforded him a lot of scope to think about ethnicity and had a much clearer bearing on the way he formed his understanding of history.

8.5.1.4 Place

The last paragraph has already begun to sketch out the way in which place impacts on how historical understandings are constructed. Reading Nayak's (1999) work is a reminder of the historically and geographically-located nature of my ethnographic portraits, all drawn in the South East of England and from experiences that could not, like Nayak's cases, be described as living in the margins. Mark's confidence can be ascribed to the permanence of his sense of place,

having been born and raised in the same rural village in the South East of England. He was able to confidently explore and consider the rest of the world from a position of all being known about the place in which he lived. This included being part of a cadet group that marked the remembrance service at his local war memorial. In this instance, place overlaps with idea of nation.

This experience of place contrasts starkly with the young people from School B and for Younis, this experience sits at the intersection of ethnicity and place. For them, place is experienced with a degree of impermanence and this serves to unsettle ideas of who they are. However, even this was not uniform, for the African-Caribbean children seem much more at ease with the idea of inhabiting two places simultaneously; their London locality and team loyalty featuring in their portraits. However, for both Younis and Abdullah, the place they belonged to was elsewhere in Bangladesh or for Younis, in the idea of the Ummah, with little outward attachment to their locality or to Britain.

In discussing the estrangement and displacement associated with hybridity, cultural theorist, Homi Bhabha, has noted the tension between national narratives that fix people, as objects, often to a set idea of place on the one hand and processes that mark people as subjects performing their own narratives on the other. This suggests that these tensions relate as much to those with acknowledged hybrid identities as those with seeming unitary identities, such as Mark. So that while local spaces might serve to forget the presence of others in commemoration, this is at odds with the history of nation that; "becomes liminal, signifying space that is internally marked by the discourses of minorities, the heterogeneous histories of contending peoples, antagonistic authorities and tense location of cultural difference" (Bhabha, 2012, p.212).

It is possible, then, to see the role of place as operating on different levels within the immediate locality in where identities are acted out, and again in the nation space where those same identities can be simultaneously recognised or concealed. However, this can be a source of tension for students of both majority and minority ethnicity as they struggle to reconcile the differences across these spaces and helps to explain the ambivalences that mark the ways in which their understandings of the past are constructed.

A final set of observations about illness suggests that while categories that inform identifications, like nation, gender and ethnicity and place are potentially powerfully formative this process of becoming remains fluid, dynamic and particular. A number of the cases in phases 2 highlighted an encounter with illness as an important dimension in their engagement with history and process of becoming.

While certain kinds of illness, such as eating disorders, tend to be associated with girls, personal illness can also create opportunities for students of both genders to pursue more personal interests and a relative's illness may prompt them to reflect on their own role and relationships with others.

Mark related his formative engagement with Pearl Harbour in the context of being ill with chickenpox: being up all hours with his mother, perhaps with a hint of fever, obsessing about details of the attack. Illness also played a further role in the way Mark negotiated his father's Parkinson's disease and may reflect in the particular way he is negotiating his masculinity. But the onset of his father's ill-health certainly underscored Mark's desire to travel and manifested in his use of history as a way in which he sought certainty and truth.

Scarlett also highlighted illness in her auto-ethnography, *With pressure comes a breaking point. I met that breaking point in September 2012. I won't go into detail, not because I don't want to, but because it doesn't feel appropriate. What I will say is that my diagnosis of anorexia and OCD does not mean that I am any less of a nerd; I am not any less of Scarlett I used to be.*'

Scarlett's astuteness enables her to grasp the twin impulses of her illness so while she writes about feeling 'ashamed' she recognises the illness as central to her identity, '*...does not mean that I am any less of a nerd*'. She takes this further in claiming agency back from the illness on an interpersonal level and in relation to her developing sense of history and its place in her thinking. Being ill gave her time to think, read and watch the TV: some of that diet was history related, based on a '*fascination for other people and their lives*'. This engagement was also therapeutic: '*Watching documentaries from every angle possible has widened my view of the world, and taken me out of the isolated bubble I would otherwise let myself fall into.*' The most significant of these (re)connections was with her father. '*I spent more time talking with my dad about all the things I had learnt; slowly rebuilding the relationship I had lost with him through our shared interest with the past.*'

Emma Rich (2006) has written about how young women 'manage' the complexities of the presentation of an anorexic identity. She argues that many of the experiences anorexics encountered acted as a type of 'discursive constraint' that emphasised the visual and further stigmatised them. Many of the young women, in her study, attempt to resist this by engaging with alternative contexts and relationships through which they can construct more positive self-representations of anorexia or anorexic identities – something, perhaps, Scarlett is trying to do in her engagements with history. She is perhaps negotiating the history/geek discourses as a way to offer her an alternative subjectivity that helps her manage her anorexia. In Scarlett's case, I have no evidence of her stigmatisation and can only speculate, therefore, whether it acted as a discursive constraint. What her own writing does reveal are the social and emotional dimensions

that take us beyond the physical manifestations that suggest someone wanting to resist the discursive constraint of the medicalised physical and visual focus on her condition.

Once again, it is clear that the making of identities takes place across a range of social settings.

More work is needed on the specific ways that illness might mediate young people's engagement with history.

This chapter has shown how young people are involved dynamically in a broad range of social remembering, across a range of contexts and utilising a broad range of tools. This is also true of those students who might, based on a narrow notion of history, be seen as not engaged. Given the range of settings and tools, it is understandable that a range of understandings are drawn, not only about WW1, but also about history in general. However, it is clear that subjectivities and the individuals' sense of who they are and the communities they are part of, is a central element in this. This sense of self can act as a prism through which history is viewed, determining the way in which utility or value is attributed to it. This might lead, on the one hand, to students rejecting history, feeling that their identities are neglected, or seeking histories that speak more directly to these identities, or, on the other hand, to a critical embrace, with students recognising the ways in which the past informs their present and their sense of who they are.

These identities play out at a societal level, but also at a more intimate level within families, for example through illness, and recognising the interplay between them is critical. The identities young people hold exist within a broader set of social relations that can serve to constrain or proscribe. So while it is useful to acknowledge the ways in which identity might act as an interpretative lens through which to view history, it is important to think of ways in which history might enable young people to act on their own identities.

Chapter 9 Re-visioning history education

Given my background as a teacher and my desire for the research to be relevant to history educators, in this chapter I challenge some orthodox conceptualisations of the purposes of history education, and argue for a greater engagement with young people's affective desires and the remembering done outside of the classroom.

The discussion in this chapter has three broad aims. I return to debates about historical consciousness, and in particular the work of Rüsen. Understanding how young people orient themselves in time thus has important implications for teaching.

My second aim is to examine implications of the research for teaching WW1. My research has shown particular issues with pupils understanding of the both the global nature of the war and its consequences. I will consider ways in which we can enable school students to engage with the complexity of WW1 and understand its continued resonance in the contemporary world.

My third aim is to make a case for two central goals regarding the purposes of history teaching in order to support pedagogy more responsive to young people's needs and their process of making and remaking their identities. The first is using history as a tool to navigate the present. My findings have shown the ways in which young people engage with history and how, if at all, they use history. Many of the older students in the study had their interest in the past stimulated through their interest in the present; that is, their curiosity in news and current affairs. This relates directly to debates regarding students' orientation in time. The second goal is the better use of history to draw out its human connections, such that through understanding people in the past students might better understand themselves in the present and future.

9.1 Historical consciousness

This work does much to flesh out empirically the sorts of processes involved in a young person's development of historical consciousness, highlighting the interplay with different forms of social remembering.

As I indicated in my introduction, the use of the definition of historical consciousness from the Centre for the Study of historical consciousness facilitates a broader engagement with historical consciousness, one that critically acknowledges the place of social remembering:

Individual and collective understandings of the past, the cognitive and cultural factors which shape those understandings, as well as the relations of historical understandings to those of the present and the future. (<http://cshc.ubc.ca/about/>, accessed 6th May 2014).

The portraits in chapters 4, 5 and 6 highlight a range of useful themes that enable this definition to be rendered in tangible lived terms. For example, with Mark in chapter 4, we recognise the place of nation and the way in which this contributes to a shared collective understanding of the past with his family and perhaps the cadets. We also observe the ways in which gender may play a part in his particular uses and perspectives of the past and how this is mediated by cognitive and cultural factors, such as Mark's objectivity and curiosity, linking to his individual desires and needs. We can see how his context(s) might begin to shape his perspective in both broadening and narrowing his frame of reference with regard to the past. Finally, we can see how Mark's interest in the present fuels his interest in the past. These themes operate at both a meta-level and a personal level, together offering scope for teachers to develop and work with these themes in classroom settings.

The portraits highlight the complex ways in which these students make sense of the past and the world around them; in particular, the ways in which they use their engagements with the past to

support the development of their own identities. Phase 2's findings show that they do this in increasingly sophisticated ways influenced by social remembering, but also mediated through the broader context of the way in which society determines their identities. This process creates a great deal of 'ambivalence', not only towards their use of the past but also in relation to their sense of self. It is important to note that the interplay between social remembering and what Biesta calls 'subjectification' can play out in both productive and problematic ways.

The relationship between social memory and historical consciousness is contested; for some theorists and writers, the relationship is a deeply problematic one. As I described in my introduction for some, the application of memory serves the needs of the nation state by shrouding the nation in a fog of nostalgia (Lowenthal, 1985; Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1992); a theme taken up by some history educators like Carretero (2011, 2012). For others, the concern is that a "surfeit of memory" (Maier, 1993) might erode the very basis of the discipline (Klein, 2000). This concern about the negative effects of social memory on the integrity of the discipline is a theme shared by some history educators (Counsell, 2011; Lee, 2004; Lévesque, 2008).

The German philosopher of history Jorn Rüsen has done a lot of work theorising historical consciousness, offering both a typology (Rüsen, 2006) and a schema interpreted by Megill (1994). What his work recognises is the important role social remembering plays in developing a young person's historical consciousness. Both the typology, but particularly the schema alerts us to two closely related dimensions of historical consciousness. The first is the idea of orientation in time, i.e. the way in which young people conceive of the relationship between the past, present and future or the degree to which they draw on history, "the mirror of past actuality" (Rüsen, 2006, p.67), to act in the present. The second is the way in which this orientation impacts upon their moral values and sense of identity.

Rüsen helpfully acknowledges in his schema the relationship between social remembering, *lebenspraxis* and the historical discipline. However, together with his taxonomy this relationship is presented as a hierarchical relationship. This hierarchy serves to obscure some of the messiness involved in, for example, the ways in which historians themselves are immersed in the *lebenspraxis*, or how the forms of knowledge generated in the discipline may omit sometimes, in their forms of representation, certain identities. This omission can also be true of social remembering. Rüsen's model also conceals the fact that *lebenspraxis* itself has forms of representation that might usefully challenge the knowledge generated in the disciplinary sphere, particularly in the cases of groups of people traditionally marginalised from the activity or the products of the discipline of history.

These debates are particularly pertinent in the sphere of identity. Hence, while Rüsen critically points out the way in which history might inform moral values and a sense of identity in the present, he takes rather less account of the ways in which identity informs the nature of young people's engagements with the past. My study, like that of Epstein (2009), highlights the impact that personal identities have in mediating the past; identities that are drawn in complex ways in relation to nation, gender, ethnicity and place. As Barton and McCully's (2005) study in Northern Ireland illustrates, the above can sometimes be problematic where the partial ways in which students drew on their community understandings of the past have led to problematic, partisan readings of the past and undesirable orientations in the present. This selective drawing upon the past can also be seen in my study with students like Mark and Younis, both at times drawing quite narrow conclusions about WW1 and history more generally. However, I believe that they and their identities had much to offer the classroom in terms of alternative perspectives that might make peers sit up and take notice. The depth of knowledge and enthusiasm demonstrated by all the students in the study is a rich resource that teachers must be encouraged to mine.

In Chapter 1, I discussed how debates about historical knowledge are closely related to debates regarding the purposes of history education, while also playing out in discussions regarding the nature of the relations between social remembering and historical consciousness. Drawing on the work of Samuel (1984, 1994, 1998), I was keen to stress the ways in which knowledge derived from what might be described as social memory might have real value, both historically and in enabling students to negotiate and construct their identities. Seeing the relationship as a less hierarchal and more fluid better enables these connections to be made; such that they might mutually complicate the sense of what is known: “A history that was alert to its constituency would need to address not only the record of the past but also the hidden forces shaping contemporary understandings of it, the imaginative complexes in and through which it is perceived” (Samuel, 1998, p. 222).

This means giving students the tools to deconstruct both representations in the past emerging from what Rüsen describes as *lebenspraxis*, but also that which appears above the line in the historical discipline. Seixas himself has articulated three approaches to the study of history in school, including one he described as the postmodern challenge that helps students position “all historical accounts in relation to the current interests of their narrators” (Seixas, 2000, p.30).

This will be alarming to many and I am not suggesting an equivalence, simply a reorientation of the Rüsen schema; that is rather than setting up the past encountered below the line as intrinsically problematic and as a consequence reinforcing the suggestion that the past as represented above the line is without its own limitations. Instead I argue for a reorientation seeks to enable students to assess both the claims and the relationship between the two. Any model that sets up disciplinary history as a corrective to social remembering is fraught with difficulties in the ways in which it fails to acknowledge the affective dimensions of *lebenspraxis* and its democratic appeal. This is especially true of students from minority backgrounds or young women for whom the history above the line still frequently forgets their presence.

