How do students learn about distant places?
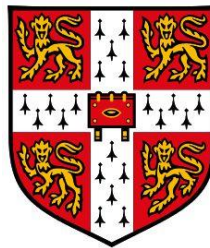# A critical analysis of how students' perceptions of Ghana change over a unit of work

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This dissertation is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

January 2018

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THESIS SUMMARY

This thesis draws upon poststructuralist theory, case study methodology, and multiple research methods to explore children's representations of distant places, particularly African places such as Ghana. It investigates the ways in which a particular group of children's representations of Ghana can be understood as exemplifying an 'exoticist' way of thinking explored by Edward Said in his seminal studies *Orientalism* (1978) and *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), and it explores how and to what extent these representations shifted over the course of a unit of geography teaching on Ghana. The research agenda presented here thus focuses (as Said puts it) on the 'ideas, … forms, … images and imaginings' of contemporary geographies of otherness, and considers geography education furthermore as a form of 'struggle over geography' in which different approaches to distant places come into contact, with some approaches becoming more dominant than others. The findings from this thesis therefore help to illuminate contemporary challenges in geographical education regarding distant places, and African distant places in particular.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my supervisors, Dr Liz Taylor and Professor Kenneth Ruthven, for their support and encouragement over the course of the PhD. In particular, Liz's work on distant place teaching was a real inspiration for my own research and a rich source of conceptual insight. My Headmaster at the time of this research, Jonathan Belbin, strongly supported this work. I would also like to thank my Geography Department colleagues and in particular the Head of Department, Simon Wilson, for his willingness to allow the research to take place. Of course, my research would not have been possible without the active and enthusiastic cooperation of my Year 8 class. Last but certainly not least, this thesis could not have been completed without the unstinting support and encouragement of my mother and father, Helen and Frank, and my husband Conor. To them it is affectionately dedicated.

Preface

This thesis explores the ways in which children represent distant places, particularly African places such as Ghana. It investigates the ways in which a particular group of children's representations of places such as Ghana can be understood as exemplifying an 'exoticist' way of thinking explored by Edward Said in his seminal studies *Orientalism* (1978) and *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), and it explores how and to what extent these representations shifted over the course of a unit of geography teaching on Ghana. The research agenda presented here thus focuses (as Said has it) on the 'ideas, … forms, … images and imaginings' of contemporary geographies of otherness, albeit framed in terms of 'Africanism' rather than Said's Orientalism. This thesis considers geography education furthermore as a form of 'struggle over geography' in which different possible approaches to distant places jostle for prominence, with significant implications for the way in which children encounter African (and other) countries both inside and, by extension, outside the classroom. The findings from this thesis therefore help to illuminate contemporary challenges in geographical education regarding distant places, and African distant places in particular.

The choice of Ghana was not made at random. I had visited Ghana numerous times before commencing this research project, giving me knowledge of Ghanaian culture and geography that has been of great value when designing and implementing the research agenda whose findings are presented in this thesis. I first visited Ghana as an undergraduate in 2003, when I spent six weeks living in Kakum National Park, Kakum Province, in order to carry out a case study of land use in national parks. My initial visit was motivated not just by the need to gather research data for my third-year dissertation, but also by my strong interest in distant places in general and African distant places in particular. My 2003 visit was the beginning of an ongoing relationship with Ghana and Ghanaians, leading to numerous visits and, after I completed my PGCE, to the establishment of a partnership between my school and a school near Elmina, Ghana (Kennedy, 2011; 2013). The partnership focused on cultural exchange between Ghana and the UK, and led to culturally rich interactions between the UK and Ghanaian students. In particular, the UK students' preconceptions about Ghana and Ghanaians, and their sometimes quite drastic reassessments following personal interactions and/or visits to Ghana, prompted me to think in more depth about the potential impact of geography teaching, and specifically the contribution of distant place teaching in the wider context of the geography

curriculum. I had already reflected on these issues for my Masters dissertation in the context of my distant place teaching on Egypt, which was part of my school's syllabus at the time (see Kennedy, 2010). But my extensive previous experience of Ghana and my growing involvement with Ghana in the context of a school partnership led to a growing interest in children's representations of this particular distant place - representations which seemed all the more vivid and fascinating because of the children's common lack of specific knowledge about Ghana, which assumes a less prominent role internationally than some other African countries such as Egypt, Nigeria, Kenya and South Africa.

A number of additional factors also made Ghana an attractive choice as a case study. While Ghana is less distant geographically from the UK than many African countries, it nevertheless constitutes a rich and interesting case study from a number of perspectives. Ghana was the first African country to gain independence in the post-war era (in 1957), and following a complex succession of military and civil governments now enjoys constitutionally-embedded, parliamentary, and multi-party democracy with universal suffrage – a key factor in Ghana's relatively low corruption levels compared to other African countries. Ghana has a multicultural society and diverse ethnic composition, with a complex tapestry of linguistically distinct tribes such as the Ashanti and Akan peoples, each with their own history and culture. Ghana is also diverse geographically, with environments ranging from tropical rainforest to savannah, and with a coastline dotted with historically significant buildings including early European slave castles such as those at Cape Coast and Elmina. Taken together, these features illustrate some of the diversity and richness that makes Ghana such a stimulating country to visit, conduct research in, teach about, and (from the student perspective) learn about. Moreover, as a relatively stable country with a middle-sized population and fast-growing economy (albeit from a low base) increasingly focused on digital technology, Ghana is also representative to a certain extent of broader African dynamics and processes – although, as discussed in Chapter Three, it is always problematic to assume that any particular country can be completely representative of wider regional or continental areas. Indeed, it was necessary, during fieldwork, to carefully distinguish between children's perceptions and representations that relate to Africa in general and those that relate to Ghana in particular, and to highlight in my teaching the importance of distinguishing between Africa and African countries as well as the importance of tracing the multiple interconnections between different geographical scales.

At the start of my research project, I set out to explore, analyse and understand how children learn about a distant place such as Ghana, with a particular focus on their representations of Ghana across the course of a unit of work, in order to assess the degree and

kinds of change that might characterise their representations over time. From this perspective, it seemed that my principal research task was to gain understanding of children's viewpoints and perspectives – and, therefore, that a Weberian interpretivist approach would be most appropriate. Weber's interpretivism emphasises a fundamental distinction between explanation and understanding, with the former associated with positivistic scientific disciplines and the latter with social science research (Poggi, 2005). For Weber, people are 'interpretive animals', being 'so constituted that in order to survive they must make sense of the world by selecting some of the innumerable, contradictory aspects which reality presents to them, and [attach] meaning to them' (Poggi, 2005: 65). Weber did not conceive of sociology as creating general laws about causality on the scientific model but rather as formulating 'ideal types' (social science concepts designed to categorise and compare observed phenomena) that could shed light on social dynamics. He acknowledged the inevitable role of the researcher's own values, viewpoints, and perspectives in the conduct of research, but insisted at the same time that subjectivism was not inevitable and that researchers' insights can extend beyond awareness of their own viewpoints to embrace social dynamics (Baert, 2005). These features of Weber's approach seemed to point to his relevance in the context of my research project, which aimed not only to understand children's changing perceptions of distant places across a unit of work. Adopting a general interpretivist approach, I believed at first, would allow for consideration of the influence of societal-level dynamics alongside micro-level interactions within the classroom, while also allowing for consideration of issues of researcher positionality without adopting an essentially subjectivist approach.

As I began to collect data in the classroom, however, I realised quite quickly that the Weberian perspective might not be the best approach with which to explore emerging topics – and topics relating to power dynamics in particular. Whether considered in terms of children's individual representations in light of wider classroom, school and societal influences, in terms of children's position in the classroom compared to my own as a teacher, or in terms of competing topics and emphases in geography education, or more widely in terms of Britain's world position as opposed to African countries such as Ghana, it was soon obvious that power would become a central theme of my research. As a result, I began to consider the potential value in adopting a theoretical perspective that could be more attuned to issues of power than a general Weberian perspective, however useful such a perspective would be in terms of general evaluations and interpretations of children's representations considered as micro-level interactions embedded in wider societal dynamics.

In terms of alternative theoretical perspectives, I considered two main potential perspectives that seemed to foreground issues of power: critical theory and poststructuralism. Critical theory focuses on human emancipation and the empowering or oppressive character of contemporary societies, with a fundamental distinction between 'traditional' theory (scientific theories with logical statements verified with facts) and 'critical' theory, which denies the separation of theory and fact and sees one of the tasks of theory as investigating its own political assumptions and historical locations. Critical theory adopts the further task of advancing emancipatory objectives through critical perspectives on the status quo. As Max Horkheimer notes, the 'presentation of societal contradictions is not merely an expression of the concrete historical situation but also a force within it to stimulate change' (1999: 215). In particular, critical theory aims to challenge specific ideologies, or combinations of normative and factual content that combine to support particular political objectives. Ideologies, for critical theorists such as Raymond Geuss, create 'false consciousness' by stopping individuals from 'correctly perceiving their true situation and real interests; if they are free themselves from social repression, the agents must rid themselves of ideological illusion' (Geuss, 1981: 3). With regard to my thesis, there is a clear sense in which a critical theory perspective is of relevance. If 'Africanism' is understood as an ideology, then a critical theory approach, in the context of my research, could be seen as developing a critique of oppressive ideas active within educational contexts in order to enable progress from the status quo. However, the generally meso/macro, societal level at which critical theory is situated seemed some distance away from the micro-scale focus of my research. Additionally, while critical theory has inspired empirical research, it has nevertheless generally focused more on abstract reflection rather than fieldwork. For these reasons, while critical theory undoubtedly offers a valuable perspective, I opted to engage more deeply with poststructuralist approaches, and with the poststructuralist approach of Michel Foucault in particular.

This approach is discussed in detail below (particularly in Chapters One and Three, but also elsewhere). In brief, I decided to draw upon a Foucauldian approach because it encourages a focus on the connections between power, discourse, and knowledge, and a focus on the ways in which particular discursive ways of understanding and categorising the world – such as Said's well-known binaries of developed/undeveloped and civilised/savage – come to hold significance in particular communities, with specific and often quite concrete results. Power, on Foucault's view, exerts control over members of modern societies through widely shared narratives – but because it relies on the constant repetition of these narratives, it is vulnerable to resistance and change if this repetition is ceased or subverted. This naturally leads to a focus

on the details of discourse, and, in the context of my research, on a general shift in emphasis from a content analysis approach to a discourse analysis approach (although I still make use of discursively-oriented content analysis to make sense of visual materials). While content analysis typically emphasises the exhaustive and exclusive categorisation of primary research material, discourse analysis focuses more on 'the way versions of the world, of society, events and inner psychological worlds are produced in discourse' (Potter, 1997: 146) and on the way 'repressive forces' such as Africanism systematically distort communication (Cohen et al, 2002). Through my reading of poststructuralist and discourse analysis literature, I came to see these approaches as the best strategy in terms of realising my research goals regarding Africanism in geography literature. Rather than simply trying to understand educational realities as they currently are, I would use these conceptual and methodological tools to try to 'uncover the way that reality is produced' (Hardy et al, 2004:19) in the classroom, and with specific regard to Ghana as a particular distant place.

I decided to structure my research around a 14-lesson, three-part unit of work (Appendix I), which drew on relevant secondary literature in addition to my previous experience in research-focused distant place teaching on Egypt (Kennedy, 2011). I taught the unit of work over a twelve-week period in 2013 in a class of Year 8 (12 to 13-year-old) students in a medium-sized secondary school for around 750 pupils aged eleven to eighteen, in a village near the border of Cambridgeshire, UK. As discussed in detail in Chapter Three, the unit of work emphasised diversity and change in Ghanaian historical, cultural, social and economic geographies, and incorporated material generated through an ongoing school partnership programme that I established between this school and a partner institution in Ghana in addition to material on Fair Trade and international development. The three enquiry sequences each focused on a particular question. These were: *Ghana: A Different Place?* (lessons 1-4), *Does Poverty Matter?* (lessons 5-9)*,* and *Has Development Worked in Ghana?* (lessons 10-14). Each of the enquiry sequences drew on a range of material (including material generated through a school partnership; see below) to encourage pupils to reflect on diversity, change, and cross-cultural similarities, as well as continuity and cross-cultural differences. The unit of work was designed to accomplish two broad purposes: first, to allow pupils to engage with a considerable new body of geographical knowledge about Ghana, and second, to elicit and engage with Africanist perspectives through this process of geographical engagement. As I discuss in Chapter Two in more detail, I see geographical education as inherently inclined towards promoting an understanding of diversity and challenging exclusionary discourses such as Orientalism and Africanism. Consequently, my research focuses on students' engagement not

just with a new body of geographical knowledge, but also with discourses that challenge Africanist perspectives.

The thesis is structured as follows. Chapter One sets the scene for my research agenda by considering how past manifestations of Africanist-style thought – considered generally as 'exoticism' - linger on in contemporary culture, before considering the role of geography and distance in constructions of otherness and the ways in which recent transnational cultural entanglement has opened new spaces of post-exoticist possibility in this regard. Yet the chapter acknowledges that globalisation has also created new patterns of inequality and exclusion, such that it remains an open question as to how children in the UK conceive of any specific distant place – and the extent to which geography education can engage with and potentially shift exoticist representations to more nuanced and critically aware representations. Chapter Two considers literature on Africanism and educational literature on teaching about distant places in order to illustrate the resonance of each literature for the other, and to suggest how a focus on Africanism in the classroom can help to address the current lack of research on how children learning about African distant places. Having identified the conceptual rationale for the research agenda, Chapter Three describes the research questions, poststructuralist theoretical perspective, case study research methodology, individual research methods, and analytical techniques used to gather and analyse the data presented in this thesis. The following three chapters then present the empirical data in terms of children's 'initial' representations (Chapter Four), changing representations (Chapter Five), and 'final' representations (Chapter Six). Rather than assuming that children's representations shifted unproblematically from initial Africanist viewpoints to final non-Africanist viewpoints, these chapters emphasise the discontinuities and non-linear pathways of children's journeys through the unit of work. Chapter Seven takes these empirical findings as the starting point for a discussion of distant place teaching and its limits in the context of challenging Africanist points of view in the classroom, returning to Foucault alongside other thinkers such as Karl Weick and Mikhail Bakhtin in order to trace the significance of the research in educational debates. Chapter Eight, finally, concludes by situating the research in its wider context.

Chapter One

Introduction

Just as none of us is outside or beyond geography, none of us is completely free from the struggle over geography. That struggle is complex and interesting because it is not only about soldiers and cannons but also about ideas, about forms, about images and imaginings.

Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*

1.1 Introduction

This chapter sets the scene for my research agenda by, first, exploring past manifestations of 'exoticist' styles of thought such as Orientalism and Africanism in colonial-era literature and showing how aspects of these approaches linger on in tourism and contemporary cultural products. The enduring character of such representations raises the question of whether distance in itself always prompts the construction of geographies of otherness, a question explored in a section that asks if we are prisoners of our geographies. The threat of geographical determinism is rejected by emphasising the way in which representations of distant places are actively constructed rather than passively discovered, a notion that raises the possibility of powerful 'exoticist' representations being contested and subsequently transformed or replaced by others. This possibility is engaged with through a discussion of Michel Foucault's theory of power, leading to the conclusion that processes of cultural entanglement have opened new spaces of post-exoticist possibility through post-colonial literature. From this perspective, greater international connectivity might be thought desirable, but as the following section discusses, recent processes of globalisation can be seen as creating new patterns of inequality and exclusion instead. Consequently, while it remains the case that powerful representations of distant places can be contested and transformed, it cannot be assumed that this will come about through globalisation or that culturally transformed representations will automatically become the dominant pattern of thought in ex-colonial powers such as the UK. As such, it remains an open question as to how (and how 'exotically') children in the UK conceive of any specific distant place, and the extent to which geography education can engage with and potentially

shift exoticist representations, including Africanist representations, to more nuanced and critically aware representations.

1.2 The Exoticism of Distant Places

Exoticism has a long history, and distant places have long cast their spell over literary and scholarly imaginations. The Roman author Pliny the Elder famously stated *Semper aliquid novi Africam adferre* (Africa always brings us something new; Pliny, 1940). It seems, moreover, that Pliny was referring to Aristotle's much earlier statement, in his *The History of Animals*, that 'it has passed into a proverb that Libya is always producing something new' (1991). The phrase refers to a perception that Africa was a continent of mystery and unpredictable wonders. The taste for portraying far-distant lands as exotic and mysterious endured through the mediaeval period, as demonstrated, for instance, by the vast appeal of Marco Polo's thirteenth-century travelogue *The Travels of Marco Polo*. The Renaissance saw a vast increase in scientific knowledge of the world, leading to the Industrial Revolution and western colonisation of many distant lands, including much of Africa in the 'scramble for Africa' towards the end of the nineteenth century. Yet exotic accounts of distant places persisted even when these territories had been brought to some extent within cartographic and scientific knowledge, and even in many cases within direct political and administrative control. In fact, as discussed below, they still endure today, long after distant places have freed themselves from imperial control.

The French painter and writer Eugène Fromentin's account of his travels in Algeria in the 1850s (*Between Sea and Sahara: An Orientalist Adventure*) provides a striking example of mid-Victorian-era European colonial attitudes to the African continent – in this case, a part of northern Africa that France had already begin to colonise in the 1830s. As such, Fromentin's views represent an important example of European colonial attitudes in a highly formative period for exoticism, which still exercises powerful influence on geographical imaginations. Fromentin muses, for example, on his capacity – and by extension, the West's capacity – to sum up the 'essence' of Algeria by simply gazing through the window of his residence thirty-five minutes from Algiers:

> What's the use of multiplying memories, accumulating facts, running in pursuit of oddities no one's written about…? The exterior world is like a dictionary; it's a book that's full of repetitions and synonyms: a lot of equivalent words for the same idea… and it's up to us to

choose and sum up…. Everything exists in everything. Why wouldn't the essence of Algeria be contained in the small space that my window frames?

<div align="right">Fromentin, 2004: 5</div>

In terms of what the 'essence' of Algeria might be, Fromentin offers a range of (seemingly positive) responses. At the start of his memoir, he describes 'Africa' in purposefully mysterious terms as a 'magic word that lends itself to suppositions and sets amateur explorers to dreaming' (ibid: 4). A little later on, he elaborates on the mysterious nature of Algeria in particular, contrasting Algerian activities, customs and lives from the (by implication) transparent and rational European homeland: 'Activities are unfathomable, customs dubious, and lives mysterious' (ibid: 10). Fromentin also finds much to idealise in Algeria's inhabitants, generalising across multiple and undoubtedly disparate groups to suggest that 'the Arab character is sombre and violent but is never stupid or gross. It's always picturesque – in the good sense of the term – and artistic with no other proof than the way they conduct themselves' (ibid: 15). Already, in the first few pages of his travelogue, Fromentin carries out four literary acts – essentialising, obfuscating, idealising, and generalising – that sum up and exemplify not just the pull of the exotic over Western imaginations but also the way in which this pull was expressed (and often still is expressed) in power-filled discursive actions.

Algeria, of course, is relatively close to France in global terms. But such influences were not confined to countries within close distances of each other, as illustrated by the vast body of British colonial literature addressing both imaginations and experiences of countries and territories around the world. Daniell notes that such literature goes back at least four hundred years and is more or less unique to the British imperial experience: 'The excitement of a remote frontier, of British possessions overseas, engagement in small, distant wars, the paramount importance of a navy, pressing problems of peace-keeping, and union, both overseas and at home, can all be found in Elizabethan writers and fairly consistently afterwards' (1994: xiv). Towards the end of the nineteenth century, however – i.e. during the 'scramble for Africa' - British colonial literature took a darker turn: 'in the latter part of the century, a change quite clearly comes over the popular literature of all kinds: much of it moves towards being aggressively, and defensively, imperialist… white dominates black with cool superiority and, usually, brutal force, in the name of something called civilisation' (ibid: xiv-xv). This demonstrates a clear shift from the earlier 'orientalist' literature produced by writers such as Fromentin, who were somewhat more likely to idealise 'native' lands and cultures than to castigate them. Notable examples of this 'darker' literature in Britain include the boys' tales of

G.A. Henty and the adventure tales (including the well-known *King Solomon's Mines*) of Rider Haggard.

However, not all British colonial literature exhibited such a straightforwardly oppressive slant, and a number of writers combined a concern with defending British imperial power with an enduring awareness of the mystery and exoticism of distant places, and even nostalgia for the vanishing character of 'native' civilisations threatened by Western intrusions. Chief among such writers is John Buchan, later Lord Tweedsmuir and Governor-General of Canada from 1935-1940. In his autobiography, *Memory Hold-the-Door*, Buchan discusses his recollections of old sea-captains who taught him about ships during his Fife childhood and expresses his early yearning for distant and strange lands:

> But my interest was less in seamanship than in the unknown lands which could be reached by ships. I became aware of the largeness of the globe… All the things which fascinated me in books – tropic islands, forests of strange fruits, snow mountains, ports thronged with queer shipping and foreign faces – lay somewhere beyond the waters in which I swam with indifferent skill.
>
> <div align="right">Buchan, 1940: 18-19</div>

Buchan himself travelled to Africa in 1901 as one of 'Milner's Kindergarten' in the Cape Colony – i.e. a group of young British men who served in the South African Civil Service under the High Commissioner Lord Milner. During this experience, writes Daniell, Buchan 'had the experience of covering tracts of country as the first white man, and there were still large blank spaces on maps of Africa marking areas unknown to 'civilisation' (1994: xvi). This experience marked Buchan deeply and tinged much of his mature fictional output, leading not just to paternalistic statements regarding 'the natives' (describing them as mentally 'as crude and naïve as a child'; cited Daniell, p.xvii) but also to an awareness, bordering on nostalgia, of the ravages that European 'civilisation' could impose on countries such as his beloved South Africa, which he described as 'the fairest country under the stars' (p.xvii). Unlike Fromentine, Buchan does not idealise African 'natives' per se – far from it; although he gives great stature to Laputo, the black leader of the Zulu rebellion in his novel *Prester John*, describing him in one place as 'this amazing man'. But Buchan does share Fromentin's mid-nineteenth century sense of wonder and mystery in distant places, as seen in his short story *The Grove of Ashtaroth*, in which the cold light of civilisation is seen as driving 'something lovely and adorable from its last refuge on earth' (p.xx). In the third chapter of *Prester John*, Buchan has his hero, David

Crawford, experience the wide landscapes of South Africa as a kind of primitive heaven: 'The fresh hill air had exhilarated my mind, and the aromatic scent of the evening gave the last touch of intoxication. Whatever serpent might lurk in it, it was a veritable Eden I had come to' (1994: 31).

Thus, despite the significant differences between Fromentine and Buchan as individuals, between travelogue and fiction, between mid-Victorian and Edwardian, between Algeria and South Africa, and between French and British imperialism, these two very distinctive writers thus share an emphasis on the exotic allure of distant places – an allure that has somehow persisted, albeit in transformed character, during the vast increase of cartographic, scientific, and anthropological knowledge of distant places that accompanied the expansion of European colonialism and imperialism from the eighteenth century onwards. No matter how great the body of knowledge about a particular territory, there always was – and still remains - the potential for new discoveries, new perspectives, and new and unexpected combinations of Western and non-Western cultures to emerge: *Semper aliquid novi Africam adferre*. The allure of distant lands was qualitative, not quantitative. Daniell notes that Buchan's fascination with South Africa largely arose from his awareness of new possibilities arising in the future: 'Much of the absorption Buchan found in the work he did came from knowing that so much was to be made afresh, and the potential was so huge, for making a successful nation in southern Africa, or for producing disaster' (1994: xvi).

Moreover, while the age of imperialism has passed, the sense of exoticism that helped to impel and maintain it has remained a dominant feature of contemporary culture, in large part because the end of imperialism has not led to an end of cultural change and novelty per se. As Gregory states, '[m]any of the assumptions of the colonial past are still abroad in the neo-colonial present' (1995: 447-8). The impulse behind travelling to discover distant places and peoples has not disappeared because the West no longer has direct control over these places, or because the amount of readily available knowledge about these places has swelled to hitherto unprecedented levels. Discussing 'ethnic tourism' in particular (i.e. tourism marketed in terms related to ethnic difference), Yang and Wall (2009: 560) note that 'the cultural exoticism of some groups is the primary attraction', while Johnston (2001: 181) more generally defines tourism as 'constructed through difference [and] the exotic.' Relatedly, cultural portrayals of distant places are often inflected with exoticist leanings, especially in the case of film and music (Locke, 2007). A popular contemporary BBC detective series is entitled *Death in Paradise*, with the 'paradise' in question represented by an imaginary former UK colonial territory in the Caribbean. Not all contemporary representations of distant places are 'positively' exoticist in

character, of course; as discussed in the next chapter, many contemporary portrayals of distant places, and African countries in particular, resonate more with the negative and oppressive portrayals of such places in Henty and Haggard than with the idealised and nostalgic visions of Fromentine and Buchan. Nevertheless, contemporary cultural dynamics and touristic behaviours illustrate the enduring exoticising hold of distant places over our imaginations. This raises the question of whether we are bound to always construct distant places in particular ways (both positive and negative) *because they are distant*. In other words, as the following section considers in some depth, the question arises as to whether we are prisoners of our geographies?

1.3 Prisoners of Geography?

*Prisoners of Geography (*Marshall, 2015), a bestselling book about geopolitics, explores the various ways in which both physical and human geography constrain and enable particular modes of geopolitical behaviours and patterns of thought. Marshall states: 'The land on which we live has always shaped us. It has shaped the wars, the power, politics and social development of the peoples that now inhabit nearly every part of the earth… the choices of those who lead the seven billion inhabitants of this planet will to some degree always be shaped by the rivers, mountains, deserts, lakes and seas that constrain us all – as they always have' (2015: ix-x). As an initial example, he discusses China and India:

> Take, for example, China and India: two massive countries with huge populations that share a very long border but are not politically or culturally aligned. It wouldn't be surprising if these two giants had fought each other in several wars, but in fact, apart from one month-long battle in 1962, they never have. Why? Because between them is the highest mountain range in the world, and it is practically impossible for advance large military columns through or over the Himalayas… and so both countries focus their foreign policy on other regions while keeping a wary eye on each other.
>
> Ibid: x-xi

Despite this example, specific physical factors, notes Marshall, do not automatically exert more or less important effects: 'Mountains are no more important than deserts, nor rivers than jungles. In different parts of the planet, different geographical features are among the dominant factors in determining what people can and cannot do' (ibid: x). Similarly, environmental and human factors – including 'climate, demographics, cultural regions and access to natural

resources' (ibid: x) – vary in importance depending on which context is under consideration. But for each given context, Marshall suggests, particular factors will be more dominant than others, and in a way that may change very little from age to age, as demonstrated by the limitations placed upon the USA's military campaign in Afghanistan by local weather conditions caused by sandstorms and heavy rain.

This approach raises the spectre of geographical determinism, or the view, as Marshall has it, that 'nature is more powerful than [humans], and that we can only go so far in determining our own fate' (ibid: xv). In terms of Africa, Marshall outlines how a number of physical geographical factors combined to render African development (with development construed in Western terms) problematic, including the natural barrier of the Sahara desert, the difficulty of domesticating sub-Saharan animals, a virulent set of diseases spread by prevalent mosquitos and Tsetse flies, the lack of navigable rivers, and the lack of land that lent itself to pastoral or arable agriculture. The consequent relative lack of 'development' along Western lines is one factor – and a powerful one – in the enduring representation of Africa as exotic and different in various ways: Africa is seen as different, such views suggest, because Africa's physical geography is different. Compared to Europe's profusion of navigable rivers and natural harbours, temperate climate, and relative lack of dangerous infectious diseases, that is, it is inevitable (exoticist accounts might claim) that Africa came to be seen in the West as inaccessible, mysterious, and unfathomable. Geographical distance – and in the case of sub-Saharan Africa and eastern Africa in particular, very long pre-Suez-canal sea distances to the Cape and beyond into the Indian Ocean – has thus played a direct role in helping to construct Africa as different and (frequently) as exotic. How could Africa be constructed otherwise, a geographical determinist might argue, when it is so hard to reach, and so distinct from Western contexts when the traveller arrives?

It is worth pausing to reflect on a set of higher-level concerns that arise with the use of the term 'constructed.' As noted in the brief discussion of Fromentine, above, specific discursive acts – in this case literary acts, but in other cases visual, auditory, or physical acts – are undertaken in specific cultural contexts in order to represent and construct distant places in particular ways. Distant places are rarely passively encountered, that is, but are imaginatively and discursively created and represented by active individuals – individuals, moreover, who are always embedded in networks of power. As Gregory writes with reference to such acts in the colonial period, 'landscapes and cultures [are] drawn into abstract grids of colonial and imperial power, literally displaced and replaced…[and] become sites of appropriation, domination and contestation' (1995:448). Such 'imaginative geographies' (to use Edward

Said's phrase in *Orientalism* [1978]) emphasise the mutual influence of power, knowledge and geography – a form of mutual involvement that did not cease with the end of colonialism, but rather continues in new ways in the post-colonial (or, as Gregory has it, 'neo-colonial') period.

Once it is admitted that distant places are constructed as well as (or rather than) 'discovered', and thus that there is a degree of human agency and creativity involved in the creation and dissemination of representations of such places, then it must also be admitted that a gap is opened for the contestation of such representations, and their subsequent replacement by new and possibly quite distinct representations. At this juncture it is useful to refer to the work of the poststructuralist thinker Michel Foucault, and in particular his notions of power and resistance. The following section explores Foucault's work from this perspective, illustrating how seemingly dominant forms of power may also provide opportunities for new and creative forms of contestation.

1.4 Contesting Representations

In the following sections, I introduce Foucault's highly original and productive conceptualisation of power in addition to his conceptualisation of materiality in order to consider how this approach can be of use in thinking about the possibilities for resisting dominant discursive constructions. I then link these theoretical ideas to the exoticist representations discussed above in order to consider how geographies of otherness can serve as springboards from which to imagine new representations. I also consider another theorist's work (that of Mikhail Bakhtin) in order to emphasise the discourse analytical view that contemporary arrangements of power are always provisional and vulnerable to transformation – an insight to which I return in Chapter Seven.

1.4.1 Foucault and Power

A useful way in into Foucault's various preoccupations, which are revisited in Chapter Three with regard to the overarching methodological rationale for this thesis, is the concept of power. In one way or another, this concept comes into practically all his writing (Sharp et al, 2000). The concept of power informs Foucault's critical analyses of social institutions and patterns of thinking and being; like Nietzsche, Foucault 'discovers power operating in structures of thinking and behaviour that previously seemed to be devoid of power relations,' such that structures and patterns of behaviour that we take to be enabling can also be seen as constraining (White, 1986: 421). In all his historical and conceptual investigations, Foucault was concerned to uncover 'what place is occupied by whatever is singular, contingent, and the product of

arbitrary constraints' in what is presented as 'universal, necessary, [and] obligatory' (1984; cited in White, 1986: 421).

Crucially, however, the concept of power that imbues Foucault's research differs extensively from the dominant 'everyday' concept of power (known variously as the 'zero-sum' or 'sovereign' accounts of power in the literature), according to which power is understood as a 'thing' possessed to differing extents by different individuals, groups, countries, civilisations, and so forth (Kesby, 2005). The possession of power, on this account, is defined as the ability to 'control or coerce others, impose its will upon others, or manipulate the consent of others' (Sharp et al, 1999: 2). 'Dominating power', on this orthodox account, enforces the interests of 'a particular class, caste, race or political configuration at the expense of others' (ibid: 2); as such it produces inequality and oppression.

Foucault rejects the sovereign view of power on the grounds that it provides a poor description of social reality in the modern era. In his book *Discipline and Punish* (1977), Foucault presented an historical narrative of the changing nature of power from the early modern period in Europe (1600s and 1700s) to the modern period. In the former period, he suggests, states were 'terror-ific' regimes 'based on bloody retribution and the breaking of the body of the condemned' (Sharp et al, 1999: 13). This was a powerful form of dominating power, but it was not very effective:

> [I]t was supported by no systematic attempt to reach into the obscure corners, the hidden spaces in the alleys and forests away into the scaffolds, where rebelliousness of all kinds – countless resistant thoughts and acts – could ferment.
>
> Ibid: 13

On Foucault's account, this kind of power began to disappear from Europe around the turn of the nineteenth century, when disciplinary, 'segregationary' institutions such as prisons and hospitals started to replace the scaffolds as the preferred locus of social punishment: 'The theatre of punishment…was replaced by the great uniform machinery of the prisons' (1979; cited in Sharp et al, 1999: 13). For Foucault, institutions such as the prison marked the emergence of a new and distinctively modern regime of power, in which power was designed to act upon and transform the agency and consciousness of the wrongdoer rather than wreaking violence upon his or her body. The most famous expression of this kind of power was Bentham's 'panopticon' – a design of prison in which no prisoner could be sure that he or she was not being observed at any one time, the idea being that prisoners would thus seek to

discipline themselves (in case they were being observed). That is, the disciplinary aspect of power became 'internalised', with inmates 'enlisted into controlling themselves' (Ibid: 14) by the discursive spread of a 'net of normalisation' that constructs subjects as 'normal' and 'abnormal' (White, 1986: 190). As Kesby remarks, power is most effective where it is 'normalised', where self-expectation, self-regulation, and self-discipline generate willing subjects who actively reproduce dominant power structures without being 'forced' to do so' (2005: 4). Modern power became discursive, local and continuous, whereas previous regimes of power, however publicly violent, had been intermittent in character.

Thus, Foucault's historical narrative concerning the origin of modern power also establishes one of modern power's key characteristics: its tendency to exert control through the spread of a 'normalising net' rather than through violence. The theory of power that can be (re)constructed from Foucault's writings, which is much more subtle and sophisticated than the orthodox, 'sovereign' view discussed above, adds further aspects to the description of modern power, such that power, for Foucault, is also 'decentred and ubiquitous'; it is at once constraining and enabling, and accordingly it is unstable; and it is material as well as discursive.

Power is decentred and ubiquitous in that 'for Foucault…power is not concentrated; nor is it a commodity to be held, seized, divided or distributed by individuals. It is a much more decentred and ubiquitous force acting everywhere because it comes from everywhere' (Kesby, 2005: 4). On Foucault's account, power is not a thing that is possessed in different quantities by individuals; it is rather to be thought of as 'dispersed throughout the complex networks of discourse, practices, and relationships that position subjects as powerful and that justify and facilitate their authority in relation to others' (Ibid: 4). The ubiquity of power signifies its unavoidability; as Bevir (1999: 66) has it, 'no society, culture or practice could possibly be free of power. No individual could constitute himself as an autonomous agent free from all regimes of power.'

1.4.2 Productive Power, Bakhtin, and Non-Finalisability
The ubiquity of power need not be taken as entailing the ubiquity of *oppressive* power. For Foucault, power is inherently *productive* rather than (as the orthodox, sovereign view has it) prohibitive; that is, power, even when it is at its most oppressive, is a creative rather than a destructive social force, serving to produce 'action, effects, and subjects' (Kesby, 2005: 4; see also Sharp et al). Thus, Gutting (2005: 602) states that power 'not only expresses the repressive, exclusionary force of a system's constraints but also creates new domains of knowledge and practice.' Accordingly, while modern power certainly constrains subjects by encouraging them

to internalise 'normal' patterns of behaviour and thought, it also opens up at the same time the possibility of creating new, potentially more enabling, patterns. Thus, while modern power does seek to constrain, it cannot avoid creating the possibility of non-constraining developments. (It is the fact that normalising power works through the internalisation of constraint that opens up the possibility of agents generating new patterns of thought and behaviour.) That is to say, a Foucauldian view of domination and resistance is one in which resistance arises out of the nature of power itself – even in contexts wherein that power is being implemented in oppressive ways. Especially in Foucault's later work, which focused on 'governmentality' (Gutting, 2005), there was more emphasis on the fact that society 'might not consist solely of…forms of discipline… Society might include an arena in which free individuals attempt to influence one another' (Bevir, 1999: 73).

The fact that power can be enabling as well as, or instead of, constraining, suggests that power is inherently unstable. As Kesby suggests, if a particular way of exercising power appears to be stable, it is simply because the social conditions that permit that power regime are being constantly reproduced: 'the effects of power are not intrinsically stable; they appear to be so only if the knowledges and practices constituting prevailing inequalities continue to be reproduced' (2005: 4). Thus, particular forms of the exercise of power come to be temporarily fixed only if members of the society in question participate in reproducing the social structures and patterns that support such a regime. If modern power exerts control over subjects through the internalisation of normalising narratives, it also relies on the continuous repetition of this process to guarantee its survival. As mentioned above, power is 'most effective and most insidious where it is normalised, where self-expectation, self-regulation, and self-discipline generate compliant subjects who actively reproduce hegemonic assemblages of power without being 'forced' to do so' (Ibid: 4). If agents choose to resist by ceasing to reproduce a given narrative of normalisation, dominant power structures are vulnerable to change.

At this stage it is useful to consider the work of Mikhail Bakhtin, whose influential theorisations of language and society provide useful conceptual tools with which to theorise what might be termed 'non-finalisability' – the idea that both linguistic and societal forms are only provisionally the way they are and thus always open to change and at times fundamental alteration. Bakhtin's concepts of 'dialogicality' and, especially, 'heteroglossia' (Bakhtin, 1981, 1984, 1986) have exerted an important impact on discourse analysis by summing up a view of language that echoes the themes of geography education in their emphasis on mingled voices, perspectives, cultures, and historical eras. The concept of dialogicality emphasises the

interconnectedness of language and, by extension, society, by exploring how 'every utterance is in relation to some other utterance,' so that 'to speak is always to speak with, and in relation to, the voices of others' (Wetherell, 2001: 12). Discourse, on Bakhtin's account, is inherently dialogical: 'when we speak we combine together many different pieces of other conversations and texts and other voices' (2001: 24), so that the 'ideological becoming of a human being is… the process of selectively assimilating the words of others' (Bakhtin, 1981: 70). This 'polyphonic' (i.e. multi-voiced) approach undermines the 'notion of social actors as whole and coherent and standing behind language, operating it and expressing themselves as they talk, but remaining inherently independent' (Wetherell, 2001: 188) and moves instead towards a more Foucauldian view of human beings as both products and producers of discourse, a view which also brings the operations of power into play: 'If our minds are a record and accumulation of discursive history and that history is a record of power then we are subjected to certain epistemic regimes and disciplined as we are constituted' (ibid: 188).

Building on this dialogical viewpoint, the concept of heteroglossia, which Bakhtin explores in *The Dialogical Imagination* (1981), emphasises the 'radical heterogeneity of the utterance in its centrifugal and centripetal elements' (Hitchcock, 1998: 84), thus establishing a tension between 'centripetal' (authoritarian/anti-change) and 'centrifugal' (autonomous/pro-change) tendencies in language and, by extension, social worlds. The tension between these forces, on Bakhtin's account, operates at every level of language use, individually, collectively, and over time, which 'keeps language alive and prevents it from ossifying or fragmenting' (Maybin, 2001: 65). Where 'monoglossial' language use predominates, on Bakhtin's account, words and meanings have close and stable relationships, hindering the development of new discursive foundations. Where 'heteroglossial' language use predominates, however, new combinations of existing elements can occur, revealing the gap between words and meanings and 'defamiliarising' dominant perspectives by making them visible from multiple perspectives.

The classic example of a 'heteroglossial' scenario is the carnival, which Bakhtin explored through a reading of the Renaissance writer Rabelais in his book *Rabelais and his world* (1984). For Bakhtin, the carnival signifies a humorous space in which everything except violence is permitted, a space which is half-way between art and everyday life, and above all an alternative and communal space in which diverse voices are heard, breaking down convention and creating the possibility for new orders to arise through the unpredictable combination of previously distinct categories. Indeed, since Bakhtin believes that social action and relationships already bear intrinsic meanings before the formalisation of such meanings in

art and literature, he also believes that carnivals 'unmask' the 'unvarnished' truths that lie 'under the veil of false claims and arbitrary ranks' that are imposed by monological systems (Pomorska, 1984: x). As Bakhtin writes, the carnival 'present[s] the victory of this future over the past… The birth of the new… is as indispensable and as inevitable as the death of the old' (1984: 256). (I return to the concept of the carnival, in addition to dialogicality and heteroglossia, in Chapter Seven.)

For Bakhtin, moreover, 'heteroglossial' language use is the fundamental, 'natural' category, with 'monoglossial' language merely a corrupted form of it. As Francis (2012: 3) states, 'for Bakhtin language is never static of fixed, but is instead diverse, and inherently dialogic… while at the macro-linguistic level there may appear to be stability (monoglossia), at the micro level there is plasticity, contradiction and resistance: heteroglossia.' Thus, on Bakhtin's account, language and by extension society is always vulnerable to resistance and revision. States of affairs are never final.

1.4.3 Productive Power and Participatory Development

Returning to Foucault, Kesby draws on his productive notion of power in his defence of participatory development projects, which have been criticised by scholars from the 'Tyranny School' of development studies. This school embodies the view that participatory development is not fulfilling its promises (to be empowering and/or transformatory), and that it is leading instead to the continuing (or worsening) oppression of marginalised peoples and to the maintenance or non-transformatory change of structures through which that oppression is enacted (Hickey and Mohan, 2004). Critics derive many specific critiques from this general background, including the notions that: participation is insensitive to spatial and cultural differences and that participation encourages a weak understanding of the complexity of local culture and power relations (see Mohan, 2001; Cooke, 2001; Michener, 1998). Most fundamentally, as Kesby relates, critics claim that even the most exhaustive and apparently inclusive forms of participation 'constitute a form of power that has dominating effects' (Kesby, 2005: 2038). Yet as Kesby points out, even if all discourses are saturated with power, not all discourses are equally dangerous. He suggests that calls for resistance to participatory discourses because they are power-riven seems to miss the point: 'To those facing poverty, gender inequality, and HIV, calls for resistance to all forms of power are unnecessarily immobilizing, and must seem to emanate from a rather privileged positionality' (2005: 2045). It is too easy, that is, to criticise participation just because it is saturated with power. For those in marginal or vulnerable situations, participatory projects may offer the chance for resistance

to other, even more dangerous discourses. Thus, 'participation's proven failure to escape from power and its association with [Foucauldian] governance do not inherently prevent it from being one of many helpful discourses on which to draw in the pursuit of a radical, transformative political praxis' (Kesby, 2005: 2049). Or, to put it more simply, you have to be in it to win it; to fight the effects of power, one must engage with that power and resist from within. Thus, while we do not have to think of participation as free from power, we can think of it as one discourse among many – and not necessarily the most dangerous. In the same way as democracy's many imperfections do not prevent it from being the best of the available alternatives, so participation, although also imperfect, is by no means the worst of the available options.

1.4.4 Material Entanglements

Up to now, I have focused on the conceptual and discursive aspects of Foucault's theory of power. However, as my citation of Foucault's work on prisons may have suggested, the Foucauldian vision of power is essentially material as well as conceptual. Sharp et al emphasise what they call the 'entanglements' of power in order to highlight the materialities of power in Foucault's theory of power – the 'countless material spaces, places and networks which sustain, practically as well as imaginatively and symbolically, the knottings that [sustain power networks]' (1999: 2). Especially in Foucault's later work, in which he moved away from the methodology of 'archaeology' and the concept of the 'episteme' (see Chapter Three), Foucault was increasingly sensitive to the relationship between discursive constructions and material practices and social institutions. Thus, Foucault's work embodies a theory of power as non-sovereign, normalising, non-violent, decentred and ubiquitous, unstable, and at once conceptual and material in nature.

The exotic representations of distant places considered in the preceding sections can now be considered in Foucauldian terms. They can be considered, that is, as produced by individuals and groups embedded in circulating networks of power that both enable and constrain what can be said – i.e. in terms of setting out widely accepted genres of discourse and patterns of thought in which and through which representations of distant places can be produced – but which also create the conditions, through Foucault's productive concept of power, in which new and different representations can potentially be created. As discussed in a previous section, Fromentine enacted a number of discursive literary acts in his account of Algeria: essentialising, obfuscating, idealising, and generalising. These acts were made possible in part through Fromentin's privileged position as a white, middle-class Frenchman

travelling in a French colony, and were articulated in part through Western literary traditions such as the travelogue and the epistolary novel (Fromentin's travelogue is constructed through letters to a friend). Thus, Fromentin's pronouncements, and those of other powerful writers such as Buchan, are not power-neutral, 'objective' accounts of distant places, but accounts that originate from a particular power-filled perspective.

At the same time, however, Foucault reminds us that the power relations that created Fromentin's and Buchan's privileged positions were inevitably unstable, and indeed have since transformed and shifted from colonial to post-colonial (or neo-colonial) regimes in which other voices have become more prominent. The West no longer has exclusive authority over Western artistic forms such as the novel and the travelogue, as demonstrated by the emergence of a vibrant body of post-colonialist literature (such as Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* [1961]) and fiction (such as the work of Nigerian novelist Chimananda Ngoza Adichie, discussed in Chapter Two). This allows for a reversal of the near/distant opposition, with Western countries considered now 'distant' from African countries within Western literary and other artistic media (as in Adichie's 2013 novel *Americanah*). Thus, material geographies need not feature as *determining* elements (though they may well be important influences) in representations of distant places; instead, they may serve as springboards from which to imagine new representations and new accounts of distant places. From this perspective, while the long geographical distances between countries such as Britain and southern Africa have led, in the colonial period and subsequently in touristic and cultural forms, to exoticised accounts of African places, this need not necessarily continue to be the case.

In other words, cultural dynamics have been at least partially transformed through entanglement across and through geographical distance and the complex social, economic, political and environmental processes taking place through geographical space. Whereas Western authors once dominated literary spaces as completely as Western powers dominated the world, the very processes of mutual entanglement brought about by colonialism prompted non-Western individuals and groups to co-opt Western artistic media for their own, often anti- or post-colonial, purposes. As Said (1978) notes, all cultures are involved in each other. On this basis, indeed, one can argue that the higher the degree of inter-cultural involvement, the higher the degree of contestation and transformation one might expect in terms of previously dominant representations (including representations of distant places). The following section considers this notion from the perspective of globalisation, which is interpreted as both potentially contributing to the overcoming of geographical distance, on the one hand, and as potentially introducing new hierarchies and inequalities, on the other. Throughout this

discussion, the value of recent geographical scholarship on space, development and inequality is emphasised.

1.5 Globalisation and Geography

Globalisation has been interpreted by neoliberal commentators in terms of new and productive connections between geographically remote places, with such connections interpreted in terms of economic benefits or, as Amin (1997: 123) puts it, 'the triumph of capitalism on a world scale over national and local autonomy.' Less dramatically, globalisation can be understood as a complex set of interlinked processes as outlined by Held et al (1999), including the emergence and intensification of interregional networks between communities, states, international institutions, NGOs and multinational corporations, whose cultural, political, economic, legal and environmental effects are felt across the globe. As Butt (2011: 425) notes, these processes have been seen as leading to a 'de-territorialisation …of socio-economic and political space… cutting across political frontiers (and 'stretching' across the globe), economic, social and political activities are no longer primarily organised by a territorial principle.' In due course, this can result in '*re*-territorialisation of socio-economic activity into new economic zones… mechanisms of governance… and cultural complexes' (ibid: 425). For proponents of globalisation, these new networks and reterritorialized arrangements serve to bring 'nations together through trade and greater efficiency in the provision of better public services' (Kelly, 2009; cited in Butt, 2011: 427). From an explicitly geographical point of view, Marshall (2015) notes how contemporary dynamics that contribute to globalisation, particularly new technologies such as digital technologies and modern transportation, have helped to overcome some of the physical geographical factors that have contributed to particular geopolitical dynamics and constructions of distant places. In this way, the complex but powerful dynamics of globalisation can be thought of as combining with the new representations produced by African fiction in order to destabilise and potentially replace older representations of distant places, partly by transforming the meanings of such places (where counts as 'distant' or 'near') and partly by effectively reducing the extent to which they can be considered as far apart from each other (in terms of 'time-space compression'; Harvey, 1989).

However, while globalisation has been interpreted in positive terms by many commentators such as Jeffrey Sachs, who emphasise the mutual benefits arising for people in both 'developing' and 'developed' countries, others have expressed caution regarding the highly uneven and potentially negative effects of globalisation (see Sachs, 2005). Work carried out by geographers draws attention to the simultaneously discursive and material nature of

global socio-economic change, helping to substantiate claims of attentiveness to specificity by elaborating the ways in which totalising discourses of globalisation and economic development themselves help to construct and perpetuate uneven and inequitable political economies (Rahnema and Bawtree, 1997; Power, 2003). Power (2003: 174) cites Grinspun (2001), who suggests that we need to 'look more closely at the social and political milieu that engender poverty'. On Power's account, this requires us to consider 'the specific local, national and global processes at work in the places and spaces of development' (ibid: 174). Geography attempts to give us a grounded, everyday sense of how varied globalisation processes impact upon and are acted out in specific locales by specific agents, leading to variable socio-economic outcomes (Radcliffe, 2005). In the context of distant places, this emphasis on specificity could be used to explore, for instance, the way in which the new opportunities to overcome space offered by new digital and transportation technologies are available to certain groups and not others.

Geography's emphasis on local specificity and difference complements, and is complemented by, a scepticism towards grand narratives (such as modernity, neo-liberalism, globalisation, and democracy), replacing totalising world views with an attention to specificity and difference (Radcliffe, 2004). Geography as a discipline is well placed to support such scepticism since it tends to emphasise differences over space, whereas grand narratives tend to conceive of difference temporally rather than spatially, viewing 'other' parts of the world (i.e. non-Western parts of the world) as 'backward' or 'underdeveloped' rather than as the sites of simultaneously co-extant and different worldviews (Massey, 1999). Thus, the limited geographical imaginations embodied in grand narratives limit the 'potential openness of the future…in a tale of inevitability' (ibid: 284). In this way, powerful actors and discourses utilise their privileged positions to distort the nature of difference by translating it from spatial to temporal terms – i.e. from complex spatial differences between distinctive places, cultures and worldviews, on the one hand, to a limited number of places on an evolutionary societal ladder with the West at the top, on the other (Flint and Taylor, 2011). This limits the potential for alternative visions and helps to ensure the continuation of the status quo. From this perspective, globalisation might be seen not as an enabling dynamic that strengthens the capacity to contest and replace powerful representations, but, rather, as an oppressive dynamic that further strengthens already powerful representations.

Geography as a discipline explicitly sets itself against totalising world views, both *ethically* (in terms of a commitment to celebrating diversity rather than erasing it; Power, 2003) and *analytically* (in terms of paying attention to the 'uneven geographies of development's

interventions' (Radcliffe, 2005: 291)). Geographers suggest that powerful agendas are never wholly dominant. Places and identities are 'never completely reshaped by capitalism and development: there are numerous points of resistance and contestation which lead to their remaking' (Power, 2003: 150). The 'places and spaces' of globalisation are not homogeneous or monolithic; they are, rather, heterogeneous and fractured by 'a range of important identities and through resistances of various kinds' (Ibid: 194). Thus, although power always operates through globalisation, it does not operate in a geographically uniform way (Radcliffe, 1999a; Massey et al, 1999), leading to an uneven geography of power in globalisation and an uneven geography of globalisation more widely. Geographers set out to map the 'changing spatiality of power', highlighting the ways in which multiple factors conjoin to produce uneven globalisation outcomes (Power, 2003: 196), and thus helping marginal actors to resist the dominating effects of hegemonic discourses. Geography, on this account, can 'seek to contest singular blueprints and orthodoxies and carve […] out a space for representation of other worlds' (Power, 2003: 208) – 'other worlds' in which distant places are seen in ways other than through exoticising lenses, or in which the distant/near opposition is reversed.

This account of geography as mapping the changing spatiality of power is linked to recent developments in the conceptualisation of space. The concept of space is in many ways fundamental to the entire discipline of human geography. However, geographers have used different concepts of space at different times. Much of the discipline's history has been dominated by an ostensibly 'objectivist' concept of space, in which space was conceived of as a 'neutral' container of objects, agents, structures, processes and events. More recently, human geographers have moved away from this objectivist conception of space towards a subtler view. One aspect of these developments relates to the creation of a relational concept of space, as opposed to the absolutist notions canvassed above. Drawing on work relating to identity politics (by writers such as Mouffe, 1988). Massey (1999: 4) interprets this notion in terms of a 'multiplicity of spaces': 'Such a way of conceptualising the spatial…inherently implies the existence in the lived world of a simultaneous multiplicity of spaces: cross-cutting, intersecting, aligning with one another, or existing in relations of paradox or antagonism'.

Moreover, space is now conceived as bearing some kind of essential relationship (or relationships) to social processes, as opposed to being a mere container of those same social processes. On Massey's account, the spatial organisation of society 'is integral to the production of the social, and not merely its result. It is fully implicated in both history and politics' (1999: 4). This human geographical insight concerning the intimate involvement of space with society (and vice versa), allied to the Foucauldian notion that society is suffused

with complex 'entanglements of power' (Sharp et al, 1999), leads to the idea that space and the spatial are themselves implicated in power. As Massey (1999: 4) states, since 'social relations are inevitably and everywhere imbued with power and meaning…, the spatial is an ever-shifting social geometry of power and significance'. Drawing on these insights, scholarship in critical human geography has drawn attention to the ways in which this connection of space and power is linked to important axes of discrimination such as gender and ethnicity.

A geographical approach to globalisation thus leads towards a nuanced understanding of uneven processes of global change and caution towards claims that globalisation can overcome the varied 'prisons' of geography (e.g. distance, physical barriers, and social inequalities). It is arguably the case, as Foucault claims, that even powerful representations (such as long-standing exoticist representations of distant places in the West) are fundamentally unstable and can thus be replaced or at least overlain by different representations, such as those expressed in African fiction. But just as the earlier exoticist interpretations of place could not guarantee their pre-eminence, so there is no inevitability that more nuanced or countervailing interpretations will necessarily replace or overlay them just because certain aspects of contemporary societies have become more interconnected. Globalisation, that is, can both enable and constrain growing awareness of geographical diversity and similarity across contexts. The Foucauldian emphasis on the instability of representations cuts both ways.

1.6 Distant Places and Geography Education

As a consequence of the considerations discussed in preceding sections of this chapter, it is by no means clear that children in the contemporary UK context can be expected to enter geography classrooms with post-exoticist understandings of distant places. While processes of globalisation have undoubtedly led to cross-cultural exchanges that have helped to challenge and in some cases transform representations of distant places through post-colonial literature, geographers have sought to emphasise the partial, incomplete, and unequal benefits of globalisation and the ways in which the power-filled entanglement of society and space has led in many cases to retrenchment of existing power structures alongside the creation of new hierarchies. While new technologies annihilate distance through reduced transportation costs and times and by connecting people digitally through email, smartphones and social media, it does not necessarily follow that these technologies are equally accessible by all, or that their benefits are equally distributed across and between contexts. The UK is no longer a superpower, but still occupies a powerful international position in terms of culture, economics, and 'soft' power, such that ordinary citizens in the UK occupy extremely privileged positions

in international terms. It would not be surprising if this translated into the perpetuation of older representations of distant places on the part of Britons, especially since many of these older representations principally derive from British colonial literature in the first place, in addition to colonial-era cultural products in other artistic spheres (such as music-hall ballads and early films) and cultural products in more recent times (for instance, the 1970s TV series *It ain't half hot mum*). Consequently, despite the undoubted transformations arising from post-colonial dynamics and non-Western cultural engagements, it is still an open question as to what kinds of perceptions children have about distant places, and how these might emerge and potentially be transformed in the classroom (and the geography classroom in particular).

This thesis takes these issues as its starting point, seeking to investigate in detail how a class of Year 8 students related to Ghana, and Africa more generally, as an example of a particular distant place (and set of distant places). The research agenda presented in the remainder of this thesis sought to first understand how pupils thought about this particular distant place at the start of the unit of work (their 'initial' impressions) before investigating how their representations of Ghana change over the course of the unit of work (their 'changing' and 'final' impressions). This research thus offers not only a case-study of how pupils in a powerful Western country conceive of a distant place that was once a British colony and is now a growing economy in a globalising world, but also a case-study of how exoticist representations – and to be more regionally precise, 'Africanist' representations (see Chapter Two) - were contested and in some cases replaced by more nuanced and critically aware representations of distant places. Consequently, this research agenda contributes not only to pedagogical considerations in contemporary geographical education, but also to debates surrounding the place of geography education more widely in the context of rapid global transformations taking place alongside widening inequality and the persistence of power hierarchies. The following chapter considers literature on Africanism and educational literature on teaching about distant places in order to illustrate the resonance of each literature for the other, and to suggest how a focus on Africanism in the classroom can help to address the current lack of research on how children learning about African distant places.

Chapter Two

Literature Review: 'Africanism' and Distant Place Teaching

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I introduce, critically examine, and bring together two distinct bodies of literature, relating to 'Africanism' and educational understandings of distant place respectively, in order to establish a theoretical context and rationale for my planned programme of classroom-based research. Africanism can be defined as a specifically African strand of the discourses and processes described collectively as 'Orientalism' by Edward Said (1978; 1985; 1993); as such, Africanist discourse is typically seen as embodying a view of Africa as chaotic, culturally 'backward', politically unstable, and impoverished, among other 'negative' characteristics (Andreasson, 2005; Mazrui, 2004), or in terms of more 'positive' characteristics such as fecundity and simplicity. As such, Africanism can be understood as a specific kind of exoticism, as discussed in the preceding chapter. The second body of literature I will examine relates to understandings of distant places as developed by educational scholars, with distant place defined as '[a place] which a group judges to be distant in that it is outside their 'normal' experience and to visit it would involve a degree of travel which might be considered exceptional' (Taylor, 2009: 179). Through an examination of educational research on geography teaching about distant place and a consideration of gaps in existing research, I consider the intersections between these two bodies of literature and the ways in which geography teaching might seek to counter any features of Africanist discourse which become evident in the classroom. My examination of these two literatures and their intersections in distant place teaching lays the groundwork for the following chapter's consideration of my research agenda and the research questions and overarching concerns that guided this research.

2.2 Africanism

Said's seminal writings on 'Orientalism' highlight the strong links that existed between academic, artistic, and literary representations of 'Eastern' cultures, on the one hand, and European imperialism and colonialism, on the other (Said, 1978; 1985; 1993). Orientalist representations downplayed diversity and complexity, refusing to acknowledge the geographical, social, cultural and historical nuances of 'Oriental' cultures and emphasizing

instead the homogeneity and inferiority of non-Western cultures (Andreasson, 2005). As such, Orientalist representations can be interpreted as highly significant examples of 'Othering', or the process by which one's own identity is confirmed and solidified through the denigration and objectification of 'degraded', 'mystified', 'romanticized', and 'exoticized' others (Inokuchi and Nozaki, 2005).

While the application of Orientalist lenses to African issues remains relatively marginal within academia, a growing number of writers draw on Said's work on Orientalism in order to highlight discourses, ideologies and material processes relating to the continent of Africa and its constituent nations, cultures, and peoples (Andreasson, 2005; Mohan & Power, 2009; Mazrui, 2005; Murungi, 2004; Ferguson & Lohmann, 1994; Watts, 2003). These and other scholars build on Said's work in order to highlight the analogous existence of 'Africanism' and associated Africanist discourses. In common with Orientalism, Africanism is seen not just as encompassing the history of African-European relationships but also encompassing as a long-standing and enduring set of representations that simultaneously portray Africa in a certain way and serve to legitimate Western intervention, both in the colonial era and more recently with regard to international development efforts (Mazrui, 2005).

For Andreasson, Africanist discourses are characterized by the motif of 'reductive repetition', which 'reduces the diversity of African historical experiences and trajectories, socio-cultural contexts and political situations into a set of core deficiencies for which externally generated 'solutions' must be devised' (2005: 971). (By contrast, geography education and scholarship embodies a commitment to exploring and communicating diversity across and within contexts; Binns, 1999.) Whereas in the colonial era these 'deficiencies' were often seen as racial and cultural in nature, emphasizing the 'tropes of sloth, fecundity, racial inferiority and an irredentist anti-market mentality' (Watts, 2003: 7), some contemporary scholarly versions of Africanism focus more on the deterministic limitations of Africa's physical and human geography, with geography seen as 'a vast wrecking ball, its biophysical powers capable of social havoc' (Watts, 2003: 7). Thus, for instance, Sachs states 'It is no accident… that genocide took place in Rwanda' (2000; cited in Watts, 2003: 6), while writers such as Haussman (2001) and Herbst (2000) see African problems as attributable in large part to 'the tyranny of geography', with 'isolation, poor soil, erratic climate, inaccessibility, low agricultural productivity and infectious disease mutually reinforc[ing] each other in a vicious cycle of destitution and backwardness' (Watts, 2003: 6).

More broadly, Africanist scholarly discourses are seen as emphasizing the natural deficiencies of Africans and African societies, and the inevitability of political descent into

unstable, criminalised and collapsed states: 'The overwhelming impression is that of a quagmire, of failure… It is difficult to read extensively on Africa without [finding]… allusions to… 'natural weakness and incapacity'' (Andreasson, 2005: 972). Andreasson singles out the field of African development studies for particular criticism, highlighting 'processes of oversimplifying and distorting the origins and perpetuation of impoverishment of African peoples' (2005: 972). Literary figures such as the Nigerian novelist Chimamande Ngozi Adichie have also drawn attention to similar processes occurring in wider cultural and literary spheres. Discussing cultural stereotyping, Adichie (2009) noted that literature, and art more widely, can mislead through partiality: 'The single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story.' This notion, and its elaboration by a literary figure, also highlights a possible critique of Africanism, namely the possibility that stereotypes, or 'single stories', may be utilised by writers, scholars, artists, and others for aesthetic and literary reasons, rather than from a desire to portray Africa in a pejorative light. From this point of view, it is important to investigate the character and content of particular texts before imputing Africanist motives with critical intent.

A less commonly-emphasised aspect of Africanism, but one which nevertheless characterises important dynamics that have emerged in cultural, academic, and historical contexts, is the tendency to portray Africa in an unduly positive light. Influenced by an older, Enlightenment tradition of literature surrounding the idea of the 'noble savage' (Rowland, 2004), and mirroring critiques of twentieth-century Hollywood portrayals of African-Americans (Denzin, 2002), Africanist tropes in this context emphasise the simplicity, fecundity, and benevolent, happy-go-lucky nature of African societies and individuals. The Oscar-winning film *Out of Africa*, for instance, portrays Kenyans largely as willing servants and simple-minded 'natives'. The preceding chapter discussed ways in which authors such as Fromentin and John Buchan tended to idealise some aspects of Africa, including the personal characteristics of Algerians and the vanishing nobility of indigenous African civilisations. Rather more recently, Comic Relief campaigns to raise money for charity, and videos showing the positive effects of development projects more widely, risk implying that Africa's problems are transient, and that the injection of some development funding will lead to a resumption of business as usual, with smiling faces and happy people. From this perspective, it is clear that misleading representations of Africa and Africans can be unrealistically positive as well as unrealistically negative.

In common with Said's view of the continuing salience of Orientalism, scholars of Africanism emphasize the multiple ways in which Africanist representations of Africa, both positive and (more commonly) negative, impact upon contemporary cultural dynamics. Whether highlighting the stereotypes and misunderstandings perpetuated by the mass media (Mawdsley, 2008) or tracing the evolution of African identity (Mazrui, 2005), researchers increasingly recognize the enduring significance of Africanist assumptions in Western cultural representations of Africa. Mawdsley notes that the Western mass media 'is often rather poorly informed, with a tendency to generalize across the African continent; and to rely on tropes of timelessness, savagery, sexuality, tribal identity, conflict, and environmental disasters' (2008: 512).

Scholars of Africanism are also attentive to the material and political impacts of misunderstandings and misrepresentations of African peoples, cultures and societies. As with Said's understanding of Orientalism facilitating imperial interventions in the Orient, scholars increasingly view Africanist discourses as linked to imperial adventuring in the past and neo-imperial (capitalist and developmental) interventions in the present. The many supposed deficiencies in Africa points to the need for external intervention (Andreasson, 2005; Mohan & Power, 2009). Following the formal end of the imperial era, these 'solutions' are typically seen as taking one of two (related) forms: capitalist economic development (Haussman, 2001), or 'one-size-fits-all' development projects overseen by international development institutions (Ferguson & Lohmann, 1994), both of which serve to incorporate Africa into broader processes and dynamics in ways that prioritise and favour Western interests and agendas. In line with Said's account of Orientalism, then, it is clear that Africanist discourses continue to exert significant – and significantly negative – impacts on material and political processes in addition to influencing both scholarly and popular perceptions of Africa.

As yet, however, relatively few scholars of Africanism have focused directly on the implications of their research for contemporary primary and secondary educational practice in Western contexts, despite the significance of educational institutions such as schools as lenses 'through which students learn to see themselves and the world' (Schmidt, 2010: 29). Murungi (2004) examines issues surrounding education, but focuses on education in Africa during the colonial era and African Studies curricula in contemporary Western universities. His research is valuable in highlighting the ways in which colonial education supported projects of imperial domination by 'socialis[ing] Africans into a psychology of being governed' (2004: 5), and the ways in which contemporary African Studies university courses can replicate colonial education through paternalistic and 'evangelical' promotion of notions such as good

governance, with Africans seen as needing 'to be saved from themselves' (2004:4). However, neither Murungi nor other scholars of Africanism (Andreasson, 2005, Mazrui, 2005 and Mawdsley, 2008) consider the impacts of Africanism on Western children's perceptions of distant places at primary or secondary levels. While most children are unlikely to be unaware of scholarly and policy discourses surrounding Africa, they are by contrast more likely to encounter Africanist representations in mass media, interpersonal communications, and educational materials (curricula, lessons, and textbooks), with potential impacts upon their understandings and perceptions of Africa and, by extension, individual African countries. Of course, educational materials no longer embrace the racist stereotypes common in Victorian-era textbooks (Marsden, 1976; Wright, 1996) – but they may still unknowingly perpetuate Africanist tropes such as Africa's 'war-torn' or 'conflict-ridden' character (Zagumny and Richard, 2012; see discussion below), with the consequence that students may be influenced by Africanist ideas even in the context of contemporary educational materials. Furthermore, educational materials could promote Africanist worldviews by omission – i.e. by focusing on certain (potentially more 'negative') aspects of Africa and omitting to foreground other (potentially more 'positive') aspects. Similar statements could be made by extension with regard to classroom lessons and curricula more generally.

To date, relatively few researchers working in disciplines such as development studies in the Africanist arena (as opposed to educational researchers; see below) have explored children's understandings of Africa in depth. Neither do scholars of Africanism consider the extent to which teachers are active (and/or successful) in attempting to counter 'Othering' discourses such as Africanism in the classroom and beyond. As such, there are significant gaps in our understandings of Africanism, its influence on children's perceptions of distant places, and the potential contribution of distant place teaching in terms of overcoming misleading but widely-shared perceptions of Africa and African countries.

2.3 Understandings of Distant Place

I will now consider a second body of literature, relating to educational research on children's understanding of distant places (and African distant places in particular). After introducing and defining the notions of distant place and distant place teaching, building on the broader initial discussions in the preceding chapter, I go on to consider geography education research. This latter body of work is highly relevant to my research owing to geography educationalists' emphasis on themes such as diversity and change in distant places and relationships between

and within places, and advocacy of critical awareness coupled with an awareness of multiple 'scales' – i.e. different layers or levels of social, political, and economic dynamics and processes. Focusing in particular upon research concerning geographical education about Africa and African countries, and referring back to the preceding section, I argue that these features of geography education appear to offer significant potential in terms of overcoming Africanist discourses, as perceived, experienced and (often unconsciously) reproduced by children. Following discussion of these features of geography education, I consider different methodological approaches adopted in previous studies in order to highlight strengths and weaknesses of the existing literature on geographical education. In particular, I highlight three gaps in current research: the general neglect of distant place teaching focused specifically on Africa; a failure to reflect in depth on the importance of scales in distant place teaching; and a focus in the English geographical curricula on certain African countries (particularly Kenya) leading to the neglect of other countries and experiences. My consideration of these gaps lays the groundwork for a concluding section which highlights the potential contribution of distant place teaching in terms of constructing learning experiences which have the potential to counter (or provide alternatives to) Africanist discourse.

2.3.1 Distant Place Teaching

Place can be defined as a particular portion of space in which social relations occur: 'Space is organized into places [which are] often thought of as bounded settings in which social relations and identity are constituted' (Gregory *et al*, 2009). A key question in distant place teaching concerns whether it is theoretically coherent or valid to distinguish between 'local' and 'distant' places. Taylor notes the difficulty of defining distant places given that the notion of distance is a relative term, but utilizes the working definition of a distance place as 'one which a group judges to be distant in that it is outside their 'normal' experience and to visit it would involve a degree of travel which might be considered exceptional' (2009: 179). For Taylor, this distinction between local and distant places, which as she points out is a common one within the literature on geography education, is pragmatically useful in the context of children's learning about distant places: 'whilst there may not be a distinction between the theoretical form of local and distant place, there is likely to be a difference for *most* children regarding their direct experiences and level of familiarity between local and *most* distant places' (2009: 178). In the context of my project, for instance, while Ghana is closer to Britain in terms of physical space than the United States, I would still include it in the distant place category owing to the unfamiliarity that most children are likely to feel with regard to Ghana (as opposed to,

for instance, the USA). Taylor suggests that while most children are likely to have a detailed knowledge of their local area, most children are likely to rely on indirect experience, through channels such as mass media, schools, and social interactions, for their knowledge of distant places; as such, she concludes that local and distant places present distinctive challenges to teachers.

Scholars from numerous disciplines have attempted to develop precise and detailed accounts of the ways in which children conceptualise and experience distant places (Taylor, 2009, 2011a, b; McKendrick, 2000; Disney, 2004; Holloway & Valentine, 2000). Matthews (1992) notes how cognitive, developmental, ecological, environmental and social psychologists, geographers, planners and anthropologists have all contributed to the debate on how children make sense of place. Taylor (2011a) divides this wide and varied literature on learning about distant place into three distinct (yet to some extent overlapping) strands, the first two of less relevance to my research than the third: (a) research focused on perception and cognition, with an emphasis on the large-scale study of children's factual knowledge and dispositions towards distant places; (b) new social studies of childhood, focusing on the meaning of children's experiences; and (c) geography education, focusing on children's learning about distant places in the context of geography teaching in schools. I will now focus more explicitly on this third branch of distant place teaching.

2.3.2 Geography Education

As the subject most directly concerned with place and space, it is inevitable that geography assumes particular importance within the general context of learning about distant place; thus Roberts (2006) notes that geography teachers' choices while representing distant places in the classroom influence students' mental shaping of the world in the same way that map projections may influence an observer's view of the world. Taylor identifies this stream of research as 'conducted primarily by geography teachers or teacher educators, with a focus on children's learning, and with a primary audience of other geography teachers or teacher educators', with the topic of distant place research featuring as a 'minor but constant theme' within the broader geography education literature (Taylor, 2009: 177). Researchers have examined various aspects of distant place learning, including textbooks and curricula (Winter, 1997; Smith, 1999; Roberts, 2006; Myers, 2001) and the nature of children's understandings and representations of distant place (with a particular focus on misunderstandings and stereotypes; Hibberd, 1983; Graham & Lynn, 1989).

Educational researchers highlight a number of key characteristics of geography education, foremost of which is an emphasis on conveying understandings of diversity, defined in terms of 'geographers' focus on a complex and varied world' (Taylor, 2008: 51). Thus Binns (1996:177) states that '[g]eography has traditionally been responsible for promoting awareness, interest and understanding of the diversity of the world's people and places' (also Taylor, 2011b; Picton, 2008). By balancing understandings of diversity *within* places with diversity *between* places, Taylor suggests that geography teachers can help children to develop 'more complex and nuanced representations of diversity' (2011b: 50). Closely related to the notion of diversity is that of change: while Massey (2005) suggests that misrepresentations frequently embody static and unchanging views of distant places, research on geography education emphasises its ability to engage with change over time and space (Picton, 2008; Taylor, 2008, 2011b). Thirdly, geography education embodies a focus on relationships within and between places: 'geographers want to find out how things are linked together and how one aspect affects another' (Taylor, 2008: 51). Geographers are also concerned with the power relations and inequalities between different places – in Massey's term, the 'power geometries' that characterize the complex and power-filed relationships between different places (Massey, 2005). Linked to this concern is a fourth, relating to the ways in which geography education fosters a critically aware understanding of the world. Thus Winter (1997: 181) describes the attainment of geographical knowledge as an intrinsic part of a wider attempt to develop pupils as 'autonomous, morally informed, critical agents who think for themselves, who ask questions, and who are aware of and able to argue against inequalities.' Taken together, these characteristics of geography teaching seem to offer considerable potential for challenging and potentially countering Othering discourses such as Africanism. By emphasising diversity within Africa and between Africa and other parts of the world, change across time and space, power-filled relationships between African countries and Africa and elsewhere, and by encouraging critical reflection on these issues, it seems likely that geography education could foster more nuanced, subtle and wide-ranging understandings of African contexts.

Yet educational scholars also recognise that geography teachers' influence on children's learning about distant place also brings significant challenges; thus Marsden highlights some of the dangers facing such teachers, who, when seeking to give useful generalisations about distant places, may unconsciously convey stereotypes and misrepresentations instead: 'in every generalisation there lurks a stereotype' (1995: 119). In an earlier article, he argues that while the age of 'imperial geography is gone' (Marsden, 1976: 228) together with its 'laughable' stereotypes (e.g. regarding the 'superior character' of

Englishmen and women), such ideas may still be found in textbooks: 'it would be unwise to assume that the stereotyping which riddled Victorian textbooks is a thing of the past' (1976: 228; see Wright [1996] for a survey of Victorian geography textbooks). In this context, scholars focusing on classroom research rather than cultural discourses, such as Myers (2001), Zagumny & Richey (2012), and Winter (1997) highlight issues such as oversimplified, misleading, and distorting representations of Africa and African countries in geography textbooks, which, as mentioned above, frequently present accounts of 'the on-going horrors of the conflicts in Liberia, Sierra Leone or Sudan' without framing such accounts with an awareness of 'the socially constructed character of [those] conflicts' (Johnston-Anumonwo, 2006: 230). Disney (2004: 3) argues that 'the messages which children absorb through the images and materials they are exposed to will have a major impact on their attitudes and perceptions'; as such, textbooks of this kind risk the perpetuation of simplistic and/or derogatory understandings of African contexts.

Similar concerns apply to teaching practice itself and to the wider cultural influences – including 'Africanist' influences - upon Western children. Johnston-Anumonwo argues that much geographical teaching about Africa continues to embody both a wide-ranging 'pessimism about the continent' and a number of misleading assumptions about African cultural diversity, change and continuity, politics and democracy, and gender issues (2006: 228), while Binns notes that 'overcoming such myths and stereotypes is a major problem in teaching about distant places' (1996: 178). Ansell (2002) also criticizes dominant approaches for failing to benefit students pedagogically and casting the Western academy as the guardian of truth about Africa. More broadly, many scholars recognise the ways in which wider cultural influences impact upon children's perceptions of distant places. Harrington (1998: 46) suggests that children develop simplistic views of the world in order to categorise the masses of information to which they are subjected by modern mass media: 'We receive so much information that we try to process it in a simple way by putting it into categories'. In this context, Graham and Lynn (1989) highlight the impact of packs about 'Third World Countries' produced by charities and distributed in schools in order to 'educate children and make them aware of the difficulties facing Third World countries.' Alongside school lessons, other influences include images in television and film, local and national charitable appeals, and news coverage in various media – all of which can convey 'Africanist' images and discourses to children., including the impression that all African countries are the same. As a result both of these broad cultural influences and potentially inadequate teaching about distant places (i.e. teaching about distant place that fails to uncover and challenge simplistic worldviews), there is a risk of children

developing simplistic and misleading perceptions of distant places, often with a strong focus on 'Africanist' themes such as poverty, hunger, and 'underdevelopment'.

Conceptually speaking, an analogy exists between the limitations of distant place teaching and participatory development, as discussed in Chapter One. While geography education might promise to accomplish transformations in children's representations of distant place, it cannot guarantee such transformations, any more than participatory processes can guarantee the fair inclusion of local people in transformative processes of socio-economic development. Yet to dismiss distant place teaching altogether on this basis would be as misguided a response to the limitations of such teaching as it is to reject engagement with ideas of development altogether, as urged by 'post-development' scholars (see Kiely, 1999). The common factor between such approaches is what Kiely calls an 'uncritical celebration of resistance' (1999: 30) Approaches like this emphasise ethical values such as individual autonomy, cultural authenticity, and organic societies, so that it appears principled to reject notions such as participation and development – and in this case, distant place teaching – on the basis of their apparent involvement with wider and oppressive discourses and power structures.

However, critical approaches of this kind are often more notable for their subtle and in some ways well-judged critiques of existing practices and discourses than they are for the concrete alternatives that they suggest. Where such alternatives are suggested - the example Kiely uses is ecofeminism – the result can often be 'an uncritical, romantic exploration of the local which can have reactionary political implications' (1999: 30). But failing to provide alternatives to the status quo is also a conservative move, since this encourages blanket disengagement rather than the (arguably more challenging) processes of engagement and transformation as charted by development geographers such as Power (2003). The fundamental basis of such disengagement is not a positive vision of poorer countries and communities as presenting new alternatives from within organic processes of local development, but rather 'a passive Third World, simply having its strings pulled by the all-powerful West' (Kiely, 1999: 48).

In the case of distant place teaching, alternatives are in any case difficult to imagine. Syllabuses and examinations are subject to requirements placed upon these by the interests of multiple stakeholders including the government, teachers, future employers and further education organisations, among other groups, and typically must provide a certain level of instruction on particular topics. In this light, it is hard to imagine distant place teaching being either dropped altogether or, alternatively, replaced by a somehow less directed form of

geographical education regarding other parts of the world. Alternatives that could be imagined in this regard could include options such as student-curated programmes of audio-visual content such as films and music, literary works, and/or social media engagement. Such alternatives would be subject to many of the same challenges that teachers themselves face (such as wider discriminatory discourses and mass media coverage), while also possibly falling into the trap of uncritically romanticising student preference over teacher preference (and thus forming an analogy with Kiely's critique of ecofeminism). Yet an omission of distant place teaching in the classroom would merely shift such romanticisation outside the classroom, leaving students entirely to their own devices – or, to put it another way, entirely open to whichever discourses and emphases they might encounter outside the classroom, without the restraining influence of teachers' guidance.

It seems, therefore, that the challenges experienced by teachers in terms of the limits of distant place teaching should not lead us to conclude that the best option is to cease engagement with geographical education of this kind. Rather, constructive engagement with distant place teaching should be undertaken, recognising the potential contributions of distant place teaching in terms of challenging discriminatory discourses, but also acknowledging the limits of such approaches and the need to be cautious towards claims of effective and/or sustainable transformations in children's attitudes and representations. As discussed above, the need for such caution has emerged in empirical research by scholars such as Harrington (1998), Johnston-Anumonwo (2006), and Binns (1996), among others. As such, concerns about distant place teaching are an integral part of the stream of geography education more widely, in the same way that 'post-development' concerns regarding development can be seen as a vital part of development thinking in geographical literature. Writing in the development context, Crush (1995; cited in Kiely, 1999: 48) argues that '[d]evelopment, for all its power to speak and to control the terms of speaking, has never been impervious to challenge and resistance, nor, in response, to reformulation and change.' Commenting, Kiely writes: 'The post-development idea [of disengagement from development] is thus part of a long history *within* the development discourse. Ideas about development therefore need to be assessed not in terms of their alleged autonomy from this discourse, but in terms of improvements in both the quantity and quality of life' (1999: 48). Similarly, ideas about distant place teaching need to be assessed not in terms of their autonomy from the limits of such teaching per se (as discussed in Chapter Seven), but with regard to how they might enhance the capacity of teachers to challenge and diversify children's representations in a constructive and sustainable manner.

2.3.3 Previous Distance Place Research in Geography Education

Scholars working in the field of geography education have employed a range of methodologies and approaches, each with advantages and disadvantages in terms of uncovering dynamics surrounding children's learning about distant places. For example, Harrington (1998) studied 28 primary (8-10 year old) children's perceptions of Africa before and after a nine-week course about Kenya. Harrington collected a range of data including results from card sorting and word pairing, drawings, and word associations in order to track changes in children's understandings of Africa. She found that children's perceptions increased in diversity and nuance after the scheme of work focused on Kenya, with increased awareness of inequality (i.e. wealth as well as poverty) and differences between groups of people. While her findings point towards the impact of geography education in terms of fostering appreciations of diversity, the small-scale nature of Harrington's study inevitably limits the generalisability of her findings, making it problematic to extend her insights to other contexts. Furthermore, she omitted to reflect on the important relationship between Kenya and Africa more generally, thus neglecting an important aspect of children's understandings of diversity (see below).

By contrast with the qualitative methodology used by Harrington, Hibberd (1983) carried out a survey of almost 3,000 children in a single school to establish whether their images of less developed countries matched prevailing views of 'the Third World' (i.e. including but not limited to Africa) at the time (i.e. the early 1980s), including 'wild animals,' 'witch doctors,' 'drums', and 'jungle'. The survey was conducted with a sample of children from second, third and fourth years (12-15 year olds), and involved children carrying out two tasks: (a) choosing ten words or expressions (from a list generated from textbooks) that best described a developing country; and (b) choosing three ways in which they felt the standard of living in developing countries could best be improved. The most popular expressions chosen related to starvation, poverty and inequality, while the most popular way of improving the standard of living was felt to be food aid from rich countries (1983: 70-1). Some differences emerged between year groups, with only 62.9% of 14-15 year olds agreeing that food aid was the best means of improvement as opposed to 73.3% of 12-13 year olds. This finding, and other findings that varied by year-group, highlights the value of surveys in terms of establishing precise, quantifiable findings regarding children's perceptions. However, the survey approach arguably suffers from a lack of interpretative flexibility, with children guided towards choosing from a pre-set list of options rather than expressing their own perceptions of distant places, with a consequent loss of nuance and detail.

Studies such as Graham and Lynn (1989) and Inokuchi and Nozaki (2005) combine some of the virtues of both approaches while avoiding some of their weaknesses. They used qualitative approaches to gather written and oral material generated with relatively large sample sizes – 320 and 372 children, respectively – subsequently analysing this material using methods such as critical discourse analysis. In common with Hibberd (1983) and Roberts (2006), Graham and Lynn focused on British children's perceptions of an undefined 'Third World', while Inokuchi and Nozaki investigated US children's perceptions of Japan. While these studies have not generated quantifiable results, they have generated nuanced accounts of distant place learning and insights regarding the strength of misrepresentations about 'Third World' distant places (Graham and Lynn), often influenced by 'Othering' discourses such as Orientalism (Inokuchi and Nozaki, 2005).

2.3.4 Research Gaps

Studies such as those cited above represent significant contributions to research on geography education about distant places, as do Taylor's qualitative studies of British children's perceptions of Japan (2009; 2011a) and Disney's study of a school exchange programme between the UK and India (2004). From the standpoint of distant place teaching on Africa, however, it can be observed that these studies have not addressed important issues for my research topic, such as: (a) children's perceptions of Africa, (b) the impact of Africanism and issues of power, knowledge and discourse on these perceptions, and (c) the ways in which distant place geography teaching may counter these perceptions. I will now consider each of these gaps in turn.

The first of these disadvantages or research gaps relate to the fact that relatively few distant place studies focus specifically on Africa and/or African countries, with several studies (Hibberd, 1983; Graham and Lynn, 1989) focusing on the relatively unspecific socio-economic/geopolitical/developmental term 'the Third World' rather than any of the specific (and highly distinctive) regions in that broad category. Yet scholars such as Johnston-Anumonwo (2006) argue that much geographical teaching specifically focused on Africa and African countries continues to perpetuate simplistic and misleading representations, including perceptions of Africa as a homogeneous space, as static and unchanging, as dominated by political and ethnic conflicts arising from colonial-era geopolitical boundaries, and as characterized by the continent-wide failure of democracy. This line of thought, which resonates strongly with scholarship on Africanist discourses (see preceding section), suggests the need for more research exploring distant place teaching focused on Africa, in order to take account

of children's specific perceptions (and potential misrepresentations) of that continent and its constituent countries.

Secondly, those studies that do focus on Africa, such as Harrington (1998), often omit to consider the relationship between particular African countries (such as, in her case, Kenya) and the regional relationships between that country and other African countries and/or the wider relationship between that country and the continent as a whole. Countries do not exist in a vacuum, and should be situated in a set of 'nested' geographical contexts. Ghana, for instance, is not only a relatively poor and relatively stable country with a mid-sized population, but also a country on the West coast of Africa and, internationally, a country that would fall into the Less Economically Developed Country (LEDC) category. These complex and interacting contexts problematise any attempt to treat Ghana, or any other 'developing' or 'poorer' country, as an entity defined solely in economic terms (and moreover in terms that imply a notion of development as a kind of historical queue; Massey, 2005) and existing independently of local, national, regional and international processes and dynamics; doing so could lead to unwarranted comparisons between countries such as Ghana and countries in other less developed countries (e.g. Ecuador in South America), which are superficially similar in terms of 'development' but otherwise exhibit many significant differences. A similar caution should be exhibited regarding regional and continental similarities and differences: Ghana and the Democratic Republic of Congo are both African countries, for example, but are so distinct in terms of colonial history, geographical size, and present challenges as to render highly problematic any attempt to treat them as similar or as sharing a common 'African-ness.' Consequently, research on geographical teaching about distant places must attempt to engage with multiple levels of complexity in order to avoid assumptions which perpetuate power-filled Africanist misrepresentations (such as the notion of Africa as a homogeneous space; Johnston-Anumonwo, 2006). Likewise, caution must be exercised in terms of generalising experiences of distant place teaching from one context to another, in order to avoid the creation of essentially 'Othering' discourses regarding the (ostensible) similarity of diverse LEDCs. Doing so requires understanding the relationships between places: 'to understand the local and specific, we would need to learn about the web of relationships which connects that place with others at a range of scales' (Taylor, 2004: 100).

Thirdly, the dominance of the 'Big Four' countries in UK geography curricula - Italy, Japan, Brazil and Kenya – had by the mid-2000s generated 'peculiar curriculum worlds with strange patterns of attention and neglect' (Roberts, 2006: 376), leading to the neglect of other, equally significant locations within geography teaching and, consequently, research about

geography teaching. Within Africa, for instance, it is difficult to conceive of Kenya as somehow representative of all other African countries – countries that differ as significantly as Egypt, Ghana, South Africa, and Somalia. In the context of geography teaching itself (as opposed to research about geography teaching), Johnston-Anumonwo (2006: 229) argues that a range of case-studies can help to counter different kinds of misrepresentations, for example by studying Ethiopia, which was never colonised by Europeans yet which suffers from ongoing border conflicts, to 'offset the overemphasis on a sole cultural causation thesis of European superimposed boundaries'; and studying countries other than South Africa – such as Benin, Burkina Faso, Malawi or Botswana - in terms of democratisation processes, in order to 'expose students to more African countries and the more widespread reality' (2006: 230). In this context, Johnston-Anumonwo also suggests utilizing a wider range of teaching resources (including literary resources such as African novels) in order to convey more vividly the complexity, richness, and above all the diversity of contemporary African culture, politics and society both between and within countries: 'it is the purposeful selection, use and re-use of a wide variety of instructional materials that provide the key to worthwhile teaching and learning about Africa today' (Willmer, 1975; cited in Johnston-Anumonwo, 2006: 232). Likewise, Binns (1996: 180) states that 'there are many… ways to bring distant places into the classroom. Music, prose, poems and film all have great potential'; Ansell (2002) focuses explicitly on the educational potential of films about Africa in the context of a Level 3 Geography A-Level module. From this perspective, a wider approach to curricula and country case-studies in geography teaching allied to a more broad-minded approach to teaching resources could help to counter the dual bias towards limited and western-centric understandings of African countries (Winter, 1997; Roberts, 2006). Returning to the wider discussion of research about geography teaching, studies of distant place learning could benefit from the enlarged spectrum of physical, cultural, social, political and other issues that would arise from geography curricula incorporating material on countries other than Kenya and South Africa. New curricula featuring African countries that students have not previously encountered in the classroom would generate interesting new conjunctures between students' preconceptions, on the one hand, and the diversity within and between African countries and settings, on the other. At present, however, the relatively narrow focus of geography curricula in England may have played a part in the comparative lack of research on geography teaching that focuses on a range of African settings.

2.4 Conclusion

The preceding discussions have highlighted a number of gaps in existing research on both Africanism and distant place teaching. Scholars of Africanism have largely omitted to consider the impact of Africanist discourses on children's perceptions of Africa or the role of distant place teaching in overcoming Africanist representations in primary and secondary Western educational contexts. Research on distant place teaching, on the other hand, has yet to take full account of African specificity and diversity, the multiple and interrelated contexts in which African distant places are always situated. My research aims to fill some of the gaps in both Africanist and distant place literatures through a rigorous examination of distant place learning in the context of a unit of work focused on Ghana. The following chapter considers the guiding research questions and methodological rationale for this research programme.

Chapter Three

Methodological Rationale

3.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out the research questions and broader research agenda that guided this research programme before proceeding to consider questions of research design. I consider issues of research design by introducing and critically examining the overarching philosophical and theoretical perspectives, research methodology, individual research methods, and analytical techniques that I have utilised to gather and analyse the data needed to answer my research questions and fulfil my broader research agenda. This chapter will also consider the contexts in which the research was undertaken and the potential challenges and limitations these presented.

3.2 Research Questions and Research Agenda

My research was guided by the following research questions, which were developed in light of the preceding literature review:

1. What initial understandings do children communicate regarding Ghana and Africa at the beginning of a three-part unit of work on Ghana?

2. Were Africanist discourses manifested in children's initial understandings, and to what extent is Africanism a useful tool for interpreting these understandings?

3. Do children's understandings become less characterized by Africanist discourses over the course of the unit of work?

In order to answer these questions, I draw upon constructionist epistemology, poststructuralist theory, and a range of qualitative methods in the context of a 'theory-seeking' case study approach, defined by Bassey (1999: 62) as 'particular studies of general issues', where 'the focus is the issue rather than the case as such'.

In this chapter, initial sections address the unit of work that I designed in order to gather data through students' classwork and coursework; the study context in which the unit of work

was carried out; and the focus on Ghana which was a characteristic of this entire research agenda. Following this, I proceed to discuss key characteristics of my research agenda in detail.

3.2.1 Unit of Work

The three-part unit of work, which is presented in Appendix 1, drew on relevant secondary literature in addition to my previous experience in research-focused distant place teaching (Kennedy, 2011). I taught the unit of work over a twelve-week period in 2013 in a class of Year 8 (12- to 13-year-old) students in a secondary school for pupils aged eleven to eighteen, in a village near the border of Cambridgeshire, UK. The unit emphasised diversity and change in Ghanaian historical, cultural, social and economic geographies, and incorporated material generated through an ongoing school partnership programme that I established between this school and a partner institution in Ghana (see below for further details)

Each of the three parts of the unit was composed of an enquiry sequence, structured around a key question (see Appendix I for more details). The first enquiry sequence, covering Lessons 1-4 of the unit, was entitled *Ghana: A Different Place?* This sequence focused on introducing pupils to Ghana and exploring fundamental aspects of its physical and (especially) human geography, including Ghanaian history and socio-cultural aspects such as family life and food; the sequence also allowed pupils to consider differences and similarities between Ghana and the UK. To address any simplistic representations about poverty that emerged in this context, the second enquiry sequence focused on concepts of poverty and development. Entitled *Does Poverty Matter?* and covering Lessons 5-9, this sequence induced pupils to think about why some countries are richer than others, before proceeding to consider issues surrounding development and how it can be defined and understood (for instance using development indicators and/or personal accounts). Particular emphasis was laid upon understanding poverty in the Ghanaian context and upon grasping the diversity of poverty within and across developing countries, and in comparison with developed countries such as the UK. The third and final enquiry sequence, covering Lessons 10-14, was entitled *Has Development Worked in Ghana?* This sequence focused in more detail on development projects in Ghana, examining large- and small-scale development projects before considering the shift from aid to (fair) trade, using a case study of a Ghanaian cocoa plantation. This sequence as a whole was designed to challenge unthinking assumptions about how development can be used to address poverty, and to move away from paternalist Africanist discourses of Western aid as the key to resolving African problems. As such, each of the enquiry sequences drew on a range of material (including material generated through a school partnership; see below) to encourage pupils to

reflect on diversity, change, and cross-cultural similarities, as well as continuity and cross-cultural differences, thus helping to challenge Africanism in the classroom.

3.2.2 Study Context

I carried out my research in the school where I taught at the time, which is a medium-sized, rural, independent secondary school in Cambridgeshire with around 750 pupils, almost entirely of white British background. In terms of geography teaching, the department is made up of five teachers. I was at the school from 2007 to 2016, and I taught every year group from Year 7 to Upper Sixth. I began teaching a Year 8 unit of work Ghana when I arrived at the school, and continued to develop my scheme of work and teaching materials on Ghana until I left. As mentioned above, I also established a partnership between this school and a Ghanaian school; see below for more detail.

3.2.3 Focus on Ghana

I chose to focus my research on children's understandings of Ghana for several reasons, including Ghana's positioning within this school - i.e. within the school partnership and as an existing Year 8 unit of work. Other relevant factors, as discussed in the Preface, include my personal knowledge and experience of the country and the ways in which Ghana can be considered to be representative to a certain extent of wider African dynamics while also exhibiting highly distinctive characteristics. I discuss these various factors below before considering how children's previous knowledge of the country might impact upon my research.

3.2.4 School Partnership

The unit of work and embedded enquiry sequences took place against the backdrop of a partnership between my school and Essaman United School in Elmina, a coastal town in Ghana (Kennedy, 2013). The partnership took the form of written and face-to-face contact between selected students and teachers from both schools, with dissemination to wider school and local communities in Cambridgeshire and Elmina. Recognising the potential for partnerships to generate positive outcomes such as greater openness, awareness of diversity, and cross-cultural communication (Kennedy. 2013), I established this partnership in 2012 with the help of Partner Ghana (a non-governmental organisation, or NGO). In addition to logistical support, Partner Ghana has facilitated communication between the two schools – a critical factor in the success or otherwise of school partnerships, which can become unsustainable if they are poorly designed, inequitable, or isolated from wider communities (Burr, 2008). In April 2013, 23 Year

8 pupils and three teachers from my school arrived in Ghana for the first partnership visit to Essaman United School. In the course of the ten-day visit, pupils from my school met their Ghanaian counterparts (with whom they had been corresponding for over a year), attended lessons at Essaman, and engaged in a wide range of activities at the school and elsewhere.

The visit included educationally significant and memorable activities for pupils from both schools, such as: a visit to Kakum National Park rainforest; an outing to a Fair Trade cocoa plantation, with an associated activity of writing letters to companies involved in cocoa processing to call for fairer working conditions; a guided tour of Elmina Castle, a 15th century Portuguese building which served as a slave castle for many years, with time to reflect on the history of the slave trade; a drum-making and dance workshop; painting a classroom and mural at Essaman United School; and participating in welcome and closing ceremonies at the school. These activities allowed pupils to experience the cultural and geographical diversity of different parts of Ghana and to grasp the challenges and difficulties faced by many Ghanaians, while also seeing for themselves that African countries cannot be understood simplistically as always and everywhere war-torn and impoverished (as Africanist discourses suggest; Mazrui, 2005; Mawdsley, 2008). However, one of the most important activities for my pupils was simply spending time in lessons with their Ghanaian counterparts. This allowed them to experience a very different kind of classroom teaching and opened their eyes to disparities in resources between British and Ghanaian schools, while also enabling them to see that effective learning does not rely solely on interactive whiteboards and iPads – an insight that speaks to the need for geographical education to challenge misrepresentations of Africa as static, unchanging, and 'backward' (Massey, 2005; Taylor, 2008). Other partnership events have included two visits of Ghanaian teachers to my school, the establishment of an annual school-wide Ghana Day incorporating cultural and educational elements (including the participation of visiting Ghanaian teachers), and library and computing projects designed to strengthen Essaman United's resources in these important areas. Participating pupils at my school have also attended a weekly Geography Club with a strong Ghanaian focus, and have disseminated their experiences to the wider school community through presentations, school newsletters, and lessons – a factor of some significance in terms of the extent to which pupils at my school may have already gained some knowledge about Ghana (see below).

3.2.5 Children's Knowledge of Ghana

Ghana is rarely used as an example in existing geography curricula in England and, to date, rarely features in news reports or other media; consequently Year 8 pupils are likely to have gained relatively little specific knowledge of the country from previous geography lessons or mass media before participating in my enquiry sequence – an important factor in terms of accessing children's initial perceptions of distant places, since the potential for learning and discovery with a lesser-known country such as Ghana is almost certainly greater than would be the case with a better-known LEDC such as Brazil. Pupils may have gained wider knowledge of the West African region more generally (as opposed to Ghana in particular), especially with regard to occasional reports of conflict and violence in countries such as Liberia, Sierra Leone, and, more recently, Mali. However, since Ghana rarely experiences unrest and violence, pre-existing generalized impressions of West Africa, if present, are unlikely to relate directly to Ghana or constitute an accurate impression of the country. That is, students' 'funds of knowledge' relating to Ghana – i.e. their knowledge deriving from their everyday immersion in wider contextual, technological, cultural, historical, political and ideological frameworks (Gonzalez et al, 2005) – were unlikely to represent extensive or detailed knowledge of Ghana and the specificities of Ghanaian culture and society. (This does not mean, of course, that students will not have wider impressions of Africa that they may then 'impose' upon Ghana in an 'Africanist' manner – an issue that, as mentioned above, I needed to be aware of during teaching and fieldwork.)

While the geography curriculum and mass media largely overlook Ghana at present, it is important to recognize that pupils may have gained some knowledge about the country and its people as a result of the school partnership between my school and Essaman United School in Ghana. The Ghana Day events, Ghanaian teacher visits to my school, British students' previous and forthcoming visits to Ghana, and occasional mentions of fundraising events at school assemblies will have raised pupils' awareness about Ghana to a certain extent, and given them a somewhat greater degree of knowledge about Ghana than might otherwise be expected. This could be a factor of some significance in terms of evaluating changes in pupils' perceptions about distant places in general and Ghana in particular, since their perceptions of Ghana may already have been affected by the school partnership and its emphasis on cultural exchange.

Equally, however, it is important not to overestimate the impact of the partnership on pupils' awareness of Ghana. None of the pupils who participated in my research project had visited Ghana as part of the partnership, nor had any of their siblings participated in the previous trip. Since pupils who did participate in the previous trip were in Year 10 at the time of conducting

the research, it is unlikely that any of the Year 8 pupils who participated in my research will have had significant social contact with previous partnership trip participants; nor had the Year 8 pupils have experienced any lessons focused specifically on Ghana or the partnership. As such, it was likely that the extent of the Year 8 pupils' exposure to the partnership will have been limited to a 20-minute drumming display at the 2012 Ghana Day assembly, passing interactions with Ghanaian teachers during their visits, and occasional mentions of the partnership in connection with fundraising activities. Thus it seems unlikely that the partnership will have exerted a significant impact on pupils' awareness of Ghana, a factor which will need to be borne in mind with regard to the wider relevance of my findings.

3.3 Research Design

Having considered my guiding research questions and the wider research agenda that my research programme addresses, I will now proceed to consider the various research design elements of this programme. Many authors identify key four elements of research design: ontology and epistemology; theoretical perspective; methodology; and methods (Crotty, 2003; Taber, 2007; Cohen et al, 2002). While these four elements are typically interrelated in a well-designed research project, with assumptions and choices made at the most general philosophical levels (i.e. ontology and epistemology) shaping choices at more applied levels (i.e. methodology and methods), it is useful to distinguish between them in order to allow for critical consideration of the strengths and weaknesses of different potential choices in the context of my research questions and the underlying logic of my wider research agenda. Moreover, it is important to ensure that each individual aspect of research design fits with other aspects, so that, for instance, the chosen approach in ontology and epistemology does not conflict with particular data-gathering methods adopted for the research project. My focus on children's understandings of distant place (specifically Ghana), and my interest in gauging changes in these understandings over a unit of work, means that some philosophical approaches and methodological choices are more appropriate and useful than others. In the following sections, I consider a range of potential of approaches in each of the four elements of research design mentioned above in order to establish which approaches and methodologies were most suited to my particular research project. As a result of these discussions, I establish that a constructionist epistemology, poststructuralist theoretical perspective, case study methodology, and multiple (qualitative) methods are most appropriate for my research agenda. Following this, I set out a timeline for the implementation of this research agenda in terms of

data collection, before proceeding to consider broader issues including research ethics and researcher positionality.

3.3.1 Ontology and Epistemology

As the theory of what is thought to exist, ontology is the most fundamental category of philosophical inquiry. As Crotty (2003: 10) notes, ontology 'is concerned with 'what is', with the nature of existence, with the structure of reality as such.' In ontological philosophy, scholars address metaphysical questions such as what kinds of things exist, whether the world exists independently of conscious beings, and what constitutes the identity of objects or beings (Baggini, 2002). Since the ontological assumptions (explicit or otherwise) that provide answers to such questions are fundamental to our understandings of the world, they could be said to underpin any and every research project; but equally, such assumptions can be seen as so fundamental that they do not require explicit examination in order to undertake theoretically-aware research. In my research on children's changing understandings of Ghana, for instance, it is unnecessary to place broad issues such as the world's existence into question; rather, the key ontological focus is children's understandings of (particular aspects of) the world and what they reveal about Africanist discourses and processes of learning about distant place. In this context, Crotty notes that realism in ontology – the theory that the world exists independently of human beings – is essentially compatible with constructionism in epistemology, or the theory that knowledge of the world is socially constructed. For Crotty, this is an example of 'how ontological issues and epistemological issues arise together… [such that] it would seem that we can deal with the ontological issues as they emerge without [a direct focus on]… ontology' (2003: 11). Ontological issues that emerge in the context of my research agenda include the extent to which children's understandings can be thought of as unchanging 'entities' existing independently of any particular setting. Approaching children's understandings in this way would require 'strong' metaphysical assumptions that are neither required nor supported by my wider research agenda, which attempts to evaluate the change in children's understandings over time and thus treats them as capable of changing. This issue can be dealt with, as Crotty puts it, by treating children's understandings in a less reified way, as emerging and changing to at least some extent through social interaction rather than internal reflection, and accessible to variable degrees (but rarely if ever 'perfectly' accessible) according to the kinds of data gathering methods employed (see below for further discussion). From this perspective, epistemological and other aspects of the research are more to the fore than

ontological aspects. Consequently, for the remainder of this chapter I will focus on epistemological, theoretical, and methodological issues rather than ontological issues per se.

While ontology is the theory of what exists, epistemology can be defined as the theory of knowledge, or more precisely, how we come to have knowledge about the world. In the context of my research project, epistemological issues emerge most obviously with regard to the question of how children's understandings can be accessed and understood. For Baggini (2002: 11), epistemological issues are among the most important in philosophy: 'In some senses, all philosophical questions lead back to the question, what can we know?' In response to this question, theories of epistemology attempt to provide rigorous and coherent accounts of what kinds of knowledge are possible and how they can be tested and validated. Several kinds of epistemological theories can be identified, including rationalism, empiricism, foundationalism, realism, idealism and phenomenalism (Baggini, 2002). In the context of educational research, Crotty (2003) highlights three overarching approaches to epistemology, aligned on a spectrum ranging from objective to subjective approaches (see also Cohen et al, 2002). At the objective end is 'objectivism', a position which holds that 'meaning, and therefore meaningful reality, exists as such apart from the operation of any consciousness… understandings and values are considered to be objectified in the people we are studying and, if we go about it in the right way, we can discover the objective truth' (Crotty, 2003: 8). On the other end of the spectrum, 'subjectivism' advances the view that 'meaning is… imposed on the object [i.e. the world and/or other subjects] by the subject…. Meaning comes from anything *but* an interaction between the subject and the object to which it is ascribed' (ibid: 9). Constructionism occupies a position towards the subjectivist end, according to which 'meaning is not discovered, but constructed' in the course of our (subjective) interactions with the world and with others (ibid: 9). From this perspective, all forms of knowledge, both 'objective' (or 'scientific') and 'subjective' (or 'unscientific') have the same, fallible, status: 'They are all constructions' (ibid: 16). Constructionism can usefully be distinguished from constructivism on the basis that while constructionism focuses on the purposeful production of meaning by individuals and groups in social contexts, constructivism adopts a more individual focus on meaning-making processes of individuals in relation to environmental factors. This difference in emphasis arises in part because of constructivism's links to Piaget's theory of learning and Vygotsky and Bruner's development theories. As Crotty states, the term constructivism indicates a focus on 'the meaning-making activity of the individual mind' as opposed to constructionism's focus on 'the collective generation of meaning' (1998:58).