History teaching should and must retain a disciplinary element; that is, history education can't just be about constructing identities, although, as Rüsen acknowledges, this is an important dimension of historical consciousness. History is more than the study of our projected ideal selves, as Samuel himself (1998, p.222) highlights: "It can also be a means of undoing and questioning, offering more disturbing accounts of who we are and where we come from than simple identification would suggest." Like Traile (2007), I would call for an embrace of disciplinary history with a recognition of history's emotional and affective power; that is, a need for sensitivity but also cognitive engagement.

This more democratic approach is also applicable to knowledge exchange at university. In Chapter 1, I outlined ways in which the impact agenda has potentially set up unhelpful ways of thinking about knowledge exchange with a focus on outcome rather than processes, suggesting unidirectional and hierarchical flows of knowledge. *The Leeds Stories of the Great War* was a good example of a community-led local heritage research project which involved academics, but was not directed by them in relation to its subject matter, research questions or ways of working. In a different project, based in Sheffield, King and Rivett (2015) highlight another benefit of this more democratic community of enquiry based on 'Stories of Activism in Sheffield' to show how the historian might benefit from a more open, two-way process, as the community involvement helped the historian to refine his questions about political engagement during the English Civil War. Conversely the project also strongly influenced orientations in the present by getting participants to think about activism in a local setting by considering the, "meanings of activism and how people saw themselves as activists" (King and Rivett, p.228).

9.2 First World War

New ways of thinking about WW1 are beginning to emerge, and this is reflected in both the scholarly and popular output outlined in Chapter 1. However, it is also true that Hynes (1992)' "myth of disenchantment" and its associated motif of futile sacrifice continues to exert a powerful hold, something borne out by my data and that of the British Council. This evocation of the horrors of war serves a powerful pedagogical role, particularly in the form of a warning to future generations (Aldridge, 2014). The problem is that it is located in a particular set of narrow references, especially in their geographical scope. This limited spatial reference also serves to inhibit students' ability to draw conclusions regarding the consequences of the war, particularly as they relate to other parts of the world.

This research shows the need to consider more explicitly the consequences of the war, thereby extending its temporal scope. A consideration of the consequences of war serves an important historical function. Assessing the long shadow (Reynolds, 2014) cast by WW1 is to understand the twentieth century. WW1 resonates into the twentieth century, yet for many young people they find it hard to see it, obscured as it is by WWII. Pedagogically, it is to put young people in touch with its continuing relevance.

A first step towards giving a clearer sense of the impact of war is to diversify the experiences of war and this might be achieved through collapsing the distinction between home front and front line (Watson, 2004). Making comparisons between gender, class and time could then illuminate, "the functioning of English society as a whole, at different specific historical moments, by means of the ways its members talked about the war- and about themselves and each other" (Watson, 2004, p.5). Using some of the insights from my research, I have collaborated with a local history teacher to plan a sequence of lessons to help a class of year 8 students to consider this breadth, diversity and enduring resonance. This was framed using the question: 'How far does the First

World War cast a shadow on the world I live in?’ Critical to this approach was the use of six historical figures, including Dorothy Lawrence (Lawrence, 1919) who disguised herself as a man to report on the fighting in France and Vera Brittain (Brittain, 1980). Through the words of Dorothy and Vera, students were then able to compare two very different female experiences of war and the wars impact on their lives as women. Thus, extending the study to get student to think about the ways in which war is remembered, and why, draws the analysis beyond the experience to show how not only that people were fighting different wars but they were, in turn, remembering different wars. Moreover, a case study comparing the Fabian Ware’s approach to the memory of war (Crane, 2014) with Kathe Kollwitz (whose statue *The Grieving Parents* is a reminder of the loss and bereavement of those who survived the war) adds a new dimension, that of an older generations guilt (Winter, 1998). This comparative approach would then enable students to recognise the different forms that memory takes and in turn ask questions about how and why it takes different forms.

Commemorations that take the form of the Tower of London poppies serve to compound an “imaginative inertia” (Todman, 2014), making it hard to consider another vision, or a range of visions of the past. Nevertheless, is possible to broaden the perspective within popular forms of commemoration. For instance, the Tower memorial has chosen to commemorate Britain’s military war dead. In response, the Quakers have devised a map, (Quakers, n.d.) showing how 19.1 million poppies could snake through London’s streets from the tower, representing all of the deaths arising from the conflict. It doesn’t have the visual drama of the Paul Cummings poppy installation, but it does encourage the imagination to extend further than these shores and to embrace all of humanity, so reminding us of what is being forgotten as well as remembered.

Reynolds (2013) who laments that we have, “lost touch with the Great War” (p.1) lays much of the responsibility for this on the *cultural turn*. He concedes, however, that the relationship between WWI and the twentieth century is a dynamic one. Popular commemorations can serve

as useful starting points for investigations into this dynamic, not least as this research shows young people are conscious of them. Within the context of the history classroom, they offer scope for young people to think about the nature of the society in which they live in, what it values and what it forgets. Commemorations offer scope for young people to speculate about the meanings inherent in these manifestations. Studied comparatively, they may challenge the idea that the meanings are constant: what are the Germans remembering? My Phase 2 research indicates that these acts of encoding and decoding are complex, involving a range of processes that draw on young people's knowledge of the past, but also their identities. In increasingly diverse classrooms, this then creates possibilities for multiple meaning-making that, in turn, gives scope to students trying to understand themselves and others. Commemorations offer emancipatory potential in giving young people access to particular contemporary debates about the past which can serve to illustrate what is more broadly at stake in historical argument. They may come to realise that, rather than being arid and dead, history is instead dynamic and contested. This approach can go some way to making the subject more relevant and less esoteric (Beck, 2013).

A final suggestion related to the problems of the narrow national perspective on WW1 and the related issue of difficulty assessing the consequences of WW1. Clearer delineation in the classroom between WWI and WWII might help to address this problem, as might a more explicit focus on the consequences rather than merely the causes of WW1, as is traditionally taught. This research indicates that place plays an important part in young people's negotiations with the past, with some, such as Younis, having a more global sense of belonging. Hence, I would urge a greater use of maps in the classroom. Cases have been made before about the use of maps as evidence (Cavanagh, 2004), so I would extend this getting students to use a world map as a constant reference point in lessons. Here, they could note the journey people they are studying are making (we did this notably with Khudadad Khan and Norman Manley as part of

the same scheme that included Dorothy Lawrence and Vera Brittain) noting different theatres of war and indicating the way in which maps were redrawn, before and after the wars. A particularly arresting but simple introductory task would be to ask students to mark on a world map where they think the first shot of the war was fired by a British Soldier. Records indicate that it was on the Gold Coast and it came from a rifle of Sergeant Alhaji Grunshi (Olusoga, 2015). We could then follow this primary question by asking them why, as I suspect based on this research, most of them placed the spot somewhere in Europe; now you have students immediately considering the interplay of remembrance and history. Using these approaches would meet the needs to orient young people towards both time and place.

The general use of a world map in the teaching of WWI does then help in taking the young people beyond the trenches of the Western Front. The University of Oxford's World War Centenary project has taken some of the thousands of GPS coordinates that the Commonwealth War Graves has been gathering over the past few years and has turned them into a visual representation of loss (Lockley, n.d.). Using Google Maps, students can then navigate across the globe, revealing the scale of the loss. This approach also works on a local level. As the website explains: "Imagine being able to look up on their mobiles the cemeteries near you that contain a war casualty and then enhance the global dimension by getting them to explore further. Why are there 9 war graves in a tiny cemetery at Trekkopje in northern Namibia? What happened there? Immediately you start to see the value of being able to visualise the war in this way."

The above approach brings the possibility of interplay between the local and the global that might help to unsettle fixed or bounded ideas of space that can cause people to forget more diverse contributions. In drawing on the work of the critical geographer Massey, Taylor describes how it is possible to explore a locality - in her case Kilburn - in such a way that asks questions about the power relations particularly in the ways that it is possible to, "explore how the same place may be invested with different meanings by different people" (Taylor, 2004, p.6). By asking

students how people from different places might view their locality and their memorial, it then becomes possible to unpick the ways in which remembrance can become normalised and bounded.

9.3 Classroom pedagogy

This research gives history educators a clearer, more embedded idea of how young people work with the history they encounter outside of the classroom. It provides a valuable context for thinking and re-thinking pedagogies within the classroom. Having a clearer sense of the meaning that young people bring to the classroom is critical if we are to work productively with them. I want to end by returning to the way in which questions of knowledge relate to the purpose of history education in order to think about the implications they have for pedagogy. I have referred to the way in which the philosopher Biesta sees one of the key roles of education as “subjectification” (Biesta, 2010, p.12), i.e. to help them in the process of becoming a subject. This focus is taken up by Barton (2009) in a historical context. Whilst warning of the dangers of a narrowly proscribed nationalistic curriculum, he argues that the alternative of a more exclusively disciplinary approach may serve to disengage students. He argues that history in school should have identity formation at its heart, as this is both engaging and serves a social purpose.

I want to argue that for this approach to be realised, it is critical that teachers both create space for dialogue within and across classrooms. Moreover, a good starting point is for students to explore their own histories, particularly within their own localities, bringing these into the classroom as a safe place to explore and evolve these biographies. The place of dialogue in the process of ‘subjectification’ could have transformed the experiences and understandings of Mark and Younis, most of whose memory work was done in isolation or in a relatively homogenous context that served to normalise and to reify their identities.

The auto-ethnographic approach with which I pursued this research could be used as a powerful pedagogical tool for students to explore themselves by looking inwards initially, but then taking this approach further by adopting a comparative approach such that their own identity formulations are problematised in a reconstructive and comparative process in classrooms. González, Moll and Amanti's (2005) notion of 'funds of knowledge' and, more recently, the concept of 'funds of identity' are central to this process.

In Moll and Greenberg's original study (1990), it was suggested that students have a range of entry points into the curriculum, but that motivation to learn is closely related to relevance derived from the student's context and the social relations within that context. For them, the home was a useful 'fund of knowledge' for both the teacher and student. Exploring this fund in the classroom involves the need for a multi-stranded, reciprocal and interdependent learning context. They stressed the need for 'authentic tasks' that had plenty of variety and allowed prior knowledge to be brought to bear in order that these tasks should have relevance and purpose, with thought given to the audience. Critically, they suggest that writing should be a tool for thinking rather than assessing.

Developing the fund of knowledge idea, (i.e. knowledge from which the whole family or community derives benefit), Estaban-Guitart and Moll (2014) evolve the concept of funds of identity referring to, "the historically accumulated, culturally developed, and socially distributed resources that are essential for a person's self-definition, self-expression, and self-understanding"(Esteban-Guitart and Moll, 2014, p.31). Once again, the use of ethnographic portraits might be a useful way for students to explore their community resources in critical and relational ways to support their self-development. The above approach should take place within a context of dialogue and exchange, regarding their portraits, such that students begin to

problematise their own identities and think about ways in which new and alternative identities might be constructed.

This process should not be a narcissist exercise, but a rigorous process of making and remaking; one that validates the places and interests of their own knowing whilst recognising the course of other identity projects. This approach might be usefully extended across schools to diversify further the ways in which students see how identity is constructed.

This need not be antithetical to the pursuit of history, as historian Selina Todd (2014) writes:

Twenty-five years ago, at the co-ed comprehensive in Newcastle-upon-Tyne that I attended, my history teacher set us a memorable assignment. We were each to interview the oldest woman we knew and then to write history from her point of view. The task developed our emotional intelligence, imagination and interest in our community. It also sparked my interest in history, and has shaped my career as a historian.

It might also serve broader societal purposes. Nayak's work on white ethnicities was clear about the problematic ways in which white ethnicities were constructed and conceptualised, such that the young people in his study felt that anti-racist policies effectively served to regulate white identities. This reminded me of the student whose vignette I begun this thesis with. Positively Nayak concludes the article by outlining ways in which identities can be positively deconstructed by students and teachers through forms of storytelling, autobiography and local historical research.

Tracing their familial past was a means of personalising history, making it relevant to their life experiences to date. In the course of this process it was not unusual for students to refer to generational elements of racism within their family lineage.

(Nayak, 1999, p.195).

In seeking to connect anti-oppressive policies, such as anti-racism, with local histories and the 'lived' culture of the community, Nayak offers a more fruitful way of tackling racism. Such an approach, drawing on the community forms of social remembering, taps into Samuel's (1981, 1994, 1998) call for engagement with the local, the vernacular and the particular. My central ethnographic portraits indicate that young people are able to draw on a wide range of diverse experiences and interpretations, providing a fruitful starting point of a shared identity; that of belonging to the locality. In addition, the variety of experiences that exist in any classroom will also open up an exploration of more diverse ways of being white.

This identity exploration need not be confined to the individual concerned or the group to which they perceive that they belong. In an article based on a series of lessons on the British Somali Community, Mohamud and Whitburn make the following observation:

A group of white working-class boys had been sitting together in a group in one of the Year 9 classes and had been thoroughly engaged in the one-hour pilot lesson we had shared with them. After the lesson they told their history teacher that they had really appreciated the lesson because it 'had taught us about our friends'. Too often the value of multicultural history has been presented in terms of individual identities and the importance of inclusion of particular hidden histories to boost the self-esteem of that heritage group. By contrast, these boys reminded us that community identity can have an integrated plurality that means the hidden histories of one ethnic minority community can engage the wider community in appreciation of how far the 'nation' has come.

(Mohamud and Whitburn, 2014, p.45)

In evolving a pedagogy that enables students' critical engagement with history, thought needs to be given to the different purposes of history, together with a more inclusive approach to knowledge, including accessing and valuing students' sources of knowledge as they exist within

their communities. In turn, this approach might enable a range of critical possibilities enabling students to see the relevance of history to their lives and so critically engage with it on a range of levels, including understanding it as a discipline. If teachers have a more informed idea of what matters in students' lives, then they also have a clearer way in which they communicate the value of history.