In my particular research context, a constructionist approach would suggest that children's understandings would be regarded as neither objectively 'there' and thus clearly discoverable (in the same way as, for instance, geometrical properties of shapes) nor as essentially and inescapably internalized and hence impossible to uncover (in the same way as individuals' perceptions of colour and taste), but rather as constructions, and to at least some extent *social* constructions generated through interactions with others and with the world, that can be elicited and elucidated through the choice of appropriate data gathering methods (see below). In the constructionist approach, the focus is less on the extent to which meanings and interpretations align with objective reality (as in objectivism) or with subjective feelings and a largely inaccessible inner reality (in subjectivism), but rather on how such meanings and interpretations come to be socially constructed, and how they change over time in complex interactions with social contexts - for example, the ways in which children's understandings of Ghana change during a unit of work. By adopting a constructionist approach to these understandings, my research agenda enabled me to reflect on the content and context of the children's changing viewpoints without requiring prolonged metaphysical consideration of the ontological status of these viewpoints. This approach also fits well within my overarching Africanist perspective in that a constructionist stance emphasises the social construction of representations and worldviews and thus their fallibility and, to some extent, subjectivity. This contrasts with the pseudo-objectivism regarding topics such as biological race and physical geography that typically characterises Orientalist and Africanist discourses, and highlights the ways in which such discourses tend to downplay the subjective political, social, and ideological conditions in which such discourses emerge and attain prominence.

In adopting a constructionist stance for educational research, I had to take account of the ways in which children's constructions of social reality might differ importantly from constructions by adults. It is important to avoid conceiving of children, considered as constructors of social reality, solely as 'incomplete adults' who are not yet able to process information 'properly.' Rather, as Uprichard (2008: 304) argues, it is important to conceive of children as both 'being' and 'becoming', as being simultaneously 'a social actor in his or her own right… and who has views and experiences about being a child' and a becoming child, an 'adult in the making… who is lacking universal skills and features of the 'adult' that they will become'. Taking this dual focus not only allows the researcher to acknowledge ways in which children may process differently (though not necessarily in an inferior manner) than adults, but also to acknowledge that children richly experience the 'everyday realities of being a child'

(ibid: 304) in a way that challenges simple (and negative) distinctions between childhood and adulthood.

In the following sections, I consider how this overarching choice of constructionist epistemology relates to theoretical perspectives, methodologies, and research methods.

3.3.2 Theoretical Perspectives

For Taber, (2007:32) the choice of theoretical perspective (or paradigm, or philosophical approach) is one of the most significant aspects of any research project, since it shapes the overall 'direction [of]… the research to be carried out'. Crotty (2003:2) defines theoretical perspectives as 'the philosophical stance[s] informing the methodology and thus providing a context for the process and grounding its logic and criteria'. Crotty identifies several theoretical perspectives, which, somewhat like epistemological viewpoints, can be aligned along a spectrum ranging from objectivism to subjectivism, with positivist approaches on the objective side and variants of 'interpretivism', such as symbolic interactionism, poststructuralism, phenomenology, and hermeneutics, placed towards the subjective side (2003; also Cohen et al, 2002). Positivism treats the social world of human relations as if it were the natural world and therefore capable of definition in terms of general laws such as the laws of motion, thus arguably overlooking the significance of issues such as subjectivity and meaning (Taber, 2007). As such, adopting a positivist perspective would have been at odds with my overarching constructionist epistemology, and would also have encouraged the adoption of quantitative research methodologies that (as I argue below) would not have been well suited to my explorations of children's understandings of distant place. Hence, I focus below on subjectivist approaches, and interpretivist and poststructuralist approaches in particular.

3.3.2.1 Interpretivist Approaches

As against the objectivist approach embodied in positivism, scholars working with constructionist and subjectivist approaches tend to draw on non-positivist, interpretivist theoretical perspectives, which are better placed to take account of the 'relativity' (or subjectivity) of experience owing to their strong focus on the lived experiences of individuals, and the way in which individuals generate meanings and interpretations through social interaction (Cohen et al, 2002). Interpretivism can be defined in terms of an emphasis on 'the meaningful character of social life and the need for interpretation of this meaningfulness' (Harrington, 2005: 323). Three prominent interpretivist approaches that I discuss briefly below are hermeneutics, phenomenology, and symbolic interactionism.

Regarding hermeneutics first of all: the term 'hermeneutics' derives from the Greek for 'to interpret', indicating the hermeneutic focus on issues of understanding, language, and interpretation associated with thinkers such as Freidrich Schleiermacher, Wilhelm Dilthey, Martin Heidegger, Hans-Georg Gadamer, and Paul Ricoeur, and concentrated in the first instance on issues of textual interpretation. Following Schleiermacher, Heidegger established the notion of the hermeneutic circle, a concept of understanding that emphasises both the role of existing experience in grasping new experience and also a continuous alternation between individual parts of experience and experience as a whole. For Gadamer, interpretation and understanding take place through an encounter between the perspectives and pre-judgements, or 'horizons of experience', of both the interpreter and the text being interpreted (Outhwaite, 2005). This interpretive process can also be extended to the interpretation of societies and cultures as well as texts, with anthropologists such as Clifford Geertz arguing that cultures can be considered as 'assemblages of texts' which have to be understood, if possible, through the eyes of participants (Bernard, 2006). In general, sociological applications of hermeneutics have emphasised that observed behaviour can only be understood if the interpreter can put the observed behaviour into 'some relation with the frame of reference that is prescribed and is relevant to the particular type of action, and in this way also to demonstrate that it is meaningful' (Reichertz, 2004: 293) – i.e. interpreting meanings and actions in their social context.

Phenomenology is an interpretivist approach that seeks 'description, analysis, and understanding of experiences... to find and systematise forms of thought in terms of which people interpret [socially significant] aspects of reality' (Marton, 1981; cited Bazeley 2013: 247). Phenomenology attempts to 'bracket' or set aside observers' pre-judgements and preconceptions regarding what is being observed, in order to concentrate on how objects appear to subjects as objects with particular meanings, as '*phenomena* that appear in our consciousness as we engage with the world around us' (Willig, 2008: 52). In sociological research, particularly research influenced by the existential phenomenology of Alfred Schutz, phenomenology embodies a focus on the 'lifeworld' – the 'social world which we interpret and make meaningful' and through which we 'make sense of the world' (Outhwaite, 2005: 113). Since different perceivers have different mental states, they inevitably perceive the world differently; consequently phenomenological sociology embodies the intent to grasp not just the content of individuals' consciousness but also 'the qualitative diversity of their experiences' (Kvale, 1996; cited Willig, 2008: 53), thus gaining a deeper understanding of the lived,

subjective experiences of individuals and the meanings they generate and attach to their lifeworlds.

Whereas both hermeneutics and phenomenology have roots in nineteenth-century German thought, the symbolic interactionist approach emerged in the Chicago School and particularly the work of George Herbert Mead and Herbert Blumer, who stressed the creative aspects of social life and the important role of individual agents in sustaining social life through micro-level interpretations and exchanges (Harrington, 2005). Symbolic interactionism emphasises the idea that agents act on the basis of meanings, which are continually produced and revised according to contingencies and events in an essentially intersubjective, social fashion and at the micro-level of interactions between individuals and small groups; consequently this line of thought represented a reaction against the macro-level structural functionalism of thinkers such as Talcott Parsons (Cohen et al, 2002; Outhwaite, 2005). Interactionism has been critiqued as predominantly a micro-level approach that was incapable of linking 'small group processes with social phenomena reflecting the behavioural influences of the larger society' and of considering the ways in which these wider influences interacted with each other (Scambler and Cockerham, 2010: 3).

As Cohen et al observe, interpretivist approaches in general are attractive to educational researchers because of their ability to capture the small-scale, 'concentrated action' in classrooms and schools (2002: 19). Yet each of the interpretivist approaches discussed above exhibits particular strengths and weaknesses when considered from the perspective of my research project. The hermeneutical emphasis on placing actions in social context, and more fundamentally the emphasis on the researcher gaining new knowledge and perspectives through the fusion of horizons, points towards the possibility of the educational researcher immersing herself in the research context in order to gain a deeper understanding of students' actions. However, the hermeneutical emphasis on sharing understandings is less than ideal for an educational context in which the emphasis in the classroom is focused not just on achieving shared understandings between teacher/researcher and students but also, and often predominantly, on imparting new knowledge and challenging (some) existing understandings that students may have. This difficulty is related to the critique of hermeneutics raised by critical theorists, which is that hermeneutics is essentially conservative in the way it ignores the power relations inherent to reaching understanding through the fusion of horizons (Chadderton, 2004).Yet due recognition of power relations, or (as Massey puts it) power geometries, is an important aspect of geography education's distinctive contribution to distant place teaching, and, by extension, an important aspect of my research on children's

understandings of distant places and the ways in which they are affected by power-filled discourses such as Africanism.

Regarding phenomenology, this approach exhibits a strong focus on generating rich description through accessing subjects' experiences, but can present difficulties in terms of the extent to which researchers are genuinely able to 'bracket' their own attitudes, viewpoints and assumptions, especially when some of these may be salient to the research in question – for instance, the view that widespread Africanist discourses are likely to influence children's perceptions of African countries. From this point of view, it was less important for me to 'bracket' my own attitudes and viewpoints than it was to explore how these attitudes and viewpoints may provide insight into how children learn about distant places, especially African distant places. Indeed, omitting to consider distant places in light of my own particular attitudes and viewpoints, especially those associated with a critical stance towards dominant discourses, could be seen as an anti-political move – a refusal to acknowledge the ways in which representations of distant places are often shaped in such a way as to legitimate intervention and condescension from a perceived position of superiority.

In terms of symbolic interactionism, while the micro-scale focus on the construction of students' social realities through individual and intersubjective meanings is important, this same focus on micro-level processes (and concomitant neglect of societal influences) would have made it difficult to study the impact of discourses such as Africanism. More widely, this approach might have tended to de-emphasise not only powerful discourses such as Africanism but also wider social dynamics and features such as change over time and diversity within and between places – i.e. dynamics and features at the heart of geography education about distant places and, by extension, my unit of work focused on Ghana.

3.3.2.2 Poststructuralism

Each of the three interpretivist positions that I have considered not only offers a particular focus on certain issues but also associated difficulties that would arise in the context of my specific research agenda. In order to avoid these particular difficulties arising, I adopted a poststructuralist, and specifically Foucauldian, approach. Poststructuralism emerged as a diverse and varied body of work that sought to counter, as well as in some ways to build upon, the perceived rigidities and certainties of structuralism as found in the work of de Saussure, Levi-Strauss and others (Harrington, 2005). A number of writers are often identified as 'poststructuralist' in approach, including Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Roland Barthes, and others, although several of these writers, including Foucault, reject the poststructuralist

label. While these thinkers advance a wide range of theoretical approaches (such as Derrida's insistence that theoretical structures rely upon 'excluded others' at the periphery and Foucault's emphasis on the historical genealogy of socially constructed categories), they are united to a certain extent by their emphasis on prioritizing epistemology over ontology and on undermining foundationalist modes of thinking that privilege apparently settled, 'self-evident' categories and binary divisions. Poststructural approaches have been used by educational researchers working on a range of substantive topics, including feminist education (Jones, 1993; Francis, 1999), environmental teaching (Barrett, 2005) and emotion and identity in teaching (Zembylas, 2005).

In common with the schools of thought surveyed above, poststructuralist approaches are also subject to critiques of varying kind. In addition to general claims of Francocentrism (with the consequence of overlooking Weber's work) and inadequate empirical grounding for sweeping historical claims (Hall, 2003), the critical theorist Jurgen Habermas undertook a sustained critical engagement with poststructuralism on the basis that it fails to recognize the universal aspects of intersubjective communication upon which Habermas based his social theory (Geuss, 1981). By engaging in a critique of foundationalist rationality, poststructuralists 'repeat the mistake of anti-metaphysical sceptics who take metaphysics all too seriously in the act of opposing it' (Geuss, 1981: 148-9).

Regardless of these critiques, Foucault's body of theoretical and historical work exhibits a number of characteristics which make it particularly suitable as an underpinning theoretical perspective for my research agenda. It is challenging to summarise Foucault's complex and diverse body of work in a short space, but it can be characterised as focusing on three major themes: the concept of discourse; power and knowledge; and questions surrounding the subject (Hall, 2003). With regard to discourse, Foucault's middle-period work explores discourses as *epistemes* - systems of representations - that influence ways of knowing about (and generating meanings about) particular topics in particular historical junctures. Against this backdrop, it is possible to investigate the way in which specific categories and binaries – including Africanist binaries such as developed/undeveloped, Western/nonwestern, civilized/savage - come to hold power and significance in particular discursive communities (imperial governments and metropolitan cultures), without necessarily holding a close relationship with extra-discursive conditions (Harrington, 2005). As Hall (2003: 73) points out, this is essentially a constructionist point of view, which thus fits with my wider theoretical approach. It is also a view that emphasises the ever-present possibility of change, since contingent way in which discourses or epistemes come to prominence in particular historical

conditions imply that other discourses or epistemes could also come to prominence in other historical conditions. From this perspective, Foucault's theoretical viewpoint bears an important similarity to the work of Mikhail Bakhtin (1981, 1984, 1986) and his emphasis on the impossibility of coming to 'final' states of affairs in language and, by extension, society and societal dynamics.

In terms of questions of power and knowledge, secondly, Foucault's later work (as touched on in Chapter One) emphasises the notion that knowledge is always implicated in power and vice versa. Against a 'sovereign' view of power on which power radiates from a single source, Foucault's account of modernity introduces a 'disciplinary' view of power in which power circulates, is exercised within institutional apparatuses and through 'technologies of power', and involves both powerful and powerless individuals in its networks at scales from the macro to the micro. Whereas many previous accounts had emphasized powerful individuals who were thought to hold power, Foucault noted that little attention had been paid to the way in which power was exercised: 'power in its strategies, at once general and detailed, and its mechanisms, has never been studied' (1980: 51). Power, on this account, is not just negative but also productive: 'it induces pleasure, forms of knowledge, produces discourse' (Foucault, 1980: 51). In this context, knowledge linked to power has the ability to make itself 'true' through dominant discourses and 'regimes of truth' – as has been seen with Africanist discourses both in the colonial period and more recently.

With regard to the subject, lastly, Foucault has been criticized for his over-emphasis on societal discourses and the way in which regimes of truth shape the ways in which subjects can come to know about the world – a view that, by contrast with the phenomenological and hermeneutic emphases on the knowing subject that Foucault critiqued, appears to leave little room for agency and choice on the part of the individual. However, Foucault's later work allowed for a degree of reflection and resistance on the part of agents, who occupy a (as Hall says) 'privileged position in relation to meaning… [since subjects are] the source of meaning in the first place' (2003: 79). While he was aware that much of his work stressed 'technologies of power' used to repress and control populations through the exercise of 'biopower,' Foucault also drew attention to 'technologies of the self', which 'permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations… so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality' (1997: 177).

These features of Foucault's approach point to his relevance in the context of my research project, which aimed not only to understand children's changing perceptions of distant

places across a unit of work but also to evaluate the extent to which these perceptions have been influenced by widely-circulating Africanist discourses. Adopting a Foucauldian approach allowed for consideration of the influence of societal-level dynamics - such as Africanist discourses, power geometries, and cross-context diversity - alongside consideration of micro-level interactions within the classroom (including the extent to which children, as subjects, resist and challenge powerful discourses such as Africanism), and also allowed for consideration of issues of researcher positionality without adopting an essentially subjectivist approach (see below). A Foucauldian approach, that is, seemed capable of accommodating the critical edge of Africanist scholarship (in the sense of recent critiques of Africanist discourse and associated power geometries) at the same time as allowing research to focus on small-scale dynamics within the classroom. Consequently, it seemed appropriate to adopt a poststructuralist approach, and specifically a Foucauldian approach, as the overarching theoretical perspective for my research agenda.

3.4 Research Methodologies

Methodology can be seen as occupying an intermediate ground between overarching epistemologies and theoretical perspectives, on the one hand, and specific research methods, on the other. In the context of my research project, my methodology constituted a bridge between constructionism and poststructuralism, on the one hand, and qualitative data gathering methods (interviews and focus groups), on the other. Crotty defines methodology more expansively as 'the strategy, plan of action, process or design, lying behind the choice and use of particular methods and linking the choice of methods to the desired outcomes' (2003:3), while Strauss and Corbin (1998: 3) define methods as 'a set of procedures and techniques for gathering and analyzing data'. Perhaps more illuminating is Taber's analogy of strategy and tactics: 'Effective research has an overall coherent strategy [methodology], which outlines the general way that the research aims will be achieved [which]… will translate into a set of specific tactics [methods] that will address sub-goals that collectively build towards the overall aim' (2007: 62). In common with different philosophies and theoretical approaches, some research methodologies were more appropriate for my specific research project than others. In this section of the chapter, I will consider four different qualitative research methodologies – ethnography, grounded theory, action research, and case study – and their strengths and weaknesses in order to clarify the rationale behind my choice of a case study approach. Essentially, my view is that the case study approach offered the greatest potential for studying the processes of change that occurred in the understandings of a group of children as they

proceeded through a course of work. While ethnographical, grounded theory, and action research approaches have a number of strengths as methodologies, they were not as well suited to my research agenda as the case study methodology.

Originally developed in the field of anthropology in order to explore and find out about other cultures, ethnography can also be applied to finding out about understandings and meanings in the researcher's own culture, especially in situations where the researcher may hold different cultural values from those whose meanings are being examined (Taber, 2007). In a manner similar to anthropologists trying to understand a newly-discovered culture, the 'researcher trying to understand how a student understands a topic area has to try to put aside their own way of thinking and… 'see' the topic through the learner's eyes' (ibid: 77). Ethnographic approaches rely on the 'immersion' of the researcher in the culture or context being studied, and, in terms of methods, on copious field notes, participant observation, interviews, and collection of literature. As such, ethnography offers the potential for generating rich understandings of particular contexts, but can offer significant practical difficulties for educational researchers, since it is difficult for researchers or teachers to immerse themselves in children's worlds in the same ways as anthropologists may with other cultures. Moreover, ethnographic approaches tend to focus on the level of cultures in general rather than particular contexts within cultures (such as particular students' understandings of other cultures). As such, while my research project did aim (like ethnographic approaches) to access others' understandings and meanings, it seems clear that other research methodologies were more practicable and suitable.

In contrast with ethnography, 'grounded theory' is seen as a research methodology with the capacity to generate 'formal, substantive theory of social phenomena' through the application of a 'specific, highly developed, rigorous set of procedures… to the analysis of qualitative data' (Schwandt, 2001: 110). Theories developed during a grounded theory project can then be tested in further studies (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Owing to its rigour, grounded theory is seen as providing a model for constructionist, interpretivist research that presents greater possibility for generalisations between research contexts. Yet since the grounded theory approach aims to develop theory from data, it is inherently 'unpredictable and open-ended' (Taber, 2007: 83), and is not well suited to research projects aiming to explore specific, already-established theoretical issues (such as my focus on Africanism and distant place teaching). Grounded theory is also less well suited to research projects such as mine, as I was not seeking to establish generalisability across research contexts so much as to explore dynamics and meanings in a single context.

Whereas ethnography and grounded theory are oriented primarily towards generating new understandings of social situations, the research methodology of action research exhibits a predominantly practical and change-focused orientation: 'Whereas much research is carried out for intellectual reasons – to explore an interesting phenomenon, or answer an intriguing question – action research is designed to bring about change in a personally experienced situation' (Taber, 2007: 83). In contrast to many other research methodologies, action research adopts an explicitly participatory approach in which 'all individuals involved in the study, researcher and subjects alike, are deliberate and contributing actors in the research enterprise' (Berg, 2004: 196). As such, action research can be seen as an essentially micro-scale, localised approach to developing and applying understandings of particular problems or issues in specific contexts – a characterisation that highlights both strengths and weaknesses. In terms of strengths, action research provides a flexible and pragmatic approach to solving particular problems while simultaneously enlightening and empowering research participants (Berg, 2004); as such it is a popular research methodology with educational researchers (Taber, 2007). However, this approach is less well-suited to projects such as mine, since the object was to study how change happens (i.e. changes in children's understandings of Ghana) rather than study what happens when change is introduced. If my project were aimed at improving the quality of my teaching on Ghana as a distant place over repeated iterations, an action research approach would be more appropriate.

The final research methodology I will consider here, and the methodology that I adopted in my research agenda, is that of case study research. Cresswell (2003: 15) defines this methodology as the in-depth exploration of 'a program, an event, an activity, a process, or one or more individuals' in which the case or cases are 'bounded by time and activity, and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time' (also Bassey, 1999). Simons (2009; cited in Thomas, 2011: 512) states that what unites case study approaches across different settings is a commitment to studying the complexity of real-life situations: 'Case study is an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project, policy, institution, program or system in a "real life" context.' The extent to which the case or cases being studied are firmly 'bounded by time and activity' may vary: for Yin (2003), the case study is an empirical inquiry that explores specific individual phenomena, or 'singularities', within their original context (such as, in my research, a group of student's changing understandings of distant place over a unit of work). This definition allows for a wide range of potential cases. As Taber (2007**:** 74) points out, this aspect of the case study approach is a significant strength

in situations in which 'the number of significant variables may exceed the number of cases, making control of variables impossible'. Thomas (2011) contrasts case study with 'variable-led' research: 'rather than looking at a few variables in a large number of cases, the case inquirer looks at the complex interaction of many factors in few cases' such that the 'extensiveness' of variable-led research is traded for the 'intensiveness' offered by case study research.

In terms of my research agenda, the boundary between case and context was established by framing the case to be studied in terms of the structure and focus represented by the enquiry sequence of lessons at the heart of my research project. I made the choice to frame the case in this way because of the benefits of engaging with the same group of children over a prolonged period, rather than (for instance) carrying out research with multiple classes or with pupils outside the classroom context. The choice of a single class proceeding through a unit of work set a clear boundary between the case and the wider context of the school. Yet the positioning of the case in terms of a class proceeding through a unit of work, i.e. as a set of lessons delivered to a set group of pupils in a particular class embedded within the school environment (spatially) and within the school working week and term (temporally), meant that the case/context boundary cannot be considered to be impermeable. Other school activities and other subject lessons over the fieldwork period likely exerted some influence on students' wider learning experiences. To cope with complexities of this kind and capture the richness of these overlapping influences, many case studies draw upon multiple sources of data (Yin, 2003). Indeed, Thomas (2011: 512) states that the case study approach should not be seen as a method in and of itself but rather as a 'design frame' that may incorporate a number of methods.

The case study comes in several different forms, including the 'theory-seeking' case study type mentioned by Bassey (1999: 62), which constitute 'particular studies of general issues' where the focus is on 'the issue rather than the case as such'; in my case, this allowed for the exploration of themes and issues deriving from my overarching Africanist framework and poststructuralist approach. In this context, Yin notes that the case study is often the 'preferred strategy when "how" or "why" questions are being posed... and when the focus is on contemporary phenomena within some real-life context' (2003: 1). Thomas (2011:512) goes further, stating that a theoretical background is inherent within case study research since this implies that cases are considered to be cases *of* something: 'The subject of the study is thus an instance of some phenomenon, and the latter – the phenomenon – comprises the analytical frame.' He adds, citing Wieviorka (1992), that 'If you want to talk about a "case", you also need the means of interpreting it or placing it in a context'. In the context of my research, the

class of pupils that I studied as they proceeded through the unit of work is considered as a case of how children's representations of distant places change through engagement with geography education, with particular reference to the role of powerful discourses including Africanism.

A case study approach allowed for a considerable depth of understanding of children's changing understandings of Ghana without the prolonged immersion required by ethnographic approaches, the generalisability of grounded theory, or the change-inducing approach of action theory research.

3.5 Research Methods

Crotty defines methods as 'the techniques or procedures used to gather and analyse data related to some research question or hypothesis' (1998:3). The case study approach does not prescribe any specific data gathering methods, so the researcher can choose a variety of methods on the basis of the specific research aims involved (Bassey, 1999; Cohen et al, 2002). It is theoretically possible to implement a case study approach (such as my study of children's understandings) using quantitative methods such as surveys and censuses. Quantitative methods, in common with positivist philosophies and objectivist theoretical perspectives, can be aligned towards the (ostensibly) 'objective' side of the objective-subjective spectrum, and typically focus on the rigorous investigation of events through techniques characterised by mathematical, statistical and computational approaches (Cohen et al, 2002). However, while such techniques can be useful in many other contexts, the case study typically focuses (as mentioned above) on investigating dynamics, meanings and interpretations in particular contexts; as such, they lend themselves to qualitative methods – methods nearer the 'subjective' side of the spectrum - to a greater extent than quantitative methods. As Geertz (1973; cited in Cohen et al, 2002: 182) notes, the case study attempts to convey 'what it is like' to be in a specific context through 'thick description'. This aim is very difficult, perhaps impossible, to achieve through quantitative methods, and calls instead for qualitative methods to allow 'events and situations to… speak for themselves' to as great an extent as possible through rich accounts of the processes of data collection and analysis. It would be difficult, that is, to elicit and elucidate children's understandings of distant places in any depth or richness through questionnaires alone. Moreover, this approach would run the risk of treating children's understandings and representations as both fixed (i.e. pre-existing and immutable) and readily accessible by researchers within a positivist framework. By contrast, my constructionist and poststructuralist approach approaches individuals' worldviews as both (partly) socially-constructed and as changeable over time, and thus – in my research context – considers children's understandings

of distant places as at least partly constructed through classroom interactions and as potentially changing over time. Whereas a positivist approach would tend to treat each student as an isolated individual, my approach acknowledges the considerable extent to which children's understandings are likely to be generated, tested, and revised in an intersubjective fashion among groups of individuals in social settings such as the classroom. At the same time, my approach does not assume that children's understandings are *only* generated intersubjectively; I acknowledge that individual students' understandings may well differ from each other in significant ways.

On this theoretical basis, I chose a range of qualitative data-gathering methods that, taken together, allowed me to collect data in both individual and group formats and thus generate a rich and detailed account of children's understandings of distant places – in this case, Ghana – as they change over a unit of work. These methods included the collection of primary material (written work and drawings), focus groups, and participant observation of classroom dynamics and discussions. While there were some aspects of group activity in students' written work and drawing assignments, the focus of these activities was at the individual level, whereas the focus group sections of my data-gathering activities were focused directly at the group level. As such, my methods represented a balanced approach to individual/group interactions that took due account of both. In what follows I introduce these three sets of methods and their strengths and weaknesses.

3.5.1 Collecting Primary Material

The first qualitative method that I used was the collection of primary material at numerous points in the aforementioned unit of work focused on Ghana, and incorporating three linked enquiry sequences (see Appendix I for details). The material I collected was gathered in order to shed light on particular aspects of children's understandings of Ghana and their construction in the classroom setting, guided by my overarching Africanist perspective and key themes arising from that theoretical framework, and with multiple iterations in order to establish the degree and kind(s) of change(s) occurring in children's understandings. Specifically, I asked children to produce both written work and drawings focused on topics with relevance to my research questions.

3.5.2 Written material

In terms of written work, students were asked to write, on an individual basis, their views of Ghana before, during and after the unit of work, in a variety of different formats and on a

variety of specific topics related to the content of the specific lesson in which the tasks are introduced, and designed to stimulate reflection on the topics being studied. For example, in the first lesson, which was focused on thinking about what kind of country Ghana is (see Appendix I), they were asked to write a set of differences and similarities between Ghana and the UK. Further writing tasks included: an entry on Ghana in an imaginary travel guide for those wishing to emigrate from the UK; a short essay about English food, to be exchanged with essays about Ghanaian food by Ghanaian counterparts in the partner school; entries on poverty and development on a dictionary of human geography; accounts of large- and small-scale development projects; and a blog written as if they were a reporter summing up their experiences of Ghana (See Appendix I for full details of written tasks.) I felt it was important to offer children the opportunity to express their views about Ghana, Africa, and distant places more generally in a range of formats within each form of media – in the written material context, essays, travel guides, and blogs. Each format offered different kinds of potential for self-expression; consequently, students who may have felt uncomfortable or constrained in class discussion or in creating visual materials may have felt more comfortable and unconstrained in writing exercises (see Zafeirakou, 2002), especially since many of these exercises were assigned as homework and so took place outside the classroom and (to some extent at least) associated power dynamics. This range of potentially unfamiliar writing formats such as essays and dictionary entries was carefully chosen in order to help students 'step back' from everyday assumptions and forms of communication and reflect more carefully and creatively on the topics under consideration. It should be noted that I gave the students some background about each of the different writing formats before the exercises were carried out, in order to ensure that the students understood what was being asked of them and could ask questions if necessary. In this way, while some of the writing formats may have been unfamiliar to some students, I aimed to enable the students to engage with the exercises to the maximum possible degree, and thus generate as rich and varied a body of data as possible, with each kind of writing offering distinctive 'affordances' (kinds of knowledge) and thus distinctive lenses and perspectives on issues relating to distant places and Ghana in particular. At the same time, the students benefited by gaining familiarity with a range of previously unfamiliar writing formats.

It should not be assumed, however, that these written materials represent a transparent means of access to children's inner worlds, nor that these inner worlds constitute coherent or reasoned views of particular topics. There is always a risk of children writing what they think teachers wish to see rather than seeking to express their own views (which may also be

unformed and/or self-contradictory), although it remains the case, of course, that the content originates with children themselves. I attempted to avoid such issues by explaining the purposes of the exercises and distinguishing between assessment and learning activities, but this point must be born in mind when interpreting the written data gathered from pupils throughout the unit of work.

3.5.3 Visual Materials

In terms of drawing, I asked each of the children to produce 'window' drawings – i.e. individual drawings representing the view through a window into Ghana - at the start of the first enquiry sequence. In line with my previous work on Egypt (Kennedy, 2011), the students were reminded of key geographical ideas such as weather, culture, landscape, and people, but nothing more. Window drawings were also collected in the last lessons of the unit of work, and were also later discussed in focus groups from an 'auteur theory' perspective (Mannay, 2010; see Chapter Five). I also asked them to each produce a poster comparing Ghana and the UK, in addition to a Wordle summing up their experience of the unit of work. Again, the content of these drawing tasks was linked to the lesson at hand (see Appendix I). The drawing activities, like the written activities, were undertaken by students on an individual basis. Also in common with the writing activities, the drawing tasks were designed to elicit students' understandings and opinions on a range of relevant topics at a number of different times through the sequences. By making use of a variety of visual tasks that aimed to prompt reflection through the unfamiliarity of the media involved, I sought to generate a range of data with varied affordances and perspectives on core issues relating to distant places and Ghana. It should be noted furthermore that all these materials either allowed for the inclusion of written material (window drawings) or required the inclusion of written material (posters and Wordles). As such, these materials were rarely 'purely' visual. Nevertheless, the dominant mode of communication in each of these genres is undeniably visual, involving pupil-led creation of expressive visual content using a range of techniques (drawing, printing, collage, writing) and a range of materials (coloured pencils, pen, coloured paper, craft materials).

I decided to collect and analyse visual materials for a number of reasons. Researchers in other fields have demonstrated the potential of visual materials to illuminate neglected perspectives and shed light on hidden aspects of experience, as shown for instance by Guillemin et al's (2014) research on policymakers' understandings of a new health policy. By supplementing an earlier round of interviews about 'revalidation' (a policy requiring doctors to undertake surveys of patient experience) with drawings about revalidation created by study

participants, Guillemin et al showed the range of different understandings of the policy and highlighted the omission of patients in the drawings – an important finding given that revalidation was ostensibly introduced to increase the prominence of patients in healthcare systems: 'We found that the dissonance between the discourses of policy was mirrored in the drawings of our participants… By drawing systems and processes rather than patients or the act of patient care, the participants represented a rather depersonalised approach to policy creation' (ibid: 135). In this specific case, they note, visual data provided a non-word-based mode of expression that allowed for the communication of 'what would otherwise be unsayable' (ibid: 136); as such, visual research methods are particularly well-suited to contexts in which sensitive issues are at stake, or in which power differentials exist between different participants (or participants and relevant others).

In the classroom context, pupils almost inevitably occupy less powerful positions than teachers, with the result that classroom discussions are almost always infused with power relations that complicate the process of interpreting children's remarks (see preceding section and Chapter Five). From a poststructuralist perspective, the self-directed creation of visual material represents an expressive avenue through which children may temporarily escape some of the networks of power that characterise educational contexts. This is not to say that visual materials, because self-directed, represent a 'more objective' window upon children's view of the world than (e.g.) written materials. As Guillemin et al (2014: 137) state, 'it is important to note that visual data does not purport to reveal some kind of true knowledge or understanding.' Rather, visual data represent a different (and mostly non-verbal) way of engaging with children's own representations of their understanding – a mode of engagement that may lead to different insights than provided by children's verbal and written accounts (considered in Chapters 5-7). Guillemin et al add, importantly, that 'in visual research… the aim is not to produce one 'true' definite interpretation but to seek multiple interpretations that may change over time (or remain relatively stable)' (ibid: 137). The emphasis, thus, is on multiplicity, variation, and changefulness, rather than necessarily seeking to establish a single definitive interpretation. In the context of my research agenda, this insight entails paying attention to the diversity present within children's visual materials over the course of a unit of work, and the possibility of generating 'different kinds of knowledge' (ibid: 137), rather than necessarily seeking to generate a conclusive narrative.

Visual materials were also collected because of their ability to canvass important thematic issues in a way that relates to considerations of 'insiders' and 'outsiders' in qualitative research, a debate that Mannay (2010: 92) characterises in terms of insider and outsider

'myths': 'Outsider myths assert that only researchers who possess the necessary objectivity and emotional distance from the field are able to conduct valid research on a given group. Conversely, according to insider myths, the attributes of objectivity and emotional distance render outsiders inherently incapable of appreciating the true character of a group's life'. Another take on the debate suggests instead that attempts to attain objectivity are doomed to failure, and that researchers working on familiar territory ('insiders') can attain greater understanding because they can effortlessly overcome cultural and linguistic barriers. Most researchers now recognise the problematic epistemic and moral privileges claimed by proponents on both sides of this debate, and focus instead on exploring the unavoidable complexities of research experiences in which most researchers 'find themselves neither total 'insiders' nor 'outsiders' in relation to the individuals they interview' (Mannay, 2010: 94). In this sense, teachers are always both outsiders and insiders in educational research: outsiders because they are no longer children and cannot engage with children as peers, but insiders because they are an integral part of educational contexts and practices. In a different sense that relates more precisely to my research agenda, I am also an outsider as a result of my substantial previous personal experience of Ghana and Africa more widely – experiences that the pupils in my class did not possess. This creates a difference between my perspective and children's perspectives, which could be useful in terms of research. Yet detailed personal knowledge of a context can also be a complicating factor in research, since there is a danger of focusing upon parts of children's discourses that (apparently) relate to familiar personal experiences and downgrading other utterances that resonate less strongly with my experience. In this context, Becker highlights many researchers' inability to 'stop seeing only the things that are… "there" to be seen' (1971: 10).

From this perspective, one important virtue of visual material as a data source is its ability to make the familiar 'strange and interesting again' (Erikson, 1986; cited Mannay, 2010: 95). Shklovsky advances the notion of 'defamiliarisation', or the way in which art can overcome our 'stale' perceptions of familiar, everyday situations 'by forcing us to slow down our perception, to linger and to notice' (Mannay, 2010: 95). By collecting and analysing visual data, my intention was to 'overcome the confines of language, open up experience and make the familiar strange' (ibid: 95) in terms of children's understandings of Ghana, in such a way as to suspend (as far as possible) my own preconceptions, while avoiding phenomenological claims to entirely 'bracket' my previous experience.

3.5.4 Written and Visual Materials

With regard to the strengths and weaknesses of these forms of primary material, such material has the potential to give the researcher access to the subjective meanings, understandings and interpretations generated by children in response to researcher-chosen prompts regarding distant places, and, by collecting material iteratively, to the changes in such meanings over the course of the enquiry sequence. By giving children the freedom to generate their own content within wide parameters, this research method should in theory lead to a rich and varied account of their understandings and meanings. The use of both writing and drawing allows children who feel more comfortable in one or other medium, or one or other format within the written and drawing segments, to have an opportunity to express themselves, as noted by Zafeirakou (2002) in her study of a Greek and French student week-long exchange. In terms of written work, for example, students who may have felt uncomfortable expressing themselves in the personal manner required by letters may have preferred the more impersonal style associated with a dictionary entry, while (on the other hand) students who may have been wary of participating in a group exercise may have felt more comfortable expressing themselves visually through an individual window drawing. Each of these media, in both the writing and drawing segments, offered a distinctive kind of material with distinctive affordances – i.e. distinctive contributions to data-gathering - and, thus, a different lens on students' understandings of Ghana. Taken together, these varied activities generated a rich and varied body of information relating to children's understandings of Ghana.

At the same time, it should not be assumed that materials collected in this way represent an unproblematic and infallible way to elicit children's own, original, and somehow 'pristine' understandings. It is always possible, for instance, that children may draw and/or write what they think the teacher wishes to see. They may also approach the exercises as 'hidden' tests or exams, thus affecting their approach to the exercise. Children may tend towards reproducing, or co-constructing, material learned in previous (geography) lessons rather than expressing their own perceptions and understandings. These possibilities are inherent within educational research, and while they do present challenges of a sort to the attempt to elicit children's own opinions, they also create opportunities to explore the dynamics of educational interactions. Moreover, such difficulties can be limited, if not entirely avoided, by explaining the purpose of the exercises and distinguishing clearly between assessment and learning activities. By clarifying the non-assessed, pedagogical nature of the exercises, I assured students that there

was no 'hidden agenda' beyond the aim of uncovering their own thoughts and perspectives. Consequently, I believe that they were more likely to set down their own informal understandings and meanings than would otherwise have been the case. At the same time, it is important to recognise that students' interpretations and understandings can never be accessed (as a positivist approach could be interpreted as implying) in a 'pristine' state that is not influenced in some way by the context in which these interpretations are elicited; rather, they are representations created for a particular audience in a particular context at a particular time, and within particular power relations. As such, the potential for students' interpretations to be influenced by external factors cannot be seen as a particular weakness of research focused on geographical education. In particular, as mentioned above, my constructionist approach to children's understandings points towards the social construction of these understandings, both within and outside the classroom. However, my collection of individual writing and drawing materials aimed to open up a space within which students could express their own perceptions, even if these are likely to have been influenced in some way by those of others.

3.5.5 Focus groups

As part of my research agenda, I conducted focus groups during each enquiry sequence, in order to generate a second source of primary material focused on the group rather than the individual level. These groups involved six participants (i.e. a number between four and twelve as recommended by Morgan, 1988; cited in Cohen et al 2002), chosen from among the class to represent some of the variety in the class group – three boys and three girls of mixed ability, with a boy and a girl chosen from each section of the class with high, average, and low grades. While it is important to have students of both genders and mixed ability in order to ensure the richest possible mix of opinion, it was also essential to facilitate the discussions in such a way as to avoid any ability group or gender dominating the discussions. The students participated in facilitated discussions lasting around 30 minutes and focused on pre-planned topics (see Appendix II), but with considerable flexibility as to how these topics were covered. Topics included the material covered in each enquiry sequence, how important pupils thought it was, and the main things they had learned from the sequence – i.e. themes that attempted to elicit their understandings of different place and how those may have changed over the unit of work. They were then given back the pictures they had drawn in the first lesson, and were asked to comment on the reasoning behind any changes they made in their portrayals of Ghana. In this way, I sought to encounter not just students' individual rationale for making changes but also their reactions to others' changes, stimulating discussion thereby.

Focus groups have a number of benefits as a research method. Vygotsky (1978) suggests that students are able to pick up on and extend each other's ideas in group situations, allowing participants rather than the facilitator to drive the agenda and introduce new ideas; yet at the same time the focus group *is* facilitated and thus more focused than typical, informal group encounters and thus presents the opportunity for focused interchange that produces a large amount of information in a short time (Cohen et al, 2002). In some ways, the focus group can also be a less intimidating environment for some than individual interviews, since the group environment does not require individuals to speak as much as one-to-one encounters. As with all research methods, focus groups do exhibit certain drawbacks. Some individual participants may feel uncomfortable speaking up in group environments, especially when they feel that their opinions differ from the opinions of the rest of the group. As my interest is with changes in the student body as a whole rather than with particular groups (i.e. ethnic or gender groupings) within the student body, it was important to ensure that the focus group participants were representative to some degree (but not in a statistical sense) of the wider group. Facilitators must also take care to ensure that discussion is both focused and relevant, in order to avoid the twin dangers of becoming excessively rigid, on the one hand, and becoming excessively open-ended and irrelevant, on the other. Care was taken to ensure that individual participants give their names at the start of each recorded discussion, so that their views and understandings can be tracked throughout the discussion and in subsequent transcripts. As with the drawbacks of collecting primary material, however, these potential weaknesses were minimised by careful attention to research planning and the conduct of the focus groups.

3.5.6 Classroom Discussion

The third and final qualitative research method I utilised in my research is the recording of classroom discussions. Classroom discussions represent a specific discursive context characterised by systematic power imbalances between teachers and pupils - imbalances that are highly likely to influence pupils' contributions to discussion (Punch, 2009; Morrow, 2008; Valentine, 1998). Most obviously, pupils' verbal contributions do not take place within free-ranging conversation, but are framed within specific lessons designed by the teacher to address particular topics and issues. There is also a clear pedagogical intent behind classroom discussions, with the teacher attempting to elicit opinion, impart knowledge, and (in many instances within geography teaching) break down and challenge stereotypes and simplistic representations of distant places. Accordingly, pupils may try to please teachers by voicing what they imagine are appropriate perspectives, for instance, or they may resist the power

imbalances inherent within classroom teaching by expressing what they see as alternative, possibly controversial perspectives. As such, the nuances and details of classroom discussions are important topics of research.

This dynamic is further complicated by the presence of individual teachers, with varied personalities, knowledge- and skill-sets, and teaching/class management styles. Different teachers are likely to interact differently with the same class of pupils, potentially leading to a wide range of contributions from the same pupils. As it is impossible to conduct lessons with group of pupils for the first time more than once, it is also impossible to evaluate precisely the impact of teachers' characteristics on pupils' contributions in a given context. Nevertheless, teacher positionality can be constructively engaged with by considering how particular aspects of individual teachers' expertise, interests and personality may influence the content and dynamics of classroom discussions.

As a result of these complexities, classroom discussions are not treated in my analysis as transparent reports of pupils' inner worlds elicited in an objective fashion by a neutral teacher-as-researcher, but rather as the emergent product of complex, purpose-oriented, time- and place-specific interactions between a particular set of pupils, an individual teacher (myself), and the subject matter under discussion (Ghana, poverty and development), in the wider context of power-filled 'discursive formations' (Hall, 2003) that influence (and may be influenced in turn by) individuals' representations of distant places. The discourse analysis presented in subsequent chapters is not a 'mere analysis of conversations' (though details of specific verbal exchanges will often be cited and discussed in detail) but rather an attempt to understand 'the position(s) from which the [discursive formation] speaks, the power it carries, and the ideological direction(s) it leads us into' (Inokuchi & Nozaki, 2005: 65).

I interpret this method as a kind of participant observation, or 'the process of collecting data from observations made [through] participating in the… affairs of the research subjects' (Valentine, 1997: 32). Weinberg (2002: 139) states that this approach involves 'finding people where they are' and 'staying with them in some role which, while acceptable to them, will allow both intimate observation of certain parts of their behaviour, and reporting it in ways not harmful to those observed.' Potential roles for the observer vary, ranging from immersion in the activities of the community on the one hand and observation of the community on the other, depending on the kinds of data sought, the researcher's position regarding the community, and the nature of the community to be observed. In my context, my role as a participant observer was structured by my position as a teacher – a position that ensures close involvement in the 'community' of the classroom throughout the enquiry sequences and also the wider school

environment in the school partnership, but which also guaranteed that I was unable to enter fully into the community of students as if I were 'one of them.' I made digital audio recordings of lessons, with the aim of capturing as much detail as possible regarding my interactions with students and students' expressions of their understandings and viewpoints, although one difficulty with digital recordings is the challenge of identifying individual voices while creating transcripts.

Participant observation allows researchers to collect data on non-verbal behaviour and to 'discern ongoing behaviour as it occurs… and to make notes about its salient features' (Cohen et al, 2002: 188). Because participant observation typically takes place over extended time periods, the method also allows researchers to develop deeper relationships with subjects – in this case, children – while avoiding the potential for bias that can emerge in other, more structured research methods. At the same time, participant observation exhibits a number of potential drawbacks as a research method. There are always limits to the extent to which researchers are able to enter the subjective worlds of others in order to grasp their meanings, understandings, and interpretations; thus researchers must be aware of the impossibility of total comprehension, such some areas of knowledge will probably remain beyond reach. There are also potential difficulties arising from the likelihood that observers may influence proceedings by virtue of their presence: 'the observer, in greater or lesser degree, is caught up in the very web of social interaction which he [or she] observes' (Weinberg, 2002: 145). In the educational context, of course, the teacher's role means that she or he is automatically part of the research context and the rich interactions that take place in the classroom (Bassey, 1999). Moreover, if the observations are undertaken with awareness of these issues, such distortions can be minimised. The use of multiple methods also helps to minimise the dynamics introduced by the teacher's position vis-à-vis his or her class (see below regarding the issue of researcher positionality).

3.5.7 Triangulation

The use of a multi-method approach can be seen as 'triangulation', or the attempt to improve the rigour and accuracy of the research process by approaching the same phenomena or set of phenomena from different perspectives. The original meaning of 'triangulation' relates to the process, in navigation, of taking bearings on two landmarks to locate one's position: 'The angle between the two bearings, plus knowledge of the distance between the landmarks, allows the navigator to plot his or her position on a map' (Hammersley, 2008: 23). Yet Hammersley points out that this analogy is problematic if it is applied too literally to multiple methods research,

especially multiple method research informed by a constructionist perspective. While triangulation can be understood to imply the view, especially prevalent in quantitative research, that each method should be used to establish the validity (i.e. the replicability and accuracy) of the findings generated through other methods, constructionist approaches might reject the idea that 'there is a single reality which it is the aim of social research to understand' and emphasise instead 'the belief that there are multiple realities or forms of life, and that research itself is necessarily implicated in these' (Hammersley, 2008: 23). Thus in qualitative, multi-method approaches, 'triangulation' can justifiably be used as a term that does not reflect a rigid attempt to validate initial findings so much as an attempt to 'map out, or explain more fully, the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint' (Cohen et al, 2002: 112). From this point of view, multiple methods can help the researcher both 'to determine what interpretations of phenomena are more and less likely to be valid' *and* 'to provide complementary information that illuminates different aspects of what we are studying' (Hammersley, 2008: 30). This conforms to what Flick (1992) describes as 'methodological triangulation', which attempts to take account of each method's inherent strengths and weaknesses by (as Denzin, 1978; cited Flick, 1992:177 states) 'playing each method off against the other.' My approach can also be described as what Hammersley and Atkinson (1983; cited in Flick, 1992: 177) describe as 'data-source triangulation', involving the 'comparison of data relating to the same phenomenon but deriving from different phases of fieldwork, different points of respondent validation, [and] the accounts of different participants… involved in the setting.' Thus I see multiple methods such as focus groups and participant observation as representing distinct yet complementary sources of data that helped me to highlight different aspects of children's understandings of distant place and Ghana in particular. As such, triangulation added both depth and insight to the research process.

3.5.8 Analytical Techniques

The three research methods mentioned above generated three kinds of data: visual content from drawings and posters; a range of textual content (including transcripts of focus group discussions); and transcripts from classroom discussions. These data were analysed using content and discourse analysis, focused on visual, written, and transcribed content respectively.

With regard to the analysis of children's drawings, the approach I used was a content analysis approach derived from Rose (2001) and informed by an orientation towards discursive meaning-making (Wetherell, 2001). Content analysis involves assessing all the images – i.e. constituent parts of the drawings - within each drawing, focusing in particular on images

relevant to the research question concerned, and attaching descriptive labels to content in those images. The categories used were exhaustive (all images were descriptively labelled) and exclusive (i.e. no overlap) in order to reveal 'patterns too subtle to be visible on casual inspection' (Lutz and Collings, 1993: 89, cited in Rose, 2001: 55). In this way, I sought to ensure that my analysis avoids a common critique of visual images, i.e. that they are under-analysed, serving (as Ball and Smith note) 'as little more than illustrative devices' (1992: 12). In addition to this categorization of images within drawings, I also recorded my overall impressions relating to each drawing and the ways in which each specific image is constructed and situated with regard to other images. While these impressions were less tangible and less easily categorized than the content analysis of the images themselves, it was important to record my impressions of the drawings as a whole in order to capture holistic aspects of the drawings in addition to their specific content. In this way, I sought to avoid a further critique often levelled at content analysis – i.e. that it allows for the fragmentation and decontextualisation of content. This critique is particularly important in the context of my thesis, since decontextualized data could be seen as facilitating an apolitical, non-critical, quasi-positivist view of content – a view in opposition to discourse analysis. Rather, I drew upon a discourse analytic perspective to inform my content analysis of visual data, on the basis that discourse analysis is not limited to the study of talk or written language but rather to the 'study of human meaning-making… [within] a much broader definition of discourse' (Wetherell, 2001: 3). This approach also resonates with Foucault's insistence that power is enacted through a range of discursive practices, including institutions, architectural arrangements, regulations, law, and administrative measures as well as written and spoken language (Hall, 2003). Consequently, I regarded issues of power as being just as central to my content analysis of visual content as they were to my more textual analysis of classroom discussions and written material.

In terms of textual primary material and transcripts of classroom discussions, I utilised a discourse analysis approach to analyse students' written work and focus group transcripts. In this context, 'discourses' may be defined as 'sets of linguistic material that are coherent in organisation and content and enable people to construct meaning in social contexts' (Cohen et al, 2002: 298). As this definition suggests, discourse analysis embodies a non-objectivist, constructionist view of the world, disavowing ideas of a single discoverable reality in favour of an acceptance of multiple 'versions of reality propounded by members of the social setting being investigated' (Bryman, 2008: 500). In Potter's framing, discourse analysis 'emphasises the way versions of the world, of society, events and inner psychological worlds are produced in discourse' (1997: 146). Moreover, critical discourse analysis has been linked to normative

theories such as Foucauldian poststructuralism and Habermasian critical theory, leading to an interest in interrogating the 'repressive forces', associated with power, that systematically distort communication (Cohen et al. 2002; Bryman, 2008) – an interest that resonates with my overarching Africanist perspective and Foucauldian approach. In the educational context, discourse analysis has been identified with an understanding of children's thinking that emphasises the role of language as 'situated discursive practice' (Edwards, 1991; cited in Cohen et al, 2002: 299) – an emphasis that echoes my concern to approach children's understandings as (at least partially) socially constructed. As Inokuchi and Nozaki (2005: 65) put it, discourse analysis is 'not a mere analysis of conversations and writings, but an attempt to explicate the position(s) from which the discourse speaks, the power it carries, and the ideological direction(s) it leads us into'. As such, discourse analysis is better suited to my research agenda than alternatives such as thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006), which does not embody a similarly marked focus on power or constructionism. As Hardy et al (2004: 19) state, '[w]here other qualitative methodologies work to understand or interpret social reality as it exists, discourse analysis tries to uncover the way that reality is produced.'

In terms of the analysis itself, discourse analysis consists of a 'careful reading and interpretation of textual material, with interpretation being supported by the linguistic evidence' (Cohen et al, 2002: 299) and by the situation of discourses within their broader context (Hardy et al, 2004). In my research, the interpretation of textual material such as focus group transcripts or students' written work proceeded principally by the assignation of codes (analytical categories of varying precision) to parts of texts relating to particular topics (Cohen et al, 2002). Codes represent understandings of the meanings of particular parts of texts and enable these meanings to be accessed quickly and compared with other meanings to generate wider themes (Bazeley, 2013). For Punch (2009: 175), '[c]oding is the starting activity in qualitative analysis' and is 'central' for analysis concerned (as my analysis was) with 'discovering regularities in the data'. Critics of coding suggest that it can lead to a 'culture of fragmentation' (Atkinson, 1992; cited Punch, 2009: 190), decontextualising findings by breaking data into ever-smaller fragments, and point to alternatives such as narratological and semiotic approaches. However, embedding coding within a discourse analysis perspective ensures that wider, contextual aspects of the data are foregrounded, thus protecting against decontextualisation. Another line of critique emphasises the possibility that subjective aspects of coding foreground aspects of data that are of particular interest to the researcher doing the coding, potentially distorting data to serve particular theoretical perspectives. However, this critique relies on an essentially positivist attitude to data that conceives of data as expressing

an objective truth vulnerable to distortion by subjective researchers. As against this, my constructionist perspective suggests that meanings arise in an emergent manner through the interaction between researchers and data. From this perspective, it is to be expected that a particular researcher's analysis of data will foreground certain aspects rather than others. Furthermore, the choice of analytical frame for a given case study is likely to influence the particular emphases in the analytical procedure.

In my analysis of textual materials, the provisional codes generated in this manner were revisited, modified, and reorganised in an iterative manner as new items of interest emerged and shed light on existing codes, data, and theoretical ideas; the data were then coded according to the finalised, or 'focused', codes (Bazeley, 2013). These codes and accompanying data were then grouped into provisional themes and related sub-themes, which were reviewed in light of preceding analysis to ensure that data and codes cohere meaningfully within the provisional themes and that the themes were clearly distinguishable. This process represents an example of 'iterative induction', with categories emerging from materials in an ongoing process of moving from data to categories and vice versa (Crang, 1997).

In analyzing both these kinds of textual materials, I followed coding and thematic generation with re-examination of the texts in their wider context in an attempt to uncover 'intentions, functions and consequences of the discourse' (Cohen et al, 2002: 300), especially those relating to, potentially influenced by, or propounding, Africanist representations, and related emotional and affective responses. In the focus group context, this re-examination also sought to take account of interactions within the group and the way in which these may have affected (and been affected by) the topics under discussion. By considering alternative explanations and the degree to which texts vary internally, I attempted as far as possible to clarify the extent to which my interpretation was a fair interpretation with a sound basis in my primary materials.

In addition to coding, I also made use of basic quantitative methods in order to present some aspects of the data in a clearly visible manner, for instance by presenting tables or graphs that illustrate the frequency with which a particular topic or theme was mentioned in a piece of writing. As stated by Mays and Pope (1995: 112), this quantification is 'used merely to condense the results to make them easily intelligible', and as such the 'approach to the analysis remains qualitative.'

These methods of making sense of my data offered the potential to organise large quantities of previously undifferentiated primary data in addition to contributing to processes of theoretical development. However, there was also a need to ensure that 'etic' categories –

codes developed by the researcher in light of salient academic literatures – did not become excessively dominant over 'emic' categories, i.e. categories emerging from subjects' (in this case the students') own meanings and interpretations (Crang, 1997). There was also a need to ensure that categories are not treated too simplistically or quantitatively - i.e. that the number of times a particular category emerges in the data is not seen as a demonstration of that category's importance, without paying attention to the content and context of that category in the broader context of the data collected (Moris and Copestake, 1993) - a concern related to the discourse analysis focus on situating discourses within their social context. Moreover, some data fit strongly into a particular category while others fit more weakly, problematising simplistic analyses. Lastly, researchers must ensure that they do not 'cherry-pick' data in order to fit with research questions, as, arguably, is the case in Inokuchi and Nozaki's work (2005), where words such as "different", "strange", "weird" were plucked out of children's writings, albeit in a systematic rather than necessarily a selective fashion, to demonstrate 'proof' that Othering was taking place. These difficulties are constant dangers for researchers utilising content and discourse analyses, but with sufficient attention to their potential dangers their impact should be minimised.

Table 3.1, overleaf, summarises my overall research agenda by presenting the two research questions alongside research methods and analytical techniques.

Table 3.1 Research Questions, Research Methods, and Analytical Techniques

Research question	Research methods	Analytical technique

1. What initial understandings do students communicate regarding Ghana and Africa at the beginning of a three-part unit of work?
 	
2. Were Africanist discourses manifested in children's initial understandings, and to what extent is Africanism a useful tool for interpreting these understandings?
	▪ Collection of written work, including:
	  ▪ Imaginary Ghanaian Letters to English pen-pals
	  ▪ Imaginary travel guide
	  ▪ Essay about English food
	  ▪ Dictionary entries on poverty and development
	  ▪ Blogs and Wordle summing up pupils' learning
	▪ Collection of non-written primary materials, including:
	  ▪ 'Window' drawings into Ghana
	  ▪ Poster comparing the UK and Ghana
	▪ Class wall display on fair trade and development
		▪ Discourse analysis of written work on Ghana
		▪ Discourse analysis of classroom transcripts
		▪ Content analysis of children's drawings on window into Ghana, and other visual materials produced

3. How do these understandings change (become more nuanced) over a unit of work?	▪ Collection of written work and drawings (as above) ▪ Participant observation ▪ Focus groups	▪ Discourse analysis of classroom transcripts ▪ Discourse analysis of written work throughout the sequence and repeated writing and drawings post-sequence ▪ Discourse analysis of transcripts from early, mid- and late-sequence focus group ▪ Content analysis of children's drawings on window into Ghana, and other visual materials produced

While these two strands of my research agenda are analytically separable, they draw on overlapping primary data and utilise similar analytical techniques; moreover my agenda explicitly embraces triangulation as a means to add depth and insight to the analytical process. Consequently, while these strands are presented separately in Table 1, considerable and productive crossover between these strands occurred in the course of the research.

3.6 Data Collection Timeline

Table 3.2 sets out the timeline that I followed during the collection of data during the 2013-4 academic year utilizing the fieldwork methods detailed above, in line with the three-part unit of work set out in Appendix I.

Table 3.2 Data Collection Timeline

Enquiry Sequence	Associated Lessons*	Time of year	Research Activities
Enquiry Sequence 1: *Ghana: A Different Place?*	1-4	September 2013	Primary data collected: • Window drawings of Ghana • Written accounts of similarities/differences between the UK and Ghana • Travel guide entry about Ghana • Essay on English and Ghanaian food • Written account of why some countries are more 'developed' than others • Classroom discussion recordings • Focus group 1 recording (post lesson 4)
Enquiry Sequence 2: *Does Poverty Matter?*	5-9	October 2013	Primary data collected: • Written account of limitations of development indicators • Written interpretation of photographs of MDC and LDC cities • Written account of pros and cons of happiness indicators • Dictionary entries on poverty and development • Written account of small-scale development projects • Poster comparing Ghana and the UK • Classroom discussion recordings • Focus group 2 recording (post lesson 9)
Enquiry Sequence 3: *Has Development worked in Ghana?*	10-14	November 2013	Primary data collected: • Spider diagram on Akosombo Dam • Written account of the chocolate trade • Class wall display on fair trade and development • Pupils' blogs and Wordles summing up their views of Ghana • Classroom discussion recordings • Focus group 3 recording (post lesson 14)

*See Appendix I for more details.

3.7 Researcher Positionality

The use of qualitative fieldwork methods raises the question of positionality – i.e. the notion that the researcher's personal and social characteristics, and position in social and administrative structures, will exert significant impacts both on how the researcher perceives her surroundings and how others may perceive her. In this context, Taylor (2011a: 1037) draws upon Doreen Massey's theorization of space as made up of 'bundle[s] of trajectories' in order to emphasise the need to consider each case study context as a holistic and dynamic whole comprising 'students, teacher, researcher, resources, classroom environment.' As Punch (2009: 45) notes, 'all researchers come to their project from some 'position'… [t]here is no such thing as a 'position-free project'.' Yet these issues are perhaps particularly noticeable with regard to teachers undertaking educational research, since teachers occupy positions of authority in schools and as such are perceived differently by children than those who do not occupy such positions: 'Power and status differentials raise the possibility that children may find it difficult to dissent, disagree, or say things which adults may not like' (Punch, 2009: 47). This can lead children to say things that they believe teachers wish to hear; as Howard (1994; cited in Valentine, 1997: 124) states, 'the very presence of the [teacher as] researcher, by virtue of the respondents' perception of his or her being a powerful person, can generate a whole host of expectations on the part of respondents [which can lead] interviewees to tell the researcher what they believe she or he wants to hear.' Overcoming or at least challenging these concerns depends on teachers generating rapport with students, communicating the purpose of the proposed research project, and ensuring that students are participating in the project on the basis of voluntary and informed consent (Punch, 2009).

It is also important to acknowledge that individual teachers' particular experiences, perspectives, and worldview – their *position* - can impact upon classroom dynamics to a considerable extent, with implications for the wider relevance of research conducted through their teaching. In her study of young people's representations of Japan, for instance, Taylor (2011a: 1040) notes that the teacher leading lessons on Japan was 'relatively atypical in her [high] level of knowledge and interest regarding Japan', such that 'any generalisation from [this] case to other contexts must be tentative.' Nevertheless, as Taylor points out (citing Stake, 1995), researchers can 'use the uniqueness of one case to illustrate ways in which each case is likely to be complex' (2011a: 1040). In the context of my research on Ghana, it was important to remember that my knowledge of and interest in Ghana and Africa more generally likely exceeded that of most other geography teachers, such that my research (like Taylor's) illuminated how each case was complex rather than producing 'generalisable results' on a positivist model. My approach corresponds more closely to the model of 'fuzzy' generalisation

described by Bassey (2001: 5), which 'replaces the certainty of scientific generalisation ('x in y circumstances results in z') [with] the uncertainty, or fuzziness, of statements that contain qualifiers ('x in y circumstances may result in z'). Bassey suggests moreover that 'fuzzy predictions' of this kind, when supported by research accounts that clarify the context of the prediction and the evidence justifying it, can serve as a guide to professional action. In the context of my research, this approach raises the possibility that case study research on changing representations may lead not just to new research insight but also to pedagogical insights of value to geography educators more widely.

3.8 Research Ethics

Researchers have increasingly recognised that ethics and ethical issues, understood in this context as moral principles and rules of conduct relevant to the conduct of research, are key concerns when carrying out research involving students (Valentine, 1998; Morrow, 2008). Increasingly, educational scholars recognise that much preceding research was 'adultist' in the sense that it involved an approach to children that emphasised working 'on' or 'for' children rather than 'with' children. As against this approach, educational scholars now highlight the distinctive ethical challenges of conducting research with children as opposed to other population groups owing to specific constructions of childhood, particularly aforementioned 'adultist' constructions that have tended to downplay the value of children's voices and perspectives (Morrow, 2008). Consequently, recent research has given greater priority to ethical issues such as children's consent, compliance, privacy and confidentiality, and, more widely, issues of (differential) power as they present themselves in educational research (Valentine, 1998). Scholars also recognise that these ethical concerns are entangled with the impacts of wider social factors such as culture, age, gender, ethnic background, and personal characteristics, in addition to children's complex relationships with a range of adults and the need to negotiate and mediate access to research participants through adult gatekeepers, with implications for understandings of informed consent (Morrow, 2008). A final, yet broader concern relates to the researcher's own position of power in terms of defining the purpose and nature of the research, the methods used to collect data, and the means used to disseminate research finding (although as Morrow [2008] notes, similar concerns are often relevant to research carried out with adults).

In the context of my own research, I drew upon ethical guidelines published by The British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2011). According to these guidelines, children must understand the process in which they will be engaged, why their participation is

necessary and how the research will be used. The guidelines clearly state that the best interests of the child must be at the forefront of every investigation (point 14). Upon starting the unit of work, students were made aware that the sequences of lessons formed part of a piece of research I was carrying out, and had the option of not participating in the research project (i.e. the student in question could participate in the classwork and learning but would not be included in the data collection, focus groups, and so on); likewise, students' parents were also informed and were able to ask that their child not participate if they wish. (In the event, no students chose not to participate.) In this way, voluntary informed consent took place. Informed consent is taken to be '[T]he condition where participants understand and agree to their participation, without any duress prior to the research getting underway' (BERA, 2011: 6). A gatekeeper for my research was chosen – my Head of Department - who was able to act in giving consent on behalf of the class. This person was a useful contact in discussing ethical aspects of the research and was kept fully informed about the research throughout the investigation. Written consent was acquired from parents of students used in the focus group in order to allow the students to participate fully in the investigation (see letter in Appendix III).

Students were informed furthermore that all research would be anonymous and although names of students are referred to in my final thesis, they are not the actual names of the participants. This again complies with the BERA guidelines on anonymity. Pseudonyms were chosen randomly, although male and female students were allocated male and female names for clarity.

Students' verbal contributions are reported verbatim, and students' written contributions are presented in their original form (i.e. without correction of spelling or grammar). While this makes comprehension more challenging in some places, it also provides a more authentic way to access students' changing representations.

The right to withdraw from research at any point is acknowledged in the guidelines (point 13). Students were able to decline to take part in the focus groups, and were asked if they wished to do so at different points. BERA's guidelines also refer to the use of appropriate methods (points 36 and 37). The methods used were discussed with a supervisor and gatekeeper before research was underway.

Chapter Four

Children's Initial Representations of Ghana and Africa

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents my research findings regarding children's initial representations of Ghana and Africa. These findings cover a range of formats, encompassing oral, visual and written materials, and were gathered in the first few lessons in the first enquiry sequence (Enquiry Sequence 1: *Ghana: A Different Place?*). Collectively, they present a multi-dimensional account of children's representations of Ghana, and to some extent Africa more widely, as expressed in a number of different modalities including verbal classroom discussion, window drawings, and a range of written materials including accounts of differences and similarities between the UK and Ghana, travel guide entries, and discussions of Ghanaian foods. All these initial data are analysed from a poststructuralist perspective, utilising discourse analysis to analyse written and verbal materials and content analysis oriented towards a discursive, meaning-making and power-sensitive approach to analyse visual materials. The focus throughout is on pupils' initial representations of distant (African) places in various kinds of 'situated discursive practice[s]' (Edwards, 1991; cited in Cohen et al, 2002: 299). Chapter Five proceeds to explore how these initial representations changed during the course of the unit of work, while Chapter Six considers the 'final' representations expressed through a variety of media by children at the end of the last enquiry sequence. As such, this chapter engages most directly with research questions 1-2, while Chapters Five and Six engage most directly with research question 3:

1. What initial understandings do children communicate regarding Ghana and Africa at the beginning of a three-part unit of work on Ghana?
2. Were Africanist discourses manifested in children's initial understandings, and to what extent is Africanism a useful tool for interpreting these understandings?
3. How do children's understandings change (e.g. become more nuanced) over the course of the unit of work?

Subsequently, the discussion in Chapter Seven will explore the utility of an Africanist approach in terms of deepening our understandings of children's representations of distant places, and the implications of this for geography education more widely.

The findings presented in this chapter foreground pupils' initial knowledge about and attitudes towards Ghana and (in some instances) Africa more widely. However, the description of these representations as 'initial' should not be interpreted as implying that pupils *only* expressed the views analysed below in the first few lessons (although they were notably more common in the initial lessons). Rather, the term refers in a conceptual sense to instances in which pupils expressed views that resonated with (and/or were directly or indirectly influenced by) Africanist discourses – views that were often subsequently altered or transformed by engagement with the geographical content of the lessons. Such points of view were often expressed with regard to new subject areas as they emerged during the unit of work – such as development or poverty – despite representations of a similar character having been previously expressed (and altered) on different topics in previous lessons, suggesting that children's understandings of distant places may be made up of a range of specific but weakly-held impressions on particular topics rather than an integrated, strongly-held set of interlinked representations.

4.2 Classroom Discussion

Pupils' initial representations of Ghana and Africa in classroom discussions tended to fall into three broad categories: positive stereotypes; negative stereotypes; and non-stereotypical representations. Stereotypes are not neutral ways to organise thematic material; rather, they exercise power through simplification, and specifically through replacing complexity and diversity with uniformity. As noted in Chapter Two, the novelist Chimananda Ngoza Adichie (2009) critiqued stereotypes as follows: 'the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story.' The act of stereotyping renders material easier to comprehend and thus easier to control, just as the act of mapping new colonial territories was not a neutral exercise in cartography but rather a way to process and administer complex and diverse geographical space. As Harley (1992) explored with regard to colonial cartography, maps played a crucial role in (as Bryan puts it) 'assembling information from heterodox, and often incommensurable, sources to fashion the geographical imagination that defined colonialism's field of action' (2009: 26). Similarly, children's positive and negative stereotypical representations of distant (African) places can both be read as instances of Africanist discourse – i.e. discourse that simplifies in order to enact power,

reducing the 'diversity of African historical experiences and trajectories, socio-cultural contexts and political situations' (Andreasson, 2005: 971).

Illustrative quotations from both of these categories are included below, selected in order to illuminate the general character of children's remarks rather than unusual or striking cases. The first group of representations emphasised what children saw (in my interpretation of their remarks) as stereotypically positive aspects of Ghanaian life, while the second (and more common) group of representations emphasised what children saw (again in my interpretation) as stereotypically negative aspects. Regardless of category, representations of both kinds tended to express simplified, caricatured views that (again in my view) fell short of the complexity and diversity inherent within Ghanaian society and geography. Many of these representations were also revealing in terms of children's discursive positions, exemplifying their privileged situation in terms of resources and capabilities vis-a-vis their Ghanaian counterparts. The following analysis considers the positive and negative categories of representations in turn, before proceeding to consider non-stereotypical representations – i.e. the relatively unusual remarks that children uttered without reference to either positive or negative stereotypes about African distant places. These remarks are considered as, therefore, relatively free from Africanist influences – though this does not mean that they cannot be considered as being influenced by other power-filled discourses and positions (for instance, children's ostensibly subordinate position within the classroom). As Wetherell (2003: 24) states, in a Bakhtinian vein, 'when we speak we combine together many different pieces of other conversations and texts and… voices. We are often quoting'. When pupils speak of Africa or other distant places in a seemingly neutral way, they may be (consciously or otherwise) invoking other power-filled discourses, including those present within educational institutions. As Kesby writes in the context of participatory development, even the most exhaustive and apparently inclusive forms of discourse may 'constitute a form of power that has dominating effects' (2005: 2038).

Within the analysis, pupils are given pseudonyms and each discussion is referenced to the relevant lesson within the unit of work.

4.2.1 Positive Stereotypes

Pupils' positive initial representations about Ghana revolved around a number of interrelated topical areas, including food, appearance, livelihoods, and lifestyle. These topical areas emerged from children's remarks in the context of pre-planned lesson structures (see Appendix I for details); as such, they should be considered as co-created products of classroom

educational interactions rather than free-ranging student reflection on distant places. In these topical areas, almost all pupils (19 of 21) uttered both questions and statements that revealed a number of positive stereotypes regarding everyday life in Ghana. In terms of food, for instance, one child suggested that 'daily calorific [intake]' in Ghana might be lower than in the UK because Ghanaians 'eat quite healthy stuff' (Celia, lesson 4). Since this statement was made in a lesson that followed earlier discussions of Ghanaian recipes (see Appendix I for details), this comment may reflect the view that Ghanaians tend to use local ingredients, including 'vegetables and plantain' (as Emily said in Lesson 4), rather than processed foods as in the UK. Of course, the use of local ingredients is strongly associated with healthy eating in Western countries, an association that may have been picked up on by some of the children. Nevertheless, the use of local ingredients does not guarantee that Ghanaians eat healthily – indeed, it is often a factor in low dietary diversity - and this image of 'healthy eating' is at odds with widespread malnutrition, especially child malnutrition, in Ghana.

A number of pupils also used Western lenses to suggest sources of food, as evidenced by one child suggesting 'fish farms' as a potential source of food for children in the Ghanaian partner school (which is located near the sea):

Teacher: [They have] lots of fish. Because the school is near to?
Charlie: Fish farms.

Lesson 1

The child's presumption that fish farms would provide the fish that children eat, rather than (e.g.) the sea, can be read as a reflection of pupils' privileged experience of eating fish sourced from fish farms and a disengagement from more 'natural' sources of fish such as rivers, lakes and the sea, enabled by their positioning as relatively affluent members of an advanced Western economy. Similarly, while another child's question in a lesson – 'would they have crème fraiche?' (Emily; lesson 4) – illustrates an awareness of the possibility that such items might not be widely available in Ghana, the question itself nevertheless indicates uncertainty in this regard. This uncertainty in turn can be seen as an indication of a positive (if somewhat unrealistic) attitude on the part of some pupils towards the availability of products associated with European cuisine in Ghana.

At times, pupils linked the topic of food with considerations relating to lifestyle and poverty. Some remarks suggested that Ghanaians have a good quality of life because they can live off the land and eat well in rural (as opposed to urban) areas:

Poverty doesn't matter so much in Ghana because it doesn't have so much cities, because you could be in poverty but you're living a good life and you can still eat in the countryside.

<div align="right">Pete (lesson 3)</div>

Similarly, four other children in lesson 3 stated that Ghanaians have skills that have become less important to Western people, including farming and fishing. These food-related considerations were complemented by reflections on Ghanaian lifestyles and livelihoods more generally, which three pupils saw as embodying a positive relationship with the land: 'they have a better life really because they get to be outside in the sun' (Angela, lesson 2); and 'they can get their wood [for building materials] from the forest surroundings' (Oliver, lesson 3). Three pupils also expressed sharply contrasting, but still positive, impressions about lifestyle factors such as transport, assuming for instance that pupils in Ghana 'could have a car to go to school' (Jonny; lesson 5). In this instance, the positivity arises from an impression – or assumption – of sameness between the United Kingdom and Ghana. Power, in this context, can be seen in the lack of awareness that some things considered as standard features of modern life in Britain – such as cars and access to education – may not be standard in countries which are less affluent than Britain.

A final topical area in which pupils expressed positive representations relates to Ghanaians' personal appearance. A majority (17) of pupils praised Ghanaians' happy appearance (as seen in photographs and also in Ghanaians' visits to the school as part of the partnership programme). In the excerpt below, one pupil interprets their appearance as suggesting happiness despite poverty while another, by contrast, highlights how Ghanaians' white teeth, clothes and haircuts point towards a lack of poverty:

Gemma – It might be poverty and yet they look quite happy.

Imogen– They've all got smiles and clean clothes.

Mary – They've got very white teeth which means they have enough money to brush teeth, they've got colourful clothes, they've got their hair shaved off so they've been to a barber or something.

Charlotte – The girls are wearing earrings too.

Andrew – Just because they're poor doesn't mean they aren't happy.

<div align="right">Lesson 7</div>

Clearly, these positive impressions overlook some important factors, such as the fact that a lack of processed food and sugar is more likely to contribute to Ghanaians' good dental health than costly dental hygiene, and that haircuts, clothes, and jewellery are often far cheaper in Ghana than in the UK (though not necessarily more affordable in local contexts). Nevertheless, the recognition that poverty can coexist with happiness is an important insight, which will be discussed in Chapter Five. Yet children's emphasis on Ghanaian positivity also overlooks a wider field of power dynamics, in the context of which Ghanaians may feel obliged to *appear* to be happy when having their photographs taken in the context of a school partnership from which their community stands to benefit, or when visiting my school in England, when they may feel compelled to adopt the role of ambassador to that community. The children did not appear to consider the possibility that appearances may be deceptive, or rather, that appearances may reflect behaviour undertaken in line with wider power dynamics rather than expressing individuals 'true' inner feelings in an uncomplicated way. This lack of consideration can be read in Africanist terms, as an assumption arising from a powerful socio-economic and geographical position in which appearances need not be distorted to fit with wider power dynamics.

4.2.2 Negative Stereotypes

While a number of pupils voiced positive initial representations of Ghana and Ghanaians from time to time in a range of lessons, most pupils more commonly voiced negative representations in a range of topical areas, including Ghanaian culture, human geography, and socio-economic development. Again, these topics emerged in part from the topics of lessons as envisaged in my unit of work (Appendix I). I have chosen to frame these representations as being stereotypically negative here by virtue of their alignment with worldviews that present one-dimensional or outdated impressions of distant places. In terms of culture first of all, six pupils demonstrated a number of Africanist representations in the first few classroom discussions (particularly lessons 2-7). These often revolved around stereotypical images of Africa, such as tribes, 'natives', and traditional societies. One pupil, in response to a discussion about Ghanaian cookery, suggested that they use 'cauldrons' rather than 'cookers [i.e. ovens]' (David; lesson 4) – an antiquated term more associated with witches and, more widely, mediaeval and earlier periods, than contemporary cooking in Western countries, thus emphasising the cultural (and, as Massey [2005] would note, historical) distance between pupils' lifestyles and Ghanaians'. This notion was emphasised by another pupil, who suggested that the Ghanaian recipes sent to the school by pupils from the partner school served to inform the class about 'special traditions'

(Angela, lesson 4) rather than regional specialties. In the same lesson, and also with regard to cookery, another pupil (Tom) highlighted the vagueness of the timings provided in the Ghanaian recipes, before suggesting that this vagueness extended to Ghanaians' sense of time in general: 'Isn't it a bit like anything, any time goes?' In this way, pupils used the topic of food – a topic of immediate and everyday importance – to frame Ghana as distant not only geographically but historically. This discursive move also frames Britain as the geographical core and, simultaneously, the historical present, in opposition to Ghana – a move that endows Britain with power and situates pupils' discursive position as one of power and affluence. (A similar framing occurs with regard to discussion of Fair Trade chocolate; see section 6.4.1).

Moving beyond the topic of food, other pupils asked questions that emphasised the continuing salience of old-fashioned stereotypes about African societies. James, for instance, asked in the first lesson about the presence of tribes in Ghana:

> James – Are there still tribes, are there tribal wars?
> Teacher – How do you think of tribes?
> James – Um, like people who go round with spears, hunting.
>
> Lesson 1

In a similar vein, a pupil in a later lesson described indigenous inhabitants of distant places in general as 'natives' (Victoria, lesson 8), while another, introducing a dated usage, asked if most of the Ghanaian population is 'coloured' (Darryl, lesson 9). In addition to these suggestions of tribal, traditional societies, another pupil (Gemma) suggested in lesson 10 that Africans in general lacked the initiative or intelligence to make the most of their natural resources: 'Africa should be the richest continent because it has loads of diamonds but nobody is smart enough to get it, like dig it up'.

With regard to Ghanaians' lifestyles and living conditions, five pupils commented on what were seen as negative aspects of living conditions in impoverished countries. Again, a number of pupils' remarks suggested a dated understanding of African countries, in this case notions of people living in 'primitive' accommodation: 'They live in shacks, mud houses and huts' (Ed, lesson 2). Later in the same lesson, Victoria stated that Ghanaians 'can't build big houses like we have', while Oliver suggested in lesson 9 that buildings in poorer countries like Ghana tended to be built for 'practicality' rather than with the aim of being 'aesthetically pleasing'. These rather sweeping statements seems to embody the view that Ghanaians'

housing typically occupies a subordinate position to British housing not just in terms of economic, but also in terms of cultural, standards.

More generally, more than half of the children (13 of 21) exhibited negative attitudes towards socio-economic aspects of Ghana, surrounding the broad perception that (as one pupil expressed it) 'the UK is very modern and in Ghana [it's] less modern' (Tom, lesson 9). When asked to contribute questions that could be asked to determine the level of development in a given country, seven pupils emphasised negative aspects of society such as corruption and starvation:

Celia – Is your government corrupt?

[...]

James – How many people starve to death per year in your country?

Lesson 6

While these questions emphasise the difference of African countries compared to wealthy, Western societies, another pupil suggested that other countries' levels of development could be judged by establishing their degree of similarity to Britain: 'we might judge how nice [another country] is on similarities with us' (Charlie, lesson 9). One pupil linked this approach to Britain's strategic relationships with other countries: '[development indicators] tell you whether you can trust the country or not' (Ed, lesson 9).

Taken together, the sentiments analysed in this section exemplified initial perceptions of African societies, and Ghana in particular, as 'backward', traditional, undeveloped, and pre-modern. Such negative stereotypes both invoke and recreate Africanist discourses that rely on notions of 'timelessness, savagery… tribal identity, conflict, and environmental disasters' (Mawdsley, 2008: 512), thus providing some support for the notion that Africanism is a useful conceptual tool for understanding children's initial views of Ghana and Africa more widely.

4.2.3 Non-Stereotypical Content

This section of the analysis considers remarks by children that embodied neither positive nor negative stereotypes but, rather, set out views of distant places that seemed (in my view) to be relatively free of Africanist influences. Thus, while the preceding two sections of analysis considered ways in which classroom discussions seemed to exemplify what Foucault would term the 'circulation' of power-filled discourses (Hall, 2003; Kesby, 2005), this section considers representations that seemed to escape these discourses. As mentioned above, this

does not necessarily mean that these representations escaped *all* discourses. In particular, it must be remembered that pupils talking in classroom contexts may be keen to say what they think the teacher wants to hear, or, less personally, to conform to their perceptions of general norms in the subject. In the case of geography education, as discussed in previous chapters, pupils may have gained the impression that, as Binns (1996:177) states, '[g]eography has traditionally been responsible for promoting awareness, interest and understanding of the diversity of the world's people and places'. The teacher's position of authority in the classroom is an unavoidable aspect of education, while geographers' commitment to diversity is arguably a progressive aspect of the subject's general character. Nevertheless, these phenomena are still constructed from particular perspectives and supported by organisations and discourses which exemplify the operations of power, and which may be perceived as such by students who occupy positions of relative powerlessness in the educational system.

Pupils voiced non-stereotypical representations in a number of the topics considered above with regard to negative and positive stereotypes. With regard to food, for example, one student (Charlie) stated in lesson 4 that a Ghanaian dish, Jolof, 'looks like paella', providing an example of what Moscovici would refer to as 'anchoring' the new in the already familiar (Moscovici, 1984). By referring to the dish's appearance, Charlie's statement expresses a willingness to acknowledge that food in distant places is both different and similar: it looks like paella (similar) but is not paella (different). The statement is neutral, neither positive or negative. In the same lesson, Victoria referred to her Ghanaian recipe to note that it contained okra, which, she added, 'we also use in this country.' Again, this is a neutral statement that implies a form of similarity between Britain and Ghana while also maintaining difference: '*we* also use in *this* country' (emphases added). Lastly in lesson 4, Tom stated that 'some ingredients here might not be common in Ghana.' While this could be taken as a comment on Ghana's relative poverty and thus its inability to import the wide range of foodstuffs available in Britain, it can also be read as reflecting the view that different countries simply tend to have different dominant foodstuffs available, as can be seen when visiting supermarkets in European countries. In these and other similar remarks, I interpret pupils as striking a balance between positivity and negativity and advancing views that acknowledge both similarities and differences between distant places and the UK.

Exemplifying this general approach, Celia said, in the first lesson, 'in some ways [Ghana] is similar but in some ways it's different.' Similarly balanced views were evident on a range of topics other than food. With regard to issues surrounding socioeconomic development, Andrew stated in lesson 7 that 'Ghana isn't the most rich country but it's not like

it's a bad country [to] be in, it's still a good country.' This approach presents a view that downgrades relative affluence as a key factor in judging whether or not a country can be described as 'good' or 'bad' (criteria for which were not provided by Andrew), thus working to some extent against wider power dynamics that privilege wealthier countries such as Britain – or, alternatively, disarming criticisms of economic inequality on the grounds that it is not linked to evaluations of whether a country is 'good' or 'bad.' In lesson 8, Oliver stated in a similar vein that 'the people can be happy with what they have no matter what their country's like' – a view that can be seen as a comment upon those living in powerful countries as well as less powerful countries. Similarly, then, this remark can be read as neither challenging nor endorsing but rather escaping Africanist discourses (if not necessarily other power-filled discourses).

At times, some children were reluctant to express a clear opinion regarding conditions in Ghana. In lesson 8, for example, Imogen stated that 'to get a real idea you have to go and see what's like.' This was allied to a perception that development indicators were 'just facts and guidelines' (Ed, lesson 8) and that poverty 'can be different depending on the place' (Victoria, lesson 8), a view that may evidence a more sophisticated appreciation that frames associated with children's own background may not be transferable to other contexts. Even in comments that related specifically to Ghanaian poverty, some remarks were phrased in terms that could equally apply to disadvantaged people in Western economies – as seen for instance in Pete's remark in lesson 6 that: 'people might not be able to afford university. Maybe they can't get enough money.' In a similar vein, answering the question 'what makes people happy?', Victoria stated: 'being content with what they have'- an answer equally as relevant to wealthier countries as to poorer countries.

Overall, these and other similar remarks made by children on various topics in the classroom context attest to the fact that not all classroom discourse is characterised by Africanist influences. Whereas much classroom discourse was characterised by both positive and negative stereotypes, there were also instances in which children spoke of distant places in ways that seemed to avoid these specific aspects of geographically-informed power-filled discourses. As mentioned above, this does not necessarily mean that children were able to avoid powerful discourses altogether. Nevertheless, it does indicate that Africanist influences, though clearly a powerful factor in children's initial understandings of distant places, were not determining factors in the representations with which they expressed these understandings.

4.3 Visual Materials

This section of the chapter utilises discursively-oriented and power-sensitive visual content analysis methods in order to analyse and explore visual materials gathered from pupils in the course of my research agenda. Window drawings are a visual genre in which pupils are asked create a free-form representation of a particular place as if seen through a window in that place. In line with my previous work on Egypt (Kennedy, 2011), the students were reminded before starting their drawing of general human and physical geographical concepts that they might want to incorporate in their drawings, such as weather, culture, landscape, and people. No more specific suggestions were provided. The drawings are mostly visual, but (as mentioned above) most students also included written labels to explain particular aspects of their drawings. Fig 4.1, below, presents two sample initial window drawing in order to illustrate the kinds of content that children typically included.

Fig 4.1 Sample Initial Window Drawings
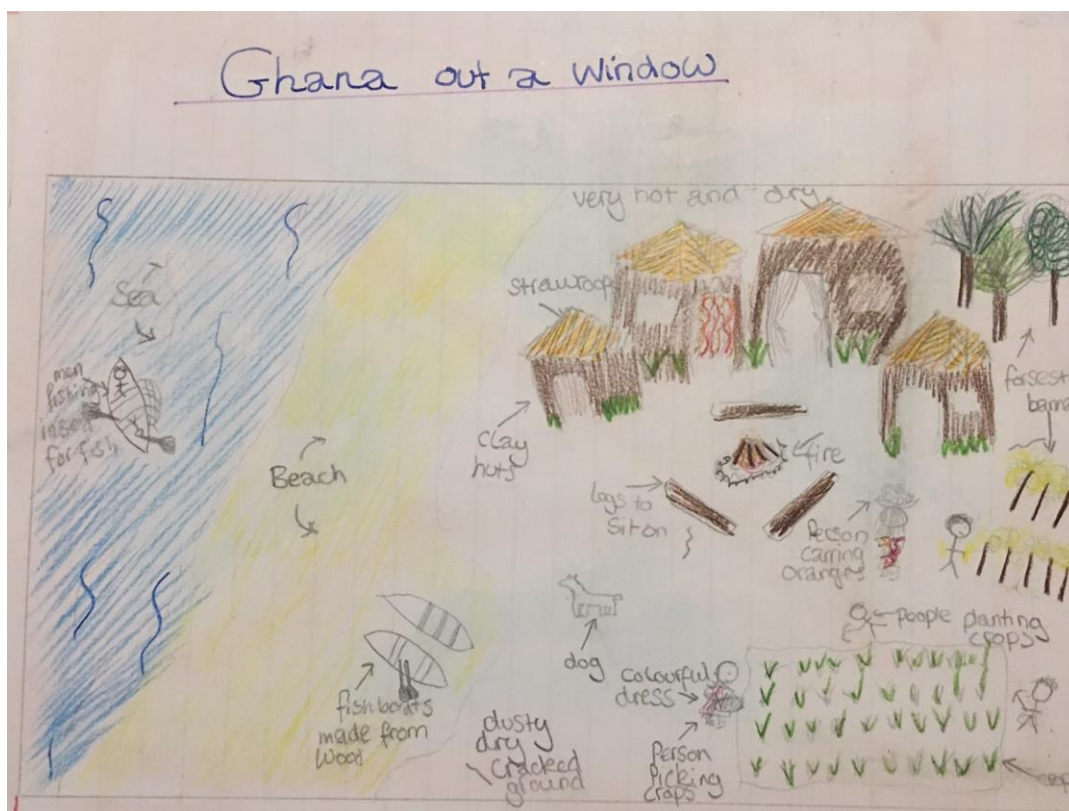
In terms of analysis, Rose's content analysis approach (2001), described above, allowed me to clarify patterns of content inclusion that could otherwise escape notice in both children's initial and final window drawings, and patterns of change between individual students' two drawings, with particular attention to topics relevant to Africanism and the operations of discursive power more widely. The potential to detect such changes represents an important contribution to my research agenda in that it offers the opportunity to explore and evaluate the extent to which geography teaching about a particular distant place can influence children's perceptions about that place and its characteristics. More specifically, it offers the potential to explore how teaching emphasising diversity and difference can challenge prominent Africanist discourses that may have influenced many children prior to the unit of work. In this section of the chapter, I present an overview of the visual content present in children's initial drawings (21 of each, summarised in Table 4.1 and Fig 4.2). A selection of individual drawings is considered holistically and in greater depth in Chapter Six, alongside children's final window drawings.

While this section of the chapter focuses on my interpretations of visual material, and thus requires me to acknowledge my role as an interpreter and sensemaker (Mannay, 2010), the focus group discussion analysis presented in the following chapter (sections 5.4.1-5.4.3) utilises an auteur theory approach (i.e. an approach influenced by the notion that the most

important aspect of understanding an image is understanding what the image-maker intended to show) to analyse children's own perspectives on their initial window drawings – thus adding an additional layer of interpretive depth to my research agenda.

4.3.1 Content Categorisation

Children's written labels and explanations are not explicitly included in the content categorisation, but are used to inform categorisation of visual content where appropriate (for instance where it was unclear as to what the visual content represented without the written annotation). Written comments provided without visual accompaniments were not included in the categorisation of visual content. Written comments and the expressive use of colour are considered in more depth in the section, below, which considers individual drawings in more depth. Table 4.1 presents a visual content analysis of children's initial window drawings, organised into rural and urban settings.

Table 4.1 Categories of Visual Content in Initial Window Drawings

Code	Sub-code	Number of references	% of total number of drawings (21) in which reference(s) occurred
Rural		20	95
Urban		1	5
Weather	Aridity/dry ground	5	24
	Rain	1	5
	Snow	1	5
	Sun	15	71
Landscape	Hills/mountains	2	10
	Lakes	2	10
	Rivers	4	19
	Sea	4	19
Plants	Crops	3	14
	Fruit	6	29
	Trees	10	48
Animals	Birds	1	5
	Livestock	13	62
	Mosquitos	1	5
	Wildlife	5	24
Activities	Agriculture	7	33
	Carrying items on head	5	24
	Children playing	4	19
	Children working	4	19
	Fishing	4	19
	Preparing food	3	14
	Football	3	14
	Recycling	1	5
	Tourism	1	5
	Washing clothes	2	10
	Women looking after children	2	10
Culture	Barefoot	1	5
	Colourful/local dress	9	43
	Jewellery/handicrafts	3	14

	Spears	1	5
	Violence	1	5
Infrastructure	Water labelled as dirty	4	19
	Dusty road/ground	3	14
	Gravel road	1	5
	Irrigation	1	5
	Lack of electricity	1	5
	Open fires	4	19
	Paved roads	1	5
	Shared toilets	1	5
	Water bucket	5	24
	Water pump	3	14
	Well	3	14
Transport	Bicycles	3	14
	Boats	6	29
	Buses/taxis	2	10
	Cars	4	19
	Pedestrians	6	29
	Traffic jams	1	5
Buildings	Larger houses	3	14
	Banks	1	5
	Markets	1	5
	Metal-roofed houses	2	10
	Mud huts	8	38
	Small/basic schools	11	52
	Straw-roofed/thatched houses	9	43

As Fig 4.2 shows, the vast majority (20, or 95%) of drawings were set in rural areas without any reference to urban areas, suggesting a perception of Ghana (and by extension, similar African countries) as predominantly agrarian, lacking large urban development. The most common content categories, shown in Fig 4.2, highlight a strong general tendency towards rural themes, including livestock (mentioned in 60% of drawings), trees (48%), straw-roofed/thatched houses (43 %), mud huts (38%), agriculture (33%), and fruit (29%). The most common element of all was the sun, symbolising hot weather (labelled as such in 71% of drawings).

Culturally, many of the drawings made reference to colourful traditional dress (frequently labelled as 'local dress'), which featured in 43% of the drawings; this arguably points towards a tendency to perceive Ghana in terms of (as Mawdsley notes) 'tropes of timelessness' (2008: 512). Schools often featured in children's initial drawings (52% overall), but exclusively as small and/or basic buildings in remote areas, thus reinforcing themes of rurality and 'underdevelopment'. Children also made reference to various forms of basic transport, including boats (29%), pedestrians walking on foot (29%), and bicycles (14%). It should also be noted that several drawings made reference to motorised forms of transport, including cars (19%) and buses/taxis (10%). As such, it was not the case that children's initial visual representations of Ghana were entirely characterised by Africanist perceptions of technological incapacity and rural 'backwardness' (Watts, 2003), although the most common

visual content codes do undeniably convey an impression of Ghana as a predominantly rural and relatively 'undeveloped' country.

Fig 4.2 Eleven Most Common Visual Content Sub-Codes in Initial Window Drawings
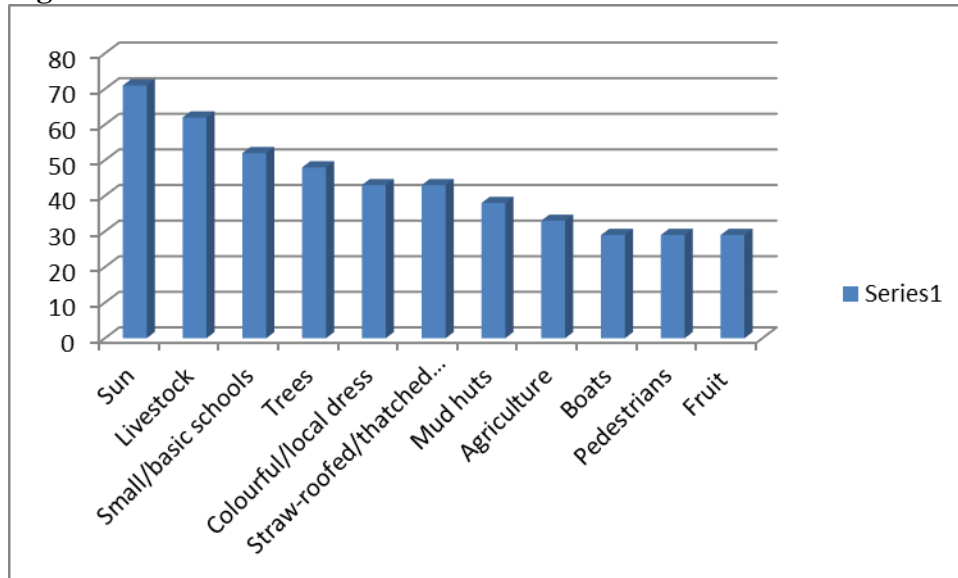
In addition to these more common themes, sixteen visual content sub-codes featured only once (thus achieving 5% coverage overall) in the children's initial window drawings:

- Rain
- Snow
- Birds
- Mosquitos
- Recycling
- Tourism
- Barefoot
- Spears
- Violence
- Gravel Roads
- Irrigation
- Lack of Electricity
- Paved Roads
- Shared Toilets
- Traffic Jams
- Banks

These included elements of weather (rain and snow), wildlife (birds and mosquitos), and several aspects of infrastructure whose scarcity as visual content suggests perceptions of poverty and a lack of 'development': (walking) barefoot, gravel road, paved roads, and lack of electricity. Some reference was made in these sixteen sub-codes to activities more suggestive

of development – tourism, recycling, irrigation, traffic jams, and banks. Lastly, these least common sub-codes also showed negative perceptions of traditional and war-torn societies, with reference to spears and violence. From a power-sensitive discursive analytical point of view, these sixteen sub-codes attest to an interesting range of perspectives that both embody Africanist perspectives through negative stereotypes (lack of electricity, spears, barefoot) and less negative views, such as mentions of banks, paved roads, recycling, and tourism – all aspects of children's views that suggest perceptions of similarity between Ghana and Western contexts such as Britain.

As a result, the overall impression arising from analysis of children's initial window drawings is one of complexity. The most common kinds of content presented in children's initial drawings (Fig 4.2) convey a strong impression of Ghana as subject to what Watts terms the 'tyranny of geography': strong sunshine, agricultural livelihoods, basic housing, and fruit, echoing tropes of 'fecundity' (2003: 6). Yet the less commonly-included kinds of content demonstrate that the predominance of such views did not rule out the inclusion of themes that conveyed more diverse impressions. As with classroom discussions, then, children's initial visual representations of Ghana demonstrated strong, but not exclusive, influence of Africanist discourses.

4.4 Written Materials

This final section of this chapter focuses on the written materials produced by pupils in a range of formats during the first enquiry sequence (*Ghana: A Different Place?*). Four specific kinds of written material were collected, focusing on different aspects of classroom work about Ghana: (a) a list of differences and similarities between the UK and Ghana; (b) a travel guide to Ghana; (c) a brief essay reflecting on a Ghanaian recipe written by Ghanaian pupils; and d) an account of possible reasons why some countries are more developed than others. The following sub-sections discuss each writing exercise in turn, focusing on the range of opinions expressed by pupils in the varying formats required.

4.4.1 Differences and Similarities between Ghana and the UK

In this brief exercise, children were asked to provide a list of five or six similarities and differences between the UK and Ghana. This homework assignment took place following the first lesson in the unit of work, 'Gorgeous Ghana', whose objective was to encourage children to think about where Ghana is in the world and what kind of country it might be (see Appendix 1). The comparison between the UK and Ghana was chosen in order to elicit children's

assumptions not just about Ghana as a distant place, but also about their own country as a 'nearby' place to them. This is important in the sense that children's perceptions of their own country, of which (in the vast majority of cases) they have extensive personal experience, can be seen as a reference point or baseline from which they can seek to explore other countries. Children's specific perceptions of the UK are likely to influence their perceptions of Ghana directly or indirectly, and so are important to capture in writing (as well as in the posters which also compare Ghana and the UK; see following chapter). A sample exercise, written by Victoria, is included in Fig 4.3 in order to convey the kind of content that children typically included in this exercise.

Fig 4.3 Sample Similarities/Differences Exercise

Diffs:
They have a very hot country whereas we have a very cold country.
There are different houses as ours are made of Brick and theirs are made of mud.
They have a very big lake whereas we don't have a big lake/river that shows on maps.
They are a more generally poorer country.
They seem a much happier smilier country.
We only speak 1 language whereas they speak 2

Sims:
We both have different accents around the country,
We both like the same sports such as football.
We both have lots of tourists and tourist attractions.
We are both English and we both have coastal areas.
They have very similar furniture to use.

In terms of children's opinions regarding differences between the UK and Ghana, first, the exercises evidenced a strong focus on four topics which collectively accounted for almost half of mentions: weather, physical geography and landscape, housing, and wildlife. Weather was mentioned most frequently of all, with a strong emphasis on the hot Ghanaian climate as opposed to England's cooler climate. Frankie's statement of this view was typical: 'The weather in Ghana is much hotter in Ghana than in England.' Ghana does have a tropical climate, but it is relatively mild for its latitude, and significantly cooler than desert or Middle Eastern landscapes; consequently, this difference may have been somewhat exaggerated in some children's responses, as was also the case in children's initial window drawings. Comments regarding physical geography often focused on the notion that Ghana has a 'greener' landscape

than the UK because the latter is a more urbanised and built up country. Emily's response in this context was also typical of many other similar remarks: 'They [Ghana] have a more green landscape to us and England is more built up.' It is true that Britain has much denser population and settlement than Ghana, but there are also significant urban settlements in Ghana in addition to drier parts of Ghana characterised by dry coastal savannah ecosystems. Remarks focusing on housing emphasised the different construction materials employed in the two countries, and bore a close relationship with remarks made elsewhere on infrastructure, resources, human geography. Students' written remarks on wildlife evidenced a view of Ghana as a kind of natural zoo, complete with (as Andrew said) 'elephants, monkeys, [and] colourful birds'

Children's remarks on differences in regard to weather, physical geography, housing and wildlife could be described as exhibiting stereotypical views of African countries as hot, underdeveloped, technologically backwards, and exotic (i.e. both 'negative' and 'positive' stereotypes), but students also made remarks that exhibited a wider awareness of diversity and difference, as was also the case in classroom discussions and initial window drawings. Some of these even prioritised Ghana over the UK, as seen for instance in the claim that Ghanaians live 'a more cultural life style than English people' (as Jonny remarked) – although this remark should be interpreted in light of the view that 'cultural' here likely refers to colourful costumes and 'traditional' rituals, i.e. a stereotypical view of tribal culture, rather than a wider view of culture incorporating literature, art, and art-music. Other less frequent categories ranged from relatively uncontroversial (because grounded on some empirical basis) claims about population density, currency, life expectancy, economic resources, and food to remarks that proposed a view of Ghana as a happier, less materialistic, and more family-based than the UK. Thus Mary stated that 'They seem a much happier smilier country,' while David stated that 'Ghana is more of a family based society.'

A similar variability characterised the students' responses in terms of similarities between Ghana and the UK. Some of the most common responses focused on uncontroversial aspects such as the similar land sizes of the two countries, the fact that both societies speak English and enjoy the same sports, and that schools teach similar subjects:

Both are similar land sizes. (Ed)
We both speak English. (Frankie)
We both have similar/the same subjects. (Celia)

Students also demonstrated a burgeoning awareness of geographical similarities in the context of diversity by recognising that both the UK and Ghana exhibit significant inequalities, with 'rich and poor living side by side' (Darryl). However, it could also be said that pupils tended to exaggerate the similarities between the countries. James stated, for instance, that 'They have very similar furniture to use.' While it is true that both Britons and Ghanaians use similar furniture in the sense of using chairs, tables, and so on, the latter typically have far less disposable income to spend on such items than the former. Likewise, Angela suggested that 'There is lots of mixed races in Ghana and the UK', a suggestion that overlooks the importance of colonialism in Ghana's racial history, just as pointing to similar subjects being taught in schools overlooks the vast gulf in resources available in the two education systems.

Overall, this writing exercise attests to the presence of a complex mix of elements in the children's writing. Following the initial lesson of the enquiry sequence, the students demonstrated that they had retained some key factual information, including the similar land sizes, shared language and religions, and common educational material in schools. They also showed a tentative awareness of some aspects of diversity and similarity across different geographical contexts, such as the presence of inequality in both settings. However, their responses with regard to difference especially showed the presence of some stereotypical, Africanist views with regard to Ghana being an exotic, hot, and developing country. From this point of view, the children's initial representations of Ghana through this written exercise exhibited a similar mix of representations as their remarks in classroom discussions and their initial window drawings.

4.4.2 Travel Guide to Ghana

This homework exercise involved asking children to write a brief travel guide to Ghana, in a format that would suit a travel or lifestyle magazine. The students were asked to focus on relating their experiences of living in Ghana to inform readers with a possible interest in emigrating there, with the suggestion of focusing on comparisons between Ghana and the UK (in order to build on the experience of the previous assignment discussed above). The students produced text of between (approximately) 50 and 300 words, with an average of around 170 words. A sample exercise, written by Gemma, is included in Fig 4.4 (overleaf):

Fig 4.4 Sample Travel Guide Exercise

> This is your guide of the ways of life in the amazing, rural, African area of Ghana.
>
> In this article I will tell you how to live in the capital, Accra. Accra is a very populated area with rich and poor communities living together. Firstly, before you worry about not knowing an African language, you don't! Because the lovely people of Ghana already speak English! There are many houses in Accra to stay and live there, which would be perfect for your new life in West Africa. Accra is more urban than the other areas of Ghana but would be great to visit new people. Also Ghana is very safe as everyone is really kind and careful. The currency, cedi, isn't too complicated either as 1 cedi = 50p in English money. There are no landlines in Ghana, but mobile phones have now taken over, so you can keep your iphones!
>
> I hope you have a happy life in Ghana and read my guide to the ways of life in Africa and Ghana.
>
> P.S. don't forget any mosquito repellent or tablets that will stop the infectious disease known as, Malaria.