Wilkinson (2014b) has explored the way in which the absent curriculum, with little or no Muslim presence, can serve to disengage Muslim boys. In another article (Wilkinson, 2014a), he shows how engagement might also relate to the way in which the purpose of history is communicated to Muslim boys such that, "history can provide a vital meaning-making tool to generate the success of Muslim boys in a variety of significant dimensions both in and out of school" (p.396). Adopting a critical realist model, Wilkinson offers a, "laminated and relational" model of success, reproduced below in figure 26. The affective success, relating to history's ability to enable young Muslim boys to reflect on home culture and their relationship to British culture, was often the least developed in school settings, having a detrimental effect on their overall holistic success and engagement. Wilkinson also revealed the formative influence of parents in supporting the boys' decisions about which subject to take for further study, while the absence of affective success might also serve to undermine the positive support parents might give to the study of history.

Figure 26: A virtuous circle of different types of emergent success with the NCH¹⁶



(Wilkinson, 2014a, p.419)

This broader holistic approach to considering the purpose of history would, I believe resonated with Younis, who had dropped history at Year 9, and his family.

Reflecting on the conversations I have been privileged to conduct with the young people in this study, it is possible to draw a range of potential conclusions reflecting the diversity and particularities of each case. Instead I have limited myself to two final observations regarding the implications for the teaching and the study of history, conducted in such a way to allow my students back into this final chapter. One is the need to ensure that the study of history is the study of human connections, while the other is that history is taught in such a way that students see it as a tool to navigate the present.

¹⁶ National Curriculum History

9.3.1 History as a tool to navigate the present

The most powerful articulation of the purpose of history, and one that is broadly accepted by the students in this study, was the idea that history could and should help us understand the present. Even the students in School B argued that more should be done to connect the past to the present in discussing how remembrance might be adapted to become more inclusive.

Amelia articulated this view very clearly when I visited her at her home on the 27th March for her, “History should serve the present and future.” All the students at School A were politically curious, and in Amelia’s case, she thought that her family’s involvement with the local Labour group was a positive thing and that many of Robert’s contributions were underscored by a political point. It did not take long, for example, when we met on the 6th November, for them to move from discussing the causes of WWI to discussing the rights and wrongs of military interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq. Robert felt that the specific forms in which remembrance manifested might serve to oversimplify the causes of war, particularly in trying to attribute a just cause to WWI. He explained:

But because of all the sacrifice and death that was on an entirely new level. People went ‘there has got to be a reason we went’ [be]cause people couldn’t get their heads round going into this war and all these people dying, gunned down by machine guns, and they said ‘keep sending them over the top’. We’ve GOT to be proud of that because if we don’t think we were fighting an expansionist evil force, they have died for nothing and I don’t think that is something most people in Britain could take.

Earlier, Robert had argued, “I didn’t watch it fully but there was a programme that week and he put across the argument that intervention in the First World War was entirely pointless because Germany only wanted to control France; they weren’t bothered about going any further.” We

established that the programme he was talking about, *The Pity of War*, featured historian Niall Ferguson (2014).

Mark was also able to offer an analysis of causation and, like the students in School B, a discussion about WWI quickly became one about Afghanistan and Iraq. “The reasons we were in Iraq and Afghanistan and the reasons for WW1 are completely separate reasons. One is about a war on terror and the other is about stopping militaristic Germany but”, he paused briefly to collect his thoughts, “a critical view of both of them. I do look at both sides of them. Obviously, Afghanistan and Iraq later I detail because they happened quite early on in my life, 2001 and 2003, so the only thing I can remember is the grainy green footage from the start of it. But personally, I am opposed to both Afghan and Iraq and how they run in parallel. It was people at the top sending people at the bottom to war. That’s how I view it.” Ivy was keen on the role that chance plays in causation: “When you learn about history, you say if this didn’t happen then the world wouldn’t be the same...It’s crazy when you think how events turn out and how one tiny thing could change.”

This linking with the present was less political in the cases of the students from School B and School D, perhaps as both groups were younger. What the qualitative research reveals was evidence that they were keen to link the events of their study of history to the present. Tom, who wrote an ethnographic portrait, finished his piece with this:

More recently on the news, however, I remember hearing suddenly about the rise of the Islamic State and the struggle of the Kurds and Syrians under the pressure of the extremists fuelled by a ludicrous amount of money. The things they did really, to put it bluntly, made me hate them. It was taking the world back to medieval times.’

For the students in School B, this linking to the present very much took the form of their own worlds. This occurred both at the level of their locality, particularly their family, and in relation to what they saw as their heritage.

Another theme related to the idea of navigating the present was the sense in which the students understood change and continuity. In the survey, some had identified how WWI was a turning point, particularly in the 22 responses that were categorised using Lévesque “relevance” criteria. This included a broad spectrum of sophistication from those who simply saw WWI as a precursor to WWII, such as this statement from respondent 29: “First World War to me is the start of WWII”. This extract from Tom’s response, in School D, presented a clear sense of change related to the global scale of the war:

I think the First World War was a turning point in wars, where there is much stronger allied forces with more countries than ever before being involved in one war. Though all wars are a horrific thing, this war may have brought countries together, such as France and Britain, bringing them together to fight a common cause. After the First World War a sort of prototype of the United Nations was made called the League of Nations and I feel without the First World War, the world would not be so unified today.’

His sense of the way in which the effects of the war are felt within contemporary society shows understanding of the interplay between change and continuity. While the extent to which the world is unified today can be debated, Tom was attempting to make connection from the events of 1914-1918 to the world he lives in today.

Tom was unusual in this regard, as far more typical were students who found it hard to make a connection between the past, in this case WWI, and the present. This echoes some of the work of Foster et al. (2008) who suggest, “The responses of only a small minority of students demonstrated a capacity to refer to the past to inform contemporary and future perspectives” (p.5). My research certainly confirms this, but also suggests that while students might find this

difficult, they are certainly keen to do so, and the argument that history should not serve the interests of the present ill serves the needs of students. One key area that illustrates the problem is in consideration of the consequences of WWI.

Evidence suggests (Bostanci J. 2014) that when thinking about WWI, the main events recognised by the British public are the Battle of the Somme and, more generally, the events of the Western front, while events like Sykes Picot and the Balfour Declaration featured minimally. This was echoed by my Phase 1 data. This absence might help explain why, in figure 18 in Chapter 3, we see 65% of the students surveyed arguing that Britain's involvement in WWI should make people feel positive about being British. In response to a similar question in the British Council survey, only 18% of Egyptians felt that Britain's role in the conflict had a positive effect on their view of it today.

The nature of the events recalled is unlikely to include any broader remembering or engagement with the aftermath of war or the global nature of the war. It is, therefore, possible to see why many of the students in my own survey view Britain's involvement in WWI as a source of positivity and pride, in direct contrast to those in the Middle East in the British Council survey, for whom some the consequences of war are more resonant. I do not wish to argue about whether or not WWI should be a source of pride, however, as the British Council's report makes clear, where Britain's success in the twenty-first century depends on its relationships with other parts of the world, "It is important that people in the UK are aware of these issues in order to better understand others' perception of the UK and reduce mistrust" (p.11).

This is not just an issue of international perceptions in the present but also directly relates to the practice of history and history teaching. It strongly suggests the need for more transnational history. Winter (2006) argues that a key to the success of the 'historical' museum at *Peronne* is its inclusion of diverse representations and its comparative approach that has the potential, he argues, to "offer insights which enrich rather than displace national histories" (p.235).

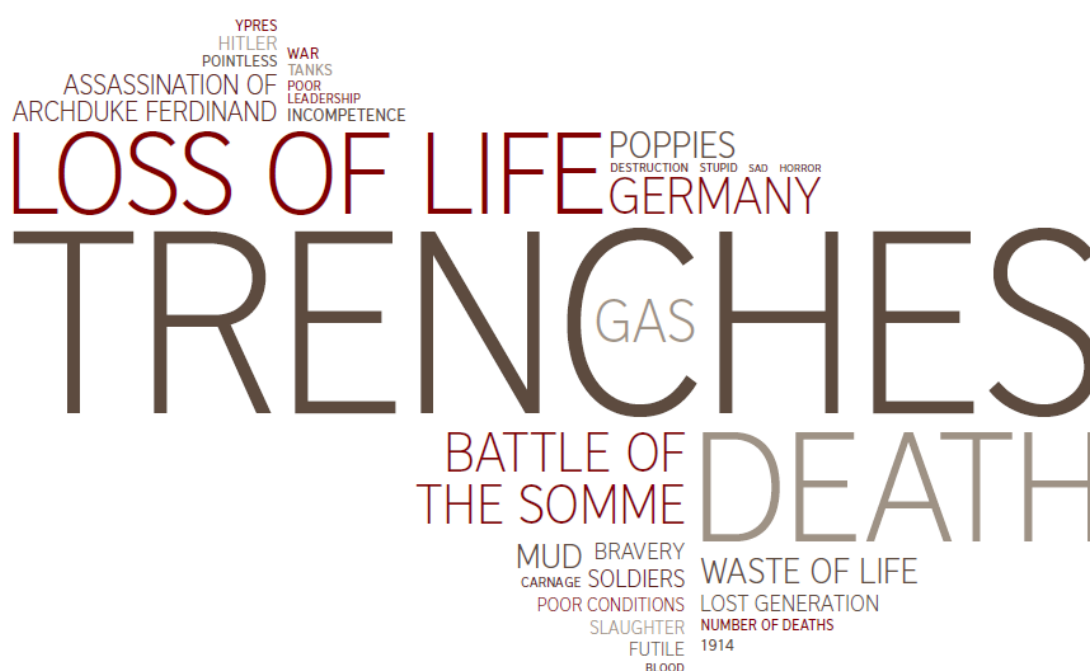
Following Halbwachs and Coser (1992), Winter makes the point that social groups frame the memories they share:

One of the central premises of the work of Maurice Halbwachs is that social groups frame the memories they share. That is, when collectives come together to recall significant events, events which tell them who they are as a group, then they create something he termed 'collective memory'. And when they no longer form a group, or when other life events intervene, and people age or move away or simply find other things to do, then the collective changes or disintegrates, and with it goes 'collective memory'. This sense of the socially constructed nature of 'collective memory' is vital to historical study, since it precludes talking about memory as if it exists independently of the people who share it.

(Winter, 2006, p154).

Being that collective memory is socially constructed and therefore subject to change, the British Council survey indicates a shared set of reference points, as illustrated in figure 27. These are echoed in the responses of the young people in my survey and quiz reported in Chapter 3.

Figure 27: Associations that the UK public holds about the First World War¹⁷



Comparing the two tables suggests something static about the forms that remembrance takes, yet if the socially constructed nature of collective memory is accepted, then we must be alert to the different scales upon which social remembering operates, from the national to the local and the familial. In this sense, memories are reframed and remade at all these levels. The headline figures in the surveys, mine included, suggests a crude form of atrophied inter-generational memory at work, where memory operates through a simple handing-down of common reference points. This does little to suggest that the ways in which these memories are framed are open to change or, in some cases, already changing.

However, Winter demonstrates this changing dynamic in a discussion on migration: “When migration patterns shift, so does the social base of ‘collective memory’” (p.155). The result is not necessarily forgetting, but more frequently the recasting of acts of remembrance into more

¹⁷ Based on the question: When you think about the First World War what are the first three things that come to mind?(Bostanci J. 2014)

discrete, distinctive national forms. Winter goes on to illustrate this using the examples of Australia, New Zealand and Canada to make the case that to remember the war is, “to remember at one and the same time the apogee of imperial solidarity and the inexorable features of its demise” (Winter, 2006, p.156).

To conclude, in this section I have outlined the interplay between the past and the present to show how young people have a particular desire for history to help them navigate the present. For the older students, this took the form of interest in politics, above all global politics, while for the younger students this was based more on trying to understand their locality. This interest in the present forced a consideration of historical concepts, such as causation, and change and continuity in particular. A central dimension of historical consciousness relates to orientations in time, while a concern amongst some history educators (Foster, Ashby, R., Lee, P. and Howson, J. 2008) has been that many students did not instinctively use historical knowledge to inform contemporary and future perspectives.

I believe that there is scope for teachers to make more of current news stories both in the way in which it taps into student desires and in the possibilities it offers both in enabling student orientations and recognition of the value of analytical historical tools like causation. This is not to suggest that we crudely plunder history in order to explain the present, but that more could be made of using the past as a lens on the present. In order for this to be effective, with the indications given by this study and related to the sorts of challenges confronting the present, it is clear that such an approach needs to be transnational.

Finally, this is not a one-way process in terms of memory work; it is evident that, in the context of migration and increasing multiculturalism, the present can serve to shift the social base of contemporary remembering in the context of WW1 away from its trench inertia. This process might be usefully capitalised upon in the classroom by drawing sensitively on the diverse range of stories to recast acts of remembering on a global scale and thereby problematising them.

9.3.2 Human connections

Many of the students in Phase 2 felt that the study of history should primarily focus on the study of people and through that particular study we might better understand ourselves, as opposed to substantive elements like dates of events. Talking to Ivy in August, it was evident that her historical interest lay in the nuggets of human stories and this tied in with her interest in film. This was also partly stimulated by her interest in culture. “It was also stimulated by her interest in ethical questions: “And also like...not necessarily the facts, I didn’t really like the military facts and stuff like that but why things happened so yeah, the moral and ethical questions.”