As with the previous exercise, this assignment presented a complex mix of elements, including recognition of geographical diversity and some ways in which Ghana could be considered a more desirable country to live than the UK, alongside more Africanist views expressing well-established (but not necessarily factually-based) representations of African countries. Interestingly, many children's recognition of more positive aspects of life in Ghana sometimes verged on overly positive and 'rose tinted' interpretations of factors in Ghana's human and physical geography, echoing the (sometimes unrealistically) positive representations presented in several classroom discussions, as explored earlier – although it should be noted that students may have been responding to the remit of the writing exercise by portraying Ghana in a positive light to potential emigrants from Britain. In terms of human geography, one student (Frankie) highlighted the juxtaposition of wealthy and poor people in Ghana and implicitly compared this juxtaposition in positive terms with the situation in the UK: '[in Ghana] no one has to prove theire wealth, poor live amon[g] rich and vice versa.' Another student (Mary) emphasised in fulsome terms what she saw as a number of positive aspects of Ghanaian society:

> Firstly, before you worry about not knowing an African language, you don't! Because the lovely people of Ghana already speak English! … Also Ghana is very safe as everyone is really kind and careful.

Remarks on the perceived happiness of Ghanaian people occurred in a minority of exercises (6 of 21), such as Charlie's statement that 'It is a bit lownley [lonely] at the moment but there are some nice people here in Ghana. They are all so happy!' Another pupil (Jonny) mentioned Ghanaian market places, which they saw as full of 'bustling, laughing people.'

A number of pupils (9 of 21) saw livelihoods in terms of rural subsistence agriculture, which was often characterised in utopian terms as a community-based, sharing-centred activity. Darryl wrote: 'the village folk are very nice and are happy to give more than they have to others… The[y] catch fish and they farm so have quite a sufficient [livelihood].' Celia went into more detail, imagining that he was a member of a family living in a stilt village and earning a living by fishing: 'I love living in stilt village as I never struggle for food as my family loves fish and as we live on top of a river it is an easy supply… I would recommend stilt village as it is one easy supply of food.'

For a majority of students (12 of 21), positive impressions were also attached to urban locations in Ghana. This was most often stated by describing Accra, the capital city, in terms of comparison with the UK, as evidenced by comments such as Tom's: 'Ghana is very much like the UK, at least in Accra. The houses are quite modern and very similar to houses in Britain, at least in urban Accra. Anyone with a decent earning in England would be able to live quite happily in the Urban areas.' Another student (Imogen) praised Accra's urban modernity, suggesting that Accra has 'splendid Towering blocks of modern apartments' which 'gleam in the heat haze' and make the capital city look 'almost like London'. Other students emphasised the similarities to a much greater extent, with Ed stating for instance that 'if you live in England, or a similar place [then Ghana] won't be much different!' Urban modernity in Ghana was often linked to an awareness of socio-economic complexity and the co-existence of wealth and poverty, as demonstrated by Anna's remark: 'In Ghana, it isn't actually all mud huts and poverty. Yes, there is poverty, there are mudhuts but people do live in houses [also] and there can be electricity.'

In terms of physical and environmental geography, several students emphasised a number of aspects of Ghanaian landscapes and ecosystems which were seen as positive. Victoria noted that in rural areas, 'You'll be living much closer to nature and more off the land', while David stated in very general terms that 'Lots of the landscape is lovely like the Rainforest and the Savanna.' While climate was often mentioned in negative terms (see below), it was also seen as a positive aspect of Ghana by four students, for example 'The weather is… very nice and warm, a lot better than England's weather so you could have a babeque every day' (Charlotte). James imagined themselves living in a coastal area and stated that: 'I do love

it here in Ghana, [with] the heat, gorgeous beach, and a lovely atmosphere!' Several of the children also made reference to Ghana's wildlife, mostly with reference to rural areas but also, as in Darryl's remark, with regard to urban areas: 'The best place to go to meet English people in Ghana is the capital, Accra, it is the most popular city to go to and many people enjoy the sites, including elephants and monkeys.'

With regard to potentially negative aspects of Ghana, a number of students (8 of 21) emphasised inconveniences surrounding daily life, including the need to take malaria pills and the uncomfortable heat of the climate. Perhaps inspired by the travel guide format, students often expressed these concerns in ways that emphasised an Anglo-centric view of Ghana rather than socio-economic realities for Ghanaians themselves, for instance Emily's remark that: 'The weather is very hot so you'd probably want to buy a large house so it doesn't get cramped and too hot and also you want it to be dark so that it's cooler in the sun.' The same student also noted that while English people moving to Ghana would probably live in Accra since it is the 'best place', she imagines herself (writing as a Ghanaian) living elsewhere: 'Although Accra is the best place, I live in a stilt village.' Similarly, Mary stated: 'Don't move to a rural area expecting luxury! Move to an urban area if you would want it to be more like England.'

More widely, a majority of students (13 of 21) emphasised negative aspects of rural life in Ghana, including isolation and poor infrastructure:

> If you move to a rural area, then you will have to use a mobile to contact people.
>
> Tom

> The rural villages are very tucked away and peaceful but [are] away from lots of resources such as schools and hospitals.
>
> Angela

Reference was also made to the demanding nature of rural life and livelihoods, such as Gemma's statement that: 'There aren't many shops as the Ghanaian people live off the land and outside a lot of the time.' In this context, the hot climate was seen by some students to be a disadvantage rather than (as outlined above) an advantage. Andrew, for instance, stated that 'It is significantly hotter than England, but it is also significantly more humid.' However, this was not seen as an intractable obstacle, with Frankie suggesting that while 'it takes a few days to get used to' the weather, 'don't worry – you will'

A number of students made reference to sickness, and malaria in particular. For example, Celia stated that: 'When you go to Ghana you better make sure that you take your pills. If you don't then you could get Mellaria.' Similarly, Pete advised that 'I would definetly take my malaria pills if I were you, as you don't want to get bitten while your out here.'

4.4.3 Essay on Ghanaian Recipes

This written exercise consisted in students commenting upon recipes for Ghanaian dishes provided by Ghanaian pupils from my school's partner school in Elmina, Essaman United. Students were asked to write a short essay discussing the recipes, with particular reference to what the recipes revealed about life in Ghana. A sample exercise, written by Charlie, is included in Fig 4.5.

Fig 4.5 Sample Essay on Ghanaian Recipes

The recipe in my they were very relaxed about what there timings were for instance "leave it for some time"

Their kitchen utensils are very basic and they would use a lot of pots over the fire to cook a lot of their food

The food was all the stuff you could farm, fish or hunt. They know all the foods inside out So they have had this food a lot of times in the past. Some of the foods they had were similar such as onion and tomato and obisouly have some of the same goods as us

There is lots of variety of ingredients in fufu and palm nuts. From fish to nuts to meat to fruit a lot of ingredients that probably wouldn't normally mix

Lots of food would be farmed or fished because that's there culture and may not need to buy there food

The children found much to comment upon in these short recipes, with one student (Darryl) explicitly remarking that 'The recipe… said quite a lot about what life is like in Ghana.' Specific remarks focused on three main areas: timing; utensils; and ingredients. As with the writing exercises discussed above, students' reflections exhibited a range of responses, including negative characterisations of Ghanaian life alongside optimistic and idealised portrayals of rural livelihoods.

In terms of timing, almost all students (17 of 21) remarked on the vagueness of the Ghanaian recipes in terms of the required time for each stage. Jonny wrote that 'the recipe…

were very relaxed about what there timings were for instance "leave it for some time".' Similarly, Olivia wrote that 'Timeing is the less of there worries because in the recipes it say 'put on fire for sometime'[,] leave it to boil for some time'[,] 'fan it for some time between 20 secons or 5 minutes.' Another student (Ed) was amused by the long time-scales involved: 'In England we are.. very specific on timings, [but this] recipe had 'leave for about a month written on it!' Reflecting on this component of the recipes, six students suggested that it demonstrated a relaxed attitude in general, for example Victoria's remark that: 'The fact that they use the jugement rather than a set time tells me that they are very much relaxed about it all.' Others described this approach as the result of an 'easy going' and 'flexible' culture, and because Ghanaians are 'more patient' than people in the United Kingdom. Perhaps less positively, David suggested that time matters less to Ghanaians than to others: 'time doesn't really matter to them as they don't need to know how long.'

With regard to utensils, a number of students (8 of 21) emphasised the differences between Ghanaian and western cooking implements. Emily described this as follows:

> People in Ghana use different utensils to us. The things they use may even be natural. They use things like Petal and Mortar but a huge one. They have big cooking pots that [they] put over the fire, they buy this so that it lasts all of there life.

Others described Ghanaian cooking utensils as 'very basic', 'found in small quantits', and 'mainly handmade', with David describing how Ghanaians use 'fire pits and utensils made of animal bone.' A number of pupils saw this as a matter of economic necessity, e.g. Frankie's statement that: 'If you were to open somebody's cupboard in England you might find the utensils spill out, but in Ghana it would be very different… They often handmake their utensils, including large stone pestles. In England we would just buy it!' A small number of students, however, suggested that Ghanaians would buy some utensils (for instance a colander) in markets instead, introducing a somewhat more realistic (and less stereotypical) note into discussion.

The third main topic was the ingredients used by Ghanaians, whether in terms of the actual ingredients used, the amounts used, or both. Many students were as struck by the vagueness of the instructions regarding amounts of ingredients as they had been by the vagueness of the timings given. One student wrote:

The fact that my recipe was quite general in terms of the amount of ingredients to use [-] they said 'some water' or 'some pepper' [-] told me that the Ghanians have different attitudes to amounts of ingredients. Whereas, in England we are very specific on amounts. Some recipes even had 'etc' written in the ingredients list!

Again, students often linked this to a perception of Ghanaians being relaxed and laid-back: 'The recipe seems very general and refers a lot to 'some water' or 'some pepper', their isn't an exact amount, so again very relaxed.' In terms of the ingredients themselves, some students expressed the view that the ingredients in their recipes were such as could be obtained from nature: 'The food was all the stuff you could farm, fish or hunt… Lots of food would be farmed or fished because that's there culture and may not need to buy there food.'

Children recognised that the recipes mentioned a variety of ingredients, including meat, fish and vegetables: 'There is lots of variety in ingredients… from fish to nuts to meat to fruit.' Yet not all ingredients were used equally: children noticed that the Ghanaians often emphasised that meat was not always available because it was expensive, and that recipes were often flexible depending upon the availability of ingredients on a given day. Some children noted that some ingredients used in Ghanaian food were not used in English recipes; thus one girl stated: 'They also have different ingredient because they have dry maze and palm nuts whereas we don't.' Similarly, one boy noted that 'a lot of the ingredients are varied and not very common in the UK. Kontomire is a sauce from the Cocoyam leaf, Ampasi (yam) is a potato and Plantian is a savoury banana.' There was also an impression that Ghana had more 'traditional' dishes than England, possibly linked to perceptions of Ghana as more 'cultural' in a pre-modern and localised sense (and possibly also linked to a specific kind of experience in England): 'The fact that it says ['my local dish['] tells you that Ghana is a very community based area as genrally in England there isn't a local dish.' However, others suggested that there was less variety in Ghanaian food than in English food: 'They use a lot of stews and a lot of the same ingretints but here in England we have a lot of varity and different food from other contreys but not Ghana.' Another student stated that Ghanaians 'seem to stick by similar, traditional recipes, unlike in England where we experiment all of the time.'

Again, these essays reveal a mixed and complex set of views on the part of students – views based in this case on their reactions to primary material furnished by Ghanaian pupils in the partner school. The vague instructions regarding timings were interpreted by some as indicating a flexible and easy-going culture in which precise timings were not required, an interpretation which in turn could be interpreted in terms of both positive and negative

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stereotypes linked to wider Africanist discourses. Children's discussion of the 'home-made' utensils which they thought were used by many Ghanaians can be interpreted as a recognition of the economic challenges faced by many Ghanaians by comparison with people in the United Kingdom, although it is clear that students had obtained what was in many ways an unrealistically negative view of domestic equipment in Ghana (as many Ghanaian households possess more modern implements and utensils than the children's essays would suggest). Lastly, in terms of ingredients, students interpreted the vagueness of instructions regarding amounts of ingredients as attesting to the easy-going character of Ghanaian society, and suggested that ingredients were largely taken from nature (thus varying in availability) and were also distinct from ingredients available in the United Kingdom. While some children suggested that Ghanaian food was more characterised by local traditions than English food, on the whole they believed that English food was more varied than Ghanaian recipes. Overall, the students' views exhibited both positive and negative stereotypes with regard to Ghana, recognising the economic and lifestyle challenges faced by ordinary Ghanaians while also emphasising some aspects of the superior diet enjoyed in the United Kingdom (such as culinary variety and experimentation).

4.4.4 Account of Reasons for Greater or Lesser Development

This writing exercise asked students to give a list of reasons that they thought might help to explain, from a British perspective, why Ghana is defined as a 'less developed' country than the United Kingdom. Fig 4.6 gives a sample writing exercise, written by Tom.

Fig 4.6 Sample Account of Reasons for Greater or Lesser Development

Didn't have the slave trade

Didn't have flooding

Weren't colonised

We have coal for industrial revolution

Not corrupt

We can trade easily

We do have natural resources

Lots of tourism around the contry

Good education system

Not many diseases and good medication

I identified the reasons given by children as falling into two broad categories, reflecting the analysis of classroom discussion and other materials above: 'positive' reasons (i.e. attributes of the UK which pupils seemed to see as helping to explain 'higher' levels of development in Britain) and 'negative' reasons (i.e. things which are not attributes of the UK but are attributes of some other countries, specifically Ghana, which pupils seemed to see as helping to explain 'lower' levels of development in Ghana and other African countries when compared to the UK). (It should be noted that the terms 'positive' and 'negative' were not mentioned by any of the children themselves; these are merely used for classification).

The most dominant reasons which students gave for Britain's 'higher' level of development relate to Britain's natural resources (most often defined simply as 'natural resources' but also with regard to coal and agriculture), Britain's health and education systems, and Britain's industrial past, with specific regard to its leading role in the Industrial Revolution. Tourism, trade, commerce and stable government were also mentioned by many students, as were Britain's temperate climate, strong armed forces, and imperial past. Among the least popular reasons, which were mentioned only once or twice, were Britain's Commonwealth, monarchy, and past colonisation by the Romans.

Students also discussed a number of reasons as significant in terms of explaining why Britain is more developed than Ghana – i.e. experiences, characteristics, and attributes that children perceiving Britain as not possessing, compared to some other countries such as Ghana – which are here classified as 'negative' reasons. The most dominant reason is that Britain does not have environmental disasters such as flooding. In a literal sense this is misleading, since Britain does experience flooding and other environmental challenges (such as drought) on a periodic basis; but certainly it is true that these challenges fall far short of the environmental crises common elsewhere in the world, including Ghana. Likewise, it is not literally true that Britons have never been slaves, that Britain has never been colonised, or that Britain is not corrupt; but it is over eight centuries since chattel slavery was replaced by feudalism in Britain, and over nine centuries since England was invaded and colonised by the Normans. Corruption exists in Britain as it does everywhere, but Britain is the 14th least corrupt country in the world (compared to Ghana's 61st place; data from Transparency International, 2016). Britain also has serious diseases, albeit not tropical diseases, and is in a great deal of debt. It is true, however, that Britain no longer has 'internal wars' following the Good Friday peace agreement in Northern Ireland.

Perhaps of more interest than the factual content of the negative reasons given by students is the relative weight placed upon them. Only two of the seven reasons relate to environmental factors (natural disasters and diseases), while five reasons relate instead to historical, political and economic factors. Similarly, only two of the 'positive' reasons given in Table 4.4 relate to environmental factors (Britain's natural resources and temperate climate). Overall, then, there is a strong focus on Britain's cultural and political heritage as explanatory factors. There is a tendency, that is, to regard Britain as a cultural-historical entity in which physical resources and the physical environment are of somewhat lesser overall importance than social and political factors. The image of Ghana which emerges from children's initial writing exercises, by contrast, is more focused on the physical environment, and to a degree perhaps not warranted even by Ghana's more 'extreme' climate. From this perspective, this and other writing exercises in the initial stages of the enquiry sequence could be interpreted as conveying an impression of Britain which emphasises distinctively intellectual, political and social accomplishments, and an impression of Ghana which emphasises rather physical geography and challenges faced by citizens.

4.5 Conclusion

The findings presented above regarding children's initial representations of Ghana – representations that mostly emerged in the first few lessons of the enquiry sequence, but which also emerged in lessons and exercises taking place at a later stage – allow for an evaluation of the extent to which Africanist viewpoints and discourses permeated their early impressions of Ghana and Africa. As such, the discursive analyses presented above begin to provide material that speaks to my first and second research questions, i.e.:

1. What initial understandings do children communicate regarding Ghana and Africa at the beginning of a three-part unit of work on Ghana?
2. Were Africanist discourses manifested in children's initial understandings, and to what extent is Africanism a useful tool for interpreting these understandings?

Whether in the form of classroom discussions, window drawings, or written exercises of various kinds, the data presented above furnishes evidence for the strong influence of Africanist discourses on children's initial perceptions of distant places (and African distant places in

particular). Moreover, this data also provides a rich and detailed exploration of the challenges facing geography teachers seeking to engage with (and potentially transform) children's views and opinions. Yet these views and opinions were far from being uniformly negative. In all three data modalities, students discussed aspects of Ghana's society, economy, and natural environment in a less pejorative manner, with some aspects which could be considered in a highly positive light (e.g. the benefits of livelihoods existing in tune with nature). At times, however, these positive views strayed into the realm of rose-tinted perspectives that resonate with Rousseau's idea of the 'noble savage' (Rowland, 2004), constituting a different but related kind of Africanism that idealises African societies in unrealistically positive ways. In the classroom discussions, for example, children made a number of remarks about Ghanaians eating healthy local ingredients, possessing skills that British people had lost, and living 'natural' lives in the countryside. Yet these were also paralleled by unrealistically negative statements that portrayed an impression of Ghanaian culture as characteristically Africanist – i.e. as chaotic, culturally 'backward', politically unstable, and impoverished, among other characteristics (Andreasson, 2005; Mazrui, 2004). Both kinds of assumption reduced the diversity and complexity of Ghanaian realities to simplistic discourses. Such representations occurred for the most part towards the earlier parts of the unit of work, although they also occurred at times in later lessons and with regard to a variety of topics.

A different kind of unreality emerged in the children's initial window drawings, which presented an overwhelmingly rural picture of Ghanaian life characterised by mud huts, bright sunshine, colourful dress, and the most basic of educational and transport infrastructure. This does not present a 'negative' impression of Ghana so much as a stereotypically 'underdeveloped' impression, since it cannot be assumed that children were implicitly criticising what they were portraying (but see discussion of focus groups in Chapter Five). Nevertheless, the overall impression is of a series of Africanist portrayals of Ghana as an idyllic, but pre-modern, backwater.

Arguably, children's exaggerated views, at times overly negative and at times overly positive, can be interpreted as a response to the overload of information to which they are subjected by modern mass media. As Harrison notes, we now 'receive so much information that we try to process it in a simple way by putting it into categories' (1998: 46). It should also be noted that Harrison was writing in 1998, at a time when the Internet was only just becoming widely accessible, and well before the advent of smartphones and social media, which have made access to information far more ubiquitous and therefore potentially overwhelming.

By comparison with the visual materials collected in the form of window drawings, the four written exercises discussed in this chapter present a somewhat more nuanced and ambivalent picture of Ghana. This was a particularly interesting finding given that some of these exercises, notably the differences/similarities and travel guide exercises, might have been expected to introduce, respectively, sharply differentiated and (potentially) unduly negative and positive accounts of Ghana, respectively (since travel guides tend to emphasise positive aspects of other places while a comparison with the UK might be expected to lead children to highlight the UK's more affluent society). Nevertheless, while the differences and similarities exercise showed many students' awareness of some important differences between Ghana and the UK, this exercise also revealed how this awareness was often exaggerated and unrealistic – such as the contention that Ghana is 'greener' than the UK because the UK is more built up, a view which bypasses Ghana's significant urban areas as well as dryer coastal landscapes, and which greatly simplifies landscapes in the UK as well as Ghana. As such, this aspect of my finding echoes Inokuchi and Nozaki's contention that '[t]he discourse of Othering not only portrays "Other" groups as different, but it also suggests "our group as monolithic' (2005:72). Students' views of similarities demonstrated a somewhat surprising awareness of the many points of contact between the two countries, such as sports, religion, tourism and inequality, although at times this awareness of cross-context similarity strayed into a homogenising tendency that led students to overlook the very different historical contexts of the two countries (Britain as coloniser and Ghana as colonised) – although Ghana's colonial past was acknowledged in the writing exercise on reasons for greater or lesser development.

This mix of awareness of diversity and cross-context similarities, on the one hand, and simplification, on the other, also emerged in the three other writing exercises. The travel guide to Ghana was particularly interesting in its mix of these aspects, with awareness of Ghana's urban contexts counterbalanced by rose-tinted views of Ghanaian inequality and rural livelihoods. Similarly, the exercise on Ghanaian recipes emphasised not just natural, locally-sourced ingredients but also the basic nature of Ghanaian cooking implements and their supposedly 'easy-going' culture. Lastly, students' exercises on greater and lesser development foreground Ghanaian physical geography and British society and history, highlighting a tendency to see the relative agency and power of the two countries in these terms and thus a tendency to accord Britain a more privileged status than Ghana.

On the basis of my previous distant place teaching experience, I had expected to find children expressing polarised and unduly positive or negative views, but I had not expected to encounter a noticeable difference between children's views in classroom discussion and

window drawings, on the one hand, and children's views as expressed through writing exercises, on the other. In retrospect, it might have been expected that different kinds of discursive activity might generate different kinds of discursive positioning with regard to distant places. This finding not only reinforces the value of utilising multiple data collection methods in order to gain multiple, potentially differing perspectives on similar topics (as discussed in section 3.5.7), but also illustrates the emergent and provisional nature of representations of distant places, which are shaped by the mode and context of their expression as well as preceding experiences and knowledge. As such, my findings illustrate the benefit of a discourse analysis approach, which does not seek to understand 'reality' so much as try to 'uncover the way that reality is produced' (Hardy et al, 2004: 19).

It should be recognised that the somewhat more nuanced views presented in children's writing exercises may have been influenced in some way by children's beliefs that they were expected to 'perform' in a less stereotypical manner in these exercises than in classroom discussion and drawing exercises, influenced perhaps by the dominance of written work for examination purposes and/or by perceptions that I, as the teacher, would expect a more balanced and considered approach in written work than in other modalities (as discussed above in section 4.2.3). Nevertheless, even if nuanced and ambivalent views were 'performed' to some extent rather than representing prior views, a discourse analysis approach would still consider these exercises as constituting reality in an important sense. They cannot be discounted just because they may have been affected by extra-geographical considerations such as expectations of intellectual performance in written examinations. Instead, they should be considered as situated expressions, influenced by wider power dynamics relating to children's position within educational environments as well as their position within wider dynamics relating to distant places such as Ghana.

Nevertheless, the findings presented in this chapter indicate the strength and prevalence of Africanist viewpoints in children's early representations of Ghana and Africa. In this context, it is relevant to recall Foucault's contention that 'there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time, power relations' (1977; cited Hall, 2003: 77). By representing Ghana as either idyllically positive or irredeemably negative, children at times constructed it in a subordinate position as either set apart from the pressures of modernity or as crushed by them. The power of Africanist discourses is visible in this 'productive' aspect of their operation, both encouraging and drawing strength from the construction and expression of a body of knowledge that illuminates Ghana as 'essentially' unitary, homogeneous, and

different from the UK in unrealistically positive or negative ways. These Africanist representations did not emerge from nowhere, but rather – as Laclau puts it – are threads that connect with wider discourses in society: 'Utterances are threads… they connect with other utterances and other conversations, texts and documents' (cited in Wetherell, 2003: 389). As such, it is likely that pupils' initial representations of Ghana do not only – or even – represent their own opinions alone, but also impressions gained from mass and social media, conversations, and experiences outside the school context. The following chapters explore how these 'initial' representations changed over the course of the unit of work.

Chapter Five

Children's Changing Representations of Ghana and Africa

5.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on children's changing representations of Ghana and Africa, i.e. the ways in which children's early views about these distant places changed and developed as the unit of work proceeded through the three enquiry sequences. As such, it begins the process of furnishing possible answers to my third research question:

> 3. Do children's understandings become less characterized by Africanist discourses over the course of the unit of work?

As with Chapter Four, much of the data presented in this chapter was collected through classroom discussions and the use of visual and written exercises. Additionally, this chapter also presents analysis of three focus groups conducted at different points throughout the unit of work. These were undertaken specifically in order to gauge children's changing impressions of Ghana and also of their own work on Ghana in various different modalities (e.g. written work and visual work). Taken together, these varied data collection modalities furnish the raw materials for a detailed and complex account of how, why, and to what extent children's views changed and developed in the course of both classroom lessons and homework assignments.

Throughout the chapter, the analytical focus is placed to some extent on individual children's contributions to class discussion and focus groups, and through the media of written and visual homework, rather than on the class as a whole. Admittedly, individual pupils in a class are subject to similar influences in that they each experience the same lessons. Nevertheless, they are likely to interpret the same teaching lessons in different ways. As a composite of individuals, it can be problematic to conceive of the class as a single entity that demonstrates unified change in specific directions. Such an approach is arguably in tension with the Foucauldian theoretical lens I adopt in this thesis, which emphasises particularity, specificity, and the normative value of resistance to overarching narratives (Foucault, 1980), in addition to the emphasis placed on subjectivity and 'technologies of the self' in Foucault's later work (Foucault, 1997).

However, it can still be useful to speak of 'classes' changing in general terms when a majority of pupils express similar opinions (and similar changes in opinion), as was the case in my findings. Furthermore, for practical reasons, teachers are often obliged to focus on achieving change at the class level rather than the individual level, in part by encouraging positive interactions between individual members of the class. Thus the apparent dichotomy between individual and class may be somewhat misleading if pressed to extremes. Consequently, while this chapter focuses on the contributions of individual pupils rather than the class as a whole, some conclusions are also drawn with regard to change occurring at the unit of the class rather than solely individuals. To anticipate these conclusions, I found in general that the class tended to exhibit similar shifts in opinion rather than a panoply of sharply different opinions. Nevertheless, differences in opinion did occur, and were at times responsible for encouraging the class as a whole to move in particular directions (see section 5.3.2).

A pitfall that arises with regard to a focus on change is the danger of assuming that children's representations *are* changing. It is by no means inevitable that children will come to reject Africanist assumptions through geography teaching about distant places, and careful attention is required in terms of analysis in order to ensure that what is reported as 'change' relates to fundamental shifts in opinion rather than continuity of viewpoint expressed in different, potentially more sophisticated, language and visual materials. A similar pitfall arises with regard to children's 'initial' representations, insofar as this focus risks neglecting the way in which these representations have already been formed through long processes of (often subconscious or implicit) media engagement and interpersonal engagement. Likewise, discussion of children's 'final' representations (see Chapter Six) needs to avoid the assumption that children's opinions on Ghana and Africa are somehow magically fixed at the end of a unit of work and that they will not develop and change in the future (possibly even reverting to Africanist viewpoints). This discussion also needs to recognise that children may express both Africanist and post-Africanist perspectives at different times, in different contexts, and for different reasons. From a pedagogical point of view, it is therefore important to recognise both the challenges posed in terms of children's previous experience and the limitations of geography teaching in terms of long-term shifts in opinion towards awareness of diversity and complexity, and away from simplistic or stereotypical points of view. Yet this perspective also reinforces the importance of geography teaching as it seeks to accomplish this change in perspective through collaborative exploration of the world's complexity.

5.2 Classroom discussions

Following Taylor (2011), the following analysis is presented in terms of two interrelated sections: (a) changing representations; and (b) instances of, and stimuli for, change. In common with Taylor's account of children's representations of Japan, while pupils' representations of Ghana were 'diverse and individual' (Taylor, 2011: 1041), underlying themes could be discerned nevertheless. The first section of this analysis shows how pupils acquired a subtler, more nuanced approach to Ghana, shifting away for the most part from an initial tendency to demonstrate Africanist discursive influences (discussed in the previous chapter) towards a growing focus on discourses around diversity and a deeper awareness of intercultural similarity/differences. This section considers some of the ways in which the initial, Africanist representations voiced by many pupils at different times were supplemented and overlain by changing representations exhibiting a greater awareness of complexity in response to challenges of various kinds (discussed in section 5.3). As well as remarks emphasising Ghana's and Ghanaians' 'natural weakness and incapacity' (Andreasson, 2005: 972), that is, many pupils also made comments in the classroom that demonstrated an emerging appreciation of diversity both between and within places and a developing recognition of links and similarities between seemingly disparate places. These remarks were more frequent towards the end of the unit of work, but were also interspersed throughout the earlier lessons, indicating the presence of a complex pattern of learning rather than a simple, homogenous, and linear process of change. Moreover, while children's perceptions of distant places were at times simplistic, they were nevertheless characterised by a wide range of varied opinions on diverse topics – including opinions that challenged Africanism as well as expressed it. Nevertheless, some power-filled Africanist representations continued to surface throughout the sequences, often emerging in new ways with new topic areas. Consequently, as section 5.3 explores, these findings highlight the multi-layered challenges involved in confronting such approaches through geographical education. As such, while geography teaching encourages pupils to engage with multiple levels of complexity in order to avoid making assumptions that link with wider power dynamics, it cannot be assumed that geography teaching alone is responsible for changing pupils' changing representations (although section 5.3.1 presents some cases in which this was demonstrably the case).

In the following two sub-sections of the chapter (5.2.1 and 5.2.2), pupils' representations are presented in two sections. Each section presents themes that emerged in classroom discussions, with reference to, first, statements that demonstrated a new awareness of diversity within and across places (especially Ghana and Africa), and, second, statements

that emphasised a new awareness of cross-context similarities between Western countries such as the UK and countries such as Ghana. In both these dimensions, my findings attest to the ways in which children's engagement with geographical education can create a greater awareness not just of the complexity of contemporary geographies but also of the ways in which commonly-held opinions may be the product of power-filled discourses and material geographical and historical processes such as capitalism and colonialism.

5.2.1 Diversity Within and Across Contexts

Taylor suggests that geography teaching can help children to develop 'more complex and nuanced representations of diversity' (2011b: 50) by balancing understandings of diversity *within* places with diversity *between* places, with diversity understood in terms of a recognition of complexity and variety in the world. In the unit of work considered here, pupils demonstrated an awareness of both kinds of diversity in a range of topical and geographical contexts. Diversity between places was typically understood in terms of international, cross-continental comparisons – between the 'West' and Africa, and the UK and Ghana in particular - while diversity within places was understood more in terms of differences within individual continents and countries (between different African countries or within Ghana).

5.2.1.1 Diversity Between Contexts

In terms of diversity between places first of all, pupils increasingly demonstrated an awareness of differences between wealthier and poorer countries as the unit of work proceeded. The differences discussed in class ranged over historical, social, economic, technological, and environmental themes, and collectively tended to challenge and undermine preceding (and simplistic) representations about Ghana by substituting a more sophisticated understanding of cross-context relationships and inequities.

Historically, pupils at times recognised the importance of the imperial and colonial periods for present-day international dynamics. In lesson 6, one pupil (Charlotte) initiated discussion about geographical patterns in wealth by asking about possible explanations for richer countries being in the north. In response, James and Emily provided two possible explanations: first, that the weather is hotter in the south (a form of geographical determinism); and second, colonialism and imperialism:

> Charlotte – why is it all the rich countries are in the north except for Australia, and all the poor countries in the south?

Teacher – Well, why might there be this pattern?
James – It's hotter in the south.
Teacher – Yes, it could be natural factors. But look at Japan, with its natural disasters, and the Congo, with its natural resources. So what else?
Emily – Rich places conquered other places.
Teacher – Yes, could be due to the fact that we conquered the rest of the world.

In an earlier lesson (lesson 3), another pupil, Darryl, asked about Ghana's history by making reference to slavery: 'Who came to Ghana for the slave trade?' Implicit here is the recognition that factors which have altered and impeded Ghana's internal historical trajectory are (at least in part) international in origin. As such, this approach moves away from the (Africanist) assumption that Ghana's poverty, 'underdevelopment', and 'backwardness' are a result of internal 'failings' and towards a recognition that international and global factors are often vital influences on 'internal' processes and outcomes.

With regard to social and political topics, a number of classroom discussions saw pupils making remarks that illustrated their awareness of social challenges faced by Ghanians and those living in other African countries, including corruption and political instability. In the latter context, one brief discussion in lesson 9, initiated by pupils, made reference to the challenges posed by instability to development processes:

Victoria – how long will it take Ghana to become a first world country?
Teacher – Good question. What do you reckon?
[…]
Charlotte – Governments might change in the middle of the process.

(It should be noted that pupils also recognised, in other lessons, that Ghana has a relatively stable political system.) Corruption was also mentioned at different times, with one pupil stating in lesson 7, for instance, that government corruption might impact upon public culture by undermining truthfulness (in the context of surveys about happiness and wellbeing):

Teacher – Any… cons [regarding the use of happiness surveys]?

Angela – People could be lying.

Victoria – With a corrupt government, people might think that's really good for them.

In terms of economic diversity across contexts, pupils at times demonstrated an understanding of the differences between what poverty means in Ghana and the UK (albeit with an often limited understanding of poverty in both contexts). In the very first lesson, pupils

had already demonstrated an awareness of absolute rather than relative poverty, as evidenced in Ghana:

> Tom - The poor are really poor out there [in Ghana]. Our poor can go to Tescos.
> Mary - Twenty people crammed into one room.
> Angela – Extended families take in children whose parents have died early.

It should be noted, though, that this awareness of absolute poverty in African countries was not always to the fore. In the context of a discussion on happiness later in the unit of work (lesson 7), for example, one pupil alluded to people in the UK who have constrained living circumstances:

> Teacher – What makes you happy?
> […]
> Celia – It depends on the kind of game you play, if you have any room to play them. Like in your back garden, some people don't have a back garden and can't do fun things.

This passage seems to discuss a form of relative poverty within the UK, suggesting that those without back gardens are unable to 'do fun things.' This perspective offers limited insight into the socio-economic challenges raised by poverty in African countries. Consequently, as mentioned previously, it cannot be assumed that pupils' learning about distant places takes place in a linear or unidirectional fashion, with a clear sense of progress from Africanist simplicity towards anti-Africanist complexity. Additionally, it cannot be assumed that the general trend towards attitudes that engage with and challenge Africanism at the class level means that individual pupils felt unable to express remarks that presented less of a challenge to simplistic attitudes.

In terms of technology, pupils were taught that mobile phones have become very popular in African countries due to the lack of landline infrastructure and the increasingly wide availability of network coverage and affordable handsets. When discussing some of the purposes mobiles are used for in Ghana, pupils displayed an awareness of some important differences between the UK and Ghana by emphasising the importance of being able to contact healthcare professionals: 'Normally in Africa you are more ill[ness]-prone and there aren't as many doctors around, so you might need to contact ambulances' (Oliver, lesson 1). Of course, there are also relatively few ambulances in Ghana compared to Western contexts, so this

comment was factually mistaken in this respect; but the pupil had recognised the difficulties Ghanaian face in accessing healthcare and the potential utility of mobile phones in this context.

Environmentally, pupils made a number of statements that highlighted their understanding of some of the challenges faced by those living in different landscapes. At times this took the form of geographical determinism, as mentioned above, to the effect that hotter countries tend to be poorer because of the heat of the climate; or of the positive and negative initial representations discussed in the previous section, which emphasised the benefits and challenges of the warm climate in Ghana. More widely, pupils also recognised the danger of natural disasters in countries such as Ghana, including flooding, droughts, forest fires, and dangerous animals such as snakes. Pupils also recognised that recent industrialisation in African countries had the potential to generate more pollution than in Western contexts: 'we don't have as many factories with lots of smoke [as they do in poorer countries]' (Jonny, lesson 11).

Overall, the views presented by pupils in a range of thematic areas attest to considerable awareness of diversity between contexts – views that emerged more strongly, but not exclusively, as the unit of work proceeded.

5.2.1.2 Diversity Within Contexts

With regard to diversity within places, classroom discussions also evidenced a growing awareness of variety and difference within Ghana and Africa more widely. In contrast with notions of cross-context diversity, these notions did not emerge with reference to a range of topics but rather with particular regard to considerations of poverty – a focus likely to have come about because of the focus of the second enquiry sequence on this field. Children made statements that recognised the possibility of poverty coexisting with wealth at different levels. In one discussion of photographs of buildings in richer and poorer countries (analysed in detail in Chapter Five), one pupil stated that '[t]hese two could be in the same country… [T]hat one could be in the poorer part and that one could be in the richer part' (Imogen, lesson 5). In a similar vein, Charlie followed preceding (quite sweeping) remarks on poverty-related geographical patterns by other children with a statement that every country has some poverty:

> Teacher – What patterns are there to poverty in the world?
> Frankie – It's a random pattern.
> Pete – The southern hemisphere is poorer.

Charlie – Absolutely every country has a little bit of poverty.

<div align="right">Lesson 5</div>

In addition to the notion of (as one pupil, Charlotte, described it in the first lesson) 'rich and poor living side by side', pupils also expressed the idea that different parts of Africa were wealthier than others:

Teacher - Is all of Africa equally poor? What would you say?

Anna – Some parts like South Africa aren't as poor.

Emily – I think you would generally class Africa as a poor country – continent [corrected by teacher] – but not every country is as poor as others.

<div align="right">Lesson 5</div>

Economic differences between countries within continents were also discussed with regard to other continents including Latin America, Europe, and Asia, with pairs of contrasting countries including the UK and Greece, Peru and Brazil, and Japan and Mongolia. Within this general framework, pupils came to understand Ghana's complexity not just in terms of its differences with the UK (as discussed above), but also in terms of its differences from other countries more generally. In lesson 8, children participated in a discussion about African diversity by highlighting Uganda and Kenya as examples of prosperous countries, and Somalia and Ivory Coast as examples of poorer countries. In an earlier lesson, economic comparisons were downplayed in favour of cultural and political comparisons:

Andrew - Ghana isn't the most rich country but it's not like… a bad country to be in, it's still a good country.

[…]

Gemma – They can be happy.

[…]

Tom – The culture might be good.

Anna – Stable government.

<div align="right">Lesson 4</div>

From this perspective, pupils recognised that development indicators focusing on economic performance may not necessarily capture every important aspect of a country's characteristics,

remarking that such indicators do not 'show how happy the poor are in the country' (Victoria) or the 'quality of life in the country' (Pete, lesson 6). Countries with similar development indicators may exhibit very different cultural, social and political characteristics.

5.2.2 Cross-Context Similarities

Further to pupils' changing representations which emerged in terms of differences across and within contexts, pupils also demonstrated changing representations with regard to cross-context similarities between Western countries such as the UK and countries such as Ghana – an important aspect of the shift towards a more nuanced view of the world as embraced by geography education (Binns, 1996). These emerged in several different thematic areas, including geography, history and other socio-cultural spheres, and economics. In terms of geography, children remarked on the need for planning in poor countries order to maximise land-use in constrained spatial settings – an imperative also experienced in Western contexts. One pupil, remarking on two photographs of urban areas in developed and developing countries, stated:

> I think they put a lot of planning into both [environments], because even though the bottom one is very poor, they would have had to make the most use of the land to find a good way to get as many houses into it.
>
> <div align="right">Olivia, lesson 5</div>

Surprisingly, pupils also identified similarities in landscape between Ghana on one hand and Scotland/England on the other:

> Andrew – [Ghana has a] very different landscape but the main landscape is English.
> Pete – [Ghana is] quite mountainous, like up in Scotland and to the left of [England], west.
>
> <div align="right">Lesson 1</div>

It is true that Ghana has more lush vegetation than many African countries and presents a more verdant appearance than the arid, dusty stereotypes often conjured up by the media, but there are nevertheless many important differences in landscape between Ghana and Britain. The question therefore arises whether potential misconceptions can serve as evidence of recognition of cross-cultural similarity. It is argued here that they can, since they can be interpreted as a willingness to entertain cross-context similarities, even if they are mistaken in actuality.

In terms of history and culture, one pupil remarked early in the unit of work that Ghana, like the UK, has a stimulating past: '[t]heir history is quite interesting, like ours' (Frankie, lesson 1). In the same lesson, Charlie suggested that Ghana, also like the UK, was a 'multicultural country,' making reference to the presence of 'Muslims' in both contexts; Darryl added shortly afterwards that Ghana like the UK has 'different religions – Islamic and Christians as well'. More widely, pupils emphasised the universality of happiness and how similar things could make people happy in both Ghana and in Britain. They did so through the lens of designing a 'happiness index' that could measure happiness in different contexts, with the aim of measuring areas such as:

> Celia – A loving family
> Tom – Sport
> […]
> Oliver – Safety
> Jonny– Food.
> Mary – Stable government.
> Darryl – Opportunities.
> […]
> Imogen – Sleep.
> […]
> Gemma – Freedom.
>
> Lesson 1

Conversely, as well as recognising the universality of features of life that contribute to happiness, pupils also recognised that danger can arise in Western contexts as well as in African countries such as Ghana. One pupil discussed this (somewhat simplistically) with reference to the dangers posed by gun ownership in America: '[Y]ou don't want to be in the kind of country where you can fire guns anywhere, but then if you go to America [and]…just walk around the corner there's a man with a gun there' (Andrew, lesson 7). In a similar vein, one pupil asked if Ghanaians have to pay for healthcare as Americans do, illustrating a willingness to entertain the possibility of similarities of this kind between the two countries despite their differences: '[Y]ou know the ambulance system, is it more like American where you have to pay?' (Anna, lesson 1).

A willingness to consider Ghana as a country exhibiting important similarities with Western countries also emerged strongly with regard to economic issues. In a discussion

focusing on development indicators in general and, more specifically, what kinds of information can be used to establish a country's level of development, pupils asked a number of questions that demonstrated awareness of potential similarities between the economies of developed and developing countries (alongside less nuanced questions as discussed above in the initial representations section):

> Tom – Do you have a strong currency?
>
> […]
>
> Celia – What does the average person earn?
>
> […]
>
> Emily – Are there many free facilities and services?
>
> […]
>
> Charlotte – Is there a big gap between the richest and poorest people?
>
> <div align="right">Lesson 6</div>

Pupils also discussed the possibility of Ghana becoming more 'developed' and thus, in some ways, more similar to the UK – although some children also demonstrated awareness that future improvements in developing country economies may be jeopardised by developed countries' economic power:

> Victoria – How long will it take Ghana to become a first world country?
>
> […]
>
> Tom – I think it will take ages because as they get more developed we will also get more developed.
>
> <div align="right">Lesson 6</div>

In turn, there was some recognition of the constraints and challenges that Western countries themselves face. One pupil highlighted their surprise that the UK only ranks 22nd in a global wellbeing index, but then cited two possible reasons for this: 'the bad weather and everything going wrong [in the country]' (Mary, lesson 6). Another pupil mentioned the 'recession' as a potential reason why a country might be poor (Darryl) – referring to the recession which afflicted the UK economy from 2008 to 2009 and whose effects were still being felt at the time of data collection. In this dimension, and with regard to other aspects of cross-context similarity noted by children with regard to the UK and Ghana, analysis of classroom discussions reveals

a general (if not fully comprehensive) shift towards more nuanced and complex patterns of geographical awareness and understanding.

5.3 Instances of and Stimuli for Change

As mentioned above, pupils at times voiced 'initial' representations towards the end of the unit of work and 'changing' representations during earlier lessons. This occurred moreover with reference to a range of thematic areas, as canvassed in preceding sections, therefore problematising notions of a simple and cross-thematic educational journey from Africanist representations of Ghana to awareness of diversity, similarity and complexity both across and within contexts. On the basis of classroom discussions alone, it is difficult to establish in every case whether the changing representations that were voiced were voiced because of classroom discussions or because of some other cause, such as discussions with other pupils outside lessons, school partnership activities, or media including television, radio, and newspapers. Nevertheless, classroom discussions did at times lead to pupils changing their representations, either through the acquisition of knowledge or through interactions with the teacher or other pupils. This section presents excerpts from transcripts of classroom discussions in which such changes did occur in order to illustrate the potential for geography teaching to enable transitions from initial to changing representations, while acknowledging that such transitions may also occur, simultaneously or in different time-frames, in other, non-educational contexts.

5.3.1 Change through Teacher Challenges

Somewhat unsurprisingly given the pedagogical nature of classroom discussions, changes in representations coming about through challenges by the teacher occurred in many of the lessons making up the unit of work. In the first lesson, for instance, I made a number of interventions that encouraged pupils to think in different ways about Ghana:

> Olivia – They have different religions [in Ghana] – Islamic and Christians as well.
> Teacher – Would you say we don't have Islamic people?
> Olivia – We do but not as many.
> Teacher – So the divide is 50/50 in Ghana. But England is also a multicultural melting pot.
> […]
> Tom – Isn't most of their population coloured?
> Teacher – Coloured isn't quite the right word. Black?
> Tom – Yes.

In the next lesson, I also asked numerous questions that prompted pupils to think about more complex realities in Ghana in the context of asking children to write a guidebook entry about Ghana.

Teacher – Is there anything would be useful to know about Ghana?

Anna – Their marketplaces get quite crowded.

Teacher – Yes, but would there be supermarkets too?

Anna – Yes.

[…]

Pete – Do they have mobile phones?

[…]

Teacher – Yes - not children, but every adult. Why?

Tom – They use it for internet.

Teacher – What don't they have that we had?

Olivia – Facebook.

Teacher – No - what else don't they have?

Jonny – Landlines.

Lesson 2

Similar challenges throughout the unit of work led some pupils to move away from their initial representations towards more complex and diverse viewpoints. By seeking to ask questions rather than dictating answers, I was able to encourage children to come to the realisation of greater complexity on their own account, and by building on their own (steadily growing) bank of knowledge about Ghana and its socio-economic, cultural, political, and geographical complexities.

Nevertheless, it is important to recognise that my utterances in the classroom context did not always match my pre-set aims. For instance, in the excerpt quoted above, it is clear that I steered children in a certain direction when I stated: 'Yes, but would there be supermarkets too?" As such, it is important to situate children's statements in classroom settings in the context of my remarks as well as in the context of subject matter and the wider enquiry sequence.

5.3.2 Change through Pupil Challenges

A different kind of change took place when fellow pupils engaged with each other and challenged representations about Ghana. Unsurprisingly, this occurred less frequently than teacher challenges, but nevertheless occurred in several lessons and with regard to several different topic areas. Again unsurprisingly, such challenges were undertaken in a different manner from the teacher's challenges, and often assumed the form of adding information or vocabulary to the contribution made by another pupil; as such, 'challenging' is perhaps a less accurate verb than 'supplementing', which captures more accurately the process by which pupils' contributions to class discussions help to generate cumulatively more informed and nuanced representations. An illustration of this has already been discussed above in the 'changing representations' section:

> Teacher – What patterns are there to poverty in the world?
>
> Frankie – It's a random pattern.
>
> Pete – The southern hemisphere is poorer.
>
> Charlie – Absolutely every country has a little bit of poverty.

In this excerpt, the first pupil made a simplistic remark about poverty in the world – 'It's a random pattern.' The next pupil added a level of detail by recognising that the southern hemisphere is poorer than the northern hemisphere, while the third pupil added a yet more nuanced interpretation which recognised that every country contains poverty of some kind.

A similar pattern was repeated numerous times in other lessons, often taking place in response to questions or topics initiated by children rather than the teacher. In another example mentioned above, two pupils provided responses to a question asked by a pupil (and approved by the teacher):

> Victoria – How long will it take Ghana to become a first world country?
>
> Teacher – Good question. What do you reckon?
>
> Tom – I think it will take ages because as they get more developed we will also get more developed.
>
> Anna – Governments might change in the middle of the process.

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In this excerpt, two pupils provided thoughtful responses to a fellow pupils' query, each exploring different dimensions of the potential for Ghana's future development rather than (as in the preceding example) adding greater detail to an initial, simplistic response. In both kinds of instance, pupils had the opportunity to express their individuality by both challenging and learning from each other as part of the wider class, as well as learning from the teacher and from academic resources. In this sense, both teacher and pupil 'challenges' offered different and complementary opportunities for pupils to collaboratively perform new interpretations and understandings of distant places, engaging in new ways with power-filled dynamics surrounding countries such as Ghana and their complex situation within multiple international discourses and material processes.

5.4 Focus Groups

Three focus groups were conducted with six children (three girls: Imogen, Frankie and Victoria, and three boys: Andrew, Tom and Jonny) near the beginning (after lesson 4), middle (after lesson 9) and towards the end (after lesson 11) of the unit of work. The children were randomly chosen by assigning a number to each child in alphabetical order and using a random-number generator to pick out six children to participate. As such, these discussions provided a useful perspective on how students' perceptions of Ghana changed over the three enquiry sequences. Each focus group was conducted with a different topic guide, reflecting the positions of the groups within the unit of work.

5.4.1 Focus Group 1

The first focus group started with a retrospective review of children's initial window drawings (discussed in the preceding chapter), followed by a discussion in which children were questioned as to whether they would draw the same picture given their experiences and learning from the preceding four lessons on Ghana. When asked to recall their initial perceptions as expressed in their window drawings, students emphasised stereotypical 'Africanist' representations familiar from Table 4.1 and Fig 4.1, including topics such as 'mud huts', 'dry ground', 'fires', 'water pumps along the road', and people 'carrying things on [their] heads.' Students also discussed a range of negative perceptions regarding Ghana, including images of poverty (Imogen: 'I drew one person barefoot [as they] can't afford shoes'), disease (Andrew: 'people dying on the streets of diseases') and natural dangers (Frankie: 'I drew snakes because they have some dangers like snakes'). Andrew added another concern about crime: 'because most people are quite poor, well, split from rich and poor, presumably poor steal from the rich

to afford things they need.' As against this, Tom stated that he thought of Ghana as 'not dangerous', and substantiated this view by suggesting that the east and south of the continent were more dangerous than the west: 'you never hear anything about the west side of Africa.'

When asked if they would draw similar representations following the initial four lessons which had by then taken place, children presented more nuanced views that evidenced an awareness of geographical and socio-economic diversity, thus challenging simplistic and Africanist perceptions. Imogen noted, for instance, that her revised drawing would 'depend whereabouts [it was portraying], because in the capital it's very different… Beforehand I wouldn't have thought that some things were quite rich as well.' Jonny added that he would have drawn the same portrayal of an agricultural landscape dominated by huts, but he would have added in another layer to portray Ghana's urban modernity: 'I might have drawn the same picture with the huts but I might have done… the skyscrapers behind it.' Frankie noted that she would now add some 'slightly richer houses, maybe one next to [the hut].'

Students were also invited to discuss their reactions to the food recipes that they had received from Ghana as part of the school partnership programme. Many of these reactions focused less on the details of the food discussed in the recipes and more on other aspects, such as handwriting (Imogen: '[I'm] jealous of their handwriting!'), spelling (Tom: 'I was quite surprised because they were good at spelling and handwriting'), and cultural aspects such as vagueness about time and ingredients, as discussed in Chapter Four: 'It was interesting how they phrased it, like put in water for some time, it wasn't like any specific meat, just put meat in water' (Frankie). Some children saw this as increasing their sense of Ghana's difference from the UK: 'I think it more different in most respects as we're quite precise with everything whereas over there they're quite easy-going and do it in the quantities that suits them' (Imogen). Others focused in more detail on the ingredients themselves, with Andrew expressing his original 'exoticist' view of Ghanaian food as spicy and different from British food: 'I would have thought that they used a lot of spices for foods and meats compared to what we have.' This also increased the sense of difference between Ghana and Britain, but Andrew also added that some aspects of cooking are similar between the contexts, therefore counterbalancing the sense of difference to some extent. In this context, another student (Tom) noted: 'I think it's more similar [to us than different from us] because when we did the key ingredients there were quite [a lot] of things that we use like onion, eggs and that stuff.'

Similarly, when students were asked if the children who wrote the recipes would be similar to them in any ways, they responded positively:

People like… things like sport, and can have the same dreams as you like becoming [a] professional footballer. (Jonny)

Just because they're from a different country doesn't mean they won't have the same thoughts as you. (Imogen)

They also suggested that school experiences might be more similar than different in some ways across the two contexts: 'I think it's probably more similar because their school runs in the same way – lessons in the morning, break-times, lunch, they do a language' (Frankie).

The final topic for the first focus group was the question of whether students saw the similarities and differences between Ghana and Britain predominately in terms of physical or social geographies. Opinions were divided on this topic, with some children stating that they saw the differences as consisting more in terms of physical features (Andrew: 'mine's more landscape', Tom: 'more physical geography because I put forest and savannah and weather') and others (Victoria) focusing more on social geography: 'mine's more cultural, family oriented.' Some explicitly stated that they saw things in terms of a mix: 'I put two of each' (Frankie); 'lots of language and weather' (Jonny). Imogen described this mixture in terms of dominant (and predominantly negative) opinions about Africa in England: 'for people in England if you mention Africa or place in Africa, they instantly think hot savannah, poverty and war.' (It was interesting to hear this student adopt a 'distanced' perspective by describing compatriots as 'people in England'. While the student did not elaborate further, this could be interpreted as indicating a desire to create a similar distance from negative views of Africa.) Tom phrased this Africanist impression of diversity in terms of temporal 'backwardness' (as Massey has described; Massey, 2005): 'When you think of Ghana you think it's pretty different – like where England was 300 years ago, like when they had the huts and the farms and stuff.' However, a number of children did express more nuanced opinions that combined ideas of similarity and difference:

I think of [Ghana] as more similar but with some differences. There are lots of big houses in England but [there are] rich and poor in both countries. (Imogen)

A few months ago I would have thought it was very different because what you see on Comic Relief is the worst of it… but actually it's fairly similar. (Andrew)

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I think the adverts and appeals make the worst of it and don't specify countries, so they say people in Africa are starving… but then when you look at it in Ghana it doesn't seem to be so bad. (Tom)

Reflecting on these views, Frankie noted, finally, that 'TV has too big a influence on how we think about other countries… if people are to get their point across to raise money they'll only show the bad things.'

5.4.2 Focus Group 2

The second group took place in the middle of the unit of work, in the second enquiry sequence. The topic guide focused on similar topics in order to chart children's changing representations of Ghana over time. As with the first group, the second group started by discussing how their ideas of Ghana had changed since the beginning of the enquiry sequence. Some responses were similar to thoughts expressed in the first focus group, in terms of heightened awareness of socio-economic complexity and diversity. For example, Frankie stated that their views of Ghana had changed 'because in September I would have thought that Ghana doesn't really have many rich things but in Accra they do… but there are [also poorer] people who are happy with what they've got.' Also similar to the first group was the recognition that dominant media images of Africa are often misleading: 'there's this old film called Zulu with tribes, and… [that's] what you think when you say Africa, whereas now it's more similar to here' (Tom).

In addition, students added new information into their responses, deriving from preceding lessons in the enquiry sequence. One child, for instance, mentioned the Akosombo dam and their surprise at Ghana containing large-scale modern structures: 'I didn't really know about the dam, so there are more structures like the dam than I originally thought' (Jonny). Others focused more on the levels of happiness in Ghana, suggesting that their perceptions of the country are now less concentrated on crime and poverty: 'At the beginning I really thought there was a lot of crime because it is poor and people are unhappy but now I know it's happier [than that]' (Imogen).

In a discussion of crime which followed this remark, students once again focused on the role of the media in conveying and reinforcing negative images of Africa. Asked 'what made you link Africa and crime?', children responded:

Stuff on the news about South Africa and crime there. (Andrew)

> I think the news really focuses on war and crime. (Frankie)

> You get a completely different view from watching the news. (Victoria)

Reflecting on the negative bias in the media, Tom added: 'the news is really meant to tell us what's happened around the world but not so much if someone's really happy.' Others reflected on the negative consequences of negative images in the media, even in the context of charitable fund-raising, since it deters tourists from visiting African countries: 'Because they show bad videos it doesn't promote tourism, it gives a bad view of the country so if you were planning a holiday you wouldn't want to go there' (Andrew).

Another perspective was raised by a student concerned about government corruption in African countries, which raised the prospect of charitable funds being wasted: 'If you're sending money rather than objects, then if they have a corrupt government they could take it all' (Tom). Tom also questioned the competence of African governments, suggesting that 'sometimes they might not know what to do with it so they might spend it on the wrong things.' Additionally, some children expressed concerns that charitable aid might lead to a culture of dependency upon wealthier countries: 'if a country knows for a year that they're going to get things to help them then they come to depend on things like money and then they might waste some of their own money' (Imogen). Andrew added: 'They might rely on that and not strive.' This approach seems to raise the spectre of Africanist stereotypes about countries as backward, lazy, underdeveloped, and unreliable (Watts, 2003; Andreasson, 2005; Mazrui, 2005). Moreover, when asked if they would be interested in visiting Ghana, their responses quickly strayed onto stereotypical images of Africa:

> I would try a tour of Africa, that would be cool. (Frankie)
> Safari. (Tom)
> Egypt. (Jonny)
> Maldives. (Victoria)

The issue of the degree to which children identified Ghana with wider African dynamics is discussed below, with regard to the discussion in the third focus group.

5.4.3 Focus Group 3

This third and final focus group took place towards the end of the unit of work, in the third enquiry sequence. The first question put to the children was to describe Ghana using a single word. From a methodological point of view, it could be suggested that this approach might tend to encourage simplistic views of the world – views that might be thought to fall into stereotypical or Africanist forms. (Similar critiques of encouraging simplistic content have been levelled against the social media platform Twitter, which limits Tweets to 140 characters.) Nevertheless, while some individual students might have been tempted to indulge in stereotypical language, it is seen that students as a whole offered a range of responses that, taken together, suggest that this methodology does not elicit only simplistic and stereotypical responses.

As with responses in the previous group, responses emphasised both physical and socio-economic aspects. In terms of the former, children utilised a range of terms: 'humid' (Victoria) and 'the rainforest' (Frankie). In terms of socio-economic aspects, children described Ghana as 'developing' (Tom) and 'sort of poor at the moment' (Andrew). Compared to the previous groups, however, students were readier to discuss cultural aspects of Ghana, as illustrated by Victoria describing Ghana as 'diverse', elaborating (when prompted) that 'there are different people … in the country… like cultures, they wear different things, older people wearing tribal stuff and children wearing average stuff.' Jonny added that, in their view, it was more diverse than Britain: 'there are more languages than [we have].'

Students also highlighted their perception of happiness in Ghana, a focus which contrasted with their previous perceptions of crime and poverty (see above). Imogen chose 'happy' as her word to describe Ghana, adding that 'they're generally happy people because of the way they live.' Victoria chose 'fun' for her word, stating that 'it's quite a lot more fun there than here.' However, others recognised that the challenges presented by relative poverty meant that not every aspect of Ghanaian life could be described as 'fun': 'If they're struggling with money it might not be fun' (Imogen). Agreeing with this, another student used the words 'working hard' to describe the country; this resonated with other children, one of whom suggested that Ghanaians 'work a lot' on farms and 'they don't have much money' (Andrew).

A new line of questioning asked children whether they thought that Ghana could be seen as representing wider characteristics of the African continent as a whole. Again, these opinions were elicited by asking children to provide single words, but in this case describing both Ghana and Africa. The words chosen by students included some words that indicated the persistence of negative views of Africa – 'underdeveloped' (Andrew), 'poor' (Imogen) – and

others that showed a focus on physical geography, e.g. 'hot' (Frankie) and 'humid' (Victoria). Other children, however, showed evidence of a more nuanced understanding of Africa, describing it as 'diverse' (Tom), 'varied' (Jonny), and 'not all the same' (Andrew). On this basis, Andrew suggested that Ghana, being itself diverse, 'gives you a good idea of the whole of Africa.'

Having asked students to give their current opinion of Ghana and Africa, they were then asked how their opinions had changed over the course of the lessons they had experienced up to that point. The changes discussed by children pointed towards some increase in awareness of geographical and socio-economic diversity, for example:

I didn't know they were happy, I thought they were quite miserable and poor. (Imogen)

I thought they wouldn't have mobile phones but they do. (Tom)

Ghana's a lot more developed than I thought. (Jonny)

Moreover, some of the children refrained from suggesting that Ghana should try to become the same as a 'developed', Western country. Asked if 'do you think the ideal is for Ghana to become like Britain?' children replied with statements that recognised the importance and value of cultural diversity:

I think the culture should be unique to different countries. If not it would be quite boring. (Frankie)

If they were all the same it would be boring, and you can't make Ghana the same because the climate's different. (Andrew)

We're not perfect so there's no point giving that to others. (Victoria)

In the context of this last comment, students also highlighted things that Britain could learn from Ghana, focusing on hard work:

Taking the opportunities we're given. (Tom)

I think people often can't be bothered here. (Jonny)

Working harder. (Imogen)

Considering all three focus groups, it is clear that while some stereotypically Africanist views of Ghana (and Africa) persisted even at later stages of the unit of work, most children also gained a more nuanced and reciprocal view of socio-economic and geographical complexity and diversity over the course of the unit of work. One of the most striking instances of this shift emerged early in the first focus group, when children talked about the ways in which they would redraw their window drawings summing up Ghana (as they were later given the opportunity to do; see section 6.2), stating for instance that they would now include urban environments and socio-economic diversity as well as visual content focused on Ghana's poorer, more rural contexts. A growing awareness of the complicity of mass media in encouraging Africanist perspectives (as discussed in Mawdsley, 2008) emerged across the focus groups, as demonstrated by Frankie's comment, in the first focus group, that 'TV has too big a influence… they'll only show the bad things', and Tom's comment, in the second focus group, that the 1960s film *Zulu* still exerted a strong influence on 'what you think when you say Africa.' As such, the shifts in opinion discussed in these focus groups refer not just to shifts in intellectual understanding of geographical material covered in the classroom, but also to a wider and deeper understanding of how views of reality are discursively produced within nets of wider and power-filled dynamics. One immediate product of this wider and more critical understanding was the opinion, expressed by Andrew in the final focus group, that Ghana could be considered in some ways as an example of African diversity more widely: Ghana 'gives you a good idea of the whole of Africa.' As in previous instances, it must be remembered that children may have striven to please me as the teacher and focus group facilitator by emphasising themes that they believed I wished them to talk about. Nevertheless, their ability to frame Ghana, and Africa more widely, in terms that emphasise diversity and complexity represents a significant progression from Africanist viewpoints, and points towards geography education's capacity to encourage children to produce new and less oppressive kinds of discourse about distant place.

5.5 Visual Materials – Posters

Having now surveyed evidence of children's changing representations of Ghana (and Africa) in classroom discussions and focus groups, I will now focus on evidence for change gathered through the very different medium of visual materials. This section of the chapter utilises visual content analysis (following Rose, 2001) to consider the posters produced by the children in lesson 9 of the unit of work, following lessons focusing on development indicators and more personal accounts of development (including happiness indicators; see Appendix I). The children were asked to produce these posters with the specific aim of comparing Ghana and the UK. There was scope for individual pupil choice in terms of the design of their poster, textual content, and the choice of illustrative photographs and/or any illustrative sketches. However, all children were asked to reference development indicators and happiness indicators, and by the inclusion of visual and textual material illustrating and reflecting upon the differences and similarities between the two countries. Consequently, all the posters produced by the children incorporate details of development indicators such as GDP, doctors per 1,000 population, and (usually brief) textual accounts of wider views of development, including happiness indicators. All but one of the posters also included the Ghanaian and British flags and maps of each country. As such, a systematic content analysis of the posters would be less useful than an in-depth consideration of several individual posters. In the following section, four individual posters are considered in detail in order to present an overview of how children chose to design and present their posters comparing Ghana and the UK. These particular posters were chosen as representative points upon a spectrum from text-heavy posters with relatively little visual content to more visual posters with a mix of visual and textual material to a small number of posters with predominantly visual material. The majority of the posters rested in the middle of the spectrum, utilising a mix of visual and textual material.

Considering the more textual end of the spectrum first, the poster presented in Fig 5.1 (overleaf; created by Emily) appears at first glance to have adopted multiple visual methods to convey information, including coloured stars (with the colours in question being those of the Ghanaian flag), text laid over the British and Ghanaian flags, the flags themselves, maps of the countries, comparative figures of happiness, and pictures of the respective political leaders at the time of the exercise, David Cameron and John Mahama. However, the considerable degree of visual repetition (i.e. the numerous instances of the Ghanaian flag and, to a lesser degree, the Union Jack) limits the degree to which visual content animates and sheds light on the textual content (the development indicators and written characterisations of the countries). Emily's

text characterising the UK highlights the pressures of modern life in a developed country, while the text characterising Ghana adopts an extremely positive approach to life in Ghana, describing it as a 'very welcoming country' and Ghanaians as being 'happy with what they have got' and as 'lighting up everyone with their glowing smiles.' This approach thus adopts an Africanist perspective insofar as it creates an unduly positive impression of life in Ghana at the same time as emphasising Britain's relative affluence (albeit an affluence that generates its own challenges for Britons).

Fig 5.1 Poster 1

The next poster (Fig 5.2, on p.134, by Olivia) adopts a more visual approach than the preceding poster, while also providing more substantial written text and commentary. The titles, text boxes, and text within the boxes are differently coloured, in line with the national flags. This poster also incorporates eight photographs, four illustrating different aspects of each country. The Ghanaian photographs illustrate the rainforest in Kakum, a town (or outskirts of a city), a traditional Ghanaian church, and a number of elephants, while the British photographs show two images of country fields, a hedgehog, and a small town with a church tower. They are,

therefore, broadly comparable, illustrating both the similarity of the two countries while also illuminating the differences – although in a manner that falls short of the full diversity found in the two countries, by neglecting inner city and coastal environments. In terms of Olivia's text, similar ideas emerge in the section on 'Happiness in Ghana' to those expressed in the previous poster: 'Ghana is definitely not a country with lots of money, but Ghana is definitely a country with lots of smiles!' As with Emily's approach, this poster therefore adopts an Africanist perspective in terms of an unduly positive approach to African countries (Rowland, 2004). The text also highlights similarities with the UK, however, including the shared interest in football and playing with friends: 'This is not so different from the UK.' From this perspective, Olivia's poster conveys both Africanist and somewhat non-Africanist perspectives.

Differences are emphasised again in the text on 'Happiness in the UK', which states that 'In the UK there is so much freedom and there is no war.' This seems to imply an Africanist comparison between peaceful Britain and war-torn Ghana, despite the fact that Ghana is actually a peaceful country. This text box also adds 'pets, food, technology, [and] hobbies' to 'friends and family' in the list of things that make people happy in the UK, with only 'friends and family' also featuring in the text box on happiness in Ghana, implying a somewhat reductive and, thus, Africanist approach to the quality of life available in Ghana. Similarly, the central text box comparing Ghana and the UK emphasises the significant differences in development indicators, landscapes, wildlife, and food between the two countries. However, this text also emphasises similarities between the two countries, including the shared language of English – although the text does not mention that this is the case largely because of the UK's past colonial occupation and control of Ghana in the pre-Independence era.

Fig 5.2 Poster 2

The third poster (Fig 5.3, overleaf, by Pete) lays yet more emphasis on visual design and correspondingly less emphasis on textual content. The flags and heads of state of both country are prominently presented in the top of the poster, with flag-coloured maps in each bottom corner. Prominently-placed graphs compare the rainfall in both countries, while a number of photographs of medium and small size portray traditional Ghanaian and 'Great British' dress (in the latter case, a number of household cavalry soldiers), popular dishes (fufu and soup for Ghana, English breakfast for the UK), landscapes (rainforest and country fields), and wildlife (elephants for Ghana and six different animals for the UK). The inclusion of elephants, colourful traditional Ghanaian dress, and a rainforest picture to represent Ghana can be seen as a simplistic and thereby somewhat Africanist representation of Ghanaian diversity (as in the previous poster), lacking recognition of urban landscapes or contemporary modes of (often Westernised) dress that are popularly worn in Ghana. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the photographs chosen to represent Britain were also quite limited in topic, including a traditional breakfast, rural scene, and household cavalry soldiers; as such, the limits of the visual choices made present a constrained view of British diversity as well as Ghanaian diversity.

In terms of Pete's text, the poster contains textual information on a range of topics, including development indicators and facts about the two countries including capital cities, currency, official language, climate, natural resources, and predominant religion. A short text box at the bottom-middle of the poster sets out a brief summary of the similarities and differences between the two countries, focusing on differences in terms of development indicators and similarities in terms of language and religion. Again, the historical reasons for some of these shared aspects of national life are not mentioned, despite their relevance to Ghana's current position in the international system compared to the UK's position.

Fig 5.3 Poster 3

The fourth and last poster, shown in Fig 5.4 overleaf and created by Darryl, represents an almost entirely visual approach to comparing the two countries. The flag of each country features three times, twice in representations of flags and once in the map of each country. One set of flags are placed on top of opening flaps; underneath are lists of development indicators for each country. Additional coloured text boxes indicate the relative population, average temperature, and national anthem of each country. Additional maps at the top of the poster also situate each country in their respective continental contexts. Seven photographs also run along

the bottom of the poster, illustrating a Ghanaian town, vegetables, and coins, and British landscape, pound coins, country village, and the Houses of Parliament. Consequently, as with poster 2, these photographs emphasise both similarities and differences between the two countries. One notable omission from this poster was the broader view of development encompassed in notions of happiness and happiness indicators.

Fig 5.4 Poster 4

These four posters exemplify different positions on a spectrum between largely textual and largely visual approaches to portraying the similarities and differences between Ghana and the UK. Since almost all the posters included relatively similar content at my request, the variations between individual posters was constituted by the creative choices made by individual students about visual content and how to balance visual with textual content. In terms of portraying both similarities and differences between Ghana and the UK, both visual and textual approaches have been seen to be of use. Textual approaches allowed children to convey detailed and often nuanced accounts of diversity and similarity that strain against Africanist perspectives, as shown for instance with regard to Poster 2. Yet textual content also contained at times

simplistic and Africanist views of Ghana, as seen in Poster 1's remarks on happy and smiling Ghanaians. This was also the case with some of the visual material selected for inclusion in the posters, with Poster 2 presenting a relatively constrained and limited view of both Ghana and the UK that was focused on traditional and rural aspects of each country. Yet visual material was also used to present more diverse views of Ghana and the UK, including some of the photographs presented in Posters 3 and 4, and also the development indicators and other information presented in a visual format in different posters. Overall, it can be said that children used the posters, which were created at more or less the mid-point of the unit of work, to convey awareness of both similarity and difference across these two countries – but also that the posters did not fully succeed in escaping Africanist influences in terms of portraying Ghana in terms that allude to 'natural weakness and incapacity' (Andreasson, 2005: 972) through stereotypes that 'make one story become the only story' (Adichie, 2009).

5.6 Written Materials

In this brief section, I turn to written materials produced by students, in this case a writing exercise which required students to provide a short written response to the question: Is all of Africa equally poor? Their responses provide additional evidence that children were by this time (after the mid-way point in the unit of work) increasingly aware of diversity within the continent of Africa in addition to within individual African countries. This awareness often proceeded upon the basis of specific development indicators for individual countries within Africa, which students cited in support of the notion that Africa exhibited wide diversity as a continent. One boy (Oliver) wrote:

> I believe that Africa is not all poor it is also reasonably well off in some contrys. I know this because of Development indicators, in some countrys the GDP per capita is a very reasonable $6700 a year wich is a good rate for earning money. Where as there are some very poor contrus like Congo. Congo's GDP per Capita is only $400 a year this is a tiny amount compared to Egypt.

Anna supported this broad position with specific reference to Ghana:

> Africa is a diverse continent when it comes to poverty as South Africa is a rich country as it has diamonds but the Democratic Repulic of Congo is really poor. Ghana is fairly poor but happy with a good education system with a literacy rate the same as Egypt but

in Egypt they get paid a lot more money. Tanzania doesn't get paid as much as Egypt but more than Ghana, though they're literacy rate is 3% lower.

At times, students' emphasis on diversity became transformed into an emphasis on economic inequality, with Victoria claiming that 'the wealth of Africa is spread less evenly around its inhabitants' – less evenly, presumably, than in 'developed' countries. (In reality, however, income inequality as measured by the Gini Index is lower in some African countries, including Ghana, than in some European countries; World Bank, 2016)

Other students emphasised instead the socio-economic diversity that occurs within countries, stating for instance that 'no country is filled with rich [people]' (Jonny) and that 'within every country in Africa, there will be rich people e.g. doctors as well as poorer people… some people within a country will be richer than other people' (Gemma). Again, a number of students expressed this view with specific reference to Ghana, as shown by this boy's remarks: 'Altogether I believe that there is a mixture of rich and poor, for example Ghana is very mixed, but currently the majority are poor' (Andrew). This recognition works against Africanist assumptions of homogenous poverty and 'tropes of sloth… and an irredentist anti-market mentality' (Watts, 2003: 7).

5.7 Conclusion

The findings presented in this chapter attest to the value of classroom discussions in terms of providing insights into pupils' changing representations about Ghana in addition to some of the instances through which and because of which representations changed through the course of a unit of work. As seen in Chapter Four, analysis of transcripts of classroom discussions show that pupils' 'initial' representations – 'initial' in the sense that they were influenced by Africanist discourses – emerged in numerous lessons and with regard to multiple topics, and assumed both (unduly) positive and (unduly) negative forms. Analysis presented in this chapter also revealed some of the ways in which the initial, Africanist representations voiced by many pupils at different times were supplemented, overlain, and in some cases replaced by changing representations exhibiting a greater awareness of complexity. These emerged in classroom discussions, with reference to, first, statements that demonstrated awareness of diversity within and across places (especially Ghana and Africa), and, second, statements that emphasised cross-context similarities between Western countries such as the UK and countries such as Ghana. Collectively, these changing representations illustrated how pupils expressed deeper and more nuanced understandings of Ghana as the unit of work proceeded – although it is worth noting that these changing representations were expressed in a complex pattern. While such

remarks were more frequent towards the end of the unit of work, they were also interspersed throughout earlier lessons and with regard to a variety of topics, indicating the presence of a complex pattern of learning, and problematising notions of a simple and cross-thematic educational journey from Africanist representations of Ghana to awareness of diversity and complexity both across and within contexts.

The changes in opinion that pupils demonstrated did not solely come about through children's passive or self-directed absorption of the geographical material presented in lessons and encountered through completion of homework tasks. Rather, challenges from me in my role as the classroom teacher, and from fellow pupils in the course of lessons, played an important role in encouraging pupils to challenge their own assumptions and engage with more open-ended, complex, and potentially ambiguous viewpoints. In other words, the 'more complex and nuanced representations of diversity' characteristic of a geographical perspective on the world (Taylor, 2011b: 50) emerged not just from involvement in academic learning, but also from interpersonal co-production of new points of view through collective engagement with the 'power geometries' that characterise the complex and power-filled relationships between different places (Massey, 2005). This set of findings highlights the value of undertaking observation of classroom discussion alongside other data collection modalities such as written and visual materials, since these challenges to individual pupils' opinions and the resultant negotiated and emergent opinion shifts would not otherwise have emerged. As such, my findings in this chapter endorse a multi-methods approach to explorations of how 'versions of the world, of society, events and inner psychological worlds are produced in discourse' (Potter, 1997: 146).

Regarding the three focus groups held at different points throughout the unit of work, most children's utterances presented a clear progression from their early views (in which Ghana was portrayed, in their window drawings for example, as poor, agricultural, and crime-ridden) to more nuanced views in which geographical and socioeconomic diversity and complexity (for example, the presence of skyscrapers in Ghanaian cities) played a stronger role, to the extent that most children in the final focus group suggested that British people could learn from Ghanaians. Interestingly, some exercises – such as the written exercise on Ghanaian recipes – seemed to increase students' sense of 'otherness' regarding Ghana, although they also elicited some points in which students gained a sense of similar experiences regarding food ingredients and, more widely, experiences of school and sports. Another important aspect of this data was the children's focus upon the negative role of the media in encouraging negative views of Africa and African countries – views which presented a fascinating counterweight to the

overtly (and, arguably, overly) positive views of Ghana and the happiness of its people that students also voiced, especially in the third focus group. Overall, the focus groups presented a clear trajectory from initial, quite Africanist viewpoints to more nuanced and mixed views in which complexity of various kinds played a much stronger role.

In terms of visual materials, children's posters represented an intermediate form between visual and textual data, and were created roughly in the middle of the unit of work. They exhibited a spectrum between more visual and more textual approaches, and emphasised both similarities and differences between Ghana and the UK, and demonstrated a range of approaches that ranged from recognitions of geographic difference and diversity to over-simplified and rose-tinted views of the two countries, often expressed in terms of their choice of photographs representing different environments within each country. Children's posters also varied in terms of the extent to which Africanist discourses were expressed, for instance in notions that Ghanaians are always smiling and happy. Consequently, as might have been expected from data gathered in the middle of the unit of work, the posters collected as visual data tended to exhibit a degree of ambivalence and uncertainty, sitting between Africanism and more nuanced ideas of diversity. While acknowledging that a poster presents a limited space in which to express the diversity and cross-context similarities of two countries, and that some students may have had limited access to visual resources, it was nevertheless the case that the posters expressed a more limited view of geographical difference than many of the verbal and written materials gathered in the course of the unit of work. This may reflect the dominance of visual media in the generation of children's initial, Africanist views of African countries, such as the 1964 film 'Zulu' which one student mentioned in the second focus group. Speaking more widely, the posters discussed in this chapter illustrate the diversity of opinion amongst pupils considered as individuals within a class, and the way in which the journey from Africanism to post-Africanist views was not uniform or linear but rather complex and diversified within a wider trajectory towards less discriminatory and stereotypical representations. Data from a written exercise was also discussed above, focusing on students' responses to the question: 'Is all of Africa equally poor?'. Students' responses to this question revealed a growing awareness of diversity within particular regions and within countries, whether expressed in terms of particular African countries exhibiting relatively high levels of GDP per capita or through the co-existence of rich and poor people in Ghana. Thus, the written material created by students in the middle part of the unit of work attested to a general tendency towards greater awareness of diversity and difference.

Stepping back from the data to consider wider themes, and foregrounding once more a poststructuralist (Foucauldian) perspective that emphasises the relations between knowledge, power and discourse, it is clear that pupils' initial representations (as discussed in Chapter Four) indicate their privileged position vis-à-vis African countries. While it has at times been assumed that Foucault's account of power is overly ubiquitous and all-encompassing, other scholars have highlighted how Foucault's theorising acknowledges the potential for resistance and change through a number of distinct activities (Pickett, 1996). In the geography teaching context, the findings presented above illustrate how teachers' and pupils' challenges in the classroom, the acquisition of a deeper knowledge-base regarding Ghana, and participation in a number of visual and written exercises allowed pupils to express changing representations throughout the course of the unit of work and especially towards the end of the unit. In the course of developing more nuanced viewpoints, children were able to bypass and/or challenge Africanist discourses through explorations of cross-context diversity and similarity facilitated by the teacher and other pupils. As such, while the discursive genre of the classroom lesson contains the potential for dominant discourses (such as Africanism) to continue their dominance, this genre of interaction also allows for the challenging and bypassing of such discourses through opposing discourses such as geographical arguments emphasising diversity and cross-context similarity (Binns, 1996). If, as Bakhtin and Volosinov contend, language is a 'site of social struggle' (Maybin, 2003: 64), then geography lessons focused on distant place learning represent important opportunities to engage in ongoing struggles surrounding children's representations and understandings of countries such as Ghana. From a Foucauldian perspective, the emergent, co-produced nature of classroom discussion offers opportunities to interrupt the repetition of power-filled discourses, substituting discourses that are resistant to dominant narratives and that present alternative ways of envisioning (e.g.) distant places like Ghana. From this perspective, geography education represents an important intervention in the stream of mass media/social media content with which pupils are deluged on a daily basis, and which often promotes and perpetuates Africanist images and stereotypes (Mawdsley, 2008).

Moreover, the more autonomously-conducted written and visual exercises represent additional arenas in which children may explore and develop their changing viewpoints through a range of creative modalities. This represents a distinctive and more individual means of resistance to dominating power, one in which individuals can interrupt and remake narratives on their own terms – although the circulating, internalised nature of modern power means that individual activity cannot be seen as *inherently* resistant (White, 1986). In the educational context, the possibility of 'normalised' power leading students to reproduce dominant power

structures *within education* – most notably their subordinate position within the educational field and thus their felt need to reproduce material that (they feel) will satisfy their teacher – cannot be entirely discounted. Thus two powerful discourses – Africanism and Western education – may come into conflict, with Africanism exerting influence from outside school contexts and educational dynamics exerting influence from within school contexts. The outcome of this conflict can be read in terms of Foucault's account of productive power, creating 'new domains of knowledge and practice' (Guttings, 2005:602) – in this case, new and more sophisticated discourses embodying more nuanced understandings of distant places such as Ghana. While these may emerge in an 'artificial' manner, i.e. through pedagogical practice rather than students' wholly autonomous, self-directed reflections, these new discourses nevertheless represent new ways of representing distant places – frequently, ways that can work against the discriminatory and oppressive tropes of Africanism. This reveals Africanism as inherently unstable, like all discourses in Foucault's view – it is only stable if 'the knowledges and practices constituting prevailing inequalities continue to be reproduced' (Kesby, 2005: 4). Given geography's inherent pro-diversity bias (Binns, 1996), geography education can serve as one of the means through which the 'prevailing inequalities' of Africanism may cease to be reproduced.

Chapter Six

Children's Final Representations of Ghana and Africa

6.1 Introduction

This chapter foregrounds the representations of Ghana and Africa that students expressed towards the end of the unit of work. As noted in Chapter Five, these views should not be considered as 'final' in the sense that they represent the end of students' own reflections on, and perhaps personal engagements with, African countries and cultures. Foucault's work emphasises the continual construction of selves and societies through the operation of discourses and the circulation of power – a constructionist point of view that, like Bakhtin's emphasis on the unfinalisability of language, culture and selfhood, emphasises the permanence of change (Foucault, 1980, 1997; Bakhtin, 1981; 1984). Children's representations are only considered as 'final' in the sense of a journey from children's 'Africanist' representations of African (and specifically Ghanaian) distant places to more sophisticated and nuanced representations – a journey that for many children coincided with the pedagogical journey from one enquiry sequence to the next in the context of a unit of work focused upon distant places. (Despite this, as mentioned in previous chapters, individual students continued to display 'initial' or 'Africanist' representations throughout the unit of work.) In order to explore students' final viewpoints, this chapter presents data gathered through visual, visual/textual, and written modalities, focusing respectively upon final window drawings, Wordles, and written exercises on Fair Trade and a reporter's blog about Ghana. As with Chapter Five, this chapter continues to outline possible answers to my third research question: Do children's understandings become less characterised by Africanist discourses over the course of the unit of work?

6.2.1 Visual Materials: Final Window Drawings

In addition to the initial drawings which were content-analysed in Chapter Four, children's final window drawings were also analysed in terms of categories, codes and sub-codes; these are shown in Table 6.1, below. The same categories and codes were utilised, but a number of

sub-codes that were evident in the initial drawings were not repeated in these final drawings, and owing to some new kinds of content a number of new sub-codes were required. In Table 6.1, sub-codes from the initial drawings which were not used in the final drawings are underlined, and those sub-codes which were used for the first time are presented in bold type.

Table 6.1 Categories of Visual Content in Final Window Drawings

Category	Code	Sub-code	Number of references	% of total number of drawings (21) in which reference(s) occurred
Setting	Rural		12	57
	Urban		20	95
Physical geography	Weather	Aridity	3	14
		Humidity	3	14
		Rain	0	0
		Snow	0	0
		Sun	6	29
	Landscape	Hills/mountains	2	10
		Lakes	1	5
		Rivers	4	19
		Sea	3	14
	Plants	Crops	5	24
		Fruit	0	0
		Trees	12	57
	Animals	Birds	1	5
		Livestock	1	5
		Mosquitos	0	0
		Wildlife	0	0
Human geography	Activities	Agriculture	3	14
		Carrying items on head	2	10
		Children playing	4	19
		Children working	1	5
		Commerce	**3**	14
		Fishing	3	14
		Preparing food	1	5
		Football	7	33
		Recycling	0	0
		Tourism	1	5
		Washing clothes	0	0
		Women looking after children	1	5
	Culture	Barefoot	0	0
		Colourful/local dress	1	5
		Jewellery/handicrafts	0	0
		Spears	0	0
		Violence	0	0
		Wealth	3	14
		Western dress	2	10

	Infrastructure	**Dam**	1	5
		Dirty water	0	0
		Dusty road/ground	1	5
		Electricity	3	14
		Gravel road	0	0
		Irrigation	0	0
		Lack of electricity	0	0
		Mobile phones	2	10
		Open fires	1	5
		Paved roads	7	33
		Pollution	2	10
		Potholed road	1	5
		Satellite aerials	1	5
		Shared toilets	1	5
		Telephone/electricity lines	3	14
		Water bucket	4	19
		Water pump	2	10
		Well	5	24
	Transport	**Aircraft**	3	14
		Bicycles	1	5
		Boats	4	19
		Buses/taxis	1	5
		Cars	10	48
		Lorries	1	5
		Motorbikes	2	10
		Pedestrians	4	19
		Traffic_jams	0	0
	Buildings	Larger houses	8	38
		Airport	1	5
		Banks	3	14
		Castles	2	10
		Churches	1	5
		Hospitals	2	10
		Hotels	2	10
		Larger school	3	14
		Markets	4	19
		Metal-roofed houses	1	5
		Mud huts	6	29
		Offices	4	19
		Shops	2	10
		Skyscrapers	14	67
		Small/basic schools	4	19
		Stadium	5	24
		Straw-roofed/thatched houses	7	33

An immediately noticeable feature of the final window drawings is the shift in setting. While 95% of the initial drawings took place in rural settings, this dropped to 57% in the final drawings; moreover, 95% of the final drawings also featured urban settings. This shift in emphasis is also visible in the twelve most common visual categories, shown in Fig 6.1 overleaf. Whereas the sun was the most common sub-code in children's initial drawings, skyscrapers (a new sub-code) were the most common sub-code in the final drawings, occurring in 67% of drawings. Other common sub-codes which pointed towards a more 'developed' view of Ghana included cars (48%, a rise of 29%), larger houses (38%, a rise of 24%), paved roads (33%, a rise of 31%), and the new sub-code of (football) stadiums (24%). Nevertheless, it should be noted that other common aspects of children's drawings also illustrated continued awareness of rural aspects of Ghanaian physical and human geography, including trees (57%), straw-roofed/thatched houses (33%), mud huts (29%), wells (24%), and crops (24%). Consequently, the children's final drawings pointed towards a more diverse, rather than a completely altered, perception of Ghana.

Fig 6.1 Twelve Most Common Visual Categories in Final Window Drawings
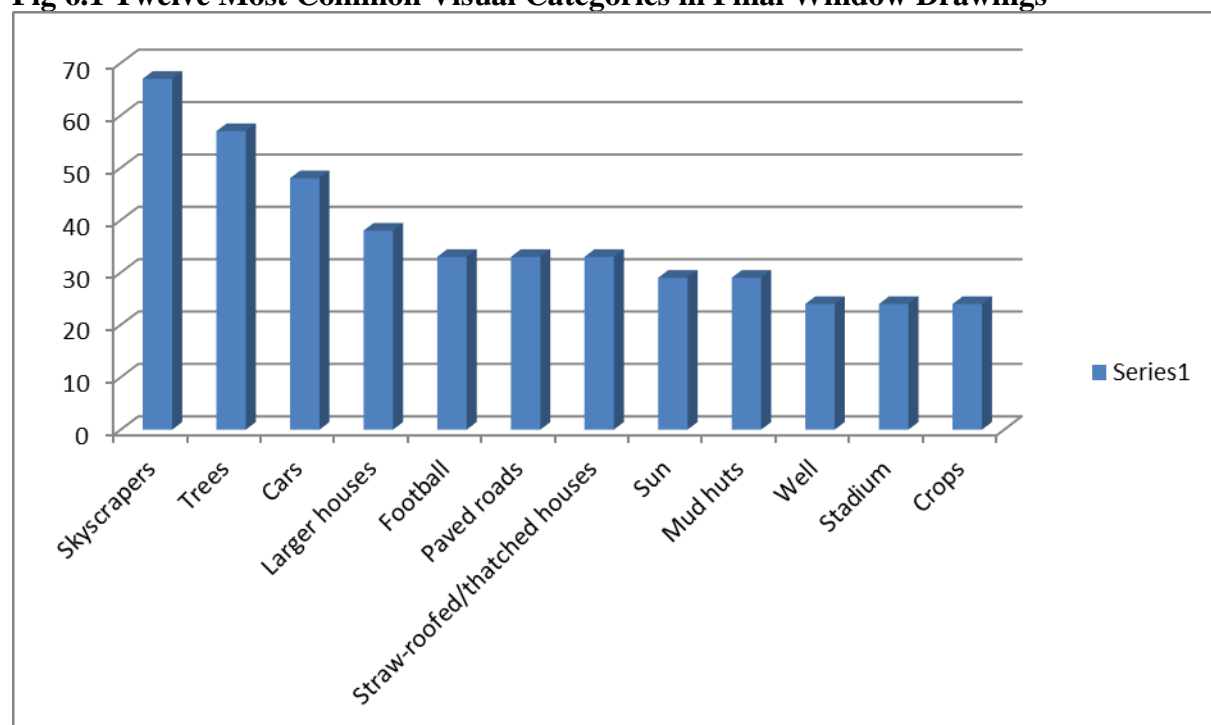
The list below presents the sixteen sub-codes which were included in the initial but not the final window drawings:

- Rain
- Snow

- Fruit
- Mosquitos
- Wildlife
- Recycling
- Washing clothes
- Barefoot
- Jewellery/handicrafts
- Spears
- Violence
- Dirty water
- Irrigation
- Gravel road
- Lack of electricity
- Traffic jams

In some ways, the absence of some of these sub-codes in the final drawings point towards a less Africanist perception of Ghana, especially references to spears, violence, (walking) barefoot, dirty water, and lack of electricity. The lack of references to handicrafts and hand-washing of clothes also suggests a less 'underdeveloped' view of Ghana. However, the final drawings also contained no references to some previously-mentioned elements that do feature in Ghanaian geography, including rain (despite the presence of rainforests in Ghana, as highlighted during lessons), fruit, mosquitos and wildlife.

It is important not to read too much into the differences between children's initial and final window drawings. The reason for some of the omissions listed above may simply be that children opted to focus on other aspects of Ghanaian life, e.g. the co-presence of urban and rural elements in Ghanaian geography and the presence of modern infrastructure more widely. Since there is only so much room in each drawing, it is inevitable that foregrounding some elements will mean that others need to be backgrounded or excluded. It should also be noted that children may well not have checked or remembered precisely what they included in their initial drawings, which were completed some weeks earlier. Moreover, as with other data collection modalities, it must be remembered that students may well have drawn these images with educational expectations in mind – in this case, my expectations of greater awareness of complexity and diversity within Ghanaian geographies and the wider global dynamics in which Ghana is situated. Furthermore, the visual medium might be thought to encourage greater diversity of content simply by virtue of its visual character, which could be said to have an inherent tendency to encourage drawers to produce interesting and varied images to catch and hold viewers' attention. Nevertheless, as with other data collection formats, the creation of these more varied images do attest to the emergence of new discursive forms. Even if they have

been created in part because of the limits of educational power dynamics, and even if they have been shaped by the inherent limits and 'affordances' of the visual format, they still represent important new ways of relating to and imaging distant places in a less Africanist idiom than some of the initial window drawings. The details of this progression are explored in the following section.

6.2.2 Case Studies of Initial and Final Window Drawings

In this section of the chapter I will present three pairs of children's initial and final drawings in order to illustrate in more detail some of the changing perspectives expressed by different children in their drawings. These three pairs of drawings vary significantly in sophistication and content, but are all characteristic of the majority of the children's drawings in that they embody a progression from somewhat simplistic, rural, and occasionally Africanist representations of Ghana in the initial drawings, to more diverse, rural/urban, and sophisticated portrayals in the final drawings, thus generating the shift towards new discursive formations mentioned in the preceding section. Figs 6.2 and 6.3, below and overleaf, shows the first pair of drawings (initial and final drawing 'A'). As can be seen, these are relatively simplistic drawings which do not display great artistic sophistication. Nevertheless, a clear progression is visible from the first to the second drawing. The first drawing is dominated by an elephant being ridden in Indian style by a person clad in colourful green clothes sitting on a multi-coloured rug. The elephant is drinking from a pool or lake labelled as 'dirty' and as the 'only source of water'; a woman wearing a purple dress is also shown cleaning clothes in the water while simultaneously carrying a load upon her head. Elsewhere in the drawing, cocoa pickers pick beans from cocoa plantations, a person opens the doors from inside a mud or clay hut with a straw and stick roof, and overhead a 'very hot' sun illuminates the scene.

Fig 6.2 Initial Drawing A
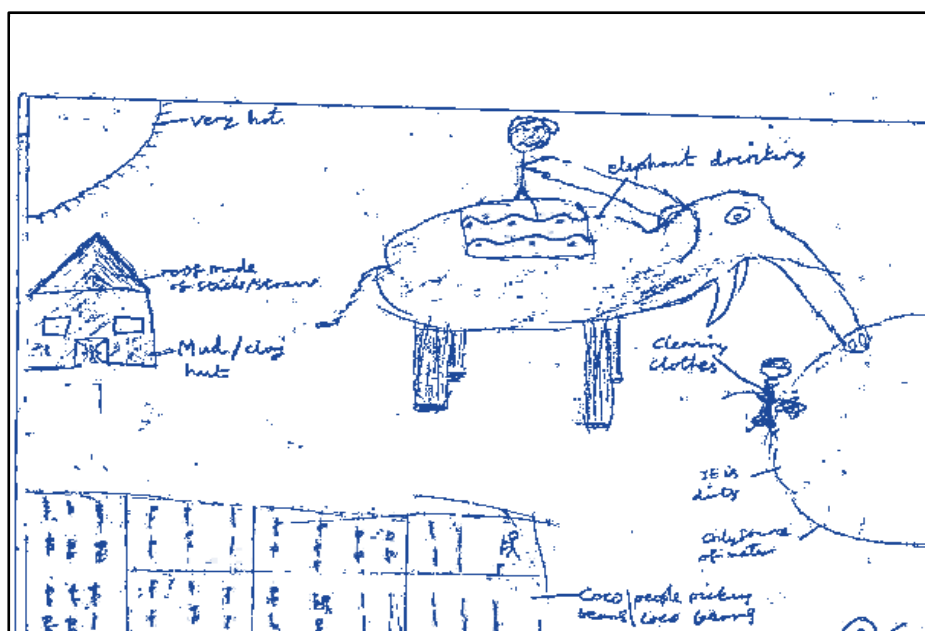
The second drawing of the pair, shown in Fig 4.4 below, presents a completely different picture of Ghana. While the initial drawing contains no reference to urban areas, the final drawing contains no reference to rural areas; instead, the majority of the page   with a large portrayal of a football pitch and stadium (labelled 'Ghana Fball Stac...... , .g....st an urban landscape with skyscrapers labelled 'City building', 'Office', and 'Bank' respectively. Also visible are cars and a motorbike or bicycle. Overall, this represents a dramatic change in this pupil's portrayal of Ghana, from a rural country dominated by agriculture, mud huts and dirty water to a modern, urban landscape with skyscraper office buildings and banks. While this clearly indicates a strong awareness of the presence of 'modern' urban areas in Ghana, this shows less awareness of geographical diversity in Ghana, and potentially a shift from one kind of stereotype to another.

Fig 6.3 Final Drawing A
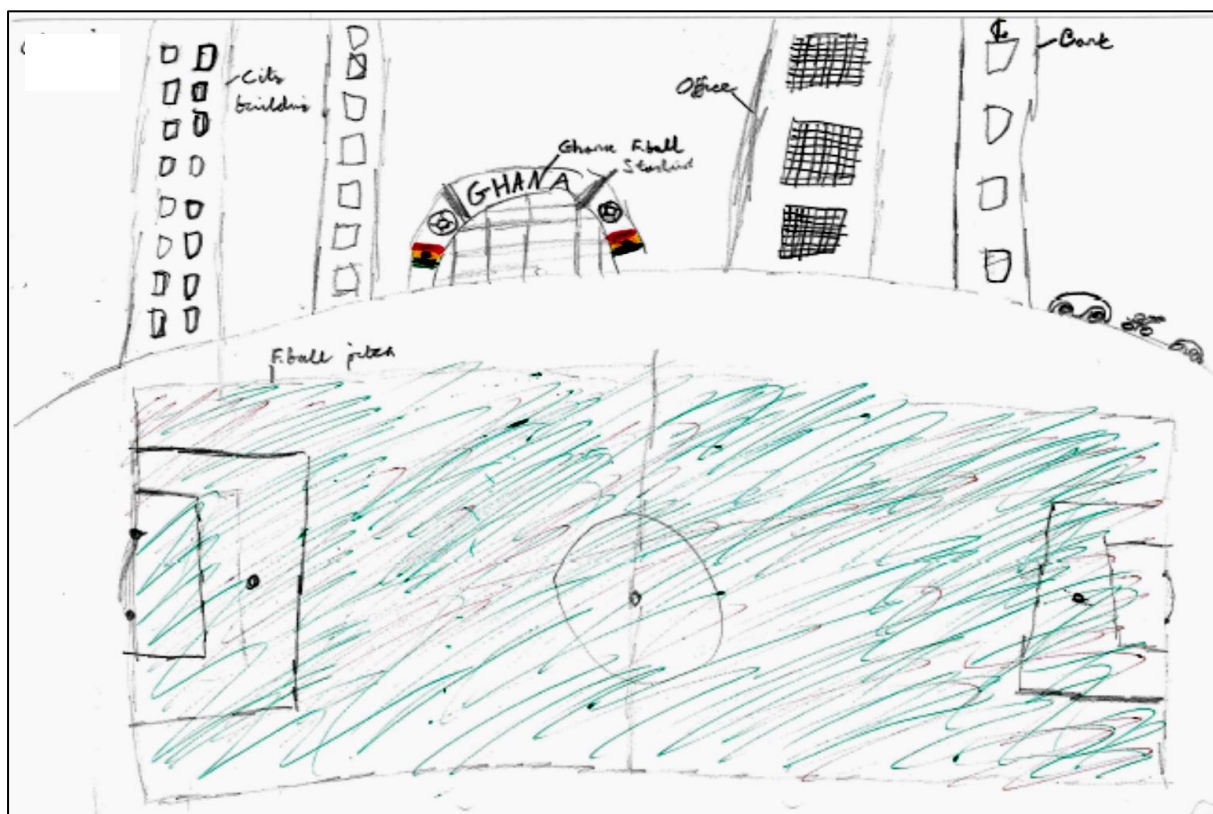
The next pair of drawings (B) are presented in Figs 6.4 and 6.5, overleaf. These drawings attest to a somewhat more sophisticated understanding of diversity than that presented in the

preceding drawings, since the final drawing in this case includes not just urban but also rural content. Nevertheless, the first drawing (Fig 6.4) presents a portrayal of Ghana that in many ways resembles initial drawing A as presented in Fig 6.2. Wildlife is again present, although in this case it is represented by wild boar rather than an elephant. Agriculture is also indicated, although in this drawing the agricultural activity portrayed (a boy picking bananas) is on a much smaller scale than the cocoa plantations illustrated in Fig 6.2. A woman wearing colourful clothing and carrying a load on her head is also present, although in Fig 6.4 she is shown walking away from a pond rather than washing clothes in it. Palm trees are depicted in an otherwise arid landscape featuring a rocky, unpaved road. A mud hut and school (under construction) are also included, as are several Ghanaians wearing colourful traditional clothing and holding spears.

Fig 6.4 Initial Drawing B

The labels within the drawing read:

- woman carrying water
- A Hut
- A boy trying to collect bananas
- wild Boar
- school being made

By contrast, the second drawing (Fig 6.5, overleaf) shows a very different landscape. In the backdrop, an elaborate cityscape labelled 'city in the background' includes modern skyscrapers of a variety of shapes. A car is driving along a paved road which runs from the foreground to the city, although the road also has a labelled pothole. Running diagonally over the road is an electricity or telephone line, with the pylons labelled 'pilons'. In the foreground, there is a small school and a small building labelled 'Bricked house', with a nearby water-pump labelled 'well'. Overall, while the second drawing contains less content than the first drawing, it presents an impression of greater geographical diversity. This is so especially with regard to human geography, since the second drawing contains no reference to plants, animals, or natural landscape features. It also presents an interesting visual perspective, which could be interpreted

as suggesting a migratory movement from the rural to the urban landscape, the destination on the horizon towards which the car appears to be driving.

Fig 6.5 Final Drawing B
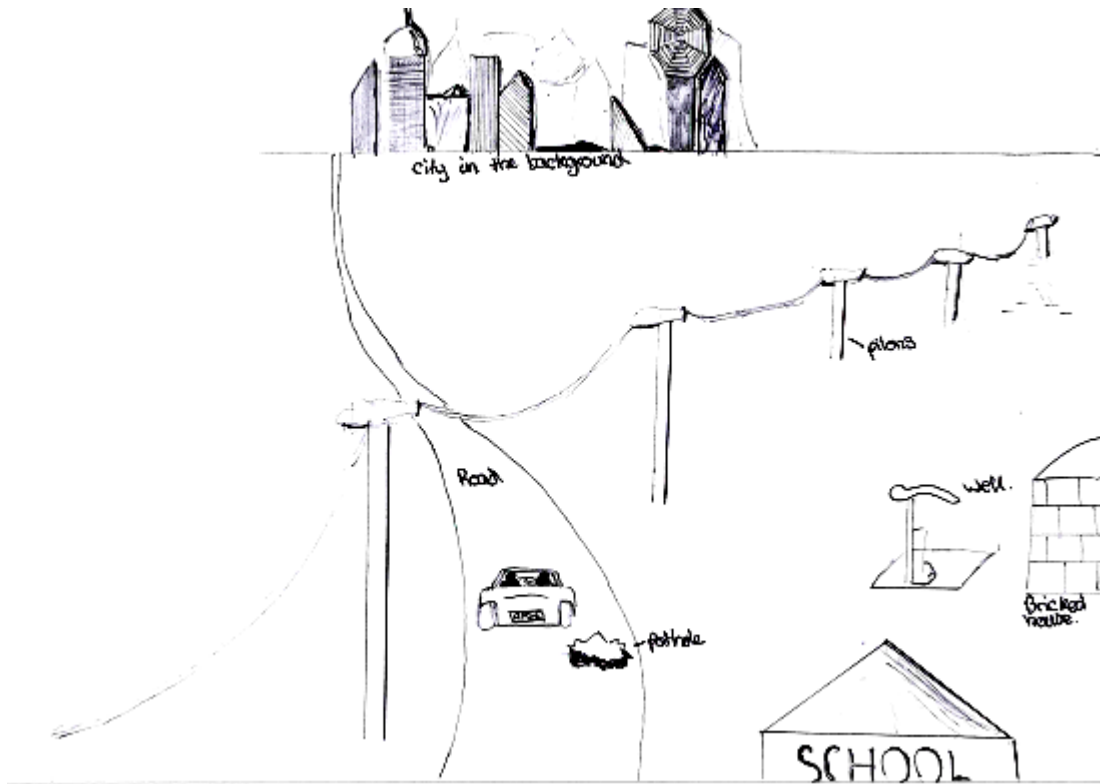
The final pair of drawings that I will consider here again represent a progression from relative simplicity to relative diversity, but in this case the final drawing represents a fuller and more rounded sense of diversity than that presented in the preceding two pairs of drawings. In common with the preceding initial drawings, the first drawing in this pair, presented in Fig 6.6 (overleaf), presents an exclusively rural scene. Other similarities also exist, with a boy picking fruit from a 'dry and stunted' tree – the label speculates that he is picking it for his family to eat or sell – and a woman in a colourful traditional dress carrying a load (fruit and water) upon her head. A goat is present in the foreground of the scene, walking upon a dirt road; also walking on the road is a woman carrying a baby in a sling. A mud hut with no electricity and labelled as 'dark inside' is also portrayed, while overhead is the sun, labelled as 'hot.'