Scarlett’s strong sense that the war “must be commemorated” came from her father and suggests a further moral and affective dimension to the ways in which she constructs understanding about WWI and history. Firstly, one way of coding her experience of Remembrance Day was in terms of the emotions that it elicited. Her writing included references to ‘*crying children*’, feeling on the ‘*verge of tears*’ and ‘*saddening*’, reinforcing the emotional aspect of her interest. I wanted to explore with her what lay behind her statement *‘I determined the reasoning behind why I become so emotional lay in other places’*. When we met on the 13th November, four days after she had written the piece (Scarlett had been ill in the intervening days and the 13th was her first day back in school), I asked her about this issue. It reminded me of the place of illness in her portrait and made me think that when she referred to “other places”, this is what she meant. Once again, and as I have shown in Chapter 5, Scarlett confounded me.

I really wanted to know why they were crying - not in terms of why (on earth) are you crying but really wanting to understand. In politics, we have been studying nationalism at the moment and my teacher said how it’s one of the most powerful ideologies because it’s the only ideology people will die for. Like you will die to defend your country. So I wanted... like if someone had asked me three weeks ago, are you a nationalist? I would have answered no because I didn’t really know what it is but

delving a bit deeper into it, people don't realise how strongly affiliated they are with Britain. And that the death of another person from Britain can be quite upsetting, especially when they are killed by someone of another nationality.

The survey and quiz did not elicit too much about the understanding or uses that young people have of history. However, with the students involved in Phase 2, clear themes did emerge relating to the desire for history to say something about the world that they live in, and that this articulation was best expressed in relation to what it means to be human.

Van Straaten et al. (2016) make a powerful case for understanding the human condition as a fundamental aim of history education. My research here supports this argument and links powerfully to the place of identity exploration within history education. Van Straaten et al offer four teaching strategies to support students' orientations in past, present and future and enable them to make human connections.

- Longitudinal lines;
- Enduring questions;
- Historical analogies;
- Decision-making and scenario thinking. (Van Straaten et al., 2016, p.491)

In the context of this study the first might mean a consideration of the nature of WW1 in the broader context of human conflict but also the nature of remembrance in the broader context of how wars have been remembered. The related enduring questions might concern questions of how humans can ensure peace, the moral dimensions of these sorts of questions enable students to think critically about human identity in the way such questions throw light on interpersonal relationship but also serve the affective needs of the students mentioned in Wilkinson's study (Wilkinson 2014a). Many of the students in this student were already using their own historical analogies in the ways they were relating discussions about the causes of WW1 to wars in

Afghanistan and Iraq. The final strategy involves, “putting students in the position of scenario thinkers” (p.495); in the context of WW1, this offers a way of putting the agency back into an analysis of the war. The historian Clark (2012) offers this approach in shifting the emphasis regarding the causes of WW1 from why to how, and in doing so to write back in the key decisions makers, “the events of July 1914 make sense only when we illuminate the journeys travelled by the key decision makers” (p.xxviii).

Claire Hollis a teacher who used extracts from Clark in her teaching notes how, “Many of the students were very interested in Clark’s use of contemporary parallels to further his arguments. Hazel in particular found his use of the example of the attacks on the World Trade Centre a useful ‘way in’ to forming an appreciation of the impact that the murder of Franz Ferdinand may have had” (Holliss, 2014, p.53).

These strategies are all useful in developing a pedagogy that is more responsive to the student needs that have been articulated in this study. I would add one other, which is the use of personal stories as useful in serving to anchor some of the complexity as well as stimulate students’ curiosity. As I have mentioned in regard to a sequence of lessons I co-constructed with a local teacher, that aimed at developing a more global and complex view of the war, we utilised 6 personal stories that enabled the students to analyse patterns of change and continuity while recognising that the patterns of change and continuity varied across the 6 individuals. The 6 individuals helped support a complex engagement with the global legacies of the war by offering a sense of personal engagement and commitment to the lives about which they were learning. More broadly the 6 individuals were then used to enable a consideration of change and continuity inviting the students to think about how WW1, as understood through the experiences of these 6 individuals, informs the world in which the students live in; addressing questions like how far had things changed in terms of gender, class and ethnicity.

Chapter 10 Conclusion

10.1 Introduction

I return in this conclusion to broader epistemological questions surrounding the study of identity and agency in young people. In this ground-breaking study, I have shown how young people make sense of the world around them in a range of complex ways, outside and inside the classroom, with remembering and forgetting important elements of this process. It is critically important that teachers take account of the knowledge derived from these different contexts and be prepared to accept the value of this knowledge. Attaining an understanding of how that knowledge has been constructed will better enable teachers to work with it. The starting point for planning students' learning should be based on the recognition of their desires and identities; this involves a critical exploration of the knowledge they value and the sources of that knowledge. In this context, acts of social remembering, such as public commemorations, provide interesting spaces in which these explorations can take place; in particular, they have the potential of giving young people access to broader debates about history, society and what society values. By making this possible, young people will be able to think in complex ways about their identities and in ways that afford them agency.

Phase 2 of the research used an innovative research method of collaborative auto-ethnography that deepened and nuanced the statistical insights from the Phase 1 data. The portraits powerfully articulate the lives of young people by rendering 'thick descriptions' of their interactions with history and afforded them agency within the research process. I begin with some conclusions about the methodological processes involved, outlining the lessons learnt for working with young people in such a manner.

10.2 Methodological value

I framed the enquiry and the portraits according to my own identity and interests as a teacher and as someone from a minority background. I have drawn attention to absences in accounts and interpreted them using my own framing. The frame also imposes a temporal dimension; and my portraits are drawn at a particular moment in time. These factors have a range of impacts. For example, as a researcher and writer, I am aware that some of the last passages of Mark's ethnographic portrait were written in the aftermath of a general election that served to foreground the state of the union. Given that the sitter is a young person, we can expect much to change over time. Even while he wrote and spoke during the research, he shifted his position. Finally, I have no idea what bearing events will have when the portraits are subsequently read on the reader and made subject to interpretation. The value of the ethnographic portraits is that they help capture this dynamism, they are deliberately context specific relating to both time and space.

As Phase 2 of the research developed, it illustrated the limitations of quantitative data, in suggesting one-dimensional conclusions about young people's meanings and motivations. Critically, the portraits offer the possibilities of different meanings and are more open in the ways they represent my own role in the constructions of the work. The foregrounding of my hand in the construction of the portraits has been deliberate yet it is more than a reflexive turn implicating me in the construction of knowledge. Hertz (1997) makes a useful distinction between reflexivity and voice which allows for both a presentation of the writer's self, alongside the writing of the voices of others. In the same book Mykhalovskiy (1997) argues that the presence of the self, rather than being self-indulgent, is a potential source of insightful analysis. Thinking about the interplay of myself and the other voices in this study has enabled me to think productively about the process of writing and reading; it is actively forcing me, at every turn, to think about both the voices in this study but also of the readers; looking for the possibilities of multiple and divergent readings. On one level, thinking about voice has forced a consideration

on my part on the balance between representing myself and representing the young people in the study. On another it asks questions beyond representation to a consideration of research methods and analysis:

What we are actually concerned with is the reconstruction and reproduction of lives and experiences through critical engagement with our data. Analysis and writing help situate the self and the field as interconnected and coexistent

(Coffey, 1999, p.136).

This deliberative situating gives a further layer of depth and analysis to the portraits, yet it still allows the voice of the student to be heard; drawing the reader's attention to what they said, how they said it and the context of these utterances. This has meant retaining their modes of speech and slang. The chatty style (e.g. "his mum" and "dad") takes you into an alternative mode of interaction with an academic subject, presenting the reader with a necessary challenge. The portraits are written in such a way so as to capture complexity and provide rich scope for discussion with teachers, particularly those new to the profession. In addition to supervisors, I had two friends (who are teachers) give me feedback on the portraits during the writing process. One of them wrote; "I really felt that I knew Mark and could place him in his setting and his personal history. It is detailed and perceptive, and written with care and sensitivity." By drawing back from overt analysis in chapters 4, 5 and 6 and using a light touch with regard to theorising, the portraits have also helped to foreground the voice of the students.

Another advantage of adopting the portrait as a medium was to challenge myself as a researcher. Stepping away from my former identity as a teacher meant entering into an unfamiliar field, but writing in this way further stimulated me in my development as a researcher. Although writing ethnographically is demanding, the advantage is that the outcome is a nuanced work based on a huge amount of rigour in approach and in execution.

In order to develop these nuances, the research proceeded in an iterative way in phase 2, responding to the students' interests and involving them as participants. My focus has been on the power relations inherent in the young people's meaning making, exploring the dynamics within the young people's home settings, communities and within the group discussion at school. Phase 2 also gave them space and the means to articulate their interactions with school history and wider history. The emphasis here was on an exploration of the plural sources of knowledge. While this is hardly dismantling existing power relations it is an important first step. bell hooks has argued that it is only through the act of listening to and recognising the narratives of silenced groups that we overcome social inequalities (hooks, 2009).

Combining the young people's evolving ethnographic writing with the school based discussions was a way of allowing space for an exploration of knowledge and diverse modes of expressions. An original feature of this work was to get the young people to analyse each other's perspective, my perspective and the data from phase 1 of the research. This opened possibilities for new questions to emerge that challenged the knowledge being presented across this range of sources. For example the Mo Farah photos served to highlight the range of possible interpretations of an image, and my interest in understanding how they are arrived at that meaning rather than whether they were right or wrong.

Another ground-breaking element of the research was to offer the young people autonomy over the methods they used and over the focus of their investigations. At the piloting stage, students offered suggestions such as video diaries. At their request I gave the student in school B video cameras. In session 1, with all groups, I offered a range of examples of young people's ethnography; these included online blogs, visual diaries and a written example was taken from an American auto-ethnography high school project, which I read to the younger ones (Camangian,

2010). Most of the older students opted for the written auto-ethnography; however the variety, and particularity, across their writing show that they felt enabled to pursue their own interests. Thomas and O’Kane’s (1998) argue that ethically sound research with children and young people needs to use methods which put participants in a place of control. They argue, “The reliability and validity, and the ethical acceptability, of research with children can be augmented by using an approach which gives children control over the research process” (p. 336-337).

A further value of the ethnographic approach of this study, is the degree of ecological validity: the degree to which the data collected and described by the researcher reflects the world of those under study (Neuman, 2003). Using the sessions in school to share writing was one way of doing this another innovative strategy involved member validation using the composite portraits with both the young people and their families, asking them the degree to which the individual and their family recognise what I have painted. For example, in Mark’s case his father asked about the absence of *Call of Duty*, in the portrait, as a tool that he drew upon. Prior to the home visit I asked students to identify who they thought I should speak to, what I should see and where I might visit. This led to Amelia and her father getting out a range of objects for them to talk about, to Scarlett inviting her sister because of their shared interest in history and to Younis inviting me to meet his Iman at his local mosque.

The ethnographic portraits also gave scope to the young people themselves to explore their own ideas and agency, indicating their utility as a pedagogical tool (Camangian, 2010).

Notwithstanding my desire to enable my development as a researcher and to create an element of discomfort (Delemont and Atkinson, 1995), my background as a teacher was certainly useful in structuring the contributions that the young people made both in sessions and in their writing. The use of modelling served a dual purpose of revealing with the students who I was and building trust and openness in that regard, as well as enabling them. It is akin to the ‘fledgling approach’ outlined by Smith (1999) in her attempt to develop culturally appropriate research

protocols and methodologies to develop indigenous peoples (Kaupapa Maoris) as researchers.

The variety and richness in their responses indicated that this modelling was enabling rather than leading.

All the students involved expressed their enjoyment of the sessions at different moments. In particular, with the exception of School B, they found the exercise of writing a powerful act of expression and, in some cases, of emancipation.

10.3 Why social remembering matters.

This dissertation has shown how children engage in a range of complex ways with history inside and outside of the classroom. The different forms of their social remembering reflect this. This remembering takes place across a range of different settings, mediated by gender, ethnicity, class and cultural background; including ideas of place and nation.

The relationship between young people's historical consciousness — their orientation in time and attitude to history — and social remembering has not been sufficiently explored or conceptualised within history education. On an epistemological level this is regrettable, as it ignores the many ways in which historical knowledge is being generated beyond the academy. On a pedagogical level it is deeply problematic, as it often crudely characterises young people's capabilities with only limited evidence to support a deficit assumption and discourages attempts to exploit young people's interests and own knowledge.

This thesis has sought to address this relationship by bringing together a range of new quantitative and qualitative evidence on young people's engagements with history. Building on a year's fieldwork and my experience as a history teacher, it combines school-based surveys of young people's historical consciousness with their own visual or written representations of that consciousness. All this has been integrated into rich ethnographic portraits of young people's everyday acts of social remembering, as played out within families and communities.

Previous studies have highlighted how problematic the knowledge acquired in these settings can be, but this research challenges that assumption and demonstrates that it is not always the case. There are many ways in which the knowledge acquired in these settings is useful. The evidence in this study shows that everyday acts of social remembering can offer a way of enhancing young people's historical consciousness. I have shown how the social remembering of individuals in their homes, localities and communities is closely related to the ways in which they build their identities and find agency in the world; this in turn is deeply intertwined with their affective needs and desires.

The conclusion of this thesis is that history educators need to know more about the ways in which young people use history in the process of making and remaking their identities. Teachers could ask students to undertake some of their own ethnographic writing that may inform lesson planning. They could also make more of the "funds of knowledge" available to them from home, just as primary teaching colleagues do, and by allowing dialogic spaces where these funds can be used to explore diversity within and across classroom settings. This will enable more explicit linking of the teaching of history to the present and facilitate the making of human connections – the twin desires that emerge strongly from the young people involved in this study.