Fig 6.6 Initial Drawing C
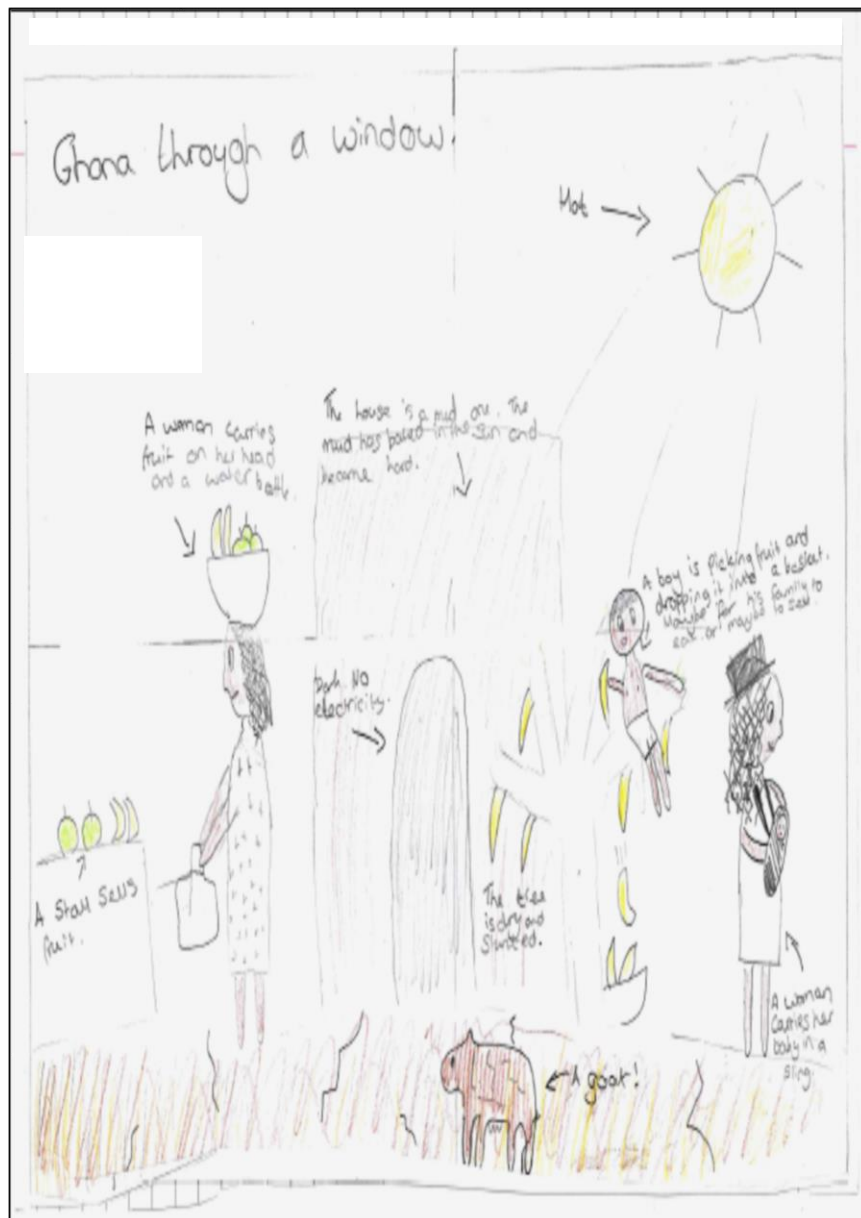
By contrast with this portrayal of an exclusively rural scene, the final drawing (Fig 6.7 overleaf) extends beyond the preceding final drawings by presenting four individual window drawings within the frame. Each of these drawings presents a different aspect of Ghanaian human and physical geography, thus indicating a more varied awareness of diversity in Ghana. The first of these, in the top-left quadrant, shows a modern cityscape (labelled 'urban' and 'pollution') complete with skyscrapers, smoking chimneys, and an aircraft with tourists on board. A signpost (labelled 'development') points towards the Akosombo Dam, a large-scale hydroelectric project carried out in Ghana in the 1960s. This quadrant is devoid of colour, while the second quadrant, in the top-right, shows green rainforests amidst 'hot' and 'humid' weather. The bottom-right quadrant shows a different scene, this time with a paved road (which runs to

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the cityscape) and a car driving along it. The emphasis in this quadrant is on tourism, with tourists wearing Western clothing and carrying a camera. Nearby stands Cape Coast Castle, a well-known slave fort on the coast of Ghana. Nearby is the sea and also a local person filling a water bucket from a well. The final quadrant is also by the sea, showing a fisherman wearing a colourful hat and a set of thatched huts on stilts in a 'stilt village', situated next to the paved road which runs into the cityscape.

Fig 6.7 Final Drawing C
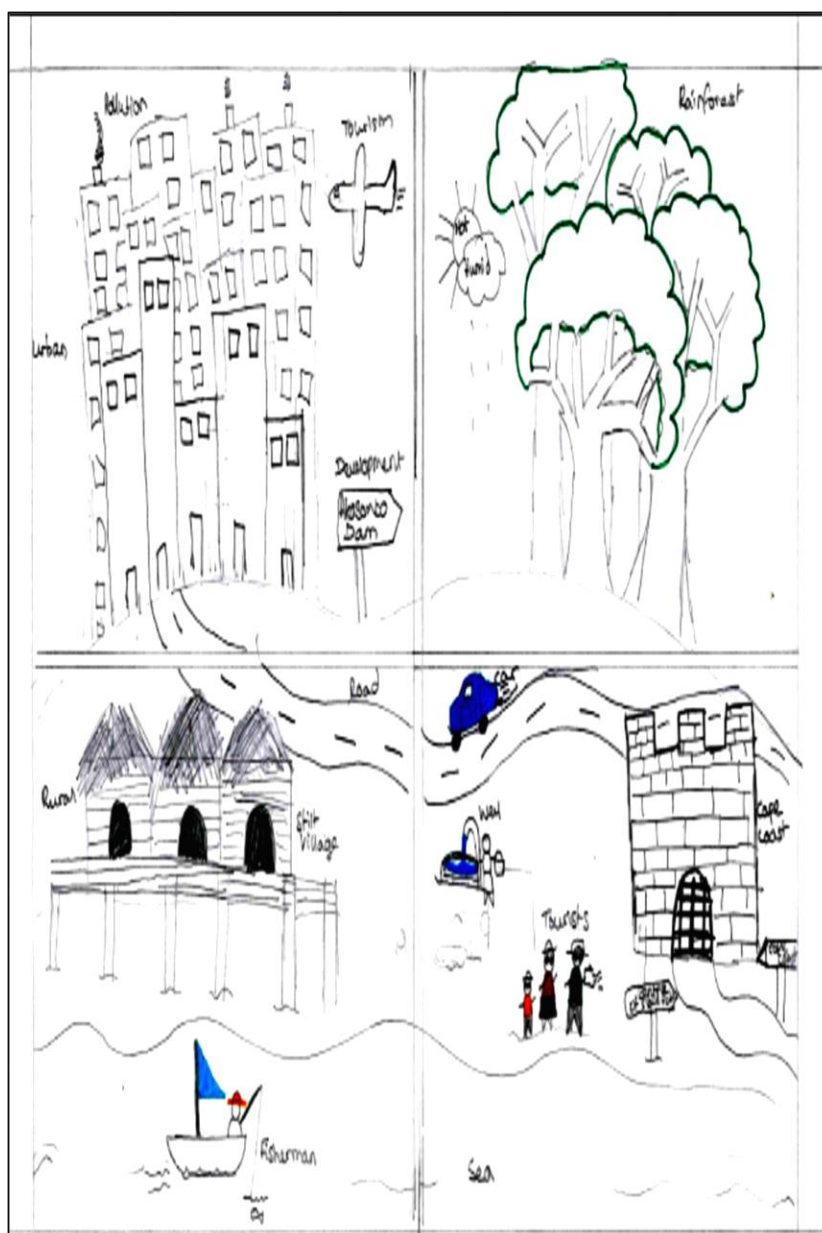
Taken together, these three pairs of drawings provide an additional level of detail to the clear progression demonstrated in the content analysis presented earlier – i.e. a progression from rural, agricultural, 'undeveloped' and often Africanist views of Ghana to more sophisticated, rounded, and diverse portrayals in the final drawings. It must be acknowledged that these drawings were completed in classroom settings, and as such children may have been influenced by each other when completing them. Nevertheless, the shift from simplicity to diversity was very strongly marked (compare Figs 6.2 and 6.3). A case can be made for attributing this shift, at least in part, to the children's participation in the unit of work on Ghana, since many of the themes in the final drawings – particularly urban landscapes, as seen for example in Fig 6.5 – were seldom present in the initial drawings and reflected many of the themes and topics

included in lessons and other kinds of unit work (e.g. written exercises and classroom discussions).

6.3 Visual Material - Wordles

Wordles (also known as tag clouds or word clouds) are visual representations of textual tags, usually single words or short phrases, in which the relative importance of each word or phrase is shown by differing font sizes. Wordles are often used to indicate which terms are seen as most prominent or significant by the individual responsible for constructing the weighted representation, or, in different contexts, to indicate how frequently specific words occur (e.g. in a website or text). In the context of this research project, the Wordles were created by students as a homework task towards the end of the unit of work (in lesson 12 of 14) in response to my request that they attempt to sum up visually their impressions of Ghana as a country by coming up with a list of attributes of the country and assigning each attribute a certain weight, which was then represented in the visual appearance of the students' Wordles. Accordingly, the Wordles can be analysed as visual artefacts that help to examine which attributes students saw as most important to their new understandings of the country.

As such, Wordles differ from the initial and final window drawings and from the posters created by students and analysed in previous sections. With window drawings and posters, a considerable degree of interpretation is required in order to conclude which aspects of Ghana students thought important in terms of what was included (and excluded) and how specific pieces of content were presented within the wider context of the visual genre in question. With such genres, it is easier to establish what kinds of content the body of students as a whole thought was important to include (by noting how many times drawings contained references to agriculture or cities) than it is to establish what kinds of content any particular student thinks more or less important in a given drawing or poster. Wordles, by contrast, give direct access, in each instance of the genre created by individual students, to the importance that students attached to different pieces of content – in this context, to different words or phrases representing attributes of Ghana.

This does not mean, of course, that Wordles represent a unique and objective lens through which to access individual students' perceptions and opinions. While Wordles allow the researcher to access the importance attached to individual terms and phrases by each student, they do not by themselves allow the researcher to access the way in which each student interpreted my request to create Wordles which represented their view of Ghana. More specifically, Wordles by themselves do not allow me to establish from which perspective or

perspectives students may have interpreted my request. They may have populated their Wordles with a view to representing Ghana as seen by Ghanaians, for instance, or from the perspective of other African nationalities, or from a United Kingdom perspective. Additionally, students could emphasise (for instance) Ghana's present or past, its urban or rural aspects, and positive or negative features of its culture and economy. Moreover, Wordles do not supplement their visual appearance with text defining how each student understood the terms used in the Wordles. As such, while the following analysis presents a strong comparative insight into how individual students saw Ghana, it cannot be assumed that each student interpreted my request in an identical manner, nor that the Wordles, considered as visual artefacts, offer an unproblematic window into students' 'real' opinions. Rather, they should be understood as a process through which students were able to engage with their geographical learning about Ghana in a relatively autonomous and self-directed manner, thus creating visual artefacts with textual content.

The Wordles were analysed with regard to the prominence of individual terms and phrases by establishing the top five biggest pieces of text (in terms of font size) in each Wordle, or more than five if more than five pieces of text are of identical size, and also the five smallest pieces of text (with similar qualifications), and by subsequently compiling lists of these terms or phrases across all 21 Wordles. This gives an indication of which terms were considered to be most and least important across the student group in terms of representing Ghana. Wordles were also considered in terms of the colours students chose to represent their textual tags.

Table 6.2, overleaf, presents in chart form the textual tags that students considered most important.

Table 6.2 Most Important Pieces of Text (Aggregate Level) in Students' Wordles

Text*	Number of references in students' top 5	Percentage coverage (%)
Ghana	21	100
Accra	11	52.4
Family	7	33.3
Happy	7	33.3
Rainforest	6	28.6
Lake Volta	5	23.8
Africa	4	19
Culture	4	19
Rural	4	19
Savannah	4	19
Poverty	3	14.3
School	3	14.3
West Africa	3	14.3
Agriculture	2	9.5
Cedi	2	9.5
Coastal Savannah	2	9.5
Colonised	2	9.5
Community	2	9.5
Crops	2	9.5
Developing	2	9.5
Education	2	9.5
Fair Trade	2	9.5
Hard-working	2	9.5
Hot	2	9.5
LDC	2	9.5
Slave trade	2	9.5
Tourism	2	9.5
Traditional	2	9.5
AIDS	1	4.8
Bauxite	1	4.8
Bilharzia	1	4.8
Black stars	1	4.8
Cape Coast	1	4.8
Cholera	1	4.8
Chocolate	1	4.8
Christian	1	4.8
Cocoa	1	4.8
Colourful	1	4.8
Democracy	1	4.8
Diversity	1	4.8
English	1	4.8
Fante	1	4.8
Food	1	4.8
Football	1	4.8
Friends	1	4.8
Fufu	1	4.8
Health	1	4.8
Income	1	4.8
Internet	1	4.8
Islamic	1	4.8
Ivory Coast	1	4.8
Pesewas	1	4.8
Quality of life	1	4.8
Safe	1	4.8
Stage 3 population pyramid	1	4.8
Trade	1	4.8
Urban	1	4.8
Wifi	1	4.8

*Textual tags are presented in alphabetical order **within** each numerical category (e.g. tags with 4 references, 3 references, etc).

The immediate impression generated by this table is diversity and complexity, with a large number (58) of individual terms or phrases being accorded a place in the five most prominent textual tags in at least one student's Wordle. More than half of these tags are also unique,

occurring in only one student's top 5 pieces of text. These unique tags include a wide range of topics, ranging from locations within Ghana (such as Cape Coast) and nearby African countries (such as Ivory Coast) to aspects of Ghanaian life (such as the English and Fante languages, football, trade, and urban contexts). From this perspective, the Wordles can be read as conveying a strong awareness of geographical complexity and of diversity both within Ghana and more widely, and (in the context of the unit of work) as representing geography education's capacity to 'carve out a space for representation of other worlds' (Power, 2003: 208).

In terms of the more common textual tags, which appeared in more of the students' top 5 most prominent tags, the two most common were geographical: Ghana (appearing in 100% of students' top 5) and Accra (52.4% of students' top 5). Lake Volta, another location, appeared in almost a quarter of students' top 5 tags, while rainforests featured in 28.6% of students' top 5 tags. Two non-geographical tags were also relatively common: 'Family' and 'Happy' both appeared in 33.3% of students' top 5 tags. The pieces of text which enjoyed intermediate levels of popularity (14.3%-23.8%) again featured several geographical locations (Africa, West Africa) and concepts (rural) in addition to wider references to culture and poverty. The less common textual tags (<14.3% coverage) were very diverse in terms of topic, ranging over geographical, political, economic, social and cultural areas and including perceptions of both positive and negative aspects of Ghanaian life ('safe' and 'colourful' alongside 'AIDs' and 'slave trade'). Overall, however, positive perceptions were more common numerically. Also prominent were textual tags indicating awareness of ways in which Ghana offers both similarities and differences to the UK setting ('hot', 'traditional' and 'cocoa' in terms of differences, and 'internet', 'democracy' and 'football' in terms of similarities).

Table 6.3, overleaf, indicates the pieces of text that were included in Wordles in the smallest available font size – specifically, the 5 pieces of text in the smallest size, or as many pieces of text as appeared in that size. These pieces of students' visual representations of Ghana present a different take on their understandings of the country. The fact that they were assigned lower font sizes cannot be taken simplistically as a demonstration that these aspects were considered to be unimportant in terms of Ghana per se, since students actively chose to include them in their Wordles. However, they were regarded as less important than the pieces of text included in larger font, as discussed above. There were substantially more of these smaller pieces of text than larger pieces (138 vs 58 for Fig 6.2). As with the less important pieces of text in Table 6.2, these smallest font size texts demonstrated a high degree of diversity across geographical, political, economic, social and cultural topics. The most common pieces of text in this smallest category again included several geographical locations deriving from

classwork, including Lake Volta (a tag which also appeared in the most common larger font size tags; see above) at 66.7%, Essaman United (the partner school in Ghana) at 42.9%, the neighbouring country of Togo (42.9%) and the large Ghanaian town of Cape Coast (also 42.9%). The second most popular tag in this category was the generic geographical category of 'urban' (52.4%); other popular tags included 'English' (i.e. the English language) at 42.9% and the Ghanaian food 'Fufu', also at 42.9%. Other popular tags in this area of least important pieces of texts included 'cocoa' (38.1%) and 'hot' (38.1%), and references to prominent religions in Ghana in geographical terms ('Christian south' and 'Islamic north', at 38.1% and 33.3%). References were also made to technology ('mobile phones' at 33.3% and 'electricity' and 'internet', both at 4.8%) and a number of specific development indicators (such as life expectancy at 4.8%), amidst many other textual tags.

Table 6.3 Least Important Pieces of Text

Text*	Number of references in bottom 5	Percentage coverage (%)
Lake Volta	14	66.7
Urban	11	52.4
English	9	42.9
Essaman United	9	42.9
Fufu	9	42.9
Togo	9	42.9
Cape Coast	8	38.1
Cocoa	8	38.1
Hot	8	38.1
Islamic north	8	38.1
Christian south	7	33.3
Mobile phones	7	33.3
Mole National Park	7	33.3
Football	6	28.6
Happy	6	28.6
Immigration	6	28.6
Trees	6	28.6
Well	6	28.6
GDP	5	23.8
Kakum National Park	5	23.8
Traditional	5	23.8
Africa	4	19
Agriculture	4	19
Coast	4	19
Colonised	4	19
Developing	4	19
Education	4	19
Fair Trade	4	19
Family	4	19
Ivory Coast	4	19
Life expectancy	4	19
Palm nuts	4	19
Relaxed	4	19
Savannah	4	19
Tourism	4	19
Akosombo Dam	3	14.3
Brandt line	3	14.3
Burkina Faso	3	14.3
Cassava	3	14.3
Cedi	3	14.3
Fante	3	14.3

Gulf of Guinea	3	14.3
Hospitals	3	14.3
Infant mortality	3	14.3
Kantomire	3	14.3
Opportunities	3	14.3
Poverty	3	14.3
Rainforest	3	14.3
Rural	3	14.3
Slave trade	3	14.3
Stage 3 population pyramid	3	14.3
Yam	3	14.3
Accra	2	9.5
Adult literacy	2	9.5
AIDS	2	9.5
Bauxite	2	9.5
Calorie consumption	2	9.5
Chocolate	2	9.5
Cities	2	9.5
Development indicators	2	9.5
Drought	2	9.5
Food	2	9.5
Friends	2	9.5
Green	2	9.5
Hard-working	2	9.5
Humid	2	9.5
Huts	2	9.5
Land	2	9.5
LECD	2	9.5
Modern	2	9.5
Nzuleo	2	9.5
Okra	2	9.5
Power	2	9.5
Red	2	9.5
Stilt village	2	9.5
Water power	2	9.5
West Africa	2	9.5
Access to water	1	4.8
Advanced	1	4.8
Aid	1	4.8
Ampesi	1	4.8
Animals	1	4.8
Bananas	1	4.8
Beach	1	4.8
Bikes	1	4.8
Bilharzia	1	4.8
Birth rate	1	4.8
Cars	1	4.8
Churches	1	4.8
Colourful	1	4.8
Community	1	4.8
Culture	1	4.8
Death rate	1	4.8
Diverse	1	4.8
Drumming	1	4.8
Electricity	1	4.8
Elephants	1	4.8
Emigration	1	4.8
Festivals	1	4.8
Fishing	1	4.8
Flooding	1	4.8
Freedom	1	4.8
French	1	4.8
Friendly	1	4.8
Giraffes	1	4.8
God	1	4.8
Growth	1	4.8
Happiness indicators	1	4.8
Independence	1	4.8
Internet	1	4.8
Irrigation	1	4.8
Ivory	1	4.8

Local shop	1	4.8
Market	1	4.8
Monkeys	1	4.8
Mosques	1	4.8
Motorbikes	1	4.8
National Parks	1	4.8
Parrots	1	4.8
Personal accounts	1	4.8
Plantain	1	4.8
Projects	1	4.8
Rain	1	4.8
Religion	1	4.8
Resources	1	4.8
Rich	1	4.8
Safe	1	4.8
Schools	1	4.8
Singing	1	4.8
Small scale development projects	1	4.8
Sun	1	4.8
Tin	1	4.8
Town	1	4.8
Trade	1	4.8
UK	1	4.8
Wet	1	4.8
Yellow	1	4.8

*Textual tags are presented in alphabetical order **within** each numerical category (e.g. tags with 4 references, 3 references, etc).

An additional aspect of the Wordles relates to the colours in which students chose to portray their various textual tags. Students were able to specify a generic, themed palette of colours for their Wordles, and whether these were on white or black backgrounds. The majority (14) chose black backgrounds. In terms of colour palettes, the sample Wordles in Fig 6.8 are included to show that most students chose palettes including greens, yellow/orange and reds, with some additional elements including purples and light blues. As such, it seems that students tended to choose colours that they saw as representative of Ghana – a finding reinforced by the inclusion of 'red' and yellow' as textual tags (with 9.5% and 4.8% coverage) in the less prominent pieces of text (Table 6.3). Reds, yellows and greens can be seen as representative of the Ghanaian flag (a red, yellow and green tricolour flag with a black star placed centrally). Only one student's colour palette differed strongly from this overall trend, exhibiting a mix of pink, blue and red that was more reminiscent of UK colours (especially the modified Union Jack images that have become popular in recent years) than Ghana.

Fig 6.8 Sample Wordles

6.4 Written Materials

In this last section, I consider two further categories of written materials: an exercise on chocolate and Fair Trade in the Ghanaian context, and an exercise in which children were asked to imagine they were a reporter writing a blog about Ghana. These pieces of writing gave children the opportunity to express their views about the complex international relationships and systems in which Ghana is situated, and, with regard to the reporter's blog, to look back over the unit of work and sum up their learning about Ghana.

6.4.1 Chocolate Trade and Fair Trade

In this writing exercise, students were asked to reflect on the structure of the chocolate trade and the motivations and interests of the various stakeholders involved in different parts of the world, with particular reference to Fair Trade (the topic of Lesson 13, the penultimate lesson). These stakeholders included the workers and plantation owners in Ghana (and other cocoa producing countries), those responsible for shipping, distribution and retail, and consumers in wealthy countries. This exercise offered an opportunity to gauge the extent to which students understood the complexities of international development and the challenges faced by workers in poorer countries – an awareness that works against stereotypes of 'backward', 'lazy' or 'underdeveloped' countries. A sample exercise is shown in Fig 6.9, overleaf.

Fig 6.9 Sample Account of Chocolate Trade and Fair Trade

The shops that sell the chocolate probably don't care as much about the money situation as they get quite a lot of money. They do offer fair trade but not as much as the non-fair trade chocolate.

Importers and shippers would be quite happy with the amount they get and might think that it's a fair and maybe even too much money.

The plantation owner would be fairly happy but probably wants more money for themselves and to pay the cocoa pickers.

The cocoa pickers are probably very disappointed with the amount they get as they spend a lot of time and effort working.

Some consumers only go for the cheap chocolate as it's the easy option but others go for the fair trade option.

Awareness of complexity was particularly marked in students' emphasis on (a) the difficult lives of the cocoa pickers and (b) the 'duty' of consumers in the West to purchase more expensive but more equitable Fair Trade products. In terms of the cocoa pickers first of all, children recognised that these workers are very poorly paid for their labour, often conducted in oppressive heat and challenging conditions. One student, Gemma, wrote: 'The cocoa pickers are probably very disappointed with the amount [of pay] they get as they spend a lot of time and effort working.' One boy, Charlie, wrote his comments as if he were a cocoa picker himself, indicating a growing identification and empathy with people living in LDCs: 'We should get more money as we can't afford to send are children to school.' Another student (Charlotte) highlighted her view that, although poor cocoa pickers may not have the high levels of personal debt common in the West, they do not earn enough to pay for their needs: 'They may not have to pay off anything they have bought, but [their pay] is not enough to pay for family costs and to send your children to school.' In a similar vein, Imogen wrote: 'I think that the cocoa pickers probably find their payment unfair. They are doing a high risk job with not a lot of money coming in.' This strong emphasis on the cocoa pickers deserving more was contrasted with the students' comments on the stakeholders involved in shipping, distribution, and retail, who were seen as unconcerned about ethics as long as they received sufficient payment. Andrew's comment on the shippers was characteristic of this approach: 'As long as the shippers are given their money then they aren't to bothered.'

In terms of consumers, a number of children discussed the role of consumer choice in ways that emphasised the moral 'duty' of choosing Fair Trade products. Thus one girl (Anna) stated that 'some consumers only go for the cheap chocolate as it's the easy option but others go for the fair trade option', while another (Emily) stated that 'some would just look for the cheaper prices. Although some would be happy to pay a bit more.' One boy (Pete) added, more widely, that 'Fair trade is a better way for everyone,' but that 'we are not willing to pay more.' Summarising, Angela stated that 'us as consumers have a big part to play. If [we] were willing to pay more for a Fair Trade chocolate bar, which many of us are then cocoa pickers could get more money. Though there are still some of us that want the cheapest chocolate possible.' Consequently, a strong sense emerged from this writing exercise that children were aware not just of the challenges facing poor workers in Ghana but also the responsibilities of wealthy consumers in developed countries – a viewpoint that differs significantly from stereotypical views of African countries as responsible for their own shortcomings.

From this perspective, children's responses to this Fair Trade exercise can be interpreted as demonstrating a move away from Africanist perspectives that assign blame to African countries for their own 'sloth' and unproductivity (Watts, 2003) and a move towards a view that seeks to reward African workers equitably for their labour. However, it should also be noted that the emphasis on consumers' moral duty can be read as concealing the historical and contemporary power inequalities that place Western consumers in positions of power vis-à-vis Fair Trade producers such as cocoa plantations in Ghana. Pete (above) stated that 'Fair trade is a better way for everyone,' but the option of purchasing Fair Trade products can be seen as a way of evading wider responsibilities by embracing smaller ones – i.e. avoiding a recognition of the inequalities of global capitalism by making specific (morally-inflected) choices within global capitalism. There were limits, in other words, to how radically children were willing to interpret the part that the West has to play in terms of challenging not just Africanist representations of distant places but also the deeper spatial, historical and material dynamics and networks in which these distant places are inequitably embedded. These limits may have arisen in part from the relatively positive framing of Fair Trade in the classroom, pointing towards the importance of lesson design in terms of influencing student work produced in response to individual lessons, and emphasising the vital role of the teacher in co-producing new discursive formations.

6.4.2 Reporter's Blog

This final exercise involved students imagining that they were a reporter who had been asked to write a blog about a recent visit to Ghana. In particular, they were asked to focus on Ghana's past, present and future. In terms of the past, students focused for the most part upon the challenges that Ghana had faced in terms of the slave trade, as this extract from Darryl's blog illustrates:

> Ghana has had a very hard past because of many reasons, but the main reason is the slave trade. The time of the slave trade was tough on Gharnaians as Ghana was one of the main ports. The white people went to villages and took who they thought was capable of living the life of a slave. They were crammed on ships and sent to other countrys, half of the slaves were dead by the time they got to the next port.

Another boy (Tom) added further dimensions to the challenges faced by Ghana in history, while perhaps over-dramatising them: 'In the past Ghana had many money issues and weren't doing very well economically and environmentally. Ghana is a great country but at the time, times got tough. They really needed some development around the country to keep them alive. Ghana was literally falling off the map.' More precisely, Mary suggested that some key components of infrastructure had been lacking in the past: 'In the past, I think that not enough has been done in terms of smaller necessities inlike clean water'. Another girl, Frankie, highlighted the challenges that arose after Ghana became independent from Britain, implying that some of these challenges arose because of colonial rule: 'In the past Ghana was colonised by the British and was mostly used for slave trade and gold (there wwas lots of it in Ghana). When they gained their freedom, Ghana had to develop the country themselves.'

This emphasis on Ghana's challenging past led in many of the blogs to a discussion of previous development projects carried out in Ghana, most notably the large-scale Akosombo Dam which was built in the 1960s. While recognising that Ghana needed to invest in development projects in the post-independence era, the students were by no means uncritical of this project (and other large-scale projects). For instance, Celia outlined the significant environmental and social impacts of the Dam and the way in which many of its benefits made their overseas rather than staying in-country:

> There were many good points that came out of this but some bad things happened too. Before the Akosombo Dam Ghana had the River Volta. When the dam was built the

Lake Volta was created. This took up 7% of Ghana's land mass and increased things like work for fishermen, transport and tourism. However, not all of the power was given to Ghana. Some neighbouring countries were higher up the list than Ghana. A large company called Valco had agreed to buy bauxite from Ghanian exchange for power. When they decided the bauxite wasn't up to Scratch they still took the power.

Additionally, students made reference to smaller-scale development projects such as wells for individual villages. Students saw these projects in a more positive light than the Akosombo Dam, with one girl (Victoria) stating for instance that such projects have 'many benefits' and 'often improve quality of life… for all. When water wells are built, it can enable children to go to school, rather than collecting water.' Pete added further benefits arising from such projects: 'Jobs and teachers need water so it can increase imployment and the teachers are more likely to stay in the area because the water they drink is not fill of paraistes.' Gemma exaggerated the benefits of such projects to such an extent as to invoke older Africanist stereotypes about 'happy Ghanaians': 'During my stay in one small village I saw and helped build a well. The villages were laughing and shoulting as they danced around it, beaming.' However, most children were also aware of some challenges arising with regard to these projects, noting that charity-supported projects were more likely near populated areas and transport infrastructure than in more remote areas – as demonstrated by this excerpt from Ed's blog: 'It can be bad because you are only likely to get it if you live by a road becaue they have got to get the stuff to them that they need to build the well.'

Surveying both large- and small-scale developments from the perspective of the present, a number of students presented a positive, optimistic view of Ghana, as demonstrated by this quotation from Anna's blog: 'So, to summarise my points about development in Ghana; I think that Ghana has improved hugely since the past.' Oliver suggested, in his guise as reporter, that he saw less poverty in Ghana than he had expected owing to the post-independence development projects that had been undertaken: 'To be truthful, I epexected to see a lot more poverty, but with projects like the Akosombo Dam there isn't anywhere near as muych poverty.' In a similar vein, another student (Jonny) stated that 'Ghana is now all about developing economically to help reduce poverty and improve the quality of life for everyone in the country.' Frankie stated that 'Ghana is way above normal assumptions made by people in Europe. Ghana doesn't rise to stereotypes – it doesn't need to. It beats them by a lot.' Students were not uncritically positive about Ghana, however, and David added the view that:

'but I think the [water] pumps would have been better for the country rather than a Dam that causes blackouts and diseases.'

With regard to Ghana's future, most children expressed optimism about what lies ahead for the country, as seen in Tom's optimistic prediction that 'Ghana will do tremendously well in the far future… it will happen' and Charlotte's view that 'Looking into the future, anything could happen.' More guardedly, Celia stated that she could see Ghana as a 'well developed country as long as they're President is never corrupt and people trade with them more, fairly… By 2030 at the latest, Ghana in my eyes could be a developed country.' This comment was interesting in that it places emphasis on the responsibilities not just of Ghanaians (to elect politicians with integrity and hold them to account) but also of other countries in the region and elsewhere (to trade with Ghana fairly). Another student (Jonny) linked this idea to Fair Trade: 'In the future, I think they hope that all their cocoa farms are fair trade so that many children can go to school.' Summing up, Emily stated that 'Ghana is an amazing country to visit but has a long way to go to becoming fully developed.' In common with the views expressed by other students, this last comment not only expresses an awareness of the value inherent within Ghana's geographical diversity but also an assumption about what it is for a country to 'become fully developed' – i.e. an assumption that 'full development' is a temporal process patterned on previous processes of development, as experienced in Western countries following the industrial revolution. From this point of view, Ghana is envisioned as following Britain and other wealthy countries up a standardised trajectory of development rather than following a different path (Massey, 2005). However, as Flint and Taylor (2011) note, countries coming after the West cannot ascend the ladder in the same way, since Western countries are already sitting at the top of the ladder. This point was made by one pupil in classroom discussion, as noted in section 5.3.2:

> Victoria – How long will it take Ghana to become a first world country?
>
> Teacher – Good question. What do you reckon?
>
> Tom – I think it will take ages because as they get more developed we will also get more developed.
>
> Anna – Governments might change in the middle of the process.

It is noteworthy that immediately following Tom's recognition of global development linkages, his fellow pupil, Anna, stepped in with a remark that is at least ambiguous with regard to Tom's

comment, and which could be read as indicating a reversion to the 'development queue' viewpoint – the 'process' that Anna describes as being interrupted by political stability.

Again, this example can be taken as illustrating the limits on children's reimagining of Ghana's present and future within the geographical material covered by the unit of work. This also demonstrates again that students' 'final' impressions are complex and cannot be simply described in terms of a linear progression from initial stereotypical views to final nuanced views.

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter has presented and analysed a range of materials, ranging from window drawings to Wordles to written exercises. As discussed previously, the rationale for collecting data through multiple modalities was to allow children a range of alternative opportunities to express their views of Ghana: visual creativity, oral contributions to class discussions, and pieces of written coursework. The creation of these varied materials not only allowed students to open up new imaginative dimensions in their views of Ghana, but allowed me to engage productively with their perceptions in a way that 'made the familiar strange' (Mannay, 2010).

The comparison between initial and final window drawings illustrated a general shift from 'Africanist' perceptions of Ghana as a rural, undeveloped and traditional society towards more diverse perceptions incorporating awareness of Ghana's geographical and societal diversity. Portrayals of rural villages with mud huts, subsistence agriculture and livestock generally gave way to mixed pictures in which urban and rural elements co-existed within Ghana, and in which newer forms of technology and infrastructure such as skyscrapers, electricity pylons, and mobile phones occupy prominent places. As such, the window drawings represented the creation of new discursive formations that moved beyond the often Africanist portrayals in the initial drawings. Nevertheless, while children's second drawings exhibited a more diverse understanding of Ghana, some important elements included in the initial drawings (mosquitos, rain, fruit, and wildlife) did not feature in the second drawings. Consequently, while the overall trend was strongly towards greater diversity, it could be said children's second drawings presented in some ways a more limited understanding of Ghanaian human and physical geography. This finding illustrates the importance of remaining open to multiple interpretations recognising diversity and complexity (as my Foucauldian perspective suggests), rather than seeking to impose a singular, all-encompassing narrative on data. Having said this, it must be remembered that such an imposition is an ever-present possibility in classroom contexts characterised by steep power differentials between teachers and pupils. As a

researcher, I was keen to solicit a range of student opinion and explore pupils' varied attitudes towards African distant places; but as a teacher, I also had a responsibility to ensure that children gained a clear understanding of requisite geographical knowledge and perspectives. As such, I recognise the unavoidable likelihood that the children's accounts that I solicited for my research were affected in some ways by my simultaneous need to carry out value-based educational work – i.e. my commitment to encouraging awareness of geographical diversity rather than Africanist perspectives, in line with established values in geographical teaching (see Chapter Two).

By contrast, and showing similarity with students' final window drawings, the Wordles created by students towards the end of the unit of work tended strongly towards a considerably more diverse understanding of Ghana that challenges powerful and stereotypical representations of distant places as framed in Africanist discourse. In addition to a strong emphasis on obvious geographical content including Ghanaian cities and regions, there was a recognition of both rural and urban dimensions of Ghanaian society in addition to emphasis on positive aspects of Ghanaian society that were shared with the UK, including friends, happiness and the English language. At the same time, references were also made to poverty and other challenging aspects of Ghanaian society and history such as colonisation and the slave trade. Consequently, while Wordles overall emphasised positive aspects of Ghana, students were not afraid to allude to more negative aspects too, while also recognising both similarities and differences between the UK and Ghana.

In terms of the written materials considered in this chapter, the exercise on Fair Trade revealed a clear awareness of the challenges faced by poor workers in developing countries, who despite working long hours in difficult conditions are paid very low wages. This awareness works against Africanist notions of Africans as 'lazy' or 'feckless' and demonstrates the way in which students had come to appreciate that hard work does not necessarily lead to wealth in wider contexts characterised by significant inequality (the global economy and regional inequalities in Africa). Children also demonstrated a strong awareness of the 'duty' of Western consumers to choose Fair Trade products, which in turn demonstrates recognition of the interconnectedness of the global economy and the fact that actions in the West can have significant knock-on consequences elsewhere. However, as mentioned above, it must be remembered that it is likely for children's accounts to have been affected by value-oriented educational interventions – e.g. the positive framework in which Fair Trade is introduced in the classroom as a way for ordinary citizens to make a positive difference to poverty in distant places. If Fair Trade had not been introduced in this manner, it is an open question as to whether

children would have shown the same awareness of, and attitude towards, Fair Trade products and their role in Ghana's economy and future development. Moreover, the emphasis placed by children on consumers helping countries such as Ghana with Fair Trade purchases may echo this positive emphasis in terms of avoiding confrontation with the wider, deeper and more insoluble inequalities within power dynamics that position countries such as Ghana in subordinate positions.

By contrast, the blog that students produced as their final written exercise showed a strong awareness of how Ghana's history had presented unique challenges (such as slavery and colonisation) which had had significant impacts on its post-independence development trajectory. Students acknowledged the importance of both large- and small-scale development projects while also recognising their potential downsides, and, summarising, tended to present a guarded optimism about Ghana's future that was potentially bright, but also potentially blighted by corruption. Their imaginings of Ghana's future development often betrayed a developmental approach according to which Ghana would have to follow a similar developmental path to Britain, discounting the challenges posed by the fact that Britain and other wealthy countries had already followed this path, and ruling out alternative developmental paths such as those suggested by Massey in her theorising of 'radical contemporaneity' (2005).

Overall, these varied kinds of data convey a picture of complexity and multi-facetedness. While the pieces of visual media created by the students fit into an overarching narrative of progress at the whole class level from Africanist stereotypes towards more complex and diverse representations (illustrated by the comparison between initial and final window drawings), this narrative is complicated by the way in which individual students omitted some important material from their later drawings and by the Africanist perspectives expressed in the posters completed in the middle of the unit of work. Additionally, while children's written work created new discursive formations in which diversity, complexity and wider power dynamics were acknowledged, these formations also retained elements that could be interpreted as reproducing aspects of Africanist discourse – for instance, the view that Ghanaian development would necessarily follow well-established developmental pathways, or the view that purchasing Fair Trade products would fulfil consumers' 'moral duty' to distant places such as Ghana.

These findings not only illustrate the importance of maintaining a focus on diversity between individual students when conducting educational research at the class level, but also highlight that children's perspectives on Ghana were significantly altered and diversified,

rather than completely transformed in a sweeping and homogenous manner, by the geographical teaching carried out in this unit of work. The answers that these findings furnish for my third research question (see 5.1 and 6.1) are therefore somewhat tentative and provisional in character. The following chapter takes up this point in a wider discussion of the limits of distant place teaching.

Chapter Seven

Discussion: Challenging Africanism through Distant Place Teaching

7.1 Distant place teaching and Africanism

It seems accurate to conclude, on the basis of the data collected and presented in Chapters 4-6, that children's perspectives on Ghana were significantly altered and diversified, rather than completely transformed in a sweeping and homogenous manner, by the geographical teaching carried out in this unit of work. In light of these findings, I will now revisit my earlier discussion of distant place teaching (see Chapter Two, section 2.3) in order to consider whether geographical teaching about distant places – and African places in particular – can realistically claim to challenge or even overcome essentialist discourses such as Africanism. It will be recalled that Taylor provides a working definition of a distant place as 'one which a group judges to be distant in that it is outside their 'normal' experience and to visit it would involve a degree of travel which might be considered exceptional' (2009: 179). On this basis, Ghana was likely to be perceived as a distant place by participating students in my research project, none of whom had previously visited Ghana or neighbouring countries. As previously discussed in section 3.2.4, it should be borne in mind that the school partnership between my school and a school in Ghana would inevitably have led to pupils being somewhat more aware of the country than would have been the case at a school without such a partnership, for example through activities such as an annual school-wide Ghana Day, weekly Geography Club meetings for older pupils, and presentations at school events. Nevertheless, despite these additional routes for children to encounter new perspectives on Ghana, the 'initial' findings described above illustrate the extent to which students voiced Africanist representations – representations that call into question the extent to which the partnership could be understood as rendering Ghana as a 'non-distant' place.

On the basis that Ghana can be considered as a distant place for the purposes of this research project and for the specific group of students that participated in my research, I will now consider whether it is the case that my own distant place teaching can be described as challenging Africanist discourses over a unit of work. As discussed in Chapter Two, previous research has suggested that geography teachers' choices and pedagogical strategies can influence students' mental shaping of the world (e.g. Taylor, 2009; Binns, 1996). Fundamental characteristics of geographical approaches to the world underpin and influence the kinds of

choices that geography teachers may be inclined to make, including: a concern with promoting awareness of diversity and relationships within and between places; an engagement with change over time and space; and a concern with power relationships and inequalities between different places (Massey, 2005; Taylor, 2011b; Picton, 2011). It is relevant to consider here Winter's description of geographical knowledge as part of an attempt to develop pupils as 'autonomous, morally informed, critical agents who think for themselves, who ask questions, and who are aware of and able to argue against inequalities' (1997:181). From this perspective, and to the extent that this perspective is adopted by individual teachers and geography departments within specific schools, it might be thought that geography teaching has an inherent bias against the tolerance of essentialist and exoticist perspectives such as Africanism. That is, by emphasising diversity within Africa and between Africa and other parts of the world, change across time and space, power-filled relationships between African countries and Africa and elsewhere, and by encouraging critical reflection on these issues, it seems likely, prima facie, that geography education could foster more nuanced, subtle and wide-ranging understandings of African contexts. Research on other contexts, such as Kenya, has shown that such transformations can indeed occur (Harrington, 1998). Can it be said that a similar process occurred in my teaching?

The methodological challenge in this context is the possibility that children might have exhibited a similar process of change without participating in the unit of work. If this research project had adopted a positivist rather than a poststructuralist approach, this concern could be expressed in terms of a potentially erroneous identification of correlation (children exhibited changing representations and participated in a unit of work) with causation (children exhibited changing representations *because* they participated in a unit of work). My approach renders such a critique less pertinent, but nevertheless it is important to recognise the wide range of influences and approaches upon children outside the classroom, especially in times of rapid technological change and sharply rising usage of smartphones, tablets, and social media. By some orders of magnitude, it is easier than ever before for children freely and quickly to access and share a vast range of information online. Additionally, while populist and essentialist discourses have undoubtedly retained and arguably increased their potency in mass media, there has also been a strong move towards more respectful, empathic, and non-discriminatory discourses with regard to factors such as ethnic identity, religious belief, and socio-economic class. In addition to students themselves, these discourses may well influence significant other people in students' lives, including friends, family and other important stakeholders. Consequently, it is certainly possible for students to have imbibed non-essentialist and indeed

anti-essentialist views from the multitude of sources available to them outside the classroom – and as such, it is possible for their views to have changed in the manner described above as a result of other influences than my geographical teaching.

Nevertheless, while this project cannot eliminate this possibility, it is unlikely, to say the least, that an entire class of children - allowing for some differences between individuals, a seen, for example, in children's visual materials (see sections 4.3 and 6.2.1) - should simultaneously demonstrate a sustained and marked shift from more to less Africanist representations independently of learning experiences in the classroom. Moreover, examination of the accounts of classroom discussions and focus groups presented in preceding chapters demonstrates the significance of teacher intervention and pupil interaction in discussion in helping to shift students' opinions towards a more critical and nuanced approach to distant places. In Chapter Five, for example, an example is given of a discussion in which my questions pushed students towards questioning the idea of a uniform global spread of wealth and poverty:

> Teacher – What patterns are there to poverty in the world?
>
> Frankie – It's a random pattern.
>
> Pete – The southern hemisphere is poorer.
>
> Charlie – Absolutely every country has a little bit of poverty.
>
> […]
>
> Teacher - Is *all* of Africa *equally* poor? What would you say?
>
> Anna – Some parts like South Africa aren't as poor.
>
> Emily – I think you would generally class Africa as a poor country – continent [corrected by teacher] – but not every country is as poor as others.
>
> Lesson 5 (emphasis added)

Earlier in the unit of work, I asked numerous questions focused more directly on Ghana – questions that prompted children to think about complex realities in Ghana, in the context of asking children to write a guidebook entry about Ghana:

> Teacher – Is there anything would be useful to know about Ghana?
>
> Anna – Their marketplaces get quite crowded.
>
> Teacher – Yes, but would there be supermarkets too?
>
> Anna – Yes.
>
> […]

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Pete – Do they have mobile phones?

[…]

Teacher – Yes - not children, but every adult. Why?

Tom – They use it for internet.

Teacher – What don't they have that we had?

Olivia – Facebook.

Teacher – No - what else don't they have?

Jonny – Landlines.

<div align="right">Lesson 2</div>

Additionally, also as discussed in Chapter Five, change also occurred through pupils challenging each other and supplementing others' ideas in the classroom and in focus groups. An example of this supplementation occurred in lesson 6:

Victoria – How long will it take Ghana to become a first world country?

Teacher – Good question. What do you reckon?

Tom – I think it will take ages because as they get more developed we will also get more developed.

Anna – Governments might change in the middle of the process.

It is worth noting, too, that (as discussed in section 5.3.2) the *content* of Anna's supplementation in this example did not challenge Tom's assumption of a development 'queue' in which countries gradually become more developed and more like Western countries, but rather offered an idea regarding the kind of obstacles (in this case political instability) that might challenge a given country's progress in the development queue.

Similarly, the first focus group saw children adding to each other's accounts of similarities and differences between Ghana and Britain, with some children stating that they saw the differences as consisting more in terms of physical features (Andrew: 'mine's more landscape', Tom: 'more physical geography because I put forest and savannah and weather') and others (Victoria) focusing more on social geography: 'mine's more cultural, family oriented.' These and other exchanges illustrate the value of focus groups for participants themselves in terms of the capacity for participants to drive the agenda and introduce new ideas within a wider structure (Cohen et al, 2002; Vygotsky, 1978).

The possibility of such external influences cannot be excluded entirely. Future research in this field could usefully focus on eliciting more information about pupils' activities outside

the classroom that could impinge on any shifts in opinion that take place during a unit of work – a topic of ever-growing significance given the rapid recent growth in smartphone and social media usage. In the context of the present project, while it cannot be unequivocally stated that geography teaching alone accounted for students' widespread (if complex and nonlinear) shifts in opinion, the combination of teacher intervention and pupil interaction points nevertheless to the likelihood that the changes exhibited in the views of participating students were brought about at least in part by children's involvement in the unit of work as opposed to external influences.

As such, this research project can be seen as a tentative affirmation of the Foucauldian view of epistemes. As discussed in Chapter Two, systems of representations, or epistemes, come to prominence in specific historical circumstances and in particular constellations of power and knowledge. Africanism can be read in this way as a system of viewing distant places that emerged during, and was thoroughly entangled with, Eurocentric, capitalist and colonialist ways of viewing the world. Foucault's account also allows for epistemes to be challenged, overcome and replaced by other epistemes – in this instance, the replacement of Africanism by a critical geographical understanding of the world as elaborated by writers such as Power (2003) and Binns (1996). It must be acknowledged that this new geographical understanding, which could be termed 'cosmopolitanism' as a replacement for Africanism, was not uniformly expressed or devoid of any residual elements of Africanist worldviews. Indeed, the variation between individual children (discussed in more depth below) resonates with a key feature of Foucault's later work, i.e. his emphasis on subjectivity as expressed in the concept of 'technologies of the self', which 'permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations… so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality' (1997: 177). Returning to the wider point, however, and to the research questions that guided this project, in large part it does appear that the pedagogical and interactional elements of this unit of work succeeded in fulfilling the aims of geography teaching – specifically, to promote 'awareness, interest and understanding of the diversity of the world's people and places' (Binns, 1996: 177) – although it must be remembered, as discussed in the following section, that children may have exaggerated their willingness to jettison Africanist perspectives because of power dynamics in which teachers' views dominate childrens' views. Moreover, while my research project focuses on the capacity of geography teaching to challenge Africanist discourses with reference to African distant places, similar considerations could apply, by extension, to discourses focused

on other parts of the world – such as the orientalist discourses dissected by Edward Said (1978), and more widely the 'exoticist' discourses discussed in Chapter One.

7.2 The Limits of Distant Place Teaching

The preceding section argued that distant place teaching can challenge and in some cases overcome discourses such as Africanism. In this section, by contrast, I discuss some challenges to this positive interpretation, relating to teacher positionality and the ongoing nature of interpretation and 'sensemaking', respectively. With regard to teacher positionality, first, I discussed my positionality with regard to distant place teaching, with particular reference to Ghana. I noted that my knowledge of and interest in Ghana, and Africa more likely, was likely to exceed that of other geography teachers. As such, I was undoubtedly able to engage productively and authoritatively with children's reactions to the unit of work, and to challenge Africanist representations (and encourage more nuanced views) in ways that may have been more difficult for other teachers, with different positionalities vis-à-vis Ghana, to encompass. This aspect of my positionality offered more capacity to challenge Africanism than other teachers may have been able to mobilise. However, I also discussed in Chapter Two the possibility that the teacher-as-researcher may 'generate a whole host of expectations on the part of respondents [which can lead] interviewees to tell the researcher what they believe she or he wants to hear' (Howard, 1994; cited in Valentine, 1997: 124). In this context, there is a risk that children may have exaggerated their willingness to jettison Africanist representations, having perceived through classroom interaction – and, for those participating in focus groups, participation in research-focused discussions – that the 'desired' direction of travel was away from Africanist representations and towards more nuanced approaches. This dynamic may have been further exacerbated by the pervasive, perennial power differential between teachers and pupils, leading Punch to state that '[p]ower and status differentials raise the possibility that children may find it difficult to dissent, disagree, or say things which adults may not like' (Punch, 2009: 47). Consequently, while my findings indisputably show a general shift from Africanism to critical geographical approaches, it should be borne in mind that this shift may have been influenced by my positionality allied to teacher-pupil power differentials. Thus, as Taylor (2011a: 1040) remarked regarding her teaching on Japan, 'any generalization from [this] case to other contexts must be tentative.' The case study approach in general, as discussed in section 3.7, tends to lead to 'fuzzy' generalisations rather than scientific generalisations: x in y circumstances may result in z, rather than x in y circumstances does result in z (Bassey. 2001). These other contexts include not just other educational contexts (i.e. other teachers teaching

classes in the same school or in different schools) but other social contexts in which pupils engage outside school, particularly contexts in which power differentials are less marked. It is possible, for example, that students may express quite different opinions when interacting with friends than when interacting with teachers, or when interacting with a newly-qualified teacher who may be seen as less authoritative than an experienced teacher.

A further consideration to bear in mind with regard to wider pedagogical considerations relates to the possibility of teachers not just lacking knowledge regarding a specific distant place, but holding specific and prejudicial viewpoints that may support or even encourage Africanism or other similar discourses. While geography teaching (as mentioned above) has a certain inherent tendency towards encouraging critical and nuanced worldviews, this does not mean that geography teachers are somehow necessarily 'immune' towards wider social pressures and dynamics that may promote Africanist or other discriminatory worldviews through mass media, social media, and other avenues such as culture and art (Mawdsley, 2008; Adichie, 2009). As discussed in Chapter Two, Africanist viewpoints can even be disseminated through ostensibly 'progressive' means such as charitable campaigns, and through ostensibly 'objective' means such as news items on poverty, famines, wars, and atrocities in Africa. Even the field of African development studies – a sub-discipline that some geography teachers encounter in undergraduate courses – has been criticized for perpetuating simplistic and overly critical views of African peoples (Andreasson, 2005). Additionally, again as noted in Chapter Two, there are also a plethora of overly positive representations of Africa, which imply that Africa's multiple problems are easily identifiable, transient, and 'fixable' with a sufficient injection of effort and funds. As such, overly positive, as well as overly negative, representations contribute to a view of Africa as standing in need of external intervention (Mohan & Power, 2009). Given the dominance of Africanist representations in mass media and other sources, it would be surprising if all geography teachers were somehow to become invulnerable to their influence as a result of their geography teaching alone. As such, it cannot be guaranteed that geographical teaching about distant places will avoid perpetuating Africanist representations, whether positive or negative, simply by virtue of being *geographical* teaching. In other words, a technocratic, deterministic approach to pedagogy – an approach that views teachers as conditioned by their disciplinary orientation alone - is likely to overestimate the potential of geography teaching to overcome Africanist (or other discriminatory) discourses in the classroom. I believe my research findings demonstrate that such potential undoubtedly exists, but equally it is important to recognise the potential contribution of my positionality in

this regard and therefore the limits of distant place teaching for other teachers who may lack individual (or largely positive) experience of and views about African countries.