This innovative research suggests the need for further thinking about how we enquire into young peoples' understanding. Relying on dichotomous and reified distinctions, like historical and memory forms of significations or *lebenspraxis* and historical discipline to delineate the boundaries of knowing reduces pedagogical opportunities but also effective forms of knowledge exchange. Further qualitative work is needed to access the complex ways in which young people work with the past if we are to understand how we are to capitalise further on young people's affective interests and desires. Any such work should be alert to the ways in which social relations have a bearing on the way in which knowledge is organised and represented, particularly in considering

the bearing this can have on the agency of young people, especially those from minority backgrounds.

I have shown how social remembering is a dynamic process involving a broad range of mediations with remembrance practices. These mediations are inflected and influenced by ideas of identity in a broad range of ways. Social remembering is intimately implicated in historical consciousness, particularly in the ways it connects the present to the past. It will continue to be a rich source of study for historians and a strong stimulus for history teachers.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Research Tools

1.1 Quiz

- 1) When you think of the First World War. What are the first three things that come to mind?

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

Can you name any films about the First World War?

Can you name any books about the First World War?

Can you name any TV programmes about First World War?

Can you name any plays about the First World War?

This next section is not a test it doesn't matter if you don't know.

What do you know about the First World War

When did the First World War start? _____

Do you know where? _____

The First World War affected many parts of the world.

Select all the areas, which, you think, were involved in the First World War. You can tick more than one.

- A. Western Europe
- B. Eastern Europe
- C. The Middle East
- D. Africa
- E. North America
- F. Australia and New Zealand
- G. Asia
- H. South America

Which of these present-day countries were involved, if at all, in the First World War? And if they were was it against the Britain or on the side of Britain?

Country	Tick if you think they were involved	Against Britain	With Britain
Russia			
Holland/The Netherlands			
Iran			
India			
Turkey			
Hungary			
Rwanda			
Japan			

Consequences Please tick the events that you think are linked to the First World War

- A. The beginnings of the United Nations
- B. The rise of communism in Russia
- C. Treaty of Versailles
- D. The end of Turkish control of the Middle East and fall of the Ottoman Empire
- E. The rise of Hitler and the National Socialist party
- F. The ongoing conflict between Israel and the Palestinians
- G. The Irish War of Independence
- H. The rise of communism in China
- I. The civil rights movement in the US
- J. The genocide in Rwanda
- K. All men and women over 21, in Britain, were given the vote.

Circle the events you are sure you have heard of.

Christmas Truce

Balfour declaration

Gallipoli

Conscientious objector

Somme

Sinking of Lusitania

Tanneberg

Sykes Picot agreement

Amiens

Make a list of 3 other events that you might link with the First World War

1.

2.

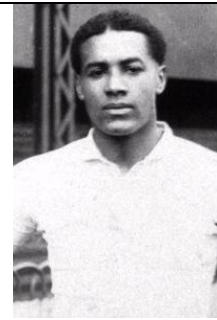
3.



Haig



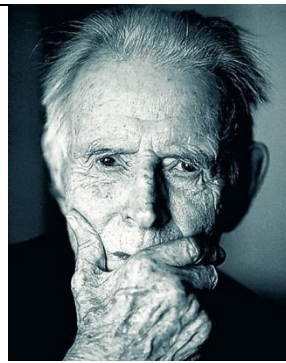
Wilfred Owen



Walter Tull



Edith Cavell



Harry Patch



Gavrilo Princip

Make a list of up to 3 other individuals that you would link with the First World War

1.

2.

3.

1.2 Survey

Part 1: Information about you

1) School: _____

Name **(ONLY IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN POSSIBLE FURTHER RESEARCH)**

: _____

2) Are you? : female or male (Circle)

3) How old are you? _____

4) What is your ethnic group?

Choose **one** option by ticking it that best describes your ethnic group or background.

White

Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups

Asian / Asian British

Black / African / Caribbean / Black British

Other ethnic group

Any other ethnic group, please describe: _____

Unsure

5) If your parents/carers are currently working what jobs do they currently do?

Parent/Carer 1 _____

+ / or

Parent/Carer 2 _____

Part 2: ‘What does the First World War mean to you?’

This year Britain and other countries will remember the 100th anniversary of the war with lots of events as part of a commemoration.

People have different views on the First World War and the commemorations. I am interested in what it means to you, even if you don’t think it’s important it would be helpful if you could tell me why.

I would like you to tell me in **personal** terms what the First World War means to you.

Things you might want to think about.

How does it makes you feel about your identity, who you are? And also about belonging?

Is the event important to you? If so in what ways?

How much does the event matter today?

Is the event important historically? If so in what ways?

Part 3 Engagement with history outside of classroom

1) What are your top three favourite types of film? Underline 3

Action/Adventure/Comedy/Crime/Factual/Fantasy/Historical/Horror/Mystery/Romance
/SciFi/Thriller/Chick flick

Other_____

2) Do you watch any history related films-outside of school? Underline 1

Always Often Sometimes Rarely Never

Can you name any:_____

3) What are your top three favourite types of TV programme? Underline 3

Sport/Sitcom/Documentary/Soap/Cartoon/Travel/childrens/Makeover/News/Cookery/
Reality

Other_____

4) Do you watch any history related TV-outside of school? Underline 1

Always Often Sometimes Rarely Never

Can you name any:_____

5) Do you watch TV with your family? Underline 1

Always Often Sometimes Rarely Never

6) Do you watch TV with your friends? Underline 1

Always Often Sometimes Rarely Never

7) Do you go to the cinema with your family? Underline 1

Always Often Sometimes Rarely Never

8) Do you go to the cinema with your friends? Underline 1

Always Often Sometimes Rarely Never

9) Do you belong to any historical societies/clubs or groups? Underline Yes or No

If yes name them_____

10) Have you seen any historical re-enactments-outside of school? Underline Yes or No

Examples_____

11) Have you taken part in any historical re-enactments-outside of school? Underline Yes or No

Examples_____

12) Do you read for pleasure? Underline 1

Always Often Sometimes Rarely Never

13) What are your top three fav genres of reading? Underline

Adventure; Detective; Drama; Fairy tale; Fantasy; Historical fiction; Horror; Humour ;Science fiction; Romance; Non fictions; biography

14) Do read any history related books-outside of school? Underline 1

Always Often Sometimes Rarely Never

Can you name any ? :_____

15) Do you ever talk about historical events/individuals with your family? Underline 1

Always Often Sometimes Rarely Never

Can you tell me some typical examples_____

16) Do you ever talk about historical events/individuals with your friends? Underline 1

Always Often Sometimes Rarely Never

17) Can you tell me some typical examples_____

18) Outside of school do you?

Go to Museums? Underline 1

Always Often Sometimes Rarely Never

Historic sites? Underline 1

Always Often Sometimes Rarely Never

If you do go to Museums or sites who are you most likely to go with?

19) Can you name Historic Buildings/monuments near your home?

This year is the 100th Anniversary of the start of the First World War. I am interested in what you know and think about this historical event.

Part 4 Engagement with First World War

2) Have you ever watched the remembrance ceremony on TV? (11/11)

Underline: Yes/No

If yes....

By yourself

OR

With others

3) Have you ever attended a remembrance ceremony? Underline Yes/No

Who with? _____

4) Have you ever been to First World War Cemetery? Underline Yes/No

Where? _____ Who with? _____

5) Do you know of anyone connected to you or your family who was involved in, or directly affected by, the First World War?

Underline Yes/No

Would you like to explain what they did? _____

6) In what ways do you think the First World War impacts on Britain today?

7) Should Britain's involvement in the First World War make people feel positive or negative about being British?

Very Positive Positive

Neutral

Negative

Very Negative

Can you explain the way it makes you feel?

- _____
- 8) Have you ever attended a play about First World War? Underline Yes/No
Can you remember the name _____
- 9) Have you ever watched a film about First World War? Underline Yes/No
Can you remember the name _____
- 10) Have you ever read a book about First World War? Underline Yes/No
Can you remember the title or author _____
- 11) Have you ever watched a TV programme about First World War or featuring the War?
Yes/No
Can you remember the name _____

Have you ever studied the First World War at School recently?

Yes

☐

No

☐

If yes when was this?

Primary School	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	Year 13

As you know this year makes the commemorations of 100 years since the outbreak of the war. I am interested in how you think it should be remembered, if at all, what would be the focus.

Purpose of commemorations- how should it be remembered? Tick all that apply

- Focus on human suffering and loss of lives
- Focus on the lasting effects and legacy of the war for today's world
- Focus on why the war broke out
- Focus on the contributions different countries made not just Britain
- Focus on who won the war and who lost, and why
- The First World War should not be commemorated

Can you add any other ways in which the War should be remembered that are not on the list?

1.3 Session 1 outline

- Aims: Begin to develop an understanding of the nature of research in general and the nature of this research.
- To appreciate associated ethical issues
- To review examples of ethnographic approaches/portraits- partly to model, partly to see value/potential and highlight personal nature

1) Intro/Team building games (8 mins)

(Icebreaker to find out about each other-want to build trust and communication but also hint at possibility of creativity to support portraits)

House on Fire

Ask, “Your house is on fire, and everyone is safe. You have thirty seconds to run through the house and collect three or four articles you want to save. What would you grab? Why?” After everyone has done this, the group can discuss what they learned about the things they value.

Aim: Get people talking- link to writing about self-values and identity

2) What is research? (2 mins)

Discuss where and when they have encountered the word/idea. (May include news, out shopping being accosted, teachers asking them to research, cancer)

Generic terms, loosely describing a process of enquiry- all seeking to find out, characterised by being ‘ethical, sceptical and systematic’ (Robson,2002)

May link well with Shane and notion of diff research traditions.

3) Why is it important? (2 mins)

Lead to beneficial change

Question existing ideas

Extends knowledge

Promotes problem solving

Aim: Perhaps better served in terms of my research? But want to get across that being involved allows them access to how knowledge is created within the project and beyond.

4) My research genesis - outline social remembering and historical consciousness. (8 mins)

Use Prezi

A. Aims;

I want to give you an idea of what I am looking for, why I’m looking for it and how. The research.

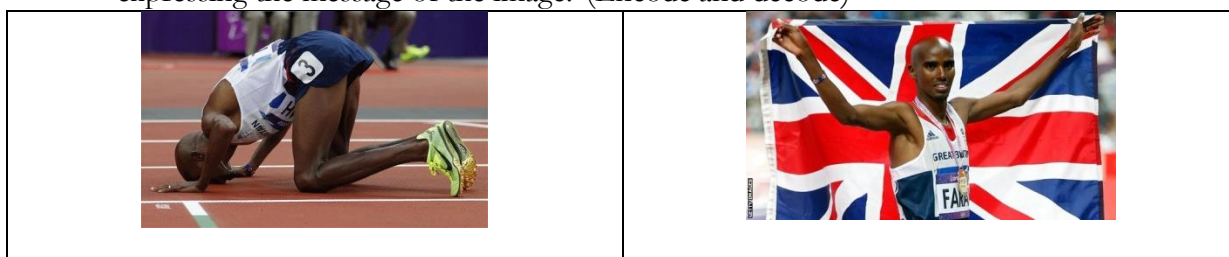
Before asking you for advice.

B. Place: A writer called Raymond Williams said ‘we are born into relationships which are typically settled in places.’ What do you think he meant by this?

Williams was thinking about nation, about identity and belonging
 If we think about what it means to be British or English, is place important? Which places?

What about time too? Did a Victorian have the same idea of being British as a Medieval?
 So the idea of identity is not fixed but they might still draw on place.
 Did they take the same meaning from places?
 Where is this? (Tower of London) What meaning might we give it?
 How might a medieval peasant view it?
 A Stuart? A catholic Stuart?

Have a look at your picture of Mo Farah and decide which statement comes closest to expressing the message of the image? (Encode and decode)



There is of course not right or wrong message, carries many meanings but also meaning is shaped by your discussions.
 Which if the following statements, in your view, come closest to expressing the ‘message’ of the image?

- A. This is the greatest moment of my life! A triumph for me, Mo Farah.
- B. This is a moment of triumph for me and a celebration for black people everywhere!
- C. This is a moment of triumph and a celebration for Muslim people everywhere
- D. This is a moment of triumph and celebration for the British Olympic team and the British people
- E. This is a moment of triumph and celebration for black people, Muslim people and the British Olympic team. It shows that you can be Black Muslim and British.

So I’m interested in how meaning is given to places, esp. historical places/events like memorials/First World War. But have shown how this can change over time and change through our discussion with others

- C. I hope I have shown how I am interested in Identity and in particular how people construct historical identities. My own identity is currently as a researcher at Oxford University but I taught for 5 years here and it is in the classroom that my research ideas began. (Relate my ethnog)
- D. I showed this picture as a starter in a year 9 lesson and asked the students to guess what the new topic was going to be.

The picture is of the Bengal Lancers but one student refused to accept that Indians played any part in the 1st WW. Given what we have talked about why do you think this was?

When I asked the student later he gave this reason- war memorial

Develop how this led to 4 research questions and how it might be important.

Outline what I mean by HC and illustrate using goggle-box clip and cenotaph clip poss. ways into research questions.

5) Ways of working (6 mins)

How might we work together to get an idea of the ways social remembering affects your HC and in particular in relation to the First World War? What data might help us answer these Qs? How can we proceed in a way that is systematic, sceptical and ethical?

6) Ethnography (15 mins)

Ethnographic research is the observation of groups of people or a culture in the field or, in other words, in a natural setting.

Share page from Shane the lone ethnographer- Galman

If I was to do this it would perhaps affect the naturalness of the setting. Getting a range of students to do this means we/I get access to a range of settings- to the different ways students make meaning from cultural artefacts in a range of communal settings.

I want you to help capture the experiences you have in making meaning from the interactions you have with cultural artefacts like TV programmes and how these experiences are collectively influenced or shaped. But in sharing these reflections we can compare and look for similarities and differences and think about what shapes these.

Share Kristian's Auto ethnography & Tyrone's Auto ethnography from Research in the Teaching of English Volume 45, Number 2, November 2010

Note how Kristian's 'attention getting vignette' hints at the dangerous consequences of emotional decision making, stereotypically used to describe many women. Kristian complicates this notion by explaining how her decision-making was shaped by her particular experiences with her father and parents split.

With Tyrone we see him reflecting on the conditions that shaped his aspirations and got him into trouble. He uses the writing to explore his own agency as a young black man. Tyrone, like Kristian talks about the media's influence on his thought processes. His models for the American dream were images of Jewellery extravagance and excessive spending by rappers portrayed on TV.

In Tyrone 2nd extract we see how Tyrone wakes up to the power he has within his own community.

Both ethnographic portraits highlight how the process of reflecting and thinking about our lives through writing can be both illuminating but also transformative. It allows us to explore our identity to think about who we are and what shapes who we are and what agency we have in this process.

I want you to write about your own experiences with history generally, First World War particular. You might describe how this happens. Set the scene describe- be imaginative. But you can also use it to explore your own thinking. I hope that over the next weeks you will find your own voice but I have given you some examples of people writing to get you thinking about it

Outline their ethnographic portrait. (5 mins) Give example

Explain it was a task set by my own supervisor- a portrait of my own personal educational journey. Discuss its personal nature and how I have tried to be frank and honest. (This is partly about trust building)

IT shows how ethnographic writing can be very personal and why your own experiences are vital to the ethnographies you produce.

Ask if they would be prepared to write a similar for our next meeting.

1.4 Session 1 A personal learning journey- finding ethnography.V1

Reading the book, 'Ethnography in Education' has been a tonic, convincing me to write. The exercise of writing a personal journey is an ideal vehicle, to explore the nature of my academic identity using ethnography as a tool.

The first step of this journey proved harder than the introduction suggested. "Who remembers their first day of school? One's first encounters- and the tastes and smells that went with it- tend to be etched on most people's memory" (Mills and Morton, 2013, 5) My memories feel more like impressions left in the sand, shallow and reshaped by the tides of later histories. My early childhood memory is fragmentary at best and in terms of schooling non-existent. I know I went to school, because I was told, but I don't actively remember this. As a child of a Malaysian mother and British father who was an Army officer, my early childhood was spent travelling. I was born in Germany; we then lived, for what seemed like moments, in places as diverse as Singapore, Thailand and Camberley in Surrey. My only childhood memory of that time; being scratched in the eye, by a boy called Edward, with a barely visible scar a handy mnemonic.

My first clearer memories are still fragments originating from our second trip to Singapore aged nine. We lived in Adams Drive, housed in Army housings. I remember terrorising the Amah (child minder) by putting huge frogs in her room, but is this because my mother told me? I remember our dog Rusty hunting snakes, but is this because I have seen the photos? I remember swimming in the monsoon drains with my sister, but is this because my sister told me? Looking back I am troubled by memory, frustrated by its fragmentary and unreliable nature. Perhaps this why I am drawn to history and its relationship with social memory?

The fragments of my early life do include tastes and smells. It is in these elements I feel more secure. The sugary smell of *chai* (tea) in my grandmother's house, mixed with imported evaporated milk was the fuel for the workers on the rubber plantations. For a young child it was intoxicating. Other fragments include trips to market with my mother. I learnt to haggle here watching my mother bargaining over the price of live chickens with Chinese men who sat impossibly on their haunches wielding huge meat cleavers. These were not men to be played with but my mum gave them hell. With my father I took trips to *Pulau Tioman*, a small island located off the east coast of the Malaysian peninsula; a place of lush jungle and mythic beasts, giant sea turtles and dolphins, fuelling my imagination.

Subsequent experience has made me distrust this memory, partly because it is not a complete memory. My adult self is also aware of how this makes the experience exotic. Reading *Orientalism* (Said, 1985) as an undergraduate alerted me to the other memories, experiences and history that the memory is filtered through, and that includes a colonial one.

It forced me to consider that memory is fragmentary and that it doesn't follow a line it jumps around. Remembering is not simply about retrieval; as our subsequent experiences act as a lens through which we remember our pasts. Mapping this personal learning journey is a reminder of the interruption of that early memory, especially where place is so important to aiding memory. Returning somewhere allows the smells and tastes of a place to aid the memory, a return not possible in my case.

However this isn't simply about not being able to go back. Leaving Singapore my family arrives in Iran in 1978. For my parents this represented, I believe, a turning point in their relationship; two years later they were divorced. At the time it felt like each of my parents had retreated into a private conversation with their own memories. While, for me as a child the chat around 'our' history had ceased, the well of stories that would, ordinarily, help to cement childhood memory had dried up. The photos of that life, that past, those aide memoire, placed literally, and metaphorically, in the attic. Painful reminders to parents, were now lost to children. In addition, Iran was also an illustration, unknown to me at the time, of public and private histories playing out. How the upheaval of my parents' marriage was echoed by the mayhem of the Iranian Revolution.

Through re-thinking and writing this past I am able to learn lessons. The relationship of private and public lives, the nature of formal and informal ways of knowing and the changing nature of identity through a shifting sense of memory. This re-thinking is further enabled by the acquisitions of different ways of viewing the world.

As my parents relationship broke down, I was sent to boarding school in Portsmouth. Wanting to hide in the tea chests on their way to *Khorramshahr* (Iran) I was instead left in the charge of Catholic *Dela Salle* brothers. This action was based on my parent's notion of a 'good education' rather than any religious motivation. I found myself confused by this setting. In class the academic reference points had no purchase for me, Shakespeare- who he? In the playground, asked which football team I supported clueless; I replied Liverpool, who having won the league two year running and the European cup were known even to me! The reasons for this choice were again only apparent later. Where were the Chinamen in the market, the giant turtles?

My first weeks at school were marked by violence, fights with other boys or the cane from Brother Laurence (very Christian). I learnt I had to find a survival identity. Initially this was through Catholicism, not out of any religious sense, but being an altar boy and choir boy allowed me to be someone. Later, I excelled at sport. Never did I excel academically. A notion formed, encouraged by teachers, that I was very nice but a bit slow. This is a notion that has had a powerful hold on me.

Leaving school with no decent 'A' levels, my educational career it seems had come to an end. Ironically, I found work in a school setting, a residential special school, in Kent, for children with physical disabilities. What followed was campus life without the essays but with pay! I think I had some sense of what an asset my 'difference' could be with the female staff. I understood that being in a caring profession was appealing to the opposite sex and that the ratios were especially favourable to me. At night school, doing a philosophy course, I learnt that I was also interested in ideas; later completing and passing 'A' levels and being successful in an application to do a Cultural Studies degree at North East London Polytechnic.

Cultural Studies was important in my educational journey. Here was an embrace of different ways of knowing about the world. Here was a chance for me to step back and study my own identity. For example, being in London and on a Cultural Studies' course I could see my own past in terms of race and to understand the historical and colonial dimensions of my father's work and, even, his meeting and relationship with my mother; to recognise that I belonged both

to the centre and the margins of power. I recognised that one way of seeing/remembering my schooling was through race, of my own identity being shaped by the interactions with people whose perception of me was possibly informed by race. These tools of analysis enabled the possibility of new readings of my past but also new identities. The political nature of the course enabled a sense of agency/action, of doing something that made a difference. That people do make their own history albeit not in the conditions of their own choosing (Marx).

It is perhaps this informed sense of agency that steered me into teaching. The counsel of friends enabled me to see ways of marrying the qualities that I seemed to have, such as empathy, with a desire to work with young people. My first teaching was in a diverse school in Lewisham. I wrote in my teaching diary about how different this was to my own first day at school as one of very few non-white children. This school has assumed an almost origin myth status in my own mind, despite my being there for only two years. Here was a radical and socially committed group of staff. We had an active union that had visitors from South Africa coming to talk to us about education there in the context of the first post-Apartheid elections. And amazing individual staff such as Paul Patrick, one of the first teachers to come out to parents and children and hold his job.

I spent 19 years teaching in different London Schools including being deputy head in a special needs school. In some ways it was easy to get into habits, some good some not so good, such that I wasn't thinking deeply about what I was doing. The Fellowship at Oxford University allowed me to address this.

However, my start at Oxford was not a happy one. Suddenly I felt catapulted into a world whose assumptions seemed a million miles away from my own learning journey. My experience as a classroom teacher seemed to have no value even though I was in the department of education. I felt I needed to unlearn what I knew. I was intimidated by younger doctoral students who seemed so confident about what they knew. I felt at sea in methods sessions, especially quantitative sessions with all those numbers. I wanted to be a teacher again, not a social scientist, it was a conflict of identity.

My personal learning journey to date had created an identity in which I was comfortable. Embracing some aspects of the doctoral course felt like turning my back on myself and one consequence of this was that I lost my voice- metaphorically.

Reading the first chapter of *'Ethnography in Education'* has encouraged me to write this. It has allowed me to clear my throat. Here, it seems is an embrace of the unconventional, a place where mixed and shifting identities are both expected and welcomed. A place where empathy is valued and imagination encouraged. This personal learning journey is a work of imagination, as I have tried to piece together the fragments of my own memory. But it is also an ethnographic exploration. For me to understand my own identity in this personal learning journey, I needed places and spaces to stand back and make sense of it. If we are to explore the experiences of others we should start with an exploration of our own.

1.4.1 A personal learning journey- Who do you think you are? (Adapted for School B to enable modelling see below)

Who am I? And what made me what I am? This is my personal journey so far.

I read a book called, '*Ethnography in Education*' it was so good it made me want to write. The book had an exercise of writing a personal journey.

The first step of this journey proved harder than the book's introduction suggested. "Who remembers their first day of school? One's first encounters- and the tastes and smells that went with it- tend to be etched on most people's memory" (Mills and Morton, 2013, 5) My memories feel more like impressions left in the sand, shallow and reshaped by the tides of later histories. My early childhood memory is scrappy at best and in terms of school non-existent. I know I went to school, because I was told, but I don't actively remember this. As a child of a Malaysian mother and British father who was an Army officer, my early childhood was spent travelling. I was born in Germany; we then lived, for what seemed like moments, in places as diverse as Singapore, Thailand and Camberley in Surrey. My only childhood memory of that time; being scratched in the eye, by a boy called Edward, with a barely visible scar a handy reminder.

My first clearer memories are still scraps from our second trip to Singapore I was nine. We lived in Adams Drive, housed in Army housings. I remember terrorising the *Amah* (child minder) by putting huge frogs in her room, but is this because my mother told me? I remember our dog Rusty hunting snakes, but is this because I have seen the photos? I remember swimming in the monsoon drains with my sister, but is this because my sister told me? Looking back I am troubled by memory, frustrated by its incomplete and unreliable nature. Perhaps this why I am drawn to history and its relationship with social memory?



The remains of my early life do include tastes and smells. The sugary smell of *chai* (tea) in my grandmother's house, mixed with imported evaporated milk was the fuel for the workers on the rubber plantations. For a young child it was delicious. Other fragments include trips to market with my mother. I learnt to bargain here watching my mother trading over the price of live chickens with Chinese men who sat impossibly on their hips using huge meat choppers. These were not men to be played with but my mum gave them hell. With my father I took trips to *Pulau Tioman*, a small island located off the east coast of the Malaysian peninsula; a place of lush jungle and fairy-tale beasts, giant sea turtles and dolphins, fuelling my imagination.



It is hard to remember my early days later experiences make me see things differently. But also because they were happening somewhere else I can't go back and visit and remind myself. Returning somewhere allows the smells and tastes of a place to aid the memory, a return not possible in my case.

However this isn't simply about not being able to go back. Leaving Singapore my family arrives in Iran in 1978. For my parents this was, a turning point in their relationship; two years later they were divorced. At the time it felt like each of my parents had retreated, not wanted to talk. While, for me as a child the chat around 'our' history had ceased, the well of stories that would, ordinarily, help to strengthen childhood memory



had dried up. The photos of that life, that past, were placed literally, and metaphorically, in the attic. Iran was also an example, unknown to me at the time, of public and private histories playing out. How the upheaval of my parents' marriage was echoed by the chaos of the Iranian Revolution.



Through re-thinking and writing this past I am able to learn lessons.

As my parents relationship broke down, I was sent to boarding school in Portsmouth. Wanting to hide in the tea chests on their way to *Khorramshahr* (Iran) I was instead left in the charge of Catholic priests. I found myself confused by this setting. In class, I didn't know who or what they were talking about; Shakespeare- who he? In the playground, I was asked which football team I supported. Clueless; I replied Liverpool, who having won the league two year running and the European cup were known even to me! The reasons for this choice were again only apparent later. Where were the Chinamen in the market, the giant turtles?



My first weeks at school were marked by violence, fights with other boys or the cane from the teachers. I learnt I had to find a survival identity. Initially this was through Catholicism, not out of any religious sense, but being an altar boy and choir boy allowed me to be someone. Later, I excelled at sport. Never did I excel academically. An idea formed, encouraged by teachers, that I was very nice but a bit slow. This is an idea that has had a powerful hold on me.

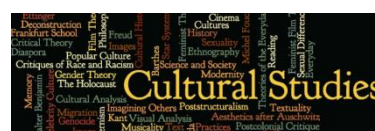


Leaving school with no decent 'A' levels, my educational career it seems had come to an end.