A further – and in some ways more fundamental – consideration arises with regard to the possibility, or even the likelihood, of shifts of student opinion taking place after the unit of work, and over the longer term timescale of pupils leaving school altogether. In one sense this consideration arises because of the temptation to assume that research findings constitute an accurate representation of reality, and that, therefore, the tendencies and shifts reported in research represent a genuine and permanent new feature, or set of features, of reality. In the context of my research, this view would suggest that students not only changed their views away from Africanist perspectives during the unit of work, but also that this change of perspective is a more or less permanent feature of their worldviews. Having begun the unit of work with Africanist viewpoints, the students not only ended it with more nuanced attitudes but, on this view, can be expected to continue possessing these subtler viewpoints indefinitely. Consequently, geographical teaching about distant places can be viewed as a kind of pedagogy with long-term progressive impacts.

As against this somewhat simplistic view of teaching's impact on students, allied to naïve realism about social ontology, I argue instead that it is more productive to adopt a constructionist view of social reality and a poststructuralist discourse view of students' representations. On this view, it cannot be assumed, firstly, that the research findings presented above represent an objective window upon students' 'real' opinions. Rather, these opinions emerged as new discursive formations across the unit of work and in multiple modalities (oral, written, visual) in a process of co-creation with multiple stakeholders – primarily me, considered as both teacher and researcher, but also classmates, others in the school environment, Ghanaian participants in the school partnership, and relevant persons and media outside the school (family members, friends, mass media, social media). As such, these viewpoints are most productively viewed as co-created products of a specific educational experience, located in a concrete space and time and in a particular institutional context, and inextricably linked with these particularities. While it is likely that other students in different year groups, schools, or geographical areas would show similar processes of opinion formation and change, it is by no means predetermined that these shifts would occur in precisely the same way as they did in my school. In line with case study approaches in general (see Chapter Three), my findings can be taken as illuminating, but not determining, patterns that may occur more widely in different contexts (Cresswell, 2003; Bassey. 1999; Yin, 2003).

Rather than construing my research findings as generalisable, 'objective' data on how children's opinions 'really' change as a result of education, they are better described as evidence of how engagement with children *can* lead to the co-creation of shifting opinions that move away from discriminatory Africanist representations towards more nuanced views. This point recalls Foucault's emphasis on the productivity of power (discussed in Chapters One and Three). Power, for Foucault, is not just repressive and negative but also productive of 'forms of knowledge' and 'discourse' (Foucault, 1980: 51). While classroom education is inevitably characterised by power dynamics, as previously discussed, it is still the case that these dynamics can be used to challenge other, wider domains of power – in this case, Africanist discourses circulating in mass media and other contexts. The variations between individual pupils' attitudes in emphasis, tone, and timing of shifts also recalls Foucault's emphasis on the individual subject and the 'technologies of the self' through which meaning is constructed by individuals so as to 'transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality' (Foucault, 1997: 177).

Another feature of Foucault's work is relevant in terms of highlighting a second fundamental limit placed upon distant place teaching considered as a means of transformation. Foucault's middle-period emphasis upon the ever-present possibility of shift in discourses or epistemes, which come to prominence and also decline and are replaced in specific historical conditions, points towards the impossibility of achieving ultimate stability in social dynamics (Hall, 2003; see also Chapter One). Whatever discourses come to dominate a given society at a given time (with associated possibilities and impossibilities), there will always, on Foucault's view, be the possibility of shifts, resistance, and the introduction of new discourses and epistemes over time. As a consequence, the whole notion of 'endings' comes into question. Research projects typically report findings over a certain period of time, and tend furthermore to portray findings in a way that emphasises data generated later rather than earlier in the process. Inevitably, this supports a tendency to assume that the later findings are more important than the earlier, and represent some kind of a natural end-point towards which the earlier findings tended. Yet Foucault's approach warns us that such natural 'endings' should be viewed with caution, if not with suspicion. Any 'endings' that do occur are unlikely to be 'true' endings, in the sense that they represent the character of a future situation that lacks any further change. It is more productive, from this perspective, to regard such 'endings' as new beginnings.

This insight is not unique to Foucault. The German critical theorist Jürgen Habermas has developed the idea of implicit 'norms' of communication that underpin social interaction,

and which produce a continual pressure towards change and the recognition of other perspectives in reason-governed discussion, or 'deliberation' (Habermas, 1990; 1993). In line with Foucault, although from a very different point of view, this perspective also suggests the instability of social dynamics, since any arrangement that seems stable may be destabilised by a deeper realisation in practice of Habermas's implicit norms of communication. Somewhat closer to Foucault's general theoretical stance is the work of Mikhail Bakhtin, who, as mentioned in Chapter Three and discussed in more depth below, also emphasised the impossibility of coming to 'final' states of affairs in language and society more widely (Bakhtin, 1981, 1984, 1986). On Bakhtin's view, which he developed by engaging with Dostoyevsky novels, characters in literature, and by extension languages themselves, are always unfinalised and unfinished. His concept of 'heterglossia' emphasises the 'radical heterogeneity of the utterance in its centrifugal and centripetal elements' (Hitchcock, 1998: 84). In practice, this means that any use of language has both tendencies towards greater order and stasis (centrifugal elements) *and* disorder and change (centripetal elements). The fact that centripetal forces, according to Bakhtin, are always present highlights the inevitability of change, or, at least, the potential for change. Thus, on Foucauldian, Habermasian and Bakhtinian viewpoints, further caution is required towards the status of my 'final' research findings – since such findings may not represent students' 'final' opinions, any more than they can be said to represent their 'real' opinions. Rather, they represent the materials for new processes of engagement with Africa and other distant places, undertaken outside the classroom and without the pedagogical direction provided by geography teaching. The possibility must be acknowledged, in other words, that although the shifts recorded here were shifts away from Africanism, future shifts cannot be guaranteed to occur in the same direction.

A final source of caution can be found in the 'sensemaking' theory of organisational sociologist Karl Weick, whose work focuses on describing how individuals process, or make sense of, new and unexpected events or dynamics by drawing on past experience (Weick, 1995). The form of this past experience is that of 'frames' – individuals' socially-shaped values, beliefs, assumptions, attitudes and priorities. Individuals 'structure the unknown' by mapping new events in ways that seem plausible to them, drawing upon their frames to do so. These frames are drawn upon in the present to orient future action, but are constructed upon past experience; thus Weick states that sensemaking is a 'cone of light that spreads backwards from a particular present' (1995: 67). Because the sensemaking process is initiated in the present, frames that currently exist will 'affect the backward glance and what is seen' (ibid), including visions of frames themselves. In other words, students' future encounters with distant

places and/or Africanist discourses may lead them to retrospectively alter their past opinions in order to aid with present sensemaking. New experiences and encounters may lead students who ended the unit of work with anti-Africanist viewpoints to shift to more Africanist viewpoints. As such, Weick's viewpoint adds another reason for caution, especially with regard to longer-term change. Overall, it seems more sensible to regard children's perspectives as temporary way-points on longer journeys of sensemaking with regard to distant places – journeys upon which children's views may shift in unpredictable (and not necessarily 'progressive') ways.

7.3 Geographical complications

Additional challenges for distant place teaching arise from the uneven geographical coverage of distant places in media coverage, cultural works, and school curricula. At present, as discussed in Chapter Two, the character of the geography curriculum in England means that there is a relatively narrow focus on specific African countries at the expense of a wider approach. In part, this is due to an understandable need to balance breadth with depth: in some ways it is arguably preferable to engage in in-depth case studies with relevance to wider dynamics (as this research project has done) rather than attempt to cover a wide range of contexts in less detail. And of course, there are many other areas that geography teachers need to cover in the course of a given school year, placing outer limits on the extent to which teachers can prioritise a wide range of geographical coverage in terms of distant places in Africa and elsewhere.

Similarly, media coverage and cultural works tend to focus more on some countries than others. This is often due to historical connections. In the UK, for example, there has historically been greater awareness of, and interest in, former colonial territories such as India than in countries that were formerly part of other European empires, such as Angola and Mozambique (Portugal) or Algeria and Morocco (France). There is also greater interest in areas that are popular tourist destinations, such as the Caribbean, South Africa, Mauritius, and parts of south-east Asia (such as Thailand, Cambodia). Furthermore, specific cultural works can create heightened interest in particular places and countries, such as the film *Out of Africa* (Kenya), the *Madagascar* films, and films and books about Nelson Mandela and his battle against South African apartheid. Media coverage of natural disasters and human conflict can also raise awareness of particular countries, such as Ethiopia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti and Bangladesh. In the absence of such media coverage and well-known cultural

works focusing on specific areas, it is easy for particular countries (for instance Malawi and Ghana) to 'fall between the cracks' and receive significantly lower levels of coverage.

This variable coverage in curricula and mass media mean that teachers – and students – are likely to have stronger preconceptions with regard to some countries than others. As a consequence, more educational engagement is likely to be necessary to challenge Africanist preconceptions with some countries than with others. Indeed, it could be said that Ghana may be a relatively 'easy' case, in that it has not become known – as Ethiopia, Eritrea, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria, South Africa, and Mali, among others – for corruption, crime, civil war, genocide, or severe natural disasters. In the absence of such preceding awareness, students' perceptions of Ghana are likely to have been less sharply Africanist than might well have been the case regarding these and other African countries that have become well-known for negative reasons. At the same time, Ghana also lacks widespread perceptions of positive attributes that other African countries (such as Madagascar, Botswana, Mauritius) have attained in popular culture. Thus, both negative and positive (rose-tinted) perceptions may have been easier to engage, challenge, shift and transform in the case of Ghana than might have been the case for units of work carried out regarding other countries.

As a consequence of the uneven geographical coverage obtained by different distant places in curricula, media, and cultural works, it cannot be assumed that the challenges faced by geography teachers will be uniform and predictable for different country contexts. Instead, teachers engaging with distant place teaching face a unique, complex and constantly shifting arrangement of contextual features that inform the preconceptions and attitudes brought into the classroom by students – and by teachers – through the course of a given unit of work. At any point, new current events and/or cultural works can bring specific places to wider attention in positive and/or negative ways. Teaching cannot be insulated from such events, not least because students learn about the world in many ways outside the classroom, and also carry out their homework outside the classroom. A contemporary example is the film *A United Kingdom*, released in the UK in October 2016, which tells the hitherto little-known story of Sir Seretse Khama, a key figure in the birth of the Republic of Botswana (formerly Bechuanaland) following independence from Britain in 1966. While Alexander McCall Smith's *No.1 Ladies' Detective Agency* novels brought largely positive attention to Botswana in the 1990s and 2000s, these have become less well-known in recent years, and so are less likely to be a source of student perceptions about Botswana than *A United Kingdom* and other more recent cultural products. Similarly but in a more negative sense, events such as the widely-published military seizure of the Electoral Commission in The Gambia in December 2016 following an election

in which the incumbent president Yahya Jammeh lost power is likely to encourage negative perceptions about the country. Geographical teaching about particular distant places will always have to grapple with wider dynamics and take these into account when engaging with Africanist discourses both inside and outside the classroom.

7.4 Bakhtinian Futures

Sections 7.1 and 7.2 summarised my research findings and discussed them in light of relevant literature in order to evaluate to what extent geographical teaching about distant places can help to engage with Africanist representations of both Ghana and Africa more widely. Reflecting on my findings regarding the extent and character of changes in children's representations of Ghana throughout the unit of work, and placing these in the context of wider factors and dynamics that might be thought to limit the impact of distant place teaching, These sections of the chapter led to a balanced conclusion: while my research shows such teaching can certainly challenge and in some cases overcome discourses such as Africanism, the likelihood that distant place teaching in general is likely to lead to effective and sustainable transformations is open to question.

As I then considered in section 7.3, each country presents a unique set of features which, arguably, can only be engaged with *fully* only on the basis of specialist knowledge and/or personal experience on the part of the teacher; and even where such knowledge is present there is a risk of children feeling 'silenced' by such knowledge on the part of the teacher, or even resisting it *because* it is possessed by the teacher. An additional potential complication arises from the possibility that deeper knowledge or experience of a particular distant place on the part of teachers may exaggerate Africanist perceptions. Furthermore, when transformations in children's opinions do appear to take place (as in many instances during my unit of work), these may be short-lived and vulnerable to subsequent reversal owing to influences such as media discourses or powerful cultural products - which themselves may be potentially influenced by enduring patterns of 'exoticist' thought and by more recent inequitable patterns of socio-economic development induced by globalisation (as discussed in Chapter One).

These various challenges to distant place geographical teaching raise a fundamental question: if distant place teaching is unable to *guarantee* its success in challenging and/or overcoming exoticist, orientalist, Africanist or other forms of discriminatory discourse, can it be justified as a pedagogical practice? If distant place teaching promises to carry out geography's 'mission' of promoting 'awareness, interest and understanding of the diversity of the world's people and places' (Binns, 1996: 177), but in fact fails to do so in a sustainable

fashion, then perhaps it would be preferable to avoid engaging in such teaching in order to avoid raising unrealistic expectations. It will be recalled that section 1.4.3 in Chapter One discussed recent debates in recent geographical scholarship regarding participatory development. In this context as well as distant place teaching, some justification exists for the argument that 'none is better than some' (referring in this case to participation in development projects rather than distant place teaching). Yet some geographers' responses to this pessimistic approach in participatory development also furnish ways of thinking more productively and positively about distant place teaching – a slant that continues into this final section of the chapter, which draws on Bakhtin's notion of 'Carnival' to advance debates regarding the character of distant place teaching in the UK.

The work of Mikhail Bakhtin has already been mentioned in Chapter One (section 1.4.2), with regard to his emphasis, shared with Foucault, on the impossibility of coming to final states of affairs. This idea arises from Bakhtin's concepts of 'heteroglossia' and 'dialogicality' (or dialogism; Bakhtin, 1981, 1984, 1986). These concepts sum up a view of language that echoes the themes of geography education discussed in previous chapters, i.e. mingled voices, perspectives, cultures, and historical eras. Following a brief review of relevance of these concepts to distant place teaching, I will consider Bakhtin's account of Rabelaisian 'Carnival' as a possible model for future pedagogy.

'Dialogicality', or 'dialogism', firstly, can be understood not just as a sophisticated fleshing-out of the inevitability of linguistic – and by extension social – change, as discussed in Chapter One. It can also understood, in pedagogical terms, as an incentive to encourage the interaction of multiple voices in distant place teaching. This can be understood narrowly, in terms of the need to encourage participation from all children present in the room (since, as shown in Chapters Four, Five and Six, their opinions often differ sharply from each other), and it can also be understood in a number of wider senses, e.g. a concern to acknowledge the importance of wider dynamics and discourses (e.g. Africanism). While a dialogical focus in distant place teaching brings a wide range of elements into play, it is not concerned with reconciling them within a unified understanding of a given place so much as encouraging an awareness of a world which, fundamentally, cannot be reduced to a single definitive account. Such 'monological' accounts of the world, as Bakhtin describes it in his linguistic terminology, represent a corrupted form of the 'dialogicism' that characterises the structure of language and society, and as such cannot do justice to the mingling of voices, perspectives, cultures, eras, and (we might now add) discourses about distant places.

From the perspective of 'dialogicality', then, teaching about a specific distant place, such as Ghana, should not aim at teaching children a definitive 'correct' story about the country so much as encourage dialogue and debate about which kinds of ideas, places, discourses, cultures, and material factors (e.g. physical geography) might be at play when the complex entity of 'Ghana' is foregrounded in educational or other contexts. From this perspective, dialogism is not just a description of how language and society works, but also an ethical imperative to oppose fixation upon any particular monological way of being – not least because Bakhtin insists (against liberalism) upon some values being incommensurable with others. Thus Francis (2012: 4) describes dialogism as involving 'the co-existence of socio-ideological contradictions between the present and the past, between different epochs of the past, between different socio-ideological groups in the present.'

It will be recalled that the concept of 'heteroglossia', secondly, emphasises the 'radical heterogeneity of the utterance in its centrifugal and centripetal elements' (Hitchcock, 1998: 84) and establishes a tension between centripetal (authoritarian/anti-change) and centrifugal (autonomous/pro-change) tendencies in language and, by extension, social worlds. The unavoidable nature of centripetal forces highlights the inevitability of change, or, at least, the potential for change. This can be taken as an encouraging perspective for teachers seeking to engage with what may seem like firmly-established discriminatory discourses such as Africanism. This concept is also relevant to substantive aspects of distant place teaching, since it emphasises the way in which any given text should not be considered as a stand-alone expression of a particular viewpoint, but rather as a temporary 'fixing' of complex interactions between many pre-existing expressions and 'speech-genres' (standard forms in which language is combined, such as journalistic styles, poetry, and the novel). This means, in part, questioning the originality of works of literature or other speech-related art forms, since authors are in some ways merely borrowing others' previous words and styles of writing. With reference to distant place teaching, the concept of heteroglossia encourages teachers to acknowledge and emphasise the interactions, not just between different speech-genres and specific works of art, but between different parts of specific countries and (with reference to globalisation as discussed in Chapter One) regions and the international scale also. Geographical study of globalisation, that is, can move beyond the acknowledgement of (e.g.) continued Western dominance of the global economy to take account of aspects of cultural exchange and social interconnections enabled by new digital and transport technologies.

Heteroglossia also encourages awareness of the unstable balance of centrifugal and centripetal forces in present global, regional and local arrangements, thus focusing attention

not just on the power-filled discourses supporting stability and the status quo but also the 'plasticity, contradiction and resistance' that emerge within any system (Francis, 2012: 4). Francis also suggests that we are all involved in the interplay between centrifugal and centripetal forces and the dialogical languages and societies through which these forces interact: 'We are all permanently immersed in this relational reciprocity – our utterances anticipate, and are prepared in view of, responses; and our utterances and responses are themselves built on/responses to historic utterances made by ourselves and others… our utterances are "filled with others' words" (ibid: 4). If geography education can encourage awareness of these interactions and associated struggles over geography, this may well be a firmer foundation for children to take forward into their future engagements with distant places, whether through personal experience or mediated through other media, than learning a definitive account of 'what a place is like' in the classroom.

How can geography teachers do this? One suggestive line of thinking is provided by the last Bakhtinian concept I will revisit here: that of the 'Carnival'. This concept was prompted by Bakhtin's reading of the renaissance writer Rabelais in his book *Rabelais and his World* (1984; see section 1.4.2). Applying the notion of carnival to geographical distant place teaching implies a certain style of classroom teaching that enables the emergence of new voices and opinions by breaking down conventions. As discussed in previous chapters, the need for teachers to retain a certain degree of directing control over classroom education means that an entirely 'carnivalesque' approach to teaching is unlikely to be successful. But elements of carnivalesque teaching could potentially form valuable parts of geography education surrounding distant places, seeking to break down conventions where possible and enable genuine dialogue between students as well as between the student and the teacher. These elements would not directly mirror the folk culture events discussed by Bakhtin (e.g. carnival pageants and comic shows), but some elements could be utilised in modified form in distant place teaching in order to emphasise particular aspects of geography teaching. For example, Bakhtin's focus on comic verbal compositions such as oral and written parodies of speech-genres presents the idea of asking students to parody texts of certain kinds (e.g. Africanist texts) in order to highlight their assumptions in more detail. This approach could build on Francis' use of Bakhtin to show how 'individual productions of gender are shot through with contradiction, and incorporate both aspects of performance generally understood as 'masculine' and 'feminine' (2012: 3).

Taken together, these aspects of Bakhtin's conceptual apparatus provide a highly suggestive set of notions for geography teachers seeking to carry out distant place teaching in

a critical yet constructive manner. By engaging with these and other pertinent conceptual resources, geography teachers can at least attempt to engage with, and possibly overcome, the limits of distant place teaching to at least some extent.

7.5 Conclusion

My research findings have revealed that a unit of geography teaching work was able to engage with and in many ways challenge students' initial perceptions, and their frequently Africanist origin and character, in order to create more nuanced and critical views. Students' changing and 'final' views attested to subtler worldviews, in which both excessively negative and excessively positive viewpoints were replaced to a considerable extent by perspectives that acknowledged the simultaneous presence of wealth and poverty in both Ghana and the UK, and that recognised the ways in which the UK could learn from the Ghana (as well as vice versa). Overall, my research demonstrates that geographical distant place teaching was able to generate greater awareness of geographical and cultural diversity while also recognising the similarities and shared challenges that both wealthy and poorer countries must face. As such, it seems clear that distant place teaching, informed by a geographical concern with difference and diversity, can help to engage with, challenge, and in some ways overcome Africanist perspectives.

At the same time, however, the discussions presented in this chapter illustrate, from a number of different perspectives, the caution that should be applied when considering the anti-Africanist potential of geographical distant place teaching. In particular, I noted that my own specialist knowledge and experience offered an unusually well-informed perspective from which to engage with students' perceptions of Ghana, and that students may also have felt (as children often do) unwilling or unable to challenge my geographical expertise and viewpoints. While my knowledge of Ghana offers certain benefits, it is also possible that my positionality therefore limited the widespread generalisability of my case study findings. The capacity of distant place teaching to engage with Africanist perspectives may also be limited, in the case of other teachers, by specific representations of their own, which may include Africanist perspectives gained from mass media and from participation in university undergraduate courses.

More fundamentally, I raised the concern that any apparent transformations in opinion that were observed may have been temporary rather than permanent, and that any attempt to establish permanent opinion shifts as the end-point of research projects underestimate the extent to which societal dynamics more widely are unstable and liable to be undermined and

destabilised by new epistemes or discourses – an insight fleshed out with reference to theoretical work by Foucault, Bakhtin, Habermas and Weick.

I then noted some geographical issues that might be thought to complicate the challenges of distant place teaching. Different countries achieve very different levels of coverage in mass media, cultural works, and geographical curricula, meaning that a complex and highly differentiated patchwork of negative and positive preconceptions are likely to face teachers attempting to engage students in discussion regarding any particular country.

Following this section, I drew upon concepts developed by the literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin in order to explore the ways in which his work offer a particularly suggestive set of notions for geography teachers seeking to engage constructively with the challenges of distant place teaching. Such challenges are more important than ever given the increasingly globalised nature of contemporary societies. Yet if these challenges are engaged with in a productive manner, distant place teaching can still hope to carry out geography's 'mission' of promoting 'awareness, interest and understanding of the diversity of the world's people and places' (Binns, 1996: 177).

Nevertheless, as a consequence of these various considerations, it seems clear that an ambivalent conclusion is most appropriate. Rather than claiming that distant place teaching can always and everywhere overcome discourses such as Africanism, it is perhaps more accurate to say, on the basis of my findings, that it can engage with and challenge Africanist discourses in certain contexts and regarding certain countries – but that this cannot be guaranteed. Every country presents a unique set of challenges with regard to wider dynamics, and these can only be addressed by engaging with them on a case-by-case basis. Distant place teaching, that is, requires detailed knowledge of each particular distant place and their complex relationships with other places. But it is only by engaging with these geographical intricacies from a positive perspective (e.g. a Bakhtinian perspective) that geography educators can hope to challenge and possibly overcome Africanism and other exoticist discourses.

<center>**Chapter Eight**</center>

<center>**Conclusion**</center>

8.1 Introduction

This final chapter summarises and reviews my findings in light of my overarching research questions (section 8.2) before considering some of the implications of this research for teaching practice and geography education more widely (section 8.3). I then consider the limitations of this study and some avenues for future research (section 8.4) before a brief conclusion (section 8.5).

8.2 Summary of Findings

Chapters Four to Six presented findings regarding children's 'initial', changing, and 'final' representations of Ghana, as encountered through a range of pedagogical and data collection activities conducted during a unit of work. These are summarised below, with particular attention to my overarching research questions:

1. What initial understandings do children communicate regarding Ghana and Africa at the beginning of a three-part unit of work on Ghana?
2. Were Africanist discourses manifested in children's initial understandings, and to what extent is Africanism a useful tool for interpreting these understandings?
3. Do children's understandings become less characterized by Africanist discourses over the course of the unit of work?

8.2.1 Initial Representations

My findings regarding children's 'initial' representations of Ghana – representations that mostly emerged in the first few lessons of the enquiry sequence, but which also emerged in lessons and exercises taking place at a later stage – furnished evidence for the strong influence

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of Africanist discourses on perceptions of distant places (and African distant places in particular). As detailed in Chapter Four, classroom discussions featured many statements that portrayed an impression of Ghanaian culture as characteristically Africanist – i.e. as chaotic, culturally 'backward', politically unstable, and impoverished, among other characteristics (Andreasson, 2005; Mazrui, 2004) – while window drawings presented a rural picture of Ghana as an idyllic, but pre-modern, backwater. Common emphases in this regard included mud huts, bright sunshine, colourful dress, and basic educational and transport infrastructure.

Yet these initial views and opinions were far from being uniformly negative. In all three data modalities (classroom discussions, window drawings, and written exercises), students discussed aspects of Ghana's society, economy, and natural environment in a less negative manner, and included content which could be considered in a highly positive light (e.g. the concept of livelihoods existing in tune with nature). In the classroom discussions, for example, children made a number of remarks about Ghanaians eating healthy local ingredients, possessing skills that British people had lost, and living 'natural' lives in the countryside. Similarly, the exercise on Ghanaian recipes emphasised not just natural, locally-sourced ingredients but also the basic nature of Ghanaian cooking implements and their supposedly 'easy-going' culture. At times, however, these positive views strayed into the realm of rose-tinted perspectives that resonate with Rousseau's idea of the 'noble savage' (Rowland, 2004), constituting a different but related kind of Africanism that idealises African societies in unrealistically positive ways.

The exercises which focused on differences and similarities between the UK and Ghana revealed furthermore a tendency to homogenise both countries - such as the contention that Ghana is 'greener' than the UK because the UK is more built up, a view which bypasses Ghana's significant urban areas as well as dryer coastal landscapes, and which arguably simplifies landscapes in the UK as well as Ghana. Students' exercises on greater and lesser development foregrounded Ghanaian physical geography on the one hand and British society and history on the other, highlighting a tendency to see the relative agency and power of the two countries in these terms and thus a tendency to accord Britain a more privileged status than Ghana. By representing Ghana as either idyllically positive or irredeemably negative, children at times constructed it in a subordinate position as either set apart from the pressures of modernity or as crushed by them. The power of Africanist discourses is visible in this 'productive' aspect of their operation, both encouraging and drawing strength from the construction and expression of a body of knowledge that illuminates Ghana as 'essentially' unitary, homogeneous, and different from the UK in unrealistically positive or negative ways

– a finding that supports Foucault's view that 'there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time, power relations' (1977; cited Hall, 2003: 77).

Moreover, these data not only revealed Africanist influences on children's initial representations of Ghana, but also provided an in-depth exploration of the initial challenges facing geography teachers seeking to engage with, and potentially transform, children's views and opinions.

8.2.2 Changing Representations

The findings presented in Chapter Five attest to the value of classroom discussions in terms of providing insights into pupils' changing representations about Ghana in addition to some of the processes through which representations may change through the course of a unit of work, thus furnishing some answers to the third research question presented above. As seen in Chapter Four, classroom discussions showed that pupils' 'initial' representations – 'initial' in the sense that they were influenced by Africanist discourses – emerged in numerous lessons and with regard to multiple topics, and assumed both positive and negative forms. Yet, as the unit of work proceeded, these representations were supplemented, overlain, and in some cases replaced by changing representations exhibiting a greater awareness of complexity. These emerged alike in classroom discussions, focus groups, and visual and written materials. In classroom discussions, children increasingly demonstrated awareness of diversity within and across places in addition to cross-context similarities (e.g. between the UK and Ghana). In focus groups, most children's utterances presented a clear progression from their initial views to more nuanced views in which geographical and socioeconomic diversity and complexity played a stronger role. For instance, children in the final focus group suggested that British people could learn from Ghanaians, in addition to emphasising the negative role of the media in encouraging negative views of Africa and African countries.

In terms of visual materials, children created posters in the middle of the unit of work to canvass similarities and differences between Ghana and the UK. These demonstrated a range of approaches that ranged from recognitions of geographic difference and diversity to over-simplified and rose-tinted views of the two countries, often expressed in terms of their choice of photographs representing different environments within each country. Posters also varied in terms of the extent to which Africanist discourses were expressed, e.g. in notions that Ghanaians are always smiling and happy. Consequently, as might have been expected from data gathered in the middle of the unit of work, the posters collected as visual data tended to

exhibit a degree of ambivalence and uncertainty, sitting between Africanism and more nuanced ideas of diversity. In terms of written materials, lastly, students' materials on photographic interpretation, definitions of poverty and development, and diversity in Africa attested to a general tendency towards greater awareness of diversity and difference embedded within many instances of less nuanced views (e.g. emphasis on the superiority of 'developed' urban environments over 'developing' environments).

These findings illustrate how pupils expressed changing representations throughout the course of the unit of the work and especially towards the end of the unit. In the course of developing more nuanced viewpoints, children were able to bypass Africanist discourses to some extent through explorations of cross-context diversity and similarity facilitated by the teacher and other pupils. As such, while the potential always exists for dominant discourses (such as Africanism) to continue their dominance, this genre of interaction also allows for the challenging and bypassing of such discourses through opposing discourses such as geographical arguments emphasising diversity and cross-context similarity (Binns, 1996).

8.2.3 'Final' representations

Chapter Six presented and analysed a range of materials ranging from window drawings to written exercises in order to evaluate students' 'final' representations – 'final' only in the sense of a journey from children's 'Africanist' representations of African (and specifically Ghanaian) distant places to more sophisticated and nuanced representations. The comparison between initial and final window drawings illustrated a general shift from 'Africanist' perceptions of Ghana as a rural, undeveloped and traditional society towards more diverse perceptions incorporating awareness of Ghana's geographical and societal diversity. Portrayals of rural villages with mud huts, subsistence agriculture and livestock generally gave way to mixed pictures in which urban and rural elements co-existed within Ghana, and in which newer forms of technology and infrastructure such as skyscrapers, electricity pylons, and mobile phones occupy prominent places. However, there were also ways in which children's second drawings presented a more limited understanding of Ghanaian human and physical geography. By contrast, the Wordles created by students towards the end of the unit of work tended strongly towards a more diverse understanding of Ghana, recognising urban and rural aspects of Ghanaian society in addition to positive and negative aspects of Ghanaian life, and similarities and differences between Ghana and the UK.

Children's written materials, including the exercise on fair trade and the blog that students produced as their final written exercise, also demonstrated their awareness of the

challenges faced by poor workers in developing countries, and by Ghana as a country more widely. Children moved away from Africanist notions of Africans as 'lazy' or 'feckless' and demonstrated their newfound awareness that hard work does not necessarily lead to wealth. Similarly, students acknowledged the importance of both large- and small-scale development projects while also recognising their potential downsides, and, summarising, tended to present a guarded optimism about Ghana's future that was potentially bright, but also potentially blighted by corruption.

Overall, these varied kinds of data convey a picture of complexity and multi-facetedness. While the pieces of visual media created by the students fit into an overarching narrative of progress at the whole class level from Africanist stereotypes towards more complex and diverse representations (illustrated by e.g. the comparison between initial and final window drawings), this narrative is complicated by the way in which individual students omitted some important material from their later drawings and by the Africanist perspectives expressed in the posters completed in the middle of the unit of work. These findings illustrate the importance of maintaining a focus on diversity between individual students when conducting educational research at the class level, in addition to the importance of drawing upon multiple methods of data collection in educational research.

8.3 Implications for Teaching Practice

As stated in section 3.7, my case study approach corresponds to the model of 'fuzzy' generalisation described by Bassey (2001:5), which 'replaces the certainty of scientific generalisation ('x in y circumstances results in z') [with] the uncertainty, or fuzziness, of statements that contain qualifiers ('x in y circumstances may result in z'). Despite the uncertainty of such statements, which are inevitably based on context-specific findings such as my research on distant place teaching, Bassey suggests nevertheless that 'fuzzy predictions' of this kind, when supported by research accounts that clarify the context of the prediction and the evidence justifying it, can serve as a guide to professional action. In the context of my research, this approach raises the possibility that case study research on changing representations may lead not just to new research insight, as discussed in the previous section, but also to pedagogical insights of value to geography educators more widely.

This possibility was discussed in the preceding chapter with regard to the need for specific geographical knowledge of distant places (section 7.3) and with regard to an engagement between my research findings and the conceptual insights of literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin (section 7.4). With regard to the former, my teaching experience with regard

to Ghana highlighted the inherent complexity of distant places and the challenges that face geography teachers seeking to engage with social, historical, environmental, and other aspects of particular countries that they themselves may never have visited. My comparatively deep knowledge of Ghana and personal experience of many of the specific places covered in lessons allowed me to answer the many detailed questions asked by pupils with some confidence, but teachers without such experience would have found such questions harder to answer in any but the most general terms. The challenges are further complicated by the possibility of non-educational events and dynamics exerting significant influence on children's perceptions of particular countries, which (given the biases often present in mass media and social media reporting) may influence children's views in complex and potentially unpredictable ways.

In terms of the practical implications of these challenges for geography education, it is clearly unfeasible for education systems to fund all geography teachers to travel to countries about which they are teaching, although schools and educational authorities should take this possibility into account when deciding upon funding for overseas school trips, in contexts where such trips are possible. However, a thoroughgoing recognition of the complexity facing geography teachers engaging in distant place teaching could encourage teachers and schools to acknowledge the need for research about individual country contexts, in order to allow teachers to engage with students in a productive manner and to help to co-create new and less discriminatory discursive formations together with students.

In part, these more productive engagements may come about through recognition of the importance of an Africanist lens when teaching about African distant places, and, by extension, recognition of the value of exoticist lenses more widely (e.g. Orientalist or 'tropicalist' lenses) when teaching about distant places beyond the African context. Unless geography teachers (and teachers in other related subjects such as history) have previously encountered the work of Edward Said or other writers with a similar approach (e.g. Andreasson, 2005), they are unlikely to have developed a strong theoretical understanding of the complex power dynamics surrounding representations of distant places in media, cultural artefacts, and geography curricula. As a result, geography teachers may not be fully aware of the power-related challenges inherent in teaching about distant places, although they are likely to have encountered the products of power-filled discourses in the form of children's representations in the classroom. While familiarity with theoretical accounts of Africanism and similar exoticist discourses cannot *ensure* productive engagements with discriminatory discourses in the classroom, such accounts do at least offer the possibility of sensitising teachers to the

potentially negative impacts of power-filled discourses on children's emerging understandings of diversity across and between contexts.

Arguably, the findings presented in this thesis suggest the need for greater attention to exoticist lenses in the context of geography teacher training and Continued Professional Development (CPD) domains. From an Africanist perspective, this need is particularly pressing given that substantial parts of the current geography syllabuses either directly focus on African contexts (e.g. the potential to teach about Nigeria in GCSE Economic Geography and Urban Environments) or on wider themes of direct relevance to African countries, such as A-Level modules on Globalisation and Development. Similarly, other relevant exoticist lenses such as Orientalism could come into play with regard to teaching focused on distant places in 'oriental' contexts such as the Middle East and North Africa (as I previously explored in the context of teaching on Egypt; Kennedy, 2011). Exoticist components of training and CPD domains could take a range of possible forms, but one practice-focused component could take the form of guidelines for distant place teaching. Framed by consideration of theoretical accounts of exoticism by Said and others, such guidelines could help teachers to become aware of, elicit, and engage more deeply with children's pre-existing representations about distant places rather than merely focusing on covering a pre-set amount of factual material. By ensuring that geography teachers are aware of the circulation of (as Foucault would put it) power-filled discourses in addition to long-standing geographical foci such as diversity within and between places, guidelines could lead to deeper and more productive interaction between teachers and children on the basis of more intensive consideration of children's own understandings of distant places – understandings that may have been formed long before distant place teaching about the context in question takes place, and which may present significant obstacles to transformative learning in the classroom. Publications based on the findings presented in this thesis may provide important insights for the development of such guidelines (see following section).

My Bakhtinian analysis of my findings also highlighted a number of important pedagogical points. In terms of 'dialogicality', first, my findings can be taken as encouraging the interaction of multiple voices in distant place teaching – both in terms of encouraging participation from all children in the classroom (since their opinions often differ significantly from each other) and in terms of recognising the importance of wider dynamics and discourses such as Africanism. Teaching about a specific distant place, such as Ghana, should not aim at teaching children a definitive 'correct' story about the country so much as encourage dialogue and debate about which kinds of ideas, places, discourses, cultures, and material factors (e.g.

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physical geography) might be at play when the complex entity of 'Ghana' is foregrounded in educational or other contexts.

In terms of 'heteroglossia', secondly, the impossibility of finality and the constant possibility of change through the combination of new elements serves as an encouraging perspective for teachers seeking to engage with what may seem like firmly-established discriminatory discourses such as Africanism. Moreover, this concept encourages awareness (for both teachers and children) of the unstable balance of centrifugal and centripetal forces in present global, regional and local arrangements, thus focusing attention not just on the power-filled discourses supporting stability and the status quo but also the 'plasticity, contradiction and resistance' that emerge within any system (Francis, 2012: 4). If geography education can encourage awareness of these interactions, this may well be a firmer foundation for children to take forward into their future engagements with distant places, whether through personal experience or mediated through other media, than learning a definitive account of 'what a place is like' in the classroom.

And in terms of 'carnival, thirdly, I suggested that, while control needs to be maintained in the classroom, the notion of a 'carnivalesque' approach to teaching could furnish new approaches to distant place teaching. For example, Bakhtin's focus on comic verbal compositions such as oral and written parodies of speech-genres presents the idea of asking students to parody texts of certain kinds in order to highlight their assumptions in more detail. I envisage a range of possible approaches in this regard, focusing on varied aspects of Africanist discourses and their manifestation in specific genres, followed in each case by the specific issues raised. With regard to overly negative representations of Africans and African countries, for instance, children can be asked to construct a parodic news bulletin reporting on famine and war in Africa, in addition to a mock Comic Relief report about poverty in Ghana. In both cases, there is a discoverable rationale behind the negative accounts of Africa that tend to be presented – informing people about what happens in distant places and encouraging people to give money to help people in distant places, respectively. As such, the process of creating parodies of these genres is not merely a process of uncovering and critiquing negative representations of distant places, but also a means for students to come to a greater understanding of reasoning behind such representations – reasoning that, at base, may be more 'positive' than students might at first think, but which, nevertheless, may encourage the circulation and perpetuation of overly negative discourses about African distant places.

While these parodic exercises are directed towards overly negative accounts of distant places, carnivalesque approaches can also be used to guide children towards a critical

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understanding of overly positive representations of African places. Earlier in this thesis I discussed the genre of travel writing as expressed in the work of Fromentin, Buchan, and others – writing which often portrayed distant places as magical, enticing, and exotic. I also discussed ethnic tourism, or tourism marketed in terms related to ethnic difference in which (as Yang and Wall note) 'the cultural exoticism of some groups is the primary attraction' (2009: 560) – with a consequent risk of emphasising overly positive 'rose-tinted' views of ethnic lifestyles in distant places. In order to explore positive stereotypes, children can be asked to create parodies of Victorian travel journals – for example, a journal written by David Livingstone during a fictional visit to Ghana in the 1850s – and, in the contemporary context, a website homepage for a tourism company advertising holidays to remote areas of Ghana. By exploring different aspects of positive representations, children are able to understand the ways in which particular kinds of vested interest make positive emphases more likely. In common with genres that emphasise overly negative views of distant places, these exercises in parody help children to understand the impact that different genres can exert on circulating discourses, with knock-on impacts for representations that come to be prevalent at particular times (as Foucault expressed in his notion of epistemes).

My findings already suggest that different modes of expression – oral, visual, and written – can lead to different kinds of discursive formation and opportunities for individual students to express different points of view. As such, it can be speculated that new and original kinds of exercise in various modalities could further assist geography teachers in seeking to challenge power-filled, discriminatory, and 'exoticist' discourses in the classroom – although it must also be acknowledged, as Bakhtin and Foucault (among other thinkers) insist, that all outcomes, and not just (e.g.) Africanist outcomes, are provisional and subject to future revision. As such, even if students complete a unit of work on distant places with apparently post-exoticist viewpoints, it cannot be assumed that these will endure into the future and in non-educational environments. The need to challenge dominating discourses is ever-present.

8.4 Plans for Dissemination

I plan to disseminate my research through a range of means in order to reach the widest possible relevant audience for my findings. In terms of journal papers, I plan to publish three papers addressed towards geography teachers, researchers of children's geographical understandings, and education policy, respectively. The first paper will summarise my theoretical approach and research data with the intent of distilling specific pedagogical insights that will be of use to geography teachers engaging with the current syllabus, e.g. the GCSE modules on Economic

Geography and Urban Environments, for which Nigeria is a potential key case study. Building on my previous work of this kind (Kennedy, 2011), this paper will be a succinct description of research methods and key findings, presented in such a way as to relate as closely as possible to direct concerns and challenges facing geography teachers in the classroom. The second paper will focus on exoticism and the utility of exoticist lenses (e.g. Africanism and Orientalism) in the study of children's geographical understandings of distant places. This paper will review my research findings in light of this theoretical perspective, in addition to highlighting the value of an overarching conceptual apparatus that combines insights from both Foucault and Bakhtin. The third paper, finally, will focus on policy implications for geography education, emphasising (as discussed above) the potential value of additions to geography training and CPD curricula. Specifically, the paper will outline suggestions for guidelines to help geography teachers develop their distant place teaching and engage more deeply with power-filled and potentially discriminatory discourses in the classroom. Taken together, these papers will not only disseminate my findings to a range of audiences but will also offer the potential to make significant impact on pedagogical practice in geography teaching.

Additionally, I plan to present at relevant national conferences such as the Geography Association Conference in 2019. At this conference, I will seek to present work not just on the research reported in this thesis but also how I have sought to apply my findings to my current and upcoming teaching on Nigeria. By the time of the conference in 2019, I will have had the opportunity to explore the practical utility of a Bakhtinian, carnivalesque approach to distant place teaching in the classroom, and to reflect on the applicability of my Ghana-specific findings to distant place teaching in different contexts. By engaging with colleagues at this conference and at other professional events, I hope to generate further impact upon geography teaching focused upon distant place.

8.5 Limitations and Future Research

This study set out to answer the research questions detailed in section 8.1, above, through the use of multiple data collection methods across a unit of work, within a wider case study approach informed by constructionist epistemology and a poststructuralist theoretical perspective. This research agenda has led to new findings regarding the capacity of distant place teaching to engage with and in many ways challenge exoticist discourses – in this case, Africanist discourses as applied to the specific context of Ghana – in addition to a number of pedagogical insights for geography teachers more widely.

Nevertheless, the study has a number of limitations. I focused on one particular class of pupils over one unit of work in a particular school, and it is possible that a different class of pupils (e.g. a different year group, or the same year group in a different academic year), or pupils in a different school and/or geographical setting, would have expressed views that differed from the views expressed by the students with whom I worked in the unit of work discussed here. Future research could usefully carry out comparative explorations between students from different year groups, different schools, and different geographical areas in order to assess the extent to which children's opinions about distant places both echo and/or depart from the findings discussed above.

Additionally, while I drew upon a relatively wide range of data collection methods, future education researchers could usefully expand the range of classroom and homework exercises (as suggested in my section on Bakhtin and carnival) in order to explore in more depth how different kinds of student engagement may generate new and distinctive discursive formations, offering the potential to develop new ways to challenge and engage with discriminatory discourses such as Africanism. While this study has not adopted a positivist approach, it is possible that questionnaires could provide a useful addition to the study approach, especially if repeated several times throughout the unit of work and if thoroughly integrated within a wider mixed-methods approach.

A further limitation arises from a factor that was a strength in terms of my distant place teaching: my extensive personal experience of Ghana and the many ways in which this generated a different teaching experience for pupils than would have been the case with a different teacher. Future research could usefully explore the extent to which geography teachers' personal knowledge and experience of distant places may affect the impact of distant place teaching on children in their classes. In turn, this research could inform future policy in terms of resource allocation for teacher training and professional development.

8.6 Conclusion

This thesis set out to explore the influence of Africanist discourses on children's initial impressions of one particular distant place (Ghana), and the impact of distant place teaching in terms of pupils' changing representations of Ghana across a unit of work, as expressed in multiple classroom discussions and classwork and homework exercises in written and visual formats. My findings demonstrate that children's initial representations exhibited strong Africanist influences, but that these influences were moderated and in many ways overcome through the course of the unit of work. However, the transition from Africanist to non- or post-

Africanist views was neither homogenous or linear, with differences of opinion emerging between children at different times, and with some 'initial' or Africanist impressions emerging again towards the end of the unit of work. The poststructuralist theoretical framework within which this research was conducted also foregrounds the 'unfinalisable' nature of educational outcomes, undermining assumptions that post-Africanist viewpoints will necessarily continue into the future and become part of children's general worldview. Thus, while this thesis emphasises the benefits of geography education in terms of challenging discriminatory and 'exoticist' discourses, it also recognises the challenges inherent in geographical education and the need for geography teachers to be aware of the complexities involved when teaching about distant places.

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ENQUIRY SEQUENCES

ENQUIRY SEQUENCE	LESSON (55 mins)	TITLE	LESSON OBJECTIVES	TEACHING, LEARNING STRATEG ASSESSMENT STRATEGIE
	ONE	Gorgeous Ghana	To think about where Ghana is in the world and what kind of country it might be	What kind of country is Ghana? (photos and Where is it? (maps on powerpoint) Pupils draw a picture from a window of wha believe Ghana is like Ghana or not quiz (20mins) Picture of family on powerpoint – discuss Homework – summary list of 5/6 similaritie differences between the UK and Ghana.
GHANA: A DIFFERENT PLACE? (Lessons 1-4)	TWO	Maps from Memory	To identify key features of the country To locate Ghana and gain an understanding of the geography of the country	Map from memory - pupils take turns to go room and replicate a map from memory Discussion, photos Homework - Find out 3 interesting facts abo
	THREE	Mapping Ghana	To recap last lesson and translate onto map, looking at photos of key places (giving opportunities for questions)	Pupils fill in a blank map of Ghana using int powerpoint and photos from powerpoint to f discussion about the country Word fill below the map Speed Quiz on Ghana- can use mini whitebo up answers Travel guide – pupils to write entry for Gha guide for people wishing to emigrate from t Homework – short essay about English food exchanged with essays by Ghanaian partner discussed in the next lesson
	FOUR	Food Project	To discuss Ghanaian pupils' essays about food and their wider cultural implications	Pupils each read out parts of their Ghanaian letters and discuss what they reveal about G and culture After lesson: focus group with 6 pupils
	FIVE	The Roots of Poverty	To think about which places are	Discuss what pupils mean when they hear th 'poor' and 'poverty,' and the enquiry sequen – 'Does poverty matter?' – with reference to Discuss the Brandt Line and the idea of LDC

			richer than others and why	Fill in 'Development Compass' and discuss countries became poorer and richer
	SIX	Development nt indicators		
DOES POVERTY MATTER? (Lessons 5-9)	SEVEN	Personal accounts of developme nt	To gain an understanding of development To understand development indicators and be able to find them on the internet (ciaworldfactbook)	Discuss what can be done to address poverty in terms of development Identify key development indicators and how used to compare different countries Task – compare four different countries in to development indicators, and complete work Homework: learn the development indicator
	EIGHT	The Diversity of Poverty	To think about other ways to measure development alongside development indicators, especially in terms of personal engagement	Discuss indices of 'Happiness' to consider h approaches to development, taking account cons Consider the value of personal experience a engagement, for example through school pa Discussion of partnership between Kimbolto partner school in Ghana, and how it can help to better understandings of life in Ghana Task: discuss letters from Ghanaian pupils o there, and compare with development indica different values do both bring to understand development? Homework: what else could be done with th to further pupils' undertstandings of Ghanai
	NINE	Ghana vs the UK	To gain an understanding of how poverty varies across and within 'poor' countries	Discuss development indicators for four dif countries Consider photographs representing the diver African lives Task: write entries on poverty and developm dictionary of human geography, taking acco development indicators, happiness, personal and diversity.
	TEN-ELEVE N	Developme nt and Aid: A Large-Scale Project in Ghana	To produce a poster showing information gathered last lesson in a coherent way	Pupils use what they have done last lesson t poster contrasting Ghana and the UK. Refre memory of CIA World Factbook and how Pupils find development indicators for Ghan and a few extra interesting things to contrast choice), including maps and photos, and a sl reflection on the poster reflecting on why in not the whole story. Homework – finish posters. After lesson: focus group with 6 pupils

HAS DEVELOPMENT WORKED IN GHANA? (Lessons 10-14)	TWELVE	Development and Aid: Small-Scale Development Projects in Ghana	Introduce the linkage between aid and development Gain an understanding of how development in Ghana has changed over the last few decades To understand why the Akosombo dam was built To think about some problems arising from building the dam	Discuss what aid is and some of its different [...] humanitarian vs development, conditional a[...] unconditional, and its role in funding devel[...] projects These two lessons focus on a large-scale dev[...] project in Ghana (the Akosombo Dam) Pupils think about why a dam might be buil[...] drawings of the development project They then brainstorm uses of lake Volta They discuss where the power goes and if th[...] situation They sort effects of the dam into positive an[...] a card sort activity and then rank the effects [...] to least bad – they make notes in their books[...] Homework - produce a piece of work to say [...] dam was a good or bad thing for Ghana and [...] benefited most. After lesson: focus group with 6 pupils
	THIRTEEN	Trade not Aid?	To understand how small scale development projects may differ from than large scale ones	Students look at a picture of a well and how [...] making their own drawings. They then deba[...] cons of small scale vs large scale developme[...]
	FOURTEEN	Concluding Lesson	To gain an understanding of Fair Trade To think about where chocolate comes from and who is involved in the industry- is the trade a fair one?	Discuss Fair Trade in Ghana through an exa[...] cocoa and chocolate production in Ghana, a[...] involved in the industry. Pupils guess how [...] per chocolate bar each stakeholder receives. [...] are given information cards and work in gro[...] up with how much they believe they should [...] their job and then debate this as a class in th[...] They then answer some questions to come u[...] solutions to improve the situation. Following this the pupils discuss Fair Trade [...] and its impact on development in Ghana They consider a case study of Kuapa Kokoo[...] successful, large-scale Fair Trade cocoa pla[...] Ghana, and watch a video of a cocoa farmer[...] interviewed in Ghana Task – work together as a class to design a v[...] on Fair Trade in Ghana, incorporating input [...] Ghanaian pupils in the partner school

			To conclude the enquiry sequence by reflecting over all the material covered To express this material in two pieces of work	Pupils imagine they are a reporter who has s months in Ghana. They write a blog summin views of Ghana, with a particular focus on t present and future of development in the cou Homework - pupils design a Wordle summi everything they think about Ghana.

Appendix II

Focus Group Topic Guide

- Initial perceptions of Ghana
  - o Discussion of 'window into Ghana' drawings and other written materials
  - o Discussion of wider initial perceptions of Ghana and West Africa
- Changing perceptions of Ghana
  - o Students' perceptions of material covered in each enquiry sequence
  - o Importance attached by students to each theme covered
  - o Main points of learning in each sequence, especially regarding perceptions of Ghana and Africa more generally, and how these perceptions had changed from students' initial perceptions
- Role of school partnership
  - o Discussion of school partnership activities
  - o Discussion of the role of these activities in the learning process

<center>**Appendix III**</center>

<center>**Letters to be emailed to parents of participating children**</center>

Letter 1 (to be sent to parents of all potential participants):
Dear Parent,
I am currently undertaking research as part of my PhD in Education at the Faculty of Education at the University of Cambridge. My research focuses on how children understand and learn about distant places, such as Ghana, with the aim of adding to the body of research that exists on this topic. I am writing to ask your permission for your son/daughter to participate in my research project. The project will involve taking a sample of your child's written work for analysis, and work from their exercise book may be photocopied. Lessons will also be recorded on audiotape and transcripts of some lessons may be written up for analysis. Apart from this, lessons will be as normal. The anonymity of your child will be assured in any subsequent written analysis.
To confirm your permission for your child's participation I would be grateful if you could complete and return the attached slip. I would also be happy to answer any questions you may have about the research.

Yours sincerely,

Claire Kennedy

Letter 2 (to be sent to parents of potential participants in focus groups):

Dear Parent,
As you will be aware from my last email, I am currently undertaking research as part of my PhD in Education at the Faculty of Education at the University of Cambridge, focusing on how children understand and learn about distant places. I am now writing to ask your permission for your son/daughter to take part in a focus group of six pupils in total, who will meet four times in my classroom over the next several weeks. The aim of these informal discussions, which will be recorded using a digital recorder, will be to understand children's perceptions of Ghana as a distant place and how such perceptions may have changed over the study of this topic. The anonymity of your child will be assured in any subsequent written analysis.
To confirm your permission for your child's participation I would be grateful if you could complete and return the attached slip. I would also be happy to answer any questions you may have about the research.

Yours sincerely,

Claire Kennedy