Ironically, I found work in a school setting, a residential special school, in Kent, for children with physical disabilities. It was like going to university without the essays but with pay! I was also interested in girls and there were lots of girls and very few boys here. I went to night school and I learnt that I was also interested in ideas; later completing and passing 'A' levels and being successful in an application to do a Cultural Studies degree at University of East London.

Cultural Studies was important in my educational journey. Here was an embrace of different ways of knowing about the world. Here was a chance for me to step back and study my own identity. For example, being in London and on a Cultural Studies' course I could see my own past in terms of race and racism. I recognised that one way of seeing/remembering my schooling was through race, of my own identity being shaped by the interactions with people whose perception was possibly informed by race, that I was an outsider. also got me interested in politics of wanting to make the a better place and realising that we could change things.



of me
This
world

It is perhaps this political idea that steered me into teaching. The advice of friends enabled me to see ways of marrying the qualities that I seemed to have, such as being caring, with a desire to work with young people. My first teaching was in a diverse school in Lewisham. I wrote in my teaching diary about how different this was to my own first day at school as one of very few non-white children. I spent 19 years teaching in different London Schools including being

My start at Oxford was not a happy one. Suddenly I felt catapulted into a world whose assumptions seemed a million miles away from my own learning journey. Everyone else seemed really clever what I knew didn't seem to count anymore. I wanted to be a teacher again, not a researcher, it was a conflict of identity.





1.4.3 Session 1 example auto-ethnography

Kristian's Portrait Auto ethnography (Camangian 2010)

Kristian chooses to tell a story of herself that quizzed her various levels of understanding gender and self as a young Black woman in South Los Angeles.

Kristian eased into an intricate analysis of her experience with a thoughtful *attention-getter* and introduction that framed her narrative effectively:

A step back is just a set up for a comeback. This idea goes out to my females, my girls. We are known as emotional beings. See, we live in a male dominated society . . . and as ladies we have to live through this, but from our experiences we could develop our minds. And if we think with our minds, we could make things better for ourselves. .

Kristian examined the role parental separation and the absence of her dad played on her decision making when dating boys her age.

I found somebody, or somebody found me, to, you know keep me company... I was reluctant at first, but my emotions were telling me, 'this is what you need.'

The Boy proceeded to buy Kristian gifts, that she describes as playing the game, and then one night they ended up in a room alone at his friend's house near to hers. As things got more intimate, she convinced herself.

Yeah this is right. You see this in TV. This is what you need. Everything is going to be good. This dude is her for you. Whatever. Do this. Do this.

Two week later they broke up; she tried to hold on to him by agreeing to submit to intimate relationship on his terms.

I was holding on to my emotions instead of using my mind to make good decisions. I realised that trying to follow my emotions was not the healthy answer. See, thinking with your emotions is not thinking clear. The disappointment we go through as women breeds a misled mind. Listening to your emotions is misleading. You're incapable of making right decisions. So, as a female talking to any other females, I just want to let you know that it will be wise to think with your mind and over ride your emotions.'

Tyrone's Auto ethnography

Tyrone lives in South Los Angeles, when he wrote this is was a 16 year old black youth.

Tyrone's 75 year old dad told him 'you need to step up, be a man.'

Tyrone got a job at the local amusement park. With his cash he brought himself a gold necklace a pendant and earrings, 'symbols of pride' for him. Unfortunately they were stolen off him when he was the victim of an armed robbery.

This led to Tyrone himself getting involved in robbery, with his peers, which got him into trouble with other gangs

I started thinking, "Why do I jack people?" And as I was sitting back watching TV one day, being in the generation I'm in—I'm only 16—that I try to be so competitive with grown [men], especially [men] I see on TV. I start thinking, ok, so if that's supposed to be an American dream . . . when you see a Hip-hop rapper, what's the image of a successful rapper? You see four or five gold chains, money coming out of his pocket- that's like the American dream where I stay at. Cuz I stay in the hood. That's as good as it gets. Its either, your're gonna play sports, deal dope, rob and steal or rap.... No need to goto school. None of that.

Bottom line, if I could get the same reaction I got, to do something positive, instead of wanting to (rob people), and have that many (black men) down for me, and follow my word, like they was, but let's do soothing positive...it'd be a much better place...I know (I aint perfect...I know that it all gotta start with myself. I just gotta find a more efficient way to get by on life, like y'all. So, you know, I'm hoping those that are real close to me- like my homeboys-will one day realise that we spend so much time and energy robbin people that if we spend some of that time and effort on doing something positive, and we seeing the same type of rewards, maybe we could pretty much stop playing ourselves and climb out of the grave.

1.5 Session 2 example prep for School B

(Need to make adaptations in respect of age but also interests, many of this group have less of an interest in history explicitly, all are from BME backgrounds and this might prove to be a fruitful avenue of exploration)

Aims Reviewing survey data from phase 1

RE-visit questions about social remembering

Exploring portraits in relation to research question- what do they tell us what else we need.

1) Ethnography-writing ourselves

Discuss/read each other's portraits- Why and how do accounts differ?

How does it feel to be honest about one desires and hopes? How did it feel writing it?

How much are family, friends and institutions emphasised?

How have you portrayed agency/activity in this story?

How do we/can we theorise/hypothesis these experiences? What can be said in general?

2) Review survey data.

Where does it place you? Get them to look at some of the graphs and think about their responses in relation to overall- are they typical? Or not?

What makes them typical or not? What in their portraits explain this?

Give their responses to Q7 about WW1 and get them to elaborate but also to think about what it is in their history/life that explains this response.

Broaden this to talk about events that might mean more to them and get reasons for why.

3) Ask for views on research focus, esp. the questions would it help to broaden.

How far does survey and portraits answer these questions? Clarify intent, possible outcomes/uses/value: - invite revisions and suggestions. Discuss ways of getting data both in terms of auto-ethnographies/portrait but other suggestions.

What is the extent and nature of children's remembering?

What understandings do children draw from the First World War?

Where are these understandings drawn from?

How are these understandings constructed outside of the classroom?

Reframe Questions in personal terms.

E.g.

- What is the amount Yvonne's remembering? And what is it like?
- What understandings does Yvonne draw from the First World War?
- Where are Yvonne's understandings drawn from?
- How are Yvonne's understandings constructed outside of the classroom?

Given the gaps make suggestions esp. in relation to Q4.

Can they write about/record recollect any conversations at home that have shaped their understandings of the past?

Can they recall watching any prog/film/book/play or event that had a historical theme? Can they write about that? Where were you when you watched this? Who were you with? How did

you feel? Did anyone talk? What did they say? What did it make you think? What does it make you think now?

What questions do they contribute to? What is left unanswered? What new questions do they throw up? How might we address this ethnographically? What implications for our own research? What are we looking for? Recording? Writing?

Using examples discuss ideas for writing ourselves in terms of the impacts of social remembering on historical consciousness

<http://www.hrw.org/legacy/photos/2005/darfur/drawings/index.htm>

In Their Own Words: Voices of Teens in Museums

<http://bengarry.wordpress.com/> Ben Garry teen Christina blog

Erin Gruwell The Freedom Writers Diary

1.5.1 Possible scaffold for School B writing about home

(Describe what you did- date, time)

Today me and my family watched a film about slavery.

Went to...

Talked about...

(Describe the setting/Scene this might include specific facts like who was there but also sensory impressions- warm/cold comfortable etc- what is typical and what is unusual)

A historical film is not something we normally watch. If we watch TV together it is usually things like...

There were 4 of us sat in the room. My sister who is younger than me sat on the floor. I sat with my mum on the sofa. My dad, who also controls the remote, sat in his own chair. We decided to eat X while we watched. We don't usually eat something while watching TV but because it was a movie we decided to make it special.

(Describe the viewing- this might include specific word or phrases that people say)

During the film my sister got up quite a few times. I noticed this was usually during...

My dad said he thought...

My mum kept quiet during most of the film. I think because I was sat next to my mum I....

I wanted to ask about...

(Describe the film)

The film told the story of...

(Describe what happened after you watched- this might include specific word or phrases that people say/conversations but also think about the tone in which things are said)

After the film finished my sister just got up and went to bed she said she thought it was....

This made me feel...

I asked my mum about....

My dad said...

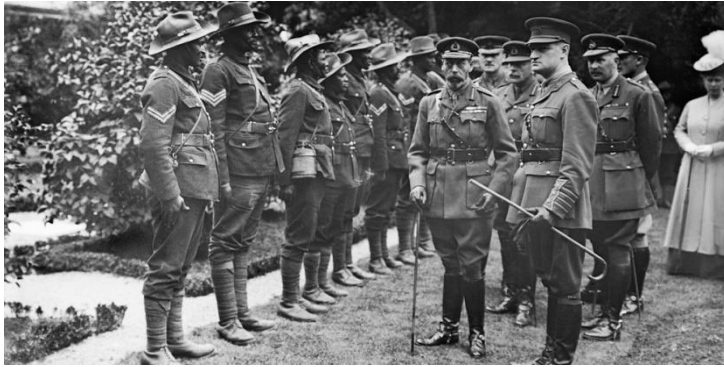
My mum said...

(Describe how this experience has contributed to your thinking about this topic but also history in general.)

You might just list these as notes and we can talk about them when we next meet.

1.6 Session 3 example of adaptations for School B

Caribbean soldiers in the First World War



I have given you three stimulus.

Remembrance Forgotten Heroes - WW1 West Indian Soldiers

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yqV64Gvv5rk>

A facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/waltertullfirstworldwar>

And a book 'A medal for Leroy'

I would like you to look at them first. And think about how

It changes your ideas about the First World War?

How does it make you feel?

Are you surprised? If so why?

List any questions you have? A) makes me want to know... B) raises no questions..

What understandings do you have now about the First World War?

And what does this make you think about history and how it works?

Think about sharing any of them with your family. This might lead to discussions; you might want to record this. Or afterwards tell us what happened? Try some of your questions out on your parents.

After sharing have you reached any new understandings about the First World War? Or History? What have your family contributed to this understanding? Who did you choose to share with and why?

1.7 My Remembrance Day Impressions

It might be a sign of remembrance fatigue but I approached remembrance this year with a high degree of ambivalence. Short term I had been to an exhibition at the British Museum called 'Memories of a nation'. It showcased 600 years of German history. It suggested to me a longer time frame of reference to the events of 1914-1918, a timeframe absent from remembrance activities. This contrast was brought into stark focus when the news programmes highlighting of remembrance services around Britain also carried stories about Angela Merkel attending ceremonies celebrating the fall of the Berlin wall. It made me see the events with a more critical eye.

Long term I had recently taken my godson to the Tower of London to look at the poppies. My, in the moment, reaction was one of wonder and awe. The scale and beauty is remarkable. And this is augmented by the huge crowds it attracted giving it weight. I was moved. Later I began to think more critically- this was designed to move me. The setting, not just in terms of the Tower and its historical resonance but the Thames side walk past the gleaming confidence of the Shard, the Second World War echo of HMS Belfast, the Victorian grandeur of Tower bridge. This was history story telling on a grand scale. I had asked my Godson- what are we remembering? And he identified it with precision, 'the 888,246 British soldiers who died in the war'.

It was only later that the partial nature of this struck me. This wasn't about the First **WORLD** war. This was about Britain. Where were the other casualties of war? The other combatants but also the civilians including the conscientious objectors. Was a poppy planted for them?

This was about emotion, the emotion of loss, authentic and real but necessarily direct. Displaced perhaps like when Diana died. I was by this stage finding the poppy oppressive.

It didn't represent understanding and perhaps can serve to obscure understanding.

So I woke up on Sunday morning to watch the ceremony, feeling jaded.

For the writer Connerton, one place where social memory can be found is in commemorative ceremonies. He argues that instead of looking at it with a sociological or historical focus we should consider the form it takes. To recognise the ways in which commemoration, and 'bodily practices' help shape social memory. I attempt, below, to apply this form of analysis to the cenotaph commemorations.

Vast crowds gather in solemn respect, heads bowed, at the same time every year.

Caught between the falling of the leaves and the onset of winter the ritual can be both

bleak and beautiful but always fixed by the calendar and the clock. What follows is a performative re-enactment that uses no direct reference to the event it is re-enacting but whose memory is felt by all. This annual ritual is more than an exercise in myth making. Myths are more pliable. This ceremony has, through its performative structures, an air of permanence about it.

The language is stylised and inclusive 'we' are brought together, an assumed collective that needs no exploration and invites none. From the crowd, men shout out what sounds like curses or oaths but are actually orders. But it is how language is rendered that highlights more clearly the performative aspect of this ritual. It follows a fixed pattern, measured sonorous intonations convey weight, pauses and silences allow reflective spaces. Punctuation is provided by the music, homophonic fanfares, percussive insistences, large bells, and booming shots. All resonate.

In its bodily expression the ritual conveys a measured solemnity. An 87 year old matriarch leads the ceremony, thousands wait as she takes staccato steps towards the 'Glorious' monument. She lays her floral tribute, her crown of eternal life. She takes tentative steps backwards and nods her head paying her respects before turning away while the rest of her family come forward and then some lesser individuals until, finally, it is the turn of the crowd.

I think the power of the ceremony comes from the habit of it. These are all well designed, like at a funeral part of the purpose they serve is to ease the trauma of the event. But the thing about habits is they don't encourage thought. I wondered as I watched- in whose interests does their ceremony serve? Who comes out of it well? What does it tell us about the First World War or any war?

And then, this cynicism faded, as the dignitaries move away from the scene and the march past begun of all the veterans. A horde of the elderly, the infirm and the disabled. And I caught the salute of a young boy as the commentator pointed out that he wore the medals on the right hand side to commemorate his dad. I was reminded of war's bitter carnage but the irony that this boy was himself in military uniform. And I wondered what understandings can be drawn from this event? And how are these created?

1.8 Composite portraits

1.8.1 Scarlett



Politics

Dad

Desire for success

Illness

'Massive nerd'

Scarlett



Visits



First World War

- Centrality of the solder
- Obligation/duty to remember sacrifice
- Personal connections
- Turning point for women
- Turning point for empire

History

- Interest in people
- Wanting human connection
- Useful for politics- nationalism

1.8.2 Amelia



History

Sense of worth
Sense of identity



Isolated exhibitionist

Resilient

Rebellious butterfly

Independent

Political

Moral

First World War

- Warning of brutality
- Divided self
- Pace of history/development
- Bigger picture
- Embarrassment- respectful

1.8.3 Mark



History

Knowledgeable
War
20th Century
Global
Answers- truth.

Curious
Objective

WW1

Expert
Facts
Patriotic
Critical
Political
Futile Sacrifice
Pride- soldier
Unity
Cause-Ger aggression
Signif-new era warfare
Lions led by donkeys
Lessons- inhumanity

Commonwealth
Irish

Circularity

1.8.4 Ivy



'Your thing'- film
A Cineaste

Creative
Unconventional blender
Contemplative thinker

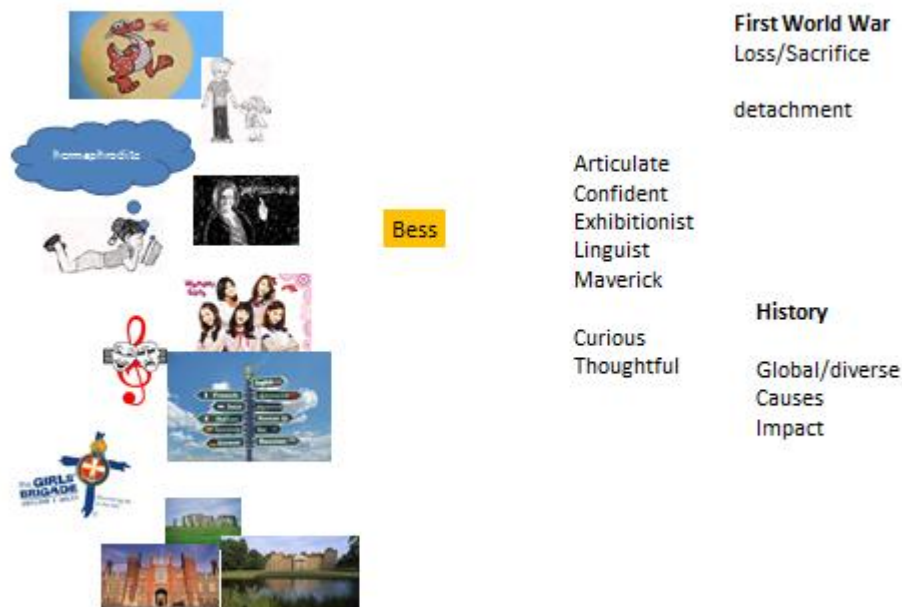
First World War

Personally detached
Tragedy
Turning point- attitudes and politics

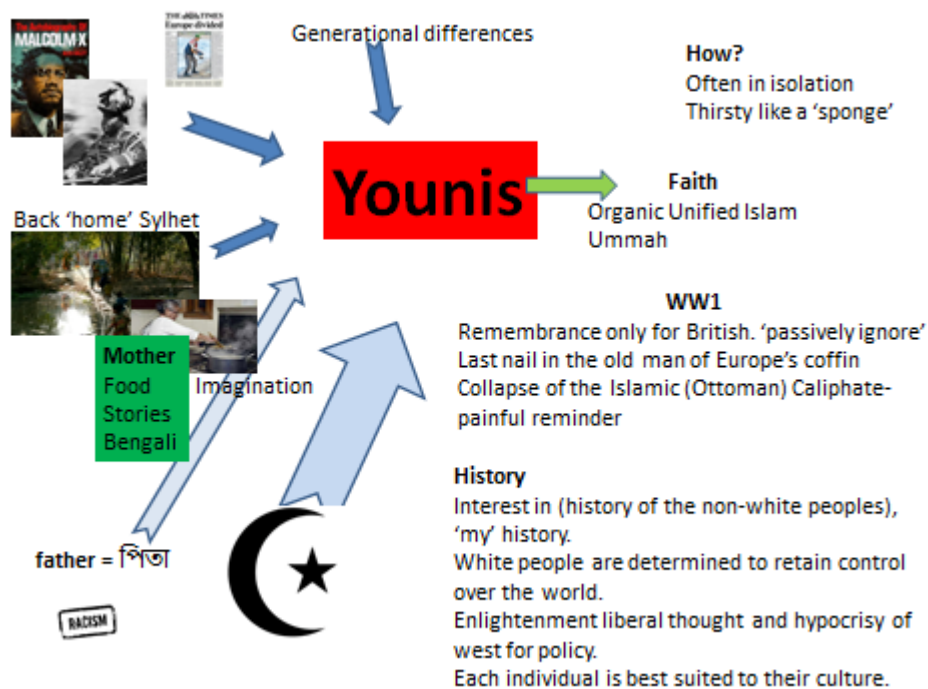
History

Moral/Ethical interest

1.8.5 Bess



1.8.6 Younis



1.9 Home Visit example of pre-visit communication including interview schedule-Ivy

Hi Ivy

I hope that Monday is still good for you. Can you let me have your address with postcode? I am aiming to get to you for about 5pm and be gone by 6.45. My number is 07713 *****, please let me know, especially if on Monday you have had a change of heart/plan so that I don't waste a journey.

I have attached an impression/portrait based on your writing and our conversations of the sorts of tools, I think, you use, on the left-hand side, to arrive at understandings about:- yourself, history and the First World War, these are on the right hand side. You and your family might consider I have missed things out on both sides or got things wrong. This would be useful to know.

On the day it would be good to spend some time with you by yourself. I would like to explore some of your ideas in more detail.

- Firstly film. What drove this interest? I get the impression you have always been into film but latterly it has taken a different form. And what bearing does your engagement with film have on your understandings of what happened in the past, your sense of the past. We might talk about the impact *Goodnight Mr Tom* had on you.

- Secondly reading, esp. historical fiction. How do you choose what you read; again both now and when you were younger?

Related to both of these who do you talk to about films and books? Where? When? And what nature do these conversations take?

- Thirdly you mentioned visits to historical sites in the past. Can you remember any of these?

- Fourth it would be good to talk about gender; you are the youngest of three sisters. How has this impacted on your character and development and particularly how might your gender influence the way you view the past.

- This relates to the last area- how do you see and use history generally? I have suggested that you are interested in moral and ethical questions- is this true? What else?

Where does your idea of the tragic nature of First World War come from? In what ways did WW1 change things and how have you arrived at this idea? You talk about the role of luck in your life- what part does it play in history? Also remembrance- you have talked before about cadet involvement and also about how patriotism clouds memory of First World War.

Then it would be good to talk to any family members who are around and happy to talk. Topics would/could include:-

Some of the themes above such as their understanding Vis WW1 and remembrance.

- The place of your grandparents in your engagement in history.
- The personal connections your family might have to WW1. Or why they might not be interested in them, even if they existed.
- Where they think your interest in history comes from? When this started? How? Etc. But also their interest in history
- Recollections of any conversations you and your family have had about either WW1 or history more generally? Esp. ones prompted by shared viewing, - you talk about watching films with them. I would be interested in how films get chosen and what you all talk about?
- You mentioned dinner times; 'Sometimes when we are eating dinner my mum will come out with some ethical questions.' I wonder if you or mum can remember any examples.
- Or prompted by shared visits to places of history like ones on holiday

Once again the main research question guiding these questions is 'How are your understandings drawn from outside the classroom?' The visit will help me get a real sense, through the conversations you have, of how you make understandings of the past.

However I have only ltd sense of what understandings so it would be good to firstly outline these more. (This might be because Mark said more during our sessions, as I had a very clear idea of his understandings)

If you think there is anything I should especially see, visit and look at do point it out? These could be objects, photos, uniforms or places that illustrate some the themes we have been exploring.

I hope this gives some kind of guide. I will be guided by you in terms of time as it really depends on how much availability you have. I was imagining 40 mins with you and perhaps 40 mins with family.

Let me know if this suits. And don't forget the contact details.

Many thanks

Jason

Appendix 2: Ethics

2.1 Ethical approval Phase 1

2.2 Example Letter to student (On Headed paper)

Study Title: What is the impact of history found outside the classroom on young people's historical awareness?

Dear Student

Hello my name is Jason and I am an education researcher at Oxford University.

I used to be a school history teacher and I am really interested in the history that young people come across outside of the classroom. When I was teaching, my pupils would often ask me if I had seen this or read that or been there. I think if teachers know a bit more about what happens outside of the classroom they might be able to make better use of it in their classrooms.

This survey is to find out about your contact with history outside the classroom. My focus is the First World War. It is the 100th anniversary of the War and there are lots of things happening to mark the anniversary and I think young people will have lots of interesting things to say about this.

Your answers are really valuable, even if you aren't involved with a lot of history outside school. This is not a test of your knowledge! And your teachers will not know how you have answered the questions. You can skip questions and say you don't know, this is also really valuable to me.

I will also be looking to find, from this survey, a group of students interested in getting more involved with this research. To become researchers themselves and investigate the ways they use history outside of the classroom. I would also need permission from your school and your family before this could happen. However if you might be interested in becoming more involved please put your name on the survey so I can contact you and your family.

When I write up the research I won't use your name or the name of your school, and if I do use your words it will be without using your name.

If you have any question about the survey you can email me-see below for address. And you can tell me, at any time, if you no longer want to be involved in the research.

Jason Todd

Teaching and Research Fellow/PGCE Tutor in History

Please return this slip to jason.todd@education.ox.ac.uk or by post to Jason Todd, OUDE, 15 Norham Gardens, Oxford OX2 6PY

REPLY SLIP

☐ Yes, I would be willing to take part in this study by completing a questionnaire about my learning outside the classroom

☐ Yes, I would be willing to take part in a possible case study involving me and my family (I understand that this would need further permission from home)

☐ No thank you, I would not like my data to be used in this research.

Your name: _____

Your signature:

Date: _____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT WITH THIS PROJECT!

2.3 Ethical approval Phase 2

Example Letter to Headteacher (On Headed paper)

Study: Impact of social memory on young people's historical consciousness

Dear Head teacher,

I wrote to you in May this year seeking permission to work with colleague in the history department_____ on a survey and quiz looking at pupil's engagement with history outside the classroom and specifically the First World War commemorations.

Phase two of the research involves setting up a series of pupil case studies.

Having reviewed the data from the surveys I would like to be able to work with (number 2-4) pupils at your school.

They are:-

1

2

3

4

I would like to work with these pupils to create their own ethnographic accounts of how they are working with the history they encounter outside of the classroom. These accounts can take a variety of forms, visual, audio or written, determined by the students. As the emphasis is on the history they encounter outside of the classroom I would need permission from both them and their families. I would therefore appreciate it if you could advise on whether or not I should approach the pupils' family. If not you would not need to explain the reasons, given possible sensitivities, but I would appreciate your guidance.

If you are happy with an approach then this is what the research will involve.

In September the pupils to take part in 3 sessions run by me at school, after school and with your permission, focussed on developing them as researchers. I will resource these and run these at dates agreed with you, running from September to October

	In school	At home
September	Session 1- 45 minutes Team building games; ways of working- contracts What is research?	First drafts of accounts

	Why is it important? Ethics and Truth Session 2- 45 minutes Reviewing survey data Re-visit questions about social remembering Introduction to ethnographic accounts Sharing accounts Session 3- 45 minutes Making meaning from accounts Developing writing and exploring social contexts	
October	One group meeting at school-sharing accounts but also shared viewing of 2013 commemoration to think about ways of analysing	Pupils to continue with accounts at home Jason to arrange of home visits directly with parent/guardian.
November	One group meeting at school-after 11 th November. Shared meaning making	Focussed account on 11/11
December: this meeting will be used to establish what further work needs to be done.	Review of accounts Group meaning making Theme search Planning meeting	Pupils to think of way of coding/analysing accounts

All participants (and their schools) will be made anonymous in all research reports. I would also not be making any judgments about what students said. The questionnaire can only be accessed electronically at this website survey monkey. Survey monkey includes an enhanced encryption package to protect the survey link and survey pages during transmission, meaning only I will have access to the data. The data collected will therefore be kept strictly confidential, will be available only to me, and will not be used for additional purposes without the further consent of all involved being obtained. All data will be destroyed at the end of the research period (estimated to be July 2016), and kept in locked or password-protected conditions until then.

If you would be willing to take part, please let us know by completing the attached slip, and either posting it to me or sending it electronically from your school email address.

Oxford University has strict ethical procedures on conducting research. The project has been approved by the university's Central Ethics Committee and will follow the ethical guidelines published by the British Educational Research Association (www.bera.ac.uk/content/ethical-guidelines). Your participation in this research would be entirely voluntary. I fully realise how busy you are and will completely understand if you decide you do not wish to take part. You would also be free to change your mind and withdraw from the study at any time.

If you have any further questions about this study, I would be pleased to answer these; please do not hesitate to get in touch, preferably by email.

Thank you for your time and attention. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Jason Todd

Teaching and Research Fellow/PGCE Tutor in History